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“STRUGGLING WITH TEMPORALITY”

A case study of place attachment and displacement of an urban agriculture community in Hungary

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ABSTRACT

I have been conducting anthropological research, involving participant observation in microcommunities engaged with urban agriculture, especially crop cultivation, from late December, 2015.

Beyond the average yield of basic vegetables or fruits and herbs, community gardening is about ‘colonising’ urban space, or in other words, practising community control over a relatively small piece of urban land, endowing vacant lots with new functions. Thus, urban gardening is a territorial natured initiative, a materialized conglutination of various ideas and acts referring to the dynamics of urban transformation processes and city development. Apart from introducing a bottom-up Hungarian garden community settled in a constantly transforming district of Budapest, I represent how place attachment and displacement influences the decision-making practices of the community, and how place attachment functions under rapidly changing conditions. At the same time I argue that place attachment lets the gardeners express forms of criticism addressed to development and to the underlying logic of ‘progress’: the controversial appearance of economic growth and capital injection in the district. I suggest that such affective initiatives function as social seismographs, in which the perceptions of contemporary urban transformations are emergent, highlighting a dialectical relationship between urban dwellers and modernisation processes.

Keywords: community gardening, place attachment, displacement, urban transformation, critical urban theory

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to represent examples based on empirical research about the connection between community gardening and place attachment, similar to the critical urban studies approach (Bodnár 2013: 15, Brenner 2009: 202–204, Fujita 2013: 6, 30–35), referring to the deeper structural processes and contradictions that occur under the surface in our everyday life and social practices. I have been conducting anthropological research, mostly participant observation in the field of social participation, primarily in communities involved in urban agriculture since late 2015. I argue that urban agriculture, especially collective forms of crop cultivation amongst urban circumstances, offers multiple ways of cultural identity construction, from health promotion and recreational opportunities, through shaping patterns of trust amongst city dwellers, not to mention acquiring and reproducing democratic values through social cooperation in organic food production (Hajba 2017: 312–313). It is recommended to think about these special parts of the urban fabric as places of expression of various needs and desires, a possibility of a more democratized urban development, and an alternative mode of city dweller participation.

Paradoxically the lifetime of these initiatives heavily depends on the contemporary transformation tendencies of cities, affected by global economic tendencies, of which the most obviously striking is the flow of capital embodied in various development projects, resulting in economic expansion and inequalities (Harvey 1978: 113–118, Swyngedouw–Heynen 2003: 900–902, Faragó 2016: 238). Whether these interventions in former urban space involve district rehabilitations with housing estates designed in the latest architectural style, or settling financially strong multinational enterprises in hi-tech thematic parks, the urban fabric is indisputably under rapid transformation (Gyáni 1990: 1–2) with all of the tension that goes with that – and so are the social perceptions of space of the urban population. In many cases community gardens are located in vacant lots and abandoned allotments, which are sensitive to the processes of the property market mentioned above. That means gardens may be established in forthcoming construction sites of a new development, or in the location of a potentially profitable municipal investment, so that many communities face uncertainty and a lack of opportunity to deepen their bonding with places. I assume that in such conflicting situations members of community gardens may articulate critical interpretations addressed to some of the forms of urban transformation of space such as alienation, negative effects of development programs on public spaces, displacement of people, and the underlying logic of these phenomena: capital concentration, and endless economic growth, as well as the inappropriate communication of local authorities related to the ambivalence of political power



Picture 1. The rising blocks of Corvin-Quarter from Tömő street. Own photograph, 2018



Picture 2. The undeveloped part of the district, down the street. Own photograph, 2018

towards green demands, which can be captured in the actions, discourses and debates of community life. Criticism means a wide scale of phenomena from mere presence of the community in an “*unconventional place*” to debates and comments on local events, since mega-projects with the promises of advancement do not fulfil the expectations of local communities, and provide no real answer to the miscellaneous social problems rooted in the neo-liberal economic structure. (Földi 2009: 32)

By introducing a case study of a garden community situated in an inner district of Budapest, Hungary, I would like to highlight how notions of place and attitudes towards urban life shift under constantly changing circumstances. My choice of anthropological fieldwork did not follow from a previously grounded research focus, quite the opposite: after the first year of participant observation I identified conspicuously popular themes and I recognized that a critical approach in the spatiality of community gardening seems to be a quite obvious way in Józsefváros, which is one of the districts in Budapest where the congestion of spatiality is a meaningful problem issue. (*Picture 1 and 2*) A critical approach is often used to reveal the uneven mosaics of cities and asymmetrical social fractures heavily affected by the capital flow of developments, (Soja 1990: 3) but it does not efficiently refer to the more or less philanthropic benefits of transformation or what is to be gained out of temporality for communities. I consider culture to be a widespread and open debate in which self-expression, evaluation, and attachment are the acts of seeking and establishing certitude or illusion of balance between uneven spatial-institutional structures of acceleration. In my opinion community gardens can be postulated as indicators of community demand to balance out structural inequalities emerging in the urban fabric. As a matter of fact my aim is to combine a critical approach of development, acts of evaluation and attachment to reflect contemporary dynamics of urban transformation; more specifically I am curious about how gardeners explain their relationship to the transforming city and to the garden, and which acts and endeavours refer to place attachment. How does the doubtful ownership situation influence community life, and is the community still capable of defining itself from time to time in the face of the constant shifting of the physical location of horticultural initiatives between the rapidly changing conditions of the built environment? How do these motifs refer back to urban development- an influencing channel of postmodern urbanity? Community vacant lot

cultivation, as I suppose, itself has a dialectical relationship with imprinting values, and many forms of evaluation (as my examples will show), even though personal motivations in plant care are multifarious.

To answer these questions efficiently, I consider it necessary to briefly outline various concepts of the relation of space and place as well as the current situation of urban agriculture in Hungary.

Growing plants in an urban context already has at least several decades or even 200 years of history, depending on which activity we identify as the historical root of urban gardening. Summerising international literature it seems that (community) gardening activity is noticeably more viral at various kinds of crisis periods such as world wars, or the political transformations of the 1970's, and most recently it gained striking significance again worldwide after the economic crisis spread around 2008. (Bassett 1981, Fácányi–Balogh 2015)

Although comparing garden communities (just like cultural imprints) reveals countless differences regarding ideas and goals, still many conceptual schemes have been constructed to allow us a deeper insight into these new forms of social relations. For example organic food production, health promotion, urban community appraisal, encouraging social participation and evaluating democratical practices, neighborhood revitalisation, culture conservation, reconsidering human relations with the 'green' and with nature through practices related to space. (Eizenberg 2011: 4–7)

