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Abstract

The publication culture on Urban Agriculture (UA) is nearly exclusively inhabited by idealist and practitioner proponents. Foremost the economics (oftentimes influenced by Marxism) dare to critique the sustainability of the movement. In short, the people that start a UA project eventually require help from their city through recognition and policy support. The full breadth of intentions of these people are principally unknown, and this hinders policy design, in turn. Investigating these rationales (using Skot-Hansen's *Five E's* (2005)) is the scope of this paper. It identifies a number of necessary policy changes, but ultimately pinpoints that it requires the involvement of activists, NGOs, and individual UA champions to raise awareness and to participate in policy design and implementation. It is found that, in one or the other way, most UA proponents' motives can be traced back to a facet of community empowerment. Amongst the variety of rationales, especially the non-capitalist culture of UA is said to further its sustainability (not just in economic terms), because it brings forth a culture that embodies the said empowerment and shapes a democratic, inclusive sharing community. Hence, UA is identified as a strategy for urban cultural regeneration.

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1. Introduction

As an alternative agricultural paradigm (van Leeuwen, Nijkamp, & de Noronha Vaz, 2010), *Urban Agriculture* (hereafter referred to as *UA*) wants to support the ever-growing city communities (Mougeot & International Development Research Centre (Canada), 2006, p. 1f.; Rydin et al., 2012, p. 2080f.) with a new and secure access to food. In many cities in developing countries, UA is a widespread principle, sometimes even the major strategy¹ for decades already (Galt, Gray, & Hurley, 2014, p. 140). In all cases, it is a reaction by people and governments, to prevent food shortages, and other interlinked consequences, such as hunger and poverty (Dubbeling & Santandreu, 2003, p. 1; Morgan, 2009, p. 344). In the case of Cuba, which faced abrupt changes in their economical supply chains after the soviet bloc collapse, the

"government adapted city laws, granted basic units of cooperation production (ie, rights over previously state-owned land), and declared indefinite free right to public land to cultivate food production for a starving population. In Havana, the inhabitants converted patios, rooftops, and unused parking lots into productive vegetable allotments, and reared livestock in a collective effort. [...] Co-operatives were established, owned, and managed by city dwellers, encouraging the trade of other scarce items such as seeds and tools. Local kiosks were set up as farmers' markets in every community, trading local provisions and eliminating the need to travel [...]
Cuba now grows 90% of its fruits and vegetables, with 4 million tonnes of vegetables every year from urban allotments in Havana alone." (Rydin et al., 2012, p. 2099)

The scale of implementation of UA in Cuba illustrates the breadth that UA can achieve on policy level². In *high-income countries* however, "[u]*rban agriculture is often sidelined in urban planning policies,* [...] *despite the fact that access to food in poor neighbourhoods is an important concern.*" (Rydin et al., 2012, p. 2097) The sheer lack of deliberate planning for a city's food supply is a "*puzzling omission*", as Morgan calls it (2009, p. 341); but the agenda is gaining momentum in recent years,

¹ "Pretty (2002) reports that in some Latin American and African cities, up to one-third of vegetable demand is met by urban production; in Hong Kong and Karachi it is about half; in Shanghai more than fourfifths; and in Cuba, it is a central part of the whole country's food security." (Sumner, Mair, & Nelson, 2010, p. 55)

² Dubbeling & Santandreu generalize and recommend policy adaptions to combat food insecurity in similar cityscapes (2003, p. 2): citizen participation on policy and municipal level; access to land, investment (e.g. though microfinance), local markets, and business opportunities; all without making a gender difference. However, as much of a role model, as it is, "*Cuba's UA is exceptional and would be difficult to implement outside of crisis, in an economy subject to a speculative land market, relative abundance and a liberal pluralist political system.*" (Sharzer, 2012, p. 109)

becoming "arguably one of the most important social movements of the early twenty-first century in the global north." (2009, p. 343) Hence, it becomes relevant to assess the movement under the lens of urban policies. In fact, "urban agriculture is growing so quickly that changes in local ordinances are not able to keep up. Zoning laws are outdated and out of step with today's world, causing a flurry of legal conflicts, as well as a good deal of confusion about what people can and cannot do on their own land." (Mercola, 2014)

Just as the literature on urban cultural planning suggests (Bailey, Miles, & Stark, 2004, p. 64), also UA literature realizes that policy and planning departments need "to understand competing visions for what spaces should be created and for whose benefit." (Colasanti, Hamm, & Litjens, 2012, p. 350) They have to "identify the pluralism of urban imaginaries in relation to UA in order to forge a more democratic approach to the governance of urban space." (2012, p. 363) Oftentimes, traditional economic models fail to understand UA, because they disregard that farmers are driven by more than just capital acquisition. This deficiency calls for "alternative rationalities" to be recognized (Galt, 2013, p. 359); at the same time, economics publications are the only ones seriously putting UA into question, frequently sidelining with Marxism.

