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Voids in the Cities: Obstacles or Opportunities? The Practice of Urban Agriculture in Lisbon[1]

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Abstract

Urban voids can be defined as temporary vacant spaces in contemporary cities generated by various processes which are connected to urbanization. With this research we look at the process of legalization and recognition of informal uses of voids in the contemporary city. We focus on a case study in Lisbon, where we aim to understand how the municipality (CML) perceives and deals specifically with the informal urban agriculture; how the municipal regulation of those uses is implemented and how are the resulting changes perceived and accepted by the users.

We registered different perspectives from farmers and the CML regarding the appropriation of space. CML´s idea of how space appropriation in the gardens should be made is oriented towards the creation of an ordered and aesthetic environment, which collides with the functional and affective way farmers relate to the land. In general we find that the municipality is changing methods, getting closer to an inclusive approach by integrating the former users in the projects. However there is a pre-selection of which farmers' needs are amenable to be integrated in the projects and thus the top-down way of implementation persists.

Keywords
Voids, Urban agriculture, Urban planning, public participation

Introduction

For a long time agriculture has been an important part of urban settlements (Mougeot, 2000; Henriques, 2009; Matos and Baptista, 2013). With the rapid concentration of people in urban areas since the industrial revolution, cities tended to spread, assimilating great part of farming areas (Martins, 2012; Matos and Baptista, 2013). Rural land was thus reduced to "pockets" in the city, today in the form of gardens or tracts of recreational land that were eventually integrated into the city in the form of public gardens (Martins, 2012). However much of these fertile areas remained without formal use, providing "a certain continuity that allows the flow of air, of water and matter, simultaneously with the flow of residents or casual users" (Matos and Baptista, 2013, p. 457). According to Gandy (2012, p. 4) since the last quarter of the 20th century there was an increase of unplanned void spaces which do not appear as a result but as a side effect of the planning process (idem). This is visible in Lisbon as a consequence of multiple processes including a so-called urban shrinkage which derives, among other phenomenon, from deindustrialization and depopulation (Lima, 2011). In European regions where these processes are most visible comes the question of how to handle these spaces (see e.g. Haase, 2008; Rink, 2009; Rösler, 2008; Lima, 2011). Agriculture or urban gardening can be one of the solutions.

Urban planning is just one side of the city development. It is the regulated, intentional and conventional process which depends on formal agreements and development of documented plans, centrally decided by city authorities, with more or less participation of citizens. In such discourse the space is seen as "abstract" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 49-50), as a void which should be filled by meaning. However, at the same time there is the informal everyday use of the void space, which sometimes stays unrecognized by the official discourse. The inclusion (or exclusion) in the city plans of this kind of informal appropriation of space lays on power relations among city dwellers and among city dwellers and local authorities, relying mostly on daily negotiations (Purcell, 2013). According to Dias *et al.* (2014) top-down approaches tend to over-

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look already existing local initiatives, something that may jeopardize the actual implementation of the pre-conceived plans. According to Salet and Thornley (2014) informal projects may go ahead and be included in the planning of the city and such informal activity becomes more important if the formal mechanisms are lacking or leading to dysfunctional results" (Salet and Thornley, 2014, p. 196). In Lisbon, formal and regulated urban agriculture is a recent initiative that stemmed from informal practices initiated decades ago in city voids (CML, oral communication, 2015). Nowadays we witness the regulation and integration of much of these practices in the city's master plan.

With this research we aim to understand how the municipality of Lisbon perceives and deals with the informal use of voids in the city, specifically with the informal urban agriculture; how the municipal regulation of those uses is implemented and how are the resulting changes perceived and accepted by the users. There are several studies regarding city planning in Lisbon (Alden and Pires, 1996; Silva v Syrett, 2006; Pereira and Silva, 2008; Raposo and Valente, 2010; Lima, 2012; Matos and Batista, 2013) and specifically urban gardens in Lisbon, including the informal ones (Martins, 2003; Madaleno, 2003; Henriques, 2009; Matos, 2010; Martins, 2012; Bernardo, 2013; Cabannes and Raposo, 2013; Silva and Monte, 2014). However, to our acquaintance, there is no study that follows a specific ongoing project of legalization of the informal gardens in order to analyze the methods used by the municipality, the results of these methods and the assumptions that underlie them. In this paper, by approaching stakeholders in the course of the implementation (the case of Vale de Chelas) or shortly after it (the case of Quinta da Granja), we were able to describe a specific legalization process in real time. The reported change of approach regarding the role of citizens in the process of city planning, by adopting a more inclusive position, added to the recently implemented strategy regarding the planning of green spaces in the city, allowed us to question whether this endeavor is being fulfilled.

Lisbon's Strategy for Urban Agriculture, specifically the legalization and regulation of informal agricultural practices provided the framework for the research. We conducted semi-structured interviews with city space planners and with former informal users of the city space in two recently constructed farming parks, both located in places with previous informal farming activity. With this research, we gathered the views of the stakeholders towards the farming parks and towards the performance of the other stakeholders. Furthermore we sought to understand which assumptions and ideas underlie the municipal projects of farming parks and what reasons influence the farmers' practice.

We start by discussing the position of void urban spaces in the current urban planning discourse. We stress the contrast between the roles of urban planning and informal uses, where the former is a tool for a formal definition of the functions of void urban spaces and the ladder is a process of its everyday appropriation. Other important characteristics of the urban planning discourse are mentioned, especially the connection with ideas of utopian thinkers, still significantly present in the contemporary planning discourse. Next, after a brief introduction to the emergence and practice of urban planning in Portugal over time, and after presenting the research's goals and methodology, we present the research results. There, we focus on the perspective of the municipality and of users, both during and after the implementation process. We try to reach the assumptions which underlie their perspectives. In the last chapter we discuss the results within the framework of the current urban planning discourse. We conclude the paper with some general remarks regarding the present and future of the urban voids in Lisbon.

