Emerging Community Gardens

Visions, motivations and further aspects that influence organization of a community garden based on experiences in the Czech Republic and Sweden

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Abstract

Community gardens have become an international phenomenon and their number has steadily increased over recent decades. In the 20th century, community gardens were mainly initiated as a response to crises, such as food and financial insecurity during war periods. The question arises as to the main motivations that influence the establishment and function of 21st century community gardens. Based on case study methodology, first-hand interviews and direct observations, this report examines the nature of four community gardens in the context of Prague, Czech Republic and Stockholm, Sweden in regards to social sustainability, social capital and related concepts. The community gardens were explored during the 2013 growing season (May to September) in order to understand the motivations of the organizers and gardeners, determine the factors that influenced the gardens’ function, ascertain the nature of the communities built around the gardens and finally compare and contrast the differences in the Czech and Swedish cultural context. The findings from the studied gardens showed that one of the main drivers for starting and creating a successful community garden project was to enhance neighbourhood social interaction and highlight the importance of the community organization and mutual cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders. In three cases the municipality proved to be a strategic partner for the gardens’ implementation. The explored gardens contributed to the densification of neighbourhood relationships and facilitated social capital on different levels, e.g. establishing and developing friendships, increasing communication between various gardening groups and improving communication between the gardening groups and municipalities. From the perspective of the social sustainability concept, the studied community gardens have a positive impact on social sustainability in terms of enhancing the quality of life, facilitating social capital, improving social cohesion and creating a sense of place. Based on the findings, a handbook for community gardening was developed to provide recommendations for persons interested in starting their own community garden.

Key words: community gardens, motivations, social sustainability, social capital, community organization

Nyckelord: stadsodlingar, motivation, social hållbarhet, socialt kapital, organisation av samhället
Shrnutí

Komunitní zahrady jsou fenoménem na mezinárodní úrovni a jejich počet se během posledních desetiletí neustále zvyšuje. V průběhu 20. století byly komunitní zahrady zakládány zejména jako krizová řešení při nedostatku jídla a prostředků, například v obdobích válek. Proto vyvstává otázka, jaké jsou důvody a motivace vedoucí ke vzniku a provozu komunitních zahrad ve 21. století. Tato práce zkoumá za použití metod případové studie, interview a pozorování charakter čtyř komunitních zahrad v Praze a ve Stockholmu na pozadí sociální udržitelnosti, sociálního kapitálu a příbuzných teorií. Během jara a léta 2013 byly tyto komunitní zahrady studovány s cílem zjistit motivace jejich organizátorů a zahradníků, identifikovat faktory, které mají vliv na provoz těchto zahrad, povahu komunit, které v zahradách vznikly, a konečně také rozdíly mezi zahradami v českém a švédském prostředí. Výsledky tohoto studia ukazují, že jednou z hlavních motivací pro založení komunitní zahrady bylo zvýšení sociální interakce v sousedství, a jako významný pro úspěch komunitní zahrady se ukazuje způsob organizace komunity a vzájemná spolupráce zúčastněných stran. Ve třech sledovaných případech se ukázala jako strategický partner příslušná městská část. Vznik zahrad, které byly předmětem studia, přispěl k zintenzivnění sousedských vztahů a umožnil navození sociálního kapitálu na několika úrovních; např. vznik přátelství, vztahů mezi organizátory jiných zahrad a navázání komunikace mezi zahradami a městskými částmi. Zkoumané zahrady vykázaly pozitivní vliv na život v dané městské části díky zvýšení kvality života, navození sociální soudržnosti, sociálního kapitálu a vnímání místa. Na základě zjištěných poznatků byla vytvořena příručka komunitního zahradnictví, která poskytuje různá doporučení těm, kteří by rádi založili vlastní komunitní zahradu.

Klíčová slova: komunitní zahrady, motivace, sociální udržitelnost, sociální capital, organizace komunity
Successful community gardens are results of an on-going communication and intensive cooperation between a number of stakeholders. Similarly, this report would never have emerged in its form without the contribution, help, advice and support of people, to whom I would like to thank in the following lines.

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Jacob von Oelreich. His guidance, enthusiasm, insightful comments and ideas that emerged during our discussions helped me at all times during working on this report. I would also like to thank my examiner Rebecka Milestad for her insightful comments that helped me improve important parts of this report.

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1. Introduction

Recent newspaper headlines (Figure 1) suggest a shift in the mind-set of urban dwellers in the developed countries; decades after the first seeds of this change were planted in Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring, where she described the harmful use of pesticides on animals and humans (Carson, 1999[1962]). Instead of simply asking ‘How much does it cost?’ we have started to consider a wider range of questions when procuring our food. We care about where our food comes from, how far it has travelled to reach our plates, or what it contains. Hand in hand with a growing awareness about what we eat and related health, environmental and economic issues, growing our own fruits and vegetables has become popular in the past years also in terms of social interaction. After times when industrial agriculture interrupted the natural binding between people and food production, “the last two decades have seen a steady rise in food-based social movements and grass-roots initiatives around the world, from slow food to community gardens” (Turner, Henryks & Pearson, 2011:489). Community gardening has become an international phenomenon and the demand seems to be increasing hand in hand with expanding urban development and associated land scarcity (Ferris, Norman & Sempik, 2001).

Most research in the field of community gardening has focused on “investigating gardens in low-income areas with diverse cultural backgrounds” (Guitart, Pickering & Byrne, 2012). This report contributes to the research field on community gardens with experiences from community gardening under rather different conditions. The gardens studied are located in the inner city and in the suburbia of two European capitals, Prague and Stockholm. The areas where the gardens are located are far from being labelled the same way as the ones above; nevertheless the communities around them are not less interesting to explore.

A community garden as seen in this thesis is a plot of land in an urban setting, where a group of people grow their own food and especially, as the organizers say, social relationships. Community gardens emerge from “bottom-up, community-based, collaborative” (Okvat & Zautra, 2011:374) initiatives to grow food as a means of social interaction in our present cities. Still, community garden is a concept characterized by various meanings and definitions that have evolved during the long history of community gardening: “multiple meanings are often ascribed to them by organisers and participants” (Firth, Maye & Pearson, 2011:556). As Firth, Maye & Pearson call it, this “definitional fuzziness” (2011:556) is analyzed in more detail in the third chapter of this report. The community gardens that serve as case studies in this paper can be seen as ‘leisure gardens’ with some features of

Figure 1. Online newspaper headlines from 2011 -2013
‘demonstration gardens’, according to the classification of Ferris, Norman and Sempik (2001). Typically initiated by a group of friends, these gardens provide space for social interaction with a background of cultivation. Often, they also cultivate the physical urban environment by engaging vacant lots and opening them to the public. The size of the examined gardens differs; still the basic idea is similar. The gardeners gather regularly to plant and maintain the garden together or to work on their individual raised beds. The gardening itself is accompanied by a range of other activities that engage communication and support development of neighbourhood relationships, for example games, cultural events or a café.

1.1 Research problem and research questions

Community gardening in the form described has become a contemporary trend and many new projects spring up like mushrooms every year. For example, in Prague, Czech Republic, there are currently two community garden projects entering their second season (Prazelenina and Kokoza) and a number of other, such as Ulitej Záhon, Zebra, started in 2013 for the first time. A similar phenomenon can be observed in the Stockholm area in Sweden, where new projects emerge continuously, such as Matparken Skarpnäck in 2011, Trädgård på Spåret in 2012 and Lilla Essinge Odlarna in 2013. Community gardens have become popular on international scale (Ferris, Norman & Sempik, 2001). However, as was suggested above, we need to be aware of the context, because in different parts of the world, or even within the same country, the term community garden can be understood in different ways. Urban gardening in many forms has had a long tradition in cities throughout the world and gardens in urban environments have been established with a range of purposes. Therefore the first research question of this paper aims to find out what purposes have led to the establishment of community gardens that are now emerging in urban contexts, which are far from being endangered by food insecurity. Moreover, these gardens emerge in environments that are not passive and therefore it is important to assess the factors that influence the functioning of these gardens:

Research question 1: What are the motivations, drivers and barriers on the way to a successful community garden?

One discernible factor we can find in the approach of the local government and the degree of mutual cooperation between a municipality and citizens’ associations. What is the attitude of the

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1 A comprehensive up-to date overview of community gardens and related activities in Prague can be found at: http://www.kokoza.cz/pripojte-se/ and in Stockholm at http://www.stadsodlingstockholm.se.
municipalities on the local scale towards the emerging community gardens? Does the legal framework provide support for the community garden projects and are there any barriers in this sense? As Hutton (2005:3 in Turner, Henryks & Pearson, 2011:491) notes, “community gardening is largely seen to be a form of feel good politics” and only little attention is given to the impact of such initiatives from the side of policy makers and urban planners (ibid.). Still, the environmental reforms that aim for sustainability are more likely to be successful if they support bottom-up politics and grassroots initiatives (Okvat & Zautra, 2011:375).

If we simply unfold the phrase as follows: ‘Community’ + ‘Garden’, it becomes apparent that the community aspect is not an unimportant part of the (re)emerging phenomenon of community gardening. Winne (2008, in Corrigan, 2011) even suggests that it is more important than the word garden. As a number of authors conclude, community gardens are “more about the community than about the gardening” (Glover, 2003:192 in Kingsley & Townsend, 2006:527), or in other words, they are “producing much more than food” (Draper & Freedman, 2010:459), they cultivate communities (Nemore, 1998 in Corrigan, 2011:1234). Thus, the next research question aims to unfold the network of social relationships that emerge in a community garden in order to examine the nature of the community, how the network is being shaped by the common interest and if the relationships outreach the piece of land where the garden is cultivated. Do the community gardens examined in this report contribute to enhancing the social relationships on a neighbourhood scale?

**Research question 2: What is the nature of the community in the community garden?**

The third and last topic to be explored in this paper rises from the location of the explored gardens. Two gardens from Prague, Czech Republic and two from Stockholm, Sweden were selected based on the personal background of the author, who has lived in both countries and therefore is familiar with the environment. All four gardens were established almost at the same time. Even though from a global point of view the Czech and Swedish environments might not seem to be fundamentally different, it is useful to examine small scale factors and elements that make the difference when initiating a community gardening project in the respective countries:

**Research question 3: What are the differences between starting a gardening project in the context of the Czech Republic and Sweden?**
1.2 Aim

Overall, the aim of the thesis is to answer the research questions outlined above, by mapping the process of establishing a community garden. The questions will be answered based on the theoretical framework and empirical research. The theoretical framework of this report addresses the research questions, and community gardening in general, from the perspective of social sustainability and related topics, notably social capital and sustainable communities and their organization. The empirical research is based on an exploration of emerging projects in the cities of Prague and Stockholm in order to describe the motivations and goals (why and what do they want to achieve?) of the organizers and the gardeners, factors that influence a life of a community garden and the nature of the community that is built around the gardening activities. The comparison of four examples from two different environments provides an opportunity to mutually learn from the successes and/or failures of other projects and therefore help others who would like to initiate a project of a similar kind in their neighbourhood. For this reason, a handbook for individuals and organisations will be developed as an output from this research. The handbook will be based on the experiences with existing community gardens and it will provide recommendations for those interested in starting a community garden.
2. Project Design

2.1 Structure

The report is structured into eight chapters as follows:

Chapter 1. Introduction: opens the topic by providing a basic background on community gardening; presenting the research problem, the consequent research questions and closes by stating the aim of this report.

Chapter 2. Project design: describes the formal elements of the report and the research strategy together with the delimitations and limitations.

Chapter 3. Background on community gardening: presents a discussion on the definition of the ambiguous term community garden, followed by a brief overview on the history of community gardening with excursions to urban acupuncture and biophilia.

Chapter 4. Case studies presentation: introduces basic information and a comparison of the four community gardens explored in this report.

Chapter 5. Theoretical framework: Social sustainability and overlapping concepts focuses on presenting the theories of social sustainability, sustainable communities and social capital and their connection with community gardening.

Chapter 6. Results and Analysis: Digging deeper into the life of a community garden: is the main part of this report and connects the empirical data with the theory. The aim of the analysis is to answer the research questions stated in the introduction by analysing the empirical and theoretical findings.

Chapter 7. Concluding discussion: summarizes the information and findings and concludes the report with the final take-home message.

Chapter 8. Handbook on community gardening. The lessons learned are compiled into a handbook, which suggests advice and recommendations for persons interested in starting their own community garden. The information presented in the handbook is based mainly on the experiences from the explored gardens with some links to the theoretical background.
2.2 Methodology

Qualitative research methods have been identified as the most suitable strategies for this paper. According to Creswell’s (2009) definition, qualitative research is

a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures; collecting data in the participants’ setting; analysing the data inductively, building from particulars to general themes; and making interpretations of the meaning of the data. (Creswell, 2009:232)

In order to set up the theoretical base of the thesis research I performed a literature review of a range of sources, as a method to obtain information about current research on the topic of community gardens and urban agriculture in general. Furthermore, the theoretical framework of the thesis was built upon an analysis of articles and publications on topics of sustainability, social capital and sustainable communities. Due to the nature of the topic of community gardens, which has recently become popular amongst a broad public, sources such as newspapers, magazines and video recordings were also included to bring in additional insights and dimensions.

The empirical part of the research was based on case-study method, which can be defined as “a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process or one or more individuals. Cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time” (Creswell 2009:13). Four examples of community gardens were chosen – all of them established in a similar time period between the years 2011 and 2012. Two cases were examined in Prague, Czech Republic, and two in Stockholm, Sweden.

In order to obtain information from the cases, a number of interviews were performed with the goal to “gain insights into people’s experiences” (Corrigan, 2011:1235) by obtaining “qualitative descriptions of the life world of the subject with respect to interpretation of their meaning” (Kvale, 1996:124). Each of the four gardens studied is represented by one organizer and two gardeners. The interviews with the organizers were semi-structured according to an interview guideline. The guideline was prepared in order to find answers for the three research questions by asking questions about the organizers’ motivations and visions, about the organizational aspects of community gardens, social relationships within the group and other topics, that aimed to get a good understanding of the concept of community gardens, the way they function and specific challenges they are facing. The interviews with the organizers took between 35 and 60 minutes, were recorded
and transcribed (on file with author). The interviews with the gardeners were shorter and aiming mainly to search for reasons why the gardeners participated and how they perceived the social bindings and connections among the community garden members. These interviews took approximately 15 to 20 minutes. One gardener provided her answers through an e-mail conversation. The interview schedule (Table 1) provides an overview of the conducted interviews and shows the gender, age and occupation of the interviewed gardeners. The interview guidelines for both organizers and gardeners are included in the Appendices (Appendix I and II). In the Swedish gardens, the interviews were held in English, in the Czech gardens they were held in Czech and later translated by the author into English.

Furthermore, I conducted at least one observation in each garden during the gardener’s meetings: Kokoza garden on July 9th during a grilling evening, Prazelenina on July 30th during an organizational meeting of majority of the members, Matparken on September 14th when the gardeners painted the raised beds and På Spåret on June 9th and 11th and July 2nd during the regular members meetings. The visits focused on observing social interaction in the gardens. I observed the approximate number of gardeners present, their age groups, gender and activities. In average the observations were 30 to 60 minutes long and recorded with notes and photographs. The photographs taken during the observations and also during times when there were no meetings serve to illustrate to the reader the gardens’ visual character, which is an important feature in relation to contribution to quality of public open spaces in urban settings.

The answers from the interviewed subjects, the notes from the observations and the information from popular media on contemporary trends in community gardening were analysed towards a backdrop of the theoretical framework in order to find answers to the research questions posed in the first chapter of the report.

2.3 Delimitations

The delimitations of this report can be divided into the following categories: spatial, temporal and theoretical. The spatial delimitations set the boundaries for the explored case studies to two European capitals; Prague in the Czech Republic and Stockholm in Sweden. These places were chosen because the community gardens gained wide popularity and attention in the past few years and there is a number of new gardens emerging every year, both in Prague and Stockholm. The explored gardens emerged all between 2011 and 2012. Furthermore, the number of gardens explored in-depth was set to four. This needs to be taken into account when analysing the results, because the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Garden</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Interview date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kokoza Prague, CR</td>
<td>Organizer, initiator</td>
<td>Jul. 9th 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lucie Lankalová</td>
<td>in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gardener 1</td>
<td>Jul. 9th 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F, 64, pensioner</td>
<td>in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gardener 2</td>
<td>Jul. 9th 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M, 33, journalist</td>
<td>in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prazelenina Prague, CR</td>
<td>Organizer, initiator</td>
<td>Jul. 16th 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matěj Petránek, architect</td>
<td>in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gardener 3</td>
<td>Jul. 30th 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Couple, 36, IT/parental leave</td>
<td>in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gardener 4</td>
<td>Jul. 30th 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W, 47, freelance graphic designer</td>
<td>in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matparken Skarpnäck, SE</td>
<td>Organizer, initiator</td>
<td>Aug. 18th 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sara Wallin</td>
<td>in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gardener 5</td>
<td>Sept. 8th 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W, 32, administrator</td>
<td>in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gardener 6</td>
<td>Sept. 8th 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W, 35, coordinator</td>
<td>in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>På Spåret Stockholm, SE</td>
<td>Organizer</td>
<td>Jun. 14th 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Estelle Conraux</td>
<td>in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gardener 7</td>
<td>Sept. 17th 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34, architect</td>
<td>e-mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gardener 8</td>
<td>Sept. 21st 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28, student</td>
<td>in person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Interview schedule
number of samples is rather low to be able to reach general assumptions. Nevertheless, the outcome of the empirical part still serves as an example of what a community garden can be like. Furthermore, the research was conducted based on the statements of the organizers and gardeners, therefore the analysis is brings their point of view and does not include views of other actors. The temporal delimitations of the report are set by the amount of time given to conduct the research, which is approximately 20 weeks. The case studies were simultaneously followed during the summer season 2013, which was the second season for most of the gardens. Therefore, the experiences of the gardeners and organizers were mostly from the first and partially from the second season and in coming seasons they may change and develop with growing knowledge and experience. The theoretical basis for the analysis covers the topics of social sustainability, social capital, and sustainable communities and their organization. Therefore the base for the analysis is limited to these concepts. The interviews revealed a range of other interesting topics that are not covered by the framework and therefore only briefly introduced, but not elaborated in depth.

2.4 Limitations

No significant limitations have occurred that would restrict the scope of the report. Due to the current interest in the topic from the media and in the happenings around the garden På Spåret it was not possible to arrange a meeting with the first initiators of the community garden due to their business. Next, due to the fact that the community gardens are public open spaces, some of the observations and interviews had to be postponed due to unfavourable weather conditions, nevertheless the arranged interviews were substituted with new ones on more suitable days.

2.5 Ethical considerations

The major part of the project depends on data and information provided by the organizers and gardeners in the interviews. The interviews with the organizers were recorded, transcribed and in the cases when the interviews were conducted in Czech language also translated by the author. The quotations from the interviews were sent to the organizers for authorization. The gardeners were selected on a random basis and the information they provided in the interviews was recorded with notes and anonymized.
3. Background on community gardening

The aim of this chapter is to outline a number of aspects related to community gardening in order to provide underlying information for proceeding to the concrete topics. The first part focuses on the definition of the term ‘community garden’ and concludes with the definition as it is understood in this report. Next, the history of community gardening is outlined from the beginnings to the contemporary form, both on global scale and on the national scale of the countries where we can find the case studies – in the Czech Republic and Sweden. The chapter concludes by outlining two concepts that are closely related to the topic and that allow us to zoom out and place the community gardens within a wider network of relationships: urban acupuncture and biophilia.

3.1 Community garden definition

As was mentioned in the introductory chapter, the discussion on urban gardening lacks a clear definition of a community garden (Pudup, 2008; Firth, Maye & Pearson, 2011). It can be assumed that the word is self-explanatory, because as Guitart, Pickering and Byrne (2012:366) noted, most of the papers on community gardens examined in their review did not define what was meant by the term ‘community garden.’ Nevertheless, the following lines explain that the term can be understood in many different ways. A very simple example of this definitional blurriness can be found through a comparison of perceptions in different geographical locations. In France, community gardens are typically places, where members of a community share both work and produce, whereas in North America the same phrase mostly refers to gardens, where each member of a community plants on a designated spot (Cockrall-King, 2012). Moreover, in the United Kingdom, “there is a notable difference between allotment gardening, where each member has a plot of land, and community gardens, which are a public garden in terms of ownership, access and their degree of democratic control” (Firth, Maye & Pearson, 2011:556).