'AVOIDING THE BAD NEIGHBORHOOD': CONCEPTS OF SPACE AND PLACE

One general concept of place is the idea of third places, which are locations of our social life separated from our usual environments (Oldenburg 1999: 44–51), considered to be home and workplace: for instance a pub, a coffee shop, a bookstore, or even a community garden. Although, as Gyáni mentions, the separation of spaceforms maintained for social, public and explicitly private behaviours has earlier roots than the 19th century image of the city (Gyáni 1990: 2), discrepancies or blurring boundaries became noticeable, since the perceptions of social acceleration became present. In the last few decades, since the 1970's, concepts of space have radically shifted from merely a condition or a background framework of the social structures making history, to a perception of it as an essential dimension of making policy and influencing social relations. (Harvey 1973: 306–308) The myth of the neutrality of space had permanently lost its credibility when space "*became a concrete expression of each historical ensemble in which a society is specified.*" (Castells 1977: 115–116) If we consider space as a socially constructed phenomenon, as Soja suggests, it should be differentiated from physical space, material nature and representations of mentally comprehended images of space even though materializations and illusions of space are all included in the social conglomerate of spatiality. (Soja 1990: 120) Debates about space construction emphasize that capitalism occupies and reproduces space to maintain its structural pattern of stability. (Soja 1990: 157, 187) In such historical and social circumstances, vigorous attempts are being made to conceptualize space as a dynamic conjunction and to capture laws of motion in it. Space appropriation is often described as a process by which individuals or communities bond emotionally to their current physical location, (Scannell–Gifford 2009: 1–2) creating a "*sense of home*" (Rioux et al 2017: 60) or a feeling of familiarity by drawing the physical or symbolical edges of privacy, visually reshaping its image, or expanding the meaning of existing relations with acts, habits, or motions. A less critical, but more philosophical

approach regarding the concept of place is the idea of non-places introduced by Marc Augé, as the transitional buffer zones embodying supermodernity. Partly opposed to places, non-places do not offer perdurable symbolical keypoints of individual identity, nor common references to social groups. Place differs from space as the latter reflects on the vectors of physical extensions and motions between dimensions, while the former refers to the individual or collective perception of it, expressed in a story, characterized by languages or emotions. (Augé 1995: 77–81, 103) This dynamic model consisting of the mutual interdependence of space and place gained attention in sociology and urban planning, as well as in contemporary literature and theater studies, since the narration of this relation assumes the inclusion of social time, and different social-authority operation schemes marking border crossings, and radical social reorganizations (Bíró 2014: 8). "*Structural effects of this multivocal code system for example orientation, continuity and separation in space are creating multidirectional relationships*" (Farágó 2014: 23–24, own translation).

Regarding walks of life it is already a commonplace that over 60% of the human population now lives in urban conditions, and the number is rising constantly. Szijártó argues that due to the urbanisation processes the way in which city dwellers act, make decisions, or associate meaning to space is fundamentally changing, the spacial manifestations of the transition lead to the 'erosion' of publicity. (Szijártó 2010: 60–61) At the same time, the emphasis of managing relations between neighbouring localities shifted from practical utility maintained through information exchange, to avoid bad neighbourly relations. (Bali 2012: 211) The evaluation of belonging somewhere, and space appropriation, are likely to be intensively emergent in urban areas, whereas the basic needs of communicational practices are degraded to the everyday elemental forms of politeness. According to Castells, places are not necessarily equivalent to communities or deeper forms of human connections, "*although they may contribute to community-building.*" (Castells 2000: 455) Thus, 'living elsewhere' than the city is interpretable as a conscious pursuit opposed to the general transformation process, and the logic behind it: vague scenarios about capitalist growth society. (Farkas 2016: 128–131) Summing up, community gardening is a constant seeking for places of ostensible stillness in accelerating motion systems, offering the opportunity for groups to deepen their internal and external relations. In this regard, I presume that community yard evaluation can be described in Lew's terms as a "*sense of place*" (used in cultural geography), as the way in which a group of people may imprint values and traditions. (Lew 2017: 2) I agree with Horlings that a place-based critical approach does not simply disclose the possible and characteristic inequalities generated by capitalism, but by taking social discourses, practices, and individual and communal experiences into account it can refer to a more sustainable, humane trait of development. (Horlings 2015: 258, 260) Davies notes that values (and negative qualities as well, I believe) are constructed through interaction between members of society and socially or institutionally characterized places (Davies 2001: 82–83), therefore there must be an obvious correlation between vacant lot evaluation and attachment to places. To support this claim I will present examples and struggles from a socially diverse community garden in Budapest located in an inner district, where transformation processes are strikingly emergent.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

definitions of community gardening may vary in relation to the factors of geographical position, legal situation, economic profile, social composition, primary purpose, and power relations as well as researcher attitude towards agriculture or emic-etic statements about community approach. My research strives to propound a quite universal definition: I consider organic food production, voluntary membership, space attachment, and establishing mutual trust as the main aspects to understand urban gardening, in which the question of control is a crucial keypoint to observe the dynamics of contemporary social transformations. One of the interpretations is that community gardening involves members occupying a relatively small piece of land to practice community control (Eizenberg 2011: 8), so that gardeners are able to self-express, cooperate, create or maintain social relations, while they perform regular gardening tasks. Although this designation is broadly limited to describe inner and outer power relations of social movements, I consider it to be particularly useful since it can show a wide spectre of social actors influencing local community life. This kind of approach correlates with the novel framework of ecosystem services as well, which incorporates all the benefits for individuals to stimulate sustainable life, to take responsibility for utilizing natural resources, (Jim–Tan 2017: 6, Chen 2017: 183–190) and (referring to more abstract levels of existence) to promote needs and autonomous decising-making while being consciously aware of opportunities and constraints. In a sense, the ecosystem services approach challenging the inner logic of property based market growth and the endless commodification of goods and places. (Sayer 2017: 110–111)

URBAN AGRICULTURE IN HUNGARY AND AN EXAMPLE: GRUNDKERT

Since the first wave (2012) of community garden establishment in Hungary, there are approximately 60 community gardens considered to be active, two thirds of which are situated in the capital city, Budapest. There are active or emerging community initiatives in provincial towns as well, for example in Debrecen, Miskolc, Szeged, Pécs, Kecskemét, and Szentendre. A Hungarian professional support organization called Kortárs Építészeti Központ (Contemporary Architecture Center) has collected data (www.kozossegitertek.hu) and mapped the active and shut down gardens in the country, but the database has not been refreshed recently.

One of my main research sites is Grundkert (*Picture 3*), a bottom-up nature garden in the 8th district of Budapest (officially called Józsefváros), where symptoms of city transformation processes such as building re-



Picture 3. Grundkert from the eastern edge of the plot. Own photograph, 2018

furbishments and housing developments, social tensions from gentrification, poverty, and many forms of provisionality are heavily present. A city development project called Corvin Project (referring to the Corvin Quarter, a relatively broad part of Józsefváros) started around the turn of millennium. The development includes modernising the quarter by building residential complexes with a wide range of entertainment opportunities, office buildings housing international think tanks, shopping malls, newly built walkways, as well as partly renovating or demolishing old buildings, and rearranging transport infrastructure. The architectural image of the district is manifold. Bourgeois houses from the turn of the century, housing estates from the 1970's, suburban family houses and hi-tech buildings can all be found in the streets of the Corvin Quarter.

