Imagining Urban Gardening Space

An Ethnographic Study of Urban Gardening in Sweden

Ida Åberg

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[...] we learn a lot about the experience of living under any set of conditions by reflecting upon the desires which those conditions generate and yet leave unfulfilled.

For that is the space which utopia occupies.

Levitas (2011, p. 9)

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ABSTRACT

Urban gardening is a phenomenon that increasingly occupies the limited space in cities. In discourse, urban gardening is constructed as a positive element and as something that can build a productive environment in urban areas. However, using urban space for gardening raises questions about the delimitations of public space. This thesis examines the boundaries for gardening practices in urban public space by mapping out the dominant descriptions of the phenomenon and then analyzing how some articulations make it possible for citizens to claim urban space for gardening. The study uses an ethnographic approach and the empirical material includes participant observations at an urban garden in Stockholm as well as articulations found in the media, interviews, and social media posts as well as participant observations at urban gardens, expos and seminars on urban gardening. The theoretical framework is informed by poststructuralist discourse theory, psychoanalysis and critical geography. The main results show that urban gardens renegotiate boundaries of property due to their semi-public character. Furthermore, affective bindings in the garden create a fantasy of an authentic relationship with nature, which gives force to the positive discourse of urban gardening and makes it possible for urban gardens to inhabit urban public space.

Keywords: Public space, urban gardening, Sweden, post-structuralism, psychoanalysis, ethnography.

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Förord

Mat har en central roll i mitt medvetande. Så fort jag ätit upp planerar jag nästa måltid, dels för att jag är hungrig jämt men också för att maten blir godare när jag sett fram emot den. En stor del av min tankekraft går alltså åt till mat. Jag letar recept, planerar middagar, odlar och läser om klimatsmart mat. Mitt intresse för mat har väckt tankar om hur relationen mellan politik, matproduktion och organisering av rummet kan gynna eller missgynna en omställning mot en hållbar utveckling. Tankar som jag fått möjlighet att utveckla under min tid som doktorand.

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Linköping den 26 april 2019

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In October 2008 the county administrative board in Skåne published a resumé of a lecture by Niklas Wennberg about urban gardening. The headline reads “The potential of urban gardening” and is followed by two rhetorical questions:

Is urban food production a romantic dream, navel-gazing for environmental Muppets dressed in cardigans? Or does it represent strategic land use, invaluable for coping with the comprehensive climate adaptation of production and consumption patterns that we face? (Länsstyrelsen Skåne, 2008, translation by author)

In this short statement, we can gather several things about urban gardening. Firstly, we learn that urban gardening is an important phenomenon that has real potential to mediate necessary adjustments due to climate change through strategic use of land. The adjustments that can be spurred by urban gardening also include a profound change in how we produce and consume commodities. Here, climate change poses a fundamental threat to the long-term welfare of humankind. Secondly, we learn that the people who currently garden in urban environments are somewhat extreme in their endeavor and that these gardeners are compared to Muppets who contemplate romantic dreams about the future. The comparison with the children’s television series *The Muppet Show* implies that urban gardening might be considered a childish activity or dream. Also, being a Muppet is commonly used as a derogatory term referring to weird or odd behavior. When urban gardening is framed in this way, the practice loses its status as a solution to the threat of climate change and thus does not require the same amount of attention or effort.

Illustrated above is one of the central aspects of politics, that is, the negotiation of how social reality is constructed. Embedded in the construction of all social phenomena, such as urban gardening,

assumptions about identities, behaviors and relationships are made. Here, two views on urban gardening produce diverse interpretations of climate change, where one positions gardening as a necessity for humankind while the other connotes a utopian dream upheld by a minority. Thus, there is disagreement about the magnitude of the threat of climate change and/or urban gardening's potential to be a solution to this problem. What to be studied is the production and reproduction of the seemingly fixed meanings of urban gardening, which, despite the changing character of the urban fabric, establish a series of political realities. This thesis will emphasize urban gardening as a phenomenon in general and, specifically, how gardening through several discursive moves gains access to the limited space available in cities.

The form and function of urban space is structured through urban planning processes. Today, these processes reward ideals such as high housing densification, access to urban green space and biodiversity (Artmann, Inostroza, & Fan, 2019), while the ideals during industrialization excluded food production from the urban fabric. Instead, food was a commodity that was supposed to be produced elsewhere and imported into the urban area (Isendahl, 2012). Hence, the interpretation of cities or urban space is not a stable object, its physical matter as well as the ideas surrounding it are continuously shaped and reshaped, produced and reproduced (Lefebvre, 1991). Thus, urban gardens are situated within an environment that is characterized by instability and contradictory ideals that strive for hegemony. This negotiation between values is also present in the relationship between urban space and nature. For example, in urban planning, green space is portrayed as both a vital part of the city and an obstacle to growth (Uggla, 2011).

The urban is often interpreted as a node for consumption because materials or commodities flow into the city rather than being produced there. The idea of the city as a node for consumption is a strong discourse, but not unchallenged. In previous research, urban gardening is interpreted as a reaction to the idea of the city as a neoliberal project (McClintock, 2014; Purcell & Tyman, 2015). Here, urban gardening is identified as a way of critiquing neoliberalism and consumerism through the practice of gardening. The critique of neoliberalism becomes visible in several ways. Firstly, the value of space in the urban environment is problematized. Urban space is identified as embedded in a neoliberal urban development schema in which private ownership is valued above public ownership and land value is measured by its

exchange value on a free market (Leorke, 2015; Lyons, Richards, Desfours, & Amati, 2013). However, the urban gardening community subordinates exchange value and instead emphasizes social and ecological values in the urban environment (Purcell & Tyman, 2015). Secondly, urban gardening is interpreted as a reaction to the rolling back of the state. Within this discourse, food justice and class are emphasized. There are examples from the USA where urban gardens have been established in low-income areas and function as economic relief (McClintock, 2014). Thirdly, the critique of the neoliberal agenda found in McClintock (2010) constructs capitalism as a dividing force in the city, alienating urban dwellers from nature and producing false dichotomies between urban and rural, nature and culture. The reader should note that the rationale behind urban gardening in research is interpreted in various ways depending on the socioeconomic context. For example, urban gardening in developing countries is rather understood as a way to overcome poverty and improve food security (Battersby, 2013; Morgan, 2015), while in developed countries it is interpreted as identity building and an expression of ecological concerns (Dobernig & Stagl, 2015). This study is situated in a developed country and as such aims to provide insight into urban gardening in this context.

A common interpretation within research on urban gardening in developed countries is that it is a practice that urban dwellers can use to de-alienate or to rediscover their relationship with nature (Dobernig & Stagl, 2015; McClintock, 2010; Morgan, 2015). The idea is that, through urban gardening, urban dwellers can challenge the capitalist order and regain a lost relationship with nature. Research also shows that urban gardeners, through their practice, are challenging both what a city ought to be and how citizens can influence and mobilize politically (Dobernig & Stagl, 2015). For example, in a paper by Lyons et al. (2013) one respondent states that “growing your own food is one of the most political acts you can do”, where the actual practice of growing a carrot in an urban environment is filled with political meanings. This can be compared with Mouffe’s (2008) writing about how feminist art can be successful in both critiquing unequal power relations and revealing other political possibilities. I argue that urban gardening sites can likewise visualize alternatives to the hegemonic organization of the urban environment.

In line with Purcell and Tyman (2015), I argue that the urban gardening community should be understood as a political or social movement

which can be compared to other movements, such as the Occupy movement. To fully understand the implications of urban gardening practice in urban space, we need to analyze it as a political activity, to demonstrate the importance of researching activities in public space (Leorke, 2015). As we can see, there is a body of literature that focuses on the merits of urban gardening as well as the motives of the urban gardeners themselves. This literature is used here as a point of departure. I argue that research on urban gardening also needs to take into consideration the issue of space and how we can understand citizen appropriation of public space. This thesis will emphasize the spatiality of urban gardening and provide an analysis of how these spaces are sites of political struggle, instead of analyzing urban gardening as a social movement.

Urban gardening entails citizens using space in urban areas for vegetable gardening. It is a broad concept and can include various forms of vegetable gardening in the city. From allotment gardens, gardening on balconies or rooftops, to the urban gardening that takes place in the public spaces in a city, including parks and old train tracks, but also other places that are defined as “empty” or abandoned. This thesis will focus on the urban gardening that takes place in public spaces, separate from the traditional allotment gardens. Urban gardens are increasingly situated in public spaces and as such are meant for everyone. However, gardens have an indefinite character of spaces in-between where they are traditionally defined as an extension of private property, and because of this they can be defined as private space. Thus, urban gardens in public space blur the separation between private and public space and should therefore be interpreted as a semi-public space to which everyone potentially has access, but which is governed by only a few – the gardeners.

In political science, it is often stated that access to public space is instrumental for important deliberative democratic values (Franzén, Hertting, & Thörn, 2016; Parkinson, 2012). The street, square or park is viewed as a space where anyone and everyone can participate and communicate their political demands. Thus, public space is often portrayed as unproblematic, open or empty space that enables free speech. Doreen Massey (2005, p. 152) refers to these articulations as romanticized and calls for an understanding of public space as a product of social relations “which are most likely conflicting and unequal”. Studies have shown that there are continuing struggles in these open and unregulated public spaces where the urban population

tries to negotiate and define who has the right to be there (Comedia [1995] in Massey, 2005, p. 152). Hence, using urban space for gardening raises questions about the delimitations of public space that concern public access. In this study, I will attempt to bring these negotiations to the fore and make them visible in an urban environment where space is contested and highly political due to lack of space.

This thesis explores what transpires when a group of citizens introduces urban gardening into a public space. Using an ethnographic approach, I have participated as a member at the urban garden Bellevue Farm, as well as at other events on urban gardening in Sweden. I approach urban gardens as a particular form of space in the urban fabric and seek to demonstrate how public space is always in the process of becoming. In this way, urban gardening cannot simply be viewed as a recreational activity or a sustainable intervention in urban space. Instead, I argue that urban gardening space is part of negotiations where some values and relations are emphasized, while others are ignored.

Aim & Questions

The overarching aim of this thesis is to give an account of how citizens use and appropriate public space for urban gardening and to identify how urban gardening space is upheld and/or transformed. In my endeavor to research urban gardening I will map out the main problem representations surrounding the phenomenon and analyze how urban gardening space is negotiated. Furthermore, I will investigate the ways in which solutions to the problems identified above are presented as desirable and sometimes necessary. To do so, I pay attention to the emotional or affective bindings created between human subjects and their social reality in order to analyze how collective fantasies work as a driving or constricting force when it comes to how space for urban gardening is made possible. To achieve my aim, I have formulated three research questions:

- How is urban gardening characterized and how are its purposes expressed in Sweden?
- How do affective bindings and collective fantasies aid the embodiment of urban gardening?
- How do citizens claim and appropriate space for gardening within the urban environment? That is, how is urban gardening space negotiated?

Outline of the Thesis

In Chapter 2, *The Politics of Space*, the theoretical framework of the thesis is described. This study investigates urban gardening through a post-structuralist lens, focusing on how gardening space is negotiated and what collective fantasies aid the embodiment of urban gardening. Chapter 3, *Researching Urban Gardening*, presents the methodological approach and the empirical material. The material consists of an ethnographic investigation at an urban garden in Stockholm as well as articulations found in the media, interviews, social media posts and during participant observations at urban gardens, expos and seminars on urban gardening.

Chapter 4, *Urban Gardening in Sweden*, gives a brief history of urban gardening in Sweden, focusing on allotments and the new urban gardening movement. Thereafter, laws and regulations are presented. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the discourse of urban gardening in Sweden. In Chapter 5, *Elaborating on the Urge to Garden*, the method of vignettes is used to develop my thoughts on three kinds of affective bindings articulated in the material (concern, nostalgia and anxiety), which illustrate the desire to garden the city. The analysis builds on the broader empirical material and includes articulations from various gardens and gardeners throughout Sweden. Chapter 6, *Urban Gardening Space*, presents the urban garden Bellevue Farm. The focus here is on the production and reproduction of gardening space and the relations present in the garden. The analysis builds on an ethnographic study undertaken in Stockholm, Sweden. Lastly, Chapter 7, *Conclusions & Reflections*, sums up the thesis and discusses the main results of the analysis as well as outlining possible future research endeavors.

Chapter 2

THE POLITICS OF SPACE

This chapter presents the theoretical framework on which I build my argument. It identifies the thoughts that have been important in the process and the writers with whom I have been thinking in my analysis of urban gardening. The thesis is mainly informed by the post-structuralist writings of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2001 [1985]) but is also inspired by the logics approach developed by Glynos and Howarth (2007). This enables the analysis to take into consideration both the form of political as well as their affective force.

Another scholar who has been important for the analysis of urban gardening space is Doreen Massey (1994, 1995, 2005, 2008). Building on the post-structuralist tradition, Massey argues that space is relational; hence, space is not just an empty surface. Instead, space is constituted out of interrelations and as such it is filled with power struggles and is always in the process of becoming. The conceptualization of space as a medium for power struggles contributes to the understanding of both the materiality of urban gardening and the ideas that surround it. Thus, how urban space is ordered and categorized is the result of negotiations. Massey's conceptualization of space serves as a point of departure in the forthcoming analysis of urban gardening space.

Post-Structuralist Discourse Theory

In *Hegemony and Social Strategy* (2001 [1985]), Laclau and Mouffe deconstruct Marxism and suggest a post-Marxist reading of the concept of hegemony. The main issue for Laclau and Mouffe is that Marxism assumes that ideology merely relates to social and economic processes. Marx argued that ideology is a system of ideas and beliefs that legitimize and naturalize certain practices and social arrangements, e.g. the relationship between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie (Marx &

Engels, 1975). Ideology is viewed as a social totality based on economic relations. Marx uses the concept of false consciousness to describe how ideological conceptions reproduce social practices, even though they are labeled as wrong or harmful for us. This view of ideology is challenged by Laclau (1990) in *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, where Marxism is criticized for the characterization of ideology as a social totality, and as such the fixation of social identities. Marx's understanding of ideology indicates a structuralist interpretation of the social. Laclau and Mouffe deconstruct Marx's conceptualization of ideology by introducing the idea of hegemony, developed by Gramsci (1971). Gramsci's definition of hegemony placed state power as the highest moment in the political struggle (Torfing, 1999). Gramsci (1971, p. 53) writes: "Hegemony is won when the ruling class has succeeded in eliminating the oppositional forces, and in winning the active, or passive, consent of its allies, and thereby managed to become a state." According to Laclau and Mouffe, hegemony is precisely this, a process or struggle of fixing meaning, where a discourse/order that appears natural is the result. The hegemonic discourse works ideologically because it is always constituted through the exclusion of other alternatives, i.e. meanings. However, a hegemonic discourse is never capable of establishing a stable identity because there is always a power struggle or antagonism inherent in human relations. The hegemonic discourse becomes visible in conflict, when fixation is challenged and the ideological moments are dislocated (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001 [1985]; Torfing, 1999).

In post-structuralist discourse theory Laclau (2003) emphasizes structuralism as the most important influence. Therefore, the structuralist moments will be accounted for below. Discourse theory builds on Ferdinand Saussure definition of language as a system, which is constituted by signs; a sign unites a sound (signifier) with a concept (signified). According to this perspective language and societies shares similar organizing qualities and structures. However, Saussure rejects the idea that there is natural relationship between the signifier and the signified, in language there is no positive terms i.e. there is no essential or natural relations between elements. The distinction between language as a system of characters (langue) and language use (parole) shows how language is more than a function of naming objects. According to Saussure the particular only get meaning in relation to the structure as a whole (Howarth, 2007, p. 25). Thus, language is form and not substance. This opens up for a relational and differential

understanding of language where there is a strict isomorphism between the signifier and the signified (Howarth, 2007; Laclau, 2003).

Using Saussure's structuralism, Laclau and Mouffe adopts an analogy between the linguistic idea of language as a system and social systems where the differentiation between signifier and signified has collapsed (Howarth, 2007). According to Laclau (1993) the works of Barthes and Lacan further loosen the relationship between the signifier and the signified. While the works of Derrida "attempts to show the elements of undecidability" (Laclau, 1993:434) inherent in structural arrangements. This means that no structure of signification can be closed without force from the outside. Post-structuralism firmly rejects the idea that every structure is one of totality, but rather sees it as a structure of the lack. Meaning is thus structured but never closed, and this incompleteness of the structure moves post-structuralism into a negative ontology, an ontology of the lack. This negative ontology is a key element in the ontological horizon of discourse and in the development of the conception of power (hegemony) in post-structuralist discourse theory (Laclau, 1993). I recognize that there is an ontological debate within the research community about ontology but, for practical reasons that come with the format of a licentiate thesis, I leave this debate for others. I will, however, comment upon how the post-structuralist perspective on ontology influences my study when discussing the choice of empirical material and the results.

