

Community Gardens in Gothenburg: Local Counter-actions in the Age of Globalization?

A Qualitative Study on Motives behind Urban Agriculture in Gothenburg



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Abstract

Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens is an increasing phenomenon around the world. Gothenburg is following this trend. Extensive research on Community Gardens globally, shows that there are various objectives behind cultivating in cities. For poor people, Urban Agriculture may be a strategy of survival. Some Community Gardens around the world are described as community projects, others are analysed to work as spaces of resistance in urban landscapes. However, there is little research done on Community Gardens in Gothenburg. Accordingly, by conducting a qualitative study, interviewing six urban farmers, this thesis attempts to paint a picture of motives behind Community Gardens in Gothenburg.

The theoretical lens of the thesis is that globalization is transforming cities and the people that live in them. Moreover, it is believed that globalization leads to counter-actions on the local level. These processes are assumed to be observed, also in Gothenburg.

Thus, the main intent of this thesis is to explore motives behind Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens in Gothenburg, and how Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens may be described as counter-acts to globalization.

Keywords: *Community Gardens – Gothenburg – Globalization – Counter-actions*

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Introduction

Background

Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens is an increasing phenomenon around the globe (Delshammar, 2011; Hörnstein, 2010; Larsson, 2009; Mougeot, 2005) Sweden and Gothenburg follow this global trend (Delshammar, 2011; Jimenez, 2012; Larsson, 2010).

Urban Agriculture is argued to become a necessity in the future as populations are increasing on the globe- and more people live in urban areas (Mougeot, 2005; Veenhuizen, 2006; FAO, 2011). Today, approximately half of the population of the world live in urban areas. This figure is steadily increasing (Boone & Modarres, 2006; FAO, 2012; Mougeot, 2005; UNHABITAT, 2008). It is estimated that '[...] by the middle of this century all regions will be predominantly urban [...]' According to current projections, virtually the whole of the world's population growth over the next 30 years will be concentrated in urban areas' (UNHABITAT, 2008: ix)

In many cities of developing countries, food is already grown by people as a strategy of survival or as an income supplement (FAO, 2011; Mougeot, 2005; Veenhuizen, 2006). In developed countries, the objectives behind cultivating in the cities look predominantly different from objectives in developing countries (Mougeot, 2005). Community Gardens in developed countries are most commonly described as social projects with aims such as; improving the health and quality of life for people using the gardens; community development; integration and reducing crimes. Other common aims are to produce organic local food, to protect green space in cities and making cities more beautiful (Cameron et al, 2010; Delshammar, 2011; Jimenez, 2012). There are also examples in developed countries, such as in the United States, where the aim is to put (good) food on the table for the poor. In these cases, the gardens are sometimes initiated by the poor themselves, but more frequently as part of community projects, initiated by different groups and organizations (Delshammar, 2011; Jimenez, 2012).

Some scholars analyse Community Gardens as forms of protest or resistance (Cameron et al, 2010, McKay, 2011; Schmelzkopz, 1995, 2002). By cultivating sustainable (and fair) local food some urban farmers believe they are resisting global injustice and the global food industry (Cameron et al, 2010, McKay, 2011) Community Gardens are also analysed as spaces resisting development pressure of cities. In addition, they may be described as

resistance to local neoliberal policies, which are promoting private property markets over people. It is a question of who has “the right to the city” (Schmelzkopz, 1995, 2002).

Sweden is a country where virtually all citizens can afford to buy their food in supermarkets today (Björklund, 2010; Larsson, 2009). So why do people, in Gothenburg, grow their own food when they don't necessarily have to? What are their motives?

Theoretical Lens or Pre-understanding of the Problem

During my studies I have been particularly interested in the transformation of Gothenburg under the Age of Globalization. More specifically, I am interested in how one may see local manifestations of globalization or counter-actions to globalization, in Gothenburg.

Several scholars argue that the global political economy and globalization processes are transforming cities and the people who live in them (Harvey, 2008; Khanna, 2010; Sassen, 2000; Sassen, 2007; Sernhede & Johansson, 2006). This is argued to also be the case for Gothenburg. What's more, globalization has connected Gothenburg to the outside world on a whole new level than before (Sernhede & Johansson, 2006; Jörnmark, 2005).

This thesis takes the stance that something new is happening to the world due to globalization processes. It follows scholars like Eriksen (2007) Castells (2000 vol.1.), Giddens, (1990, 2000) and Scholte (2005) who claim that, since the mid 20th century, the world has seen an increase and changes in social connections between people, which move beyond territories. As Scholte describes; ‘A reconfiguration of social geography is intimately interlinked with shifts in patterns of knowledge, production, governance, identity, and social ecology’ (Scholte, 2005: 60). According to Castells theory of ‘*network society*’ we are now all connected in one way or another. This was initiated by new information technology and now affects all aspects of life (Castells, 2010, vol. 1 and 3). This interconnectedness with the outside world has impact on social structures on the local level. Giddens argues that in post-modernity social relations and activities are no longer bounded to traditional geographic locales. Rather, people may have connections with other distant places. Space becomes ‘relative’, ‘deterritorialized’ and ‘stretched’. This is what Giddens calls *disembedding* mechanisms of social structures. Furthermore, local transformations are part of globalization (Giddens 1990, 2000).

As a counter-reaction to globalization and disembedding processes people search for identity and meaning (Eriksen, 2007). Moreover, '[...] globalization is always *glocal* in the sense that human lives take place in particular locations- even if they are transnational, on the move, dislocated' (Eriksen, 2007:141). This may be seen in emerging social movements as well as in identity politics (from above and below) such as local nationalism and in indigenous people's struggles for their culture. This is according to Eriksen a process of *re-embedding* (Eriksen, 2007).

Thus, the theoretical lens of this thesis is that globalization *has* changed the world and this therefore has strong impacts on Gothenburg. Hence, by taking this view-point one may also argue that local counter-actions to globalization ought to be seen in Gothenburg. This theoretical perspective made me question whether or not Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens in Gothenburg may be understood as counter-acts to globalization.

Why Community Gardens?

When investigating local counter-acts to globalization, in Gothenburg, I could have chosen several other local phenomena to conduct research on. This could have been a thesis about youths burning cars in the suburbs, increased nationalism, people occupying houses in Gothenburg or civil society etc. However, the choice landed on Community Gardens. This is due to several reasons. An internship at S2020¹ (during winter 2011-2012) gave me the opportunity to write two articles about Community Gardens in Malmö. While collecting information for the articles I met up with some urban farmers in Malmö and I was intrigued by their enthusiasm and stories about their Community Gardens. Thus, I started to become interested in this, for me, new phenomenon. Moreover, I myself have an allotment house in the outskirts of Gothenburg. However, I have mostly used my garden for recreation and have not cultivated much during the two years I have owned it. Perhaps this thesis will inspire me to start cultivating more? But let's make a long story shorter and continue with the purpose of this research.

¹ S2020 stands for *Socially Sustainable Development, year 2020* (Socialt hållbar utveckling år 2020). It is a Commission within the City of Gothenburg that has the task to work towards a common image of what social sustainable development ought to be, for the city (*see also* www.kunskapsmatris-s2020.se).

Purpose and Significance of Study

The main intent of this research is to explore motives behind Community Gardens in Gothenburg and how these motives may be understood as counter-acts to globalization.

As I began this research, I soon realized that this was an ambitious task to undertake during the scope of a master thesis. However, it was made feasible as I chose to carry out the research as a qualitative study. Six semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals who are active in Community Gardens in Gothenburg. By choosing this research design the study is mostly interested in exploring the experiences and beliefs of individuals directly involved in this phenomenon (Bryman, 2004, Creswell, 2009).

The strategy of the research was therefore; 1) To gather information about motives behind Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens in Gothenburg, 2) To question, by the help of previous research and literature, whether or not Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens in Gothenburg may be understood as local counter-acts to globalization?

To my knowledge there is not much research done on motives behind Community Gardens in Gothenburg. Moreover, I have not found a single research that makes the connection between Community Gardens and counter-acts to globalization. Not explicitly. Consequently, this thesis may be of importance to future research in this area. What's more, there is little research done, whatsoever, on Community Gardens in Gothenburg. During my reviewing of the literature of Community Gardens in Sweden I was mostly able to find examples coming from Malmö. Hence, this study could also be of substance on *other* issues related to Community Gardens in Gothenburg. In addition, the study should be seen as a compliment to research on Community Gardens in other cities around the globe. Even if it will be difficult to make generalizations, due to the fact that this research is based on few interviews, it may be a suggestion of a research area that may be looked into further.

Research Questions

This thesis has two main research questions, followed by a set of sub-questions;

- 1) *What are the motives, as described by six urban farmers, behind Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens in Gothenburg?*
 - What are the reasons for cultivating in the city of Gothenburg?

- What attracted these individuals to become members of Community Gardens, in the first place?
 - How do these individuals describe motives behind urban agriculture in Community Gardens in Gothenburg, in general?
- 2) *May Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens in Gothenburg be understood as local counter-acts to globalization?*
- May one distinguish counter- acts?
 - If so, what are individuals resisting?
 - Are these counter-acts of reactive or proactive nature?

Central Definitions Used in Thesis

When doing research on Community Gardens a mishmash of definitions are encountered. Besides, when writing a thesis in English and searching literature in both English and Swedish it becomes somewhat tricky to keep track of different concepts and how they may relate to each other across the languages. The following is a brief presentation of definitions used in this thesis.

Urban Agriculture and Urban Farming

The word that is most commonly used for cultivating in cities in Sweden is the Swedish verb *stadsodling*. But it is difficult to define exactly what *stadsodling* encompasses in Sweden, as a concept. Firstly, it is used and related to activities initiated by the municipality, by grass-root groups or by individuals. Secondly, it may be done individually, in a community or commercially. Thirdly, it may entail growing food in public spaces, in backyards, in allotment plots, or on balconies etc. Another word, but not as frequently used is *urban odling* (Delshammar, 2011; Hörnstein, 2010). It is noteworthy to mention that neither *stadsodling* nor *urban odling* is in Svenska Akademiens ordlista (Svenska Akademien, 2012). Naturally, it is therefore also hard to find a good translation into English. However, Hörnstein states that both *stadsodling* and *urban odling* may be the equivalent of the English concept of *Urban Agriculture* (Hörnstein, 2010).