The frontline of the 700m² garden area is situated in the middle of Apáthy István street, bordered by the Ronald McDonald Child Support Foundation's house on the western side, and two already confluent, empty rectangle-shaped territories from the north (Szigony street) to the east (Balassa street), each several thousand squaremeters. On the eastern plot there was a building complex previously functioning as a tyre and car service, till the real estate developer demolished it in February 2018 after it was abandoned, including the facades that used to shield many sections of the garden. The empty plot used to be a multifunctional site from a guarded parking lot to a film shooting venue, and temporary accomodation site with caravans for filmmaking crews in the last 3 years; now it is a closed construction site where the new part of the Corvin Project is under progress. The Grundkert community keeps plastic barrels on the edge of the two plots since there is no natural source of water or any tap water on the territory. Getting involved in plant cultivation with barely no experience in agriculture in a 2m² raised bed seemed to be an ideal way to conduct participant observation in the community, mapping inner and outer social relations, drawing concepts of urban space and greenery, and capturing self-reflections of community life. Furthermore I have been participating in events (seed or seedling exchanges, film clubs, roundtable discussions, creative workshops, community-building retreats, informal meetings, celebrations) of community life "*beyond the garden fences*" since November, 2015. There are nearly 40 community members from various social backgrounds, of which the youngest member is 11, and the oldest is 75 years old.

In the first horticultural period after I joined the community in 2016 I participated in the blue collar work of the garden: I fabricated raised beds and wooden garden furniture, assisted in early spring arrangement tasks around the garden plot, while I observed the main discussions, turning points and happenings of community life, and took as many notes as I could while I was experimenting with the first tomato, mustard and paprika seedlings. I was trying to be present as much as possible, generally 2–3 times a week with varying intensity between weekdays and weekends. My own notes of discussions in various situations are complemented with hours of personal semi-structured interviews. For this article I selected 28 interviews from 13 different participants I collected over the last 2 years, mainly from 2018, and cited from 3 different group discussions in the last 2 years. These interviews begin with general inquiries "*How do you feel in the garden/community nowadays?*" focusing on community related topics and moving forward to informal conversations. I added 7 online comments and notes from different members (apart from interview situations) excerpted from the analysis of the online surfaces, including inner discussions (Facebook group comments), and social media presence (see the cited comment debate about the development below). Inner chat mostly consists of organizing social life and administration, tips and tricks about plantcare methods, personal impressions about gardening, program

suggestions, and of course sometimes debates about news, happenings in the district, and reflections on community life.

Regarding these empirical sources my aim is to highlight the diversity of explanations around the core concept of place and expressions towards it in multiple ways. The majority of the gardeners support sharing knowledge and open discussions about many dimensions of urban agriculture, therefore I was not supposed to hide the garden's location and identity, but I use monograms and anonymity (in requested cases) to identify the opinions of partners, and refer to the context or situation, rather than to the year of the source briefly. Questions of ethical considerations were present in the case of place attachment through the removal of a politically contested symbol (barbed wire) but as we can capture from the different opinions, the debate itself reflected the complexity of divergent viewpoints even in the community, and there were no strict answers to such situations. A comprehensive set of photographs has been made to provide visual substantiation for the textual empirical material, illustrating community life and the constant spatial transformation.

Despite the scarcity of resources (water or electricity) the main idea of Grundkert is that a group of individuals from various social backgrounds occupy a vacant lot, and transform it as a counterpoint of growth processes accumulating in the precinct. In this sense, community gardening is about 'colonising' urban space, or in other words, practising community control over a relatively small portion of urban land. Grundkert allows more than 40 gardeners "to dig" as they say, divided between 28 outdoor allotments (maximum 9m² each) and 12 raised beds fabricated out of wooden waste boards (maximum 2m²), so that some flowerbeds are cultivated by more than one person, friends, family members or volunteers of associations. Flower gardens made from car tyres filled with soil are a common feature. Basically, group members cultivate their plots individually, but forms of exchange and reciprocity, looking after each other's flowerbeds, are also present. Disfunction in community life (in the garden) is often caused by differences in personal proxemics, and neglected community rules, however considering the different focus of this article, I will not expound this phenomenon in detail. Grundkert community was an informal group in the last 6 years till 2018 April, at which point the Messzelátó Association took on the responsibility of legal representation on a courtesy basis, in exchange for a plot of land for their volunteers. The community took on a formally existing but not active association, *Kalapos Egyesület* to provide an official form of self-representation, but the official reconstitution has yet occurred. As many gardeners say, this step was necessary to form community demands of place attachment in the precinct (or somewhere else), when opportunities for vacant lots are scarce.

VACANT LOTS: PLACES OF EVALUATION AND/OR DISPLACEMENT?

Legal status and access to urban space are crucial points in community garden establishment. Informal or grassroots initiatives may develop into privately supported groups or take the shape of an association. The attitude towards co-operation with the local council in order to rent urban allotments may depend on numerous subjective and objective viewpoints about economic profile, political commitment, or sense of dependency, just to name a few.

In their previous Facebook introduction Grundkert community emphasized the values they consider

to be important, stressing that gardening under urban conditions should not be an 'exclusive' initiation, but a possible means of urban transformation.

"We would like to try out and show: that there is an alternative way to live in the city, that an urban renewal territory can have another, favourable appearance, that vacant lots can have other functions than simply to be parking lots. We would like to show our children that a carrot does not grow in a wrapped polyethylene tray. We like to cultivate in the middle of the city. We are happy if we are able to bring vegetables from the garden to the kitchen for cooking. Moreover, we are happy as well, if we can get rid of our stress in the fresh air doing light physical work, together in the community." (from Grundkert Facebook site, translated from Hungarian, 2017)

The shifting functions of vacant lots as alternative city structures are emergent. Gardeners emphasize the importance of community gardens, as locations to reconnect to 'reality':

"I'll tell you why we do [community] gardening: because we live in cities, and we are all eager to have 'greenness'. [...] The keyword is time I guess, because you spend your time in an unconventional/not ordinary place. Not in the office, not in the pub, not at home watching TV, but in an interesting place where you meet good people... still, Grundkert is not about gardening... but about the place. Sitting there, drinking a good beer, cooking, so if we grow vegetables, than we use them for cooking [...] it is simple." (Nagy, senior gardener, personal interview, 2018)

"...what matters is to have a place where you can let [problems, words, anxiety] out. For real. It is quite easy to do it here, out in the open air, because the open air means your freedom in some ways. The garden and the things and thoughts oscillating around or in it are modeling the universe in miniature... some tools are also needed here, just like in a workplace. Hoe, spade, wheelbarrow... a kind of order of things. Just the way we have financial experts here, we also have Uncle Pali, who fixes the lock of our garden gate." (FoG, gardener, personal interview, 2018)

- Is that symbolic to grow plants here, in the 8th district?