Discourses are always contingent and historical constructions. However, this does not reduce everything to discourse; rather, it emphasizes how both ideas and matter are inscribed in discursive fields that differ depending on historical prerequisites (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000; Laclau & Mouffe, 2001 [1985]). Discourse theory aims to deconstruct these hegemonic practices; in this case, how a matter such as the value of an urban garden can be talked about, approached or noticed at all. The focus of this study is not on discovering facts or revealing truths about urban gardening. Instead, the analysis aims to draw attention to the conditions of possibility for urban gardening (Fridolfsson, 2004; Laclau, 1993). In my analysis, it will be important to identify how dichotomies or contradictions are established to produce certain arguments or practices that are more legitimate than others. I will also examine which alternatives are juxtaposed and see how certain positions within the discursive field are charged negatively, i.e. as dichotomies or antagonisms, and as such represent the *constitutive outside*. The constitutive outside is a

prerequisite for the construction of identity. It is what identity on the inside is contrasted against, the state of being other or different that threatens the discursive system of differences (Torring, 1999, p. 299).

Relational Space

Following the post-structuralist tradition of thinking, space is not merely the container of objects or the material world that is 'out there' (Murdoch, 2005, p. 27). This is an opposing view to the structuralist mode of thinking of space as surface. The structuralist interpretation of space makes sense of the world by slicing out a piece at a time and investigating it. In this way, structuralist thinkers tried to tame space and make it into something that could be observed and measured (Massey, 2005). By trying to 'hold the world still', space was immobilized and given an essence; in this way, the possibility of real change is eliminated. However, as we will see, space is more than a reflection of the material world, it is also vital for the production of the social and not just a result stemming from it (Massey, 1994).

Doreen Massey writes in *for space* that "[c]onceptualising space as open, multiple and relational, unfinished and always becoming, is a prerequisite for history to be open and thus a prerequisite, too, for the possibility of politics" (Massey, 2005, p. 59). Space, or the spatial, is here understood as constructed out of multiple trajectories, a myriad of stories and social relations. Thus, space is social and concerned with relations and interrelations between processes and entities that continuously change depending on their composition. These relations are filled with power and stretch from the global to the local, the town, household or park. Massey (2005, pp. 130–131) writes: "[i]f space is rather a simultaneity of stories-so-far, then places are collections of those stories, articulations within the wider power-geometries of space." Place or place identity can be seen as an attempt to stabilize the meaning of particular events, which can be done through references to the past or to a wider social or political context. If place is produced, then we need to understand both the geographical boundaries and the subjects within them (Massey, 1994, pp. 7–8). In this way, places are unique, while also having aspects in common with an interrelated world (Massey, 1995).

This conception of space in relational terms – as always changing – is connected to an anti-essentialist notion of politics (Massey, 2005), where identity is constructed and reconstructed through differences

and the relations between elements create the distinction between them (Laclau, 1993). Thus, space is never closed or fixed, the meaning of space or the space itself is always being contested. Space is always in the process of becoming (Massey, 1995, 2005; Murdoch, 2005, p. 28). If we consider the incompleteness of identity, the ontology of the lack, what follows is that no subject or space can fully attain its identity. Laclau and Mouffe argue that this 'failure' to grasp identity and thus interest, is a prerequisite for social antagonism (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001 [1985]). Social antagonism develops because social agents are unable to acquire an identity and, therefore, they need an enemy who is considered responsible for this failure. Thus, the identity process becomes intrinsically political, because these processes include some form of exclusion. To identify 'something' or 'somewhere' is to draw a line between insiders and outsiders. These identities are not universal or natural; instead, their construction plays a constitutive role for social agents.

Identities are formed based on differences; however, they can also be built on what an object or subject is not. Consider the case of national identity. 'You' and 'I' become a 'We' because we are not 'Them' (Howarth, 2007; Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000; Torfing, 1999). This process is called the *logic of equivalence* and expresses a certain sameness. Equivalences are used to build alliances or a chain of elements and includes the construction of a common 'enemy'. The counter movement – *logic of differences* – instead works to break these alliances, keeping the elements distinct and thus weakening the collective identity by emphasizing differences. In the case of national identity, the 'We' can be challenged when the population is divided by gender, class or religion etc. These logics or forces always have an interaction and work simultaneously within discourses (Howarth, 2007; Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000; Torfing, 1999). When it comes to national identity, the intersection between space-identity-power is shown in the formation of political identification (Massey, 1995, p. 285). Massey argues that space or spatiality can be a "key moment in the constitution of political identities". However, the significance of spatiality will vary depending on the situation (Massey, 1995). This means that the conceptualization of relational space identifies the ordering of urban space, like any order, as political (Mouffe 2005a, p. 18).

Ideology & Fantasy

As we have seen, meaning and identity are discursively constructed through differences. In the same way, subjects use differences to produce their identity, through speech and actions. Subjects find themselves inside discursive structures but cannot be determined by them due to the structures' inability to fix meaning. When a discourse is contested and hegemony is threatened, the individual is forced to take action and identify with other emerging political projects or hegemonic discourses (Howarth, 2007; Torfing, 1999). Through this process, individuals have the opportunity to shape the political subjectivities available and a determination by the structure is prevented.

During the development of discourse theory, Laclau and Mouffe (2001 [1985]) interacted with and were inspired by psychoanalytical thinking (Stavrakakis, 2007). There are, for instance, several terminological crossovers, as well as conceptual affinities between discourse analysis and psychoanalysis (Glynos & Stavrakakis, 2003). When discourse theory embraces psychoanalysis, it moves from a focus on hegemony and semiotics in discourse to also account for the affective dimensions of ideology using enjoyment or '*jouissance*'. By incorporating the affective mode and *jouissance* into political analysis, Stavrakakis (2007) claims that political analysis can examine "how hegemonies are sustained, how identifications stick, and political discourses get sedimented – obstructing or enabling social change – [...]" (Stavrakakis, 2007, p. 102). The psychoanalytic approach can help scholars to examine why some discursive structures distinguish themselves as strong candidates for hegemony while others do not. Laclau and Lacan "are both interested in showing that human construction is never able to institute itself as closed and self-contained order. There is always something that frustrated all efforts to reach an exhaustive representation of the word – whether natural or social" (Glynos & Stavrakakis, 2003, p. 114). The engagement in Lacanian theory, predominantly by Laclau, led to a redefinition of such aspects as the conception of subjectivity from 'subject positions' to an understanding of subjectivity as lack. This lack imposes a constant struggle to construct and partially fix identity, something that originates from Lacan's encounters with the Real (Stavrakakis, 2007).

Lacan's psychoanalytic theory focuses on the subject and the subject's identity formation. According to Lacan, human beings have trouble representing their identity due to castration in the social world (Svärd, 2015). The castration occurs when the subject leaves the Real and

enters the symbolic. In Lacanian theory the Real is a pre-symbolic state that we as subjects lose when we enter the social and linguistic world. In this process we lose a part of our identity, a part that we cannot fully represent again. Instead, we live in a constructed 'Reality', unable to fully represent our identity or events in the social world. Here again, there are some crossovers between Lacan and Laclau; Lacan, like Laclau, recognizes that all social practices or objects are of a discursive character and that there is a discursive (the symbolic) and an extra-discursive (the Real) state.

In the symbolic-social world language is emphasized; it is through language that subjects learn how to construct a new identity through significations (Glynos & Stavarakakis, 2003; Stavarakakis, 2007). Additionally, language makes it possible to articulate desire and communicate with others. However, because a subject cannot fully identify with the signifiers available, the subject always realizes that something is missing (Žižek, 1989). Svärd writes that "[t]he experience of this constitutive lack fuels human desire to fill that lack and overcome the 'identity deficit' to recover to fullness. A fullness that is sacrificed, lost, or blocked" (Svärd, 2015, p. 29). It is this process of lack that introduces the central role of desire into Lacanian theory (Glynos & Stavarakakis, 2003). Desire emerges from the constitutive lack of the Real and from the human desire to acquire a stable identity, to regain what is lost. In my analysis, I will focus on which affective bindings and ideological fantasies become important in the discourse of urban gardening. I do so in order to identify the fantasmatic support for urban gardening as a political project.

As we can see, in psychoanalytical theory, neither discursive structures nor subjects can construct a full or stable identity; also, the discourse's ability to build relations between social practices and objects is emphasized. Stavarakakis (2007, pp. 75–76) argues that "[p]olitics comprise all our attempts to fill in this lack in the Other." This is where ideological fantasy and its promise to eliminate all that is missing enters in. To attain the sensation of a stable identity, fantasy is used to eliminate what is missing, which makes alternative identities or discourses seem insignificant (Stavarakakis, 2011). There are several ways for a subject to sense the materialization of their fantasy. This study has focused on three discursive structures of enjoyment in relation to the appeal of urban gardening. These are: 'partial' enjoyment, 'theft of enjoyment' and 'excessive enjoyment'. First, 'partial' enjoyment is constituted in everyday experience and provides

some sort of enjoyment, a sensation of “we’re almost there”. ‘Theft of enjoyment’, on the other hand, is a structural position that explains *why* enjoyment is missing and *who’s* to blame (Žižek, 1989), for example, the global food industry is unsustainable and damages biodiversity. Finally, excessive enjoyment – you enjoy yourself ‘on my behalf’ – through, for example, consumption. The way in which a subject is emotionally invested in a fantasy through these ‘enjoyments’, i.e. how much attention and effort is invested in the fantasy, has ideological implications (Glynos & Howarth, 2007). If the subject experiences ‘partial’ enjoyment on a daily basis, the fantasy is perceived as more convincing and thus strengthens its hegemonic appeal.

Spaces of Discipline

Foucault (1995 [1977]) argues that liberal society is governed through a variety of rationales and techniques. By means of a set of operations, power controls and regulates human bodies; disciplinary techniques comprise one of these means of government and as such shape behavior (Murdoch, 2005, p. 46). In his work, Foucault is sensitive to the spatiality of history; thus, he emphasizes histories with particularity and specificity (Flynn, 1994, pp. 41–43). Foucault sees “spatial relations and spatial arrangements as similarly constituted by discursive regimes of various kinds” (Murdoch, 2005, p. 34). Thus, space is shaped by discourse and these discourses are anchored in micro spaces. Discourses become embedded in the materiality of space and these discursive and material spaces govern human bodies.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1995 [1977]) describes how, due to the spatial arrangement in Jeremy Bentham’s prison Panopticon, the prisoners developed self-discipline, a type of internalized morality or conscience, due to the threat of surveillance. The panopticon is designed to monitor the prisoners without them knowing whether they are being observed or not. Foucault shows how the desired morality was internalized, under the threat of surveillance, due to disciplinary techniques such as hierarchical observation, examination, and normalizing judgement. Foucault later extended his studies from micro-spaces to broader systems of government at the societal scale – that of governmentality. Government is defined by Foucault as “conduct, or, more precisely as ‘the conduct of conduct and thus as a term which ranges from ‘governing the self’ to ‘governing others’” (Lemke, 2001, p. 191). The form of representation, that is, the specification of objects and boundaries, justifications, and the

delineation of concepts, structures specific forms of interventions derived from that specific representation of social reality (Murdoch, 2005, p. 95). In the case of urban spaces, the form of representation is heterogeneity and disorder and, thus, the intervention designed to create order is planning. Through planning processes urban space is ordered by a set of disciplinary techniques such as measuring, observing, naming and registering. In the planning process physical space and its imaginary together create the discursive field within which the urban is to be represented. Any disorder that deviates from this plan is met by reprisals; for example, the criminalization of graffiti. In the forthcoming analysis Foucault's ideas on discipline are used to understand the processes by which the gardeners impose self-discipline when it comes to the design of the garden.

Chapter 3

RESEARCHING URBAN GARDENING

This chapter accounts for the method, research process and analytical approach. The study uses an ethnographic method to analyze urban gardening in Sweden and the power dynamics producing the phenomenon. The fieldwork started broadly with the reading of newspapers, watching the news on TV, and exploring social media, and became more focused when I attended seminars and expos on urban gardening as well as visiting urban gardens. The main part of the fieldwork was performed with me as a participant at the urban garden called Bellevue Farm in Stockholm. The chapter ends with a presentation of the analytical approach.

Approaching Ethnographic Method

When researching urban gardening, place is at the core of the practice at hand. Gardening is a geographically grounded activity where material characteristics, such as soil quality, a sunny location, access to water, and wind velocity, are important for success. These facts made it evident that, in order to understand these spaces and the social reality of urban gardens, I needed to spend a significant amount of time in at least one of these gardens. Therefore, I adopted an ethnographic approach to research urban gardening. Ethnography has its roots in anthropology and was originally used to gain a complete picture of a culture. This was done by spending extensive periods of time with members of the community under study while the researcher tried to interpret structures of signification through thick description (Geertz, 1973). This can also be accomplished by looking at a phenomenon from various perspectives or locations (Marcus, 1995).

This study uses ethnography as a tool to understand the context that surrounds groups or individuals through an inside perspective using various methods such as interviews and participant observation

(Gustafsson & Johannesson, 2016). I approached ethnography as a way of producing knowledge where emphasis is given to the gardeners' own experiences and stories. As a strategy I chose to be a participant-as-observer due to the practical nature of the object of study. This entails the researcher taking part in the activities just like any other member in the social setting, but the members know that the researcher is conducting research (Bryman, 2008, p. 410). Because the other participants dug in the garden and took care of the compost, the participant-as-observer choice led to natural conversations with the gardeners about the activity at hand, as well as their motivations and feelings about the urban space. Through my observations during the urban gardening activity I gained a firsthand account of the social context in the garden. Thus, the ethnographic approach provided a naturalistic and holistic interpretation of what was being studied (Bray, 2008).

Ethnography belongs to the hermeneutic tradition and because of this it shares many similarities with post-structuralist discourse theory. Both traditions position themselves through their rejection of essentialism and universalism in positivist and naturalist conceptions of knowledge and method. Instead, a deep understanding of socially produced practices or thick descriptions is sought, with the aim of illustrating how social agents identify with particular systems of meaning (Howarth, 2007, pp. 145–147). However, where hermeneutics seeks to make social practices and phenomena understandable, discourse theory adds the analysis of how political forces and political subjects construct and reconstruct identity within an incomplete social structure. Hence, attention is given to how the urban gardeners construct their own gardening practice.

Empirical Material

The empirical material consists of participant observations at urban gardens along with social media, policy documents, pictures, websites, podcasts, interviews, news reports and urban gardening expos. All of the linguistic and non-linguistic manifestations (such as pictures and matter at the garden) of urban gardening are treated as *text*, that is, as signs that establish meaning (Howarth, 2007, p. 18). Language is not treated as a neutral instrument with which we communicate; instead, language shapes and constructs social reality. This does not mean that discourse theory rejects the physical world, the very act of digging in the soil is understood as discourse. For example, the interpretation of

the physical act of digging a hole depends on the social configuration surrounding it. When in a garden digging symbolizes the process of planting or working with the soil; however, in another context, such as digging a hole in a graveyard, the same act could be understood as digging a grave. Together, language and actions create the systematic set of relations that we call discourse (Mouffe, 1990, pp. 100–103). Through looking at these relations, discourse theorists seek to understand and critically examine socially produced reality. In my research, this approach enabled observations and an analysis of urban gardening through the gardening experience as well as the many conversations held with urban gardeners.

In political analysis, and especially in post-structuralist discourse analysis, the bulk of the empirical material is constituted by already-produced textual material, such as newspapers, speeches, and policy. When approaching ethnography as a post-structuralist, one needs to be sensitive to the fact that the researcher is a co-producer of the empirical material. As described by Tornhill (2010, p. 55) this requires the researcher to consider the “ethical, emotional and analytic differences between analyzing an anonymously authored policy document and conducting an interview [...]”. The researcher, thus, needs to be reflexive and to differentiate between one’s own interpretations and the interpretations offered in the conversations held with informants. That is, the researcher must make it clear who is expressing a certain perspective and the context in which it is expressed (Börjesson & Palmblad, 2007).

Bellevue Farm

The analysis on which this thesis builds is mainly based on an ethnographic study conducted at Bellevue Farm in Stockholm. Bellevue Farm was selected based on the idea that the chosen garden should be embedded in an environment that does not usually produce food and where space is scarce. The idea was that an urban garden in a city where land represents a scarce resource could, in an explicit manner, illustrate the conflicts and negotiations surrounding urban gardening space. Because of this, the search was restricted to urban gardens in Stockholm. The garden Bellevue Farm was chosen based on advice from gardeners I met online and people living in Stockholm. Because of their recommendations, as well as a positive response from the garden’s board the fieldwork was based at Bellevue Farm.