Whereas Ferris, Norman and Sempik (2001:561) suggest that a precise definition of a community garden is actually not a desirable goal, because that would “impose arbitrary limits on creative communal responses to local need,” Pudup (2008) criticizes the vague definition resulting in various understandings of the term. She argues that “(w)hen all sorts of cultivated spaces are called ‘community gardens,’ it can be difficult to meaningfully assess their strategy or putative success – not to mention their motivations – at producing communities, subjects or spaces” (Pudup, 2008:1231).
Also for that reason, rather than using the term ‘community garden’ for a wide range of activities that are in a way related to ‘community’ and ‘gardening,’ but can turn out to be radically different in their principles, she developed a more prosaic concept of an “organized garden project” (Pudup, 2008:1231) that is based on a set of three specific principles that prevent associating multiple meanings to the term. These principles are outlined in the text box on the side of the page.

However, the purpose of this report is not to develop a new term or a definition, but rather to clarify the existing term ‘community garden’ in the cultural, spatial and temporal context related to the gardens explored in this report. Thus, the typical features of the presented gardens and similar examples, ranging from the organizational structure, access, degree of participation etc. have served as a major tool when searching for the definition. Even though many similarities exist between the presented cases, due to the range of differences I prefer to approach the term from a broad perspective that can be additionally narrowed down and specified in detail according to the specific context. The American Community Gardening Association (ACGA) sees a community garden as follows:

It can be urban, suburban, or rural. It can grow flowers, vegetables or community. It can be one community plot, or can be many individual plots. It can be at a school, hospital, or in a neighbourhood. It can also be a series of plots dedicated to ‘urban agriculture’ where the produce is grown for a market. (ACGA, n. d.)

As ACGA further summarizes, a community garden can simply be seen as “any piece of land gardened by a group of people” (ACGA, n. d.). This simple definition is broad enough, but the term group of people requires in our context some further clarification. That can be found in the next definition, where Holland (2004:285) refers to community gardens generally as to “open spaces managed and operated by members of the local community for a variety of purposes.” Holland’s definition will represent the meaning of the term community garden in this report, because it is specific, yet broad enough and characterizes very well the gardens explored in this report.

The group nature distinguishes community gardens from private ones (Ferris, Norman and Sempik, 2001). The convergence of individuals that act together is an important feature in managing community gardens (Draper & Freedman, 2010) that can be seen as public urban green spaces “in terms of ownership, access, and degree of democratic control” (Ferris, Norman and Sempik, 2001:560). Therefore in this sense, the community gardens can be seen as democratic arenas that depend on collective management and as Colding and Barthel (2013:159) note, arenas to “to which individuals and interest groups participating in management hold a rich set of bundles of rights, including rights to craft their own institutions and to decide whom they want to include in such

Three main axioms of the “organized garden project” concept according to Mary Beth Pudup:

(1) “An organized group of people is involved in cultivation, even if gardening is individualized in its spatial arrangement and practice (e.g., gardens consisting of individual plots worked by individuals).” (Pudup, 2008:1231-1232)

(2) “The group involved in cultivation has espoused a set of goals for its gardening practice. The people organized to engage and/or engage others in cultivation do so with a set of objectives and some expressed understanding of how gardening will allow participants to achieve those goals.” (ibid.)

(3) “The cultivated space is not typically devoted to third party gardening, i.e., gardening by people other than the owners of and/or custodial employees on the property.” (ibid.)
management schemes.” According to Draper and Freedman (2010:459), the membership base of community gardens may be wide and diverse, because they are “used by, and beneficial for, individuals of any age, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, as well as the disabled and nondisabled alike”. The question is whether this applies to all the community gardens universally. Therefore, one of the tasks of the empirical part was to outline the actual diversity in the explored cases.

3.2 Urban gardening forms and developments

As the previous part outlined, community gardens can be understood as a specific form of gardening in urban areas. At first, this might be perceived as something very new, because the development in the past led to the exclusion of agrarian activities from the urban environment (Yokohari & Bolthouse, 2011:421). But if we look further than decades ago, for example to Asian cities such as Japanese Tokyo or Chinese Changan more than one thousand years ago, we realize that urban farming and agricultural activities within the city borders are actually not new at all (Yokohari & Bolthouse, 2011; Mougeot, 2006). Still, we do not necessarily need to travel that far in history. During past centuries, food production within city limits was an important component of cities’ daily life; fresh fruit and vegetable produce was a significant contribution to people’s diet, furthermore, the local production limited the transport and storage demands and ensured the reuse of animal manure (Stanhill, 1977).

A good example can be found in 19th century French urban gardens that were characterized by application of very efficient growing techniques, known as French Intensive Agriculture, or ‘square-foot gardening’. The gardens were surrounded by medieval walls that absorbed the sun heat and they used the easily available horse manure as a fertilizer. The cultivation system reached its peak in terms of sophistication and importance in the second half of the nineteenth century. The decline came in the early 20th century for three main reasons. First, horses were replaced by motor vehicles and thus the main source of the fertilizer became scarce. Second, the competition for land within city limits increased. Finally, the urban gardens could not compete with rural areas that had more favourable climate conditions. (Cockrall-King, 2012; Stanhill, 1977)

Similarly as farming in the city, community gardening in its various forms has had a long history originating in the mid-nineteenth century allotment gardens in Europe (Turner, Henryks & Pearson, 2011; Firth, Maye & Pearson, 2011). Community gardens were also of significant importance in the USA. There they can first be traced in the form of so called “potato patches” (Firth, Maye &
Pearson, 2011:556), that were meant to improve the difficult life situation of people brought to the cities by industrialization and work in factories under poor conditions (Lawson, 2005 in Turner, Henryks & Pearson, 2011:490). The first organized forms of community gardens in the North American and European cities were supposed to solve the problems of food insecurity of the poor part of population, who did not have enough money to buy food (Cockrall-King, 2012).

Furthermore, other forms of community gardens in the 20th century showed that ‘response to crisis’ was one of the main historical reasons to establish community gardens (Okvat & Zautra, 2011:374), where “citizens have been encouraged to play an active role in food production” (Turner, Henryks & Pearson, 2011:490). Community gardens were formed especially in the USA and the United Kingdom as a response to food shortages during both the First and Second World War, known as ‘victory gardens’ (DeSilvey, 2005 in Turner, Henryks & Pearson, 2011; Cockrall-King, 2012). Furthermore, in-between the wars – during the Great Depression, so called ‘relief gardens’ were initiated as a tool to deal with food shortage and also how to actively involve a large number of unemployed people (Lawson, 2005 in Turner, Henryks & Pearson, 2011).

An example from the second half of the 20th century can be found in Cuba, where after the fall of the Soviet Union, leading to the termination of Soviet aid, and under the US sanctions, public access gardens were formed in order to secure nationally produced food (Premat, 2003 in Turner, Henryks & Pearson, 2011).

An interesting point is made by Turner, Henryks & Pearson (2011), who describe additional positive outcomes of community gardens in times of crisis, other than just the food production itself. They highlight the positive impact on people’s sense of place and belonging, not only to a community, but also to nature and land. Furthermore, activities such as growing food and the immediate relation between manual work and the real product of the work can contribute to a sense of self-satisfaction:

In times of fear and crisis, we see people turn to food gardening. This may not simply be about the functional outcomes of food production, but may be about creating and supporting people’s efforts to establish a sense of connection and about grounding people in place and creating and supporting efforts to find a sense of purpose and belonging, not just to a community, but to land and to nature as a personal and, sometimes rather intimate response to bigger picture issues over which we as individuals might feel we have little control. (Turner, Henryks & Pearson, 2011:490)
If we now focus on the roots of the currently emerging community gardens that were defined in the previous part, can we see a crisis as the trigger? Or are the reasons different? The interest in community gardening in urban areas has been constantly growing in countries with a developed market economy, such as in the United Kingdom, the USA and Australia during the past decades (Firth, Maye & Pearson, 2011:555). The origins of the rise in popularity can be traced back to North America in the 1970s (Pudup, 2008) and explained as the human desire to “reconnect with food, nature and community” (Firth, Maye & Pearson, 2011:555). Signs of this desire can be found in some movements that have been established during the last decades, such as the Slow Food movement, guerrilla gardening or for example farmers’ markets and community supported agriculture (Cockrall-King, 2012). Still, according to Cockrall-King (2012:17) the “major global economic meltdown” in 2007 can be seen as a recent example of food production in urban areas driven by crisis as a reaction to the dramatic increase in prices and existence of “food deserts” in American cities.

If we zoom to the local scale of the countries where the case study gardens are located, we can trace quite similar development on the field of urban agriculture. Urban agriculture in Sweden was an important economic activity already in the 19th century and even before, with its main function being to allow part of the citizens of Swedish towns to fulfil their food demands and to sell their surplus produce locally (Björklund, 2010). The nineteenth century was a century of big changes for Stockholm and Prague that both had to deal with poor living conditions as a consequence of industrialization and overcrowding (Barthel, Folke and Colding, 2010; Klouparová, 2009). As a response the movement of allotment gardening emerged, where the land in the urban setting, owned typically by the municipality, was divided into small plots designated for horticulture and managed by individuals or families (Barthel, Folke and Colding, 2010). Allotment gardening has been since widely popular both among the inhabitants of Stockholm, where there are currently about 10,000 individual plots that take up an area of 210 ha (ibid.), and Prague, where even though the number of allotments is shrinking every year, still as of the year 2012 the allotments occupied about 680 ha (CDAP, 2013). Although historically the allotment gardens have been embedded into the urban structure of the cities, the emerging community gardens are seen as something new (Prague People’s Garden, 2012). The relationship between allotment and community gardening, their similarities and differences has been a subject of discussion for example on the Czech scene, as can be exemplified by the public discussion on the topic of urban gardening, where the initial thesis was “The current forms of urban gardening are built upon the tradition of farming in allotment gardens” (Anthropictures, 2013). The

“Historically, urban agriculture was used as a way to improve local food supplies, while contemporary community gardening often focuses on renovating vacant lots and turning them into green spaces that include fruit and vegetables, but also floral beds, sitting areas, and other amenities (Saldivar-Tanaka & Krasny, 2004). Transforming vacant lots into green spaces has also created opportunities for community building (Armstrong, 2000), civic participation (Glover, 2004), and youth and community development (Hung, 2004) in communities throughout the United States. More recently, community gardening and conservation have become major components of sustainable community development strategies that integrate social, environmental, and economic concerns (Hess & Winter, 2007; Holland, 2004).”

Ohmer et al. (2009:378-379)

Translated from the original thesis in Czech language “Současné podoby městského zahradničení navazují na na tradici hospodaření v zahrádkářských koloniích.” by the author.
connections between allotments and community gardens are a broad topic that would deserve a thesis of its own.

The last parts of this chapter briefly touch upon two concepts that offer another perspective on community gardens and thus deepen some of the information provided in the previous parts: urban acupuncture and biophilia.

3.3 Urban acupuncture

Community gardens bring a different type of green spaces into the city. They contribute to the overall diversity, not only in the sense of enhancing the variety of plant and animal species, but also by, for example, enriching leisure possibilities of the inhabitants of urbanized areas. They are small-scale, low-tech and bottom-up initiatives that may have the potential to make a change on a much wider scale than in the area of their own. If we take this assumption as a starting point, we can view community gardens as a possible element of the urban acupuncture concept.

Through the macro-coordination and control, urban acupuncture can make the city’s development more positive, healthy and sustainable. Because of the project of Urban Acupuncture is small and the investment is reasonable. Through the strategic choice of the urban catalyst, combine the “top to bottom” of government regulation and “bottom to top” of market mechanism closely can play a catalytic effect in a short time and have the control and flexibility at the same time. (Shidan & Qian, 2011:1861)

Urban acupuncture is a type of progressive urban renewal method that draws inspiration and adopts its name from the ancient Chinese ‘acupuncture.’ It is based on small-scale actions that are efficient and have impact on a larger scale. In urban acupuncture, the city is seen as a living organism, a body, which is being regenerated by means of small localized interventions. In this way, a positive impact and development on a larger scale can be achieved. (Shidan & Qian, 2011)

As has been mentioned already and will be discussed in the following chapters, community gardens are typically based on bottom-up, citizen initiatives. They can be perceived as localized projects that emerge based on the efforts of the neighbourhood community. Even though the gardens are mostly not coordinated on a city-scale, it may be of a benefit for the future development of our cities to view the potential of community gardens as tools of urban acupuncture, where the bottom-up and top-down initiatives meet to improve the urban environment.
3.4 Biophilia

The term biophilia, meaning “love of life of living systems” was first coined by German psychologist and philosopher Erich Fromm in the book *The Heart of Man* in 1964. Twenty years later, Edward O. Wilson developed the biophilia hypothesis in the work *Biophilia*, defining biophilia as “the innate tendency to focus on life and lifelike processes” (1984:1). Biophilia is usually explained as human affinity to nature and living systems (Wilson, 1984).

This affinity is expressed in the appreciation of nature, where positive feelings toward certain habitats, activities, and objects in the environment are rooted in our biology. It is in relation to a human need to spend time in natural environments, surrounded by animals and plants. (Chen et al., 2013:304)

Therefore, the closeness of the natural environment and contact with living systems can be perceived as the basis for mental well-being (Kellert and Wilson, 1993 in Chen et al. 2013:304). It can be assumed, that together with other forms of green and living spaces in the city, such as parks, one of the main reasons why people cultivate in community gardens is the easy access to a green open place in the city where one can directly experience the evolution of the life of a plant from planting the seed to reaping the fruits, all thanks to one’s own contribution and care. As a number of authors state, there is evidence that the “exposure to natural landscapes and participating in outdoor recreation or gardening promotes restoration, positive affect and higher-level performance has been demonstrated” (Hartig, Evans, Jamner, Davis, & Garling, 2003; Kaplan, 1993; Ulrich, 1984; Unruh, 2004 cited in Chen et al., 2013:304).

Through gardening, neighbourhood residents ameliorate the trauma of social and economic handicaps, and the resulting friendliness and improved neighbourhoods are large scale consequences. Horticultural therapy, on the other hand, is concerned with people-plant interactions in a much more intimate way. (Lewis, 1996:75)

Not only we have the power to shape nature by means of gardening, but the gardening itself has the potential to change us, which can be a seen as the basic principle of the so called Horticultural Therapy Movement, that believes in “the transformative power of nature, and specifically plants, on the human spirit” (Pudup, 2008:1232).

Even though the biophilia theory cannot be tested easily (Chen et al., 2013), it may be seen as a possible explanation for the popularity of community gardening as means of meeting other people in urban areas, where there is a lack of green spaces and nature-like environments. In this way,
community gardening can be seen as beneficial both to the communities and the individuals, because it has a positive impact not only on the large scale, but it also provides contact between the individuals and the natural elements within the urban environment and thus may facilitate our innate exercise of biophilia.
## 4. Case studies presentation

Four community gardens were selected for the empirical part of the research, two in Prague, Czech Republic and two in the area of Stockholm, Sweden (Figure 2). There are a number of features, which connect all the gardens, or that connect two or more of them regardless of in which of the two cities they are located. On the other hand, there is also a variety of characteristics that differ from garden to garden, or that suggest international and national (cultural, social, political) differences. An overview of the basic features of the studied gardens is presented in the Table 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kokoza</th>
<th>Praželenina</th>
<th>Matparken</th>
<th>Trädgård på Spåret</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td>Prague, Czech Republic</td>
<td>Prague, Czech Republic</td>
<td>Stockholm, Sweden</td>
<td>Stockholm, Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neighbourhood</strong></td>
<td>Suburbs</td>
<td>Inner City</td>
<td>Suburbs</td>
<td>Inner City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formal status</strong></td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Informal club</td>
<td>Association/Informal</td>
<td>Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>group of people</td>
<td>(Förening)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First season</strong></td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basic principle</strong></td>
<td>Cultivation of</td>
<td>Cultivation of</td>
<td>Cultivation based on</td>
<td>Cultivation based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>individually rented</td>
<td>individually rented</td>
<td>joint work, shared</td>
<td>on joint work,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>raised beds</td>
<td>raised beds</td>
<td>harvest</td>
<td>shared harvest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>founders</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>~5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>~6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>organizers/garden</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>coordinators</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Annual costs</strong></td>
<td>CZK 70 000 (~ SEK 23 500)</td>
<td>CZK 140 000 (~ SEK 47 000)</td>
<td>SEK 3 000 (~ CZK 9 000)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Member fee for a</strong></td>
<td>CZK 200 (~ SEK 70)</td>
<td>CZK 850 (~ SEK 285)</td>
<td>SEK 300 (~ CZK 900)</td>
<td>SEK 200 (~ CZK 600)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>season</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scale</strong></td>
<td>~135 m²</td>
<td>~1100 m², 130 bags</td>
<td>~300 m²</td>
<td>~1000 m², 100 boxes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 2. Locations of the studied gardens](image-url)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kokoza</th>
<th>PrazeLENINA</th>
<th>Matparken</th>
<th>TRÅDGÅRD PÅ SPÅRET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of active participants</td>
<td>15 – 20</td>
<td>100 units*</td>
<td>3 – 15**</td>
<td>20 – 40**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of members</td>
<td>~15 – 20</td>
<td>100 units*</td>
<td>~300</td>
<td>~300 units*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of meetings</td>
<td>2 per week</td>
<td>1 per week, irregular</td>
<td>1 per 2 weeks</td>
<td>2 per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character of a garden</td>
<td>Mobile with some permanent elements</td>
<td>Mobile</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>Mobile with some permanent elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of cultivation</td>
<td>Boxes, beds</td>
<td>‘Big-bags,’ greenhouse</td>
<td>Permanent raised beds</td>
<td>Boxes, flowerbeds for perennials, greenhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrigation</td>
<td>Water main, rainwater</td>
<td>Water main</td>
<td>Water main</td>
<td>Water main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compost</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic cultivation methods</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes – Non-certified</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenhouse</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional available facilities</td>
<td>Facilities of the cultural centre KC Zahrada</td>
<td>Café</td>
<td>Park, facilities of the cultural centre Sputnik</td>
<td>Café, marketplace, library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples of non-gardening activities</td>
<td>Workshops, grill, festivals</td>
<td>Workshop, concerts, film screenings competitions</td>
<td>Fika***, water battle, workshops, painting</td>
<td>Concerts, festivals, market, fika</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Overview of the case studies

* Unit in this case represents an individual or groups of individuals, e.g. friends, family who rent and take care of the raised bed together.

** Number of active participants is fluctuating because the shared character of the garden does not require presence of each member on every meeting.

*** “Coffee drinking is fostered through a tradition called fika — in which friends, family and/or colleagues meet for coffee or tea.” (Sweden.se, 2011)
4.1 Prague: Prazelenina

Prazelenina was initiated by architect Matěj Petránek who, based on inspiration from a photograph depicting a small garden in Helsinki, which was managed by a group of friends, decided to start his own community garden and this way cultivate neighbourhood relationships. The garden started in 2012 on a vacant lot that was left after a building demolished after the floods in 2002. The site was privately owned and in the beginning of 2013 the owner decided not to extend the contract, because he had other interests for the use of the site. Therefore, the organizers had to search for a new site just at the beginning of the second season. A new site was found not far from the original one, again on a private lot with commercial rental conditions.

The garden is fully mobile and consists of one hundred raised-bed bags that are each cultivated by an individual or a group of people based on seasonal membership. The gardening activities themselves are individual, but still the main goal of the organizer is to cultivate the interpersonal relationships and therefore the accompanying programme is broad. The social activities take place around the café area that is located in an old, refurbished trailer that nowadays hosts a bar with all necessary appliances. Besides hanging out in the café, the garden offers a range of cultural events, such as film projections, concerts, workshops on gardening but also for example a workshop on sculpting.

Prazelenina is basically built on the enthusiasm of its founder and other active people. It can be seen as a private club; nevertheless the membership is open to anybody who is interested. The garden is now located on a place that used to be a parking lot. The strategy to use abandoned space without any function can be seen as a step to cultivate the quality of open spaces in the neighbourhood, which is of great interest to the organizer.