Veenhuizen states that;

‘Urban Agriculture can be defined as the growing of plants and the raising of animals for food and other uses within and around cities and towns, and related activities such as the production and delivery of inputs, and the processing and marketing of products. [Moreover], Urban Agriculture is located within or on the fringe of a city [...]’ (Veenhuizen, 2006:1).

Another scholar using *Urban Agriculture* is Mougeot (2000). He stresses the importance of ensuring that the concept of *Urban Agriculture* (UA) is used with coherence in order for it to be useful to practitioners and policymakers. In the thematic paper *Urban agriculture: definition, presence, potentials and risk* he argues that; ‘UA is different from, and complementary to, rural agriculture in local food systems: urban agriculture is integrated into the local urban economic and ecological system’ (Mougeot, 2000:1).

Another commonly used word that I have stumbled across during my research of literature is *Urban Farming*. Thoreau (2011) states, that there are differences between the concepts of *Urban Agriculture* and *Urban Farming*. He claims that the main difference is that *Urban Farming* has the goal of generating income. *Urban Agriculture* does not necessarily have to do that. He also defines *Urban Agriculture* as an overarching concept including *all* forms of food production in cities, where *Urban Farming* is a component of *Urban Agriculture*. However, while doing Internet search I have noticed that *Urban Farming* may also be used for describing growing food in cities, without generating income (*see for example* Urban Farming, 2012).

This thesis understands both Urban Farming and Urban Agriculture as translations of *stadsodling* and uses them as working definitions for the *activity* of cultivating in the city. However, Urban Agriculture is the most commonly used not to confuse the reader. At some places the words cultivation and community gardening are also used.

Community Gardens

In Sweden, the location where Urban Agriculture (or Urban Farming) takes place is also called a *stadsodling*, (the noun form). In English, when talking about places where grass-root initiatives are cultivating, the concept of *Community Gardens* is generally used (Larsson, 2009). However, I find that this concept could be somewhat misleading as it does not talk

specifically about cultivating in the *city*. ACGA² states on their website that a Community Garden is “*Any piece of land gardened by a group of people*”. On the website the following definition of a Community Garden may also be found;

‘It can be urban, suburban, or rural. It can grow flowers, vegetables or community. It can be one community plot, or can be many individual plots. It can be at a school, hospital, or in a neighborhood. It can also be a series of plots dedicated to "urban agriculture" where the produce is grown for a market’ (ACGA, 2012).

In 2009, Marie Larsson introduced the Swedish concept *stadsdelsträdgård*³, which she believes is the equivalent to a Community Garden, but in a Swedish *urban* context.

‘One difference between a self-organized garden for community and cultivation in Sweden and the international community gardens is that even when the Swedish examples are citizen-initiated, it is a long step to their being completely free of local involvement and control. On the other hand, it is interesting that the Swedish examples are trying out various forms of collaboration between users and the municipality, resulting in a more transparent and accessible/public version of the community garden [...]’ (Larsson, 2009:164 *own translation*).

Although the English concept Community Garden may not be completely adequate to describe the Swedish phenomenon of cultivating collectively in cities, this is the chosen working definition in this thesis. In this thesis, it is the Swedish *versions* of Community Gardens (as conceptualized by Larsson) that are being referred to.

Delimitations

This study is carried out doing semi-structured interviews with individuals active in Community Gardens in Gothenburg. It does not include individuals that are cultivating privately in residential areas or in allotment houses/plots. Neither is this thesis looking at commercial Urban Farming. Moreover, this thesis is only interested in Community Gardens that are initiatives coming from below. However, all of them do have collaboration with the municipality, in one way or another. Furthermore, this thesis will not strive to highlight the various positive outcomes of Community Gardens. It is only concerned with the motives behind community gardening in Gothenburg. I could have done observations of the urban farmers being active in their Community Gardens in order to get an insight in the locations.

² American Community Gardening Association

³ This concept is not yet in Svenska Akademiens ordlista (Svenska Akademien, 2012).

However, I was collecting empirical data in March and as this thesis is about cultivation there was not that much going on the gardens during that time. As a matter of fact, the gardens firstly returned to life after the winter, in May, as I was in the final stages of the writing process. However, I did visit them all at various occasions.

Methods

Methodology

Qualitative Research Design

The chosen design for this research is qualitative research. The reason for deciding on this specific method stems from the nature of the research questions, which are concerned about (personal) motives behind Community Gardens. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research is an appropriate choice of design when the intent of a research is to understand a certain group or phenomenon.

Choosing a qualitative research design, means that words will be emphasized rather than numbers and magnitude of data. The epistemology of the thesis is *interpretivism*, driven by how each participant (including myself) sees the world. The ontological basis of the thesis is *social constructionism*, meaning that social reality is seen as constantly shifting as individuals create it (Bryman, 2004; Creswell, 2009).

‘Humans engage with their world and make sense of it based on their historical and social perspectives – we are all born into a world of meaning bestowed upon us by our culture. Thus, qualitative researchers seek to understand the context or setting of the participants through visiting this context and gathering information personally. They also interpret what they find, an interpretation shaped by the researcher’s own experiences and background’ (Crotty, 1998; *quoted in* Creswell, 2009:8).

I find Creswell’s (2009) choice of using the term worldviews instead of epistemology and ontology interesting in relation to social research. According to him, a worldview is ‘[...] a general orientation about the world and the nature of research that a researcher holds’ (Creswell, 2009:6). Thus, when he speaks of social constructionism as a worldview, he sees it as guidance for both ontological and epistemological considerations in research.

Use of Theory

This thesis primarily uses an inductive approach. This is the most common approach in qualitative research. An inductive approach to theory in a research means that it wishes to generate theory rather than being driven by it (Bryman, 2004; Creswell, 2002). ‘With an inductive stance, theory is the *outcome* of research’ (Bryman, 2004:9). This research is inductive as it wishes to generate new theory about possible relations between motives behind Community Gardens in Gothenburg and strategies of resistance. However, as mentioned above social constructionism as an ontological consideration or worldview means that historical and social perspectives guide me as a researcher. Hence, the pre-understanding or theoretical lens has been revealed to the reader. Without the theoretical perspectives gained through my studies I would not have posed the questions I am posing. My pre-understanding of the problem helped me develop the research questions and the interview guide. However, it was the participant’s answers that guided the rest of the research. In that sense it is an inductive approach to theory.

Data Collection

- 1) Semi-structured interviews with individuals active in Community Gardens in Gothenburg.
- 2) Literature review – including academic books, articles, official documents and Internet searching

Semi-structured Interviews and Interview Guide

Semi-structured interviews were chosen in order for participants to be able to respond freely to the questions. This type of interview also enables the researcher to ask further questions if necessary. What’s more, semi-structured interviews facilitate comparison as the participants answer similar questions. Unstructured interviews, on the other hand, means that the interviewee usually ends up controlling the interview (Bryman, 2004).

An interview guide (*see appendix 1 and 2*) was created for the semi-structured interviews. Using the interview guide made sure that certain important topics were covered (Bryman, 2004). It was structured in sections containing questions about similar topics. The main sections were as follows; 1) background of the interviewee; 2) about experiences of community gardening in Gothenburg; 3) about societal changes; 4) about community

gardening in general. I chose the first section in order to let the interviewee talk about themselves firstly. As we got to the important questions they were somewhat warmed up and this, I believe, helped getting the interviewees more relaxed.

I chose not to record the interviews as I know from experience how time consuming this can be. Instead I took interview notes and wrote down the conversations straight after into interview protocols. I sent the scripts to each participant afterwards in order for them to have an opportunity to check through the quotes, so that I had not misunderstood something.

Sampling

When finding the interviewees I used *snowball sampling*, which is a type of convenience sampling (Bryman, 2004). Firstly, I found one person that is relevant to the topic and this person directed me further to other people that are relevant to the research. This meant that I had no impact over gender, age or which Community Gardens they are active in. However, I managed to get individuals from 6 different Community Gardens;

- 1) Stadsjord
- 2) Gåsagången Gror,
- 3) Tillsammansodlingen Mölndal,
- 4) Guerrilla Gardening on Skansberget
- 5) Two Neighbourhood Gardens in Gamlestaden (Kvickrotten and Klostergården)

Some of the participants were active in more than one of the gardens. These gardens will be further described later on in the thesis.

After I had conducted six interviews, I believed I had enough material for the research. I saw a maturity from the answers that could answer my research questions and I didn't see any greater value in continuing to interview more people.

Literature review

The reviewing of the literature undertaken for this research was partly based on Gothenburg University Library Catalogue. A lot of the search was also conducted on the Internet. There I looked for books or articles, on for example Google Scholar. I also searched Google for websites of Community Gardens, in Gothenburg, Sweden and globally. Further search was also done on websites belonging to (trans) international organizations such as UN⁴, UNDP⁵, UN-HABITAT⁶, FAO⁷, RUAF⁸ etc.

⁴ The United Nations

Both Swedish and English international literature and documents have been searched for. In English, the keywords used in the search has been the following; Urban Agriculture; Urban Farming; Community Gardens; globalization; counter-acts; social movements; transition movements; social movements. The Swedish search terms were; stadsodling, urban odling, stadsdelsträdgårdar, globalisering, motstånd, sociala rörelser, omställningsrörelsen; sociala rörelser.

Data Analysis

Creswell suggests certain steps that need to be taken in qualitative data analysis. Overall, he argues that qualitative data analysis should move from particulars to general themes (Creswell, 2009:184-186). I have more or less followed his suggestions. The first step was to write down the interviews into interview protocols. Secondly, I read them through and reflected on the general ideas and themes the interviews gave me. Thirdly, I went back to the interviews and conducted detailed *coding*, where I organized the material into chunks of different topics and categories. I tried to look for themes that could answer my research questions, but also themes that are related to my pre-understanding of the problem. I also looked for themes I had not expected or that were unusual. I divided the themes into major topics, unique topics, and “leftovers”, as suggested by Creswell. Then I used the coding in order to narrow down the themes. In the end there were six themes left. I was also interested in how the themes may be interrelated. The interpretation of the data was done comparing the findings with literature and theory.