Bellevue Farm is located in Bellevue Park¹ in the municipal district of Norrmalm in central Stockholm². The garden is situated approximately 3 km from the city center, right next to the intersection of the large roads E4, E18 and E20 (Figure 1). These roads function as barriers between the garden and the city center and the adjacent neighborhood. However, the noise from the highway, of tires against the road and the honking of horns, contributes to the feeling of being within the urban fabric.

Figure 1. A map of Stockholm marking the location of Bellevue Farm ©Lantmäteriet (2019a).

Bellevue Park is a part of the National City Park and constitutes one of three English landscape parks that were constructed during the late 1700s in the area. Since Bellevue Park is part of the National City Park, it is governed by specific laws and regulations. For example, the City of Stockholm is not allowed to build in the area. This creates the necessary

¹ Bellevue is French for beautiful view.
² The municipal organization in Stockholm consists of a City Council, the City Executive Board, 16 Specialist Councils and 14 District Councils. The District Councils decide on municipal services and care for those who live in the district area. Some of these issues are municipal preschools, elderly care, the urban environment, leisure and cultural activities (City of Stockholm, 2019).

prerequisite for Bellevue Farm to build permanence in the park in a way that other urban gardens lack. It is more common for urban gardens to reside in locations where the future of the garden is unsure or finite. Landowners offer diverse conditions linked to gardening space; for example, in Lund some gardeners are using a vacant lot that is awaiting a new purpose and because of this they know that they will need to relocate their activities at some point.

Bellevue Farm started as a bottom-up process whereby a small group of people contacted the municipality in an attempt to realize their aspiration to garden in the city. Because of this, the municipal district of Norrmalm took a prominent role in the construction of the gardening space. When approaching the municipality, the gardeners were urged to form a non-profit association that could work as a counterpart to the municipality. The association is called Norrmalmsodlarna and has around 30 members, including individuals, couples, and parents with children, with ages ranging between 0–80 years old. Some were born in Sweden, whereas others moved here from other parts of the world. Most of the members live in Vasastan/Norrmalm, while a few live in other residential areas in Stockholm, like Gärdet and Gröndal, and therefore have a longer commute to the garden.

Doing Fieldwork: Onsite and Online

The fieldwork took place between May 2017 and June 2018 at the urban garden Bellevue Farm in Stockholm. It was important to follow the garden through the seasons in order to comprehend how the work was organized and to understand the specific context in which the gardeners are situated. This was achieved through physical observations at the garden and online observations in a closed Facebook group. The Facebook group serves as an organizing platform for the members; they post information about what needs to be done in the garden, the results of their work or what is to be harvested.

The participant observations onsite were made on garden workdays. The gardeners gathered every Sunday afternoon and Tuesday evening during the growing season to collectively work in the garden. The workdays are organized by the gardeners themselves, mainly through the Facebook group. The organization of workdays has been somewhat problematic because much of the responsibility has landed on the board members. There are various reasons for this, and communication between members needs to improve. One is that some of the gardeners are afraid to act on their own initiative without first asking everyone

else in the group. To create order in the garden, the association formed subgroups with responsibilities for certain areas; for example, the compost, the annual plants, or marketing. The way it works is that the organizing group plans projects and communicates these to the rest of the members. However, the tasks can be performed by anyone at the garden.

The gardeners have also organized workshops to deepen the group's knowledge within specific areas; for example, 'weeding' and 'composting'. I attended the workshop on how to recognize various weeds. In addition to these internal workshops, the gardeners also organized workshops in the garden for anyone to join. These workshops have taken the form of an urban garden picnic, an event with a chef and an artist, and a workshop where the gardener painted pictures of the plants as a way of documenting what plants are present in the garden. These workshops were communicated via Facebook as Facebook events. I attended the urban gardening picnic, at which the public were invited to meet the gardeners and taste some of their crops. I also attended two members' meetings: an evaluation meeting and the annual meeting for the gardening association Norrmalmsodlarna. At these meetings, the gardeners discussed what had worked well during the past season and the problems that had occurred. The discussions were held in subgroups and then summarized by the board members at the end of the meeting.

My observations were documented in field notes, audio files, photographs and video files. It has been somewhat problematic to take notes because of the ongoing activities. When I was at the site, I worked in the garden. So that I could remember what happened in the field, I chose to limit the timeframe for the observations to approximately 2–4 hours. On Tuesdays, the gardeners met from 18:00-20:00 and on Sundays from 11:00 until they were done. The limitations on my time naturally fitted with the other participants' behavior since they came and went as it suited them. As a technique to remember the events in the garden, I jotted down notes on my phone, while pretending to answer a text message. I also took photos with my smartphone to help me remember various incidents or conversations. One example of how photos were used in the fieldnotes was when I was weeding with two gardeners and we started to talk about the value of weeds. As we talked back and forth, someone noted that one of the weeds could actually be used to dye fabric and showed us the color of the dye by breaking the stem of the plant and drawing circles on the distribution box next to us

(Figure 2). Directly after the fieldwork, I wrote out my full field notes, using the “text messages” and photos. Usually, the full fieldnotes were written out on the train back to Linköping, where I reside.

Figure 2. From fieldnotes – Vegetable dye on the distribution box.

In addition to the conversations that took place during the participant observations, two semi-structured interviews were conducted with members of the board. These interviews were aimed at learning more about the institutional arrangements and the process of establishing an urban garden in Stockholm. They provided information about the garden’s initial stages and facilitated contact with the other participants in the garden. I also attended a seminar on urban gardening and Bellevue Farm held by one of the board members on September 17, 2017 at the housing exhibition “Vallastaden” in Linköping. This seminar was about 30 minutes long and filmed using my smartphone. The topic of the seminar was the process of establishing a garden, and it compared the different ways in which this has been achieved in Stockholm. It also focused on the importance of green space in the city and how urban gardening can be a useful practice in the city from this perspective, among others.

The participant observation also extended online, due to the fact that Facebook proved to be an important organizing point for the gardeners in their everyday lives. Using a closed Facebook group, the gardeners

shared information and ideas, made plans for future work, reflected on past work, and organized workshops and events, as well as asking questions about practical activities, such as the watering, and posting pictures of sowing and harvesting. At the garden, the online dimension is closely interwoven with the material and the gardeners are building the garden by using the platform onsite to communicate what needs to be done. In this study, the onsite observations in the garden serve as the base for the study; however, I did observe that some of the gardeners usually did not meet in person and instead communicated through Facebook. One gardener told me that she rather worked alone and therefore often visited the garden outside the announced workdays. Instead, she could use Facebook to communicate and receive information about what needed to be done. I also used the Facebook group to present myself and my research to the gardeners as well as commenting on posts or events.

The Facebook group enabled me to follow the work in the garden even when I could not be present in person. This involved using ethnographic techniques online, such as participant observation within the particular group to identify patterns of behavior and meanings (Holm, 2016). This method is called Nethnography and it is used when one wants to research social and cultural relations online (Kozinets, 2002). The gardening practice, however, has its base onsite at the garden, and because of this I considered the Facebook group to be an extension of the physical space and not a separate online dimension (Berg, 2015, pp. 68–69). In this way, Facebook has been an important channel for me to communicate with the gardeners and receive information about life in the garden as well as upcoming events. The empirical material would not have reached the same ‘thickness’ without the combination of observations online and onsite (Berg, 2015, p. 88).

The Role as Researcher: Insiderness & Ethics

In my fieldwork I have often thought about the phenomenon of ‘going native’. That is, an over-identification by the researcher which makes it hard to develop a scientific perspective (Bryman, 2008, p. 412). This is because I am interested in vegetable gardening myself and live in a city with little or no access to garden space. This is in many ways an advantage because it helps me to easily gain trust and access to spaces, but it also leads to the risk of getting wrapped up in the world of the participants (Bryman, 2008, pp. 407–409). When reflecting on this, I have noted that many urban gardeners see me as a participant in the movement ‘urban gardening’. They view me as being on their side in the

quest for better or more urban gardening. I am interpreted as their ally and can in this way legitimize their practice when, for example, they talk to the municipality or other institutions. Interestingly enough, this is also the reaction I get from peers, friends and family. They viewed me and my research as something 'political', or maybe as 'activism'. This fact is interesting for me and my research. What is it about urban gardening or me that make people assume that this is a political endeavor? In line with people's expectations, initially I found myself sometimes taking the gardeners' side and not asking critical questions about the gardeners, in fact, occupying public space. It has been a challenge to critically examine the practice while at the same time trying to fairly describe the gardeners' reality. Here, post-structuralist theory contributed to the ethnographic approach due to its focus on analyzing how statements are constructed as natural or true within a discourse.

The gardening community is an open setting in which the public is encouraged to participate. Therefore, it is easy to gain access to the gardening groups. My role as a researcher was overt, most of the gardeners at the site knew that a researcher was present (Bryman, 2008, pp. 118–125). However, this overt role was somewhat dubious, I am not sure that I met everyone in the gardening group and people from the outside were not aware of my role as a researcher. There have been occasions where passersby started a conversation about the gardens with me, assuming my role as a participant. Because of this I have anonymized the gardeners when writing up the analysis. The only time I identify someone is when one of the board members talked to me. This is done because the board members are seen as representatives of their association and my status as a researcher was distinct, unlike when I talked with the other gardeners or passersby. Despite my precautions, full anonymity cannot be guaranteed; the role of the gardening association is overt and as such the members as a group are identifiable.

My presence online has posed other sets of ethical considerations, because the Facebook group is closed and the conversations there are held 'in private'. In addition, my online presence has been less visible than my presence onsite at the garden. Berg (2015, p. 93) discusses how the researcher needs a well-thought-out strategy to announce their presence online and cannot simply periodically proclaim: "The ethnographer is here!" to the community. Even though I presented myself and my research in the Facebook group, it has been a challenge

to remind the gardeners of my presence. Because of this, I have chosen not to include quotations or pictures from social media. Instead, discussion points and the concerns of the gardeners are included in the material as part of the discourse.

Other Participant Observations: Onsite and Online

The fieldwork also extended to other observation sites that I visited both physically or online; these sites were other gardens, seminars and expos on urban gardening. I visited three seminars/expos: Nordic Gardens; Vallastaden, held by Linköping Municipality; and the Urban Garden Show, held by the National Allotment Association.

Nordic Gardens is the largest exhibition of gardening in the Nordic countries and is held annually in Stockholm. The participant observation was conducted in 2016 and included visiting booths discussing urban gardening and collecting pamphlets from companies and associations. I also listened to short talks on urban gardening, as well as attending an urban gardening seminar adjacent to the exhibition. The seminar “Urban Gardening – Obstacles and Possibilities” was hosted by Fritidsodlarnas riksförbund (FOR)³ and the Swedish Museum of Natural History and focused on urban gardening as a phenomenon and its development in Sweden. The seminar addressed questions around sustainability and urban gardening, problematized urban gardening as a trend, and discussed the perspectives of local governments and urban planners. The speakers were representatives from Swedish municipalities, architects, urban planners and landscape planners, politicians and practitioners from the urban gardening community. The audience included representatives from the same categories.

Participant observations were also conducted at the housing expo *Vallastaden* in Linköping in September 2017. A housing expo displays new architecture and dwellings within a neighborhood with the aim of illustrating possible future ways of living. Vallastaden was built around central themes of social, environmental and economic sustainability to build a dense, green and varied neighborhood centered around its residents (Linköping Municipality). The expo focused on a number of themes during the various weekends, with workshops and seminars. On September 16–17, urban gardening was a theme and included seminars

³ Freely translated into English: The Leisure Growers’ National Association.

and workshops on gardening in the city, urban bees, growing mushrooms at home, growing food in odd places and ecological understanding. The fieldwork included attending these seminars and workshops as well as talking to visitors to the expo about urban gardening.

The fieldwork also included participant observation at *Stockholm Urban Garden Show* in Stockholm on September 8–9, 2018. The garden show aimed to be a platform for discussions on the role and future of urban gardening (Koloniträdgårdsförbundet). It included seminars and panels, as well as a fair offering food and vegetables, activities for children, exhibitions and booths for both companies and non-profit associations. During the garden show, I visited a seminar held by Monica Schmalensee, general secretary of the government council for sustainable cities⁴, on challenges and possibilities for the sustainable city. I also attended the panel “Planning the city”, where the focus was on how urban planners and builders develop green cities.

Furthermore, I carried out participant observations at several urban gardening sites, mainly in Linköping and Stockholm. Sometimes the fieldwork included talking to gardeners and on other occasions I visited the gardening space to take photos, record sounds and look at the plants. These gardens were located in diverse settings, such as “Takodlarna Sergel”, which consists of a garden on a roof next to Sergels torg in central Stockholm, or “Stadsodling i Linköping”, who garden with the help of the municipality in several parks in Linköping. Some were full-fledged gardens while others were made up of a few pallet-frames placed in a group on the outskirts of a park or neighborhood.

Social media sites, such as Facebook and Instagram, have proved to be an important part of many urban gardens, and this shows that our identities are also defined and shaped beyond physical space (Berg, 2015). Facebook in particular is an important platform for the gardeners, and there are two large Facebook groups on urban gardening in Sweden: Stadsodling Sverige⁵ and Stadsodling Stockholm⁶. In these groups, the members talk about their gardens, problems with

⁴ Regeringens råd för hållbara städer

⁵ Urban Gardening Sweden.

⁶ Urban Gardening Stockholm.

various pests, and showing pictures of their gardening processes from seed to fork. Despite of this, the Facebook groups are not very active in terms of talking about gardening; instead, the platform seems to be used sporadically to spread information about events or ideas about urban gardening. Because of this, I have mostly used the Facebook groups to identify gardens and gardeners to follow in other ways. For example, by visiting their garden or becoming a member of their specific urban gardening Facebook group, where activity is more frequent.

Thus, the gardeners are situated within diverse contexts of social relations connected to urban gardening, as well as connected online where they share ideas and disappointments as well as collectively constructing an imaginary space as well as a community. Ward (1999) describes the online community as an ‘imagined community’ within which members are united by a common interest or understanding rather than proximity. In addition, Berg (2015, p. 68) describes how Robert V. Kozinets (2010) differentiates between *online communities*, which are based online, and *communities online*, which also have ramifications offline. In this study, it seems that the urban gardening community merges the physical dimension, in which they garden, with a virtual community by sharing knowledge and producing public opinion. The communities online are part of the construction of imaginary spaces where one or two pallet frames become part of a greater urban gardening community.

Interviews

During the initial stage of my field studies, I conducted five recorded interviews in order to grasp the main concerns surrounding urban gardening. The length of these interviews ranged from 45–90 minutes and all of them have been transcribed and analyzed. The interviewees were chosen because they frequently posted on social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, successfully ran blogs, made podcasts, gave lectures, and wrote books about urban gardening. In addition, these are some of the people who are organizing non-profit urban gardening associations. The interviews were conducted over the phone due to distance. However, during the later stages of my fieldwork I have met most of the interviewees, often by chance at events connected to urban gardening, such as Nordic Gardens described above, or at Bellevue Farm. After finishing each interview, I asked the interviewees about contacts to other gardeners and it turned out that

many of the chosen gardeners knew each other or at least followed their respective projects at a distance.

The interviewees reside in various parts of Sweden and are therefore embedded in diverse social realities. This means that they had formed relationships with a range of institutions, such as the municipality, private actors, or municipal housing, in order to realize their aspirations to garden in the city. The institutional arrangements created diverse experiences of the process of building an urban garden. In the interviews, I asked about how they started to garden and how they feel when they are gardening in order to understand their drives and motivations. I asked about how they define the practice of urban gardening, how their gardens were founded and what possibilities and/or problems they had met as urban gardeners. Other issues covered included the virtues of gardening on both a local and global scale, where responsibility was a theme. These descriptions provided insight into how I could proceed with my field studies when finding a garden to follow.

Published Material

The empirical material also included a range of published resources, such as policy documents from municipalities, news reporting, information from websites such as Koloniträdgårdsförbundet, and books. The material often included interviews with urban gardeners, who elaborated upon why they garden in the city as well as the positive and negative effects of their decision to do so. The material also includes analyses of the phenomenon from urban gardeners, debaters and researchers.