Theoretical framework

Void urban spaces in the current urban planning discourse

Urban voids can be defined as temporary vacant spaces in contemporary cities (Rahmann and Marieluise, 2011), generated by various processes which are connected to urbanization. According to Santos (2011), they are the result of both city expansion and decline. They can be part of the city periphery as residual spaces around infrastructure or produced by unregulated suburban development. We can also find them in city centers as abandoned sites, brownfields or interstitial voids between buildings (Santos, 2011).

Voids can be produced by urban shrinkage, a phenomenon that is affecting many European cities nowadays. The term urban shrinking is used to describe a situation when "loss of population and economic downturn have brought about a fall in the demand for housing, commercial property and social infrastructure buildings", which caused an "increasing number of

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vacancies calls for the demolition of buildings, producing more empty spaces and transforming the urban fabric" (Rösler, 2008, p. 147). Urban shrinking is very often derived from the process of deindustrialization of formerly prosperous industrial regions (Haase, 2008, p. 1-2)[2].

Voids can also be residual spaces (Wikstrom, 2005) or spaces left over after planning, i.e. SLOAPs (Doron, 2007, p. 20). Wikstrom (2005) describes them as "unplanned or left-over land" which is often an "indirect result of planned building". They occupy a "periphery of architects' and planners' intentions" (Wikstrom 2005, p. 50), but they are intrinsic to urban planning (Nielsen, 2002, p.54).

As summarized by Doron (2007) we can also find other concepts describing these phenomena in architecture and urban planning discourse. What they often share is the subjective judgment and aesthetic appreciation, which do not recognize many of the functions that the voids can actually have (Doron, 2007, p. 14-15). This is also stressed by other authors. McDonogh (1993) shows how the "speculative emptiness" connected to vacant lots is usually seen as a "natural, short-term phase within our models of growth and change in a 'healthy' city", but as "wasteful, uneconomic, or threatening" when it lasts too long (McDonogh, 1993, p. 7, similarly Edensor, 2005, p. 8). As Haase argues, European urban policy makers still concentrate on the idea of growth, therefore urban decline or stagnation is seen as something undesirable (Haase, 2008, p. 1).

However, Haase (2008) shows, that recently there is an emergence of approaches that search for new ways of raising life quality, even in low-density or shrinking cities, and which do not rely on the idea of an optimistic economic and demographic future (Haase, 2008). Also Gandy (2012) argues that spaces once "regarded as marginal or aesthetically problematic have gradually gained an increasingly significant role in urban discourse". According to the author, it is a consequence of "changing aesthetic characteristics of cities themselves and the proliferation of anomalous or 'empty' spaces" (Gandy, 2012, p. 4).

In the Portuguese context, voids are often called expectant spaces in the planning and architectural discourse (Santos 2011, p. 35). As concluded by Veiga et al. (2010), these spaces "are the result of the functioning of the land market," being "inside the game of interests between public and private actors" (Veiga et al., 2010). Lisbon's voids could also be connected to the process of urban shrinking[3]. Lima (2011) draws attention to the fact that during the economic crisis Lisbon's shrinking process can be accelerated. Therefore the author argues that we need a new no-growth paradigm of urban development consisting for example of creation of more public and green spaces (Lima, 2011, p. 15).

Formal and Informal Uses of Space

The prevalent approach to marginal urban landscapes in the contemporary urban design is rather utilitarian seeing them mainly as a waste space rather than discovering their "intrinsic qualities" (Gandy, 2012, p. 5). Unofficial or marginal activities often stay unrecognized, ignored, or are even excluded (Edensor, 2005). Edensor (2005) argues that since the contemporary city becomes increasingly subjected to regimes of regulation and demarcation, [...] certain spaces are deemed suitable for nothing. "However these spaces can play roles that cannot be fulfilled by the highly regulated contemporary city: they can be for example spaces for leisure, adventure, cultivation, acquisition[4], shelter and creativity" (Edensor, 2005, p. 21).

Similarly, McDonogh (1993) argues that some uses that answer to specific needs of particular social groups are seen as inappropriate and thus are not included in the urban design. To describe the spatiality of this exclusion processes McDonogh uses a concept of empty space. He defines it as a space void of certain specific contents, while "the process of definition of correct and incorrect contents can derive from territorial struggles between groups of users" or from the "imposition of cultural values" of one social group "upon the space" (McDonogh, 1993, p. 9). We can see the process of exclusion as a part of a broader tendency of the contemporary Western city to produce ordered and regulated space which is characterized by "surveillance, aesthetic monitoring and the prevalence of regimes which determine where and how things, activities and people should be placed" (Edensor, 2000, p. 54, similarly Gandy, 2006b, p. 507).

But despite this tendency, the contemporary city and its society is not controlled by one center of sovereign power. According to Gandy there is always an "interplay between formal and informal networks of power, and between the visible and invisible manifestations of authority." Thus "society is increasingly controlling itself through innumerable surveillance networks" (Gandy, 2006b, p. 507-508). Amin and Thrift (2002) also argue that there will always be blind spots, overlooked spaces, which exist out of the networks of production and power, out of the systems of

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[3] AAccording to Lima (2011) Lisbon has been shrinking since the 1960s, mostly between 1981 and 1991 when the population was reduced by 40% (Lima, 2011, p. 13), which created a significant amount of abandoned buildings and areas around the city.

[6] E.g. plundering and collecting of materials or food etc.

regulation (Amin and Thrift, 2002, p. 92). We can see void spaces, appropriated and reclaimed by their everyday users, as a good example of such blind spots. The inclusion (or exclusion) of informal appropriation of space into the formal planning depends on power relations among city dwellers and among city dwellers and local authorities, relying mostly on daily negotiations (Purcell, 2013). As Salet and Thornley (2014) state informal activity becomes more important if the formal mechanisms are lacking or leading to dysfunctional results.