Reliability and Validity of Research

Possible problems of the validity and reliability are that I needed to interpret the findings and in qualitative research there is always a risk of being *biased* (Bryman, 2004; Creswell, 2009). However, I tried to eliminate biases by putting much work into the coding, in order to cross check the themes thoroughly. Moreover, by sending the scripts to each participant I made sure that no mistakes were made in the actual writing down of their answers. By presenting the themes that are unusual or “leftovers” I am also giving the reader a chance to see what I

⁵ The United Nations Development Program

⁶ The United Nations Human Settlements Programme

⁷ The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

⁸ Resource Centre on Urban Agriculture and Food Security

decided to leave out of the coded overarching themes. Furthermore, as the worldview of this thesis is social constructivism and the epistemology is interpretivism there *will* be biases. Hence, this thesis sees the researcher as a part of the research, and therefore my viewpoints are important. The fact that I am Swedish and also born (and live) in Gothenburg gives me, as a researcher, a good understanding of the participants and the setting.

Interviews were done in Swedish and then had to be translated into English. Therefore, some minor meaning may be lost along the way. But, I am a native speaking Swede and more or less fluent in English, which minimizes such losses.

Ethical Considerations

As this research is based on individual's thoughts and beliefs it is important to treat this information in an ethical manner. I am aware of the fact that my interpretative role as a researcher may lead to some misinterpretations. That is why I chose to send the scripts to each participant so that they could look them through and comment if they felt the need for that. This also eliminated some power issues that may arise in a research (Bryman, 2004; Creswell; 2009). I also chose to be upfront about the thesis topic from the beginning, which gave the participants a chance to be somewhat prepared for the interview. Some of the information shared with me turned out to be very personal life stories and experiences. I feel honoured that some of the participants decided to share this with me and the choice of letting all participants remain anonymous is therefore the appropriate approach. Due to the fact that the community of Community Gardens, in Gothenburg, is rather small I chose not to reveal detailed descriptions of the participants. This could have made it easy for any reader to figure out who they are and they would not stay anonymous in the research.

Limitations

As I used the snowball sampling method for finding the participants I had no control over age, gender or education of the participants. The coded themes of the motives might have looked different if I had found an even more diverse and representative group of individuals to interview. I understand that this thesis therefore may not be able to make any generalizations. However, this was never the intent in the first place. To be able to make any generalizations I would have needed much more time and space to conduct this research (*see* Bryman, 2004). However, this thesis could be used as a proposition for future research on Community Gardens.

In hindsight, nevertheless, it might have been a good idea to choose to look at only one of the Community Gardens. On the other hand, since not much research has been done on Community Gardens, the approach of including several gardens is the appropriate choice, in my opinion.

For future research I think it could be of use to conduct *a survey* on motives behind Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens. This is an increasing phenomenon and therefore also an important field to investigate, in my opinion. It could also be valuable to conduct observations in the setting of the Community Gardens. Then, I strongly recommend any researcher to make sure they have time to do them during the summer, when there is activity.

Setting

Gothenburg

Gothenburg is a typical post-industrial harbour city. The global division of labour has made many Swedish companies move their industrial production abroad or have simply sold them to foreign investors. Therefore, in order for Gothenburg to survive and to be competitive on the global market and a provider of employment, the city is changing into a ‘knowledge city’ or an ‘event city’ (Jörnmark, 2006; Sernhede and Johansson, 2006). One could say that this transition has rendered Gothenburg a city that is “still in the game”, competing with other cities and regions. However, as many scholars argue, this type of development also creates inequalities and increases social exclusion in the peripheries as well as promoting gentrification processes. This is something that we can see happening to many post-industrial cities around the globe (Byrne, 2005; Sernhede & Johansson, 2006).

A report made, in 2009, by Andersson et al shows that segregation and polarization in Gothenburg increased between the years of 1990-2006. ‘Areas with many well-educated and high-income inhabitants are greatly advancing when it comes to income and health, compared to areas with lower proportion of well-educated and with low-income inhabitants’ (Andersson *et al*, 2009:22, *own translation*). This is not a thesis about social exclusion or segregation. However, it is useful for the reader to get an understanding on what kind of city this research has been conducted in. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, Gothenburg is connected to the outside world on a whole new level thanks to new information technology (Eriksen, 2007). One may have different views on whether the changes in Gothenburg are positive or negative.

However, the important point to be made here is that the city has and is changing, due to external influences.

Community Gardens in Gothenburg

As this research started out I only found information on a handful different Community Gardens. However, as the research progressed I came to realize that there are many. I have found it rather difficult to search information for various reasons. Firstly, it is a new phenomenon. Secondly, not all groups have searchable information on for example the Internet. Thirdly, many groups started during the time I was conducting the research. It is also a matter of how you define the concept of Community Garden, when searching for information. Does one include gardens that collaborate closely with the municipality or not? If one defines Swedish Community Gardens as *versions* of Community Gardens internationally, as suggested by Larsson, it gives room to say that there is more than a handful Community Gardens in Gothenburg. However, as stated earlier this thesis is interested in Community Gardens that are initiated from the grass-roots. Nevertheless, they all (today) have collaboration with the municipality, in one way or another⁹.

Since 2007 grass-root organizations and networks such as Stadsjord, Mykorrhiza and Omställning Göteborg (a part of the global Transition movement), have initiated Community Gardens in Gothenburg (Mykorrhiza, 2012; Omställning Göteborg, 2012; Stadsjord, 2012). When one looks briefly at their websites, one may learn that they all share a similar vision. They all seem to have the objective of changing society, in one way or another, by (organic) farming in the city. The following are quotes from their websites;

‘We are changing the world by growing organically together. Through experimental learning and knowledge sharing, we are in transition towards a more sustainable society’ (Tillsammansodlingen, 2012, *own translation*).

‘Vision; to create quality of life and sustainability for all in cooperation with nature and each other’ (Mykorrhiza, 2012, *own translation*).

”Stadsjord is about farming, local food and neighbourhood cooperation. We want to create a new culture of sustainability, based on old traditions” (Stadsjord, 2012 *own translation*).

⁹ It has been revealed in the interviews that they get support either in terms of tools, leasing land or they have dialogue with the municipality.

Klimax (which is a Swedish network of groups that was prominent mobilizing for COP15) has mostly been involved in guerrilla gardening¹⁰ in Gothenburg. Their main objective is to ‘[...] work together for a quick transition to a fossil free society. Through advocacy and direct action, we want to challenge the "business as usual" and build a climate movement that sees solutions’ (Klimax, 2012).¹¹

Clearly, the main rhetoric about visions and aims are connected to ecology, climate issues and sustainability¹². One reason for this could be that they have been or are all networked and draw from each other’s experiences. For example; one of the Community Gardens Tillsammansodlingen Mölndal, was mainly initiated by Mykhorrisa and Omställning Göteborg, and over the years they have had collaboration with Stadsjord and Klimax. Today this garden is run as an Omställning Göteborg project (Mykhorrisa, 2012, Omställning Göteborg, 2012).

Besides these main grass-root organizations there have been and are many smaller groups that cultivate in their neighbourhoods. These are mostly gardens that have been initiated in closer collaboration with the municipality and property owners. However, they are still initiated by the users themselves. These gardens also go under the definition of a Community Garden in this thesis.

Community Gardens Represented in this Research

Stadsjord

Stadsjord¹³ was initiated in 2007. They started in the neighbourhoods of Högsbo and Bergsjön, have moved on to Hisingen and Majorna and their vision is to expand to engage the rest of Gothenburg, the western region of Sweden and further out in the country. Stadsjord is about farming, local food, cooperation in communities and beautifying neighborhoods. They want to create a new culture of sustainability, based on old traditions. Their organization is

¹⁰ Guerrilla Gardening is a form of activism, where people start cultivating land without asking for permission from the municipality or the land owners (Jimenez, 2012).

¹¹ It may be noteworthy to point out to the reader that many of the organizations started urban farming around the time of the climate top meeting COP15, in Copenhagen in 2009.

¹² The report *Our Common Future* states; ‘Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (WCED, 1987:8).

¹³ Stadsjord may be translated into something like *Urban Soil* or *Urban Earth*.

based on collaboration with a range of organizations. They also have close dialogue with municipalities, provincial governments, universities, schools, kindergartens and individuals. A small group of people with associates and employees at Stadsjord work to develop and implement *Stadsjord* as a working model for Urban Agriculture today and in the future. This Community Garden is well known for their pigs. Their urban farming model uses pigs in order to prepare the soil for cultivation (Stadsjord, 2012).

Tillsammansodlingen Mölndal

*Tillsammansodlingen Mölndal*¹⁴ is a Community Garden originally initiated by a number of groups (as described in the above) and is today organized by Omställning Göteborg. It is a non-profit farming cooperative and located in the outskirts of Gothenburg, in the suburb of Mölndal. They have chosen this location in order to grow food (together) on a larger scale. They lease KRAV¹⁵ approved farmland from the municipality of Mölndal and sell their KRAV labelled produce. They believe that local organic food supply is part of the solution to ‘increase self-sufficiency, reduce dependence on oil and find sustainable ways of living’. This Community Garden was founded in 2010 and they label themselves as a CSA (*Community Supported Agriculture*)¹⁶ (Tillsammansodlingen, 2012).

Gåsagången Gror

*Gåsagången Gror*¹⁷ is located in the neighbourhood of Backa. This Community Garden is a collaboration between Omställning Göteborg, the property owner Familjebostäder, Studieförbundet and the research project *Mellanplats*¹⁸. Most importantly they collaborate closely with residents of Gåsagången, while cultivating in the neighborhood. This Community Garden started in 2011 and the aim is to be an ecological project, community project, as well as an integration project (Omställning Göteborg, 2012). Backa is a neighbourhood with

¹⁴ *Tillsammans* means *together* in English.

¹⁵ KRAV is a Swedish label for organic products and stands for; ‘Sound, natural environment, solid care for animals, good health and social responsibility’ (KRAV, 2012).