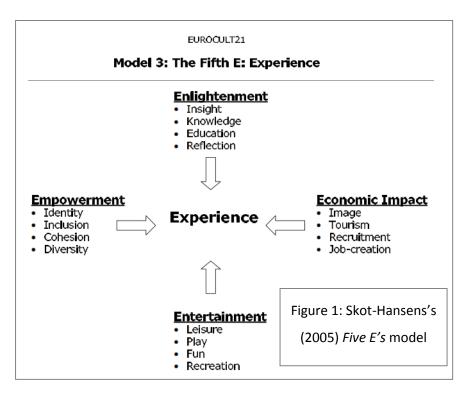
Assuming this gap of research, and its simultaneous proximity to cultural planning, this paper seeks to study the following: What rationales are applied to argue for UA in the Global North, and what urban policy recommendation do they lead to? Given the publication culture of UA, the capitalist lens of Marxism is assumed, in order to assess the academic discourse in its entire dimensions. Skot-Hansen's Five E's model (2005, p. 36) is used as a methodical framework and is discussed in the following chapter, including limitations of both, the method, and the sources. In order to remain in proximity to urban cultural policy, Höhne's definition of culture from cultural management (2009, p. 14) is applied: He differentiates between the social field, where symbolic demarcations shape in- and exclusive spaces; the habitus, including learned behavior, socialization, and expectations; and a holistic dimension, which includes the products and effects of the said behaviors.

The primary body of the paper assesses the UA rationales under the scope of each of Skot-Hansen's 'E's', taking into account current academic publications, but also non-scientific "activist-practitioner" (Colasanti et al., 2012) sources, such as policy-maker, NGO, and media publications. After a general policy recommendation, the challenges of addressing the urban capitalist substructures are

discussed. In the conclusion, the relevance of culture in resolving these structures is illustrated and UA is recommended as an alternative strategy for culture-led regeneration.

2. Methodology and Limitations

Skot-Hansen's model of the
Four (or Five) E's was originally
introduced to answer the question:
"What are the overall rationales (goals)
of the cultural policies of the cities?"
and "How do the cultural activities
reflect these rationales?" (2005, p. 32).
The model differentiates between
rationales of enlightenment,
empowerment, economic impact,
entertainment, and lastly, in order to
compensate for an ongoing



instrumentalisation of cultural policy (2005, p. 37), experience.

Although agriculture definitely is a part of culture³, the *Five E's* were not designed to asses '*Alternative Agriculture Paradigms*' (*AAP*) and '*Alternative Food Networks*' (*AFN*) (Sharzer, 2012, p. 76; Sumner, Mair, & Nelson, 2010, p. 55). The various health, sustainability, and food security motives expressed in the literature enlarge the 'Empowerment' rationale category (where they simply fit in best) to such a degree, that a hierarchy of rationales is created, which discredits the neutrality of the model. On top of this, AFNs are a recent phenomenon, not yet fully recognized as a normative canonical part of many cities' profile; hence, the *Five E's* may not be fully eligible to map the entire variety of rationales that lie behind UA today⁴. This is supported by the general remark that "*qualitative valuations of greenspaces are difficult to integrate into conventional assessment procedures.*" (van Leeuwen et al., 2010, p. 23)

³ Through Höhne's (2009, p. 14) *holistic* approach this is the case without doubt, but UA may even venture into high culture, from an 'Enlightenment' and 'Experience' perspective (Mark, 2011, p. 89)

⁴ However, Skot-Hansen's model is ahead of other suggested models, like Baycan-Levent et al.'s multi-criteria typology (2009; assessed in van Leeuwen, Nijkamp, & de Noronha Vaz, 2010). The *Five E's* can be used in a neutral and non-instrumental manner, which cannot be said for Baycan-Levent's model, where the 'use-value' focus introduces the very economic bias that Galt (2013, p. 347f.) criticizes in the introduction.

Besides the methodology limitations, the majority of the assessed literature mentions only the *impact* of UA, not the *rationales* used by its proponents⁵. Upon assessing even peer-reviewed articles, discussing solely alleged beneficial impacts, it becomes quite apparent that about everyone publishing on UA is also backing the movement. It is a challenge to find any resources on UA that do not praise it as a panacea (Saed, 2012). As such, even theoretical and academic statements can and will be treated as rationales of UA. What's more, peer-reviewed research is deliberately instrumentalized in order to further the UA movement (Golden, 2013, p. 17). This makes it difficult to judge whether the rationales of researchers are the same as those of other UA stakeholders. Here, qualitative studies make the strongest contribution, because farmers' opinions are assessed directly. There is also a large regional bias towards the United States, as the majority of the literature assesses only North America (especially with focus on *community-supported agriculture* (CSA, as it is called here), while oftentimes generalizing their findings for the Global North.

3. Empowerment of people and planet

As the few points in the introduction already hint towards, the most prominent rationales used to advocate UA can be subsumed under the *Five E's* facet *'Empowerment'*. To begin with, in terms of urban cultural policy, the model addresses the democratic and egalitarian approach in distributing and accessing culture to promote identity, inclusion, cohesion, and diversity among a heterogeneous city population (Skot-Hansen, 2005, p. 33f.). While the UA-movement certainly is a (sub-)culture (Sumner et al., 2010), which has their own *social fields* and *habitus*, also the garden is sometimes viewed as *"a kind of art installations* [...] *an artistic, imaginative endeavor"* (Mark, 2011, p. 89), a cultural product, which is open to everyone.