In Lisbon it is frequent to find spaces of different dimensions apparently with no formal use. Some belong to the municipality; others are privately owned by individuals or institutions[5]. According to the municipality[6], informal uses may be more or less tolerated by the owners of the space. In some cases there is a tacit agreement between the owner and the user, in others the uses are maintained until the owner is aware of the situation or until there is another use defined for the area. This also applies to expectant spaces owned by the municipality where many unregulated urban gardens are located. Nowadays we witness the regulation and integration of much of urban gardening practices into the city's master plan, i.e. integration of informal practices into the conventional planning. However, it is difficult to predict which uses or practices will be considered by the authorities to be part of the formal plans. As pointed by Salet and Thornley (2014), "institutional conditions can never fully explain what strategies are brought forward in social and political practices; they only offer conditions (particular opportunities and constraints) that vary between different institutional contexts. Urban policy practitioners respond to these conditions in the most intelligent way they can" (Salet and Thornley, 2014, p. 197).

Utopian visions of an ideal city in urban design

In order to explain deeper reasons underlying the tendency to regulate space of contemporary city and exclude some uses, we look at utopian ideas hidden in the urban planning discourse. Many of the ideas which we find in the history of urban planning were inspired by thoughts of utopians, especially the idea that if we give a new order to space, we will also positively influence society (Harvey, 2000, p. 154, similarly Gottdiener and Hutchison, 2011, p. 332). Designed nature, which includes parks and gardens, played a significant role in the process of utopian change of the city as well (Gandy, 2006a; Clark, 2010). In its controlled and regulated form, nature was expected to have a role in the construction of the healthy and beautiful city (Gandy, 2006a, p. 66-67; Clark, 2010, p. 144), and also of the ideal society (Burrell and Dale, 2002)[7].

According to Gandy, the "earlier attempts to create an Utopian synthesis of nature and culture were gradually supplanted in the 20th century by a more radical and technologically inspired vision" which Gandy calls "hygienic city" (2006a, p. 66). This idea combined the earlier conceptions of healthy city with the use of green spaces and the scientific management of space, bringing a vast diversity of innovations such as "land use zoning and regional planning" (Gandy, 2006a, p. 66). But the implementation of this new utopia did not bring expected results, and during the 1950s and 1960s "planners themselves increasingly recognized that the ideal of 'master planning' was illusory and began to explore ways of bolstering their legitimacy through wider public consultation" (Gandy, 2006a, p. 67).

Public participation as a tool of urban design

Probably the most influential reaction to the conflict of the modernist fantasies of ideal city with the lived reality was the famous work of Jane Jacobs *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Jacobs, 1961). The author opposes the prevailing way of urban planning of the first half of the 20th century and stresses the importance of public space and street life. She claims that planning should be reoriented back to human scale and recognize users as co-creators of public space. The organization of public spaces should contribute to the creation of intimate relationship among neighbors and thus create a sense of community (Jacobs, 1961).

Jacobs's vision was criticized by some authors. For example Harvey (2000) objected that Jacobs was in her own way every bit as utopian as the utopianism she attacked. Harvey argues that in her conception there is also an "author-

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[5] For example, we find many spaces in road encroachments around Lisbon's Metropolitan Area (LMA) left without any use that are now informally used for farming. Also in the recent past, there were cases of informal organizations starting cultural and leisure activities in abandoned buildings. (E.g. Casa de São Lázaro in Lisbon, (2010) an occupied building used for cultural expression, exhibitions, communitarian meals, concerts, etc., evicted by the CML; Laranjinha, an occupied primary school used for cultural and educational activities, located in the Sintra municipality, Damaia, very near to the borders of the LMA, also evicted by the municipality of Sintra).

[6] Information collected through an informal interview with two people of the staff responsible for the planning of city's green spaces.

[7] The authors show this on the example of the reconstruction of Paris during the regime of Napoleon III. , when gardens were supposed to help with the prevention of social tensions, or in the concept of the "Garden city", which was meant to merge the advantages of living in the city and in the country (Burrell, Dale, 2002).

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itarianism hidden within the organic notion of neighborhood and community as a basis for life". Community offers not only security, but also social control which can be oppressive. Thus the social diversity which Jacobs wants to create can work only as a "certain kind of controlled diversity", as Harvey calls it, which is maintained by self-surveillance of the members of a community (Harvey, 2000, p. 164). According to Gandy her approach has its roots in romantic anti-urban sentiments which follow an idealistic picture of rural or small-town society (Gandy 2006a, p. 65). Gottdiener and Hutchison (2011) argue that "Jacobs's ideas about community may also be passé", because people are not fixed in locality to the same extent as in the past (Gottdiener and Hutchison, 2011, p. 337).

But despite some criticism, the idea of community as a base for a viable city advocated by Jacobs endured and influenced urban planning (Gottdiener and Hutchison, 2011, p. 338). We can find it in the concept of participatory or bottom-up planning. Dias et al. (2014) argue, that to create sustainable projects we need to develop a proper bottom-up approach which "identifies the community needs and aspirations" (Dias et al., 2014, p. 501). The authors map the current approaches to urban planning and conclude that despite this need the top-down approaches still prevail. Even when the community is included the professional actors still maintain their dominant lead over the other stakeholders. "In some top-down approaches which include the public in the later stages of planning there is a risk of "manipulation of local opinion rather than a genuine participation, because the agenda has already been framed and developed by the professional actors" (Dias et al., 2014. p. 500).

Urban planning in Portugal

As Alden and Pires (1996, p. 27) argue a "planning system is very much a product of its special political and constitutional history". In Portugal, there was a monarchic system until 1910 and in 1922 a right wing coup gave rise to a dictatorship that only ended in 1974 with the 25 April military coup. The lack of political and financial autonomy of local authorities under the dictatorship led to the absence of autonomous initiatives in development planning (Alden and Pires, 1996). Therefore, the centralized process of decision-making was perpetuated until the 1980's, when the Municipal Master Plans (Plano Director Municipal, PDM) were introduced in

order to decentralize planning; to introduce the concept of social and economic development in city planning, until that time disregarded; and to integrate the public in the decisions concerning urban territory (Alden and Pires, 1996). However, only in the 1990's, motivated by a change in the law that simplified the process of plan preparation, the objectives of the PDM started to be reached (Idem).

The process was enhanced by Portugal's integration in the European Union (Alden and Pires 1996; Silva and Syrret, 2006; Moreira, 2013). Thee access to the European funds redirected the public policies at the local, regional and national level (Silva and Syrett, 2006). At the organizational level the use of European funds led also to changes in the state administration, leading to the strengthening of the regional tier of territorial administration (Silva and Syrett, 2006).