¹⁶ ‘CSA stands for Community Supported / Shared Agriculture and is a form that has been tried in for example United Kingdom and Cuba. The form implies that the consumers of vegetables are also involved in cultivation in different ways’ (Tillsammansodlingen, 2012 *own translation*).

¹⁷ “The Gåsa path grows”

¹⁸ Mellanplats (or Interplace) is an interaction research project researching the interplay between citizen initiatives and invited participation in urban planning (Mellanplats, 2012).

inhabitants with diverse ethnic backgrounds. The past years there have been some conflicts in the area, with for examples instances where cars have been burnt. This is something that the municipality and the police are working with (Goteborg, 2012). *Gåsagången Gror* could be seen as one initiative to combat segregation issues.

Guerrilla gardening at Skansberget

Skansberget is a rocky hill with the old fortress of *Skansen Kronan* at the hill top. It is situated in a central part of the city and is a lush area with trees, bushes and grass. In 2010, Klimax started a guerrilla garden in the area. They believed that long transportations of food are unsustainable for the environment and climate. Furthermore, in the long run they see Urban Agriculture improving local and global environment, as well as the neighbourhood. It creates more community and provides healthy food. They further described themselves as new beginners and they wanted to regain vital knowledge about farming that has been lost (Klimax, 2012). This guerrilla gardening was not collaborating with the municipality in the beginning but now has dialogue with the municipality.¹⁹

Two Neighbourhood Community Gardens in Gamlestaden

There are two newly started “neighbourhood” Community Gardens that both started up for cultivation in spring 2012. They are run by two “urban farming associations”; Klosterträdgården and Kvickrotten, that cooperate with the property owners, the tenant’s association and the municipality. They both have individual plots as well as communal ones.²⁰

Participants

The six urban farmers that were interviewed consisted of a rather diverse group in terms of age, education and occupation. The snowball sampling method led to interviews with five women and one man. The occupational and educational fields represented are social sciences, environmental studies, architecture and journalism. Some similarities are that they all have been/are studying at university level and that many of them work with sustainable development in one way or another. Some are Gothenburg natives, some are not. According to the participants the Community Gardens in Gothenburg are mostly used by relatively well-

¹⁹ This information was shared in one of the interviews.

²⁰ This information was shared by one of the participants as I could not find any information on the Internet.

educated middle class individuals. In that sense, they are representing community gardeners in Gothenburg well. In the thesis they are coded as participant A, B, C, D, E and F.

Empirical Findings

Motives behind Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens in Gothenburg

The objective of this chapter is to answer research question number one. It is therefore time to present the reader with a reminder of this question, as well as its sub questions;

What are the motives, as described by six urban farmers, behind Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens in Gothenburg?

- What are the reasons for cultivating in the city of Gothenburg?
- What attracted these individuals to become members of Community Gardens, in the first place?
- How do these individuals describe motives behind Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens in Gothenburg, in general?

Major themes

When conducting the interviews with the six participants some tendencies of motives started to reveal themselves. After carrying out the analysis and coding, the research arrived at six themes. The six themes are as follows;

- 1) Urban Agriculture as a Hobby/Interest/Social Activity.
- 2) Belonging somewhere.
- 3) Good food on the Table.
- 4) Urban Agriculture as a Reaction to Urbanization and Urban Planning (policies).
- 5) Urban Agriculture as a Reaction to Unsustainable Development.
- 6) Urban Agriculture as Pro-action for Sustainable Development

These themes are to be understood as overarching tendencies of motives behind Urban Agriculture amongst the participants. In the following, the six themes are presented with a few examples of quotes from the interviews. The themes are not put in any specific order of

significance. Furthermore, as the reader will find out, these themes are argued to be interrelated. In the next chapter, the empirical findings will be put into relation to previous research and literature.

As mentioned before, these motives should not be understood as generalizations of motives for Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens in Gothenburg, as this is a qualitative research based on few interviews.

Urban Agriculture as a Hobby/Interest/Social Activity

One of the reasons for cultivating in the city in Community Gardens is, as explained by the participants, simply due to the fact that they enjoy the activity. They see Urban Agriculture as their hobby or interest. They also enjoy the fact that it is a physical outdoor activity and they like farming with others. Moreover, they see it as a social activity. The following are a few quotes shared in the interviews;

A: “It’s sociable! [...] And it is cosy to cultivate and to be outdoors! Everyone is drawn to urban farming because it is fun”.

B: “I have always liked watching something grow! [...] It is a leisure activity that feels meaningful”.

C: “It is also about meeting spots and getting to know others in the neighbourhood. And it’s about being outdoors, in common areas”.

D: “I think it is about poking about in the soil. It’s about the pleasure of farming, as an activity and about working with your body”.

Belonging somewhere

This theme is somewhat connected to the previous theme. Participants express a wanting or longing to belong to a community. Furthermore, some of them describe how they believe that people need to get back to a sense of belonging to the earth, to the soil.

In addition, a few of the participants make a direct connection between managing anxiety and the feeling of belonging somewhere. Belonging to a community and to the earth makes people feel less lonely, they believe.

C: “Urban farming is a lot about “a longing”. And about feeling resident. Apparently I need to put a seed into the soil in order to feel settled somewhere. [...] I think it’s

because I have moved so much in my life. It's about roots. Community Gardens are often used as integration projects as a matter of fact".

A: "I had a life crisis for many years [...] I had to deal with a lot of anxiety, and I sort of secluded myself from society. Fukushima last year became a kind of awakening for me and I started to "see" society again. As a result, I wanted to get a feeling of society again and I became a member of some associations. The Community Garden was one of them. [...] It's about cultivating relationships as much as it about cultivating plants. The social aspect is really important! [...] The best thing about the Community Garden is that you are not alone in your anxieties about the future".

E: There is something universal about urban farming. There is a longing and a joy about farming in general. There is logic in farming and things that grow. [...] As human beings we are genetically coded to liking the earth and the soil".

F: "I think many people cultivate simply because they need to feel affinity. People have lost their value in capitalist society, and many people feel some kind of loneliness. I think some people want to go back to something that we used to have. To a connection with the nature and with animals".

Good food on the Table

Many of the participants mention that one of the reasons for them to grow food in the city is because they want "good food". They want locally produced food, organic food, fair food and tasty food. By cultivating their own food they feel that they have control over the production of food. As a consequence they feel that they can control what they eat themselves. In addition, they feel that they can control that food is produced in a sustainable way.

C: "It is starting to become more and more about tasty food for me. One actually gets pretty big crops. [...] It is about good tomatoes!"

B: "You also take power over what you stuff yourself with. It is not ok to import as much food as we do. The WTO²¹ and the EPA²² trade agreements are unfair. I think Sweden should focus more on its own production".

²¹ World Trade Organization

²² European Partnership Agreements

D: "It's about the food. People want organic, locally produced food. People want control over what they eat".

Urban Agriculture as a Reaction to Urbanization and Urban Planning (policies)

Some of the participants also feel that Urban Farming is about a reaction to an "ugly" city. They want to make the city greener and "prettier". Naturally, this may also be connected to a "longing for nature". Moreover, it is described as a reaction to urbanization and to local urban planning.

C: "It's a protest against densification processes. People think there are too many hard and concrete surfaces and that the city is ugly. It is also a reaction to not feeling that you as a citizen have enough influence for the city planning. People feel that public spaces should be shared and they want to regain power of the city"

D: "You are making the city look nicer. The neighbourhood gets prettier".

B: "In the beginning I was mostly doing urban farming because of food and climate issues. [...] Today I am interested a lot in the questions of "To whom is the city meant for"? "Who are allowed to do what in the city, in public spaces"? There is a lot of municipal land that isn't used for anything, but still no one gets to use it. Another question is about the city centre. I am talking mainly about the shopping streets and malls. Those who have money can buy room in public spaces of the city. The city centre it is so characterized by commercialism and materialism".

E: "In London and New York for example that are so heavily urbanized people want contact with the soil again. And urban farming is applicable everywhere, on many different places. Also in Gothenburg. [...] We have a barren urban landscape in Gothenburg. I often talk about "incomprehensible landscapes". People cannot verbalize or explain their worries or anxieties. But today we build landscapes that are incomprehensible to human beings".

Urban Agriculture as a Reaction to Unsustainable Development

The participants also communicate a motive that may be understood as a reaction to global unsustainable development, including reactions to environmental, economic, and social

developments. It is an outspoken view, shared by all participants that “something is wrong with society”. This is connected to many different global issues, such as; the food industry, climate change, environmental degradation, consumption patterns and the current economic system. The following quotes are some of the narratives that were shared with me;

B: “Today we have an unsustainable food situation in the world. Urban farming, for me, is about food and the climate. [...] Society needs to change. We cannot work as much as we do. And we cannot have consumerism as the end goal. And what about meat? Do we really need to eat as much meat as we do”?

C: “Urban Agriculture has a lot to do with consumption. People are tired of it”.

F: “It’s a question about justice today. But Urban Agriculture for me is also about the fact that we are destroying our earth and if we don’t do something now we might not have a place to live on in the future”.

Urban Agriculture as Pro-action for Sustainable Development

The most commonly described motive behind urban agriculture, amongst the participants, is that they do it because they feel they are *doing something active* to change society. This is in the thesis interpreted as pro-action.²³ They describe it as a political and radical act. Urban Agriculture is something that feels meaningful to them. Rather than just talking about the wrongs of society they feel that they do something about them. It is also explained as a preparation for the future. When the oil runs out, or the economic system collapses, as they explain, the participants believe they are prepared with a self-sufficient lifestyle. In order to achieve this they (and Gothenburg) need knowledge about local food production. They consider this knowledge to have been lost.

A:”There is a desire to change society. Cultivation is about “bypassing the capital,” People today are changing clothes, food, seeds, everything. One is changing society by being in transition and one starts in the practical. It is about changing socially, economically and energy wise. Take also the clothes swopping trend for example. I do that all the time now and I don’t buy new clothes anymore. This has led me not to care

²³ ‘proactive *adj* (of a person, policy, or action) creating or controlling a situation by causing something to happen rather than responding to it after it has happened: be proactive in identifying and preventing potential problems’.

about clothes and I have lost a need for having possessions. We have to build something new before everything is destroyed”.