Beyond Skot-Hansen's taxonomy, the environmental and social considerations of the space, the cultural practices, and the produce, expand UA's target group from the current population of the city to the future generation, and the global and local biodiversity. For this reason, the reach of 'Empowerment' needs to be extended to include possible health, environmental and direct community benefits. In short: "Urban agriculture is undertaken by residents in an effort to take control of food security, social ills and environmental degradation in their communities [...]" (Sumner et al., 2010, p. 55).

⁵ Sharzer (2012) is a good example of a neutral UA publication, treating pro-UA position only as arguments and rationales used by UA advocates, and discusses them critically.

3.1 A new source of food to ever-growing city populations

As the recent UN climate report (United Nations, 2014) concludes, climate change is no longer a future worst-case scenario. Global temperature change and extreme weather events are causing unpredictable shortfalls in food production, especially hitting the poor and undeveloped areas. Simultaneously, in all parts of the world cities are expanding (Mougeot & International Development Research Centre (Canada), 2006, p. 1f.; Rydin et al., 2012, p. 2080f.), while adequate access to food and other supplies has to be maintained. This becomes an immense logistical endeavor, consuming massive amounts of resources and energy (Knight & Riggs, 2010, pp. 118, 120), creating a vicious cycle that adds up to the environmental challenges once more. On top of this, the recent financial and economic crises showed even the wealthiest urban regions in the Global North that food security and sustainability is not any more an optional, benevolent PR strategy, but a real and urgent agenda (Morgan, 2009, p. 342; van Leeuwen et al., 2010, p. 22). However, it is the city dweller and their organization in activist groups of like-minded people, who initiate and drive UA. Henceforth, their reasoning has to be understood first.

Although Mark's study of urban farmers' reasons for their UA commitment (2011) is only based on a specific location in the US and draws inspiration from various other paths of thought, he arrives at insightful conclusions. He explains the increased interest in agriculture with the city dwellers' lacking proximity to nature, elevating organic produce to some miraculous, nearly forgotten artefact, which gains sudden value in an increasingly digital and 'unreal' world. There is an evident distrust towards the established agribusiness, which is not perceived to operate for 'Empowerment' purposes (Sharzer, 2012, p. 79); but this reasoning rarely precipitates in the form of a reactionary culture of 'hatred' – it is "hope" that drives the urban farmer communities (Galt et al., 2014, p. 134). Sumner et al. make a very similar discovery among their study participants, who joined UA projects "as a reflection of their growing concern about access to healthy food and the desire to support local farmers." (2010, p. 58) The participants state a moral attachment, not just towards the produce, but also to the producers (a tendency that will be discussed further in 'Economics' and 'Experience'). Colasanti et al. (2012) complement these findings by differentiating between participants involved in UA, those that are not, and their backgrounds. In all publications, the quality of food and its origin is addressed, opening up another dimension of 'Empowerment' rationales – health considerations.

3.2 Health benefits and environmental sustainability

Besides the provision of *enough*, UA also promises to deliver the *right* food to the ones that require it. Its lean logistical profile releases fresh, organic nutrition at a cheap price on local markets, with the power to change consumer behavior (Golden, 2013, p. 12; Hagey, Rice, & Flournoy, 2012, p. 8; Wakefield, Yeudall, Taron, Reynolds, & Skinner, 2007, p. 95ff.). Besides, the very act of urban gardening is said to hold recognized health benefits (Rydin et al., 2012, p. 2097; Sharzer, 2012, p. 98; Wakefield et al., 2007, p. 92f.), consciously utilized by farmers as a form of physical exercise and release (Mark, 2011, p. 88; Wakefield et al., 2007, p. 95ff.).

The majority of health issues are discussed in relation to environmental considerations. Besides food, Knight's and Riggs' "issue-based framework" (2010) identifies 'energy', 'water', 'soil loss' (or moreover, 'soil quality' (Hagey et al., 2012, p. 10)), and 'biophilia'⁶, as the main areas of environmental improvement potential. Rydin et al. also mention wastewater management and the urban heat-island effect (2012). In all of these areas, UA is said to make a significant contribution, by utilizing unused resources (urban space, wastewater, organic waste), or by promoting new sustainable paradigms among the community. Literature and policy began only recently to link community gardening and sustainability (Mendes, Balmer, Kaethler, & Rhoads, 2008, p. 437); today, there is "an overwhelming amount of research on UA's ecological and sustainability impacts. This will continue to prove important as the growing demand to address climate change becomes inevitable." (Golden, 2013, p. 17)

3.3 Social aspects

Aligning with Skot-Hansen's description of the Empowerment category (2005, p. 33f.), UA is seen as a catalyst for all major sub-rationales 'identity', 'inclusion' and 'cohesion' (rather referred to as 'community engagement' or -'development'), and 'diversity' (social and agricultural). Golden's literature review gives a broad overview to the said rationales (2013, p. 8ff.): Through their beautifying character, urban gardens' social field create the notion of safe places in the city, building trust among people, reducing vandalism, shaping 'local pride', and thereby identity. This compound of sub-rationales is sometimes referred to as regeneration or revitalization (Hagey et al., 2012, pp. 9, 21).