Regardless of the institutional changes achieved, the difficulties to translate planning principles into specific practices have prevailed over the declared policy intention of disseminating and applying such principles (Pires, 2005). Despite several initiatives to strengthen other strands of government besides the state, and almost 40 years after the 1976's constitution, centralized power is still an issue. In the city of Lisbon a central state control still prevails together with a weak "metropolitan government" (Silva and Syrett, 2006, p. 114). Nevertheless, there have been some attempts in Lisbon to include the citizens' views and needs in the process of planning (e.g. participatory budget[8]). According to Pires (2005), despite the ups and downs of official planning policy, ideas to accommodate environmental concerns, to foster public participation and to develop a strategic and integrated dimension to spatial planning, "are gradually finding their way into practical experiments and, consequently, into the agenda of discussion among [Portuguese] planners" (Pires, 2005, p. 241).

Objectives and methodology

With this research we aim to understand how the municipality of Lisbon perceives and deals with the informal uses of voids in the city; how municipal interventions in the city space are implemented and how are the changes perceived and accepted by the users. We focused on the cases of the informal use of municipal land for urban gardens and on the process of their legalization through the construction of official farming parks owned and henceforth managed by

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[8] This initiative is organized at the municipal level and means to involve the public in allocation of part of the municipal budget to projects that deal with the use of city spaces, infrastructures, etc.

the municipality. Since we aimed to study informal uses and methods used by the municipality to manage city space, we searched for farming parks that were constructed in the areas previously used in an informal way as this would enable us to pursue our goal[9].

Thus the research was developed in two farming parks located in different parts of the city of Lisbon: Quinta da Granja and Vale de Chelas. Quinta da Granja was the first park being built (2011) and Vale de Chelas (2013) is the largest within the area. The first is located in the city center and the latter is situated on the northern outskirts of the city[10]. We conducted semi-structured interviews with farmers in both farming parks. We tried to contact people with various relationships with the particular place. Thus interviews were made both to "old" farmers that have been working in these areas for decades, and also to "new farmers", people that were selected through the public tender[11]. Along the interviews several issues related to the municipal strategy were raised by the interviewer. Participants were given freedom to develop the subjects as they wished, using their own frames of reference. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with two people from the municipality who were directly involved in the conception and implementation of the city's strategy for urban agriculture. We consulted also other sources of information (e.g. the websites of organizations of urban agriculture, national and international; the CML's website and documents; online newspapers etc.) dealing with the planning of the city and the strategy for urban agriculture initiated by the CML in 2007.

We performed qualitative analysis of the collected data. The number of interviews followed the principle of saturation regarding the results of continuous analysis. The approach of each stakeholder was analyzed according to the aims of the research. We sought to identify similarities and dissimilarities among the various statements of farmers and among the information collected along the interviews with the CML staff and drawing upon other sources of information on the urban agriculture strategy and on the CML's position on the informal use of municipal land. The results section is further divided into three sections: first we use the data obtained along the interviews with the CML staff and we focus on the informal uses in the city of Lisbon and on the strategy of the municipality

towards these uses; secondly, referring also to the CML' interviews, we focus on the Lisbon strategy for urban agriculture; finally we present farmers and CML's perceptions and motivations towards the farming parks' projects using the information collected with farmers and the CML.

Results

Informal uses and urban voids as expectant places - a municipal perspective

According to the municipality, control over the informal appropriation of municipal expectant spaces by citizens was, until recently, random and aimed to deal with the situation in an effective and fast way and with the least logistics possible. Allegedly this was the result of the lack of staff to perform the monitoring and regulation of the uses and therefore the process consisted mainly on the expulsion of the users (CML[12], personal communication, 2015).

Recently the CML initiated an inventory of the existing municipal expectant places and their uses. Before the inventory was finished the responsibility had been passed on to the parish council *(Junta de Freguesia)* as a result of the reform of local authorities' institutions in 2013 (Reforma da Administração Local - CCDRN, 2016; CML, personal communication, 2015). Taking into account the diversity of uses found along the inventory, the CML perceived farming activities as "the best examples of uses found" and started a process of legalization of the occupation of space in which some of the uses were perceived as being unacceptable (e.g. prostitution bars, car workshops and storage houses or leisure places for family and friends). Before such findings the municipality felt the need to terminate these initiatives in order to regain control over the city space (CML, personal communication, 2015).

Gardening as an acceptable informal use

As we were told by the CML, their strategy towards the "acceptable" informal uses of the municipal space is based on the principle "if you

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[9] In these parks the gardens were classified as "social gardens", i.e. regulations and objectives were different from other urban gardens. In social gardens the promotion of social and economic wellbeing was intended, thereby allowing farmers to sell their production. Gardening was also considered as an occupational therapy for unemployed or retired people. Creating the possibility for people already farming there to stay was also a pre-determinant.

[10] Further details on the parks can be found in the results namely in the section II regarding Lisbon's strategy for urban agriculture.

[11] Along the interviews the difference between the views of the new and the old farmers became evident. This was related to the fact that the new farmers were not acquainted with the previous form of informal use of the place. Once the aim of the study was to analyze the strategy of the CML towards informal uses we concentrated on the "old farmers" discourse. Therefore, most of the results presented in this paper are based on the perceptions of the old farmers, despite we took into account also the "new farmers" perception when it was relevant.

[12] Department of Green Structure and Energy [Pelouro da Estrutura Verde / Energia] of the municipality of Lisbon

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can't beat them, join them". Thus, when confronted with informal uses susceptible of being included in the city planning, the CML proceeded with their regulation. Among the several uses found in these areas during the inventory, farming was the most common (CML, personal communication, 2015).