"Yes, it is. Because you can utilize an abandoned plot differently. This is an extreme. Look at the opposite side, there is a huge parking lot. Extremes. [...] I am in favour of small experiments of creation, and it's quite easy to experiment here. It is good to own a place where you can walk out to water the plants daily, see what's going on with them... and there are members who you can ask for advice, whether some disease attacked your flowers, or they have nutrient deficiencies, or how to handle the issue, what should you do." (NZs, gardener, personal interview, 2018)

In these explanations the garden site seems to be a multipurpose location besides home or workplace, a spot to raise awareness of processes of life hidden by the everyday ratrace in order to sustain a socially appropriate quality of life, even though (as shown below) sustainability in the context of gardening is surrounded by obscurity.

"I think the garden may help us understand that a particular area, a piece of land is capable of growing certain quantity of food, whether it's a lot or an insignificant amount... because of this, people maybe imagine more easily how much effort it takes to create it, and it raises awareness that Earth is finite. I can visualize people who realize the 'price' of things because of gardening." (BO, gardener, personal interview, 2018)

"Personally the sustainability means a lot to me, nevertheless I don't consider Grundkert to be such a sustainable project... I hope we can do gardening here for a few more years, still it would be really great to find a permanent location, but I think of Grundkert as a mental/intellectual workshop exceeding the garden fences. We show that, even though we live in cities, it doesn't automatically mean there is only speed, and all you can think about is concrete." (Gibbon, coordinator gardener, personal interview, 2018)

As these examples show, gardeners explain various ideas and concerns related to the controlled space, when I ask them about their motivations for gardening in the (centre of the) city. Many gardeners (like in the latter quotation) consider it desirable to find a permanent location. What does this claim mean in the context of a changing district? If a vacant lot is the main frame and condition of efficient community functioning, does space attachment exclusively define community life and opportunities? Not necessarily, I argue. Of course community gardens heavily depend on the changes of land ownership and resources on the actual vacant lot such as water access, but Grundkert itself provides unequivocal evidence that community life is not necessarily attached to exact places, as the gardening site is variable. Grundkert is one of the oldest urban agriculture communities in Budapest, with 6 years of history (in 2018), and right now the garden is situated in its third location within the borough. The first location in 2012 was in the nearby Práter street, next to Grund hostel, formerly a guerilla garden. As KZs, a founder member of Grundkert, explained in the online inner group conversation, since the garden plots always have been provided by Futureal (the developer company) at no charge, the expansion of the development affects the physiology, and durability of the garden. Then the second plot was by the Corvin walkway, down to Szigony street; both these locations lasted for a complete harvest year. Worries among the members about the following gardening season are present, since the investment company extended the easternmost scope of the Corvin Project purchasing the whole territory discussed above, including the third garden plot. I suppose that for a comprehensive understanding, space attachment should be examined involving the time factor (Rioux et al 2017: 62), weaving deeper meanings of place. Fluctuations in membership have occurred associated with shifting places, however a few gardeners still own plots even in the newest location. Gardeners who are/were engaged in cultivation in at least two locations usually compare their experiences when I ask them about their relations to different places. (Picture 4)

"I guess we moved enough with the garden to say it's not a certain area that defines the community. I think it probably goes on if we find another plot to continue... If so, then the greater part of the commu-



Picture 4. A few community members in annual meeting in the third location. Own photograph, 2018

nity will evidently move with the garden. Attrition exists apart from moving... many of the members were at least there when things came up, ‘crisis’ has a cohesive force. However I am quite pessimistic about human relations, but still...maybe we would even survive this [another moving].” (BO, gardener, personal interview, 2018)

“Our previous garden was much bigger, but cliques weren’t as frequent there. The question is more about if you belong to the core of the community or an outer circle... I think the question is ambivalent, because the core members, approximately 15–20 members, live in the 8. district anyway. Well, not everybody... Gibbon comes from Érd [a settlement in Pest county, nearby the capital.] He thinks that community and garden matters... well, it doesn’t necessarily mean the same to everybody. [...] As for me I live in the VII. district [Erzsébetváros] quite close to a transport node so if the garden moves, let’s suppose, further than 20 km... I would say, well, nope. But if I can reach the spot in about 30 minutes with public transportation, I say okay.” (NZs, gardener, personal interview, 2018)

“I got to the garden in the previous location barely knowing anything about gardening. Kinga planted for me at the beginning, I had no clue what I can plant next to each other, and I was lazy to look it up, but the truth is the people I met down there in the second place... are exactly those people, who were the reason that I used to love to be there. When we moved again, the situation became complicated: only a few of my acquaintances remained, who I could ask for help, they used to tell me gladly... in the new place I felt like everybody minds their own business... for me it wasn’t the place anymore, just a space of flowers. [...] Somehow it’s different here... people don’t pay attention to each other like before, at the beginning. (FeE, senior gardener, personal interview, 2018)

“In the last garden it was a really good team... This place is much smaller here. Much smaller, yeah. It is a bit harder for me to make up my mind to go out there. I’m collecting the compost for weeks sometimes, till it’s already smelly, even full of fruit-flies...and there’s also compost in the kindergarten, but I don’t bring it to the garden... it’s a bit further than the previous garden, like 15 minutes from my home... but if we did something jointly, I would regain my enthusiasm to get involved with gardening.” (ToB, gardener, personal interview, 2018)

“I used to live in Tömő street, parallel to Apáthy István street [...] but I don’t live there anymore, right now I come from MTK [Hidegkuti Nándor] stadium to the garden, a bit further away, but I really love to be there. When I am home alone and bored ... I like to walk to the garden instead, and look around... something like that. [...] I insist on gardening, not the garden site.” (TaJ, senior gardener, personal interview, 2018)

Of course the garden location matters regarding mood and motivation for participation as a few gardeners resented shifting locations and compared them to previous experiences, but the fundamental desire to cultivate urban green or social relations cannot be undermined by the developmental process.