Prazelenina is the only garden in this report located on a private site, which brings some advantages and disadvantages. As a positive aspect we can see a form of independence from the local government, a negative aspect can be seen in costly rent and insecurity in terms of future land access.
4.2 Prague: Kokoza

Kokoza is a small, try-out, project within a framework of the civil society organization KOKOZA, o.p.s.3 founded by Lucie Lankašová and Kristina Regalová. The project’s aim is to test organization of a community garden on a small scale in order to gain experience and establish a network of actors to enable a smooth start for a similar project on a larger scale. Unlike the other three gardens researched in this paper, Kokoza is the only one that, among other goals, strives for economic self-sufficiency in the future and is set within the business plan framework of the civil society organization, together with other projects. The framework came to life in year 2010, when Lucie and Kristina (then Řešátková) signed up for a local ‘Social Business Idea Contest’ and won:

Lucie Lankašová and Kristina Řešátková won today the first round of the social business idea contest in Prague. The two young ladies convinced the jury with a social business project that helps to integrate people with mental disorders into the job market. The kick off for the project ‘Employment of people with disability in community compost garden’ will be in one year. (The Grameen Creative Lab, 2010)

The non-profit project of Kokoza can thus be seen as one of the steps on the way to accomplish the vision of the Big Kokoza. Big Kokoza aims to be a platform for urban composting and gardening on a larger scale, which will focus on cultivating and composting together with providing work places for people with disadvantages, as for example persons with disabilities or senior citizens. The organization has already made the first steps in this direction and started a project “Community Garden: a safe place for training and vocational integration of people with experience of mental illness”4 within the Operational Programme Prague – Adaptability (Kokoza, 2013). Furthermore, KOKOZA aims to initiate the establishment of localized, small community gardens in various city districts and neighbourhoods, which will be of a similar character to the one explored in this report. If we look only a few pages back to the background chapter, we may identify in the case of Kokoza signs of the urban acupuncture method, where by means of placing small, low-cost interventions within the city framework (e.g. small community gardens, composting sites) a change on a larger scale can occur (e.g. decrease of the share of organic waste in the total municipal waste).

3 In Czech: Obecně prospěšná společnost KOKOZA, or KOKOZA, o.p.s. The community project name bears the same name as the civil society organization, therefore to differentiate; the project name is spelled in lower case (Kokoza), and the association’s name in capital letters.

4 Translated by the author from the original “Komunitní zahrada: bezpečné místo pro trénink a pracovní začlenění osob se zkušeností s duševním onemocněním”
4.3 Stockholm: Trädgård på Spåret

Stockholm’s Trädgård på Spåret was initiated by three friends – Philip Olsmeyer, Max Zinnecker and Lisa Kopp, who, inspired by the famous Prinzzessinengarten in Berlin, started in 2012 their own community gardening project on abandoned railway tracks on one of Stockholm’s central islands – Södermalm. The garden is based on a principle of sharing, where nothing is individualized. Gardeners meet twice a week to work together, share the produce and interact. Whereas there are about 300 registered members, the number of people who come every week is much smaller and ranges from about 20 to 40.

The basic principle of the garden can be described as ‘learning by doing’, driven by enthusiasm and energy of individuals that are striving to build a common space to enjoy for everybody. The garden is located in a leftover space between the Eriksdalsbadet swimming pool and allotment gardens in Skanstull, Södermalm. During the first year additional features have been introduced, such as the café or a greenhouse, and more projects were prepared, such as a filtering pool for wastewater or cooperation with an urban bee project. Furthermore, På Spåret cooperates with local restaurants and also with schools. The garden’s programme visions can be seen as rich and ambitious and reaching into many directions that cross the borders of the garden itself.

The garden site is open 24 hours a day to the general public. Therefore it can be said that the garden extends the range of public open spaces in the area by means of cultivating a piece of land that was abandoned before. Even though the use of the site has changed, it is still accessible to anyone. This can be seen as an advantage, but also this way the garden can be threatened by vandalism.

The association principles of Trädgård på Spåret are attached in Appendix III.
4.4 Stockholm: Matparken Skarpnäck

The story of Matparken (‘The food park’ in English) in a Stockholm suburb started to develop in 2010, when the district administration (‘stadsdelsförvaltningen’ in Swedish) of Skarpnäck began to prepare renovation plans of a park at that time called Indianparken. The citizen organization Folkodlarna collected 37 signatures for the idea of a food park, which was then presented on a public meeting with the municipality. The citizen proposal (‘medborgarförslag’ in Swedish) was approved on November 11th 2010 and thus the path to the new food park had opened. The area designated for the food park is approximately 200 – 300 m² large, equipped by permanent raised beds and a pergola with benches and tables underneath. The organization of the park is based on an agreement (‘brukaravtal’ in Swedish), according to which the district administration provides the place, tools, soil, fertilizer, water and access to compost, whereas the citizen association is responsible for the seeds and maintenance of the park. (Wallin, 2011)

In comparison with the other three community gardens presented in this report, Matparken is unique for a number of reasons. First, the mutual cooperation between the municipality and the citizen association that led to the establishment of the community garden is special. Second, because the garden is in essence primarily a park, it is accessible to everybody who wants to participate, without the need of being registered as a member. Third, thanks to the cooperation with the municipality, the costs for the citizen association to establish the project were minimized. Matparken Skarpnäck can therefore be seen as a grassroots project that succeeded thanks to the mutual cooperation between the municipality and the citizen association.
5. Theoretical framework: Social sustainability and overlapping concepts

The theoretical framework of this report is built upon a set of theories that are closely linked to the topic of community gardening, but also mutually interrelated. The overarching perspective used in this report views a community garden as a functioning urban green space, place for leisure activities, social interaction, building of social relationships and a possible tool on the way to sustainable society.

Numerous definitions and understandings of the concept of sustainability have been emerging ever since the concept of sustainable development was presented by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in the report *Our common future*, which defined the sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987). In this report, sustainable development is perceived as a balanced convergence between the economic, environmental and social pillars of sustainability (UN, 2010). Even though these pillars can be viewed as individual goals that are to some extent interrelated (Åhman, 2013), it is necessary to perceive them as part of the composite concept of sustainability and avoid limiting the sustainability concept to the ecological aspects only (WCED, 1987; United Nations General Assembly, 1992; InterAction Council, 1997 in Åhman, 2013).

The common characteristics of the community gardens presented in the following chapter are based on the focus on cultivating community relationships. The production itself, in terms of the amount, is mainly of a lower importance. The gardening component is seen as a tool to achieve the primary goal; enhance the social connections on a local scale. Therefore, the following paragraphs focus on the theory of social sustainability and related concepts of sustainable communities and social capital, and offer a point of view that relates these theories to the concept of community gardens.

5.1 Social sustainability

In contrast to the environmental dimension of the sustainability concept, the social pillar had not been granted as much attention (Åhman, 2013). The discussions on sustainability have just started to
approach the social and economic components (Dempsey et al., 2009). Still, the discussion is rather broad and the topic of social sustainability is quite “undertheorised” (Weingaertner and Moberg, 2011 in Åhman, 2013:1) and lacks a clear definition (Dempsey et al., 2009; Vallance, Perkins & Dixon, 2009).

In order to simplify the understanding of the concept, for example Vallance, Perkins & Dixon (2009) present a three-element typology: development, bridge and maintenance social sustainability. In brief, the development social sustainability expects positive environmental changes as a consequence of securing primary needs of humans in developing countries, such as access to water, food, education and employment (“what people need”). The bridge social sustainability represents the way to support environmental awareness and responding behaviour in our daily lives (“what is good for the bio-physical environment”). Finally, the maintenance social sustainability deals with the practices that people would like to maintain, even though they may contrast with the general opinion on what is eco-friendly behaviour, low-density suburban developments (“what people want”) could serve as an example in this case. (Vallance, Perkins & Dixon, 2009:343-345)

Another perspective on defining the concept of social sustainability was brought by Henrik Åhman (2013), who presents the six most discussed themes that represent the qualities leading to social sustainability. Rather than offering a definition, these themes help in understanding the social sustainability concept by describing its core consisting of basic needs and equity; education; quality of life; social capital; social cohesion, integration and diversity, and sense of place. (Åhman, 2013)

The Basic needs and equity theme addresses the issue of basic human needs, as for example food, housing and health and “the social disparities that threaten to rip society apart.” (Åhman, 2013:4) Therefore it is similar to the development social sustainability in the theory of Vallance, Perkins & Dixon (2009).

Access to education can be seen as an important part of equity when striving for social sustainability. Equal opportunities in terms of education help for example to increase the degree in participation, employment possibilities, or to broaden the awareness of social sustainability beyond basic needs (Littig and Griessler, 2005 in Åhman, 2013:4).
In comparison with the material nature of basic needs, the topic of quality of life focuses on the immaterial values in human life, such as “being and doing well, happiness and satisfaction” (Moberg, 2011 in Åhman, 2013:5).

Social capital is a widely discussed concept in the field of social sustainability that comprises “trust and codes of conduct” (Weingärtner and Moberg, 2011 in Åhman, 2013:5). The theory of social capital is further analyzed in the following part of this chapter (5.2).

Social cohesion, integration and diversity are three related concepts, where the cohesion and integration represent the opinion, that a sustainable society cannot be divided. The concept of diversity puts the focus on the necessity of having a wide range of perspectives that enable the society to be better prepared to face the prospective issues and therefore be sustainable (Hawkes, 2001 in Åhman, 2013:5).

The concept of sense of place places the main focus on the way people perceive a specific place and how their impressions are constructed (Hargreaves, 2004; Colantonio, 2008 in Åhman, 2013:6).

The basic points of the two outlined approaches to defining social sustainability, both from Vallance, Perkins & Dixon (2009) and Åhman (2013) are summarized in the Table 3 and Table 4.

### 5.2 Social Capital

The theory of social capital is closely overlapping with the social sustainability concept. As was introduced in the previous part, Henrik Åhman (2013) classifies social capital as one of the themes that contribute to the understanding of social sustainability. In comparison with the other themes presented, the social capital theory may be the most abstract term and the most difficult to be understood. According to Baum & Zierversch (2003) the amount of literature on the topic is enormous. Similarly to the concept of social sustainability, a concrete definition seems to be lacking, because “almost everything ranging from social relationships via norms up to tolerance is termed social capital” (Häuberer, 2011:27). Therefore, the following paragraphs summarize the concept based on underlying theories and suggest a link between the social capital, sustainable communities and their organization.

The term ‘social capital’ has experienced a significant rise in popularity since the 1990s, when it has started to be widely discussed and elaborated in an increasing number of articles (Pawar, 2006). However, the history of related concepts dates back to the times of Durkheim, Simmel, Marx and

| Development social sustainability | “What people need” |
| Bridge social sustainability | “What is good for the bio-physical environment” |
| Maintenance | “What people want” |

**Table 3. Social sustainability according to Vallance, Perkins & Dixon (2009)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic needs and equity</th>
<th>Food, housing, health, social disparities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Equal access to education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of life</td>
<td>Being and doing well, happiness, satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Capital</td>
<td>Trust and codes of conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social cohesion, integration and diversity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of place</td>
<td>Way people perceive a specific place</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4. Social sustainability according to Åhman (2013)**

“Social capital is produced in open and closed structures and institutionalized and non-institutionalized relationships equally. Furthermore, the relationships feature different characteristics: they can be based on trust, authority, norms or formal organization and contain information potentials that are together the basis for access to embedded resources. The resources embedded in these different structures may benefit different actions.”

Häuberer (2011:51)
Topics entailed in the social capital concept:

- Trust
- Codes of conduct
- Social participation
- Reciprocity
- Community
- Social networks
- Volunteering
- Social exclusion, inclusion and equity
- Civil society
- Cooperation
- Mutual benefit


Weber (Baum & Ziersch, 2003). It seems rather difficult to trace back the first use of the phrase, though it can be agreed that the first records appeared in the early 20th century (Pawar, 2006). Interestingly, in 1961, Jane Jacobs used the term in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, referring to the value of networks that “are a city’s irreplaceable social capital. Whenever the capital is lost, from whatever cause, the income from it disappears, never to return until and unless new capital is slowly and chancily accumulated” (Jacobs, 1993[1961]:180).

The contemporary discourse on social capital is mainly based on texts of three theorists, whose works were developed in the second half of the 20th century (Baum & Ziersch, 2003). Nearly independently, the term social capital was coined by Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman (Häuberer, 2011:35) in 1986, and 1988 respectively. Robert Putnam contributed with his theory in 1993 (Häuberer, 2011; Baum & Ziersch, 2003; Pawar, 2006). Therefore, the concept is characteristic by a wide range of varying definitions, that aren’t always in accordance (Häuberer, 2011; Pawar, 2006; Lomas, 1998; Wall, Farraggni, & Schryer, 1998 in Lindström, Merlo and Östgren, 2003).

Most theorists see the social capital as the networks, both formal and informal, that connect the actors to each other, where the actors can mean individuals or groups of individuals (Gilles, 1998; Putnam, 2000 in Lindström, Merlo and Östgren, 2003; Kawachi, 2007). Social capital is based on the value of social networks, reciprocity and mutual trust (Coleman, 1988 in Elgar et al., 2011). Bourdieu’s definition characterizes social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition” (Bourdieu, 1983:248 in Elgar et al., 2011:1044). Contemporary theory associates social capital with three types of social connections: bonding, bridging and linking (Baum & Ziersch, 2003; Elgar et al., 2011; Häuberer, 2011). These types divide the social connections and relationships according to the scope and level where these are placed. More detailed characteristics of the three types are presented in Table 5.

In relation to different social capital theories we also need to consider the negative effects that might arise. One of those is social exclusion, which necessarily occurs when social groups are created and which is not assessed in Bourdieu’s theory. Such exclusion not only has negative impacts on the outsiders, but also on the group itself, because those excluded may have skills potentially valuable for the group. (Häuberer 2011:49)

Social capital is a value that is difficult to measure, especially on a qualitative scale (Baum & Ziersch, 2003). Nevertheless, it can be assumed that community gardens feature characteristics that significantly contribute to social capital (Draper & Freedman, 2010). For example, if we take a look at the bonding social capital, previous research has shown that taking part in gardening activities has a
positive impact on individuals’ relationships with family or friends, in other words, the social context of community gardens provides a space, where social capital can be generated (Chen et al., 2013).

The involvement and participations of citizens, individuals or groups in civic matters is an important feature of social capital (Lindström, Merlo and Östgren, 2003:1112). The community potential of social capital appeared as beneficial (Kawachi, 2007), not only for the initiators of such organizations, but also for individuals or groups who are not directly participating, but benefit from actions of voluntary organizations that strive for the public good (Coleman, 1995:406-407 in Häuberer, 2011). Therefore, the concept of a civil society lies in the focus of social capital debates (Baum & Ziersch, 2003). Civil society can be perceived as a group of individuals that strive for a “change in the community through activities that are not part of the formal political system, commerce, or government” (Baum & Ziersch, 2003:320) and therefore “has the capacity to influence the climate of values and opinions that underpin policy and impact on public and private decision making” (ibid.). This characteristic of a civil society opens up the following part on sustainable communities, because “it is an active society that is sustainable (Etzioni, 1968) and most resilient (Zautra et. al., 2008)” (in Okvat & Zautra, 2011:375).

5.3 Sustainable communities and their organization

Communities are an inseparable part of the theoretical discussion and understanding of the concepts of social sustainability and social capital. It is the communities that have the potential for initiating of sustainable development initiatives, which might then have an impact not only on the community scale, but also on mainstream society (Seyfang, 2010). Thus, it is appropriate to define what is meant by the term ‘community’ and in what context it is being used in this report. Similarly to the concepts discussed above, the viewpoints presented in the literature differ and confirm the ambiguity of the word.

Within the context of community gardens, the term ‘community’ can describe, for example, “a group of urban residents sharing neighbourhood proximity but no other affiliation” (Pudup, 2008:1231). Though, there exist many forms of gardens that serve purposes of groups of people, that do not necessarily need to be connected by means of neighbourhood proximity, as for example in the cases of therapeutic gardens, school kitchen gardens and guerrilla gardens (Turner, Henryks & Pearson, 2011), where the precondition of participation is given by other factors than the neighbourhood affiliation. Generally, communities thus can be defined as groups of people who share a certain quality. Depending on the context, it is necessary to specify the nature of this quality. It can be seen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of social capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bonding social capital refers to the way the individuals identify themselves with groups of people sharing similar characteristics, furthermore it refers to the cooperation and trust among the members of these groups. (Baum &amp; Ziersch, 2003; Elgar et al., 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridging social capital refers to the relationships that link different groups/individuals, who are more or less at the same level in terms of their status. (Baum &amp; Ziersch, 2003; Elgar et al., 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linking social capital, in a similar way as the bridging social capital, refers to the ties between individuals/groups that are not of the same formal status or power, for example citizens and formal authorities. (Baum &amp; Ziersch, 2003; Elgar et al., 2011)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Social capital types
in a sense of belonging, by the “perception of similarity to others, an acknowledged interdependence by giving to or doing for others what one expects from them, the feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure” (Sarason, 1974:157 in Plas & Lewis, 1996:110).

Another aspect that deserves attention in this report can be presented by the following question: Is it the community that runs the community garden, is the community garden being run for the community, or was the community established as a result of the community gardening activity (Pudup, 2008)? Any of the three options can be valid depending to the specific context. Interestingly, it is the last option that directly connects the community building capacity of a community garden to the social capital context (Firth, Maye & Pearson, 2011). Community gardens, as well as other types of neighbourhood green spaces, feature the ability to “facilitate social interaction and ties among neighbours” (Ohmer et al., 2009:380). Because community gardens, seen as an example of community organizing initiatives, are typically very localized projects (Stall & Stoecker, 1998), there is an open question if they can outreach the garden lot and have the capacity to contribute to a higher level of social capital (Kingsley & Townsend, 2006).

If we place a community in the sustainability framework according to the three dimensional WCED definition, then a sustainable community can be seen as one, that is “managing and balancing environmental, economic and equity concerns” (Agyeman, 2005:67). A more detailed description of the features of a sustainable community is presented in Table 6. Nevertheless, in order to balance the concerns of environment, economy and equity, two important elements need to be present: democracy and accountability (ibid.), where democracy is seen as the “quality and quantity of empowerment” (Roseland 1998:24 in Agyeman, 2005:67) and accountability as the quality and “representativeness of individual participation” (Foster, 2003 in Agyeman, 2005:71). From this point of view, it is not only important to look at the outcomes of community gardening activities themselves, but primarily to examine the way the community gardens emerge, how have they been established and how they are being organized.

The number of possible ways a community garden can be organized can be directly related to the number of definitions of the concept presented in the previous part of the report. Community gardens can be initiated by bottom-up or top-down approaches, most of the time they are being managed by non-profit organisations, such as cultural and neighbourhood groups (Guitart, Pickering & Byrne, 2012), or for example by “a council, teachers, or a group of dedicated gardeners” (Turner, Henrys & Pearson, 2011:489). Community gardens can be based purely on voluntary grassroots initiatives, or they can be organized by, for example, a paid manager from a non-profit organization (Smith, 1997). The specific context and the approach to organizing a community are factors that may

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**Table 6. Sustainable community**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protect and enhance the environment</th>
<th>A Sustainable Community Seeks to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use energy, water and other natural resources efficiently and with care</td>
<td>• Use energy, water and other natural resources efficiently and with care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimize waste, then re-use or recover it through recycling, composting, or energy recovery, and finally sustainably dispose of what is left</td>
<td>• Minimize waste, then re-use or recover it through recycling, composting, or energy recovery, and finally sustainably dispose of what is left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit pollution to levels that do not damage natural systems</td>
<td>• Limit pollution to levels that do not damage natural systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value and protect the diversity of nature</td>
<td>• Value and protect the diversity of nature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meet social needs</th>
<th>• Create or enhance places, spaces, and buildings that work well, wear well and look well</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Make settlements “human” in scale or form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Value and protect diversity and local distinctiveness and strengthen local community and cultural identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Protect human health and amenity through safe, clean, pleasant environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Emphasize health service prevention action as well as cure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensure access to good food, water, housing, and fuel at reasonable cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Meet local needs locally wherever possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Maximize everyone’s access to the skills and knowledge needed to play a full part in society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Empower all sections of the community to participate in decision-making and consider the social and community impacts of decisions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promote economic success</th>
<th>• Create a vibrant local economy that gives access to satisfying and rewarding work without damaging the local, national, or global environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Value unpaid work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Encourage necessary access to facilities, services, goods, and other people in ways which make less use of the car and minimize impacts on the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Make opportunities for culture, leisure, and recreation readily available to all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

have a great deal of impact on the success of a community garden. Because the way the concept of community gardens is understood in this report puts a stress on the community aspect and views the gardening as a tool rather than a goal, the following paragraphs focus on the advantages and barriers that occur when organizing such community activity.