Informal urban gardens are legalized by establishing a contract between the farmer and the CML. This contract does not include any investment by the municipality (e.g. water system, fences, storage houses, etc.), only imposes some simple rules considered essential for public health and aesthetic issues that consist mainly of prescribing the materials which can be used (e.g. wood as a degradable material is preferred to other materials such as plastic or metal), and prohibiting the storage of stuff and garbage and to construct any structures. Farmers can continue farming until the CML has another formal use for the land. In the meantime they pay a symbolic annual fee. The legalization of these uses was a strategy that helped the CML to regain control over some parts of the city space. Furthermore, by keeping the space actively occupied the CML prevents the appearance of other potential but less acceptable uses (e.g. emergence of landfills etc.) and also the degradation of the soil.

Municipal Strategy for Urban Agriculture

In Lisbon the inclusion of formal agriculture initiatives in the city planning started recently, except for some rare initiatives in the end of the 1990's[13] (Henriques, 2009).

According to the CML in 2007 there was a change in the management and conception of the city's green spaces by adopting a more functional perspective of these areas through the inclusion of sports and leisure activities in the parks and gardens (e.g. kiosks, gymnastic devices, cycling roads). Also, agriculture was considered to be an important part of the green planning of Lisbon, which was first put to practice through the adoption of Lisbon's Green Plan, henceforth integrated in the City's Master Plan, thereby establishing Lisbon's ecological structure[14].

Within this framework the strategy for urban agriculture was initiated and a committee was created for its implementation. As we were told, after some research and visits to other European cities to gather experiences, the committee conceived the "farming parks" which would include both farming plots and green spaces for recreation. This choice was based on the idea that agricultural activities should not be isolated from the rest of the city, on the contrary they should be accessible to everyone in order to raise awareness on subjects such as "food quality", "environment" and "organic farming". The choice was also economical since it was more cost-effective to construct a farming park than a conventional garden; furthermore the maintenance of the space, which generally represents a significant part of the budget, would be guaranteed by the farmers (CML[15], personal communication, 2015). Thus farming parks were defined by the CML as "urban structures to be used by the farmers that are also open to the public for diverse leisure activities, with pathways for people to walk and cycle" (Henriques, 2009; CML, 2016).

According to the CML's website these spaces were created "to contribute for the development of an environmental conscience by learning and applying good farming practices and to incentive the interaction between neighbors and strengthen social bonding among the users". On the environmental perspective, the "farms should promote the ecological balance of the territory through the use of good farming practices that would protect biodiversity and the ecosystems and enhance soil fertility and drainage capacity" (CML, 2016).

Among regulated farms the CML established different types according to the main objectives underlying their creation: leisure farms, pedagogical farms and social farms (CML, personal communication, 2015). Social farms consisted of institutional farms created as a project of social support aiming to decrease social injustice and urban poverty. Therefore the annual fee requested for the use of these farms is lower when compared to the leisure gardens; whenever possible the plots in the social gardens are larger (minimum of 100 m²) then in the leisure gardens (minimum of 50 m²) and the selling of the products is allowed (CML, personal communication, 2015). Social gardens are associated with the farming parks built where farming activity was already a reality, assuming that those farmers are the ones that mostly take advantage of those benefits.

In 2011 the first two parks were finished and

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[13] An example is a Pedagogical Farm in Olivais in 1996, aiming to promote environmental education through a non-formal education concept, integrating the pedagogical and recreational components. It is a public facility managed by the municipality of Lisbon through the Education Department (CML, 2016; Henriques, 2009).

[14] With the plan, its author, the landscape architect Ribeiro Telles, meant to create green corridors through the city that would connect different types of land uses, such as gardens, urban spaces and some of the already existing farming plots (references). It also intended to increase the number of farming plots.

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opened to the public: one of them in *Quinta da Granja*, Benfica, which is one of our case-studies, and the other in another area of the city, Campolide. As a part of the project, the CML provides fences, storage houses, and installation of the water system; technical support and workshops on organic farming techniques. In 2013 other 4 parks were completed, one of them in Vale de Chelas (our other case study). In 2014 the city had already 10 farming parks and more of them were completed in 2015 (CML, 2016).

After the farming parks' regulations had been created, the municipality started the search for the most proper locations. The criteria were based on the fertility of the soil, on the functional category of the area on the PDM, localization and other circumstantial factors related to the specifics of each place. At first the CML looked mainly for places classified as "green spaces for leisure" and "productive green spaces"[16]. Among those, spaces with high agricultural potential were selected. In a second phase the Green Structure Department[17] wanted to go further and also started to look for places that were under other categories on the PDM, but which had suitable characteristics for agriculture. Their use was then negotiated between the different departments of the municipality (CML, personal communication, 2015). Although this is not assumed to be a selective criterion by the CML, most of the places where the parks are implemented[18] had been already used for informal farming. Nevertheless, not all expectant spaces with previous agricultural use are considered equally interesting to be integrated in parks: either the soil is not fertile and/or the localization is not suitable for the purposes of the CML's project, or there are simply no financial conditions to construct the park. These legalized farms not integrated in parks are called "disperse farms". According to one of the interviewees from the CML, the existence of prior farming activities is mostly related to the priority given to social gardens by the municipal strategy for urban agriculture. By consolidating these farms into the farming parks the CML guarantees to a certain extent that the former gardeners will remain in the regulated areas. These people are not expected to join the public tender to be integrated in the project once they have priority access to the plots, which also helps to assure their permanence on the site (CML, personal communication, 2015). Even though farmers in disperse farms are also allowed to remain working in the place, these however stay in a precarious situation since the contract ends at the moment the CML has another purpose for the area. When included in farming parks one can expect a more secure situation.

Contextualization of the case studies on CML's strategy for urban agriculture

Quinta da Granja was constructed in 2011 and it was the first park built. It is placed in the former territory of a large private farm. Some decades ago a part of the farm was sold to the municipality by the owners' descendants. In the subsequent years there was no definition of a formal use for the area. According to the municipality, in 1999 the CML conceived a project for the renewal of the area. However, mostly for economic reasons, its implementation was finished only in 2011, already as a part of the municipal strategy for urban agriculture. The planned intervention included the construction of a garden for recreation, and also the implementation of more plots for urban gardening. Today, 56 plots are being used for farming (CML, personal communication 2015; CML, 2016).