“Honestly, we got into gardening when the issue of community was not that important to us, I was more eager to have my own tomatoes. Our flat has no balcony, and the gangway in the building is not suitable for growing anything. I was always wondering where I can make a garden, then once we stepped outside our door, and it was right in front of us, now there is the head office of Nokia... so that was the start of our story with the previous location of Grundkert. And really, exactly right in front of our door and everybody was gardening. [...] The lack of green in the 8th district is a really huge problem. In Grundkert I feel like

I've travelled to the countryside. After half an hour my brain switches completely, and I don't even feel like I am in Budapest, more like somewhere else. On the one hand the garden site is useful because of the opportunity for relaxation, and to enjoy the green as well... it's so good to have a green island in a district that has little to do with green... to chill out, doing something very different from what you usually do... kind of stepping out from the treadmill... on the other hand when we started gardening, I thought we would have a child earlier... and I thought how good it would be, if I can carry him/her to the garden. But now our situation with the garden is uncertain. I think we won't move. But it depends on how far away we would get a space, because if it's within reasonable distance, then yes, maybe..." (CzR & BeS, coordinator, gardener, personal interview, 2018)

"It would be great to find a constant place where no one decides above our heads... a place to attach to more. [...] It was wonderful that Futureal lent us a piece of land, and it worked somehow... but it would be better to have a permanent place." (ToB, gardener, personal interview, 2018)

"Honestly I was eager to keep artichokes, but as far as I know that's biennial, so you have to care for it for 2 years and it needs plenty of space, and maybe we won't even be here next year. I didn't dare to do it. [...] Within a certain distance I would go with the community, if it's in a certain radius... But I hope that it [moving away] will happen later. I don't know Futureal that much [...] but I would like to believe that somebody will make Futureal act reasonably, that they will handle a piece of land for us, or if not, maybe they won't build upon this plot, but keep it as a green park for recreational purposes... I don't know if there are any more abandoned plots in the district where we can get our hands dirty..." (FoG, Gardener, personal interview, 2018)

As we could see, gardeners articulated a set of individual and collective advantages of gardening, taking into account the fragile relationship between development and ways of collective attachment or self-expression. Uncertainty is probably the hardest burden of community life, but an emerging feeling of displacement seems to be a strong cohesional trait, encouraging community members to cooperate in problem solving and acting collectively. Does constant shifting between places influence community life? Of course it does: sometimes the varying location may discourage some gardeners from getting involved in plant cultivation, but the overwhelming majority of the members are optimistic about the future: they wish for a piece of land, a place to cultivate. Many of the interviews cited above were made in mid-February, shortly after demolition machines, excavators, and construction workers unexpectedly appeared in the neighbouring plot, and rapidly started to demolish the abandoned building complex without informing the community about the potential scenarios. In such troublesome situations gardeners reflect, and explain their emotional relationship in connection to the place, opposed to the massiveness of demolition; on the other hand, they more or less implicitly draw up criticisms of modernisation and power, which I argue draws upon a kind of social pattern of how evaluation and place attachment operates. In conjunction with Eizenberg I experienced that *"determination of space facilitates a strong psychological ownership among gardeners"* (Eizenberg 2012: 116).

PLACE EVALUATION AS A CRITICISM OF DEVELOPMENT

In late winter in 2018, when expressed feelings of displacement showed up shortly after demolition work on the neighboring plot, gardeners instantly intensified communication, in which criticism of development was emergent. Members expressed misgivings about their place and the lifeforms of the ecosystem attached to it.

"If somebody was in the garden these days, you could see that the neighbouring building on the right side came to a sticky end. They've already started to demolish it, the car tyre service moved away earlier. The roofing was taken away at the edge of the two plots, in a narrow corridor, soon they will knock down the walls as well. Two things came to my mind: I guess workers will not act gently or circumspectly, there is a high chance that the bricks will fall on Kornél's cactuses. The second thing is the fate of the bees living in the wall crevice. They are doomed, unless an apiarist can save them with an empty hive. It would need some organization, and to keep an eye on the demolition work, and to ask them to leave the rest of the brickwall intact, so that we can take it down with our hands to avoid killing the bees with the falling debris and dust. Maybe it's impracticable, but if we don't even try they will surely die. (TJ, supporting community member, inner group conversation, 2018) (Picture 5)

"I feel serious pain when I look at these pictures. Our roses right next to the wall survived for now. The question is: for how long?" (FK, gardener, inner group conversation, 2018)

"I am afraid it means the end of the garden as well." (MaJ, gardener, inner group conversation, 2018)

"Damn, I can't believe we cannot spend a few years in the same place. I thought they would inform us in time to save our hide..." (Nagyi, senior gardener, inner group conversation, 2018)

Such an intense utterance of unbalance, I suppose, refers to existence of deeper attachment, even though, as we saw previously, many gardeners considered the actual garden site less important. A few days later many gardeners joined together in the garden to remove fallen bricks and dust from the plots that used to be by the edge of the wall. It turned out that the investment company did not inform the community on purpose, since it was winter, and indeed not the gardening season. Members resented the lack of adequate communication from the company, as it increased uncertainty. (Picture 6)



Picture 5. The days of destruction in February.
Photo by János Tölgyesi, 2018



Picture 6. Gardeners removing the debris from the flowerbeds. Own photo, 2018

"I called the main architect of Futureal yesterday and he said that he told the contractor responsible for the demolition to look after the garden. They said they will be gentle. Gentle demolition, huh? (Gibbon, coordinator, gardener, own notes, 2018)

The rebuilding gained notable press coverage at the end of February, mainly in blogs and online magazines in the context of the Corvin Project. Corvin Negyed Blog, which writes about the current state of development, posted the following:

"This is the end for the buildings in the corner of Apáthy and Balassa street. Rebuilding work started recently, so it can definitely be stated that the development of Corvin Quarter won't stop at Szigony street, instead it goes further in the direction of Klinikák [Clinics]. Besides the development, we secretly worry for Grundkert in case they have to go; maybe they will get another opportunity for urban gardening." (post from Corvin Negyed Blog, 14 February, 2018)

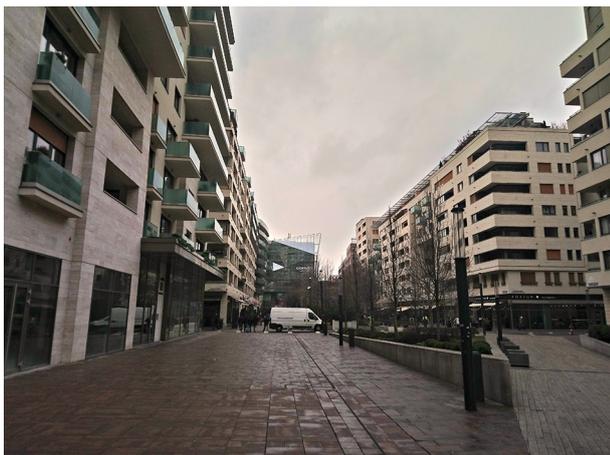
The article received a massive response from the gardeners in inner discussions and outer, public online fora as well, referring to the contradiction between progress and autonomous/self-expressive community initiatives, criticism addressed towards the development itself:

"This, what you call progress [of the district] is exactly the thing that expels the bottom-up nature initiatives from the city, just like Grundkert, which tries to re-interpret urban spaces." (TaV, gardener, public comment on article, 2018)

According to Ger, contrariness (the way how people express themselves differently) through setting goods in a new context can be liberating in a sense (Ger 1997: 111). Place attachment, particularly the community garden as a community asset challenges the traditional conceptions of urban space. Members constantly shared their opinions about the contradictions between the claim to control places and displacement. In the beginning of the sowing season in late March, early April, the topic came up many times: members addressed more specific criticism towards modernisation in the context of the garden's situation, and expressed the view that upcoming conflicts are more likely to be the outcome of bigger issue.

