

Chapter 9

Social Dimensions of Urban Restructuring: Urban Gardening, Residents' Participation, Gardening Exhibitions

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9.1 Introduction

The conditions for urban development have changed considerably in the last decades. This can be attributed to social and economic changes encompassing the processes of globalisation, deindustrialisation and demographic change. The corresponding economic, social and ecological impacts pose new challenges on urban development and planning. Especially those cities which have undergone a transformation from a socialist planned economy to a social market economy in the last 20 years are affected from these new challenges. The “shrinking city” is a phenomenon which sets up a new dimension in urban development. Shrinking leads to a substantial reshaping of urban structures. It is causing urban decline and decay, vacancy and underuse of lots and buildings. The effects and problems resulting from a loss of function include the rise of urban brownfields, depopulation, empty apartments and unused social infrastructure such as schools and kindergartens. This calls for new forms of action, planning and controlling of urban development processes. Urban restructuring requires measures which provide opportunities to adapt existing structures to meet the needs of a changing society and a changing economy. Urban brownfield sites and vacant buildings offer potentials for a sustainable urban development and innovative temporary uses. These potentials provide

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a variety of options to improve natural and built environments for the inhabitants on varying spatial scales.

Urban development is a social process. Political-administrative actors are increasingly confronted with private sector actors (e.g. private investors and housing companies) and civil society (e.g. tenant associations). The various actors have different power resources, motives and logics of action. This affects participative processes, which play an increasingly important role within the planning and controlling of urban development, especially with regard to the objective of sustainable development. It is important to integrate all actors into these urban development processes, including a civic participation. This is the basis for a collaborative form of political control, which includes different objectives, spatial and social levels.

Within the Graduate Research Programme (Graduiertenkolleg) the subject area of “Urban geography and planning” is covered by three subprojects which are dedicated to empirical research on urban restructuring. The projects are concerned with three specific aspects of sustainable urban development and design. They are considering the changing conditions and deal with community gardens, urban restructuring and gardening exhibitions. In each case the research focus is on the social dimensions of restructuring processes and participation in the coordination and control of the examined projects. In order to analyse past and present social processes, all three projects are using qualitative methods. The research includes three different spatial levels of the city:

- Micro level: Brownfield sites in diverse structured housing areas (subproject 1)
- Meso level: Urban restructuring in a large housing estate with prefabricated housing units (subproject 2)
- Macro level: Gardening Exhibitions as an opportunity for a sustainable urban development (subproject 3)

For subprojects 1 and 2 Berlin has been elected as a study area. The city is a prime example for the changing conditions urban development has to deal with. Berlin has undergone a radical structural change in the last 20 years due to economic and social changes, the reunification of the formerly divided city and the political and economic transformation of the eastern part. Berlin is characterised by a stable population, a relatively high unemployment rate and an extraordinarily high level of debt. It is not a shrinking city, but there are parts of town which are characterised by large-scale industrial sites which turned into urban brownfields. These sites offer opportunities for a sustainable urban development. Especially in the large housing estates (Großwohnsiedlungen) in the eastern parts of Berlin measures for substantial restructuring have been carried out. These measures have modified the urban structures in these areas considerably. Formerly used sites have been abandoned and turned into urban brownfields. At the same time, however, the measures taken for restructuring provide new opportunities for urban regeneration and an improvement of living conditions for the inhabitants. Thus, many new options are available for the design of urban nature and a sustainable land use.

The three subprojects cover very different fields of research within the research areas of urban restructuring measures and sustainable urban development, namely

the constellation of actors, their motives and logics of action. The results provide interesting insights into details of the research projects. Strategies for urban ecology as temporary or long-term uses are pointed out. Moreover, the following reports provide evidence for urban governance and new forms of control in urban development. They reflect the changing requirements for policy and planning on the one hand and the problems of participative processes on the other. The implementation of sustainability in urban development is a difficult and diverse project which needs to be adapted to local conditions in order to be successful.