Often, community gardens are “self-organized by stakeholders within a community” (Colding & Barthel, 2013). Consequently, the majority of the gardens examined in this report were initiated by a bottom-up initiative. The bottom-up strategy in the context of urban gardening is a term closely related to grassroots movements such as ‘guerrilla gardening.’ The guerrilla gardening movement originated in the 1970s in the USA, and can be characterized as a spontaneous initiative of citizens, who adopt a public space that needs to be taken care of and cultivated; it is a movement without leaders and without claiming ownership of the public space (Certomà, 2011).

Community gardens differ from the guerrilla gardening movement precisely in the points of leadership, land ownership and access. Still, the bottom-up approach, that is necessary in the case of guerrilla gardening, can be seen as an important strategy in a success story of a community garden. A community garden has a higher chance to succeed in case the citizens are interested and involved in the planning of the garden from the very beginning (Corrigan, 2011). Thus, the interest and the engagement of the community can be seen as a precondition of establishing a garden. If we relate back to the definitions of sustainable communities, the engagement, or in other words participation, can be seen as one of their essential components.

The interest and engagement are not the only aspects that influence the success. The community action does not happen by itself, it needs to be organized and supported by building strong relationships between the community members involved (Stall & Stoecker, 1998). Sometimes the community even needs to be reorganized in order to build “an enduring network of people, who identify with common ideals and who can act on the basis of those ideals” (Stall & Stoecker, 1998:730). The organizational maintenance is, next to aspects such as access to garden lands and resources, a challenging task for the organizers and/or organizations (Schukoske, 2000).
Whereas voluntary grassroots initiatives have the capacity to mobilize social capital, it can become a rather difficult task to accomplish their mission due to lacking professional skills to handle the growing administrative demands (Sharpe, 2006). Moreover, often the initiatives face difficult situations resulting from the need for particular skills, finances and other resources, both in the beginnings and during the development, which expose them to vulnerability when dealing with “financial and political shocks” (Seyfang, 2010:7625). Therefore, while establishing a garden it is necessary to keep in mind the importance of the organizational capacity and its potential of growth. The natural characteristics of grassroots movements is their localization and rootedness, which makes them difficult to expand (ibid.). Furthermore, clashes can occur between the ideology promoted by the initiative and the mainstream environment and policy framework (ibid.).

Yet, according to one organization interviewed by Corrigan, when starting a community garden it is the community that is important, and as the interviewee adds further, “just start it, and you can figure out liability or permission later” (2011:1239). When the community is organized in an efficient way, there is a great possibility of achieving a successful movement, because “the community is more than just the informal backstage relationships between movement members” (Stall & Stoecker, 1998:729). Though, the tricky part in organizing the community is precisely to find this efficient way, because there are a number of factors that have an impact, ranging from the physical context, social norms and political environment to the essential informal characteristics of a community and the interpersonal relationships between the community members. Therefore it is vital to briefly assess the aspects of inter-organizational relationships that help at least partly understand the complexity and complications of community organizing.

In the theoretical research, there has not been much attention focused on the “interorganizational and interpersonal behaviours that reflect informal accountability of organizational actors within a network” (Romzek, Blackmar & LeRoux, 2012:442). Organizing a community garden can be viewed as collective action with a common goal, where the network of actors is represented by the community members. The way these actors cooperate is the key to functioning of these networks, particularly in cases where the networks are self-organized. The informal environment of such collective effort thus brings up issues such as accountability, reciprocity, trust and communication (Romzek, Blackmar & LeRoux, 2012; Ostrom, 2000; Teig et al., 2009), all of which relate back to the concept of social capital.

If we look more closely at the community and social networks and how they are built, first it needs to be realized, that the networks consists of individual persons, who have different attitudes to initiate reciprocity to achieve the benefits of collective action (Ostrom, 2000:138) and who have their
own interests, that need to be balanced with the collective ones in order to succeed in the collective action; this finding is in a sense relevant to the “theoretical social dilemma of managing the commons” (Romzek, Blackmar & LeRoux, 2012:443). Second, the common interests of the community are reflected in the concept of collective efficacy, which is a term defined by Sampson and others, that describes the relation between the “mutual trust and a shared willingness to intervene for the common good of the neighbourhood” (Sampson et al., 1997 in Teig et al., 2009:1115). Whereas social control is based on mutual trust and solidarity, informal social control enables to “fulfil neighbours’ expectation to be able to take action together” (ibid.). Similar point of view is presented by Romzek, Blackmar & LeRoux (2012), who highlight trust achieved by frequent communication, and mechanisms of informal control as the essential ingredients for a successful collective action:

Collective action and cooperation in the management of common pool resources requires trust among participants that each will adhere to the unspoken rules of conduct and mechanisms to informally punish those who defect on verbal agreements or fail to adhere to norms of conduct. (Romzek, Blackmar & LeRoux, 2012:443)

Therefore, to successfully establish an informal community organization, there is a need for some individuals, who would initiate the “norm of reciprocity and to be willing to restrict their own use of a common pool resource so long as almost everyone reciprocates” (Ostrom, 2000:149). The process of cooperation can be established by a relatively small group of members that can gradually develop a system of rules that might be needed for the organization to be maintained over time (Ostrom, 2000). Furthermore, Ostrom (2000) highlights the importance of a leader or an entrepreneur that has the capacity to initiate the impulse for establishing cooperation.

This schematic overview of the issues related to informal organizing of a community needs to be completed by highlighting the importance of the context. The individuals who participate in collective actions are influenced by the “institutional, cultural and biophysical contexts” (Ostrom, 2000:154). The understanding how individuals are affected by the context by means of learning from the past can help us prepare for the future by developing “public policies that enhance socially beneficial, cooperative behaviour based in part on social norms” and thus help individuals to better solve issues of collective action (Ostrom, 2000:154). The following part outlines the social context in the Czech Republic and Sweden in order to facilitate an understanding of the differences between the establishments of community gardens in the respective countries.
5.4 Civil Society in the Czech Republic and Sweden

From an overall perspective, the Czech Republic and Sweden, the countries where the case studies of this report are located, have a wide range of characteristics in common. On the other hand, looking back at the history and events of the 20th century may facilitate an understanding of the differences between social norms in the two countries. For this reason, the following paragraphs briefly present the main differences between some of the characteristics of the civil society in the respective countries, related to the community gardening initiatives and approach to the commons.

The main factors that influence the social capital and social relationships in the Czech Republic can be found in aspects such as “the Communist past with political control, collectivism, forced membership and constrained opportunities and goods; the transition to Capitalism with changes in the social structure, increasing unemployment, devaluation of the old form of political capital and consumerism and individualism” (Häuberer, 2011:181). Due to these factors, the informal networks have been especially important within the Czech context, not only during the period of communism, but also in the following period of transition to capitalism. (Häuberer, 2011)

In the Czech Republic, the informal networks of friends are considered to “be a part of the private sphere and are resistant to public mobilisation” (Rakušanová, 2005:42), because the private sphere is strictly divided from the public one. As Rakušanová further argues, these informal networks are an important element of the democratic system, which can raise the public participation by means of strengthening confidence in institutions. Still, due to the past experience of totalitarian regimes and forced participation, public participation is low and the citizens can be seen as passive in their attitude to the non-profit sector and to taking the responsibility for the commons (Rakušanová, 2005; Těšitel, Kusová and Bartoš, 2000). Furthermore, as Těšitel, Kusová and Bartoš (2000:35) further suggest, the “roots of primarily self-oriented behaviour, however, seem to be even deeper and more general - value system preferring individualism.”

Moreover, if we shift from the citizen as an individual and approach the topic from a broader perspective, only little importance is given to the public opinion on the issues of “commonly shared entities” (Těšitel, Kusová and Bartoš, 2000:35) and the non-profit sector still lacks “acceptance as a major partner, both in the provision of social services and in policy making” (Rakušanová, 2005:37).

Sweden is a country with a greater commitment to a more equitable society, universalism and gender equity, that is based on a comprehensive welfare system that supports individuals that happen to be in need at some points in their lives (Agyeman, 2005; Burström, 2012). In the introduction to the

“However, the post-communist society does not represent a set of atomized individuals submitted to the state of anomy, rather, some people still believe that social networks, subjectively regarded as a part of the private sphere, are important and thus they may be considered as an alternative to the civil society” (Rakušanová, 2005:42)
book ‘State and Civil Society in Northern Europe,’ the editor Lars Trägårdh presents two different theorists’ viewpoints on modern Sweden, where one can perceive Sweden either as a “state-dominated society or as an associative democracy in which the state is primarily an arena in which free associations negotiate with each other under the benign and neutral guidance of state representatives” (Trägårdh, 2007:3). As he further points out, both viewpoints are not necessarily mutually exclusive; the State has a significant role in Swedish affairs, the taxes are relatively high with correspondingly high expenditures of the public sector (ibid.). On the other hand, Sweden has marked high scores in comparison with other countries in terms of “trust, social capital, and membership in voluntary associations” (Trägårdh, 2007:3).

The preceding paragraphs have outlined the characteristics of civil society positions in the Czech Republic and Sweden. Nevertheless, because the topic itself is very broad and complex, the scope of information has been compressed and generalized in order to gain basic understanding about the differences that might help explain the differences between starting and managing a community garden in the respective countries. To summarize, in the Czech environment, a general suspicion to membership in citizens associations and lack of communication between the state and the citizens is significant, and the informal networks play an important role in the life of citizens. Sweden is a country with a strong influence of the State on the daily lives of its citizens; nevertheless citizens' associations play a significant role in managing public affairs.

5.5 Concluding thoughts

This chapter has presented the main theories that build the framework for the analysis of the information obtained in the empirical part of this research. The outlined theories on social sustainability, social capital, sustainable communities and the differences in civil society build the background for the following chapter. All the topics touched upon in this chapter are very complex, therefore only the main characteristics and aspects related to the main focus of this report – community gardening – were outlined.

The most important take-home message from this chapter highlights the role of the community, a group of people that share a certain quality, which represents the red thread that connects all four parts presented above. As was mentioned earlier, it is also the community that is at the core of the community gardens studied in this report. Based on the theory, community gardening initiatives can be classified as actions of the bridge social sustainability, as they introduce an environmentally friendly behaviour and a different type of green space into the urban structure, and support community
cohesion and sense of belonging at the same time. Some aspects that are important building
elements of social capital, such as for example trust, participation, social networks can help us
understand whether social capital is being generated as a result of community gardening.
Nevertheless, it is necessary to add that the quality of social capital depends on the way the
community gardens are organized and how they are functioning. The last topic has assessed the basic
characteristics of the civil society in the Czech Republic and Sweden, because the differences on a
larger scale, such as the role of civic associations in managing the public life, can help us better
understand the differences on the scale of a community garden.
6. Results & Analysis: Digging deeper into the life of a community garden

Based on the theoretical framework and the data collected by interviewing the organizers and the gardeners of the four explored gardens, the first part of this chapter presents the analysis of the motivations and factors influencing the establishment and functioning of a garden. The second part focuses on the nature of the community that is being built around the gardens and the third part ponders upon the differences between organizing a community garden in the Czech and Swedish settings. The aim of this chapter is to search for answers to the research questions by means of connecting the theoretical and the empirical part of the project. To conclude, the findings from the three parts are placed within the framework of social sustainability and social capital.

The semi-structured interviews with four organizers and eight gardeners brought a wide range of topics into focus, some were more or less expected, but some were quite surprising findings. These are depicted in a diagram (Figure 4) of the most common topics that were brought up in the interviews in relation to the frequency of their use by the organizers and in relation to the scale they apply to (garden, neighbourhood, global). The font size represents the frequency and relevance of the topic for the further analysis. The location within the circle represents the scale of the issue. In this way the most important aspects that arose from the interviews can be viewed at one glance.

6.1 The motivations, drivers and barriers on the way to a successful community garden

In order to answer the first research question, the most relevant issues mentioned in the interviews have been structured into a framework of four categories as they occur during the life of a community garden: drivers, factors, positive and negative outputs. To get a quick overview, these categories are summarized in a diagram that represents the connections between concepts of each category (Figure 5).
Figure 5. Factors, drivers, positive and negative outputs that influence a community garden (based on the experiences from the studied gardens)
Drivers can be seen as necessary preconditions for the initiation of a project of a community garden. They play a crucial role in the beginning of the project; nevertheless we should not forget that in a long-term perspective, the drivers can influence the decisions and direction of the vision. Moreover, since the drivers, to a significant extent, are represented by motivations, they have influence as keepers of the directions and motivate to hold on to the long-term vision.

Factors are perceived as a set of circumstances that influence the way the community garden is organized and how it is incorporated in the existing environment, both in a physical way and in terms of, for example, the legal or cultural environment. Factors can be represented on the one hand by concrete subjects, such as the municipality, on the other hand by abstract concepts, such as norms. The factors create the environment and the nature of connections and relationships not only between the garden and its surrounding context, but also within the garden itself.

Positive outputs can be characterized as the products of community gardening that are other than the fruits, vegetables, herbs or flowers. These can sometimes be associated with the initial visions, but in this case, only visions that have been achieved can be considered positive outputs. They can be seen as positive aspects that have the possibility to affect both previous categories retrospectively and thus, for example, strengthen the initial vision, or change the surrounding conditions in favour of the garden itself or similar community gardening initiatives.

As the last category, negative outputs represent a number of circumstances that may occur during the existence of a community garden that can cause a range of consequences, which can eventually lead to failure of the project. Therefore, the negative outputs can be seen as threats to the existence of the garden. As with the factors described above, the negative outputs can emerge both within the garden itself, and in the surrounding environment as a result of the garden’s activities.

The following pages present the first part of the interview results in tables structured according to the above presented four categories (Table 7, Table 8, Table 9, Table 10 and Table 11).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prazelenina</th>
<th>Kokoza</th>
<th>Matparken</th>
<th>På Spåret</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivations</strong></td>
<td>To grow the neighbourhood relationships.</td>
<td>To offer sustainable work for people with disadvantages. Enjoy and live out of at the same time. Create a functioning model for the Czech Republic.</td>
<td>To have a place for people in Skarpnäck where they can meet. Show that it is possible to grow in the city.</td>
<td>To get involved with people. To do something outside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visions</strong></td>
<td>Cultivation is a tool how to attract people and make them share something.</td>
<td>To have a small and a big Kokoza garden in every district of Prague in order to increase the impact of the associations’ activities.</td>
<td>Focus on children.</td>
<td>A 10 year plan can be to spatially connect the garden with some other areas, civil organizations and thus from a planning perspective show quality of life and innovation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It does not make sense to expand, the capacity in the area is fulfilled and there is not more human potential.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Demand</strong></td>
<td>The gardeners came by themselves. There was a hunger for something similar, probably thanks to the media coverage of the project.</td>
<td>The topic promoted itself.</td>
<td>People who lived close always come. But lot of other people chose to come to the allotment gardens instead, searching for quietness, they wanted to find what they planted, because that was always insecure in an open garden.</td>
<td>There was a great demand, it became very popular. Gardeners came, thanks to the newspapers, because they heard from a friend or they passed by.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acceptance</strong></td>
<td>The communication with the local district administration failed, due to unclear jurisdiction.</td>
<td>The acceptance was achieved based on two years of intensive networking, building and maintaining connections and promotion of the topic, which created a sound background not only for this garden, but also for establishing of other gardens.</td>
<td>The project was initiated as a result of political acceptance, where the local district administration built the garden based on a citizen’s proposal.</td>
<td>The acceptance was built gradually – based on small signs, such as allowance to cultivate perennials in the ground. A political statement of a permanent character would be if the garden was connected to the water and electric grid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of a group</td>
<td>Kokoza</td>
<td>Matparken</td>
<td>På Späret</td>
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<tr>
<td>There were about 5 units involved in the project (2 singles and 3 families) from the people who came last year and proved to be constructive.</td>
<td>A paid function of a coordinator was established, who communicated and connected the people and was responsible for garden maintenance. The coordinator was always present at the regular meetings (Tuesdays, Sundays). The structure/framework was provided by the initiators.</td>
<td>All activities were organized by one organizer (initiator). The gardeners met regularly every second Sunday.</td>
<td>The amount of work was over exceeding the capacity of the people voluntarily involved in organization. Managing of a group effort, keeping it open and transparent was seen as hard. A risk occurred of possible clashes between individual initiatives and the will of the association. Work was dependent on how many people come, which was never known ahead. Ideally, a project manager would solve a number of issues. Group met every Tuesday and Sunday.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The garden was getting support in form of material provision (growing tools, elephant dung), from own resources and partially from the member fee (850 CZK/6 months) and from the profit of the café. Costs for one season were approx. 140 000 CZK.</td>
<td>Costs for one year were approx. 70 000 CZK, including the investments. The garden was getting support thanks to partnerships with firms that focus on gardening, thanks to obtained grant from district administration, through workshops and lectures organized by KOKOZA. Recently the garden as an European project was awarded two grants, for investment in special composting technology and for employment of persons with disadvantages. The aim was to cover at least 50% from own resources.</td>
<td>Cost for one season consisted from the cost for the seeds (3000 SEK) and gardening tools (also 3000 SEK). The garden operation is financed by a grant of the district municipality (approx. 7000 SEK) and from Folkuniversitet (10 000 SEK). The garden had an agreement with a local farmer to obtain 1m3 of cow manure for 100 SEK. Last way of funding came from the membership fees in the Folkodlarna organization (300 SEK per year).</td>
<td>The impression was that the economy and global budget were unclear, though in process of stabilization. Sponsorships were one of the ways of obtaining resources, such as soil and seeds. The organization was applying for scholarships (i.e. educative garden). Also, the organization cooperates with bars/restaurants in the area.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Garden project started with a help of friends. The garden was located on a private site with commercial rent, therefore it was only necessary to talk to water and electricity providers and not to other stakeholders, such as district administration.</td>
<td>The project was initiated by two friends and based on cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders (director of cultural centre, district officials, representatives of firms, active individuals). Aim of Kokoza was to break down boundaries between the profit and non-profit sector. The organizers put emphasis on establishing and maintaining communication with a range of actors.</td>
<td>At the beginning of the garden stood a citizens proposal, initiated by local citizens organization. Organization of the food park was in the beginnings based on work of friends from this organization (Folkodlarna).</td>
<td>The project was initiated by three friends and the start was enabled thanks to a developed network of formal and informal relationships, connecting different actors (district administration, local companies, allotments).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The garden was located in the plot of the cultural centre, owned by the district Prague 11. The space was provided for free based on a ‘gentlemen agreement’, the costs (i.e. water) were paid by Kokoza. The site was seen as very important and crucial aspect for the existence of the garden.</td>
<td>The garden was located in the plot of the cultural centre, owned by the district Prague 11. The space was provided for free based on a ‘gentlemen agreement’, the costs (i.e. water) were paid by Kokoza. The site was seen as very important and crucial aspect for the existence of the garden.</td>
<td>The food park was part of a park owned by the district municipality, managed on a principle of a mutual agreement [brukaravtal], where the citizens took care of the public open space.</td>
<td>The garden was located on an abandoned railway site, rented from the municipality. The gardeners are cultivating this land and transferring from a grey zone it into a public open space. The expansion possibilities are limited, also because of the demands for watering in terms of time and resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The communication with the local district administration failed as a result of unclear jurisdiction.</td>
<td>The communication and cooperation with the district administration turned positive and successful, even though the beginnings were difficult in terms of understanding and participation. Some district administrations provide support to the Kokoza activities (mental, financial support).</td>
<td>The food park was established by cooperation of the district administration and the citizen, as a result of citizens proposal. Important in this cooperation was the background of the citizens association, that showed some results of the work. Still, not always the cooperation was smooth and sometimes the opinions and preferences of the organizers and district administration were different.</td>
<td>As an advantage was seen the local tradition of cooperation between administrations and citizens. Also, as a positive aspect was seen a well prepared presentation of the project and the goals, including the aspects of sustainable development and social relationships. The garden gained gradual acceptance, from a short term contract, to allowance to plant perennials in ground.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The norms and administration made many things difficult or impossible to realize.</td>
<td>The legislation does not recognize these types of projects. Community gardening is also facing some administrative obstacles, such as building permits.</td>
<td>The garden was facing administrative obstacles regarding i.e. obtaining of ecological soil because of the administrative boundaries and related regulations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Interaction</td>
<td>Prazelenina</td>
<td>Kokoza</td>
<td>Matparken</td>
<td>På Spåret</td>
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<tr>
<td>New bindings were created between people, who live in the neighbourhood and met in the garden for the first time.</td>
<td>The garden was engaging local people in coordination of the project. Some gardeners interacted less, other communicated, searched for the common activities, participated.</td>
<td>The organizer herself met many people through the activities related to the food park (i.e. project for children). Some gardeners came regularly; some just passed by and joined.</td>
<td>A steady group formed in the garden, people came and were happy. Harvesting vegetables for private use was not the main reason why they came.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Learning and Education | Occasionally workshops. | Kokoza provided workshops, lectures (i.e. about planting in containers) with guest lecturers. Additionally, the organizers held lectures at different venues. | Many less known plant species were planted to engage curiosity and attract attention. Furthermore, the food park served as an educational garden for pre-schoolers. The organizers also participated in an EU project that focuses on techniques how to engage vulnerable citizens in society by means of community gardening. | Garden was a place to experiment and try out less common plants. Also, the garden was seen as a place for people who do not access to the countryside, to show the children how vegetable was planted. |

| Appreciation and joy | Community gardening was a source of joy that helped to overcome problems related to organizing the garden. | It was rewarding to see that the concept works, people participated, the activities had results not only in the garden itself, but they had a great impact also outside of the garden in terms of raising awareness about such initiatives. | It was rewarding for the organizer when the people said “It’s very nice to have you here”. | The garden was a fun way to meet people of various backgrounds and opinions, which, even if the opinions were sometimes different, were seen as enriching and contribution of community gardening. |