"Speaking from my life situation of course I am annoyed, because right there on the other side, by Corvin pathway everything is happy, happy, happy... hypocrisy. This is how I see it now, but it doesn't mean it is not a necessary thing to develop. I didn't spend much time investigating the history of the 8th district, but there were strange things around the tree felling at Orczy Park as well... My friends who are involved in municipal work are more focused on this issue, they say Corvin Project is a highly demanded development, with billions of forints put into it. But I think no one engaged essentially in the life circumstances of local inhabitants, they didn't do anything with the problems. For example isn't the solution to the problem of drug addicts to hide the needle ... I do not know. [...] I am pretty sure the house next to us will disappear soon. [She refers to an old building in Tömő street, settled by people who live under the subsistence level.] I am desperate because of these trees in the empty plot in front of us as well. I can't see trees anywhere else around. If you pass by Nokia Centre down the street, there are display panels with landscape pictures placed on the outside. This is a lie. A complete lie." (FoG, gardener, personal interview, 2018) (Picture 7)

"There are beautiful buildings for sure, but I suppose where things look too perfect... I'm not eager to walk around, still they are intensively developing Corvin. In point of fact we build modern housing estates



Picture 7. The neighbouring streets: the centre of Corvin development. Own photo, 2018

and modern factories. The scary thing about it is that the centre built next to the garden is a factory where people sit in front of computer screens. [...] In many regards the district has become better, and in many regards it hasn't, since there is more concrete everywhere, and you can't intensify this to infinity, I think it will slow down or get stuck at a point after a while.” (NZs, gardener, personal interview, 2018)

“I don't know where they would give us a new plot, because I was wondering after all they are building these high-rise buildings which I don't like...even though the 'neighborhood' changed a lot and the walkway next to Nokia is so different you can't believe it... My friend used to visit me and she told me, Erzsi, it's like we're not even in Hungary... They always told me when we went down to the walkway, that this is another world, how far is this world compared to the old 8th district? [...] If young people come here to work, they won't know a thing about what the 8th used to mean before. When me moved here from Óbuda decades ago, they said to us: you are crazy. [...] Because of the incessant rising of property prices my husband and his carpenter colleagues have to move to find another workroom, but he does it as hobby, he is already 75 years old, but they have to move. If someone had told us decades ago that there will be such high houses blocking the view of the Buda mountains from the 9th floor, and warn me about this amount of dust coming into the flat daily, I would have considered staying in Óbuda instead. [...] Green would be so important here, even now, after so many trees were cut in Orczy park because of the refurbishment, and even there is a lack of green in the inner courtyard of the new houses so... it would be necessary to leave green places, because new houses are rising, everything is being built-in and slowly you can't even breathe here [...] even though, doing something with the 8th was really important.” (FeE, senior gardener, personal interview, 2018)

Inertia, wrath and destruction. I quote Gergő: ‘this is an indiscreet pout of the symbolic system of ‘progress.’ [...] the Grundkert is on an adjacent plot, I have been cultivating plants there with a town community for 3 years [...] capital concentration vs. social space, the 8. district, where “the largest continuous green area is the top of the pool table.” (InP, gardener, shared Facebook post with pictures of the nearby demolition work, 2018)

These interviews and comments offer a detailed picture of the negatively experienced effects of the transformation, in some cases the developed part of Corvin even crops up as a physically opposable part of the district compared to the garden site. A few members I asked feel like they are not able to express familiarity or homeliness with the upcoming developments of the district.

"Maybe it is a conscious strategy of the locals to push out poorer social groups from here, like a population exchange or I don't know. As I stare at these houses I cannot decide which method is easier: to refurbish or to rebuild them; look at that art nouveau-styled house, that's where I live. There are a bunch of inner problems, and the house next to it is in even worse condition. During the 40 years of the socialist era they let these buildings deteriorate, now it's the responsibility of the dwellers to make them even habitable. But obviously new people come to live in the district from a different social layer, and I recognized that even kindergarten children like to hang out in the Corvin shopping mall. For me it's not a pleasurable time, I go there for a purpose, or if I need a kind of product. [...] But I've seen old people sitting inside on the benches, maybe it's good for them in winter to go to a warm place, and to use the public toilet for free. I don't know. It's ambivalent. I cannot reconcile these two things. It's really good to live in the city with lots of cultural opportunities right 'in your face', but I miss nature, and the opportunity to retreat to a place... I would love to live in the countryside if I had lots of money, you know... I would surely buy an active/passive or an eco-house. [...] But these monetary and profit-oriented companies cannot admit that this won't be profitable for them. Most of these corporations want more money, and to produce more... and no wonder you meet kind of degrowth groups who say: this is abnormal, planet Earth is finite, I don't know how far we can still grow economically."

- Even though the garden area is provided by a kind of company?

"I think somebody, or somebodies handled our situation as a personal mission at the company, maybe it touched somebody... it is not the whole company at all. They get no profit from it. Maybe somebody in a decision-making position was favourable... but it's not the whole company, the whole logic behind it. 'Cause if it were, they would make a kind of green park, even with their name on the 'thanks to list' on the door of a community garden, or I don't know. It's very distant... it's about profit, profit and more profit, meanwhile the human disappears...the way how he/she feels him/herself disappears... and places narrow. Population grows, we need more space instead of places. But as for me I am happy that there are more and more community gardens opening every year, of course there are garden communities with an easier life and destiny... this is ours, struggling with temporality. The question is, whether the community is strong enough to seek another urban territory or not, and how much energy we want to sacrifice..." (ToB, gardener, personal interview, 2018)

"Listen, more or less, but this is about money... I don't live in this part of the city, I don't know, whether it affects the life of locals positively or not, but this is pretty much about money." (KoP, gardener, own notes, 2017)

"...you know, those guys at the Corvin Quarter Blog more have the viewpoint of evaluating progress, but I'm not. I think that all kinds of social formations should find their place in the city..." (TaV, gardener, own notes, 2018)

"Come on, this is about money. I think I've said everything with that. We can say 'things' just like in American movies: such a development, such opportunities for local entrepreneurs, how good it will be, everybody will be happy, and everything will prosper, still I'm not really concerned about this is how it should go. If the developers at Futureal are a bit reasonable, they will transform this place along the lines of a green concept, or leave it as a little green park. That would be something at least. And yes, if something, then achieving change in the minds of people: that's the hardest." (FoG, gardener, personal interview, 2018)