C: It is also about breaking a consumption pattern, to find other ways of relating to our common resources. Getting the knowledge of how to cultivate and an understanding of what I eat. There lies a strength in not being completely dependent on wage jobs and money.

E: “It’s an active effort, people take responsibility. It’s actually better than protest! It’s a given activity, that gives meaning straight away”.

E: “There is so much that motivates Urban Agriculture! There are major structural issues, and entire cities are involved. [...] Urban Agriculture breathes new life into issues of classic ecological cycles, as well as social issues. [...] It’s a fact, that we soon will have to find cheap energy and fuel, to our homes and cars. This must be motivated to politicians. And as well as it is nice and fun to cultivate we WILL go into a time of food shortage. And who is responsible and has the knowledge when this happens? One wonders what happened when we “closed down” the knowledge about local food production. Sweden is lagging behind in Europe and worldwide. And in the third world it is a part of the mainstream economy. I think that people should have access to cultivation”.

B:” It’s about an unsustainable food situation. I am taking more control and make myself more independent from the system. If something should happen in the future. [...] Perhaps everyone needs to do this, in order to deal with food security in the future?”

D: “It’s also about increased awareness about climate changes. We need to be prepared if the oil runs out. With Urban farming you can do something directly. You take control over your own impact on the climate”.

Unusual topics

There were also some topics that stood out from the rest, and that may not be put into the six themes;

- 1) One participant thinks that people cultivate in the city because they have it as an occupation. Nowadays it has become easy to apply and receive money from municipalities, the state or the E.U. People become urban farming entrepreneurs.

- 2) The same participant believes that people actually don't want to farm collectively. If they had the chance, they would have their own plot. This person believes that people are individualistic in today's society. But because they have no other alternative they cultivate in Community Gardens.
- 3) A second participant thinks that one of the reasons for people to seek to Community Gardens is because farming by your self is hard work. But when you do it together it gets less "cumbersome".
- 4) A third participant believes that Urban Agriculture also can be about status. It is about showing others that you have the time and the energy.

These are all interesting accounts; however I have chosen not to put them into a theme as these were unique accounts from single participants.

“Leftover” topics

There were some topics that were revealed in the interviews which couldn't be put into one of the major themes, and that is not related to the research questions directly. One reason for this is that the interviewees were allowed to speak somewhat freely in the semi-structured interviews. Another reason is that one of the questions in the interview guide²⁴ (which was first noticed afterwards) did not relate directly to the research question. These topics can therefore not be used in the thesis but could indicate some areas for further research in the future.

Something that revealed itself during the interviews is that most participants talk of Urban Agriculture as a trend, in general. Not only in relation to Community Gardens. However, I don't interpret this as a motive *in itself* to start cultivating in Community Gardens. Rather it is an explanation for the increased awareness and interest from people. As two of the participant explains;

C: “Urban Agriculture has become something that is spreading faster than you can think. It is something timely. It's cool, everybody thinks it's fun”.

²⁴ “How are community gardeners in Gothenburg treated by different actors in society”? (see also appendix 1).

E: “It has become trendy and there is hype in mass media. But this hype could be sensitive and volatile. But since it is backed by natural science, Urban Agriculture will probably continue”.

Many of the participants also mention that they think that Guerrilla Gardening is not really an option in Gothenburg anymore. As one participant argues;

C: “Guerrilla Gardeners sneak around, but I don’t see the point of that. When society or institutions are so positive it gets silly to do it on the sly. There are so many other good things one can do secretly, in my opinion”.

Another participant states;

E: “It’s not really possible to do Guerrilla Gardening in Gothenburg or Sweden. Not anymore anyhow. Because, when you cultivate everyone will love you”.

Another issue that was revealed also concerns increased interest from the municipality. Many of the participants articulate that even though it is positive that the municipality wants to support Urban Agriculture and Community Gardens, they also believe that the wrong strategies are used. Rather than putting emphasis on giving people pallet collars and soil the municipality should put focus on support with organization skills. Moreover, they argue that the bureaucracy around applying for a permit is too time-consuming. They fear that many people that are interested in cultivating may be lost, as they lose interest, in the process. In relation to this, some of them mention a new initiative from Göteborgs Stad that goes by the name Stadsnära Odling. In 2011, The Housing Committee (Fastighetskontoret) was commissioned by the City Council to encourage Urban Agriculture in Gothenburg. The aim is to encourage small-scale and “*cultivation near residential areas*” (Goteborg, 2012). Some of the participants think this is a good initiative others, are sceptical to whether or not this will change much. There are still permits to apply for and the emphasis is more on giving tools rather than supporting with organization, as they explain.

Summary

As we have now seen motives behind Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens in Gothenburg are numerous. The empirical findings also points to the direction of six presented overarching themes of motives. Furthermore, these themes are interrelated.

On an *individual level* the motives are connected to controlling the food they eat. It is also about the pleasure and satisfaction they get from cultivating. Moreover, Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens is a social activity that feels meaningful to them. In addition, they describe Urban Agriculture giving a sense of belonging. This belonging is related to belonging to a community, as well as belonging to the earth.

The motives expressed are also related to the individuals *acting on a societal level*. These six participants describe motives behind Urban Agriculture being related to a *reaction* to the state of the world, their local environment and to the global food industry. There are clear descriptions of an urge to change society. Developments described as unsustainable should be transformed into sustainable development. This is interpreted as a form of pro-action. Furthermore, it is read from the interviews that this is a strategy that they feel benefits the environment, themselves, other people in Gothenburg and globally. Moreover, it will give benefits today, as well as in the future. Hence, they are involved in Urban Agriculture both for individual reasons, as well as for the collective.

The motives shared with me during the interviews do not answer research question number two explicitly. However, I believe, after analyzing the interviews, that there is an *indication* that Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens in Gothenburg, in some ways may be understood as a counter-action to globalization. In the next chapter, the analysis and empirical findings will be related to previous research on Community Gardens, as well as theory on globalization processes and counter-actions to globalization.

Literature Review / Analysis

The main aim of this chapter is to analyse the empirical findings of the research, with the help of previous research and literature, in order to answer research question number two;

May Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens in Gothenburg be understood as local counter-acts to globalization?

- *May one distinguish counter- actions?*
- *If so, what are individuals resisting?*
- *Are these counter-acts of reactive or proactive nature?*

Introduction

When reviewing literature about Urban Agriculture and Community Gardens one is confronted with theories from many different fields; urban studies, landscape architecture, geography, social sciences (including global studies), psychology and health science etc. The span of this thesis neither has the time nor the space to take into account every viewpoint within the theoretical debate on these areas and issues. Therefore, a selection is made that may correlate to the empirical findings and that may answer research question number two.

Moreover, theory on globalization and its processes is also vast. Hence, this chapter ought to be seen as a brief presentation of some perspectives that may be relevant to this thesis. Whilst analysing and conducting research on globalization processes, it is important to be aware of the academic debate on globalization. Is it a new or old phenomenon? Abrahamsson points to scholars such as Cox, Fukuyama, Huntington and Hirst & Thompson by stating that;

‘Globalisation is a contested concept. How you understand the world order, depends on where you are sitting [...] Consequently, it is possible to view globalisation variously as a process bringing prosperity, as an unavoidable threat, or as an imagined construction- a myth’

(Abrahamsson, 2003: xvii) (see also Held & McGrew, 2007a, 2007b). Some are globalizers while others are sceptics, to the concept of globalization (Eriksen, 2007, Hettne, 2009).

Furthermore, Li states that; ‘Globalization [...] cannot claim to be the single, totalizing master word or metanarrative that explains what is or ought to be happening in our world. It is a selective, performative discourse that finds what it seeks and believes what it creates’.

Therefore, globalization ‘is open to dispute and rearticulation’ (Li, 2000: 34). Held & McGrew (2007b) discuss whether globalization is demising, whether the discourse itself is deteriorating or whether one can say that globalization ever existed. They argue that; ‘Rather than the demise of globalization, in its multiple forms, the empirical evidence suggests, to the contrary, that it has proven much more resilient or socially embedded than critics believed or many desired’ (Held & McGrew, 2007b:4) The deep global interconnectedness that we witness today, will most likely prevail in the future. This interconnectedness will make it hard for political communities to stay out of the global context (Held & McGrew, 2007a, 2007b).

I am aware of the debate concerning globalization and of the discourse of globalization.

Nonetheless, as stated in the introduction, the theoretical lens of this thesis is that something new is happening under the Age of Globalization. Globalization is transforming cities and the people that live in them. Moreover, it is believed that globalization lead to counter-actions on

the local level. Naturally, without taking this point of view, research question number two would not have been possible to pose.

Before we look into some previous research on Urban Agriculture and Community Gardens and some literature which further may describe conditions under the Age of Globalization, I would like to finish this introduction with some statements from Eriksen. He argues that; ‘Although globalization is old in the sense that transnational or even global systems have existed for centuries- indeed for millennia- contemporary globalization has distinctive traits due to enhanced communication technology and the global spread of capitalism’ (Eriksen, 2007:14). Furthermore, globalization processes, contain (since the mid 20th century) the following characteristics; disembedding, acceleration, standardization, interconnectedness, movement, mixing, vulnerability and re-embedding (Eriksen, (2007:8-9).

Urban Agriculture Increasing in the Times of Crisis

People have always cultivated in cities

Boone and Modarres argue that people have cultivated in cities since the times they were founded. This is due to the fact that people commonly settled in areas with fertile land. Gradually, as the towns expanded, dichotomies between urban/rural, city/countryside and nature/human occurred. Rural areas were meant for agriculture, cities were mercantile area where people were specializing in handicrafts, that they could trade for food coming from the surrounding rural areas. Later on, the industrial revolution further transformed cities around Europe. The new urban ideal was a celebration of modernism and cities grew in size as people started migrating from rural to urban areas to look for labour (Boone and Modarres, 2006; *see also* Björklund, 2010). ‘The irony of the 19th century, however, was the perpetual concern with what was being lost – nature, community, and human dignity- in the face of capitalist urban reality’ (Boones & Modarres, 2006:34).