The enabled access to land is furthermore mentioned as a sense of ownership over the space, the work, and the produce (Colasanti et al., 2012; Golden, 2013, p. 9; Mark, 2011, p. 89; Sumner et al.,

⁶ "an instinctual love of nature", based E.O. Wilson's conception (Mark, 2011, p. 89).

2010, p. 59). Allegedly, urban gardens form an *inclusive social field* to further community development by breaking down barriers and promoting social interaction in a democratic space. They create "a new generation of activists and engaged citizens" (Golden, 2013, p. 9f.), who "address questions of justice in urban and peri-urban environments" (Galt et al., 2014, p. 143). Under the lens of (youth) education, UA furthers knowledge on healthy living and consumption, and raises awareness about the issues and benefits of UA (Colasanti et al., 2012, p. 361f.; Golden, 2013). Cheap, healthy produce, community engagement, learning opportunities, and eventually entrepreneurial potential further the prospect of eradicating poverty in respective neighborhoods (Colasanti et al., 2012, p. 359; Galt, 2013, p. 142; Hagey et al., 2012, p. 7f.; Rydin et al., 2012, p. 2098).

The community engagement happens on both, a cross-generational and cross-cultural level, connecting youth and seniors, immigrants and local citizen (Golden, 2013, p. 10f.). Not surprisingly, interests and intentions are different between social groups (Colasanti et al., 2012), and the variation of rationales continues even on individual level: "When potential McKinsey consultants decide they would rather dig in the dirt than work in the comfort of an office, a shifting of culture's tectonic plates must be underway. Yet if we have witnessed the evidence of this shift, its causes are unclear." (Mark, 2011, p. 88) From this evident diversity, it becomes clear that UA is not driven by a group of "hippie forbearers, seeking to go 'back to the land.' They are, instead, trying to develop a land ethic in the city. The garden fulfills people's instinctual need to connect with natural systems because of (not in spite of) its location within the city." (Mark, 2011, p. 90)

In total, this adds onto the perspective of cultural planners, as represented by Bailey et al.: "cultural forms of consumption can actively enhance and enliven local communities. They are able to do so precisely because culture matters for its own sake and not merely as a means to an economic end. Evans's 'renaissance city' may well be emerging, and the key characteristic of that city may well be the reconstruction of local identities in global contexts." (2004, p. 64) In stark contrast to their view of urban culture, associating more with a commercialized "global brand and a lifestyle than the characteristics historically associated with a particular nation, region or city" (2004, p. 63), UA may be a counter-culture to this trend. Farmers and gardeners are viewed as locally conscious cosmopolitans (Morgan, 2009, p. 345) and agents of sublime positive change, for whom their gardens and their produce in themselves make a political statement (Mark, 2011, p. 91). Direct anti-capitalist demands for "a reversal of growth, 'deindustrialis[ing]' agriculture, 'rejecting everything that is unnatural'" (Sharzer, 2012, p. 79) (a sort of romantic utopianism (Mason & Knowd, 2010, p. 3ff.)) are rare in qualitative studies.

4. Economic Impact

The assumption of underlying capitalist (Sharzer, 2012, p. 99), anti-capitalist (Sharzer, 2012, p. 79), or non-capitalist (Galt, 2013, p. 374; Sharzer, 2012, p. 100) motives, sets the tenor of the discussion about economic rationales. While the entrepreneurial impact is mentioned frequently in all publication types, allegedly affecting all stakeholders involved in UA, Golden observes that the literature backing these claims is very limited, oftentimes only relying on models and estimations (2013, p. 13). Together with Galt's criticism of conventional economic modeling on UA (Galt, 2013, p. 359f.), economic rationales appear quite different from what the actual impact may be.

The major expressed rationales are job creation through entrepreneurial endeavor, training, and business incubation; market expansion for farmers due to increased customer reach; increasing home values and tax revenues; and lastly, financial savings for both, farmers and municipalities (Golden, 2013, p. 13f.; Hagey et al., 2012, p. 18ff.). From a fundamental point of view, these rationales are used to support either of two ends of a spectrum: the *purely instrumental and profit-driven* motivation on one side, and the *'Empowerment'-driven* on the other. The latter is assessed first.

In general, Sharzer notes that the empowerment of urban populations and their economic activity is interlinked and no contradiction (2012, p. 99), especially with regards to helping poorer communities. Hagey et al. pinpoint projects that specifically employ the young, or marginalized groups to provide them a stabile job, as well as training and transitioning for the future job market (2012, p. 18f.). Galt et al. generalize this overlapping of rationales within Karl Polanyi's substantivist approach to economics, and thereby introduce the cultural aspect of *social field* and *habitus*: UA allows "communities to co-create collective action and have the potential to re-embed the moral economy of exchange into social relations [...] These are examples of what Gibson-Graham (2006b, p. 77) term 'new economic becomings – sites where ethical decisions can be made, power can be negotiated, and transformations forged" (2014, p. 143). In fact, UA projects oftentimes downplay the economic rationales, in order to keep "the grassroots and social justice [...] as a focused priority" (Golden, 2013, p. 16), and Galt proposes that the resulting (and necessary) "self-exploitation" of the farmers is a what makes them competitive against conventional, industrial food production (Galt, 2013, p. 346f.). Hence, in conclusion, also the economic mode of UA is not solely driven by an individual capitalist precept, but by a culture of inclusiveness and 'Empowerment' (Sumner et al., 2010).