Summing up these viewpoints of criticism, does it mean that members refuse all the processes of modernisation? Of course not. This relation between place attachment and modernisation, as we have seen, is more complex and dialectic. Many of the gardeners find it positive that this part of the city is undergoing serious and beneficial changes in transportation services, cultural opportunities and architecture. However, they are conscious about negative effects such as small communities losing ground in the city, that reflects the inner philosophy of development: forced individualisation, privatisation, lack of green, lack of connection with nature, and displacement through growth and property market dumping. Do these aspects automatically mean that the community and individuals do not attach emotionally or symbolically to places or locations? In the upcoming examples I suggest again: not necessarily. They do, but much depends on the time factor, and a certain or transparent legal situation. Urban gardening is a territorially natured initiative, a materialized conglomerate of various ideas and acts referring to the dynamics of adaptability and rapidly changing life conditions. Even though members bond more to other members and relations over 'the garden fences' through patterns of trust, there are many acts and actions that can be registered referring to the fact that the community tries to form the vacant lot like it is their own property, and take responsibility for its appearance and what kind of cultural content it mediates.

THE CULTURAL ASPECTS OF ATTACHMENT: TWO TELLING INCIDENTS FROM THE GARDEN

Given my word count limitation, I would like to mention two brief, interesting incidents that took place in the garden last summer and this winter, showing a more specific operation of place attachment and evaluation. First of all, after extremely long discussions about whether the garden should be more visible to passers-by at the front gate in Apáthy István street or not, two members of the community removed the barbed wire from the top of the garden wall (made of at least 2 meter high OSB plates) without asking the rest of the community members if they could do so. The barbed wire in the frontline had already been part of the fences around the vacant lot built by Futureal, shortly after the community members moved into the new garden site in the early spring of 2015. The removal happened in April 2017, when the heavily distorted anti-refugee discussion was at its most intensive in the mass media, and was a matter of common talk. As the participants of this action explained, barbed wire became a symbol of hatred and intolerance in Hungary. Because of its meaning it was felt it should not appear around the social space of a community that believes in tolerance, trust, the chance of integration, transparency, democratic values and experimenting with social participation. The case generated extensive discourse in the inner chat group and verbally as well, through mostly similar opinions and of course some surprising extremes. There was a broad consensus about the appropriateness of the action, although a few members expressed concern about the need for community re-conciliation in such important situations. Right now there is no wire in the fences anymore; therefore, the meaningfulness of the actual landscape has been modified. Conflicting viewpoints highlighted the way of attachment in spite of the awareness of temporality.

"Yesterday I removed the barbed wire from the top of the fences. I put the remaining pieces in a box next to the gate if someone wants to use it later. If not, then does anyone know a place where this can be handed in? I hope no one is shocked about it." (Anonymous gardener, inner group conversation, 2017)

"Why remove the barbed wire from the fences? Because it is a fairly ambiguous thing to protect an open-minded community garden with barbed wire from the outside world, since nowadays barbed wire is a symbol of populism and hatred in Hungary, and because we are hosting the Menedék [Shelter] Association in the garden [with a raised bed] who are 'defending' refugees from barbed wire. And it's ugly too." (TaV, gardener, inner group conversation, 2017)

"I thought it's a garden, not a shelter. They are welcome in the garden as always, in their point of view [she refers to the refugees here] the barbed wire could be left as it was, because it was placed there for another purpose. If the wallpaper hurts my eyes when I am a guest somewhere, I don't think they will remove or change it for me. The guest should come, feel him/herself at home, and if he/she feels okay and done, then we should let him/her go home. It's not decoration. Réka is right, speaking about it referring to others' emotions has no ground. Especially afterwards." (SGy, ex-gardener, inner group conversation, 2017)

"As for me I think it's important to discuss such things. Wire as a symbol is very negative. As a defending object it's very good. Moreover I think it's important to note that there are no hosts or guests in the garden. We are all gardeners with equal rights. Referring to the previous example: 'roommates.'" (Gibbon, coordinator, gardener, inner group conversation, 2017)

"If you let me share my thoughts about this, I consider it a noble thing to try to keep democratic forms of coexistence, reconciliation and decision-making in unstable conditions, but there is a point when a sudden decision is taken. It is almost illogical, still it makes sense. That is why I agree with the seemingly revolutionary removal of wire under these circumstances. [...] So in my opinion, we should speak about where and what is the exact role of a community garden in Hungary, in the 8th district, or in the world, if its functionality is still considered to be openness. I certainly don't think that it is the exceeding of average yields of tomatoes..." (SziG, gardener, closed group conversation, 2017)

"In principle this is a beautiful thought. But in practice this is the property of Futureal. Legally, Messzelátó Association is responsible for us! If Futureal wants, they can pick a quarrel about this, so Messzelátó, who are taking the legal responsibility for us as a favor, maybe it can cause trouble and awkwardness for the coordinators... with a revolutionary act like this." (CzR, gardener, coordinator, inner group conversation, 2017)

These segments of the discussion show that modifying elements of the garden site brings up the emotional connections with the place and deeper meanings attached to it. In the long run the barbed wire was removed and replaced with bell-shaped ornaments and festoons resembling colourful flags in mid April, after a decoration workshop. Gardeners mostly look back at the incident as getting rid of an unpleasant meaning attached to the place, which is inappropriate in such an open-minded formation as the garden community, even though the symbolic meaning of the barbed wire was assigned to it externally at first, defined by actual political-natured events.

"As for me the strange thing was that a newcomer does something, and doesn't reconcile it with the community. I rather saw a communicational problem in this thing, than something else. Well, I wasn't following the discussion that much, but the outcome was fairly positive for me, I didn't have a problem with the act itself, but how it was put into effect. To avoid indignation, speak about your intentions before you act... I think if they had asked them first, and argue why it is wrong, then maybe it wouldn't have caused trouble like a guerilla action." (BO, gardener, personal interview, 2018)

"I don't even remember clearly, but the truth is yes, it has symbolical meaning, and I am happy that it has been removed... but it's really difficult to find balance with these things... I think this is a kind of solution as well, that colourful flags have been placed there and not the barbed wire, which notoriously evokes unsavoury memories. I say no, it shouldn't be here, and it's not a problem that it's not here. If someone wants to break in here, it won't stop that person." (FoG, gardener, personal interview, 2018)

Many gardeners noted that the irony of the situation is that, shortly after the deconstruction ended, unknown culprits broke into the garden, removed the lock of the garden shed, and scrounged gardening tools, metallic objects, the wheelbarrow, the hydrant wrench, the aluminium hanging gutter, and the electric compost grinder. Even though the incident was reported to the local police department, the tools have not been found since then, and the incident caused momentary concern about whether the community could start the gardening season. The stock of tools has been partly restored by donations of other community gardens and private offerings with internet fundraising, and with internal support as well. Still the situation was discouraging for many members, since after the removal of debris from the neighbouring plot there were no walls to separate the garden site from the eastern property line; Futureal simply placed easily removable mobile fences around the plot. The community decided to place boards advising that it was a private area and property, and installed a burglar alarm above the door of the garden shed. The case revealed a set of values and ambivalences referring to the attachment to a temporary place. Apropos of installing tangible security elements to the garden, I asked the community members how they relate to publicity. The provoking question was that, if the community garden promotes that the city belongs to its dwellers and communicates openness, then why is the garden clearly physically separated from the street?