<p>| Public open space diversity | The garden was using a space of a former brewery that served as a parking lot for many years. The garden was waking different emotions, positive and negative. Mainly the garden has influenced its neighbourhood in a social way – it provided a place to socialize (facilities for children, ping-pong table, concerts, workshops, etc.) and worked more like a community centre than a community garden. | The garden had low publicity in the neighbourhood; many people did not know that it was there. Therefore information shields were in preparation. The garden had the biggest impact on people who directly participate, but the impact on the other locals who do not participate directly could be questioned. | The organizer was hoping that the food park influenced its surroundings. | The site of the garden was a leftover area. It was hard to find, though visible from a bridge above and thus engaging curiosity. Many people came just to have a cup of coffee, seeing it as a different way of meeting people, as an alternative to the city. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Prazenlina</th>
<th>Kokoza</th>
<th>Matparken</th>
<th>På Spåret</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The garden was organized as an informal club with majority of responsibility laying on the initiator, who was also planning most of the common activities.</td>
<td>For the organizers it was hard to make decisions, which influence functioning of the project itself, such as if to continue, or not.</td>
<td>The activities in the garden were organized and planned by one organizer. A plan was to involve one more person in organizing these activities.</td>
<td>Organization of the garden was at some points dependent on individuals, which was seen as a difficult aspect, putting a lot of pressure on these individuals. Planning and sharing of responsibilities was seen as a challenging task.</td>
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</table>

| Social exclusion | Distrust and envy of people who were not participating had negative aspects on functioning of the garden (i.e. neighbour’s complaints). | For people who were not involved could be hard to imagine, how a community garden works. | | |

<p>| Member turnover | About 60% of gardeners were continuing from the first season and about 40% were new. The garden attracted many foreigners. | In the first season there were about 20 gardeners, in the second season there were about 15. | People from the surrounding areas came regularly, however, other gardeners preferred to cultivate in the nearby allotments, because the allotments offered a kind of quietness and security to the produce compared to the totally opened food park. | There were no statistics on new members and members who did not continue in the second season (and their reasons). It was seen as a challenge to keep the same people from season to season. Though, many new people came and formed a steady group. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kokoza Gardener 1</th>
<th>Kokoza, Gardener 2</th>
<th>Prazelenina Gardener 3</th>
<th>Prazelenina Gardener 4</th>
<th>Matparken Gardener 5</th>
<th>Matparken Gardener 6</th>
<th>På Spåret Gardener 7</th>
<th>På Spåret Gardener 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Why do you do community gardening?</strong></td>
<td>Liked to grow, see result, and meet new people, because she recently moved to the area.</td>
<td>Enjoyed planting and growing, seeing it as a leisure activity.</td>
<td>It was a family leisure activity, a good alternative to children’s playgrounds.</td>
<td>Community gardening was seen as a meaningful use of an empty space, virtuous activity and a place for meeting people.</td>
<td>Wanted to get to know people.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Because it was fun, relaxing, good opportunity to practice language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How far from the garden do you live?</strong></td>
<td>Very close, could see the garden from her window</td>
<td>10 minutes by bicycle – about 2km</td>
<td>5-10 minutes by foot</td>
<td>5 minutes by foot</td>
<td>50 meters</td>
<td>Lived in the neighbourhood.</td>
<td>300 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is important for you in the garden?</strong></td>
<td>To be with people, to grow something, be outside in nature, to share experience with others.</td>
<td>To meet people with similar interests. To take care about the plants. The atmosphere. The people.</td>
<td>To meet good people, an interesting group of people and children.</td>
<td>To show the support to the project. The environment was seen an island in the middle of the city.</td>
<td>The community - the social part was seen as the most valuable (to get to know people, neighbours).</td>
<td>Having fun.</td>
<td>The possibility of local ecological food production, using of an abandoned space for gardening and meeting different people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you want to come next season?</strong></td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What would prevent you doing so?</strong></td>
<td>Lack of time and loss of community feeling.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moving out of Stockholm.</td>
<td>Lack of time, loss of community sense.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1.1 Drivers

Based on the interviews, the drivers could be divided according to two different characteristics. First, there are a number of drivers that were present at the very beginning and that were needed for the initiation of a community gardening project. For an easier orientation, we can name them *initial drivers.* Second, drivers can be identified that help sustain the project over a period of time. These may be identical with the initial drivers, but also they may occur as a consequence of the activities of a community garden and thus they fall into the outputs categories. The second type of drivers can be named *sustaining drivers.* To make this concept a little bit more complicated, one more division of the category was observed, this time according to the environment, or area, where the driver emerged. In this sense, the drivers originated either inside the garden community, or in the outer environment. These types can be named simply as the *inner* and *outer drivers.* The diagram depicted on the side of the page demonstrates the interlaced relationships of this typology framework (Figure 6).

Considering the nature of the examined projects, which overall can be characterized as bottom-up or grassroots initiatives from the very beginning, the drivers help demonstrate that the establishment of the case study community gardens was based exclusively on the citizens’ efforts to start such project. All the initial drivers, motivations, visions and the demand could be assigned to individuals, groups of citizens or citizen’s associations. Therefore the studied gardens fulfil one of the preconditions of success, which is to involve the citizens in the very beginning, as discussed by Corrigan (2011). The specific drivers that influenced the case studies are presented in more detail in the following paragraphs, starting with the organizers motivations:

I arrived here and I wanted to get involved with people [...] because it is hard to get in to the Swedish society. [...] The idea was of doing something outside, something I like. Because I sit in front of the computer the whole day and I am really fed up with that. [...] What really keep me there now are the people. Because I think that is the only place where I meet people from different social backgrounds in Stockholm. (På Spåret, organizer)

The interviews confirmed the initial assumptions and theories, mentioned in the earlier chapters, about the essence of community gardens, that are “more about the community than about the gardening” (Glover, 2003:192 in Kingsley & Townsend, 2006:527), because the most common *motivation* for the organizers was to get involved with people, either by means of providing place for people in the neighbourhood to meet, or to actually meet people through gardening (Prazelenina, Matparken, På Spåret). In general, the organizers put an emphasis on the social aspects in relation to the neighbourhood, whereas the cultivating itself was perceived more as a tool how to initiate the

![Figure 6. Drivers typology](image-url)
interpersonal connections. A community garden can thus be viewed as a kind of playground that provides space for social interaction with the background of developing horticultural skills. Therefore, community gardening is seen mainly as a leisure activity, both for the organizers and gardeners, which can be assumed from the fact, that with one exception, the organizers invest their free time into the development of the projects. Lucie Lankasová, organizer of the Kokoza community garden, chose a different approach:

I wanted to do something that I would enjoy and can live out of at the same time. I have always been interested in self-sufficiency, even though I know it is not a real thing in a city. Partially it was because I like to cultivate. I was searching for ways how to compost. My big motivation is to offer sustainable work for people with disadvantages. We don’t do it at the moment, because first we had to learn all the things about the organization of a small community garden and a compost site, create a functioning model for the Czech Republic. (Kokoza, organizer)

In comparison with the other three organizers, Lucie’s motivation was diametrically different, however, possibly even more interesting. Her motivation was driven by a strong long term vision and connected the social aspects of community gardens with the possibility of economic self-sufficiency. Furthermore, the environmental dimension could also in her case be found in the original concept that preceded the establishment of the community garden itself and that was based on spreading composting habits among city inhabitants, because it was seen as an easy thing to do for everyone. Nevertheless, even though most of the organizers and gardeners could be seen as people with a strong commitment to, or at least a good level of awareness of environmental issues, the environmentally driven motivations were not mentioned by any of the organizers as the most important drivers.

The arrow in the diagram (Figure 6) suggests that the initial motivation that led to the establishment of a community garden could persist and evolve into a secondary driver, as was the case with the majority of interviewed organizers (Kokoza, Prazelenina, På Spåret), who confirmed that their first motivation has not changed, only deepened:

Still now, my main motivation is to meet people and this is one way. (På Spåret, organizer)

Still, new motivations could occur during the functioning of a garden, as was the case of an organizer who, after the first gained experience, decided to work more with children:
I’m going to work with the children instead, because they always need this. We can show to the kids that you can also grow in the city. (Matparken, organizer)

Similarly, the main motivation of many gardeners for joining their community garden was to meet people, as can be seen in the quotations on the side of the page. Often, the gardeners just moved to the neighbourhood and the community garden proved to be a place to initiate social interaction with the local people. Other than meeting new people, the gardeners often see the importance of community gardening as a leisure activity they enjoy.

The motivations are closely related to the visions, and in some cases they can be interchangeable, as in the case of the Kokoza garden. Both long-term and short-term visions occurred, which were subject to the seasonal nature of the projects. Whereas motivation is perceived here as more of a personal concept, that influences mainly the persistence of a single person, the visions represent a common goal for the association as whole. For example a short-term vision can be represented by a plan for expansion as in the case of På Spåret, a long-term vision can be found in the goal to provide employment for persons with disadvantages in case of Kokoza. As most of the interviewees noted (Kokoza, Matparken, På Spåret), the vision and the way in which it is presented is an important element when communicating, both within the garden organization and with other stakeholders, especially with the municipality representatives. In that case the way of presentation of the project has a great impact on the acceptance and prospective support.

The motivations of the organizers can be labelled as the driving force that mobilizes the individuals to initiate the norm of reciprocity (Ostrom, 2000) by starting a project of this kind. At the same time the visions the participants identify with, and the motivations of the gardeners to come and participate can be seen as fundamental preconditions for the organization of a community in or around the community garden, drawing from Stall & Stoecker’s (1998:730) remark on the identification with common ideals, which can be seen as the basis for “an enduring network of people”.

In general, the above presented motivations expressed by the organizers do not significantly differ from the most common motivations that were presented by Guitart, Pickering & Byrne (2012) as a result of analysis of 87 papers on community gardening. These included, above all, “to consume fresh foods, social development or cohesion such as community building and culture exchange, to improve health among members, and to make or save money by eating from the garden or selling the produce” (Guitart, Pickering & Byrne, 2012:367). Other, important motivations that should be listed are “to educate, to enhance cultural practices, to access land, to enjoy nature, environmental sustainability and to enhance spiritual practice” (ibid.).

Gardeners on motivation

I like to grow and see the result. I like to meet new people, because I am new in this town. (Kokoza, Gardener 1)

I enjoy planting and growing. It is a leisure activity for me. (Kokoza, Gardener 2)

We like it as leisure activity for our family, a good alternative to children’s playgrounds. We think it makes sense to support such project. (Prazelenina, Gardener 3)

I see community gardening as a meaningful use of an empty space, virtuous activity and a place for meeting other people. (Prazelenina Gardener 4)

We moved here when it started, we got an allotment, but I wanted to get to know people. (Matparken, Gardener 5)

Because I like the idea, it’s fun, it’s relaxing, I can practice my Swedish, I learned a lot of new worlds related to gardening. (På Spåret, Gardener 7)

I enjoy the place, I like being there and meeting nice people there, I have my hangout buddy there; I met someone there and then it was always fun to meet and hang out on Sundays. (På Spåret, Gardener 8)
Demand is a very important initial driver coming from the garden’s external environment. As one of the organizers noted, there was a ‘hunger’ for an activity of such kind (Prazelenina). The other organizers expressed themselves in a similar way:

They [people] just came. (På Spåret, organizer)

There was no need to invest in promotion, the interest in the topic is high from the side of the media, and sometimes it is even too high. Nevertheless, in terms of planning for the long term, it needs to be realized that the potential of growing is limited according to the demand in a specific context, as was noted by one of the organizers, saying that the demand in the area is fulfilled and it is not reasonable to plan for expansion (Prazelenina).

Appreciation and satisfaction are clearly a sustaining driver that was highlighted by most of the interviewees as an important aspect that was motivating them to continue their effort at times of complicated situations and crises. Especially after the scepticism in the beginnings, that some of the organizers experienced (Prazelenina), the appreciation from the gardeners (inner driver) helped to make decisions that otherwise could be difficult to motivate:

It’s all the people, when they say it’s very nice to have you here. It was a friend who told me that some guy, who was here, said ‘I am a bit afraid of all these gardeners who are leaving town and will live up in the woods when a catastrophe is coming. I am very happy that Sara is here, she will teach us how to live when the catastrophe is coming, when the world is going to end.’ (Matparken, organizer)

On the other hand, acceptance is an example of a sustaining driver that comes from external environment (outer sustaining driver). Acceptance was achieved in the explored cases when the municipality acknowledged and started to support the activities of community gardening. The ways and difficulties to achieve a certain level of acceptance differed depending on the socio-cultural and political context, as could clearly be demonstrated in the comparison of the cases in the Czech Republic and Sweden that will be presented in one of the following parts of this chapter (6.3). Achieving a certain level of acceptance was important in order to be able to plan for the long term. Furthermore, awareness-raising significantly helped similar projects to take their first steps, as one of the organizers noted (Kokoza). In general, according to the organizers, it is the persistence, intensive communication and a sound presentation of the project and visions that are necessary components on the way to general acceptance by the municipality (Kokoza, Matparken, På Spåret):

To make it succeed, you need to make it look nice. And have a project. And have all this nice concepts, sustainable development, social relations. (På Spåret, organizer)
6.1.2 Factors

Whereas the drivers can be seen as the initial and sustaining powers in the life of a community garden, the factors that raised from the interviews can be described as the features of the environment, that modify the way the garden is organized and placed in the environment, where the environment can be seen as the place “where we live, where we work and where we play” (Alston, 1991 in Agyeman, 2005:2). Based on the interviews with the organizers, I have structured the findings into three categories according to the type of environment, where the factors emerged:

**Organizational environment** is the set of circumstances that emerged directly within the inner environment of the community gardens.

**Socio-cultural environment** is the outer environment that consists of concepts such as socio-cultural norms, cooperation, and governance.

**Political environment** is the outer environment that is represented by the role of the municipality and legally binding concepts, rules and regulations.

However, some of the factors that were found in the interviews can be assigned to more than one category, because the boundaries between the environments are not strictly defined. Figure 7 helps to understand this by placing the actual factors into the relevant environments.

A number of topics that touch upon the organizational environment emerged from the interviews. In general, the interviews showed that the organization of a group and funding are seen as important factors by the organizers of Kokoza, Prazelenina and På Spåret. These are complemented with topics such as citizen engagement, vision presentation and persistence.

> It’s hard to manage a group thing, and to keep it open and transparent. But it’s really fun anyway to meet people. (På Spåret, organizer)

The way the community around the garden is organized is a determining factor for the functioning of a garden, especially in the long term. If we want to place this factor within the framework of social capital, we can assign according to the characteristics to the first type – *bonding social capital* (Table 5. Social capital types) that refers to the cooperation and trust among the members of the groups (Baum & Ziersch, 2003; Elgar et al., 2011). More or less all the interviewed organizers put an emphasis on the organizational aspects of community gardening they were dealing with (Kokoza, Prazelenina, På Spåret). The question of leadership in such projects may be sensitive, though it could be seen as crucial to successful management of ’informal’ communities. Drawing
from the interviews it can be implied that the informal nature of groups that formed around gardening activities, or groups that established the gardens could bring a certain degree of blurriness in terms of planning for a common action, taking responsibility and decision making (Kokoza, Prazelenina, Matparken, På Spåret). Moreover, the explored gardens were typically initiated thanks to the organizers’ enthusiasm and a large energy input from their side, which put the organizers into the role of leaders (Kokoza, Prazelenina). Though, the voluntary nature of associations of this kind may cause problems in case the leaders cannot for various reasons hold onto their responsibilities:

That is a problem, is so much success, none of us is paid. We have problems to handle all this, because it’s too much work. It would be good if more people were taking over. (På Spåret, organizer)

If there is no one else to stand up for the challenging task, the dependence on the leader may then possibly endanger the functioning of the garden. To avoid such situation and deal with problems that occur over time, it is necessary to build a clear organizational structure with assigned responsibilities. If we apply the theory on organizing of a collective effort, this structure is based on accountability, reciprocity, trust and communication (Romzek, Blackmar & LeRoux, 2012; Ostrom, 2000; Teig et al., 2009). This is particularly important the larger the garden gets in terms of participants. As an example can be used the following quote:

I worked a lot for it by myself and I was having lot to do and also feeling that I was not representative. That was mainly my problem; I thought there should be more people to do that, because I was just deciding for everyone. (På Spåret, organizer)

In a similar way the organizer of Kokoza garden highlighted the importance of communication in a sense that it is important to ask people what they want, because there is no sense in organizing activities that nobody is interested in.

If we look closer at the organization of the gardens, we can see that while three of the examined gardens were based entirely on a voluntary basis (Prazelenina, Matparken, På Spåret), the initiators of the Kokoza garden decided to go a different way and set up a paid position of two garden managers, who had the responsibility for the daily life of the garden:

It is important to have a coordinator, who communicates and connects the people with each other, takes care of both the people, but also the maintenance of the garden. We think that this function should be paid, because otherwise there is a risk that the person accepts some responsibility, but is not able to hold. To us it makes good sense to reward the people with a salary, it was one of the big experiences, that
if we have nice non-profit project, we always have to think that people who have some responsibility, are needed to be paid for. (Kokoza, organizer)

Establishing the coordinator function that is paid can be seen as one of the options for dealing with the responsibility issues and how to prevent a burn-out of the organizers. Nevertheless, such a step inevitably leads to the question of the economic nature of the community gardening associations and the way they are financed. Funding could be seen as a challenge not only in the examined case-studies, but it is an important topic in the research on community gardens in general (Guitart, Pickering & Byrne, 2012).