Analytical Approach

This section describes the analytical approach based on the theoretical and methodological discussions presented above. The analytical approach is inspired by Tinnerholm Ljungberg's (2015, pp. 61–64) analytical strategy of using empirically oriented questions to guide the analysis. The analysis started by mapping the dominant ideas and in this way create an overview of the available empirical material as well as enabling me to comprehend the politics at work. This overview was created as a pilot study during the initial stages of research and constitutes the starting point for the analysis. The empirical questions that guided the analysis were:

- How are urban gardening and urban gardeners constructed?
- What are the benefits and challenges of urban gardening?
- What versions of urban gardening and urban gardeners can be distinguished and how are they related?

In Chapter 4, the results of the pilot study are presented. These results then led to new questions that helped to focus the in-depth analysis on urban gardening space and the tales that are associated with it. Two main sets of questions were identified as central to the development of the study: 1) the collective fantasies that make the physical urban garden possible at all, and the conflicts within them, and 2) the negotiations that characterize the garden space at Bellevue Farm.

In Chapter 5, the focus is on ideological fantasies and desire, and I use a psychoanalytical perspective to analyze how urban gardening is made into an absolutely necessary activity within the urban space. This is because the alternative to the hegemonic discourse is too threatening or because urban gardens offer a promise of harmony. Here, the threat can take the form of an ‘enemy within’, where there is something or someone that blocks the gardener’s identity or place identity. If this obstacle is removed, fullness and harmony are promised. The threat can also be articulated as an external obstacle which can harm or threaten an already-existing fullness (Glynos & Howarth, 2007, p. 150). Thus, the psychoanalytical perspective provides a means to understand why a particular discourse ‘grips’ subjects. As Stavrakakis (2005, p. 73) put it, “it is the imaginary promise of recapturing our lost/impossible enjoyment which provides the fantasmatic support for many of our political projects and choices.” The empirical questions that guided the analysis were:

- What emotions are described in relation to gardening in general and urban gardening in particular?
- Who/what are being made into a threat or ‘the other’ that stands in the way of fullness and harmony?
- What modes of enjoyment (‘partial’ enjoyment, theft of enjoyment and excessive enjoyment) can be identified?

The analysis uses vignettes to illustrate three tales about urban gardening that are found in the empirical material. These tales are closely tied to urban gardening space and are part of the ideological

fantasies that make urban gardening possible. The vignettes aim to disclose some of the characteristics of urban gardening practice in order to illustrate some of the stories that are recurrent in or adjacent to urban gardening space. However, these vignettes should not be viewed as ideal types. They simply represent some of the stories that are present in the discourse of urban gardening.

In Chapter 6, the social and political practices involved in the urban gardening of Bellevue Farm is presented. This chapter identifies the “rules of the game and can be compared to thick description in hermeneutics” (Glynos & Howarth, 2007, p. 137). The thick description is based on contextualized self-interpretations and is used to examine the purpose, form and content of urban gardening space and practice. The following analytical questions were asked of the empirical material in order to capture the rules that govern the gardening space:

- What are the dominant problems regarding gardening space formulated onsite?
- How are boundaries drawn in the urban gardening space in terms of logics of equivalence and difference?
- How do the gardeners relate to others onsite?

Here, the logic of equivalence and the logic of difference provide an account of how the political dimension (conflicts and negotiations) manifests itself in the garden. Thus, the analysis investigates how social practices in the garden are challenged and defended. Any existing practice can thus be understood as a hegemonic struggle infused with political, normative and ideological dimensions.

Chapter 4

[...] Anna Lindhagen (1870–1941), som säkert skulle blivit en precis lika framstående guerillaodlare som någonsin de som kom efter henne, om kungen bara hade sagt nej när hon bad om hans mark. Men det gjorde han inte. Och än idag har tusentals svenska stadsbor laglig rätt att helt fredligt odla sina egna grönsaker.

Elin Unnes (2018, p. 66)

URBAN GARDENING IN SWEDEN

This chapter presents the results of a pilot study that was conducted in order to identify the political conflicts surrounding urban gardening in Sweden. The aim of the chapter is to offer the foundations upon which the subsequent analysis builds and to give insight into the main themes to which I will return in the following chapters. It includes a brief history of gardening in cities and a presentation of who has the authority to decide the whereabouts of urban gardens. In addition, a review of how municipalities present their work with urban gardening on their websites is presented. I also situate the practice of urban gardening in Sweden by analyzing how it is identified and talked about, as well as the political subjects produced.

A Brief History of Urban Gardening

Allotments are the most common form of urban gardening on public land in Sweden. The allotment movement started during the early 1900s and the opening quote refers to how it originated in Sweden. Anna Lindhagen was a social democrat and a member of Stockholm City Council with an interest in urban planning. Her goal was to provide beautiful and well-planned environments for the disadvantaged. After a visit to an allotment garden in Copenhagen in 1903, Lindhagen became dedicated to supporting the allotment movement and started to work for the introduction of allotment gardens in Stockholm (Nolin, 2003).

The first allotment gardens were temporary in character and the prerequisites were not ideal for gardening. A problem for the allotment movement during this phase was long-term planning. Short-term

contracts were used, which made it difficult for the gardeners to invest long term (Nolin, 2003, p. 30). In addition, the type of land offered to the allotment holders was criticized due to mismanagement and the low fertility of the soil (Eriksson, 1918, p. 2).

In 1921, the National Allotment Association was founded in Stockholm to coordinate local associations throughout Sweden. By coordinating the interests of local associations, the national association became an institutionalized counterpart to the authorities (Bergquist, 1996, p. 37). The process that led to the institutionalization of allotment gardens in Swedish cities needs to be understood within the historical and political context of industrialization and urbanization. Rapid urbanization during late 19th and early 20th centuries demanded additional housing in and around larger cities. Many cities had problems with sanitation and insufficient living space and urban development was an important issue. As a response to societal problems in the urban landscape of industrialism dedicated wealthy women and men became determined to help the less fortunate. Through voluntary measures, they were determined to raise the general level of education and shape the urban population to live a healthy lifestyle (Nolin, 2003). The allotment gardens were localized on the outskirts of the city, close to the working district or industry, in line with the contemporary ideas on zoning of population groups, activities and functions in the city (Bergquist, 1996, p. 39).

The allotment movement was part of a larger philosophical tradition concerned with human relationships with nature. In the late 1800s, Ebenezer Howard (1985 [1898]) wrote the influential book *The Garden Cities of Tomorrow*. This book draws up a plan for social change with an environmental core that positioned the garden as a key transformative engine in the city. Howard combined what he considered to be the best characteristics of the countryside with the best from the city. The town-city incorporated beautiful natural areas, fields and parks, no smog and no slums, and it was filled with the social opportunities which the countryside lacked (McKay, 2011, pp. 26–41). The focus was on the right to be in or close to nature, and this is also evident in early writings on allotments. In the magazine *Koloniträdgården*,⁷ in 1918, Bengt Eriksson elaborates upon the significance of allotment gardens for the working class:

⁷ In English: The Allotment Garden

When the allotment movement started several years ago, it basically had one main task. This was to make it possible for the less fortunate population in cities, who, due to economic circumstances could not, like the more fortunate, live in the countryside during the summer, an opportunity to spend time at least one day a week in fresh, beautiful nature. [...] The utility question also played a certain role, of course, but not nearly as much as now [reference to the First World War] (Eriksson, 1918, p. 2)⁸

Eriksson emphasizes the role of allotments for the less fortunate and argues that a lack of resources should not hinder people from experiencing healthy nature. Gardening is constructed as a way to create a good relationship with nature, and the final product of gardening, the crops, is only mentioned as a secondary reason imposed by the First World War. These thoughts are also reflected in the many city gardens that were built in Swedish cities at the same time (Wallenquist & Billeson, 2009).

The new urban gardening community is related to allotment gardens, but there is one significant difference. Their position in the urban environment and the scope of the movements differ. In Sweden, the allotment gardens were placed on the border between urban and rural space and rarely interfered with the urban environment (Bergquist, 2003), at least until the city expanded to surround the allotment gardens. While the urban gardening community aims at being within the urban fabric. Today the allotment movement has an established organization, while the new urban gardening community is based on citizen initiatives with no formal channels when approaching the local government.

Institutional Framework & Municipal Support

In Sweden, urban planning is regulated by the Planning and Building Act and implemented by local government (Khakee, 2005; SFS 2010:900). The intention is for public interests, such as social and environmental values, to be balanced against each other in an equal manner across the country. Thus, urban planning is a municipal competence and because of this the conditions for urban gardening differ at the local level. In most cases, local government requires the

⁸ All quotes in the following chapter are translated from Swedish to English by the author.

gardeners to set up a non-profit association (City of Stockholm; Norrköping Municipality). This is necessary for the municipality to be able to enter into a contract with the gardeners. These contracts differ in character and state diverse conditions for gardeners across the country. In a few cases, an individual can gain access to an assigned plot of land and pallet frames⁹ without a written agreement (Jönköping Municipality; Linköping Municipality). Some municipalities have guidelines for urban gardening that regulate the practice and the relationship between urban gardeners and the municipality (Eskilstuna Municipality; Norrköping Municipality). In many cases, the responsibility for urban gardens rests with the Estate and Traffic Administration or Civil Administration at the municipality. In some cases, public housing companies run urban gardens (Mimer; MKB Fastighets AB; ÖBO). Urban gardens usually start because there is one citizen or a group of citizens who request a piece of land from the municipality. However, there are also examples where the municipality initiates urban gardens and advertises the possibility to local citizens.

Identifying Urban Gardening and the Gardeners

In Sweden, urban gardening is constructed as something new and trendy in the media and on social media. This description starts by linking Swedish cities to other (metropolitan) cities such as New York, London or Berlin (Benner, 2012; Dellert, 2014; Permell, 2014b). Using the global context, a logic of equivalence constructs a sameness between the small cities in Sweden and large, fashionable cities around the world. Although one could easily imagine an alternative story about reviving old Swedish traditions, such as allotment gardens, that discourse is not available. Nor is Stockholm used as a benchmark to establish urban gardening as a fashionable activity. Instead, the trendiness is established by connecting urban gardening to other fads in Sweden, such as baking using sourdough. Urban gardening is even defined as more fashionable than sourdough (Permell, 2014a). Urban gardening is thus identified as a temporary activity that could easily be replaced by another trend. However, the description of urban gardening as trendy is contested by a description in which the practice seems to transcend temporary trends and is established as a permanent activity (Mendel Westberg & Axelsdotter Olsson, 2014). Again, the tendency is

⁹ Pallet frames are commonly used as containers in vegetable gardens in Sweden. Compare with box gardens.

to link urban gardening to a global and metropolitan discourse using troubled cities as examples. One common example used in the urban gardening discourse is Detroit, a US city that lost important industries. In the process of recovering from the crisis, urban gardening is portrayed as a significant activity. Through urban gardening, vacant lots are transformed into something that is both productive and gives purpose to urban dwellers (Daniel, 2014; Linder & Nelson, 2015).

These two narratives produce two political subjectivities. While the narrative of urban gardening as a trendy activity produces the middle class as the main group of urban gardeners, the narrative of urban gardening as a permanent activity produces political subjects situated outside of society who need a new purpose. The construction of urban gardening as a temporary trend and middle-class activity builds on a perception that urban gardeners are linked globally, whereby the same activity is conducted in metropolitan cities all over the world. To be a true metropolitan involves, among other activities, practicing urban gardening. The discourse of urban gardening as a middle-class activity is further established when the practice is compared to baking using sourdough. This comparison places emphasis on free time, where gardening, just like baking sourdough, demands attention and the luxury of leisure time. In this way, the practice of urban gardening connects to a certain social class; it is those who have time who garden in the city. Urban gardening is a practice which, just like sourdough, is perceived in the media as a hipster¹⁰ activity. This perception further establishes the practice as something new and non-mainstream.

The construction of urban gardening as a permanent activity, in contrast, is situated within a community-building discourse. The analysis shows that urban gardening is frequently linked to concepts such as community, democracy, integration, health and knowledge. Headlines like *“Urban gardening strengthens community”* (Widell, 2013), *“Integration through gardening”* (Svenneback, 2016), *“Urban gardening creates new jobs”* (Dahlqvist, 2014) frequently appear in the media. The gardening site becomes a place where people meet in the neighborhood and this strengthens the community. One urban gardener explains in a news report: *“Another big part is the sense of community. I’ve seen people I didn’t even know lived here”*

¹⁰ Hipsters are often constituted by middle-class youth who build their identity by emphasizing individualism and uniqueness.

(Gustafsson, 2015). Urban gardening is constructed as an activity that brings urban dwellers closer together; for example:

Also, the idea is that it [urban gardening] contributes to community building too. People who [would] not normally meet can hang out, learn from each other, and swap plants with each other. So far, the mix is good, we have high hopes. (Westman, 2016)

The gardening site aims to be a meeting point for people from diverse backgrounds. The idea is that gardening allows people of various classes, genders, and ethnicities to meet and share experiences and knowledge. Through the ability to strengthen community, the practice of urban gardening is produced as an activity that can integrate new citizens. The practice becomes a way for immigrants and Swedes to meet naturally and to share experiences while growing crops (Interview – LW, 2016; Interview – SN, 2016; Svennebäck, 2016).

[...] A potato and a radish look exactly the same regardless of what language you speak, what background you have or what ambitions you have in life, there is in itself no difference to it. However, you can interpret the radish in different ways. It can mean different things to different people. But it's right there, which means you can communicate on a level that ignores many things that pull people apart and I think this is an important thing with gardening. (Interview – AB, 2016)

Gardening is articulated as an apolitical activity where everyone can meet on equal terms. Because of this ability to bring people together, gardening is used for exactly this reason. The idea that urban gardening creates purpose for people who appear to have lost theirs manifests itself in discourse. Therefore, urban gardening is used as a way to integrate new Swedes and many urban gardens include integration within their scope. Integration is articulated, for example, by the municipality of Malmö. When asked why the municipality focuses on urban gardening, they described the daughter of an immigrant in the suburbs who told them: *"My mother has stopped crying now that she's spending her time in the garden"* (Interview – MK, 2015). The mother's tears are interpreted by the municipality as an expression of a longing for purpose and community, something that she regained when she started to garden. Thus, the practice of urban gardening is established by urban gardeners, policy-makers and researchers as something that provides hope for the future, where community and empowerment are central in the narrative of the ability to conjure feelings of hope (Gallaher, Kerr, Njenga, Karanja, & WinklerPrins,

2013; Permell, 2014a). In one interview, the respondent elaborates upon the initial experiences in an urban garden in Malmö:

They got hope for the future. It [the gardening site] was something that was not vandalized or burnt in their neighborhood. That's when the residents started to ask if they could garden too. Is it legal to 'tear up' a lawn? (Interview – LW, 2016)

This quote emphasizes urban gardening as an activity that can boost neighborhood morale, as well as empowering citizens to act. The fact that the urban garden was not vandalized in an otherwise troubled area spurred questions among passers-by about what they as citizens are allowed to change in public space to make it more prosperous. The narrative of urban gardening as something that can empower citizens supports the discourse of urban gardening as a permanent activity. The description of the gardening experience as meaningful, for either an individual or a community, is based on articulations like these. Interestingly, the urban gardeners do not produce the idea of purposelessness when talking about themselves. Instead, this discourse is assigned to those with other political subjectivities, who are perceived as outsiders and purposeless. The articulation of urban gardening as good for community and integration produces the urban gardening practice as an imposed solution instead of an individual choice.

Critiquing Urban Space through Gardening

In the section above, I touched upon some of the political issues relating to urban gardening, such as permanence and subjectivity. Another important part of the identity of urban gardening is sustainability and urban infrastructure. Many urban gardeners define their practice as the growing of plants *within* urban space, on the walls of buildings, on rooftops, in parks, or within housing areas.

[...] first and foremost, you need to garden in the city and grow plants in urban space. [...] You can garden on balconies and plant walls, in courtyards, in parks and so on. [...] The aim is to truly take advantage of urban resources and spaces such as inner courtyards, balconies and walls. There are endless spaces that you can use to garden in the city. (Interview – LW, 2016)

However, the definitions of urban gardening are as many as the gardeners. Some include vegetable gardening in peri-urban areas, whilst others stress the importance of being within the urban fabric, as in the quote above. Within the urban gardening community, I have

identified a normative idea about the sustainable city and what the urban environment should include and exclude. The current infrastructure of the city is believed to be insufficient and in need of modification (Field notes, 2016-09-12b). As a solution, urban gardening is presented as a productive activity that can be performed within the urban fabric:

At an old demolition site at Skansberget in Gothenburg, the old house grounds remained, the place felt insecure and many avoided it. Today, there are about 90 cultivation boxes on the site and the stones and debris have been replaced by tomatoes, cabbages and parsley. (Frisk, 2014)

Urban gardening is deemed sustainable because of its possibilities to use under-utilized space and its ability to transform urban infrastructure and recycle waste materials produced by the city; for example, fallen apples from gardens. The traditional infrastructure, where resources are transported into and out of the city, is articulated as old-fashioned and unsustainable. Here, the practice of urban gardening is articulated as a meaningful activity that can contribute to curbing climate change.