"You present this issue very well. Strictly speaking both extremes can be found here in the garden. Why close the gate? – leave it open; the other side, in a figurative sense, would even place wire at the top. The middle path is the best, just like everywhere else. People patently have a certain degree of self-defense thinking, mea culpa, because I was participating in it, I helped in things, I am attached to it. It wouldn't be good if someone disrupts it. Here is a short example: we have to care about people as well, the poor or humans falling on evil days, okay. Once we tried this, let them in, it didn't work."

– So, are these fences necessary?

"Yes, indeed." (Nagyi, senior gardener, personal interview, 2018)

"Yes, it's necessary, because we can be lambs but not sheep. Just because I don't take someone else's stuff, it doesn't mean I will leave the door open. You must be realistic, see the things as they are, apart from that we have open minds and we do certain kind of things, and a couple of things we don't. We gardened in all good faith, look what was the result: somebody broke in." (FoG, gardener, personal interview, 2018)

Gardeners make important remarks about the lines and limits of space attachment: clarifying that the promotion of importance of attachment and evaluation under the circumstances of transformation and attachment itself is different, although in the examined case openness is an essential part of attachment to share a sustainable vision of the city.

“Yes, it’s necessary for people to see the borders, but our door is open for everyone. There are tables of descriptions of gardening on the inner side of the walls, but if somebody stops, we invite them in, probably it’s a kind of primary filter who to let in. [...] Well, a bit of prejudice is in everyone.” (NZs, gardener, personal interview, 2018)

“It’s self-defense. We are in the 8th after all, still we would like to harvest for ourselves... as for me, it’s not the most important aspect to harvest my self-cultivated things, but still... there are lots of different people in the community. First of all, we have to focus on each other, secondly, on the place... we are a kind of a family, so it’s a reasonable claim, if someone wants to border him/herself to defend the plants. [...] Our farming unit consists of, I don’t know exactly, maybe 50–60 persons, I think 20 of them are really open minded, but there are lots of them who are not that open-minded. Our commitment is to embrace them as much as possible. Maybe some are not capable of being more open, but no one should be forced into unacceptable conditions, for example to cultivate on a plot without walls, in a fully libertine world, maybe they just want to eat the whatever... the potatoes they grew. [...] In the previous garden, before the Nokia centre was built, there were window boxes and wire fences. I’m not in favour of this wooden palisade wall here... there was a better opportunity to talk with the passers-by, you could invite them inside easier, come on, take a look around... this palisade somehow blocks it, so it’s kinda’ hard, because the essential purpose would be to communicate that you can do things like this in the city. (Gibbon, coordinator, gardener, personal interview, 2018)

A ‘DOUBTFUL’ CONCLUSION

In my opinion, space attachment unfolded in acts and discourses has to be researched if we are supposed to achieve a deeper understanding about the dynamics of social space construction in cities. According to Soja, Foucault, Sassen, Castells, and Harvey places are politically contested since they gain importance as the expression or solidification of power (through capital control, access control, and social exclusion). The aim of my analysis was not to challenge ideas about spatiality, but to glance over relatively rigid ideological positions on capital concentration, and to suggest a brief anthropological overview by examining a microcommunity: a dialogic relation with modernity through the lense of a community reacting to sustainability. In this sense, Grundkert is both a result and a symptomatic outcome of transformations. Thus, being in the crossfire of place evaluation and displacement we cannot speak of community life without the local political situation that is leading to an increase in the complexity of social dynamics.

I argue that these ways of forming space and the symbolical meanings attached to it imply a set of instructive community demands and directions which can be taken into account during community development processes and participatory planning of cities, maybe even in decision-making levels. Expressions, thoughts, acts and actions of the participants about attachment beyond all skin-deep recognition have the potential to address how ideas of development should be fine-tuned, incorporating the human factor of local perception, even without, I venture, changing the core logic of modernisation. In this article I attempted to introduce an (in some ways) overlooked territory of critical urban theory with an anthropological overview of members’ impressions. Even though community gardening is currently still underrated in general urban development practice, it seems to be a useful context to particularize questions about sustainable directions. As I see it,

the real question is how much chance we have that development processes and engineering-approached city planning will take into account any of these (in the case of community gardening) more and more important social factors. I suppose, little. Yet, any kind of social participation in urban space planning has little significance in Hungary. Since there is no efficient communication between social actors, currently an unsupportive political environment for civil self-representation (Pálné 2008: 54–56), and the economic potential of civil associations is heavily differentiated, community gardening will still have more 'evident' (e.g. aesthetics, healthy food) material importance than compared to its deeper and more complex or symbolic dimensions. Still, if we take a look at communities that are forced to change, we are able to see that they have a remarkable corpus of survival strategies, which refer to more abstract questions of urban transformations perceived locally. Regarding local development it definitely has a humane and emotionally attached scenario if we see urban agriculture as a dialectic relationship, a set of attachments, expectations and desire of sustainability rather than aesthetics. Grundkert seems to be a valuable social seismograph of the occurring structural reshaping, where between the extreme ends of the pendulum, there runs an agreement that change is necessary: what would matter most is the exact scale and the methods.

I was writing the main parts of this article between March and May, 2018. It is May now, and the garden is blossoming. By the time the article is published, the gardenplace will possibly have been displaced by construction machinery, structural elements and mobile toilets instead of flowerbeds, so that the anthropological essence of this paper may involuntarily acquire the substance of an historical imprint. This is more-or-less a reflection of the logic of temporality, which is definitely becoming part of our perception of the world. In the case of community gardening, space attachment is dialectical with interdependent relations with land owners and economic processes. Although the average number of small communities getting engaged with social space production in cities is rising, it does not necessarily mean that they stick to only one geographical location. Varying the location does not necessarily mean that communities or individuals fail to deepen their relationship to place. Beyond the average harvest of paprika, tomatoes and countless mint leaves or parsley, the basic need to transform space is manifested in highly particularistic ways; the further question is, whether this affective equipoise can be sustained by microcommunities settled in cities within or without a supporting social and political environment. Criticism of the growth society through space usage practices and evaluation is emergent, and it needs further investigation to clarify its import, and to draw up alternatives for a more democratized, community based city planning. *(Picture 8)*



Picture 8. The property line of Grundkert with the construction on the background. Own photo, 2017

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