9.2 Results of the Subprojects

9.2.1 *Subproject 1: Community Gardens in Berlin – A New Form of Citizen Participation? (Marit Rosol)*

9.2.1.1 Introduction

Berlin, as a stagnating city, has many brown fields and empty lots. Alone in the inner city, there exist about 1,000 empty lots (ca. 150 ha). They can be found especially along railway tracks, the former wall-strip, and on former industrial estates and graveyards. As consequence of economic and demographic change, locations of social infrastructure such as Kindergartens and schools are being, or will be, abandoned, especially in districts in the outer city such as Marzahn-Hellersdorf (c.f. Beirat Stadtforum 2020 2005). This is a result of a decreasing population, decreasing number of jobs due to de-industrialization, and global economic and social changes, events, which are followed by the demolition of vacant houses, social infrastructure, and industrial areas.

At the same time, there are still qualitative and quantitative deficiencies regarding the provision of urban public green spaces. A study by the Berlin government (the *Senat*) calculates a quantitative lack of 210 ha of public, near-residential green space for all of Berlin. Studies on the quality of public green space show, furthermore, a deterioration both in maintenance and in equipment in recent years (cp. konsalt et al. 2000; SenStadt 2001). This neglect of the public green sector is in contrast to the enormous social, ecological, and economic importance stated in studies about urban green space (e.g. Bochnig and Selle 1992; Nohl 1993; Selle 1993).

This situation needs, and allows new and innovative, solutions for empty lots. Not surprisingly, thus we find an increasing number of calls from municipalities for more civic engagement or general civic participation in maintaining and governing urban green spaces (EA.UE 1992; Schröder 2000; Krug-Gbur and Preisler-Holl 2004). Therefore, I will focus on a specific form of residents-lead transformation of empty lots into public green space.

In recent years, quite a number of local initiatives in Berlin have turned former empty lots or brownfields into publicly accessible open (green) spaces, some only

temporarily, others on a more permanent base. A few of those projects – often inspired by those created in New York City – can be identified as Community Gardens. Collective gardening, in the form of community gardens, is still a rarely known form of creating, shaping, and using public space. In the German context, it has been analyzed thus far primarily in the context of urban agriculture (Lohrberg 2001) or their potential as interim uses (Bauhardt 2004; Eißner and Heydenreich 2004; BBR 2004; Rosol 2005). In this paper, I want to analyse this recent development in the context of citizen participation in urban (green space) governance. Thus, I ask, in how far does Community Gardening in Berlin represent current forms and problems of public participation in urban green space governance, and thus exemplifies important shifts in the role of citizen participation over the past 20 years?

In order to contribute to answering this question, I will present results from a case study of nine community gardens in Berlin.¹ After a brief introduction into Community Gardening in Berlin, I will discuss important shifts in the role of civic participation and volunteering. In the fourth section I will present motivation and requirements of gardeners before I close with some reflections on what made possible the emergence of community gardening in Berlin, its possibilities and limits, and how to analyze it in the context of a changing character of civic participation.

9.2.1.2 Community Gardening in Berlin

The term “community garden” is in Germany mostly known from New York City and other cities in North America, but until now has rarely been used in Germany. The phenomenon, however, does exist. The Berlin, community gardens differ in size (from 700 m² to 4.5 ha), target group (local residents, migrants, children), and appearance (landscaped park, organic vegetable garden, brown fields with spontaneous vegetation). What they share in common is that they differ from both uniform institutionalized public green spaces and other forms of urban gardening. In contrast to city parks, they are community-managed, i.e. they are collectively designed, built, and maintained by local residents. In contrast to other forms of urban gardening, like the well-known – private – German allotment gardens (*Schrebergärten*), they are, at least, sometimes open to the general public. They heavily

¹The case study is based on 44 semi-structured in-depth interviews and another 24 shorter interviews – some of them as group interviews - with community gardeners from 14 garden projects ($N = 26$) and support organizations ($N = 12$), local politicians and administrators ($N = 16$), academics ($N = 6$) and environmental organizations ($N = 8$) conducted in 2003/04 and analyzed with MaxQDA qualitative data analysis software. The sampling followed theoretical, not statistical logic. Least similar cases of existing, and more or less successfully operating, gardens were selected in order to explore different perspectives. Further sources are participatory observation and analysis of secondary literature, media coverage and policy papers [for detailed information on methods, see Rosol (2006)].

depend on voluntary work and reflect the needs and ideas of the volunteers in both management style and appearance. In contrast to other forms of voluntary engagement, as, for example, stewardship for existing green spaces or sporadic volunteers' days, the involved residents create new green areas according to their own ideas. Moreover, community gardening implies the steady and more or less long-lasting commitment of residents through different stages of green space production (concept, creation, maintenance).