Niklas emphasizes that there must be resilience within cities and preferably within neighborhoods, that we should be better at taking care of the resources available. For example, we make biogas from fallen apples, which are easily biodegradable. Resources like those should stay in the neighborhood and be used to create something new. He talks about how he introduced city pigs in Gothenburg and giving the apples to the pigs is much better than making biogas. He talks about the waste staircase, the urban metabolism, and displays a model that can be introduced when building new neighborhoods. With space for vegetable gardening and fish farming, which meets the food requirements of the whole neighborhood. Niklas argues that we need to become more self-sufficient to meet the climate goals that have been set. (Field notes, 2017-09-16)

In the discourse of urban gardening, ideas about a productive and reproductive city emerge, suggesting how cities could be more than a node for consumption and instead produce useful items, such as food. Through careful planning, the city holds endless possibilities for meeting forthcoming climate change. Urban gardening becomes a means for citizens to imagine another city and redefine what a city could contain and what urban dwellers could/should do. The urban gardeners also create an imaginary in which the profitability of the city

is connected to ecological and social earnings (Interview – LW, 2016; Interview – UFF, 2016). The economic goals of local authorities and government are central in this argumentation; they want the city to grow larger, but in a sustainable way. One interviewee argues that urban dwellers don't want another mall or parking lot; instead, they want creative spaces in public areas with which they can interact, such as urban gardens (Interview – UFF, 2016). The emerging critique of the neoliberal economy and consumerism correlates to the findings of previous research (Dobernig & Stagl, 2015; McClintock, 2010, 2014). Through the practice of urban gardening, the understanding of neoliberal economic growth is challenged.

The Construction of Urban Gardening in Sweden

The pilot study showed that the discourse of urban gardening includes a diverse set of elements, such as integration, community, participation, urban infrastructure and concerns about climate change. Urban gardening is often positioned as a solution to a variety of problems positioned in urban space. This was also the case during the early 1900s, when the allotment movement wanted to help underprivileged groups to improve their health through access to urban green space. However, in order to realize all these positive outcomes, urban gardens need to occupy urban space. In the analysis above, the infrastructure and conditions for urban gardening are deemed important for realizing a greener urban area.

In the pilot study, two main problem areas concerning citizens' appropriation of urban space were identified. These problems concern the motives behind urban gardening and access to urban gardening space. These problem areas constitute the starting point for the forthcoming analysis, which will focus on how urban gardening space becomes enabled through discourse. In Chapter 5, urban gardening and its presumed role as a solution to various environmental problems is analyzed. Emotions and affective bindings are the focus in order to examine why some discourses distinguish themselves as strong candidates for hegemony while others do not. Chapter 6 discusses urban gardening space and analyzes the idea of the city as underutilized. The analysis focuses on urban gardening space and emphasizes the negotiations that are present within an urban garden in Stockholm.

Chapter 5

Certain gardens are described as retreats when they are really attacks.

Ian Hamilton Finlay

ELABORATING ON THE URGE TO GARDEN

In this chapter, I will focus on desire and ideological fantasies in order to analyze the affective bindings to urban gardening and urban gardening space. The analysis will examine how, through a set of discursive moves, gardening gains access to the limited space available in cities. A psychoanalytical approach will be used to examine why some discursive structures distinguish themselves as strong candidates for hegemony while others do not. The analysis will focus on which affective bindings and ideological fantasies become important in the discourse of urban gardening. I do this in order to identify the fantasmatic support for urban gardening as a political project. The analysis draws upon the broader empirical material, and articulations from several gardens and gardeners are used. The analysis is conducted in two parts; firstly, the affective bindings are in focus and, secondly, the fantasmatic dimensions.

Affective Bindings

In this section, attention is given to the emotional or affective bindings that are created between human subjects and their social reality. I will describe three dominant emotions (concern, nostalgia and anxiety) in the urban gardening community and the problem/s that are connected with each emotion. To illustrate these affective bindings the method of vignettes is used. The vignettes consist of fictional characters and their motives for gardening in the city. These illustrations are closely tied to urban gardening space and are part of the discursive structure that makes urban gardening possible. Note that these vignettes are not to be viewed as ideal types, they simply illustrate some of the stories that are present in the discourse of urban gardening. The vignettes are closely connected, but for analytical purposes I have separated them.

Concern: A Problem of Knowledge

A concern is a matter that engages a person's attention, but it can also describe an important relation or bearing, as well as expressing worry or unease about something¹¹. In the empirical material one concern that demands attention is a lack of knowledge about food production, especially among children. There is unease about the urban population's (lack of) relationship to nature and knowledge about the ecosystem. The following vignette illustrates the problem of knowledge:

"The most important thing for me, is that children should know where food comes from. The vegetables don't grow at the grocery store!" says Ali.

Anna agrees with her husband and adds "and you get all this amazing food!" Anna and Ali garden on an allotment that belongs to the townhouse where they live. The municipal housing company has allotments that you can rent just as you rent a parking lot. To have the opportunity to garden, even though they live quite centrally, is something they value highly. Ali and Anna believe that gardening creates a special relationship with nature, one understands how everything is connected, from the quality of soil and fertilizer to pollination and harvesting. "We don't want to lose this just because we live in the city, it feels important that our children build that relationship with nature."

"It's fun to garden with the kids because they learn to eat seasonally," says Ali. "We eat a lot of spinach in April and May. Then there are peas and beans in July, squash and root vegetables in August–September, cabbage in September–December and artichokes in January."¹²

Knowledge, or rather lack of knowledge, is identified as a problem within the urban gardening community. In the vignette above, urban children are assumed to be disconnected from nature, or at least to have a problematic relationship to nature. The phrase "children need to know how food grows" or variations of it are expressed throughout the fieldwork. One interviewee described the extent of the problem:

¹¹ Cambridge Dictionary: Concern. Available at <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/concern>

¹² All quotes in the following chapter are translated from Swedish to English by the author.

Knowledge about the ecosystem is too low, the children who visited us last season didn't have the faintest idea, for example, about how potatoes grow. It's like they believe potatoes are hanging from a bush, they've never thought about how it works. So, when I say: "Put your hand down here [in the soil] and you will be able to pick a potato," they think I'm crazy, until they try. [...] And they're like, "but what?" (Interview – AB, 2016)

The current state of knowledge about how food grows is described as insufficient and in need of improvement. This interviewee also observes a great concern about knowledge of the ecosystem and the role humans take in it, and continues:

And it's not that we can't teach them, it's great fun and it's needed, but you get a little shocked about the current situation. It must be virtually impossible to have an understanding of your own place in the ecosystem when you have so little knowledge about how food grows. (Interview – AB, 2016)

However, this is not only a problem that concerns children; the urban population as a whole is identified as lacking knowledge when it comes to how food grows. As a consequence, urban gardening is emphasized as a pedagogic endeavor that is necessary and important to raise awareness and educate adults as well as children. Thus, education becomes a central goal among urban gardeners.

In general, there is a fear that lack of knowledge about food production will alienate the urban population from nature and as a consequence they will lose the ability to understand and curb climate change. In these articulations, knowledge is identified as the solution to the threat of alienation:

I want future generations to have some insight into where food comes from and how it's produced. You know, the corn doesn't just grow at the grocery store. You can water the damn corn plant for six months then you become a little eager in July and break off the cob, then there is no corn cob. That means that you've put in four months of energy to water it and then you harvested it a little too early. And it's at these moments that the children realize it takes a lot of energy to grow food. (Interview – LW, 2016)

Trough the experience of gardening, children learn about the lifecycles of plants and thus how the ecosystem as a whole works. Several articulations, like the one above, express an urgent need to educate

children. Through the teaching experience, the gardeners want to reconnect plants with food. To do so, urban gardeners want to help urban dwellers to lower the threshold for growing vegetables. Several gardeners expressed a fear that gardening is perceived as difficult. This fear is confirmed in news reports, which often mention the ‘fact’ that some people are blessed with green thumbs while others are not. One urban gardener describes how easy it could be to garden:

[...] What I want you to take from this, is that it takes a lot of time to become an expert in any area. But it’s also extremely difficult to completely fail with gardening. You can essentially just take a slice of tomato you bought from the store, put in in a pot and water it a little. And the likelihood of a plant sprouting is extremely high. (Interview – AB, 2016)

This quote illustrates how the current knowledge level is partially explained as fear of failure or not ‘having’ a green thumb. Here, urban gardening can help people to overcome their fear of failure and through gardening access a deeper understanding of the ecosystem. Thus, lack of knowledge becomes an argument to claim space for gardening in urban environments and enable social change.

Nostalgia: Relationship to Another Place

Nostalgia is a sentimental desire to return, in thought or fact, to a former place or time in one’s life¹³. It is often connected to feelings like joy, calmness and happiness. In the empirical material, nostalgia is often expressed when talking about urban gardening. It seems that the practice of gardening connects previous experiences with the present. The following vignette illustrates how urban gardening creates a relationship with the actual space as well as to *another* place or time:

In a box garden in one of the urban parks, the Green Growers have received land and pallet frames from the municipality. Otherwise, they tend to the garden themselves. The gardeners are city dwellers who want some self-grown vegetables for dinner and have a reason to leave their warm apartments in the summer. The box gardens are personal, and the crops are harvested individually. One of the gardeners is Gunnar. Gunnar has been retired for five years and helps the other participants

¹³ Cambridge Dictionary: Nostalgia. Available at <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/nostalgia>
Svenska akademins ordlista (SAOL): Nostalg. Available at <https://www.saob.se/artikel/?seek=nostalg&pz=1>

in the garden to water the plants. Gunnar usually takes care of the watering on weekdays because he lives close by and has some time on his hands.

Gunnar grew up in the countryside, so he knows what a garden needs even though he has lived his entire adult life in the city. His father gardened a lot and to Gunnar's great disappointment he also had to help to pull weeds, thin carrots and pick blackcurrants. "When I moved away from there, I said 'never again' but now I'm here again," Gunnar laughs. Now that he's older, he yearns for the countryside, when nature was close by and the potatoes were picked around the corner. "The potatoes didn't have to travel across land and kingdom before finally landing on my plate." Through gardening, Gunnar gets to relive his childhood again, and he describes how in the early mornings he sits on his balcony and looks down at the garden beds and observes how the mist touches the plants and how the scents float up to the sky. Just like when he was a little boy.

This vignette illustrates how place identity is constructed in the urban garden by contrasting one place with another or by focusing on similarities between places (Forsell & Eimermann, 2015, p. 9). Here, the urban garden is contrasted with a place in the private past. Frequent articulations refer to an idea about "how it [the relationship with nature] was when I was a child". The gardeners are searching for similarities between *another* distant place and the present garden, imagining a once truer relationship with nature. The private past constitutes an idea of what this true relationship with nature ought to look like. A romanticized idea of nature and the rural landscape reinforces the hegemonic appeal of gardening.

A significant aspect of the construction of place identity is how distance – in both time and space – is positioned as an organizing point in the discourse. Urban gardens are described as having the ability to reconnect with a previous point in time as well as bringing the countryside and its positive qualities closer to the urban fabric. Distance in space is also important when it comes to the crops harvested, and the vignette identifies that close proximity to food has a high value. This is confirmed in one of the interviews:

UFF: [...] It's great fun to harvest the first early vegetables in spring and eat the asparagus, rhubarb and all. The connection between gardening and food is direct, you can just take a walk and pick salad for lunch. It's luxury, everyday luxury. [...] It makes me happy and it's so much better.

I: Why is it better?

UFF: Because the crops have grown slowly in the sun at their own pace. They haven't been transported, they're harvested directly and then they're tastier. (Interview - UFF, 2016)

The distance the food has travelled is here seen as a measure of quality, where closer proximity gives a higher return value in terms of flavor. When eating food that the gardeners have produced themselves, feelings of joy are connected with it. The eating experience is described as pertaining to all of the senses, from the tactile experience of planting the seed in the soil to seeing it grow and harvesting it to the taste sensations when it is consumed.

Urban gardening is a practice that implies close proximity to nature but also to the city. The closeness to nature is constructed by urban planners as something that will enrich people's lives and often refers to human senses – touch, smell, sight – and feelings – calmness, joy, mindfulness (Lilja & Sundström, 2015). Urban gardening creates a new space in urban areas and thus changes the form and function of the city. The experience of nature, and in particular gardening in an urban environment, can carry many meanings and be inscribed with a variety of values. It seems that the gardening experience is filtered through these sensations and emotions, which reinforces the motives for the gardening practice.

The emotions that emerge in relation to gardening are also expressed as solidarity or being part of something bigger – the ecosystem. One urban gardener explains:

The gardening is a kind of affinity or an experience of being part of a larger system, the ecosystem, where the distance between me and the plants decreases when I devote myself to gardening and it becomes clear how everything is connected. The gardening is a kind of meditation, probably because I can rest in the feeling of being part of something bigger, I think. That's how I feel. (Interview – AB, 2016)

Through gardening a symbiosis is created between the gardener and nature, where the human activities are interpreted as dependent on seasonal cycles. In this way, urban gardening is situated as an activity which acquires meaning within a discourse of ecology, and the act of growing food becomes a natural or authentic activity. The gardening activity creates a connectedness to the ecosystem as a whole.

Anxiety: Gardening as Activism

Anxiety is the fear of danger or misfortune, or a psychological state of intense apprehension or worry¹⁴. In the empirical material, feelings of guilt and worry are frequently expressed when people talk about their motives for gardening. There is an unease or fear of misfortune due to climate change. The following vignette illustrates how anxiety about the current state spurs activism:

Kim thrives in the city! He loves to be close to everything, such as entertainment, jobs, friends and family. In spite of an exciting life, Kim has a strong anxiety about the future. The climate is changing, and he knows that society must change profoundly to prevent a catastrophe. The lifestyle changes started by altering small things in everyday life, replacing light bulbs with low-energy ones, having water-saving faucets and buying more things second-hand. Today, Kim thinks bigger. After seeing the documentary “Cowspiracy”, about the meat industry’s impact on the climate, he took the step and became a vegetarian. Animal husbandry requires huge resources in the form of water, soil and feed for several years for the animals to become food and the veggies don’t need as much.

At the same time, Kim decided to learn how to grow his own food. What began with some herbs in the kitchen window has now grown out of the apartment to a community garden on the outskirts of the city. The group calls itself Green Concrete and the gardeners work, sow and harvest together! The experience of gardening with others is so great, then you can go on vacation for a week and the vegetables get watered anyway. And you learn so much from the other gardeners involved.

Through gardening, Kim has gained new knowledge about how food is produced, and the amount of work required to grow cabbages. Something that is hard to believe when the cabbage costs like nothing in the fall!

The vignette above illustrates how the urge to garden is constructed as a reaction against an unsustainable global food industry, with loss of biodiversity and the use of pesticides as vast concerns. Urban gardeners are motivated by feelings of guilt and anxiety, which in turn spur changes in lifestyle at an individual level.

¹⁴ Cambridge Dictionary: Anxiety. Available at <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/anxiety>

The respondents describe a process whereby the responsibility for environmental concerns is pushed from a governmental to an individual level. Through this shift, urban gardening becomes a sustainable lifestyle choice that individual city dwellers should perform. This lifestyle shift was also expressed in the interviews, whereby urban gardening becomes a way to handle anxiety in an unstable world.

Anxieties about the state of the planet and of humanity. And that gardening is something very hands-on that you can do yourself, we can't influence, we can't ban fossil fuels, we can't change the laws, it's quite a slow process in the political systems. But gardening is something very tangible you can do.
(Interview – SN, 2016)

This respondent expresses anxiety connected to climate change that appears to ease when the individual is practicing urban gardening. These examples both articulate an understanding that individual activities and choices have environmental consequences and recognize urban gardening activity as a political action.