On the contrary (especially concerning 'Empowerment'), Galt's results (2013, p. 357) show a contradicting picture of the "win-win situation that would pay farmers a fair wage in addition to fulfilling other goals." The "social embeddedness" of UA holds manifold rebound effects, so "that the capitalization of land prices drives alternative production practices toward industrial style farming" (2013, p. 342), which UA actually attempts to escape, if not eradicate. On top of this, as Saed pinpoints (2012), the decision-making of established mainstream businesses, industries and landowners is neither based on 'Empowerment' rationales, but profit oriented. They defend their long-standing business models and modes of production, which UA may overthrow, if the movement was to gain a certain momentum. Consequently, Galt et al. criticize the prevalent elite surplus-circulation-systems and neoliberal discourses for still promoting an economic rationale that makes consumption the primary key to bring forth change in society (2014, p. 141). This highlights the clash between 'Empowerment' and 'Economic' rationales.

Despite these staggering findings, some proponents see the liberal economic dimension of UA as the major foundation for change: "The spectrum of activities based on urban agriculture to promote the green urban world is limitless and depends almost exclusively on the creative nature of the local population and its entrepreneurial capacities and leadership." (van Leeuwen et al., 2010, p. 25) Likely, this will remind a city planner of Richard Florida's creative class (2003)⁷, and when going further into city-planning, the 'sustainable city' appears to be quite synonymous with Florida's 'creative city': "UA now becomes one of the principal components of sustainable cities, not only feeding the citizens, but also maintaining the strategic virtuous circles of attractiveness that city regions increasingly seek to achieve in a globalizing world." (Mason & Knowd, 2010, p. 70) In this stark perspective, UA is made a distinct element of municipal cultural profiles, and thereby becomes part of the ongoing international competition between cities (Bianchini, 2005, p. 8; Skot-Hansen, 2005, p. 34). (It comes as no surprise that even tourism is brought into proximity with UA (Mason & Knowd, 2010; van Leeuwen et al., 2010, p. 25).) However, this 'creative' and competitive viewpoint of UA is not certain; it takes scalability for granted, which needs to be addressed critically (Sharzer, 2012).

⁷ Indeed, it requires a small group of creative self-starters to initiate UA in a city (at least for the Global North, top down initiatives have not been noted). Furthermore, Sharzer (2012), illustrating the manifold economic struggles that urban farms face (p. 95), mentions that the agglomeration of small projects may help overcoming these problems (p. 100). Golden observes the same trend for partnerships with other types of stakeholders (2013, p. 17). Hence, one can also argue for Florida's (2003) clustering of creative talent (or in this case: urban farmers) to play a significant role.

5. Overlapping and clashing rationales: Entertainment, Enlightenment and idealist Empowerment

As the previous chapter on economic rationales illustrates, the discourse mediates between 'Empowerment' and profit-driven positions. The same is true for the other rationales not mentioned yet. 'Entertainment', for instance, mingles with the health benefits in 'Empowerment'. Here, UA becomes "a hobby: it's an escape, a reclamation of time", promising "physical exercise" and "psychic release" (Mark, 2011, p. 88). The UA community and their activities do not just serve bonding functions, but also provide a space and a culture for simple enjoyment (Sumner et al., 2010, p. 58f.). In the larger picture of urban greenspaces, such as parks, recreation is an integral part, without question (van Leeuwen et al., 2010). While a greenspace, primarily designed for leisure, does not constitute for UA (Knight & Riggs, 2010, p. 123), partnerships with "the city's parks and recreation departments or [...] other public agencies for land access" (Golden, 2013, p. 6; Nasr, MacRae, & Kuhns, 2010) are essential. After all, since 'Entertainment' is not the primary objective of UA, and already present in urban greenspace infrastructure, this rationale operates unobtrusive.

Quite the contrary may be said about the 'Enlightenment' rationale, since high enlightenment culture and agriculture appear very conflicting, from a normative perspective. However, looking back onto 'Empowerment', where "a new generation of activists and engaged citizens" (Golden, 2013, p. 9f.) is shaped, the discourse advances into the 'Enlightenment' paradigm: The democratic process and the values that the farmers are learning, living and spreading align with Adorno's 'Erziehung zur Mündigkeit' (the education to mature and considered expressivity), based upon a Kantian definition of enlightenment (1970a, p. 19, 1970b, p. 140ff.). Oftentimes, the commitment to UA is a result of an intellectual reflection, grounded in 'Empowerment' motives (Sumner et al., 2010, p. 58); therefore, 'Enlightenment' plays a role in the strategic and philosophic UA discourses.