Although some of the gardens are only temporarily open to the general public, they can fulfill important social or other functions, which are relevant for a broader group of people or for the whole neighborhood. Most of these gardens have both an economic function (food provision) and a social function (social contact), irrespective of the geographical region in which they are situated. Often urban gardening projects are also political battles around the power of disposition over (urban public) space.² In contrast to North American community gardens (Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004; Baker 2004; Meyer-Renschhausen 2004) though, the Berlin gardens mostly do not serve productive functions. Flowers and shrubs are more commonly planted, and vegetables are planted for demonstration purposes, not as agricultural crops. Most gardens have collective areas as well as individual beds. The community garden groups are organized in different ways, ranging from loose groups to formally registered associations. The groups get funding from different sources: member fees and member donations, donations from outside, or prize money. Most of them get public funding as well, sometimes only for the creation of the gardens, sometimes also for maintenance costs.

Community Gardens fulfil important social functions, because they provide a space to meet and get in contact with other neighbours. They offer open green spaces to city dwellers and this way alleviate lacks of urban green in neighbourhoods with inadequate provision with public green open spaces. Different to conventional parks, they provide more appropriation possibilities, because people can use and change these spaces according to their wishes and ideas. Community gardens present, at the same time, an alternative to private gardens also in dense inner city districts. In a community garden, the garden as a traditionally very private form of green space can become an experimental ground for urban society.

The importance of the diverse functions of a community garden differs according to the needs in the specific neighbourhood. Generally, the public accessibility will be more important in dense inner city districts with a higher lack of public green space, whereas in the outer and periurban areas no full public access all the time may be needed due to better provision with private green spaces and other forms of urban green such as forests.

²This is especially well documented for New York City (Hassell, 2005; Schmelzkopf 2002, 1995; Staeheli et al. 2002; as another example see e.g. Lebuhn 2008). Here the guerilla gardening movement stands out, which became famous in New York City in the 1970s (Meyer-Renschhausen 2004; Reynolds 2008).

9.2.1.3 Shifts in the Role of Civic Participation and Volunteering

But in how far does community gardening represent a new form of citizen participation, and what kind of chances and problems does this reveal? Theoretical and empirical research (e.g. Elwood 2002; Geddes 2006; Ghose 2005; Herbert 2005) have shown how changes in urban governance over the last 20 years has shaped citizen participation at the local scale in the following five respects:

1. There is a growing responsibility of citizens and civic institutions – corresponding to the neo-liberal goal of greater institutional efficiency – which is usually not accompanied by increasing resources, influence and power (Ghose 2005)
2. Outsourcing and privatization of state services towards the profit-making and the non-profit sector and to volunteering citizens has become more common (Bondi and Laurie 2005)
3. There is the emergence of a discourse of collaboration that “has the potential to de-politicise urban governance practices and effectively discipline community organizations into forms of participation that are more manageable for the state,” (Elwood 2002: 123)
4. There is co-optation of energy, time, and agendas of participating citizens (Elwood 2002) and
5. Competitiveness among community groups has increased, as they, for example, compete for grant funding, at the expense of co-operation (see e.g. MacKinnon 2000: 298).

Crucial for the following discussion of community gardens is the rising significance of, “governance-beyond-the-state” (Swyngedouw 2005), i.e. the increasing participation of non-state actors in (local) state decision-making and the transformation of roles, responsibilities and institutional configurations of the (local) state and citizens in urban spatial politics. In many cases, this inclusion of non-state actors is less geared at citizens’ participatory rights, but rather at the outsourcing of traditional state functions to civil society organizations (see e.g. Fyfe 2005).

This is especially obvious in the shift of responsibilities for service provision towards the profit-making and the non-profit sector and to volunteering citizens (Bondi and Laurie 2005; Mayer 2006a, b; Milligan and Conradson 2006; Milligan 2007; Kearns 1992; Fyfe and Milligan 2003).

9.2.1.4 Motivation and Requirements of Gardeners

Within this larger context, I take a closer look at a specific example of civic participation in urban green space governance: community gardening.