The reference to individual experiences in the world is further developed in other articulations, where gardening becomes a tool to grasp the complexity of climate change. One respondent elaborates upon the connection between climate change and the practice of urban gardening:

It became obvious last summer, as it started off cold and the crops didn't grow. Then it was dry, and after that, it rained a lot. The harvests didn't come out as planned. The carrots were small, and the cabbage grew poorly. It's times like these that you think: "we're screwed, even if I do grow vegetables."
(Interview – SN, 2016)

The global phenomenon of climate change is described as something that is experienced in everyday practice. The effects of climate change on weather conditions affect the yield, and as such the availability of some crops. The empirical material portrays a dystopian image of the future when it comes to the current neoliberal economic system and its effects on food production and the climate. The respondents have a strong belief that the current economic system, with its focus on profit, causes unsustainable food production (Interview – AB, 2016; Interview – JW, 2016; Interview – SN, 2016). The economic system is forcing farmers to focus on quantity not quality, which sets us on a negative spiral towards unsustainability.

[...] I mean, monocultures are a huge problem, for example, Spanish tomato garden beds are several square meters, in a single large greenhouse. That soil can't be used for anything else after that, at least not for a long time. In a monoculture, there are no insects. Instead, they release a number of bumblebees every year to pollinate the tomatoes and then they kill all the bumblebees, these gardens have no sensible place in the ecosystem.

The tomatoes are organic in the sense that you haven't used a specific group of non-biodegradables or pesticides and fertilizers with a large negative ecological impact but it's only a small part of what organic should stand for. (Interview AB, 2016)

Within the urban gardening community there is a critique that the current economic system fuels unsustainable food production. There are concerns about profits in the neoliberal economic system, a factor that forces large-scale farmers to focus on one crop, which yields a large harvest but creates a loss in biodiversity. The argument is that the economic rationality demands that farmers work the land in an unsustainable way. Note that it is not the large-scale farmers who carry the responsibility for unsustainable developments within agriculture. Instead, the economic rationality in current capitalist society arises as the 'Other', or the threat, and thus becomes a primary reason to act.

Also, governments are produced as impotent because of their inability to impose sufficient legislation on the industry to protect the environment. The lack of responsibility within government emerges as a key reason to take individual action. Through food-growing activities, urban gardeners recapture independence and, through the capacity to act, they feel empowered. In the news article below, urban gardening is discussed:

Urban dwellers garden because they want more and better food, they want to be self-sufficient. It's like a political protest against governments' failure to stop climate change, or simply a new dimension of city life. (Permell, 2014b)

In this article, urban gardening is interpreted as a political protest against an ineffective government, and consequently individual responsibility becomes important to induce change. It seems that the interpretation of economic sustainability by the urban gardening community challenges a neoliberal economic rationality. As a result of governments' inability to impose sufficient legislation on industry, individual responsibility emerges as important for changing the status

quo. The actual practice of growing food is seen as doing something to create a better world. The practice of gardening in the city becomes fundamental for change, to garden is 'to do something'. This something is *something else*, rather than just engaging in a political debate about the environment; it is about spreading knowledge and leading by example. One gardener expresses disappointment in how local government uses urban gardens to score political points during election year:

They just talk, I don't attend these meetings anymore. I used to attend, but now I'm sick of it. I can't sit around, talking about how the world should become a better place anymore. I grow food instead. That's what I'm trying to say to people [...] or politicians, they're really good at getting involved and taking pictures of us when it's election year, but otherwise they're not interested. Instead, they should join us and take responsibility for a watering week. (Interview – JW, 2016)

In this way, urban gardening becomes a tool for changing your own behavior as well as the behavior of others. The practice of urban gardening gives the individual the opportunity to perform everyday politics on a daily basis. Furthermore, the everyday 'doing' of global politics is separated from party politics and is interpreted as more effective than proposing legislation. In spite of the perceived individual responsibility, the government is still identified by the respondents as a guarantor which should have the ultimate responsibility for citizens' fates. However, since the government has failed to impose enough legislation addressing the global food industry, it is not performing its duties and consequently lacks legitimacy.

Fantasmatic Dimensions

Fantasy and desire are used by a subject to construct a stable identity and help to create order within a conflicting social reality. This promise is articulated as something that can be fulfilled as soon as the identified obstacle is removed. The function of fantasy is to present a scenario that makes the conflicting social reality appear to be a temporary obstructive force (Žižek, 1989). The description of the affective bindings between urban gardening and the gardeners can help to explain why the discourse of urban gardening grips subjects as well as the force of hegemonic discourses that makes alternative discourses seem insignificant. This section analyses who/what are being made into a threat or 'the other' that stands in the way of fullness and harmony.

In the empirical material, both internal and external threats can be identified. In *Concern*, a lack of knowledge poses as an enemy within, as the object that blocks harmony. The construction of people as unenlightened creates an idea of false consciousness. Since ‘the people’ cannot fully understand the ecosystem and what it needs, their behaviors lead to unsustainable food production; thus, they need to be enlightened. The identity of urban gardening is constructed through these differences in knowledge levels. If the obstacle ‘lack of knowledge’ is removed, harmony is promised. The affective binding *Concern* strengthens the conviction that education is essential to solve the problem of climate change. Thus, the structural position ‘theft of enjoyment’ is used in the analysis. ‘Theft of enjoyment’ is a structural position that explains *why* enjoyment is missing and *who* is to blame (Žižek, 1989); for example, the global food industry is unsustainable and damages biodiversity. Lack of knowledge is identified as the explanation for why enjoyment is missing, and a group of unenlightened citizens and consumers are recognized as the Others, those who are lacking in knowledge.

In *Nostalgia* and *Anxiety*, identity is created through a fantasy about a truer relationship with nature. In these sections, a hierarchy of natures becomes apparent, in which some types of ecology are valued more highly than others. Identity is constructed through building a sameness between the past (when humans had another relationship with nature) and the present activity of gardening. In both sections the external threat is embodied by the neoliberal economic rationality of the global food industry. In *Nostalgia*, the threat is constructed as a problem of proximity to food production and in *Anxiety* as a problem of the conduct of industry and an ineffective government.

The practice of growing food diminishes feelings of anxiety caused by unsustainability when they are transformed into feelings of hope and pride (or nostalgia) through everyday experience. Thus, the everyday experience fuels a fantasy of an authentic relationship with nature by continuously re-connecting the city dweller to nature. The practice of urban gardening provides a form of ‘partial’ enjoyment for urban gardeners, which allow them to gain a sensation of fullness, a sensation that “we’re almost there”. Through urban gardening, global environmental politics is materialized and performed at the local level. Because the subject experiences ‘partial’ enjoyment on a daily basis, the fantasy is perceived as more convincing and strengthens its hegemonic appeal.

Chapter 6

Gardens are peculiar, hybrid spaces: part private, part public. In one sense they appear to exist as part of the private realm: ...they are conceived and constructed as partially private extensions of the home dwelling. [...] On the other hand, the garden is an interface between the privacy of the house and the civic property of the street. It is a space onto which others can look, examine and judge.

Lisa Taylor (2008)

URBAN GARDENING SPACE

In this, I will present the urban garden Bellevue Farm. I will focus on the ordering and reordering of urban gardening space and how it became possible for the gardeners to inhabit this specific slice of the urban fabric. As Massey points out, space is always under construction and, thus, the production of urban gardening space is based on creating differences and some form of exclusion (Massey, 2005). In the first section, the problem of finding gardening space is analyzed, as well as how gardening space is legitimized using the concept of the constitutive outside. In the second section, the relationships at Bellevue Farm are discussed; here, the balance between public and private property imposes diverse prerequisites on the garden. The analysis focuses on boundaries of enclosure and the balance between aesthetics and function in the garden to suit the gardeners' needs as well as meeting the requirements posed by the municipality.

Main Problem Representation

The main problem that dominates urban gardening is how to access physical space for gardening. In this section, I will emphasize how the articulation of the garden space as empty or unproductive is crucial to enable the urban space to be deemed available for urban gardening and makes the production of urban gardening space possible at all. I will show how the emptiness of the urban space is contrasted against gardening, which has a productive or re-productive purpose. This discursive move makes urban gardening a legitimate activity within the urban fabric, although the garden space could have stayed the same or

turned into just about anything, for example a skatepark, an outdoor gym or a parking lot.

Finding Space: Representing Emptiness

At Bellevue Farm, the process of assigning gardening space started when citizens interested in gardening contacted the municipality (the District Council of Norrmalm) and simply asked for gardening space. According to the gardeners, the municipality was positive towards their initiative. The gardeners also got the impression that the district was under pressure to establish an urban garden, since it was the only district in Stockholm that didn't have one. Other districts, such as Södermalm and Kungsholmen, already had several established urban gardens.

Because the municipality had a positive attitude toward the establishment of an urban garden, the process of 'finding space' started in late 2014 and the garden was started in 2016. This period is described as long and a bit tricky by the gardeners. During the process, the demands of a garden, like access to water and good soil, were opposed to lack of green spaces in Vasastan (Burman, 2017; Interview – CC, 2018). The gardeners and representatives from the municipality looked at several possible locations in Vasastan; however, these were deemed unsuitable for various reasons. For example, Vasaparken¹⁵ in central Vasastan already attracted enough people; therefore, the municipality thought that an urban garden "would be too much" (Interview – CC, 2018). Bellevue Park was then considered as an alternative location and one of the board members describes the initial reactions to the space:

Then we looked at Bellevue and there I immediately felt ... it was the perfect place. Because it was ... it was nothing! So you could really do what you wanted and it would be better, definitely better than it was before. It was a good sunny location and things like that, the only thing that was a bit uncertain was the quality of the soil. The municipality was really helpful because they really wanted an urban garden [...]. (Interview – CC, 2018)¹⁶

¹⁵ Vasaparken is Swedish for the Vasa Park.

¹⁶ All quotes in the following chapter are translated from Swedish to English by the author.

In Bellevue Park, the space was literally identified as empty by the gardening association. Whilst a popular park such as Vasaparken could be a good place for an urban garden, this location was not in question. By defining Vasaparken as unsuitable due to the many activities already taking place there, the municipality indirectly confirmed Bellevue Park as empty and in need of more activity by assigning space in that area.

The garden space stretches over 1000 square meters, which makes Bellevue Farm one of the larger gardens on public land in Stockholm. The gardening space is bounded by train tracks and walkways. The garden is framed by a few big trees and bushes facing the walkway and an iron fence facing the train track (Figure 3).

Figure 3. A satellite picture showing the gardening space at Bellevue Farm ©Lantmäteriet (2019b).

Before the garden was established, the space functioned mainly as a storage area or temporary parking for the park management. In the discourse, the previous use of this space is not recognized as productive. Instead, the previous use contributes to the assumption of the space being empty. This emptiness is described as perfect, because of the possibilities that it offers. The potential other stories about this space are overlooked and diminished. By constructing the space as a *tabula rasa*, it can be filled with other (more important?) stories.

Further on, the picture below (Figure 4) shows how the before-space is contrasted against a sketch of how the space was transformed. Apart from the sketch, the picture contains a mind map with buildings connecting to possible activities such as a café and a library. The mind map illustrates how the empty space is to be filled with activities and make it productive (Field notes, 2017-09-17). Through the gardeners' ambition, the space became acknowledged and received a purpose, gardening. In addition, the space also got someone who attended to it – the gardeners.

Figure 4. A before-picture and mind map (©Malin Lobell/Norrmalsodlarna, 2016).

The space could indeed be interpreted as empty, or ‘nothing’ as in the quote above, even though it did have a previous function – a parking lot. Because the space was not properly designed to fill a certain function according to a plan, it was identified as open (Schéele, 2016; Wikström, 2007, p. 148). Spaces like these are sometimes defined as urban voids or wastelands. An urban void is a left-over space, a space

that appears to be open and as such possible to use. It is the space in between houses, it is the lawn with unkept grass that one crosses over on the way to the supermarket, and it is the vacant lot awaiting new purpose (Schéele, 2016, p. 14). These spaces could be interpreted as forgotten by the authorities, due to their temporary character, and the activities that are going on might not necessarily be authorized. Bellevue Farm, however, is authorized by the local government, but there are many examples of urban gardens where citizens simply start to grow vegetables or flowers without permission.

While grateful for gaining access to a space, the gardeners are critical of the kind of space they were offered. They are well aware that they received a plot of land that could be interpreted as wasteland or urban void. One board member expressed discontent about the available space at a seminar on urban gardens in Sweden:

Urban gardeners often get a non-surface, something that is left over. [...] Soil that can't really be used to garden, land that is temporary and so on. Or without water. Not recognizing that gardening is a leisure activity, just like soccer. (Quote from video file, field notes, 2017-09-17)

The gardeners' critique is presented as a lack of knowledge or interest within local government.

Urban garden spaces are often located in odd spaces that are unfit for gardening or deemed empty. A common opinion among urban gardeners in Sweden is that 'they' [local governments and local administrations in general] want gardens but are not willing to commit to the practice in terms of proper soil or permanence. However, this critique stands in opposition to the discourse on urban gardening as an activity that transforms unproductive urban space into a productive and reproductive space. The very fact that urban gardening embodies this ability is one of the key arguments to legitimize the occupation of the urban fabric, as demonstrated below.

Legitimizing Urban Gardening Space

Urban planning draws a line between spaces; for example, spaces are defined as urban, sub-urban or rural, or earmarked for residential homes, industry or roads. Urban space consists of a limited number of square miles within which multiple functions coexist. Therefore, one cannot 'find' space in the urban fabric. Hence, the very act of assigning space a new purpose is a form of spatial politics. Here, I will focus on

how emptiness takes up a position as the constitutive outside in the articulation of urban gardening with the aim of legitimizing the act of occupying urban space for gardening. 'Occupying' is a multifaceted concept and its etymological origin is partially derived from the right to make an unowned object or territory your property by physically taking possession of it, such as in a military occupation of a territory. However, to 'occupy' also connotes keeping someone employed and refers to one's occupation. It can also imply the act of being occupied with something¹⁷. As shown in the previous section, the location chosen for Bellevue Park is constructed in discourse as empty or open and, according to the etymological origin, urban gardening space can be interpreted as being taken possession of. But this interpretation can also refer to the occupation of urban gardening space as employing it or to occupy it with gardening. In the forthcoming analysis, all of these meanings apply to the act of occupying urban space.

Empty space is linked in discourse to the identified problem of cities that do not live up to their true potential (as argued in previous chapters). If cities were more productive and efficient, the threat of climate change would decrease. Below, I will exemplify how this discursive move naturalizes the discourse on urban gardening, deeming it a natural part of the city by reflecting it against the unproductive and empty space that preceded it. On the home page of Bellevue Farm, a series of pictures is posted, illustrating a timeline of how the gardening space was constructed (Figure 5). The picture series helps to establish the idea of transformation from a passive and empty space without activity to a productive and re-productive space with a clear function. In the timeline, the first picture shows a plot of land covered with gravel or grey, dry soil and yellow grass. In the distance, one can see bare trees. The second picture shows the garden under construction, there is a fence of sticks and the now moist and brown soil is contrasted against wood chips on a pathway.

¹⁷ Svenska akademins ordlista (SAOL): Ockupera. Available at <https://www.saob.se/artikel/?seek=ockupera&pz=1>

Figure 5. Pictures illustrating the transformation of space (©Norrmalmsodlarna, 2016–2019).

The space is now populated by people working in the garden. Note that they are not dressed in the traditional reflective clothing which Park management uses in Sweden. This indicates that non-professional people or citizens have built the garden. In the third picture, one can see how the plants have started to grow, the pathway is central and the light green plants are framing it. The last two pictures portray the mature vegetable garden, the deep green kale is in focus as well as the irrigation where the sun is reflecting the water droplets. These pictures demonstrate how the value of a place can change, from being ‘nothing’ or ‘only’ used for the temporary storage of equipment and parking to a place that one can use and enjoy. The pictures also illustrate gardening as a reproductive activity. The plant lifecycle from seed (in the second picture), to flowering, fertilization, development of fruit and (if not harvested) back to seed again. The later pictures in the time series ooze the viability of the water running and the deep green kale. The timeline illustrates the cultivation of plants, as well as space, and shows how both space and nature are in the process of becoming.

Nature, just like any concept, is a construction that is dependent on time- and place-specific discourses. How nature is given meaning depends on where that specific representation is articulated. The construction of the garden space as empty neglects the kind of nature that was there before the garden. A hierarchy between various types of ecologies or natures emerges. The ‘before-space’, with its gravel and grass, could only mimic or imitate vital nature, whilst the transformed space is constructed as more authentic or natural. The dry grass and gravel are placed in a hierarchy below fertile plants in the vegetable garden. Thus, the cultivated nature in the garden is more natural than the kind of nature that preceded it. In discourse, the garden is continuously established as a space that has been transformed and focuses on the new relationship with the place and nature that has been formed. A truth about the before-space as a non-place, or non-nature not suitable for gardening, with soil that was contaminated due to previous uses of the place, is continuously established.