At the same time, it is in these intangible statements where the 'Enlightenment' approach loses touch with reality. For example, 'social inclusion', in practice, is oftentimes hindered by project structures rather based on 'Enlightenment' than 'Empowerment', "alienating for UA's target audience, low-income residents with limited food access." (Golden, 2013, p. 15) The social field itself may be accessible, but the poorer population simply cannot connect to the visionary (maybe elite) goals and strategies behind UA; these are beyond their understanding. More radically, as Saed argues (2012), the western (and capitalist economic) rationales, disguised entirely as moral and benevolent sustainability considerations, disregard the historicity and the embedded power relations of UA, so that "urban

farming must seem a cruel racist joke"⁸ (2012, p. 7) to those living in the poorest neighborhoods. Consequently, the absence of critical thinking in literature and urban planning prevents the discovery of underlying structural flaws that may sabotage the positive efforts, but too much visionary idealism will also erect barriers towards the people that UA is supposed to help the most.

6. The fifth 'E': Experience

Speaking about intangible rationales, 'Experience' cannot be ignored. This category encompasses the personal and individual reasons of people to support UA, best compiled by Mark (2011): "No matter what words they use, the new agrarians are seeking a way to refashion the relationships—ecological, emotional—that have been eroded by work without meaning and food without substance." When Bailey et al. outline that "inhuman objects are becoming increasingly important to the construction of human identities" (2004, p. 63), it does not just include technology, but also the substantivist spectrum of a new materialism. With UA, an "intimate connection to food" and the above mentioned 'biophilia' is regained; the work in the gardens becomes self-evident: "People leave the farm fulfilled, knowing they have used their hands to reshape the world." (Mark, 2011) There is a sense of pride, but also a comforting humility to be experienced, eventually adding "additional meaning" to peoples' lives.

In the end, however, "if people come for personal reasons, they stay for collective ones." (Mark, 2011, p. 91) The 'Experience' rationales oftentimes take off and conclude again in 'Empowerment'. This becomes especially visible in the manifold ways that morality is mentioned as an incitement (Galt, 2013; Morgan, 2009, p. 345; Sumner et al., 2010, p. 58). The "personal and spiritual" satisfaction (Sumner et al., 2010, p. 59) farmers draw from engaging in their cultural activities is derived from an assumed 'Empowerment' impact that their work and their produce has on the community.

⁸ This is an assumption of Saed, however. In qualitative studies, as in the Detroit study of Colasantie et al. (2012, p. 355ff.), some participants see agriculture as part of their roots, and are willing to capitalize on them, while many others react somewhat opposing to UA, because they see agriculture and (traditional) urban environments as disconnected.

7. The state of urban policy and UA

In general, more and more cities around the Global North strive towards a 'green' profile (van Leeuwen et al., 2010, p. 22f.) and include UA as a major asset in their policies. The environmental factors and the vision of a sustainable city appear to play a major role for them (Morgan, 2009, p. 341f.), indeed reflecting the hierarchical outcomes of the above rationale discourse analysis. Depending on the rationales applied, UA policies never appear isolated, but are often part of a larger policy enacting. They are mostly found in urban food planning policies (Golden, 2013, p. 17; Knight & Riggs, 2010, p. 119f.; Morgan, 2009; Sharzer, 2012, p. 107), greening and sustainability strategies (van Leeuwen et al., 2010), but are also recommended to consider in municipal health policies (Morgan, 2009, p. 343; Rydin et al., 2012).

Independent of the policy direction, it is apparent that the most successful UA initiatives and transformations happen not because of a sudden change in the policy makers' mindset⁹, but because of the persistent engagement of influential individuals, UA champions, and activist groups (Mendes et al., 2008; Wilford, 2011, p. [5,7f.]). Not just for the startup of UA, but also for the consistent support and expansion, many authors call for the direct empowerment and involvement of these UA advocates (Galt et al., 2014, p. 142; Rydin et al., 2012, p. 2100; van Leeuwen et al., 2010, p. 24f.; Wilford, 2011, p. [5]). (Indeed, this requires the basic premise of any promising UA policy to be aligned to 'Empowerment'.) By connecting the various groups and movements, and by their active contribution to policy creation, a strong body of inside knowledge and cultural support among the city population is won (Mendes et al., 2008; Morgan, 2009; Rydin et al., 2012, p. 2089; Wilford, 2011). Municipal resources are saved by collaborating with existing organizations, already addressing structural barriers (Morgan, 2009, p. 343); but also internally, bureaucratic barriers have to be identified and eliminated (Wilford, 2011). This agglomeration strategy is also important with respect to the planners, who have very heterogeneous backgrounds, in general (Morgan, 2009, p. 342). Lastly, most UA advocate literature ignores the larger part of the urban population that will not involve and is not interested in UA. Their perspectives and reasoning has to be captured (Colasanti et al., 2012; Galt, 2013, p. 347f.) in order to design a policy that allows for the expansion of UA, while shaping an urban environment that all inhabitants enjoy living in;

⁹ Taking up the example of Toronto, "policymakers need to be led to making effective planning and policy decisions after practitioners have demonstrated the efficacy of a particular aspect of urban agriculture" (Wilford, 2011, p. [5])

where the two cultures and paradigms can coexist. As such, raising awareness among all stakeholders of a city is a requirement that has to come alongside with policy design and implementation – that includes already school education (Wilford, 2011, p. [10f.]).