As we were told by farmers and the CML, in Quinta da Granja farming activity started when the area was still owned by the private proprietor with his permission. This primary group of farmers used water from a water mine and from a well through the acquisition of hoses and engines to enable the collection of water, therefore the CML did not install any water system on that part of the urban park. Other parts of the gardens, newly created with construction of a park, got the water system installed (by the municipality)." (CML, personal communication, 2015).

The farming park in *Vale de Chelas* is more recent (finished in 2013) and with more than 200 plots it is the largest park constructed in the city at the moment (Câmara Municipal de Lisboa - Parques Hortícolas Municipais, 2016). As we were told by the CML, this area is a space left over after the construction of buildings and roads all around that area. It is located in a valley and has been informally used for agriculture since decades ago. The soil is very fertile due to its geographical conditions. The first CML project was conceived for 15 hectares of land, from which 6.5 hectares were for agricultural use (CML, personal communication, 2015). However, due to changes in the project budget, the area had to be reduced and the number of plots decreased from 400 to slightly more than 200 (CML, personal communication, 2015). When the CML started the project more than 100 peo-

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[16] Translated from the portuguese, F.T. *[espaços verdes de recreio e de produção]*.

[17] Short for Department of Green Structure and Energy of the municipality of Lisbon.

[18] True at least until this research and the fieldwork were finished, summer of 2015.

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ple were already farming in the valley (CML, personal communication, 2015). The selection of *Vale de Chelas* was justified by the soil fertility, the dimensions of the space, and also by the imminent real estate projects, that would occupy all of the area, something the CML's Green Structure Department wanted to prevent (CML, personal communication, 2015).

CML's and farmers' perspectives on the project of farming parks

Different perspectives regarding space functions and forms of occupation of the newly built farming parks arose in the discourses of both the CML and the farmers integrated in the projects. In the next section we present both perspectives and we discuss the issues that stood out. We especially concentrate on their views regarding the forms of appropriation of the space within urban gardens which illustrate the way farmers and the CML perceive each other's interventions in the public space.

Implementation process

When we asked farmers if the CML included their perspectives on the project, in general people did not seem to understand the question. The possibility of integration of their opinion was not even considered by the farmers. So, when the municipality arrived to *Quinta da Granja* and especially to *Vale de Chelas* to present the project to the population of farmers and to inform them that they could stay after the reconstruction, the general reaction was disbelief. People were not used to this approach. The former municipal control of informal uses was done by literally tearing down the farms and expelling the farmers (especially in *Vale de Chelas* where, according to the CML, this happened recurrently). Nevertheless, once farmers understood what was going to happen and what were their rights and duties, some of the rules seemed difficult to accept. The obligation of sharing the plots and the other resources (water, storage house) with people they did not have any close relation with was one of the changes that caused most friction[19]. Also, there were farmers who used to have large unregulated areas that had some difficulties in accepting a situation where everybody was supposed to have the same area, whether they were able to cultivate it and needed the amount of production or not. This rule led some farmers to leave the area.

Prohibition of some social uses of the garden was another critical issue. People were used to enjoy the space in the company of family and friends, in gatherings and barbecues, for resting, etc.

So, when the authorities initiated the contact with informal users they already had a finished project in hand, created exclusively by the municipality without previous consulting with the former and future farmers. Nevertheless, by allowing and prioritizing the access of the former farmers to the plots the CML intended to favor these people, notwithstanding, that this approach was mainly based on their own perspective. So although the CML seems to focus also in fulfilling the farmers' needs, it does not ask them directly what their priorities are. This might explain farmers' noncompliance with some of the settled rules which is leading to conflicts among the users, and between the users and the CML.

For example, while farmers were required to share resources some freedom of choice was also granted (e.g. they could choose the neighbors in the plots; choose the plot location; choose to sell the products or not; respect for the old pathways in the construction of the parks by the authorities). Thus we could say that to a certain extent some of the needs of the farmers were integrated in the projects. However, the selection of needs and priorities (on the projects) was decided by the municipality. As a result we see that farmers circumvent some of the rules. As one farmer says: "Oh yes I can [use herbicides]… I look to the one side, I look to the other… if they [the CML representatives] are not in the surroundings I will use it". Another farmer, one of the oldest in one of the parks, complains when talking about the use of biological products to protect the crops: "Who sets the rules in my land? Them? I am the boss in my land; I am paying to be here" (farmer in QG[20], personal communication, 2015).

In turn the CML shows an undeclared tolerance regarding the transgression of some rules: "In the beginning they were very skeptical about organic farming techniques, but now the majority uses it and sees the benefits and that it is not more expensive. There is only one, one of the old farmers that continues to use the products" (CML, personal communication, 2015). Concerning the maintenance of dogs the CML representative adds: "I arrive to the farms and there is this peaceful dog on the pathway next to the owner's plot… Of course I am not going to tell her that she can have the dog there, that is against the rules, but I am also not going to run to put the dog out" (CML, personal communication, 2015).

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[19] Although the CML gave farmers the chance to choose the neighbors, not everybody had friends or family interested in renting a plot.

[20] Henceforth we will use QG for farmers of Quinta da Granja, and VC for farmers of Vale de Chelas.

CML's view of (formal and informal) farmers' practices

As mentioned, informal uses are seen by the authorities as inevitable and so their strategy to control the uses in municipal expectant spaces is to accept them and regulate them. However, this acceptance is previously weighed and some uses that farmers associate with farming activity are not allowed by the municipality at all, which is not easily accepted by farmers. For instance, from the perspective of the CML, gatherings, having dogs or planting trees, are attempts of the farmers to appropriate space for themselves, and therefore should not be allowed. Other practices that according to the municipality put at stake public health or aesthetics are also discouraged - e.g. use of fertilizers and chemicals to protect the crops.

The expected recreational and aesthetic role set by the CML for the farming parks does not allow the simultaneous presence of seemingly incompatible activities. Thus, accumulation of stuff, plastics or other materials is not compatible with the existence of a beautiful, ordered and attractive garden; keeping dogs and organizing gatherings collide with the possibility of contemplative silence, etc. Therefore the CML prohibits activities that would primarily fulfill the needs and aspirations of farmers in regards to the functions of the garden. In the preferences of the CML we see a tendency to create ordered space, i.e. space that facilitates control of the uses by exhibiting a form of symmetric organization. Aesthetic is intrinsically related to the idea of order and illustrates the need to exclude everything (e.g. materials, behavior, practices) that collides with the CML's notion of beauty and an attractive landscape. Both ideas are related to CML's conception of farming parks which are supposed to have the conventional garden role and be quiet and contemplative spaces.