We have a great partnership with firms such that are active in the field of cultivating, composting. They support us by different means, one helps us to realize our workshops, other gave us some material support for an exhibition on some fair, where we made an edible balcony exposition, together with the other firms, and there we made some money. We are making workshops, lectures. We would like to achieve to cover at least 50% of our budget from our own sources. We don’t want to write grants the rest of our lives; we don’t want to be dependent on one source of money, because that makes no sense to us in the future. (Kokoza, organizer)

Drawing upon the information provided by the interviewees, a wide range of resources were brought up as available to help financing and/or supporting the projects in a material way. A yearly (seasonal) membership fee was common to all four gardens examined; nevertheless, the extent to which this source could cover the operational and other costs of the garden differed depending on the size of the garden and the ratio of active and supporting members. For example, the membership fee of Kokoza was relatively small considering the costs for running such a garden. On the other hand, for larger gardens with a wide membership base, this amount could potentially cover a significant part of the budget. Another option, that rose from the garden environment, was the income from running a café-like establishment (Prazelenina, På Spåret) and selling own products, ranging from surplus vegetable to locally produced honey (På Spåret). Holding workshops with a certain participant fee was also among the possibilities that some of the organizers used (Kokoza). Furthermore, there existed a number of other options based on the support from the ‘outer’ environment, such as support from the municipality in terms of provision of favourable site rental conditions (Kokoza, På Spåret), cooperation with private companies that deal with gardening and thus could provide e.g. tools, soil or fertilizers for a good price (Kokoza, Prazelenina, På Spåret). Another type of cooperation could be established with restaurants or cafés that can buy the locally grown produce (På Spåret). Last but not least, an option that was mentioned by the organizers was obtaining grants from private companies and foundations (Kokoza).
The gardens studied in the framework of this report have shown various approaches in terms of economic planning. Whereas some of them were practicing a form of short term oriented economy with investments based on immediate resources available (Prazelelnina, På Spåret), one garden (Kokoza) was functioning on a background of a larger urban gardening and composting platform that was planning for economic self-sufficiency in the future and aimed to become the main source of income for its organizers. This ambitious plan required devoting a large amount of time to strategic planning. Even though such initiatives are not typical for similar community gardening efforts, where the economical drivers are typically in minority (Holland, 2004), in this specific case they exemplified the possible symbiosis of the economical, ecological and social aspects of community gardening.

We already took a step out of the garden’s inner environment by naming the possible partners and options for funding and material support. Another range of factors that influenced the functioning of the studied community gardens, next to the political environment that will be discussed later on, by socio-cultural customs and concepts such as awareness, informal networks and governance.

**Informal networks** are an important element and contribute to building and maintaining community gardens from many points of view. Friendships and acquaintances were seen as a great help during the first steps on the field of community gardening (Kokoza, Prazelelnina, Matparken). These interpersonal relationships were perceived, among other things, as a tool to obtain resources that otherwise would be difficult to obtain, especially regarding the time frame. Among these resources we can include helping with knowledge, physical work or for example obtaining material resources. A developed structure of informal relationships could be therefore seen as a great advantage when establishing a community garden. These types of networks can be aligned to the bridging social capital that connects individuals and groups, who are more or less of a same status (Baum & Ziersch, 2003; Elgar et al., 2011). Moreover, the informal relationships can also be seen as a backbone of the gardens that holds the community together, in that case they can also be assigned to the bonding social capital. As not only the organizers, but also many of the interviewed gardeners highlighted (Kokoza, gardener 1; Prazelelnina, gardener 4; Matparken, gardener 5), it is the “meeting people” factor that made them curious to join the garden and as one of them pointed out (Matparken, gardener 5), if no one else came and the community was lost, it would make no sense coming anymore. Nevertheless, the informal relationships can also have a negative impact in some cases. For example, when the neighbours (an individual or group of individuals) take initiative against the community garden by means of filing complaints, which was the case in one of the explored garden (Prazelelnina) and which has also been named as a challenge for a number of gardens in the
analysis of Guitart, Pickering and Byrne (2012). This aspect can be seen as a result of social exclusion (which will be discussed later as a negative output - a threat to the gardens).

We cooperate in the framework of KOKOZA, it is difficult to separate this specific project [community garden], because everything we do we try to do with a systematic vision for the future, and because we didn’t have much money in the beginning, we invested mostly time to [form] relationships with people. (Kokoza, organizer)

However, it is not only the informal connections that are valued, but also the formal relationships and networks that have a large impact on the possibilities of community gardens. These can be associated to the category of linking social capital that refers to the relationships between groups and individuals that are not of the same formal status (Baum & Ziersch, 2003; Elgar et al., 2011). The organizers in both Prague and Stockholm (Kokoza, På Spåret) noted that a community garden is a multi-stakeholder project, as can be exemplified by the funding and resource searching practices mentioned above that connect representatives of the municipality, firms, individuals involved in similar projects and other active individuals:

We had to contact all stakeholders, municipality (district officials, councillors, and representatives), representatives of firms, active individuals, who do similar projects. It is a multi-stakeholder project. The more people know about us the higher is the chance that we get some feedback. Kokoza, besides that it wants to promote gardening and composting in the city and wants to provide work for people with handicap, involve elderly and so on, it wants to break down boundaries between the profit and non-profit world, for us it is very interesting to induce partnerships with different people. For us it is not important for which organization the person works, but the way he/she thinks. There we found a fruitful soil for creating such partnerships that sometimes work, sometimes work less, sometimes we have expectations that will not be confirmed, and so on. (Kokoza, organizer)

Even though differences between the Czech and the Swedish examples existed and will be discussed in a separate part of this chapter (6.3), in both countries we could identify these multifaceted networks of cooperating actors as a ‘form of governance’ on a local scale, as one of the organizers named it (På Spåret). The level of governance differed to a certain degree according to the socio-cultural context. At the same time, in relation to community gardening, it was to a large extent based on intensive communication, awareness, sound presentation of the project and trust (Kokoza, Matparken, På Spåret).
The site is important. Experience and money are cool, but without a site it is impossible to do anything. (Kokoza, organizer)

Not only in most of the studied gardens (Kokoza, Prazelenina, På Spåret), future land access was of the highest concern for the community gardens that were examined in the papers analysed by Guitart, Pickering and Byrne (2012). Simply put, there cannot be any garden without a place. The site and the rental conditions are crucial in relation to the long-term functioning of such projects. Typically, the gardens examined in this report started out as mobile gardens with the majority of crops planted in bags, boxes or containers (Kokoza, Prazelenina, På Spåret). This fact reflects the insecurity in a long-term perspective, which occurred both in cases of using the site based on an agreement with a municipality (Kokoza, På Spåret) and in one case of renting from a private owner (Prazelenina). The short, typically one season agreements made it difficult to develop specific plans for a long-term perspective. Often, the gardens could be seen only as a temporary solution, a holding strategy to an unused or abandoned space that is waiting for its future residential or commercial development (LaCroix 2009). For example, the famous Prinzessinengärten in Berlin is nowadays facing the threat that the land will be sold and used for other purposes (Berliner Zeitung, 2012). This was also the case for one of the examined gardens in Prague that had to relocate in early spring 2013 (Prazelenina), because the owner of the former site had planned a different use. Therefore, the “escalating land use competition” (Pudup, 2008:1232) can be seen as a challenge, and in some cases as a threat to community gardening.

Three of the studied gardens were located on a plot owned by the municipality (Kokoza, Matparken, På Spåret), which was also according to Guitart, Pickering & Byrne (2012) the most common form of land tenure for approximately 60 gardens studied in the available literature on community garden research. Therefore, the issue of the rights to use the land for community gardening purposes is closely related to the political environment and to the acceptance from the municipality. Matparken Skarpnäck could be seen as a clear example of political acceptance of the community gardening activities from the very beginning. Moreover, the two other gardens have experienced during their existence signs of a long-term recognition from the municipality, such as permission to plant perennials in the ground (På Spåret) or a mutual agreement on future cooperation (Kokoza). However, these two cases can only be seen only as the first fruits of intensive and on-going communication:

Officially in the beginning it was in boxes, because everything was supposed to be able to move, if the city needed to claim the area. But now the city says it is fine if you put perennials on the side. This was totally ‘no no’ in the beginning. Those are the small signs that tell you that it is accepted in a sense, at least for few years. [...]

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But it would be a political statement to put water, electricity and a toilet, that’s not ready. So I say, the day you put water, electricity and toilet the garden is going to stay. (På Spåret, organizer)

In comparison with the relatively long (up to 25 years) rental terms of allotment gardens in Sweden (Colding et al., 2013:4) that suggest a full recognition of this type of land use, the community gardens can still be perceived as a transition than a long-term strategy. Considering the more than a hundred year old tradition of allotment gardening in comparison with the quite recent community garden movement, this is not surprising. Still, if we take a look overseas, an unusual step in this sense had been made by the city of Cleveland, which has adopted a specific zoning category for urban gardens as a part of their strategy dealing with the city’s shrinkage to ensure, that the gardens are appropriately located and protected to meet the needs of the community (LaCroix, 2009). There, the gardens were established as a goal in themselves, not as a holding strategy until it is time for residential, commercial or other use (ibid.).

[The project will be endangered in case] we would not agree with the municipality about the site, if there was any obstruction of this type, or if we would not have the money. (Kokoza, organizer)

As can be drawn from the preceding paragraphs, the **municipality** could be seen as a key stakeholder. Even though the cooperation between the municipality and the community garden was not completely necessary in some cases (Prazelenina), the supportive attitude of the municipality in any form is desirable and helps to proceed to the goals (Kokoza, Matparken, På Spåret). In case of the gardens that use public land, the municipality could be seen as the major partner (Kokoza, Matparken). Depending on how strong the bonds between the municipality and the garden are, it might become difficult for the garden to sustain a self-organized association in cases when “the external governmental officials presume that only they can make authoritative rules” (Ostrom, 2000:152):

    The tricky part is when you have some ideas that are not on the same level with the district administration [stadsdelsförvaltningen]. For example, I want to paint this low and really high bench in green. The whole food park is very sterile. And maybe the low benches paint in different colours, for the kids. But then they say that everything needs to be in the same colour. (Matparken, organizer)
Therefore, the domain of rules, norms and policies can be seen as a not less important factor. The issue of norms and policies that do not recognize the existence of community gardens and related citizens’ initiatives was brought up by a number of organizers (Kokoza, Prazelenina).

The barrier is because it still is a new topic; people can’t imagine what it is – a community, urban garden, not speaking about a composting site. Then there is the legislation that does not know these types of projects. There are also a number of administrative obstacles, for example building permits in the city centre. In the beginning we could not imagine how many different approvals and documents we would need in order to start with such a project. (Kokoza, organizer)

The administration, the norms and the legislation were seen as a barrier or even as a factor that had prevented the organizers to realize many things (Prazelenina, organizer).

6.1.3 Positive outputs

In the beginning of this chapter, the positive outputs were characterized as the community gardening products other than fruits, vegetables, herbs or flowers. Typically, they can be seen as the initial goals that have been achieved:

I think that lot of new bindings were created and are being created, lot of people met right there, even though it was people from the neighbourhood. There were cases of people who lived in the same apartment building but didn’t know each other. (Prazelenina, organizer)

The increase of social interactions on a local scale can be seen as one of the most notable positive outputs. Meeting people was not only a large motivation from the perspective of the organizers (Prazelenina, Matparken, På Spåret), but also one of the most frequently mentioned reasons to participate from the side of the gardeners (Kokoza, gardener 1; Prazelenina, gardener 4; Matparken, gardener 5; På Spåret, gardener 8). Most of the participants come from the neighbouring areas, even though exceptions exist. Cultivating neighbourhood relationships can thus be seen as a vision that had been realized and became an actual positive output (Prazelenina, Matparken). Furthermore, an increase of social relationships on a wider level has been marked, as can be exemplified by the social connections between the organizers of different garden in terms of cooperation and sharing experience (Kokoza). These two types of social interactions can be assigned to the bonding, respective bridging social capital (Table 5).
Learning and education can be seen as another significant contribution of the explored community gardens. Especially in the urban setting, the gardens became places to learn how the things we buy in supermarkets have been grown:

I know some people, who are engineers and have children that have never seen the countryside and that don’t know what a cow looks like. And they want the child to learn what it looks like. (På Spåret, organizer)

All gardens in this study have in common, that it is either the organizers (Prazelenina, Matparken, På Spåret), or the gardeners themselves who encourage planting of less known species, either for example vegetables that used to be very common decades ago but now are hard to find on the markets, or foreign species, as can be exemplified on an “Asian box” of one gardener in Prague, who experimented with a variety of Asian herbs and vegetables (Kokoza, gardener 2).

[...] then I just plant lot of flower that engage lot of bees. And a lot of things that are here – when you see them ‘Oh, what is that!’ – that is the most important. For the children, for everybody. If I can get just one person to stop and look at it. That is a win. (Matparken, organizer)

The other method of learning was more explicit. Both Swedish gardens (Matparken, På Spåret) were engaged in educational programmes and they cooperated with local schools by means of providing them with boxes or raised beds where the children and pupils could learn how vegetables are grown.

If we take a look back to the theory, we can find education as one of the essential characteristics of social sustainability as presented by Åhman (2013), where the topic is understood as equal access to education. Therefore it needs to be understood that looking from the perspective of social sustainability, the above presented examples of the garden’s educational activities may be seen as a form of extension to this idea, but not as the core theme leading to social sustainability of community gardens.

Appreciation and satisfaction were another positive output that also could be assigned to the category of drivers. For the organizers, this appreciation (Matparken) and basically seeing people happy (På Spåret) had a great value and became a reason why to keep on making an effort and organizing the community garden’s life (Prazelenina, organizer), as it has been already mentioned in the drivers part.

Establishing a community garden in an urban setting may enhance the variety of public open spaces on a local scale. From this perspective community gardens can be seen as an example of
urban acupuncture (3.3). They were localized projects that contribute to the diversity of public and semi-public open spaces, such as parks, playgrounds, public squares, and yards by introducing an activity of a different kind. Therefore the community gardens contribute to the good quality of the outdoor space (Gehl, 2010). For example, one interviewed gardener (Prazelenina, gardener 3) mentioned, that she had just come to the garden with her daughter, because she did not feel comfortable at the playground nearby due to misunderstandings with other parents; she appreciated having the possibility of spending the afternoon in the garden. Similarly, other gardener expressed the fact that they enjoy going to the garden not only for the gardening related activities, but also other happenings and events that are being held in the garden, such as concerts, grilling evenings, workshops, etc (Prazelenina, gardener 4). Moreover, one of the common characteristics that the examined community gardens bear is that they cultivated a space that was previously a “left-over” space without any function (such as the abandoned railway in the case of På Spåret and empty lots in case of Prazelenina) and assigned it a new function, that was publicly accessible at certain times (Prazelenina), or even 24 hours a day in some cases (På Spåret). Some gardens were more exposed to public life and more visible:

We passed by the garden last year and got interested in what was happening there. (Prazelenina, gardener 4)

Other gardens were in some way hidden within the neighbourhoods and therefore their contribution to their nearest surrounding could be subject to discussion (Kokoza).

6.1.4 Negative outputs

Even though the majority of gardens were on public grounds and publicly accessible, there could have occurred a risk that the gardens may have been perceived as enclosed communities that might have discouraged new potential users of the specific space. In this sense, even though the gardens enhanced the social interaction and the variety of public spaces, there was a risk of a possible threat of social exclusion of people, who were not participating. One gardener (Matparken, gardener 6, at the same time one of the initiators of the citizen proposal stood at the beginning of the community garden in Skarpnäck) noted, that it can, for example, be a political engagement of some of the people in the group that might “scare away” new people. The social exclusion as an output of community gardening could be perceived as a threat to a garden’s existence, as it was observed in the case of Prazelenina, where the local municipality received an anonymous report that criticized some specific activities happening in the garden. Social exclusion is seen in the theory as a negative effect of the social capital (Häuberer, 2011).

“An interesting contrast to the cohesion perspective comes from Jansson (2010), who argues that one of the threats to social sustainability in rural areas is that people do not feel culturally acknowledged in their local community, which may result in people moving to live elsewhere in order to meet likeminded people, thus eroding social sustainability in their community. Hence, if Pole’s claims that not meeting different people is a threat to social sustainability, Jansson argues that not meeting culturally likeminded people is a threat to social sustainability.”

Åhman (2013:5-6)
Situations that follow the complaints and reports may be seen from a perspective of an organizer as discouraging and may lead to a series of decisions that influence the existence of the community garden. Therefore, it is important to highlight the above mentioned role of the organizational structure, that can be helpful in distributing the responsibilities more evenly and thus prevent the dependence of the garden on one leader. The dependence on one leader can potentially endanger the existence of the garden in cases where the leader cannot fulfil his/her responsibilities. The reasons can range from a “burn-out” of the organizer, who has been putting a vast amount of energy into the community gardening project, to for example a case if the organizer would become pregnant and there was no one else to take over. Therefore, the efficient organization of the community garden can be seen as an important precondition for achieving a successful movement, as was suggested already in the theoretical part of this report (5.3).

A second necessary element that is needed for a successful functioning of a garden is the participants and the gardeners. Some of the organizers (Prazelenina, Matparken, and På Spåret) mentioned the fact that the community is changing from season to season. Although there are no statistics on who left the community and for what reasons, in one garden (På Spåret) the organizer estimated, that about half of the members from the previous season did not come back:

I always worry what about people from the last year, did they get disappointed, or did they just have a child, or have more work, lots of them I know have changed city, changed work, have a child, changed position and in some way that they don’t have the same time. But it might be in some way that some people as well feel this doesn’t fit them. (På Spåret, organizer)

Since there was no information available, that would explain why the member turnover is so high, possible reasons can be drawn from the interviews with the current gardeners, who replied to the question about what would stop them from planting in the next seasons. Most of the time the gardeners answered that they would not come if they moved out of the area or if they had no time for such activity. Two gardeners mentioned the loss of sense of community (Matparken, gardener 5) and if their friends were no longer coming (På Spåret, gardener 8), which can be seen, among other things, as a result of a high member turnover.

6.2 Nature of the community in a community garden

As the interview results showed (Table 12, Table 13), the community gardens were more about the community part than about the gardening.
Already discussed in the previous parts, meeting people was one of the main reasons for participation mentioned by the gardeners and also one of the main motivations of the organizers. Based on the interviews, it is also possible to present some basic characteristics of the communities that emerged around the community gardens.

Typically, the gardens were initiated by a group of two or more friends (Kokoza, Prazelenina, Matparken, and På Spåret). Gradually, the communities grew to a size that corresponded to the capacity of the area. The first members joined the garden mainly after reading about it in the local newspapers and through newsletters (Kokoza, På Spåret), in some cases they passed by and got curious (Prazelenina, gardener 4), some of them were friends of the initiators and wanted to support them in this way (Prazelenina).

The size of the community differed according to the size of the space provided. Furthermore it is worth noting the difference between the active members, who came and cultivated, and supporting members, who mainly supported the garden activities by paying the membership fee (Matparken, På Spåret). For example one garden (På Spåret) counted up to 300 supporting members, but the number of active members was ranging only from 20 to 40. In another case the garden (Kokoza) only had about 12 members who steadily participated. Another (Matparken), similarly small, garden was functioning on a non-binding flexible principle, where the number of active gardeners was ranging from 3 to 13. The frequency of common meetings in the gardens varied. Some of the gardens have scheduled two meetings a week (Kokoza, På Spåret); some were meeting meet once a week or more or less irregularly (Prazelenina). Moreover, organizers of one garden (Matparken) decided to lower the frequency of meetings to once in two weeks, because the participation in the weekly meetings was too low.

