

A growing urban gardening

Local food production in urban gardens

Apart from public and community initiatives, private urban gardens are increasing in number enlarging the area devoted to urban agriculture (UA) in cities. In particular, gardens in balconies and terraces are growing in popularity in highly dense cities, such as Barcelona (Spain). However, public and private initiatives diverge in motivations and design. **This study aims to analyze the motivations behind both public and private gardens to unravel similarities and differences among them.**

Methods

Data was collected through surveys performed in visits to the gardens. Interviewees were asked to provide data on:

- the user profile (age, gender, education)
- the type of garden (crop type and management)
- the motivations behind the activity
- sustainability habits related to the activity

Surveys were conducted from March to July 2014. Data from the interviews were analyzed using Microsoft Excel.

Case study and interviews

The Vila Olímpic district of Barcelona was used as case study, interviewing 16 gardeners and garden managers.



User profile and garden type

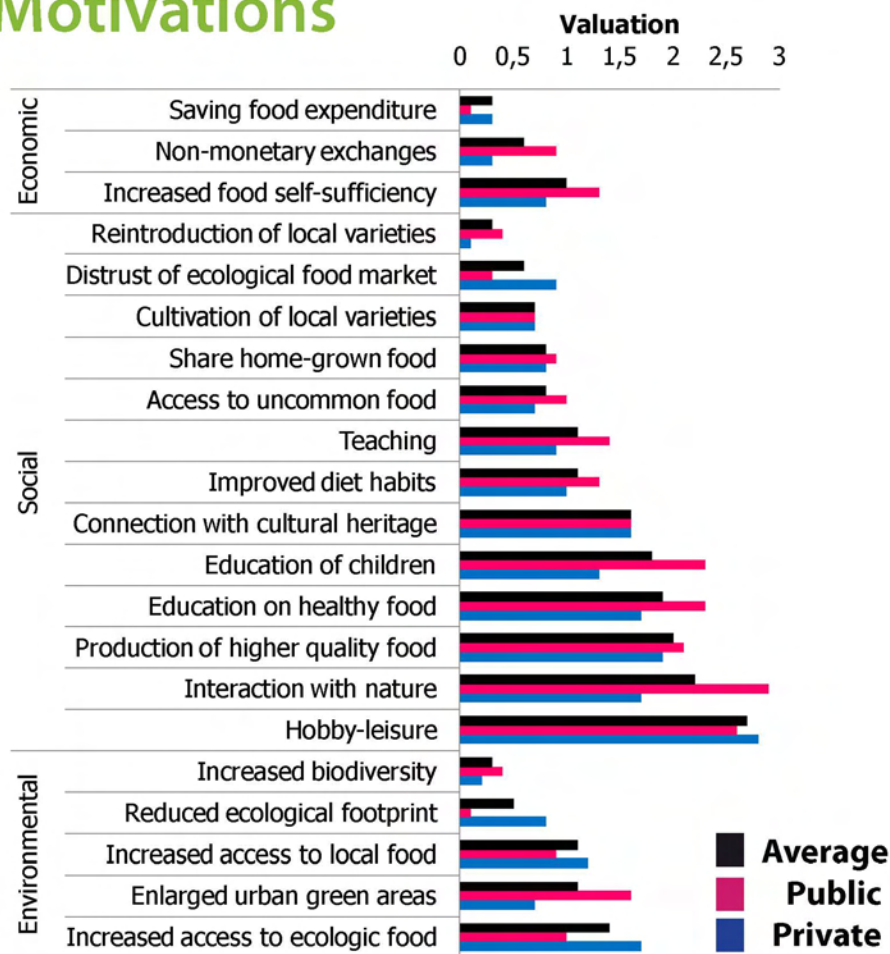
Public

Average gardener: **58 years** old, man, graduate, employed or **retired**, medium-class
Crop type: **22.2 m²**, 4h weekly labour, soil, ecologic pesticides and fertilizers, **compost**
Installation costs: 0€/m²
Production costs: 11.5€/m²

Private

Average gardener: **40 years old**, man, graduate, **student** or employed, medium-class
Crop type: **2.2 m²**, 2h weekly labour, **pots and cultivation tables, little use of fertilizers**
Installation costs: 59.2€/m²
Production costs: 3.5€/m²

Motivations



Motivations behind the gardens

Public

Economic: Increased self-sufficiency is positively valued
Social: Hobby, education and interaction with nature are the most valued motivations
Environment: Public gardeners value the contribution to **green areas and biodiversity**

Private

Economic: Savings in food expenditure are outlined
Social: Hobby and quality of food are the main motivations
Environmental: Private gardeners look for an increased **access to ecological and local food**

Discussion and conclusions

Gardeners of Vila Olímpica (Barcelona) had a similar profile (age, gender) than in other qualitative studies on urban agriculture (Teig et al., 2009; Kortright and Wakefield, 2010), although private gardens were in terraces and balconies contrary to common backyard gardens. Notwithstanding that social motivations, in particular "hobby-leisure", are the most valued for all the gardeners, the study unveiled **divergences between public and private initiatives, mainly related to the origin of each one**. Public gardens are **ludic spaces** (municipal gardens) or **educational tools** (school gardens), while private gardeners aim to increase their **food self-sufficiency in terms of high-quality and ecological food** while performing a ludic activity. Larger differences between public and private gardens are found in the economic and environmental dimensions, where private gardeners largely valued the **savings in food expenditure and the reduced ecological footprint of their diets**.

REFERENCES: Kortright R, Wakefield S (2010) Edible backyards: a qualitative study of household food growing and its contributions to food security. *Agriculture and Human Values* 28:39-53; Teig E et al. (2009) Collective efficacy in Denver, Colorado: Strengthening neighborhoods and health through community gardens. *Health Place* 15:1115-22.

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