Farmers' perspective on the implementation and management of farming parks

In general, farmers do not have any complaints regarding the construction of the farming parks. As one farmer said "well, it is a good project, they could have just thrown us out, and it is more beautiful now, more organized" (farmer in QG, personal communication, 2015). CML's previous ways of dealing with informal uses might have an important role here, explaining farmers' positive reaction to the change of the method.

However, in regards to the maintenance of the project, most of the farmers mentioned that the CML is not fulfilling its responsibilities. Farmers enumerate a number of problems: the muddy pathways, the lamps that do not turn on, the lack of a bathroom in *Vale de Chelas*, the quality of the soil in the areas the CML intervened (in both parks), on the top of which CML's response to the complaints is late or absent. Also, as most farmers pointed out, some projects features were not very realistic, something that became clear when applied in the field; for instance the height of the fences and the high number of robberies, or the destroyed door locks in *Quinta da Granja*. Water plays a major role in the farming parks. For most of the old farmers from Vale de Chelas, which had no access to water whatsoever (except for residual water sources or sewers), the existence of water for farming is the reason that led them to accept CML's conditions in the first place and to continue farming there; in Vale de Chelas the existence of water is the central issue influencing old farmers' perception on the farming parks. In *Quinta da Granja*, where the water system was not implemented by the CML and the informal ways for collecting water were maintained the old farmers complain, especially since the new plots constructed with the farming park have a water supply installed.

For farmers, especially the ones that were used to the freedom of the informal way of using the space, there is no separation between the gardens' productive and social function, something that collides with the aesthetic and ordered urban garden concept of the municipality. The subjective appropriation of the space in order to create a warm and familiar environment is part of their perception of a farming plot. As one of the "old" farmers says: "Before I had a huge table, more than 10 people could sit there, we made barbecues, gathered friends and family... now, I tried to create some shadow by hanging one canvas near the storage house, but they said we can't".

Assumptions underlying the CML project

Farming parks as "community sense raising" projects

With the purpose of strengthening community ties the CML created rules from the outside to be applied inside the community without consulting people first; for instance the rule that four people have to use the same tap to water the plants, or that the storage house is always

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shared by four farmers. One representative of the CML says: "If the house was used individually these places would turn into the ghetto that existed here before, where some of them ruled and there were a lot of complaints and conflicts among them. We could see it on the meetings" (CML, personal communication, 2015). According to the CML and the farmers, at the time the project started to be implemented, power relations were already established among the farmers. There were farmers that appropriated large areas making considerable business by renting it to people wanting to farm. In fact to be able to farm in places like Vale de Chelas a previous demanding process of preparation of the land was needed since the place was filled with canes and bushes. Thus, land that allowed for immediate farming was much valued by farmers.

Creation of a sense of community by enhancing cooperation and sharing of space and resources is one of the topics of these projects. However this initiative has ultimately fostered the existence of conflicts between the CML and the farmers during the implementation phase - farmers would not accept the compulsory sharing - and later also among the farmers. By pushing farmers to create random relationships and by neglecting the already existing ties and conflicts the CML is inadvertently causing opposite outcomes in respect to those intended.

Rules as tools for the prevention of conflicts and for attending health and environmental concerns

While the municipality inadvertently creates potential conflicting situations, it also creates rules that mean to decrease the probability of conflicts. For instances, the maintenance of animals, the plantation of trees and the individual appropriation of the space are forbidden also because these activities are seen by the CML as potential sources of conflict among the neighboring farmers: the shadow created by the trees; the fruits desired by the neighbors or that fall on the neighbor's plot, the individual and eventually nonconsensual appropriation of a part of the shared plots, all create possible sources of conflict, at least as the authorities perceive it. So we see that while the CML inadvertently raises conflicts with its rules, it creates rules to avoid conflicts that do not exist yet.

Health and environmental protection also seems to underlie most of the guidelines of the farming parks. We see that users are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles (e.g. sports, quality food, or outdoor physical activity) with reduced impact on the environment (e.g. the use of organic farming techniques or preference for wood as a material instead of iron, or other materials not ecologically degradable). Aesthetics also arises as a central issue. Some materials are prohibited because of their impact on the image of the farms; farmers are encouraged to plant flowers near the fences. Most of the rules created to regulate the uses in the *disperse farms* and also in the farming parks focus on the risks they pose to public health[21] and address aesthetic concerns at the same time.

Discussion

CML's versus farmers' way of appropriation of space

As argued by Edensor (2005), voids are generally regarded as empty or unused spaces due to the fact that the informal uses are not recognized as existing or adequate (Edensor, 2005). In both case-studies we see that there is a change in CML's approach regarding informal uses: those which were in the past seen as inadequate and excluded are now accepted and legalized. Despite this change there is a prevailing tendency to prioritize aesthetics and the image of the place (e.g. spaces appropriated informally are seen by the CML as being disordered and not attractive to other users) motivated also by the need to clarify the legal status of the property, by not allowing farmers to fully appropriate the plot. Also the disorder found in the expectant places is seen as a threat and thus there is a need to create a specific order to facilitate the control of the space. We can compare it to the tendency of the modern and contemporary city to produce regulated and ordered space with a defined single use (e.g. Edensor, 2000, p. 54, similarly Gandy, 2006b, p. 507).

Indeed the project of farming parks suggests a very organized and structured appropriation of space which is also meant to support equality among users. Activities in the farms are supposed to respect a certain aesthetic conception (e.g. incentives to plant flowers on the fences, etc.) and follow cooperative use, which does not always have the expected results because it depends on the correspondence of values between both stakeholders, and on the compliance of farmers. The rules were introduced by the municipality, they did not come up from an internal need of the users to organize, create their own rules and cooperate.