The diversity of the membership base is also an interesting aspect that is worth pondering upon. As Draper and Freedman (2010:459) stated, community gardens can be used by diverse groups of people in terms of “age, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.” Although the organizers do not keep records of this aspect; we can still be able to draw some basic conclusions on how the communities in the explored gardens looked like.
### Table 12. Interview results – social aspects and nature of community in the studied community gardens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Garden Feelings</th>
<th>Social Network</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Meetings</th>
<th>Garden Expectations</th>
<th>Produce</th>
<th>Meetings Schedule</th>
<th>Social Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Praželenina</td>
<td>Most participants were families with small children, people in productive age, singles, and young couples. There were few older couples. In the first season one pensioner was participating, who did not return for the second season. The garden was waking different emotions in the neighbourhood, both positive (joy and pleasure) and negative (worries). The garden contributed to the density of social networks in the neighbourhood and initiated new friendships. Besides gardening the environment provides activities of cultural character that facilitated social interaction. Some of the gardeners organized activities also outside of the garden.</td>
<td>The garden has fulfilled the expectations regarding the number of gardeners (about 15); the amount of produce was seen as unimportant. Two of the gardeners became coordinators of the community garden. The gardeners meet twice a week. Some gardeners were more social and some less; whereas some preferred to have their own piece of land and not communicate too much, others were searching for the common activities, communication and participation.</td>
<td>The harvest was not the priority in the food park; the priority was to offer a place for local people to meet in their neighbourhood. The number of gardeners varied from 3 to 15. Some of them were registered and some of them just passed by and joined spontaneously. Not many foreigners joined the gardening activities. Many new friendships were established through gardening and other activities planned by the organizer (i.e. water battle, fika, concerts). The meetings are scheduled once every other week.</td>
<td>The garden provided space for social interaction and place to meet people from various backgrounds. Most participants were mid-age and younger, but there were also people from other age groups and the garden offered space for diverse social classes. The meetings were scheduled twice a week and relied on voluntary work of gardeners who came (approx. 20 people) from the total number of about 300 members. People came also during the week when there was no meeting. Many gardeners lived nearby, but there were also people living quite far. The gardening itself was accompanied by a range of activities and events (fika, celebrations). The garden served as a stage for interaction.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kokoza</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matparken</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>På Spåret</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender, age, occupation</td>
<td>Kokoza Gardener 1</td>
<td>Kokoza Gardener 2</td>
<td>Prazelenina Gardener 3</td>
<td>Prazelenina Gardener 4</td>
<td>Matparken Gardener 5</td>
<td>Matparken Gardener 6</td>
<td>På Spåret Gardener 7</td>
<td>På Spåret Gardener 8</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W, 64, pensioner</td>
<td>M, 33, journalist</td>
<td>M, 36, IT</td>
<td>W, 47, freelance graphic designer</td>
<td>W, 32, association administrator</td>
<td>W, 35, coordinator</td>
<td>W, 34, architect</td>
<td>W, 28, student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe your lifestyle.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>“I’m doing what I enjoy.”</td>
<td>“We like organic food and we think about more ecological way of life.”</td>
<td>“I think about what I eat and I like variation in my diet.”</td>
<td>“Ecological. We don’t have any car and we don’t go by airplane. But we are not completely vegetarian.”</td>
<td>“Deep green, deep intrinsic values – that means, the nature is not for me, I am part of it.”</td>
<td>“Quite environmental conscious. I don’t own a car, use public transport, and walk to work. I pay attention to recycling, re-use, energy/ water saving and consumption in general. On food: I would be happy to have access to more local products.”</td>
<td>“I have quite high environmental awareness, I care lot about quality of food, I despise the food industry, I try to buy as much organic as I can afford.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have previous experience with gardening?</td>
<td>Yes (own garden)</td>
<td>Yes (own balcony, guerrilla gardening)</td>
<td>Yes (own garden)</td>
<td>Yes (own garden)</td>
<td>Yes (allotment)</td>
<td>Yes (allotment, permaculture studies)</td>
<td>Yes (grandparents’ garden)</td>
<td>Yes (parents’ garden)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you plant in this garden last year also?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you come?</td>
<td>Twice a week.</td>
<td>Once a week.</td>
<td>Once a week.</td>
<td>Every other day.</td>
<td>Once or twice a month.</td>
<td>Irregularly.</td>
<td>Once/twice a week.</td>
<td>Twice a week.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you meet with some gardeners outside of the garden?</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you participate in other activities in the garden?</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Not much.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most of the time it is families with small kids (1 to 10 years old), mainly people in productive age, single, young couples, young families, a few older couples. Last year we had one pensioner, but he didn’t come back this year. (Prazelenina, organizer)

The situation in the other three gardens was similar, as could be drawn from the interviews with both organizers and gardeners, with generally high percent of young gardeners and families, and altogether low participation of pensioners. A detailed research on the socio-economic and age structure of the participants, which was not part of this study, would be necessary in order to provide precise conclusions in these terms. Even though the explored community gardens were open to all participants, their membership base was not as diverse as the citation from Draper and Freedman may suggest.

Whereas the size of the community was different in all cases, what the gardens had in common was their localized scale. The majority of the gardeners lived in close proximity to the studied gardens, from about 50 meters to 10 minutes by bicycle, with some exceptions, as for example friends of an organizer who joined to support him in the beginning (Prazelenina). The residence in the neighbourhood was not mandatory to join the gardens studied. However, such a condition was part of the rules of another, recently founded Stockholm community garden called Lilla Essinge Odlarna\(^5\) (2013).

The ties between the members varied. As the organizers said, many new friendships have been formed (Prazelenina, Matparken). A number of the interviewed gardeners (Kokoza, gardener 1; Prazelenina, gardener 4; Matparken, gardener 5, På Spåret, gardener 8) participated in order to meet people, many of whom because they were new to the area and were searching for neighbourhood connections. The ties between the gardeners can be perceived as bound to the site of the garden, which was the arena for interaction. All gardens provided a wide range of activities ranging from gardening itself to concerts and film projections that all took place in the gardens – no commonly organized activities were happening outside of the studied gardens. Even though the actual activities were happening mainly on the site of the gardens, the outreach of the community gardens and the impact on creating a higher level of social capital, which was questioned by (Kingsley & Townsend, 2006), can be seen in the densification and initiation of connections on many levels: between the gardeners and other participants, between organizers of different gardens, between the gardens associations and private companies and between the organizers and the municipality representatives.

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\(^5\) “The association is open to all individuals who live on Lilla Essingen and also welcomes organizations connected to Lilla Essingen.” (Lilla Essinge Odlarna, 2013), loosely translated by the author.
It is worth noting that the community gardens did not only have a personal impact on the gardeners, but also on the organizers as individuals:

[I learnt] to trust people more. (Prazelenina, organizer)

In general, the ties between the community gardening members can be labelled as a type of bonding social capital (Table 5). They refer to the way the individuals identify themselves with groups of people sharing similar characteristics, the way they cooperate and to the level of trust among the members of these groups (Baum & Ziersch, 2003; Elgar et al., 2011).

6.3 Differences between starting a gardening project in the Czech and Swedish settings

The comparison of gardens in different settings provided us with interesting information about differences in the processes of establishing a community garden. The number of differences was not high, nevertheless, some of them significantly influenced the way the gardens functioned. Because the conclusions and thoughts on the aspects that are similar were presented in the previous part, the following paragraphs focus on what was different between the gardens in the respective countries, starting with a table that presents the results in a comprehensive manner (Table 14).

The idea is that there is nothing personalized, everything is common. (Trädgård på Spåret, organizer)

First, a major difference could be seen between the basic principles of functioning of the gardens in Prague and Stockholm. The examined Swedish gardens were based entirely on the principle of sharing, where all members were working together and later share the harvested products. Nothing was individualized. The organizer’s task during the winter was to prepare a plan for the season in terms of what will be planted where and in what amount. The system was very flexible in a sense that the members came to the garden when they had the time. Some members came more regularly than others, and the organizers never knew beforehand how many people would come. Therefore, the numbers of active gardeners were approximate and differ from week to week. The disadvantage of this model can be seen in the fact, that in a larger community garden it might be difficult to get to know people who come less regularly than others. As one of the organizers noted, she did not know all members by name (Trädgård på Spåret). Oppositely, the explored Czech gardens can be seen as very individualized.
Table 14. Interview results – differences between starting gardening project in the Czech and Swedish settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prazelenina</th>
<th>Kokoza</th>
<th>Matparken</th>
<th>På Spåret</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual and Common</strong></td>
<td>Principle of the garden was based on individual cultivation according to gardeners’ preferences. The ability to share was seen as limited. The community aspect was represented by common activities of cultural and social character (concerts, workshops, etc.)</td>
<td>Principle of the garden was based on individual cultivation according to gardeners’ preferences; there was a common herb garden.</td>
<td>Every raised bed in the garden had a scheme of cultivation and was cultivated together by all present gardeners.</td>
<td>Everything in the garden was common, the work and the harvest. All work was dependant on people, without knowing ahead how many people would come.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication with authorities</strong></td>
<td>Communication with the local district administration was not successful and no cooperation was established, due to unclear jurisdiction and lack of understanding of the project.</td>
<td>The cooperation with the local district administration was established after a number of meetings, intensive communication and thanks to persistence of the organizers. The project then received support from a number of district administrations.</td>
<td>The food park was established as a result of cooperation between the local district administration and the citizens’ organization.</td>
<td>The garden was seen as a success thanks to the Swedish tradition of dialogue between authorities and citizens. The project gradually achieved a longer-term recognition from the local administration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Everybody grows what they want. There are some limits. Most of the people grow vegetables and herbs. We have some common flowerbed with ornamental plants or flowers. This year I built a foil house for fun, so we have some things there. There aren’t that many community things, because I came to conclusion that the ability of sharing is very limited.” (Prazelenina, organizer)

The Czech gardeners did not plant and harvest together, but everyone or each ‘unit’ cultivated their own piece of ground individually. The community essence was then supported by additional activities such as cultural or sports events, workshops, evenings with grilling, festivals or just hanging out outside the café.

And if the one who is interested [in starting a community garden] has in his/her surrounding someone who has got some experience, the best thing is to come and ask, look how the project works and find all the necessary in advance, cooperate, not keep any secrets and do things alone, but share with others. Which is not very common in the Czech Republic, people are used to take care of the things on their private site, but for us it is much more interesting to cooperate. (Kokoza, organizer)

In the Swedish gardens a person bought a share in the association by paying the membership fee, but he/she did not buy a specific ‘physical’ object. On the other hand, in the Czech gardens a person, by paying the membership fee, rented a concrete box for one season. The other Czech organizer has mentioned that before Kokoza started in 2011, there was an attempt on the same site to start a community garden based on the principle of sharing, but that project did not succeed. Even though both the Swedish gardens studied were based on sharing of the work and produce, gardens based on a model similar as the Czech gardens also existed, where the boxes/bags were rented out to individual persons or groups of people. The already mentioned Lilla Essinge Odlarna (2013) garden found in 2013 can serve as an example. Similarly, a garden based on the principles of sharing of work and produce was found in 2013 in Brno, the Czech Republic. Interestingly, a parallel of the differences between the concepts of sharing and individualism can be seen in the housing customs in both countries in terms of apartment ownership. In Sweden, the possibility of private ownership of an apartment was only introduced in 2009 (Boverket, 2013). A more common is a situation, when the tenant does not typically buy the apartment itself, but a share in the association/housing cooperative that owns the property (SCB, 2013). This model exists in the Czech Republic as well,

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6 In 2012, from the total 16657 newly built apartments only 192 were in private ownership. 51% of the apartments were owned by cooperatives and 48% were rental apartments. (SCB, 2013)
however, the private form of apartment ownership is approximately twice as more common (ČSÚ, 2011).

The second significant issue, which can be drawn from the experiences of the organizers, is a topic that can be labelled as governance. The cooperation between the gardens and the municipalities was different in both countries. From Swedish examples it can be assumed that there was a kind of tradition of cooperation between the municipality and the citizens (Matparken, På Spåret). For example Matparken Skarpnäck rose out of the cooperation between the citizens’ initiative and the local municipality. One could say, that the local governments listened and were open to similar citizens’ suggestions and initiatives, at least as shown through this research.

The last two years we weren’t basically doing anything else but going to meetings, we were convincing the municipalities and other possible partners to join and support our activities and to cooperate. Now I think we passed this stage and we are headed towards the realization of a much bigger project. (Kokoza, organizer)

In the Czech environment, both garden organizers expressed themselves in a sense that the communication with the municipality representatives was difficult in the beginnings. That was especially because the topic itself and citizens’ initiatives of such kind were new and therefore not covered by any norms or laws (Kokoza). The municipality representatives by large did not know how to approach such efforts and which department was competent to administrate community gardens’ agenda (Kokoza, Prazelenina). The cooperation of the gardens with the municipalities and their success was then largely based on the persistence, intensive communication and clear presentation of the projects (Kokoza).

The cooperation with the municipalities and the wider range of stakeholders could also be related to the finding, that both Swedish cases were involved in projects that introduced gardening and cultivating to children of pre-school age and pupils and they officially cooperated with the respective schools. This could be perceived as a sign of recognition and trust for the activities of community gardens.

It has become a topic that is ‘hanging in the air’ – people already recognize it. That I think is a big part of our work of the last two years. And what I am happy about, even though maybe the other gardens don’t see it, that we were inspiration for other gardens, but also that we prepared the path for them. When we say community

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7 According to the Population and Housing Census in 2011, from the total of 4 104 635 dwellings 824 076 were privately owned (own houses excluded) and 385 601 dwellings’ tenure status was in cooperative ownership. (ČSÚ, 2011)
Whereas the beginnings of the community gardens in the Czech environment were difficult due to the low level of awareness and experience with citizens associations of this kind, the Swedish gardens had the advantage of the tradition of communication and cooperation between the municipality and active citizens. Still, as the quotation above suggests, it can be concluded that the efforts of the Czech organizers fell on fertile ground, mainly thanks to the on-going communication and publicity (Kokoza). Therefore, the general awareness about community gardens was constantly growing, which helped create a better background for similar community gardening efforts to start with.

The empirical findings based on the interviews confirmed the assumptions, drawn from the theoretical background, that suggested a general lack of communication between the state and the citizens in the Czech Republic, and on the other hand noted the significant role of citizens associations in managing public affairs in Sweden.

6.4 Placing the community garden within the framework of social capital and social sustainability

The three preceding parts presented the findings from the empirical part and suggested links to the theoretical background of this report with the aim to provide answers to the research questions. In order to summarize the findings and place them within the concepts of social sustainability and social capital, this part presents two tables that represent the way the findings from the studied community gardens can be incorporated into the theoretical concepts. The first table (Table 15) assigns the aspects of community gardening to the six sustainability themes presented by Henrik Åhman (2013) that represent the qualities leading to social sustainability. In this way we can observe how and to what extent the community gardens can be seen as contributing to social sustainability. The second table (Table 16) in a similar way seeks connections between the community gardens and the concept of social capital.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social sustainability theme</th>
<th>Community garden reflection as seen in the studied gardens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic needs and equity</td>
<td>The volume of food production is not the main focus of the examined community gardens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Community gardens offer special educational programmes and workshops for children, cooperate with school and thus help enhance the understanding of how the products of our daily consumption are being cultivated. Nevertheless, this form of education can be seen as an extension to provision of equal access to education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of life</td>
<td>Community gardens provide an alternative way to spend free time in a green urban environment and enrich the social relationships on a neighbourhood scale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social capital</td>
<td>Community gardens engage and help developing and supporting densification of social networks on different scales, as for example on the localized scale (between community garden members), or at wider city scale (between organizers of gardens in different districts).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social cohesion, integration and diversity</td>
<td>Community gardens connect like-minded people, who are interested in gardening activities which is perceived as a tool for meeting other people by interacting and sharing experience. At the same time, community gardens can become places to meet people of other backgrounds (social, professional, cultural, national) or for example people of different age. Community gardening can be a tool how to meet neighbours for those, who have recently moved to the neighbourhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of place</td>
<td>Community gardens are localized public open spaces of specific visual characteristics that are available for everyone to participate or enjoy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15. Social sustainability themes related to community gardening
6.5 Concluding thoughts

The aim of this chapter was to answer the research questions of the report, by analysing the empirical input towards a backdrop of the theoretical framework outlined in the previous chapter. The results can be summarized as follows:

**What are the motivations, drivers and barriers on the way to a successful community garden?**

The interviews revealed a number of factors that influenced the functioning of the community garden. These were categorized in four areas (drivers, factors, positive and negative outputs), even though some of them can be assigned to more than one category. The first group represented the drivers that initiated the establishment of a community garden and that also help sustain the functioning of the garden. In this group we can find the motivations, visions, demand, appreciation and acceptance. The second area represents the factors that influence the way the garden is functioning. These factors can be found both within the garden itself, such as the organizational structure and funding, but also in the surrounding environment of the garden, where we can find the majority of factors: formal and informal networks, future land access, relationship to the municipality and norms and policies. The third group represents the positive outputs that can be seen as the positive products of community gardening, other than the produce itself. In this group we can count the increase of social interaction, learning and education, appreciation and enhancement of the variety of public spaces. The last group represents the negative outputs, issues that might represent...
risk to the community garden’s functioning and existence. In the last category we can find aspects such as social exclusion and member turnover. The result of the analysis suggests that there is no short answer to the initial question. This list of factors that influence the success of the community garden is rather long and even though some aspects might be prioritized, none of them can really be omitted. Still, as the most important factors, which had a great impact on other aspects, we can see the way the community around the gardens were organized and the way the gardens cooperated and communicated with municipalities and other stakeholders.

**What is the nature of the community in the community garden?**

As one organizer highlighted, the neighbourhood relationships were getting denser thanks to the community garden and many friendships emerged. Most of the participants typically lived in proximity to the garden. They saw the garden as a place to meet their neighbours, especially when they were new to the area. The frequency of the meetings in the gardens was different, ranging from twice a week to once in two weeks or in irregular intervals for specific occasions. Not much interaction was happening outside of the community garden itself. Typically, the gardeners in the studied gardens could be characterized as young people in productive age, coming alone, with partners or with families. However, more detailed data and analysis is needed in order to assess the demographical structure.

**What are the differences between starting a gardening project in the context of the Czech Republic and Sweden?**

The main differences can be seen in the more individualized approach in the Czech environment in comparison to the explored gardens in Sweden, which are based on the principle of sharing. Still, the number of gardens studied in this report is too small to draw general conclusions, because other examples of both approaches (not part of this study) existed in both countries. The second significant difference can be seen in the communication and cooperation between the local government and the citizens’ associations/gardens. In Sweden, cooperation between these seemed to be more intensive and included a dialogue between both parties as a natural part. On the other hand, the organizers in the Czech Republic put a large effort into the communication with the municipality to achieve the inceptions of this dialogue.

To conclude, the findings from all parts were placed into the framework of social sustainability and social capital in order to demonstrate the way the community gardens contribute to the respective concepts. Even though the community gardens themselves may not be seen as the crucial elements when striving for social sustainability, if we look at them from the perspective of urban acupuncture, they can be perceived as one element that contributes to the system as whole.
7. Final discussion

This paper investigated a number of specific aspects related to the emergence of community gardens in the context of Prague, Czech Republic and Stockholm, Sweden. The aim of the study was to find answers to the research questions posed in the first chapter by means of theoretical and empirical research process. The theoretical part was based on the concept of social sustainability, social capital and related theories. The empirical part focused on investigating four emerging community garden projects, in order to find out the motivations and goals of the organizers and participants, factors that play a significant role in the life of a community garden and the nature of community that was created around the garden. Based on the findings, the research questions were answered in chapter 6. This final chapter ponders upon the overall outcome of the report and discusses further aspects that arose in this study.