The greatest expressed demand in policy and government support lies in the connection of UA proponent empowerment and the transformation of the cityscape: access to viable land (Golden, 2013, p. 6; Hagey et al., 2012; Nasr et al., 2010; Sharzer, 2012, p. 78f.; van Leeuwen et al., 2010, p. 24f.; Wilford, 2011, p. [8f.]). Engaging citizens in designing a municipal inventory, together with the city administration and possible other local partners, such as universities, proves to be a best practice method to map the city's UA potential, initiate projects, and to raise awareness among the population (Hagey et al., 2012, p. 10f.; Mendes et al., 2008; Wakefield et al., 2007). The space has to be "safe, attractive, and welcoming", while imposing no restrictions on user groups (Hagey et al., 2012). The city or benevolent organizations should serve as a relation managers between stakeholders (Hagey et al., 2012, p. 23; Wilford, 2011, p. [9]), or should even buy up parts of the identified, vacant land, to provide it for UA purposes. This maximizes the security to the land, which is constantly at risk, if it is owned by a private-sector party. As long as such insecurity persists, farmers will be deterred from investing in their farm. Most importantly, rents and infrastructure have to be reconsidered, especially if low-income groups are supposed to be empowered to engage in UA (Hagey et al., 2012, pp. 9ff., 23ff.; Wakefield et al., 2007, p. 98ff.). Concerning the use of the land, farmers require support in identifying and dealing with contaminated soil (Hagey et al., 2012, p. 25; Wakefield et al., 2007, p. 99), such as on brownfield lots; tools and other maintenance support is similarly welcomed (Golden, 2013; Hagey et al., 2012, p. 26f.), and the lack of entrepreneurial and business background demands for training of the farmers, in order to provide them with a sustainable fundament (Hagey et al., 2012, pp. 10, 24).

As a critical amendment, Sharzer raises the point that "improving the neighbourhood also raises land values" (2012, p. 98); this provides a financial challenge for the engagement of low-income groups, and implies a problem of general economic sustainability: "Community gardens must either be insulated from the law of value through subsidies or they must generate sufficient rents". Besides start-up, operating costs and wages have to be taken into account (Hagey et al., 2012, p. 10f.; Sharzer, 2012; Wilford, 2011, p. [12]). Farmers need access to markets, as well as the right to sell what they produce (Wilford, 2011). Unless urban farms focus solely on an inclusive and empowering culture (Sumner et al., 2010, p. 60), they have to engage in existing capitalist structures (Galt, 2013, p. 361; Hagey et al., 2012,

pp. 27, 31ff.; van Leeuwen et al., 2010, p. 25). Otherwise the government would need "to expropriate the land, as in Cuba, which would call into question property rights as a whole." (Sharzer, 2012)

8. The integration of the rural and the urban: The challenges of resolving a capitalist structural binary

The strategic and political antagonism that Sharzer (2012) expresses – the question on what kind of economic and capitalist profile UA and its practitioners apply and think in, and which one UA actually requires – remains unsolved in the literature and in this paper. The breath of this discrepancy appears to be a fundamental one, when seen through *capitalist* lenses: In order to integrate in the existing capitalist and industrial urban structures, UA has to adopt parts of their premises, in order to survive financially and politically. However, the actual transformation of the intangible values of UA into economic value-addition is conflicting ("*no-one is paying farmers a million dollars yearly for environmental services*." (Sharzer, 2012, p. 100)). Doing so may begin to contradict the primordial (ethical) intent to provide local organic produce outside of conventional processing and distribution frameworks.

Even if UA is done for no profit-oriented reasons, the activist intervenes with the established urban space, disrupts the urban cultural premises, and thereby imposes *a challenge to the community*. Neoliberal agribusinesses will see promising UA initiatives and policy endeavors as an immediate threat (Saed, 2012) – even rural farmers can feel attacked and left out, if there is no (policy) mediation and coordination between conventional farming and AFNs. Just as much as UA is driven by *moral concerns*, the interference in city space will feel to a great part of the population as a *moral accusation* or repression against them and their vision of their *social field* (Colasanti et al., 2012, p. 362). Even within the farming community, the altruist "*self-exploitation*" (Galt, 2013, p. 347ff.) may have its limits ("*We are all volunteers* [...] *it is the passion that fuels us but that will eventually lead to burn-out because we need fair wages*." (Andrea Chan in Wilford, 2011, p. [12]). To address all these stakeholders and their interests, the activist requires support from administrators and city planners, which demands lobbying and campaigning¹⁰; they have to acknowledge and back UA in person and with policy changes.