Neither in Sweden should Urban Agriculture be seen as a new phenomenon (Björklund, 2010, Delshammar, 2011). Tim Delshammar, a landscape architect and senior lecturer at SLU²⁵ writes in the report *Urban odling in Malmö* (Delshammar, 2011) that Urban Agriculture, in Sweden, has a long tradition and was a common feature in Swedish cities late into the 20th Century. During the First World War, parks were cultivated, in order to provide the

²⁵ Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (Sveriges Lantbruksuniversitet)

population with food. He also points to allotment plots deriving from the late 19th century, which was an initiative to give citizens opportunities to grow their own vegetables.

He further argues that there is a growing grassroots movement of a new form of Community Gardens in the cities of Sweden. He believes that these are different to Urban Agriculture in the past. However, '[t]he extent of urban farming is probably relatively limited. At least today. At least in Sweden. But that does not mean that it is a marginal phenomenon or a passing fancy. Urban farming is a part of the culture of Swedish cities' (Delshammar, 2011:9 *own translation*).

Community Gardens originating from New York

In the literature, Community Gardens are often considered to originate from New York in the early 1970's, when the city had high unemployment, and was suffering under economic crisis. A group of people (later going by the name of Green Guerrillas) started guerrilla gardening. Their vision was to turn the concrete city of New York into a more beautiful place and to create green spaces for recreation. Their approach was to create "seed-bombs" which they threw into vacant lots (Boone & Modarres, 2006; Jimenez, 2012; Schmelzkopz, 1995). These first Community Gardens are argued to also coincide with the environmental movement and a time when New York was thriving of avant-garde art and creativity. The central figure of Green Guerrillas and the founder of the very first Community Garden in New York was the young artist Liz Christy. Today this garden bears the name *Liz Christy Community Garden*. In 1974, after conflicts with the authorities the Green Guerrillas were turned into tenants rather than squatters. Today, there are around 600 community gardens only in New York and the concept has spread all over the United States (Jimenez, 2012).

However, Laura Lawson who has done extensive research on Community Gardens in the United States argues that Community Gardens in the country may be traced back to as early as in the 1890s. 'Vacant lot and relief gardens during economic depressions, school and children's gardens, war and victory gardens, neighborhood gardens, and contemporary greening projects together describe a land use and programmatic medium largely ignored in the social and environmental history of American cities (Lawson, 2000). Karen Schmelzkopz adds to the point by explaining that the purpose of these gardens was to give the populations nutritious food and self-sufficiency, as well as an attempt to lift people's morale during

wartime and to build communities.²⁶ After the wars, when the economy picked up, the gardens vanished. Schmelzkopz main argument is that urban agriculture is on the rise in times of crisis, and after the crisis they vanish again (Schmelzkopz, 1995; Schmelzkopz, 2002).

Jimenez, on the other hand, states that these earlier Community Gardens are different since they were initiated by the authorities. Moreover, Jimenez argues that the gardens from the 1970s in New York are the “models” for Community Gardens in Sweden today (Jimenez, 2012). The Community Gardens in Gothenburg bear resemblance with the Community Gardens in New York as they are initiated by the users themselves (Delshammar, 2010; Jimenez, 2012; Larsson, 2010).

Factors that encourage Urban Agriculture

Annika Björklund argues, in her doctoral thesis; *Historical urban agriculture – Food Production and Access to Land in Swedish Towns before 1900* (2010), that Urban Agriculture in Sweden is an historical phenomenon, but that it could become important also in the future. In the past Urban Agriculture was both a necessity and common in urban areas, in Sweden. This is not the case today.

Björklund further argues that there are similarities between Urban Agriculture in developed countries, in the past, and Urban Agriculture in developing countries, today.

‘In the pre-capitalistic society, the state did not provide secure social safety nets [...] Although the global South today does not consist of feudal societies, most state authorities do not provide secure safety nets and, just as in the pre-capitalistic society, access to land for self-sufficiency becomes an important asset for many people’ (Björklund, 2010: 218).

She has developed a model, which describes what factors “encourage” respectively “discourage” Urban Agriculture. The encouraging factors are; 1) Insecure or irregular income resources 2) Transportation difficulties 3) Subsistence economy 4) Environmental concern. The discouraging factors are 1) Social safety nets 2) Fast and cheap transports 3) Settlement expansion 4) Market economy (Björklund, 2010:215). She points out that in the case of Sweden Urban Agriculture today does not have to do with growing food for self-sufficiency or as a matter of survival. This has to do with the fact that the state provide its citizens with

²⁶ These types of gardens could also be found in United Kingdom during the wars (Schmelzkopz, 1995, 2002)

social safety nets and basic low level income. She further argues; ‘In the global North, the interest in urban agriculture instead has more connections with ideological issues, such as environmental concerns and local food production’ (Björklund, 2010: 218).

Using Björklunds arguments facilitates an understanding of similarities between Urban Agriculture (in Community Gardens) in Sweden and other developed countries. Moreover, when relating the empirical findings of this thesis I would agree with Björklunds model as the motives are connected to environmental concerns. However, I believe there are factors missing in the model in relation to the findings of this research. As we have seen the motives are not only related to environmental concerns. Some factors I would have liked to see added as encouraging factors are naturally related to the themes of motives presented in this thesis. Moreover, she puts Market Economy as a discouraging factor for Urban Agriculture. However, I believe that the empirical findings of this research show that Market Economy is in fact, one of the reasons for people to do Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens. The participants describe a desire to prepare for another type of system. An alternative to what we have. Hence, one may suggest that Market Economy, in fact, is giving people a *motive to act*.

In sum, Urban Agriculture and Community Gardens are argued to increase in times of crisis. Gothenburg or its inhabitants may not be struck by a major crisis directly today. Gothenburg too has seen impacts of the global financial and economic crisis but Sweden has coped with it well in terms of stabilizing the economy (*see* OECD, 2012). Neither is Sweden at war. Moreover, the country provides its citizens with basic social security and benefits if necessary. However, my interpretation of the empirical findings suggests that these individuals *anticipate* that there will be a crisis in the future. Furthermore, they are concerned about environmental and climate change issues, as well as of the well-being of people *outside* Gothenburg. They describe that the way we live our lives is unsustainable and it affects people around the globe. Moreover, as already pointed out in this thesis, Gothenburg is connected to the outside world on a whole new level than before. What happens in other localities matters and affects inhabitants of Gothenburg.

This may be related to Ulrich Becks *world risk society theory* (2009). According to Beck, global risks are *staged* and an anticipation of future *probable* catastrophes. He distinguishes between three global risks: economic risks, environmental risks and terrorist threats and argues that they are interrelated. In world risk society, reality is undermined by possibility.

Fear determines the attitude towards life. Security is displacing freedom and equality from the highest position on the scale of values. The result is a tightening of laws, a seemingly rational ‘totalitarianism of defence against threats’ (Beck: 2009:8-9). Depending on who holds ‘power of definition’ some risks are on the agenda, others are ‘forgotten’. Their ‘[...]’reality’ can be dramatized or minimized, transformed or simply denied according to the norms which decide what is known and what is not’ (Beck, 2009:30). According to Beck, media plays a great part in staging global risks. He further believes that *world risk society* and the anticipation of global risks changes society fundamentally and has done so since the 1960s and 1970s. However, he also speaks of a *cosmopolitan moment*. Global risks forces us to be confronted with the excluded others (Beck, 2009). And, ‘[a] general cultural transformation is taking place: different understandings of nature and its relation to society, of ourselves and others, of social rationality, freedom, democracy and legitimation – even of the individual – are developing (Beck, 2009: 15).

As the empirical findings show that the participants anticipate crises in the future, it could be argued that they live in *world risk society*. They acknowledge environmental degradation, climate change, food shortage and economic crisis and this is what they react on. Moreover, they also describe Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens as an altruistic act. They do it for the sake of other people around the globe (and in the future). Hence, drawing on Becks theory, Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens in Gothenburg could be analyzed as an *ideological action*, which is also suggested by Björklund.

Community Gardens as Politics

Political action in urban settings

In the book *Radical Gardening: Politics, Identities & Rebellion in the Garden* (2011) George Mc Kay draws an historical overview on how city gardens, present and past, aren’t merely sites of recreation but may be seen as radical political acts. Today Allotments, Community Gardens, and Guerrilla Gardening are all forms of Radical Gardens. He conceptualizes three versions of interconnected “plots” or meanings when describing and analyzing *Radical Gardens*. These three plots are about 1) Land; how it is claimed and shaped, 2) History; the extensive historical and contemporary narratives and stories about gardens, and 3) Politics; gardens have/are often sites for ideological struggle. The book further shows how ‘[...]’ notions of utopia, of community, of activism for progressive social change, of peace, of

environmentalism, of identity politics, are practically worked through in the garden, in floriculture, and through what Paul Gough has called ‘planting as a form of protest’ (McKay, 2011: 6). Furthermore, McKay sees this protest or acts of resistance as positive acts, while he refers to a quote by Peter Lamborn Wilson who states that; ‘Growing a garden has become – at least potentially – an act of resistance. But it’s not simply a gesture of refusal. It’s a positive act”. McKay, 2011: 10). Moreover, whether intentionally or not, gardens are local spaces interlinked with key global concerns such as climate change, peak oil and global environmental- and food issues (McKay, 2011).

Furthermore, Harvey argues, in the article *The Right to the City* (2008) that being able to make and remake our cities is a human right, not on an individual but on a common level. However, in the urban processes of today (that are global in scope) private property rights stand before the citizens rights. ‘The right to the city, as it is now constituted, is too narrowly confined, restricted in most cases to a small political and economic elite who are in a position to shape cities more and more after their own desires’ (Harvey, 2008:38). He points to urban social movements that are trying to counter act these developments and he believes that this resistance needs to be a global struggle, which should “de-colonize” the cities (Harvey, 2008).

This politicization of Community Gardens and the conflicts over who has the right to the city may be seen in an example from New York, where Schmelzkopz describes the following;

[...] the conflict over the community gardens in New York City was a contest over the right to the city. It was about control over public space, about who has (or does not have) the right to space, and about the right to be a part of the public. While the community gardens provided important benefits to marginalized people [...] ultimately it did not matter: marginalized people had no right to the city’ (Schmelzkopz, 2002:337).