The value of nature transformed along with the place. In addition, the transformation of place nature has turned it into an actor in its own right. The gardeners speak about nature with agency. This is exemplified by the choice not to remove most of the contaminated soil but instead to try to improve it using ecological methods in collaboration with Stockholm University. The soil is an important actor in the garden, and the gardeners wish to take responsibility for the space that they have occupied. In a similar manner, the gardeners see the compost and soil as something alive, which needs nutrients and care (Field notes, 2017-05-07). To learn how to best feed the soil, the gardeners arranged a workshop on how composting works and what it needs. Compost is identified as crucial for the reproductive force in the garden.

The discursive markers of cultivation (or reproduction) of place and plants reoccur in several articulations. In a news article about the garden, the journalist writes: *"[the gardeners] have turned an inconspicuous plot of grass into a fully-fledged garden filled with vegetables, plants, and fertile soil"*. Again, the unproductive is contrasted against the reproductive qualities of the garden. The article continues *"... An important part of urban gardening is to demonstrate how everything is connected, but also how we can make use of green areas in the cities"* (Burman, 2017). This implies that this slice of green space was, in fact, not used at all or not used in the proper way. The articulation of the space as unproductive is continuously contrasted against what is now perceived as a myriad of events occurring in the gardening space. However, there are examples of events when the presence of the gardeners is questioned. Passers-by ask if the gardeners have permission to occupy the space; some are curious, whilst others are irritated. A gardener describes how a person approached her, obviously annoyed about the fact that the space was occupied. The person explained that "I used to walk my dog here," implicitly stating that "you disturbed an important part of my everyday routine". This makes it apparent that no space is empty or without positive value. Through articulations like these, the interpretation of gardening space as empty is challenged. On these occasions, the gardeners restore legitimacy by referring to their collaboration with the municipality.

The gardening space is constructed as reproductive, useful and profitable, and it is through its usefulness that the gardeners' occupation of space is legitimized. This is done by contrasting the now

useful space, which is filled with activity, against an idea of the state of the space before the gardeners occupied it. The articulation of the legitimate garden is dependent upon the idea that the before-space was of no use. Thus, the identification of the place as nothing or empty is positioned as the other – as negative or threatening within the discursive system.

(Property) Relations in the Garden

Bellevue Farm is a community garden¹⁸ which the gardeners manage together. This means that there are no individual beds assigned to the gardeners; instead, they sow and harvest as a community in common beds (Bellevue Farm, 2016). Hence, two problems appear. Firstly, that gardening is strongly associated with individual ownership of the crops and the harvest and, secondly, that public space entails that the space is made for everybody and owned jointly. As the opening quote from Taylor (2008) states – gardens are peculiar because they normally extend the home dwelling from inside to outside. At the same time as a garden is interpreted as private and part of the home sphere, it also functions as an interface between the private and public realms. Because gardening space can be simultaneously interpreted as public as well as private, as the initial quote states, the property relations need to be analyzed. This predicament can help to illustrate the property relations within an urban garden.

Property will be investigated here as social and, thus, political and not as an account of human nature or rights. Devenney (2011, p. 161) writes that “[p]roperty, as a bundle of rights, sediments certain social relations and institutionalized practices which define and distribute rights of access to resources”. In this section, I seek to illustrate how the articulation of urban gardening space negotiates institutionalized practices and challenges the definition of what can be owned, used and abused. Firstly, I focus on the ownership of the garden space and, secondly, I turn my attention to the persistent negotiation of the use and abuse of gardening space; that is, to enclosure and trespassing. Thirdly, I will analyze how the identity of the gardener is constructed through the somewhat problematic relationship with other visitors to the park, as well as the municipality.

¹⁸ In Swedish: Tillsammansodling.

Negotiating Enclosure

This section will analyze the relationship between public ownership and civil management of urban space. The municipality is the landowner and is the counterpart on with which the garden association relies. The garden space was assigned to the gardening association through a user agreement. This agreement lays out the property relations, that is the conditions for ownership and access to the garden space. The conditions in the agreement state, for example, that the garden space is on loan and that the gardeners can use it until further notice, with one month's notice. One board member comments on these terms:

Not even a growing season is guaranteed. Which is a bit strange considering the growing cycle, but according to them it was a formality, this is what the agreements with urban gardeners look like. (Quote from field notes, 2017-08-29)

There seems to be a discrepancy between gardening practice and the terms of the contract. Gardening is an activity that takes a long-term perspective, but despite the slow processes in gardening, the contract can be cancelled within a month. For example, if the municipality wanted to build condominiums or a road, perhaps the urban garden would be considered interchangeable. Beyond the formal contract, the gardeners also depend on the municipality in other ways. One example is that they need to adhere to national regulations as well as the rules set by the municipality. According to the regulation of public space, nobody has the right to exclude others (Field notes, 2018-09-08b) whilst in private areas the owner has the right to exclude and/or decide who has access to a space. Thus, being the owner of a property enables you to protect it against theft and trespassing – that is, violation of property.

At Bellevue Farm, in one way, the property relations are clear. Due to its location in a public park, the gardeners are not allowed to fence the garden in order to keep the space open to the public. The role and interpretation of urban gardens can thus be seen as even more peculiar than that of other gardens due to the unclear property boundaries. This is especially problematic for urban gardens, which are often situated on public land and as such are open to all. To meet the requirements of a public space, the garden in Bellevue Park cannot be fenced in. Instead, the gardeners have fenced the garden beds. The picture below shows how the garden space itself is accessible, there is nothing separating it from the public space of the park, but the garden beds are defined (Figure 6). The fencing is described as a compromise by the gardeners,

who are trying to balance the requirement of being open to everyone with developing the separation of spaces that is sometimes required to successfully run a vegetable garden; for example, to keep rodents away.

Figure 6. The fenced garden beds.

In gardening, the fence functions as a means to control nature, it keeps unwanted wilderness out (such as rabbits and deer) but lets through desired wilderness (for example, pollinators such as bees).

The group responsible for the perennials has noticed a problem with the wild rabbits in the area. Because the garden beds don't have a gate, the rabbits eat the crops and the problem needs to be solved. As a solution, one guy builds a gate from chicken wire and builds an extension from the fence around the garden beds so they can be closed. (Field notes, 2017-06-06)

The openness of the garden has to be negotiated due to pests. A potential consequence of the fencing is that it could also signal people to keep out. In addition, in the quote above, the fencing is deemed not to be enough, the gardeners also need to build gates. Visitors can open the gate and look at the plants while it will keep rabbits out. In a similar manner as the fence, gates are normally used to control the entry or exit of individuals. Thus, the fencing could contribute to the interpretation of the garden as a private place. The garden can therefore be interpreted as a semi-public space, where the spaces in between the garden beds are public, but the beds themselves are private. Despite this, the garden may unintentionally be perceived as enclosed by people passing by, a place that “I can't visit anymore”. This is because the common

interpretation of a fence clearly visualizes enclosure and privacy. The fencing constitutes a way for the gardeners to claim and appropriate urban space.

Trespassing

This section focuses on the distinction between the use and abuse of property. The gardening space and its upkeep is assigned to the gardeners through a contract, while the ambient park area is managed by the municipality. As such, park management performs various tasks in the park; for example, mowing lawns or taking down trees. Occasionally, these tasks are performed in close proximity to, or even within, the gardening area assigned to Bellevue Farm.

The presence of park management is perceived as a possibility for the gardeners, where cooperation can potentially generate a positive outcome for the garden. One such possibility is to collect the cut grass from the park to cover the garden beds. Covering the beds works as a fertilizer and, in addition, less water is required because the plant material from the cut grass supports the ability of the soil to hold moisture (Field notes, 2017-06-06). Through cooperation with the park management, resources produced in the city can be returned/recycled to the urban ecosystem. This statement links to the articulation of how urban gardening is a way to make the urban fabric more profitable, effective and sustainable. However, park management is described by the gardeners as unaccommodating of their needs due to logistics or worries that the amount of grass clipping is too much for the gardeners to handle.

While cooperation with park management is sometimes described as a possibility, the management is more often described as unhelpful due to miscommunication within the municipal organization. There are several examples of park management performing tasks in the garden area, even though the garden is supposed to be managed by the gardeners. One example concerns their compost, which the municipality removed one year. To compensate for this event, the compost bin was replaced with a new one:

They talk about the compost bin and how the municipality removed it last year. Then they got a new one without consulting them [the gardeners], and the municipality shouldn't have authority to do that. The new compost bin is difficult to handle on your own, one needs to lift off a rather heavy gate. And then they [the municipality] dug a foundation

in the ground using gravel. [...] This will make it hard for the worms to get to the compost! Again, knowledge about the needs of a garden does not seem to exist. (Field notes, 2017-08-29)

The construction of a new compost bin was not communicated to the gardeners and this event created feelings of discontent. Firstly, because park management came unannounced into their assigned area (again trespassing and thus violating the terms of property) and, secondly, park management built a new compost bin without consulting them. Note that this behavior is identified as the municipality's, rather than criticizing the individuals who actually performed these tasks in the park. The gardeners criticize the event on a systemic level, while the focus could easily have been directed towards the individual workers.

The discontent is based on the inexperience that the gardeners identified within the municipal organization. The municipality is constructed as ignorant compared to the gardeners themselves, who 'know' about nature's cycles and needs. The foundation of the compost bin is one example of their ignorance, because this foundation was made of concrete and gravel, which stops worms reaching the garden waste and starting the decomposition process. This municipal ignorance is opposed to the gardeners' understanding and knowledge about the materials used. The gardeners are positioning themselves as the knowledgeable ones and as a result the municipality is positioned as the negative aspect in the discourse by embodying the opposite – being ignorant. Hence, the gardeners identify their relationship with nature as truer or more authentic because of their deep understanding of what the soil and the plants need. The municipality's ignorance is also articulated within the short-term perspectives identified in the formal contract.

The municipality's inability to understand gardening processes is deemed problematic both for the gardeners and also for nature as a whole. By reflecting on what kinds of behavior are unfit, the gardeners identify themselves as the ones who are most suitable to manage urban gardens. Here, one could imagine an alternative story of how park management is specialized to take care of the park and its plants; however, that narrative is not available. The municipal organization is clearly interpreted as the Other, even though it certainly has mandate to perform tasks in the park. However, park management's lack of knowledge means that its workers' presence is interpreted as trespassing. The statements thus create a number of distinctions

between us, the gardeners, and them, the municipality, based on suitability and knowledge levels.

As shown above, two important actors surrounding the garden are the gardeners themselves and park management, representing the municipal organization. However, there are several other possible subjectivities that are present in or adjacent to the garden, such as visitor, thief, soccer player and guerilla gardener. The following text illustrates how acceptance of the presence of other categories of actors in the park is contingent and how these actors relate to each other. The presence of certain actors is defined as positive by the gardeners, while the presence of others generates feelings of discomfort or is interpreted as threatening.

I will illustrate how the activities in the garden challenge a hegemonic discourse of property boundaries. An example of this is shown in a comparison of the reactions to two events that could potentially be interpreted as trespassing. This concerns the willow in the garden and a guerilla gardener. Firstly, for two years in a row the gardeners have planted willow trees that park management has then cut down (Figure 7).

Figure 7. A picture of the felled willow.

Park management thus destabilized the enclosure established by the gardeners and its workers' presence is interpreted as trespassing. In contrast to the municipal activity described above, the gardeners also

discovered that an undefined Other had planted potatoes in an area of soil that contained elevated levels of a toxic chemical (Figure 8). The urban garden has a guerilla gardener¹⁹ present, an event that would normally be identified as trespassing on property.

Figure 8. Potatoes planted by a guerilla gardener.

The attitude towards the guerilla gardener is more positive than towards the municipal presence in the garden. Instead of interpreting the unknown actor as a potential threat, the gardeners identify with the unknown. Feelings of concern emerge, and the gardeners want to warn the unknown gardener about the contaminated soil.

She [a gardener] also tells me that they have a guerrilla gardener in the urban garden; someone planted potatoes next to the distribution box. She wonders who planted them and says that we should warn them about the potatoes. The soil in that spot is the worst in the whole place. [...] She wonders when the secret gardener will come and harvest the potatoes. (Field notes, 2017-08-29)

Note that the growers did not simply pull up and throw away the potatoes that the guerilla gardener had planted. The gardeners at

¹⁹ A guerilla gardener is a person who plants crops in the city without formal permission to do so.

Bellevue Farm do not claim ownership over the crops that are planted in 'their' garden. Instead, ownership is connected to the effort made and not the property it was grown on, even when it is done without permission.

As well as the guerilla gardener, other unknown actors are continuously present in the garden. These unknown actors are identified by both the urban gardeners and passersby as potential threats to the garden.

While we are building the pergola, a visitor passes by and starts asking about how the gardening is going and if 'we' are not afraid that things will be stolen or vandalized. The visitor talks about ownership, focusing on the fact that the gardeners don't own the vegetables or the land that they're gardening on. (Field notes, 2018-03-21)

There are tensions between the place as funded by taxes and therefore to some extent belonging to everyone and the fact that the crops growing there belong to the gardeners. Here, violation of property is identified as a potential problem, where "someone" could use the resources that are 'rightfully' limited to some – the gardeners (Devenney, 2011, p. 162). In an interview with one board member, it turns out that the pumpkins and tomatoes are popular among other people to harvest. These kinds of crops disappear relatively soon after they are ready to be harvested. To get around this problem, the gardeners have implemented a strategy trying to grow rare crops. Instead of spinach, they could grow pigweed, these crops originate from the same botanical family and can be used in the same way in cooking. The difference is that pigweed is less well-known and therefore fewer 'someones' dare to harvest that plant. Passersby often comment on this free-rider problem; however, the gardeners themselves rarely mention it or consider it problematic (Ostrom, 2015). Instead, the potential free-rider is interpreted as someone whom you have to take into account when you are in a public space. In the case of urban gardening, there is no actor who can enforce the laws or norms of trespass because the place is 'common' and belongs to 'everyone'. Thus, gardening in a public space makes 'the public' subjects of property.

Disciplined Aesthetics

In the new national goal for architecture, form and design, it is stated that the form and function of public space is important from a democratic perspective and it discusses the importance of well-thought-out architecture:

The design is important for how well an environment works and how appreciated it becomes. A well-designed place marks the value of a place and can, for example, result in people feeling better and using the place to a greater extent. How the public environment is designed signals both the care that has been put into it and its importance. (prop. 2017/18:110, p. 52)

Thus, the shape and design of public space is identified as a question of democratic concern. How public space is perceived affects its use and purpose as well as marking care and meaning. However, how a well-designed space should look is not defined. When it comes to the visual shape of the garden, the demands of the municipality are not clearly articulated. Despite of this, the gardeners relate to non-communicated demands about the design and upkeep of the garden. Here, I use Foucault's concept of discipline/hierarchical observation to understand how the gardeners are subject to a set of rationales and disciplinary techniques that control their behavior. In the garden, other actors in the park are recognized as judges who surveil the garden and could possibly report any disorder to the municipality. In this section, I will illustrate how the gaze of others becomes important in terms of the aesthetics of the garden, and how this is interpreted as conditional for the gardeners' presence.

Bellevue park is populated by people who walk their dogs, commute, bike, run, and take walks. Next to the garden, a soccer field is frequently visited by new teams almost every hour of the day. The noise of laughter and loud children, whistles, team-mates who holler to one another and applause from the onlookers is a prominent feature of the park (Field notes, 2017-09-26). The presence of others is palpable in the park. Potentially, all social categories have access to the gardening space; runners share the park with soccer players, visitors to the museum and patrons of the café. These actors use the gardens in various ways, some are mere visitors, whilst others are using the garden as a common, such as the people working out in the park.

I walk towards the compost and there is an old car chugging. The walkway next to the garden is well-used. I turn around and see a woman using the pallet frames as a support for doing dips. She was out running and stopped for some weight training in the garden. (Field notes, 2017-09-26)

In this way, the garden is open to everyone and this illustrates how the garden can be used in a number of ways, by a number of people.

However, the visitors also count as monitors or judges who surveil the garden. Due to this, the gardeners' exercise self-discipline through the upkeep and design of the garden. In the annual meeting for 2017, a discussion on messiness and beauty prevailed. The verdict of many of the gardeners was that the garden had looked messy during the previous growing season (Figure 9). The garden was experienced as disorganized, messy and untidy (Field notes, 2017-11-29).

It is unclear whether this messiness is problematic for themselves as actors in the gardening space, or if it is related to how others might perceive the garden. Regardless, the perceived mess spurred a discussion on how to improve the experience of the garden during the forthcoming growing season.