¹⁰ As Mendes et al. (2008, p. 437) illustrate a number of reasons why planners have not engaged in UA or food policy design; among them, city planners tend to disregard food policies, because they assume this area to belong to the private sector, and in total, outside the city. This means that cities (unintentionally or purposely) may define

For UA to be successful, it cannot be seen isolated, but has to be embedded in a larger holistic picture, which accounts for vision, the city's cultural and demographic profile, anticipated and realized impact, external relations, and policy design. Greening-, food-, health-, recreation-, park-, and cultural policies and strategies all hold potential for UA to be implemented in. However, planning for AFNs cannot be conventionally linear (Wilford, 2011). Creating a sustainable city demands the acknowledgement of unpredictable complexity of policy outcomes and requires experimentation, trial and error (Rydin et al., 2012, pp. 2079, 2102), but also an innovative mindset (Sandy Houston in Nasr et al., 2010, p. 5).

Here, the "post-productivist", but liberal standpoint (championed by van Leeuwen et al., 2010, p. 25), comes into play, closely resembling the entrepreneurial spirit of Florida's creative class (2003). He foresees the 'romantic farming visions of mankind' to be realized through the collaboration of architects, landscape designers, policy makers, and the creative citizen. The complement to van Leeuwen et al.'s creative UA farmer would be the radical (and traditional) anti-capitalist, who insists on non-compliance with conventional structures, and forms a "defensive localism" (Sharzer, 2012, p. 103). Eventually and ideally, both rationales and groups are to mingle with the non-capitalist movement (Galt, 2013; Mason & Knowd, 2010): It accepts that capitalism cannot be overthrown or reversed; the focus is adjusted to combating its ills through sustainable alternatives (hence, AFNs). However, (from a Marxist proponents perspective) the true alternative and innovation potential of UA lies not so much in an entrepreneurial empowerment, but in one that challenges a structural and a holistic cultural blind spot, produced by capitalism and urbanization itself: the dissection of the rural and the urban.

The industrialist precept of concentrating production and capital flows in cities creates a polarity between the urban and the rural (Saed, 2012, p. 5; Sumner et al., 2010, p. 60). As outlined above for the 'Enlightenment' rationale, there is the tendency to dissect (high-)*culture* from agri-*culture* (see again Durkheim's 'sacred and profane' dichotomy (Garbarino, 1977, p. 40)) – but this antagonism stems only from the 'structural binary' (Claude Lévi-Strauss in Garbarino, 1977, p. 85) between the *sacred city* and the *profane countryside*. Qualitatively, this is recognizable in Colasanti et al.'s (2012) non-farmer group: Agriculture, for them, belongs outside the city; they feel the *social field* of their town challenged by

UA¹¹. This gives rise to the question of who has the right to urban spaces, and who has the right to intervene and transform them (Saed, 2012)¹². A truly negative effect of this structural binary can be seen in developing countries, where city development begins to adopt the said attitude: Morgan describes African urban planners embracing the modern "town-country split" paradigm, eventually "ridding the city of urban farmers and street food vendors" (2009, p. 344). Although a historic view presents the very opposite – namely that agriculture and cities have always been in proximity, especially in times of crisis (van Leeuwen et al., 2010, p. 20f.) – any type of stakeholder may have initial reservations in the Global North. These reservations have to be overcome.

9. Conclusion

By reintegrating the rural into the urban space, UA exposes an underlying capitalist and industrial structural binary of the city; but it is only through its non-capitalist attitude that a social window for change is opened, where the demand to "put the culture back into agri-culture" (Sumner et al., 2010, p. 60) can be addressed. The work- and social culture of urban farms and gardens, which also their produce carries (as a political statement (Mark, 2011, p. 91)), "creates the climate where efficiency, fairness, agro-ecology and cooperation can emerge and thrive." (Sumner et al., 2010, p. 60) In this democratic space of inclusiveness and negotiation (Galt et al., 2014, p. 143) the 'Empowerment' rationales can turn into real impacts (Saed, 2012, p. 7; Sumner et al., 2010, p. 60). The visions extending from these open minded spaces form quite an idealist, if not utopian picture. Looking at the 2020 vision of Toronto (Nasr et al., 2010, p. 55ff.), it really is the collaboration between different groups and individuals that makes policy implementations successful; beyond this point, UA and its community impact is kept sustainable by the same committed people and their culture, ranging over the fences of their farms and gardens, to establish a community of sharing (Nasr et al., 2010).

Together with a multitude of stakeholders, UA is to be integrated in various municipal and regional policies, in order to thrive. Quite rarely do we see a direct overlap with (conventional) cultural planning and policies (exemplified by Bianchini (2005)). However, what Bailey et al. discuss and request from cultural planning to achieve regeneration effects (2004, p. 64) is precisely the prospect of UA:

¹¹ Interestingly, these rather subconscious defenses illustrate that much of the urban culture and habitus is more of a cultural conditioning (see Ruth Benedict in Garbarino, 1977, p. 66) – a product, rather than an active behavior.

¹² Saed (2012) addresses the ,right to the city' question from UA perspectives and in a similarly critical way as Skot-Hansen (2009) is examining the question with regards to cultural planning and Florida's creative city and class (2003).

establishing a new consumption culture that has its end in itself, not in economics; shaping a local and global awareness and identity; slowly deconstructing the industrial precepts of urban structures – all this to benefit the people of the city themselves. Therefore, UA – with its breadth of empowering rationales, its community engagement and development, and its non-capitalist sharing culture – is certainly a viable strategy for *urban cultural regeneration*.

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