Some of the participants of this research do express that Urban Agriculture is about taking place in the city. Some even explicitly say that it is a question about “The Right to the City”. Furthermore, many of them narrate a feeling of doing something positive while being political. As one of the participants narrates;

C: “It’s a protest against densification processes. People think there are too many hard and concrete surfaces and that the city is ugly. It is also a reaction to not feeling that

you as a citizen have enough influence for the city planning. People feel that public spaces should be shared and they want to regain power of the city”

The fact that one of the motives for cultivating in the city is to do something active about unsustainable development also suggests that it is a political act. Although, it may not always be a conscious act and known to the gardeners themselves, their actions may be analysed as political (radical) acts, as McKay suggest.

New levels of space in globalization

Parag Khanna (2010), a scholar in International Relations believes that what we see today is a new ‘urban age’. He points to the emergence of new ‘megapolises’ and ‘knowledge cities’²⁷, around the world (where there was none before) especially in China and in the Arab world.

‘What happens in our cities [...] matters more than what happens anywhere else. Cities are the world’s experimental laboratories and thus a metaphor for an uncertain age. They are both the cancer and the foundation of our networked world, both virus and antibody. From climate change to poverty and inequality, cities are the problem—and the solution. Getting cities right might mean the difference between a bright future [...] and a world that looks more like the darkest corners of Karachi and Mumbai’ (Khanna, 2006:6).

The motives described by the participants in this research gives an indication of a desire to “getting the city right”, and an attempt of making sure the city doesn’t turn it into a place with problems such as inequality, poverty or environmental degradation. By choosing to produce (good) locally produced food they may control that it is produced in a sustainable way. Moreover, by gaining knowledge about local food production, they feel they are prepared for the future. However, the participants do not stop at the border of the city. They also talk about global justice and sustainability.

Sociologist Saskia Sassen (2007) has contributed with critical thoughts on spatiality in the era of globalization. She especially focuses on the role of ‘global cities’. In her view, it is important to examine how globalization creates new levels of space, nationally and globally. She believes that former perceptions of spatiality and territories such as nation-states and ‘the local’, needs to be reconsidered. ‘Specific structurations of what we have represented as the global are actually located deep inside states and other national institutions, and more

²⁷ Here he draws from the sociologist Saskia Sassen

generally, in territories encased by national legal, administrative, and cultural frames' (Sassen, 2007:99). What we see happening is a partial denationalization. Alongside new levels of space on sub-national levels are created such as 'Global cities' and social movements, which connect horizontally in networks. Sassen claims that these levels still are a part of globalization, though situated nationally or locally (Sassen, 2000, 2007). Cities have become strategic places for both capital, as well as citizens making claims on the city and the world (Sassen 2000).

Community Gardens connected to a Global Movement

A networked society

Wekerle (2004) argues that Community Gardens are a part of an emergence of a global networked food justice movement.

'Food justice movements are active in transnational networks that challenge the global food system at various scales and create locally grounded alternatives to global food systems based on visions of a more just society. They draw upon the experience of daily life and engage in delinking strategies that create local food alternatives, at the same time as they attempt to address issues of democratic practice through their own coalitions' (Wekerle, 2004:381).

This may be related to Castells (2000, vol. 1 and 3) who claim that today's world is organized in a *network society*, which affects all aspects of life. We have '[...] a new economy, the informational/global economy; and a new culture, the culture of real virtuality' (Castells, 2000, vol. 1:367). The world has moved from *industrialized capitalism* to *informational capitalism*. And: 'Global financial networks are the nerve center of informational capitalism' (Castells, 2000, vol. 3:374). This network society accompanies inequalities; there are winners and losers as people have different access to information and networks. However, "There is nothing that can't be changed by conscious, purposive social action, provided with information, and supported by legitimacy" (Castells, 2000, vol. 3:390). Hence, Castells argues that 'network society' also carries possibilities of counter-actions and resistance.

The social forces capable to use this possibility of resistance are, by Hardt & Negri (2000, 2003), called *Multitude*. They mean that capitalism and globalization has created a new global order, which they call *Empire*. It's not an empire in the classical meaning, but 'organic', has no centre, no boundaries and produces and reproduces itself. It includes everything and

everyone, and power is everywhere and has no fixed place. Sovereignty of nation-states, empires or imperialism is no longer possible. The counter-reaction constituted by the *Multitude*, are global flows of social resistance that one day will liberate us from *Empire*. The food justice movement may be argued to be one example of the different social movements constituting the Multitude. Wekerle further argues;

‘Food justice movements provide insights into several critical debates in the planning and urban literatures: the role of civil society and urban movements, particularly those focused on social and environmental justice; the subaltern strategies of resistance to globalization; the social construction of scale and “glocal” movements that bridge the dichotomy of local-global; and the transformations of urban governance’ (Wekerle, 2004: 379).

Evidence of Community Gardens in Gothenburg being connected to global social movements may be found from the websites of the initiators of the gardens as presented earlier in the thesis.²⁸ One example is Tillsammansodlingen Mölndal, which is connected to the global Transition Movement²⁹ (Omställning Göteborg, 2012). Moreover, as mentioned before the Community Gardens represented in this thesis are networked to each other locally *within* Gothenburg. Furthermore, I interpret gardens to be connected to a global food justice movement, since narratives of similar motives are shared between the participants of this research and this movement.

Thus, by taking Wekerle’s, Castells’ and Hardt and Negri’s arguments into consideration one could start to paint a picture of Community Gardens in Gothenburg being sites of counter-actions to globalization. However, one may also argue that they are *a part of* globalization itself. This latter view is facilitated by Sassen’s argument about new levels of space in globalization.

²⁸ However, this may not be said about the Neighbourhood Gardens in Gamlestaden. Although, it was told in one of the interviews that some people in this garden also cultivate in Tillsammansodlingen Mölndal.

²⁹ ‘Transition Network's role is to inspire, encourage, connect, support and train communities as they self-organise around the transition model, creating initiatives that rebuild resilience and reduce CO2 emissions’ (Transition Network, 2012).

New forms of politics under globalization

Wettergren and Jamison (2006) as many other scholars, argue that social movements of today go under the *Identity Paradigm*. For instance, they draw on sociologist Alberto Melucci who has done research on social movements;

‘Because contemporary society is so complex, we can hardly expect that one single movement grows as strong as for example the labor movement. Instead, one can expect a variety of movements that challenge society from as many different directions, and whose primary purpose is not to conquer the political power or achieve a better allocation of resources. The aim is rather to protect personal and private autonomy, and to highlight the risks and dangers that the Western way of life entails, and to unmask the seemingly neutral and anonymous relations of power and oppression’ (Wettergren and Jamison, 2006:13 *own translation*).

Moreover, although movements of today ‘[e]xpress themselves through cultural symbols and actions, rather than through traditional political manifestations, it is still *politics* that they are involved in’ (Wettergren and Jamison, 2006:13 *own translation*). By merely existing, they are challenging power structures (Wettergren and Jamison, 2006). Wettergren and Jamison argues that; ‘[a]nother important key to global movements could be to consider the *feelings* of togetherness and solidarity that they generate within the activists around the world. This in turn is made possible by the "virtual" reality of the information society (Wettergren and Jamison, 2006:20 *own translation*).

Håkan Thörn is another scholar that has done research on social movements. In the book *Globaliseringens dimensioner: Nationalstat, världssamhälle, demokrati* (2006) he is analysing historically created structures, created under globalization and what impact these have on people and society. I find Thörn providing a relevant analysis for this thesis, when he puts Giddens concept of *Life Politics*, in correlation to social movements. Giddens argue that there is a connection between globalization and individualization. People are confronted with global information flows that tell them how to live. However, people do not always have the chance to fulfil these ideals. Hence, Life Politics is often related to individuals making claims politically, to create their own lifestyles. However, as Thörn argues, this concept may also be related to the environmental and justice movements. These movements are not making individual claims but collective and solidarity claims for the sake of the globe by defining *limitations* on our lifestyles (Håkan Thörn, 2006).

During the post war period, one may distinguish new forms of political action. Thörn divides these political actions into three forms of “strategies of Life Politics” (Thörn, 2006:182-183);

- 1) The increasing importance of consumer boycott as a political act.
- 2) Lifestyle Politics
- 3) Life Form Politics

The first is related to new movements using consumer boycott rather than strike, as was more common before. They often use a transnational mobilization. The second strategy is also connected to consumption. It is a systematic politicized lifestyle, where the consumer buys green or fair trade products. The third strategy is the building of alternatives by social movements. It is related to alternative housing, alternative economic systems and global trade preventions. It is thought within these movements that the new alternatives ultimately will change society from below. Thörn further argues that these new types of political actions give the individuals a sense of identity and belonging to a community (Thörn, 2006).

Summary

This chapter shows that people have always cultivated in cities. However it is also suggested that there is something new and different with the Community Gardens in Gothenburg, comparing to the past. They are thought to have their origins in the Community Gardens in New York in the 1970s. The reader is also presented with the proposition that Urban Agriculture increases in the times of crisis and vanishes again when the crisis is over. In Gothenburg this may be seen as an anticipation of a crisis in the future or an understanding or urge to act on crises in other parts of the world. This is connected to sustainability issues.

In developed countries, such as Sweden, encouraging factors for Urban Agriculture are mostly connected to environmental concerns. One may argue that there are similarities between Urban Agriculture in Sweden in the past and developing countries today. The encouraging factors are, in these cases, most commonly insecure or irregular income resources, transportation difficulties and subsistence economy.

Community Gardens may be viewed as local political spaces in urban settings. Moreover, they may be seen as a conflict over who has the *right to the city*. They may also be sites of ideological action and struggle. Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens may therefore be understood as positive acts of resistance. The interpretation of the empirical findings is that

this may also be occurring in Gothenburg. However, the users of the gardens may not always be aware of this political aspect themselves.