Figure 9. An example of what the garden could look like.

One action to make the garden more beautiful is to keep it tidy and remove any clutter that is lying around. Other solutions related to the public, and focused on knowledge, i.e. how the gardeners could create an understanding of why the garden looks the way it does. Here, actions such as signs could guide visitors to look at the space with the right expectations. The signs could help to illustrate for the public the principles of several gardening methods.

- We should put signs out so that visitors have the right expectations; for example, 'Meadow' or 'Forest garden' to signal

that there are not straight lines in this garden like in Rosendahl.

- Maybe we can have straight lines in the kitchen garden? As a strategy to catch the attention of more people by showing different ways to garden. (Field notes, 2017-11-29)

The discussion articulated a norm of order, in which straight lines and bare soil represent an ideal by which the garden can be judged. By accommodating the garden to these ideals, the gardeners hope that the gaze of others might be more forgiving. The fear of the gaze of others is internalized; however, there are examples of passersby reacting to the garden's upkeep and beauty.

She [the visitor] works or lives near the university and often gets irritated because she thinks it looks untidy there [there is an urban garden in the campus area at Stockholm University]. There are students who have started gardening and then left the place unattended. [...] Understandably, she wonders what it will be like here at Bellevue Farm. A board member explains the arrangements in Bellevue Park and says that that will not happen here. The woman does not budge and continues to talk about the urban garden at the university as a cautionary example. (Field notes, 2017-05-21)

This woman questions the practice of urban gardening and the elements of untidiness that it brings to public space. She identifies continuity as a problem for gardens run by citizens, suggesting that one day the gardeners will move or find another interest and leave the gardening space to turn into wilderness again. However, the garden at the university is part of an urban gardening class that uses forest gardening as its method. The method aims to use the prerequisite of the chosen location and build a garden adapted to local conditions. Using nature as a model for the design of these gardens, it stands in contrast to how one is used to seeing gardens. Using this method could mean that somebody will be of the opinion that the garden looks messy; this 'somebody' represents the undefined public or the Other. With this as a threat, the gardeners self-regulate in terms of what the Other thinks 'it should look like'.

Integrated into the gardening practice, there is also a threat of hierarchical observation. A board member at a garden in Malmö explains how the hierarchy affects their work.

I: You mentioned several times that urban gardening needs to be beautiful in some way. Is that also a prevailing argument?

LW: Yes, but it's very subjective. I guess I say it because I know how important it is for the municipality. Some municipal oldsters don't think that it's beautiful with gardening. Urban gardens are not like the Victorian parks with straight lines and dazzling flowerbeds.

I: And that can be problematic?

LW: Yes, if the public agrees, and there is a risk of more vandalism if the garden is too messy or leafy. In the same way, the property owners don't want the outside space to look neglected. But everything is subjective. (Interview - LW, 2016)

This gardener expresses the opinion that beauty is subjective; however, the hierarchical gaze is deemed important. In addition, it is assumed that an untidy place risks vandalism if the space looks abandoned. The hierarchical observation is also a reality at Bellevue Farm. Let us return to the example presented in the section *Trespassing* of when the willow was removed by park management. The willow illustrates an event when communication between the municipality and its subcontractors did not work, but also represents an example of how responsibility for miscommunication is taken on by the gardeners themselves.

We are weeding by the willow and a gardener tells me that the municipality's contractors have been here and cleared the whole surface. Before that, the garden bed was filled with nice flowers and similar. But now it's just thorny grass. She [the gardener] thinks that if they had weeded the garden bed before, it would have 'looked like something.' (Field notes, 2017-08-29)

Due to what she identifies as a failure in upkeep, the gardener reflects on their own responsibility for the trespass performed by park management. In the garden, trespass and aesthetics are linked and echo the values presented in the government bill; namely, that the design and upkeep of public space signals the importance of designated places. As a consequence, if a contrasting state occurs, the space may be misinterpreted as forgotten by the gardeners or the authorities and thus attract activities that are not necessarily authorized.

Negotiations in the Garden

Several negotiations take place in the urban garden of Bellevue Farm. The main concern is the value of space and types of ecology that serve as a basis for the legitimacy of the gardeners' occupation of urban

public space. The divergence between the before-space (a parking lot), which was not properly designed or included in urban plans, and the current design and use of space is continuously in question. In discourse, a hierarchy between types of space and ecologies is established. Certain parts of urban space are constructed as non-space, underutilized and empty, by the gardeners and other representations in the media, while other types of spaces are constructed as productive and reproductive. The problem representation of empty or unproductive urban space is constructed as a problem even after the garden has been established. This indicates that conflict over space is ongoing, and discourse is not yet naturalized.

Other negotiations in the garden concern property relations, where the gardeners renegotiate the openness of public space in their ambition to garden in the city. One example is the reasoning about fencing, which illustrates the difficulties of providing a space that is open to everybody. While this fencing is necessary from a horticultural perspective, it could be interpreted as a signal for others to keep out. The boundaries of property are also challenged in other ways. An example is the renegotiating of ownership of crops in the garden. Here, the guerilla gardener's actions are read as use and the actions of park management as abuse of property boundaries. Instead the gardeners show respect for the person who planted the crops and leave them in the soil for the guerilla gardener to harvest. Interestingly enough, the presence of the guerilla gardener is not interpreted as trespass, even though he or she planted the crops without permission. This can be contrasted against the interpretation of the park management's presence as trespassing, although their ambition is to assist the gardeners in the garden by building a compost bin. The mishap perpetrated by park management is identified as displaying a lack of knowledge, while the gardeners can identify with the guerilla gardener.

Lastly, the design and upkeep of the garden is interpreted as conditional for continued access to the land and connects to questions of ownership. Because the gardeners do not own the garden space themselves, their access is interpreted as conditional. Due to the one-month cancellation clause in the contract, the municipality could retract their access to the garden space at any time and, for example, build a parking lot or skatepark. The possible interchangeability of the garden space changes the interpretation of other visitors to the park and the municipality from innocent passers-by to judges who could potentially put a stop to the garden if it is deemed too messy or

neglected. This conditionality results in a disciplined aesthetics, where the gaze of others affects the gardeners' decisions about the form and function of the garden.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSIONS & REFLECTIONS

This endeavor started out with a curiosity about the ‘new’ urban activity of gardening that has become increasingly visible in urban public space over the last 10 years. The aim has been to identify the boundaries for the practice of gardening in urban public space by mapping out the dominant descriptions of the phenomenon and then analyzing how some discursive markers make it possible for citizens to claim urban space for gardening. To answer these questions, I have approached urban gardening as a participant observer at an urban garden in Stockholm during the course of one year. I have also analyzed a range of other types of empirical material, such as interviews with gardeners, news reporting, policy guidelines and notes from seminars on urban gardening. In three empirical chapters, I have shown the discursive conditions for urban gardening. The following sections will summarize and discuss the most important findings of the study. This concluding chapter begins with an overview of the dominant representations of urban gardening in Sweden. Thereafter, I will focus on affective investments or ideological fantasies and discuss how urban gardening is presented as an absolutely necessary practice in urban space. Lastly, I will present the negotiations and conflicts in the urban garden of Bellevue Farm, where attention will be given to the conditions of urban gardening space.

The activity of urban gardening is part of an interest in vegetable gardening grounded in a political motivation to ‘live’ in harmony with the political conviction to be environmentally friendly or form an authentic relationship with nature. Thus, the practice of cultivating food not only modifies the city’s physical environment, but also reproduces a fantasy of authenticity which gives force to the discourse of urban gardening as sustainable. However, this conviction is reduced in the media to a trendy activity performed by the middle class or a tool for the dominant culture to integrate new Swedes. The multi-functionality of urban gardening that was described in the empirical material neutralizes the political motives of the practice. Despite the interpretation of urban gardening as apolitical, it is an activity that, for

some, visualizes another possible urban environment that needs to be taken seriously. Urban gardening can thus be interpreted as a form of environmental activism that aims to change society (its visions and ideologies). The threat of environmental climate change transforms the simple act of growing a carrot in the city into a necessity for urban life or even humanity. Together, the physical world (the soil, rocks, plants and sun) and the ideas (of climate change, food production and aesthetics) that are tied to it create an imagination of space that represents the socially produced reality, or discourse. In this way, the gardeners protest against the prevailing society and its practices by creating alternative images and visions (utopias) for the future – visions of a more environmentally sound society, where food is organic and produced nearby. The conviction of urban gardening's positive values is reinforced through these ideological fantasies.

Main Representations of Urban Gardening

The phenomenon of urban gardening is described as an activity that takes place within the urban fabric. One can garden on a balcony, adjacent to one's dwelling, and in public spaces, such as parks or along old train tracks. This is compared to allotment gardens, which are placed in separate zones that are often located at the border between the urban and rural. The contemporary urban gardening community, however, does not build a sameness with the traditional allotment gardens, even though the allotment movement shares some characteristics with the contemporary urban gardening community. The legitimacy of urban gardening is instead based on a sustainability discourse whereby the practice holds the possibility of remedying many problems that are present in the city, such as lack of community and a proper relationship with nature or food production. In addition, the phenomenon of urban gardening is distinguished through the creation of sameness between cities in Sweden and other cities around the world, such as New York, Berlin or Detroit. This sameness builds an alliance between global cities and the local garden-constructing identity, and at the same time creates legitimacy for urban gardens to occupy urban public space.

There are two dominant problem representations in the urban gardening discourse: the problem of prerequisites for gardening and the problem of under-utilized urban space. The problem of prerequisites for gardening refers to the institutional framework for the practice of urban gardening, where the time horizon for the agreements is

identified as an important issue. Short-term perspectives make it difficult to invest in the garden and create feelings of uncertainty among the gardeners. Other preconditions are the location of the garden, where soil quality, access to water and orientation to the sun emerge as crucial. Institutional arrangements are criticized in the discourse due to a lack of knowledge about what a garden needs. This lack of knowledge within the local administration and government is considered to be the cause of the poor conditions for urban gardening. The issues of time perspective and location were also important when the allotment movement was founded at the beginning of the 20th century. One can identify similarities in institutional arrangements (such as short-term contracts) as well as the arguments (such as urban dwellers' (lack of a) relationship to nature) that are used to legitimize urban space for gardening purposes. The analysis shows that ecological and social values are ranked as vital in the urban environment, while economic values are subordinated.

The Role of Ideological Fantasy

When it comes to the problem of 'underutilized' space, urban gardening is represented as a remedy, as something that can heal what is broken or missing in the urban environment. The actual space for legitimacy is created through these exclusionary positions. The discourse expresses a critique of how cities are planned for and built. The analysis confirms the findings of previous research on urban gardening that expresses a frustration among urban gardeners when it comes to sustainable development. I claim that urban gardening space would not be possible without the hegemonic fantasies of urban gardening as a remedy for the incompleteness of urban space.

The analysis of urban gardening in Sweden shows that emotions are often expressed in connection to the processes of gardening and eating. Because these feelings have been expressed as significant in the discourse, it has been important to take them seriously in the analysis. Feelings of nostalgia, such as joy and calmness, are often expressed in the gardeners' narratives. The gardening practice is then connected to events in childhood or to a time when the gardeners experienced a truer relationship with nature. Other feelings that appear include feelings of anxiety, where the threat of environmental problems emerges as the enemy within. I analyzed these feelings through the psychoanalytical concept of *jouissance*, or desire, in order to examine how discourses are sustained, thus obstructing or enabling social change. This study has

focused on three discursive structures of enjoyment in terms of the hegemonic appeal of urban gardening. These are: theft of enjoyment, partial enjoyment and excessive enjoyment. In the urban gardening discourse, these discursive structures can be found in three processes of Othering that were identified. The Others are those who don't know, those with the wrong relationship to nature and those who don't take proper responsibility for nature.

In *Concern*, those who don't know are identified as the Other. Knowledge about food production and how food grows is lacking, which results in decisions that are bad for the environment. Thus, the process of reconnecting food with plants is emphasized and the practice of gardening has a clear pedagogic ambition. Connected to this lack of knowledge, feelings of concern emerge. Lack of knowledge is represented as the explanation for why enjoyment is missing, and a group of unenlightened consumers is identified. Thus, the structural position of theft of enjoyment is used in the analysis. In *Nostalgia*, those with the wrong relationship to nature are discussed. Here, distance in time and space is used to create a sameness between the past and the present, but also to generate a close proximity to food and food production. Connected to distance, feelings of calmness, happiness, and pride are articulated, and these affective modes help the gardeners to construct a symbiotic relationship with nature. The gardening practice functions as partial enjoyment and provides the gardeners with the sensation that "we're almost there", which gives strength to the aim to transform the urban environment. In *Anxiety*, those who don't take the proper responsibility for environmental issues are discussed. The neoliberal economic system functions as a threat to the harmony that is to come. Connected to this process of Othering, feelings of anxiety are articulated. Anxiety over both the conduct of industry and also an ineffective government that does not do enough to induce social change.

Negotiations of Urban Gardening Space

The discussion on gardening space circulated around property relations and how property can be owned, used and abused. The first recurring problem at Bellevue Farm concerning ownership is access to space. Ownership continued to be represented as a problem even after the gardeners obtained space for their garden. The narrative about how space was found is a cornerstone for legitimizing the garden's presence in urban space. Legitimacy is constructed using a normative ideal of the

city as a space that should represent profitability. The analysis has shown how representations of spaces in the city are constructed as 'under-utilized' or 'empty', and how this is identified by the gardeners as an important sustainability problem. A discursive structure of a profitable or productive city teaches us that urban gardens are necessary in order to adapt to climate change. Using this discursive structure, a slice of land in the city is constructed as empty and as such represents the constitutive outside onto which the productive and reproductive garden then reflects. In the narrative of finding space, boundaries are being drawn between under-utilized or unproductive urban space and the productive and reproductive space of the garden. Even though the transformation of unproductive space is used as a main argument for occupying urban space, the quality of the gardening space is criticized. The gardeners reflect on a hierarchy among various leisure activities in urban space and compare their gardening practice with soccer.

Connected to ownership are problems of use and abuse that is, how the gardeners relate to the fact that they are occupying public space. The second recurring problem in the garden touches on tensions that are created between public and private ownership. At Bellevue Farm, there is a tension between the pronounced ambition of being open, engaging and teaching the public about vegetable gardening, and keeping the garden closed for members only. Physical boundaries in the form of fencing are discussed, where the fence is interpreted as a negotiation of the openness of public space. These negotiations are also shown in the strategies developed to minimize theft and exclude others; for example, in the choice of rare crops that are less well-known to the public. However, the gardeners do not necessarily view the disappearance of crops as theft; instead, they say that this is something one needs to expect when one gardens in a public space. Hence, the crops are not interpreted as subjects of property.

The use of the garden also raises questions about who is identified as welcome in the garden and who is identified as a trespasser. Boundaries are being drawn between the gardeners and the local municipality. The municipality is represented as lacking in knowledge and, thus, as not having the proper relationship to nature. Because of this, the municipality is presented as abusing the rules of the garden, while the actions of the guerilla gardener and thieves are viewed with a more forgiving gaze and are understood as use rather than abuse. The presence of others is palpable in the park, where the visitors also

function as monitors of the garden. This results in discussions about the proper design of the garden and how others may perceive it. The gaze of others functions to monitor and shape the behavior of the gardeners. This is evident because visitors and passersby comment on how the upkeep is being managed and what the condition of the garden is. The occupation of urban space is thus interpreted as conditional by the gardeners, whereby their authority is dependent on the design and upkeep of the garden.

Future Research Prospects

The reflections in previous chapters indicate that there are different potential avenues for future research endeavors. In this section, I briefly present two proposals for future research approaches. The first focuses on urban gardening and the institutional framework and the second concentrates on urban gardening and democratic subjectivity. First, the study shows that there are tensions between the gardeners and local government at the gardening site due to unclear terms for urban gardening. Using this result as a starting point, it would be interesting to elaborate upon the relationship between citizen initiatives and local government in urban public space. This study has focused to a large extent on the gardeners' perspectives; therefore, it would be fruitful to explore how local government reflects on such issues as policy, political goals and property relations in urban gardens.

The study also raises the potential for a more comprehensive analysis of interactions in non-traditional political venues such as urban gardens in public space. This line of research would further challenge the assumption that public space is an unproblematic space that enables free speech and instead embrace it as a site of conflict. Here, Chantal Mouffe's writings on radical democracy can shed light on how seemingly ordinary practices can engage a large number of people and scrutinize how citizens interact in a democracy. By studying radical democratic aspects (such as the conditions for political action and speech) in public space, we can learn something about democratic subjectivity – how it is constructed, upheld and challenged.

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