The study was limited in three ways: in the spatial, temporal and theoretical dimension. The spatial delimitations corresponded to the relatively small sample size that was limited to four in-depth explored gardens. The temporal delimitations were based on the fact, that the empirical research followed the case study gardens for a limited amount of time in the summer of 2013, which was for most of the gardens their second season. The theoretical delimitations limited the scope that comprised the theory of social sustainability and related concepts. From this point of view it is vital to note, that the results may be applicable with caution and may not be transferable universally.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the results of the study suggested the following outcomes:

a) As an answer to the first research question, the study identified a number of elements that influenced the establishment and functioning of the studied community gardens and that were of relevance for new gardens emerging in similar contexts. As the most important aspect were seen the organization of the community within a community garden together with the establishment of a network of cooperating stakeholders, which could be of a great help when securing the necessary resources: the site, material resources and funding.

b) The answer to the second research question suggested that the studied community gardens helped initiate social interaction and interweaved neighbourhood relationships by means of the common interest of the participants – gardening. The importance of the social aspect in community gardening can be found in the essence of the studied gardens, which is captured in Holland’s definition (2004:285), referring to community gardens as to “open spaces managed and operated by members
of the local community for a variety of purposes.” Furthermore, the additional activities offered by the explored gardens, such as neighbourhood meetings, workshops, markets, concerts and common coffee breaks contributed to the importance of the community aspect of community gardening.

c) The answer to the third research question showed the basic differences of establishment and management of community gardens in the Czech and Swedish contexts. The gardening activities in the explored Czech gardens were based on an individualized approach and the social interaction was mainly conveyed by additional activities. The explored Swedish gardens, on the other hand, emphasized the concept of sharing work and produce, where the ‘gardening together’ could be seen as a means of social interaction. Nevertheless, examples of the two approaches cannot be seen as typical for the two countries, because gardens of the opposite concepts were found in both the Czech and Swedish settings, but were not subject of this study. The second main difference shown by the case studies was in the approach of the local administrations and the overall communication between the municipalities and the citizen organizations, which can be assigned to different socio-political environments as a result of the historical development in the 20th century. In the cases of the Swedish gardens, the dialogue between the municipalities and the community gardens appeared to be a natural process of planning, whereas in the Czech Republic the successful dialogue was based on persistence and intensive communication, preceded by initial misunderstandings.

d) The previous chapter also showed a possible way of placing the community gardens within the concept of social sustainability and social capital. The studied community gardens facilitated all three types of social capital outlined in the theoretical background, because they were seen as multi-stakeholder projects that connected a wide range of actors. Bonding social capital refers to the cooperation and trust within groups of people sharing similar characteristics (Baum & Ziersch, 2003; Elgar et al., 2011), where the groups could be seen as the communities built around community gardens. Bridging social capital represents the relationships that connect the different groups that are at the same level (ibid.), which can be exemplified by the relationships between organizers of different gardens, or between the gardens and other actors that are on the same level, such as other citizen associations or private companies. Linking social capital can be found in the relationships between groups that are not of the same formal status or power (ibid.), in this report we can find an example in the cooperation between the community gardens and the local authorities. Social capital is one of the six themes that according to Åhman (2013) represent the qualities leading to social sustainability: basic needs and equity, education, quality of life, social capital, social cohesion, integration and diversity and finally sense of place. As Table 15 showed, four of these aspects can be facilitated by community gardening: those are the quality of life, social capital, social cohesion, integration and diversity and sense of place. Therefore we can conclude, that the explored community gardens
helped facilitate social sustainability and social capital. Nevertheless, there are issues that need to be pointed out in relation to these concepts. First, community building around community gardens is necessarily linked to the emergence of social exclusion of the individuals that are not participating, which may eventually become a threat to the garden. Second, Draper and Freedman (2010:459) suggest that community gardens are “used by, and beneficial for, individuals of any age, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, as well as the disabled and not disabled alike.” This was not completely the case of the explored community gardens, where, even though one organizer noted that the community garden was for her “the only place where I meet people from different social backgrounds in Stockholm” (På Spåret, organizer), the actual membership was not as diverse as the citation from Draper and Freedman might suggest.

e) This report has approached the topic of community gardens from the perspective of the social dimension of the concept of sustainability. Social aspects were one of the main motivations of the organizers and gardeners to participate in community gardening. Still, the other two dimensions of sustainability could be found in the explored cases, even though they occurred in minority. For example, one organizer has started the community garden as a project within a larger framework focused on urban gardening, composting and employment of people with disadvantages with the aim to be able to cover at least 50% of the budget from own sources (Kokoza). This case of a strong economic dimension of the motivation was unique among the explored cases. Similarly, the environmental dimension was represented in a minority of organizers’ motivations. An example could be found in the same garden (Kokoza), which originally rose out of the concept of introducing composting in an urban environment, seeing it as an easy thing to do, that may have an impact on a larger scale. Even though the environmental dimension was not seen as the main driver in the explored gardens, the following quote suggests that it can become a strong motivation in different contexts:

Concerned about climate change, Ridsdill Smith had been working to make an impact with a number of ‘low-carbon groups’, but he found it was tricky to get people enthusiastic about all the things they couldn’t do. He turned to growing food, figuring it would be a low-impact action that might be a nice change, because it was about something you could do. (Cockrall-King, 2012:119)

If we refer to the concept of sustainability, we should keep in mind that even though the three pillars of sustainability can be viewed as individual, yet interrelated goals (Åhman, 2013), it is necessary to approach the environmental, economic and social dimensions as parts of the composite concept of sustainability (WCED, 1987; United Nations General Assembly, 1992; InterAction Council, 1997 in Åhman, 2013).
As the outline of the historical background suggested, the 20th century community gardens emerged mainly as a response to crisis (Okvat & Zautra, 2011). Therefore it is of relevance to discuss if this can also be applied to the community gardens studied in this report. The answer can be both positive and negative. No, because the studied community gardens did not emerge as a result of food shortage or financial insecurity of the organizers or gardeners and therefore cannot be compared to the gardens that emerged during the world wars or during the Great Depression. On the other hand, drawing from the conclusion that “meeting people” was one of the main motivations of the organizers and gardeners to participate, the explored gardens can be seen as examples of a response to societal crisis in urban areas, where, even though they are full of people, it might be difficult to engage in social interaction.

The findings from this report add to a growing body of literature on community gardening by means of an analysis of factors that influence the functioning of a community gardening project, an examination of the nature of community in the community gardens, and a comparison of the influence of the socio-cultural and political norms on the establishment and functioning of the gardens in two different contexts. Still, the findings also brought up a range of topics that might be explored in further research. As the most interesting for further investigation we can see a detailed analysis of the actor network that possibly contributes to the success of the community action and that would bring together the points of view not only of the organizers and the gardeners, but also of other actors that participate in the process. Other interesting topics for further research are the long-term prospects and planning possibilities of community gardens, possibly with a connection to the field of futures studies. A third issue that may be worth exploring is mapping the way in which community gardens and similar citizen initiatives are approached in the legal documents and comprehensive plans of our cities.

The approach of the local governments and the position of the community gardens within the legal framework can also be seen as an important topic with implications for future practice, especially in the Czech Republic. The explored cases showed that the general awareness of community gardens rose and the cooperation with the authorities improved based on persistence and on-going communication. Still, at the moment where we left the studied gardens there is still plenty of work left to the organizers on the way to full recognition. Legal recognition can be seen as a necessary precondition for viewing the community gardens as long-term strategies for enhancing social sustainability and improving the quality of public open spaces in urban areas, instead of seeing community gardening as a transition strategy of a temporary character.
8. Handbook on Community Gardening

Based on the analysis of the theoretical and empirical data, the last chapter summarizes the main steps that lead to the establishment of a community garden and thus provides basic recommendations and a number of issues that should be taken into account for anyone who would like to start their own community garden project in their neighbourhood. The diagram on page 79 (Figure 8) shows a simplified ‘Story of a Community Garden’ that presents the major issues and steps that need to be covered in planning for a community garden project. The steps have been clustered in four thematic areas: preconditions, concept, actor network and resources and are presented in detail in the following paragraphs:

8.1 Preconditions

At the very beginning there are two important aspects that influence all the following steps: **Vision** and **demand**. The vision is an idea of what the community garden will be like, what purposes will it serve, where it could be, what will be happening there and who will be involved. The vision can involve many ideas, because it is mainly a product of the imagination influenced by internal and external stimuli. Demand, on the other hand, is something very concrete. Every neighbourhood has its specific characteristics in terms of its physical form and social structure. A preliminary review of the local conditions can be an advantage, because expectations and the real outcome may be very different. Community gardens can be seen as a welcomed urban greening element in areas, where there is not a sufficient variety and density of open green spaces. For example, there is a chance of higher demand for a community garden in densely populated inner city neighbourhoods than in low density districts with detached houses, terraced houses or adjacent to allotments where most of the population already has access to a private garden.

8.2 Concept

Once the preliminary phase is done, it is time to develop an in-depth concept that illustrates all the details of the functioning of the garden, its basic functioning principles, organizational structure, requirements for the land, the size of garden in terms of the area and the number of gardeners, sources of funding and material resources, norms and regulations regarding community gardening in
the area, complementary activities and last but not least, a list of stakeholders that need to be contacted in order to obtain necessary permissions, resources and initiate mutual communication and cooperation. In this and the following phase it is also advisable to involve the gardeners in planning of what they want the garden to be. The participation during early stages of planning is an important step on the way to a successful community garden.

8.3 Actor Network

It is important to keep in mind, that to obtain the resources outlined in the last paragraph, it is desirable to initiate communication with a range of stakeholders. The on-going communication is the prerequisite for setting up a base for an efficient network of multi-stakeholder cooperation. In this network, the community garden organization itself can be seen as the most important.

There are many ways in which a community garden can be organized depending on the local circumstances. It can be for example an informal club of friends, an association with registered members, a project as a part of other activities. Each form of organization has its pros and cons; nevertheless, in the beginning it is important to think through the organizational structure, the tasks and the responsibilities. Even though community gardens can be seen as informal initiatives and leisure activities, an organizational structure with assigned responsibilities helps prevent vulnerability to outer influences and sustain a long term functioning of the garden. Furthermore, a clear organizational structure is helpful when communicating with representatives of the municipality, private companies and other stakeholders.

The municipality has the potential to be the key partner of a community garden. This partnership can come in various forms, ranging from passive acceptance to active support. A positive attitude of a municipality can alleviate some situations the garden is facing. For example, the municipality can become a strategic partner and provide a site with special rental conditions. Active communication is always of a great importance for the future prospects. Furthermore, communication with municipality representatives shows how well developed the garden concept is. In this sense, it is necessary to highlight the importance of the presentation of the project that needs to be easy to communicate and understand for a wide range of stakeholders.

The communication and presentation of the concept are important also in terms of cooperation with private stakeholders, such as for example companies in the field of horticulture. This group of stakeholders has a great potential to help the garden with both material and immaterial issues. In this sense, private companies can be strategic partners when obtaining material resources such as seeds,
soil, fertilizer, tools and others. On the other hand, the cooperation does not necessarily need to be unilateral. For example, the community garden can establish a partnership with a local restaurant and provide them with fresh locally grown produce.

Another important actor group are the active individuals. These play an important and irreplaceable role in the life of a community garden in the sense of support, sharing experience, spreading word and initiating contact among people who would otherwise not meet. As an active individual we may basically perceive anyone ranging from the gardeners themselves to organizers of other gardens, or any persons who are somewhere ‘out there’ and willing to contribute by means of donating time, effort, experience or valuable connections.

8.4 Resources

Next to the elaborated actor network, which can be described as “soft conditions,” the resources can be seen as the “hard conditions.” A community garden may be established without any significant communication with municipality or private stakeholders. However, it is impossible to do so without having a site, funding strategy and material resources. Still, even though not necessary, the developed network of cooperating actors may be of great help in this sense.

The site is important, it creates the image of the garden and forms the way the garden works. Typically, community gardens use left-over, unused spaces in the urban structure, even though exceptions exist. The main concern with the site is the form of agreement and the length of the rights to use the land. That is the reason why many gardens are mobile, using containers or bags as temporary raised beds that can easily be moved to some other place. Long term agreements allow to plant directly in the soil or in permanent raised-beds and they prevent the feeling of insecurity for the following seasons. Often, the municipality may be the main partner when searching for a site. On the other hand, it is also possible to rent a site from a private owner. Besides the possibilities of the type and length of the agreement it is also vital to consider the accessibility to the site and access to basic utilities such as water, electricity and toilet.

Apart from the site itself, another basic component of a garden is made up of the material resources. In this category we can find for example the soil, seeds, gardening tools, and materials to build the raised beds and other accessories than need to be obtained. The cooperation with a range of actors can be seen as an important strategy in this sense also, because they can be of great help when obtaining and searching for the material resources. Use of creativity and curiosity when
searching for these may be a good strategy, because some of the resources may be found surprisingly easily in unexpected places.

**Funding** is the last resource that completes the list. Similarly to the previous two resources, the dense actor network may be of great use in this sense. Forms and approaches to funding of community gardens can be different, ranging from collecting a membership fee, introducing some activity with a profit, such as a café or workshops, private investments of the organizers, sponsorships and grants from foundations and private companies. The number of possibilities is quite high and different from case to case, but what can be recommended in general is to keep good track of the funding structure in order to be able to fulfil not only short term goals, but also to fulfil the long term strategies and thus secure the functioning of a garden in the coming seasons.

This list of aspects presents the steps that the organizers may need to evaluate when planning for new community gardening projects. The concrete aspects of each step are far more complex and to a high degree dependent on the specific case and the characteristics of the surrounding environment. Nevertheless, one last advice that can be drawn from the messages given by the organizers of the studied community gardens is to be persistent and not to be afraid, because a community garden is definitely worth the effort.
A Story of a Community Garden

When the concept is ready, the phase of establishment of so-called 'soft' values starts. In this phase, the communication is the essential tool on how to promote the project and establish a dense network of mutually cooperating stakeholders. These come both from the formal and informal sphere. A well-developed concept and the way it is presented is an important precondition of successful cooperation with the formal actors, such as the local municipality and private companies. At the same time, communication with active individuals and people who deal with similar projects is a valuable tool on sharing experience.

The dense network of relationships and mutual cooperation is one hand not necessary for the existence of a community garden, on the other hand the investment of time into developing this actor network is worth when aiming for a durable base for community garden's organization.

The fourth phase is represented by the 'hard' values, that can be seen as the aspects that are, unlike the social networks, tangible. Whereas it might be possible to establish a garden without a dense network of actors, it would be impossible to do so without having the rights to use a site, to have resources such as seeds, tools, soil and without funding.
References


Figures

Figure 1. Online newspaper headlines from 2011-2013
Sources for collage:


Figures 2 – 8 created by the author.
Appendix I. Interview Guideline - Organizers

A. Personal Information
- What is your occupation?
- What is your education level? In what field of study?
- Do you have specialized training in urban agriculture? Horticulture?
- How would you describe your lifestyle?
- Are you involved in some other projects related to CG activity, NGOs etc.?
- Where did the first idea to start a community garden (CG) come from? What was your source of inspiration?
- What was your motivation behind starting a CG project? (education, facilitating community or community building mechanism, health benefits, growing your own food for personal food security, growing organic food?)
- Has your motivation changed?

B. General Questions about Establishing CG
- When did you start your project?
- How many people are involved in organizing the project and how did they meet?
- What were the main steps you took to establish a CG?
- What were the sources of information for a startup of such project? Did you know any organizations that could have helped you?
- What authorities/stakeholders did you have to contact and cooperate with in order to establish a CG?
- List factors that have helped establishing a community garden.
- List factors that made the process of establishing a CG difficult, that made you change your plans or give up some ideas.

C. Land Use
- What type of land do you use for growing (current status in a land use map)?
- What are the ownership rights and rental conditions? How many years? How much do you own/rent/lease?
- How does the land look like?
- How would you describe the surroundings?
- How do you think the surrounding environment influences the garden and vice versa?
- Have you tested the land for possible contamination from previous uses?
- What is happening on the land during the winter season?

D. Funding/Economy
- Did/do you receive funding/grants/local government grants/loans/utility discounts to start/operate the CG?
- What is the economical/formal characteristics of the CG? (Is it a NGO or some other form of organization? How is it financed?)
- List items that needed to be paid for to establish/run the CG and the costs?
- List income sources.

E. Planting
- What do you plant? Is there a planting scheme?
- Do you provide the gardeners with seeds/utilities/workshops/advice?
- Do you promote organic food production?
- How do you fertilize?
- How do you compost?
- How do you irrigate?
- How do you control pests?
- Do you plant yourself?

F. Social Aspects
- How many people are involved in the CG? Organizers/Gardeners?
- Who is planting in the CG? How did you find the gardeners? Did you know them before?
- Do you live nearby?
- How would you describe the social relationships in the group?
- Is it the same people who applied for the second season?
- What are the other (non-gardening) activities related to your CG?
- Who is planning and organizing them?
- Are there some common events/activities that take place outside of the CG?

G. Experience and Plans
- What have you learnt during the first season?
- Is there something that have changed your approach after the first season?
- How does your experience with establishing a CG differ from your expectations?
- What was the most difficult?
- What was the most rewarding?
- Do you plan for the next seasons?
- Do you promote your project? Do you have a website?
- Do you participate in public workshops, forums, groups to share your ideas and experiences with others?
- Do you have recommendations to others who are interested in starting a similar business?
Appendix II. Interview Guideline - Gardeners

1. What is your age and occupation?
2. What is your education level? In what field of study? (High School, Post-secondary)
3. How far do you live?
4. How would you describe your lifestyle? (food habits – organic food, environment concerns, commuting by bicycle?, car ownership, participation in some other activities, NGOs etc.)
5. Do you have any previous experience with gardening? Allotment gardening/Own Garden/Balcony?
6. Do you participate in some organizations/associations focused on social development, public space, neighbourhood, sustainability, raising awareness etc?
7. Had you heard about CG before? If yes – where from?
8. What do you think of the concept of community gardens?
9. How did you find out about this CG?
10. Why do you participate?
11. Have you planted here the last year also?
12. If yes, what did you plant?
13. How often do you come?
14. Do you come alone/with friends/family?
15. Did you know some of the other gardeners before? If yes, where from?
16. Do you meet some of the gardeners outside of the CG?
17. Do you participate in other activities related to this CG than gardening?
18. What is important for you related to CG?
19. What do you like the most about CG?
20. Is there something you do not like about CG?
21. Would you like to plant the next season also? What would prevent you from doing so?
Appendix III. Trädgård på Spåret: Association Principles

[Loosely translated from: http://pasparet.org/om-oss/ by the author]

In February 2012, we formed the non-profit association “Trädgård på Spåret”.

Background
In late 2011, the City of Stockholm gave a green light for our idea: a mobile, temporary and non-profit driven garden on the track area in Eriksdal. Building an organization was an important step to move from a thought to an action - to gather interested people who want to help to concretise and implement the idea. It's neither funny nor possible to run such a project alone. We also needed an organization to deal with all the bureaucratic topics: Writing a contract with Development Administration (Exploateringskontoret), manage a bank account and send out invoices.

Purpose
When we wrote the statutes, we decided that the association should have the following three purposes:

- Carry out a mobile organic garden where members can cultivate themselves, to disseminate knowledge of the culture, ecology and food (-> cultivation schools and libraries) to develop a sustainable strategy for the future of the area, where the garden is placed.

Base
The association consists of:

- Membership: Members contribute to the association through practical involvement and/or membership fees (SEK 200/season or 250 for families) that is invested in the organization. You should become a member if you think it's a good thing. You can decide if and how much you get involved. Some participate every week, others may want to just stop by for a coffee or be happy to support and follow the På Spårets development.

Right now, the garden has about 300 members. Around 40% count for family memberships.

- Plant Sponsorship: As a plant sponsor you contribute directly to the garden by funding one or more cultivation boxes. A box costs SEK 500 for individuals and SEK 1000 for a company. It consists of a pallet, three pallet collars, ground cloth, approx. 350 l of soil, plants and/or seeds. You cannot decide what should be grown in “your box”, but you get a sign with your name, a plant sponsor diploma and documentation at the end of the season.

In 2012 we found sponsors for 75 cultivation boxes (45 individuals, 30 companies).

- Partnership: The association cooperates with the city, businesses, foundations and other organizations. We welcome sponsors that suit us. It is possible to sell and market sustainable products or services. We are open for events, courses, research or other projects. And the association applying for grants for various activities.

Our partners in 2012 were:
Stockholm City / Development Administration (Stockholms Stad/Exploateringskontoret):
Thank you for the 5,000 sqm of land as well as lighting for symbolic SEK 12,000/year
Rolunda Farm:
Thank you for 36 pallets with 40,000 litres of the finest farming soil.
Fiskars:
Thank you for the big and small shovels, rakes, saws, axes and all other fancy gear.
Mercado Medic:
Thank you for 100 cultivation boxes of 100 pallets and 300 pallet collars.
Runäbergs seeds:
Thank you for 125 bags with best organic seeds.
Antonia Axson Johnsons’ Foundation for Environment and Development:
Thanks to a grant to develop the gardening school.
Ottoboni:
Thanks for this website ...

Organization
Association's Board of Directors consists of
Philipp Olsmeyer (chairman)
Lisa Kopp (vice-chairman)
Max Zinnecker (vice-chairman)
We have five working groups where you can get involved.
GARDEN, CAFÉ & EVENTS, COMMUNICATIONS & PRESS, BUSINESS & SOCIETY, AREA & ARCHITECTURE
The association has two fixed meetings every week:
Tuesday’s meeting at 18.00 for the planning and work in the garden - especially for the members, but open to all who are interested (from April to September in the garden; October to March at Katarina Bangata 56)
Open Track on Sundays - especially for all, but also for members who want to work in the garden (May to September)