This chapter also shows how Community Gardens in Gothenburg are part of a global food justice movement. They may be seen as *glocal* movements that bridge the local-global dichotomy, while highlighting the risks that the western way of living causes. Furthermore, the reader is presented with suggestions that there are new forms of politics under globalization. New social movements go under the identity paradigm and there is a connection between individualization and globalization. During the post-war era it is believed that there are three political strategies of *life politics*. They are used both by individuals and social movements. Firstly, consumer boycotts are replacing strikes as political action. Secondly, people are systematically politicizing their lives by choosing green and fair trade products. Thirdly, social movements are building new alternative life forms with the aim of changing society. It may be assumed that the new forms of political actions and the new social movements give individuals a sense of identity and belonging to a community.

Final Discussion and Conclusions

The descriptions from the empirical findings of this thesis show that motives for Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens in Gothenburg vary. However, six themes have been distinguished that captures an essence of what the participants have shared with me during the interviews; 1) Urban Agriculture as a Hobby/Interest/Social Activity. 2) Belonging somewhere. 3) Good food on the Table. 4) Urban Agriculture as a Reaction to Urbanization and Urban Planning (policies). 5) Urban Agriculture as a Reaction to Unsustainable Development. 6) Urban Agriculture as Pro-action for Sustainable Development. These are also argued to be interrelated. Some of the motives shared in the interviews could not be put into one of these themes, and are considered unusual topics or “leftover” topics. They are also made known to the reader. Hence, I consider research question number one to have been answered: *What are the motives, as described by six urban farmers, behind Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens in Gothenburg?*

When it comes to research question number two it is not so clear-cut. I believe that the empirical findings show an *indication* that Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens may be understood as local counter-acts to globalization. However, this indication does not reveal itself so directly, as the participants do not explicitly protest against globalization. They have

not uttered words like anti-globalization or counter-actions to globalization in the interviews. However, as presented in this thesis, Community Gardens in Gothenburg may be analysed as spaces for both conscious and unconscious political actions. This is in line with McKay's argument that all Community Gardens are sites of political acts, whether intentionally or not. Moreover, an understanding that the motives are connected to a *reaction* to global unsustainable development and *pro-action* to change society, may lead us in the direction of describing Urban Agriculture in these Community Gardens as counter-actions.

One motive behind Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens is by these participants described as a choice of producing food in a sustainable way. They also relate Urban Agriculture as a reaction to consumerism and the western way of life. They sense they are controlling their lifestyles by cultivating. What is more, they believe that Urban Agriculture is about building alternatives, by active knowledge building and preparing for the future. This may be related to Thörn's and Wettergren & Jamison's viewpoints that we under globalization may see new forms of political strategies of action, which are related to lifestyle choices. Although, the participants may not be uttering resistance against globalization as such, they do resist the unsustainable world order. If one follows the theoretical lens, of this thesis, that our lives are lived under the Age of Globalization, perhaps it is possible to also argue that the participants are counter-acting globalization, as they are reacting to global unsustainable development? And pro-acting by building alternatives to globalization, that are sustainable?

The suggestion, by Thörn, that these new types of political actions under globalization give individuals a sense of identity and belonging may offer an understanding of why the participants of the research portray a longing to belong to a community or to the earth. Some participants state that they feel good about not being alone in their anxieties about the future. Moreover, the Community Garden is thought to be as much about cultivating relationships, as much as it about cultivating vegetables.

If Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture are on the rise in times of crises, and if people have always cultivated in cities, what then is really new about Community Gardens in Gothenburg under the Age of Globalization? The answer may lie in the typology of these Community Gardens. As suggested, in this thesis, Community Gardens in Sweden and in other developed countries today are similar and primarily encouraged by environmental

concerns. They are not encouraged by insecure incomes. People are increasingly more aware of what happens in other places today. And people are aware of the fact that their lives affect other people. Although Gothenburg may not be in a crisis directly, the crisis today may be of a *global scope*. It may be a reaction to a crisis elsewhere in the world and it may also be an *anticipated* crisis in the future. Beck's *world risk theory* facilitates an understanding, such as this one.

This may also be related to the perspective of the increased interconnectedness and social reconfigurations, argued to occur under the Age of Globalization. There are descriptions from the interviews about Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens being a meaningful activity, which may be interpreted as to people taking control over their fears. They describe that they feel good about *doing something*, rather than being left feeling victimized.

Furthermore, as we have seen in this thesis, Community Gardens in Gothenburg are connected to a global food justice movement. If one assumes that this global movement is part of what Hardt & Negri call the *Multitude* it could indicate that Community Gardens in Gothenburg are parts of global flows of resistance counter-acting *Empire*, which is created by capitalism and globalization.

It is argued in this thesis that globalization has created new levels of space nationally and globally. We live in a new urban age. In our networked, interconnected society, cities and social movements are argued to gain more influence under globalization. Disembedding mechanisms under globalization urge people to counter-act and to search for identity and meaning, and is therefore followed by re-embedding. Moreover, globalization is thought to be glocal in the sense that human lives take place in local settings, even though they are connected to a transnational sphere. Hence, if one views counter-actions to globalization as *re-embedding* mechanisms, this may give an understanding of Community Gardens in Gothenburg being just that. What's more they are seemingly glocal, as they are working locally, while being connected to a global movement, with global issues. In addition, these local levels of space may be seen as being *a part of* globalization.

By taking Sassen's point of departure that cities and social movements are new levels of space under globalization, connected horizontally, further conceptualizes this idea. Sassen's theory on global cities may indicate that Gothenburg as an interconnected city is not only affected by globalization, but also an operational entity *producing* globalization. This may be the case

also for Community Gardens, as they are interconnected with others globally, as well as within Gothenburg making claims on the city and the world. Hence, globalization may be viewed as *enabling* global movements, and global movements are in turn enabling globalization.

However, may Community Gardens be looked upon as counter-actions to globalization, when they are collaborating with the authorities? I would say they could. In an era with life style politics politicians may be forced to listen to the desires and demands from the citizens. As we have seen the political strategies of actions are suggested to have changed under globalization. This puts new types of pressures on politicians to meet the requirements of the citizen, in order to be re-elected. This may also be related to the empirical findings which also show that participants believe that cultivation is about reacting to urbanization and urban planning policies. As we have seen Gothenburg is a post-industrial city transforming under globalization. By viewing Gothenburg in this manner facilitates an understanding of Community Gardens as spaces of resistance under globalization. I find this an interesting research area to investigate more into.

Another interesting area to do more research on could be the decline in guerrilla gardens in Gothenburg. Is the reason for this that the former activists don't feel the need as the municipality is in favour of Community Gardens today? Or has the municipality "taken over" Urban Agriculture (consciously or unconsciously) in order to regain power of public spaces?

During this research I found it hard to relate the theme, which describes motives of having Urban Agriculture as a hobby or leisure activity. However, it could be put in relation to health studies, or studies about changes or trends in leisure activities in the Age of Globalization. By analysing the theme in this manner it may also relate it to one of the "leftover" topics, which described Urban Agriculture as a trend. This theme may also be related to theories on work tasks undertaken by many people under the Age of Globalization. Are people drawn to Community Gardens as they have an inactive and deskbound occupation? These types of occupations could be assumed to be increasing in Gothenburg as the city is transforming itself into a knowledge city. Therefore, this could be a relevant topic for future research.

So; Are Urban Agriculture in Community Gardens, in Gothenburg, to be understood as counter-actions to globalization? Drawing on the findings from this research I would say they

could. However, I would also say that this thesis shows that there needs to be more research done in this area in order to make any generalization about this issue.

There is now only one question that remains to be answered. Did I start cultivating more? The answer is yes! Now, I am only waiting for the first potatoes, beans and carrots to pop up.

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Appendix 1

Interview guide in English

Introduction Questions

- Please, tell me a little bit about yourself. What is your background, age, education/occupation, what do you do with your spare time? Whatever you feel like sharing. You will remain anonymous in the study and in the thesis.

About experiences of Urban Agriculture/Community Gardens

- How did you first hear about Urban Agriculture/Community Gardens?
- If you remember, what was it with Urban Agriculture that appealed to you? Why did you start cultivating in a Community Garden do you think? (Has your reason for cultivating changed)?
- Why do you think Urban Agriculture is increasing? In Gothenburg/Sweden/Globally?
- Do you think people cultivate in the city for various reasons? Which reasons?
 - Do people have a message? Which message?

About societal development

- How would you describe your worldview? How do you look upon the world?
 - Do you feel any concerns/worries for the direction society is developing? What worries you in this case?
 - How would you say that you deal with these concerns/worries about the future?
 - What are your hopes for the future?

About Urban Agriculture/Community Gardens in general

- How are community gardeners in Gothenburg treated by different actors in society? ("The lady with the dog on the street"? Children? Authorities? Parking attendants?)
 - What do the reactions look like?

Appendix 2

Interview guide in Swedish

Introduktionsfrågor

- Berätta lite kort om dig själv; Vad är din bakgrund, ålder, utbildning/yrke, vad sysslar du med på fritiden? Det du har lust att dela med dig. Du kommer att vara anonym i undersökningen och uppsatsen.

Om erfarenheter av stadsodling:

- Hur fick du först höra talas om stadsodling?
- Om du kommer ihåg; vad var det med stadsodling som tilltalade dig? Varför började du stadsodla tror du? (Har din anledning för att stadsodla förändrats?)
- Varför tror du att stadsodling ökar? I Göteborg/Sverige/globalt?
- Tror du människor stadsodlar av olika anledningar? Vilka?
 - Har man ett budskap? Vilket?

Om samhällsutvecklingen

- Hur skulle du beskriva din världsbild? Hur ser du på världen?
 - Känner du någon oro/bekymmer inför hur håll samhället utvecklar sig? Vad oroar dig i så fall?
 - Hur skulle du säga att du hanterar denna oro/bekymmer inför framtiden?
 - Vad har du för förhoppningar inför framtiden?

Om stadsodling generellt

- Hur tycker du att man som stadsodlare i Göteborg blir bemött av olika aktörer i samhället? ("Tanten med hunden på gatan"? Barn? Myndigheter? Parkeringsvakter?)
 - Hur ser reaktionerna ut?