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[21] For example CML's intervention in Vale de Chelas was triggered (among other factors) by the fact, that the farmers allegedly used contaminated sewers water to water the plants which were sold afterwards) (CML's oral communication).

At the same time the order and aesthetics within the appropriation of space seem to be differently valued by the CML and the farmers. For the municipality the regulation of the existing uses is a tool for controlling the space and the users - by eventually excluding non-compliers - and for supporting the creation of a community. In turn, for farmers the appropriation of space intends to create a place to farm but also a comfortable place they can share with friends and family. The functional dimension is clearly more valued than the aesthetic. Thus, to avoid conflicts they are forced to circumvent the rules and CML must disregard many practices which are actually not allowed. We can see the space as a complex structure of power relations where there are "blind spots" left, despite the rules and regulations prescribed by the authorities (Amin and Thrift, 2002).

Public health issues underlying the planning of urban space

Public health is underneath most of the objectives of these parks. We can connect this issue to Gandy's notion of "hygienic cities" and to the general target of the modern planning to create cities that do not threaten public health, both physical and mental. It has its roots in the utopian projects of the *ideal city* and during the 20th century it also strengthened the assigned role of urban nature as designed parks and gardens in the modern city (Gandy 2006a, p. 67). We see these roots in the will to maintain the recreational function of the farming parks; in the way the CML prohibits the use in the farming plots of certain materials that might represent some danger to public health; in the fact that the CML excludes animals from these spaces and also in the background of the promotion of physical and outdoor activities and consumption of a good quality food.

The will to foster community sense

There is an almost paternalistic approach of the authorities towards the users of the farming parks: people should get along, cooperate, share resources and be friendly. If this proximity does not fit the farmers' perspective, he/she can always give up farming and leave the place open for another more compliant or cooperative farmer.

CML's will to create an ideal community through the adequate design of space is much in line with the utopian tendencies found along the urban planning history to the present urban planning discourse (Harvey, 2000, p.156). But as Gottdiener and Hutchison (2011) argue, people's behavior is influenced by the physical environment but not so significantly. Social relations are very complex and depend also on other factors such as education, race, class or gender. The idea that human behaviour can be foreseen and regulated so easily is thus simplistic (Gottdiener and Hutchison, 2011, p.205 e 303). Furthermore the communities created in these case studies reflect the kind of controlled diversity criticized by Harvey (2000, p. 164) the users accept the rules which are prescribed or they can leave.

Top-down interventions versus integrating the users' needs in the projects

The interventions of the CML in the public space, namely in what concerns the farming parks and their implementation on places occupied informally, have followed a *top-down* approach. The project was conceived by the CML departments – in this case the Green Structure Department – with no previous consultation of the informal users and local populations. It can be argued that any project that intends to adopt the former uses developed in the area should incorporate their perspective (Silva & Monte, 2012; Matos, Batista, 2013; Dias *et al.* 2014). This is highlighted by Dias *et al.* (2014, p. 502): "when the local significant factors and the problem roots are not clearly identified in the urban design solutions developed by the professional actors working primarily alone there is every chance they will not fulfil the needs and the aspirations of the local communities" and therefore contribute to non-compliance due to their rejection of certain choices and rules.

In our case we see that the CML tries to a certain degree to include the needs of the farmers but doesn't integrate the farmers in the process of mapping these needs. In the end farmers are granted with priority access to a project built on the CML's perceptions and concepts. As a result some of the farmers' needs are not attended (e.g. social function of the plots) and some local significant factors were not integrated in the project (e.g. robberies, problems regarding the sharing of resources, previously created social networks, the will to use organic farming techniques, etc.), thereby becoming a source of conflict and also a reason not to fully comply.

Nevertheless we can recognize a tendency for a more "bottom-up" approach. Although the con-

ception of the project was developed solely by the municipality, it also intended to respond to a need manifested by the local communities, namely the need or will to farm. From this point of view the initiative began from the bottom but was developed from the top, following the priorities and principles of the municipality, allied to a previous definition of the "problem" by the planner, and not by all stakeholders (Dias *et al.*, 2014).

Conclusions

Projects as the farming parks studied in our research are undoubtedly important for the city. Also, these projects had positive reactions from the population and led to an involvement of new members into urban farming projects. As we have shown, this was achieved together with the inclusion of the people who formerly used the space in an informal way. But despite a current change of the approaches in nowadays urban planning in Lisbon, the top-down approach prevails, even if it strives for social equity, sustainable agriculture and self-sufficiency. While some users' needs are fulfilled, others are not even considered. We have argued that this can be a source of ongoing conflict, leading to the users' circumvention of the rules or even to the exclusion of some members of the community.

Furthermore, the results of this research evoke ideas that repeatedly appear in the history and theoretical reflection of urban planning. Specifically, the utopian idea of building a community that integrates heterogeneous members of the society and their needs seems to be rehabilitated on the restructuring of Lisbon's urban gardens. However the results highlight the limitations of such vision when put into practice.

The results also point to the tendency of the modern and current urban planning to create regulated spaces as a tool to facilitate the control over the space. But as we have seen, the implementation of the CML's visions can be threatened by many procedural complications which cannot be fully included in the planning (e.g. changes in the budget or the problematic communication with the users). These changes then produce side-effects that highly influence the outcomes of the projects, namely through the consequences they have on the relationship between users and planners that may lead to noncompliance and ultimately to the modification of the rules. Thus the case of Lisbon urban gardens shows well the interplay of power, where even in well planned, structured and controlled spaces,

some "blind spots" are left that escape the local authorities' control. As future scenarios we may expect that either the ongoing everyday negotiation of the rules and uses will lead to a change of CML's vision with a gradual fulfilment of the needs of the users; or, on the contrary, the ongoing exclusion of non-compliers may lead to a more homogeneous community of farmers that is more in line with the project's guidelines.

In a context of economic crisis an increase of interest in urban farming can be expected. Alongside, we can also expect as a crisis' outcome the advance of expectant areas in the city. In this scenario urban agriculture finds good conditions and context to expand and be part of the solution, by contributing to the mitigation of the social and economic effects of the crisis.

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