Running a community gardens requires a lot of commitment – it needs time, labour, and money. Why do people do it nevertheless? It is revealing to study the motives of people who are community gardeners, i.e. who do commit their time and energy to running public green spaces. Generally, it can be said that their motivation

does not stem from calls for volunteering or an abstract sense of civic engagement. Instead they participate for specific personal reasons. Motives vary a lot and range from self-serving motives to political claims far beyond the actual gardens.

Analyzing the in-depth interviews, I found four motives to be the most important ones. First, most of the community gardeners enjoy the gardening itself. Second, most of the garden members want to be part of a group, socialize with others, and get into contact with their neighbours. An aspiration of some, for others a nice surprise, the gardens have become important local meeting places where neighbors get to know each other. Third, they are not satisfied with the number and appearance of existing parks and green spaces and wish to improve the situation of the lot or the neighborhood, beautify them and make them accessible to themselves and the public. And fourth, many of them also want to provide a safe and enjoyable outdoor space for their children.

Other motives mentioned by some gardeners were: recreation and fitness through gardening, exploring one's own creativity, affinity to nature and environmental concerns including the questioning of corporate (global) food systems. Last but not least, there are pedagogical motives (teaching children about nature in the city or demonstrating organic gardening techniques combined with the joy of cooking), economic reasons (because private or allotment gardens are not affordable for many), the desire to promote a co-operative form of working together, and this way transforming the city. Some gardeners also expressed the feeling of responsibility for their neighborhood and the future of a gardening project.³

Not surprisingly – if familiar with other empirical research concerning volunteering (e.g. Braun and Klages 2000: 76–85; Klages 2003: 92–93) – “having fun” is the factor that predominates and combines all other motives for the commitment of the community gardeners. In other words: If it does not bring fun, they don't engage in it. Therefore, the gardeners seek those activities that are most likely to be enjoyable for them – be it the actual gardening, be it fund raising, public relations or designing the garden, negotiating with local politicians or organizing a garden party. It is these motives that drive residents to green and maintain small lots and take on responsibility for them. However, they do not: (a) take on responsibility for a whole existing park or parts of it by joining a registered association or the like; and (b) assist the parks department more than sporadically through labor intensive, executive work such as garbage and leaf collection. This is simply because, “just cleaning, picking garbage and so on, that cannot be the fun.” (Gardener, Interview 12b/2003).

Moreover, the gardeners ask for basic conditions and provisions from the local state concerning funding and support in bureaucratic and legal issues. Without financial assistance, many of the gardeners could not afford the costs for the sites. Furthermore, the gardeners typically see funding for gardening material as an

³Food production for self-sufficiency or as self-help in the face of poverty is, as mentioned earlier, in contrast to many other cities (Domene and Sauri 2007; e.g. Buckingham 2005; Johnston and Baker 2005) not an important factor. The motives listed above confirm results of other community gardening studies (e.g. Armstrong 2000; Gehl 1987; Hanna and Oh 2000; Stone 2009).

appreciation of, or compensation for, their voluntary work: “because we do the work and they give the money.” (Gardener, Interview 12a/2003). Another one requests from local authorities:

Well, the only thing we really ask for is that they should give us the site at no cost. And really, at no cost. And they should make their contribution in the form of ensuring safety and paying other costs. So they should still fulfill their public duties. And even then, we would still give more than enough work in maintaining (. . .) the sites. (Gardener, Interview 47/2004)⁴

They also ask for minimal interference in the design and their way of running the lots. The self-determination, the voluntary nature of their engagement, and the openness of the process are important factors for many of the gardeners. This does not mean that the gardeners would completely abstain from support from the outside or be ignorant towards other needs and critique. However, they would not work in a hierarchical project, controlled and managed from outside, e.g. the city’s park department. Thus, representatives of the garden “Dolziger Straße,” for example, approve of an expansion of community gardening projects, but nevertheless doubt that it would work with a master plan imposed upon them from above (Interview 8/2003).⁵ Another gardener answers to the question whether he favored an expansion of community gardens that it would become dangerous if local authorities obliged people. In his view, local authorities should act according to the motto: “We don’t cede work, we cede decisions.” (Gardener, Interview 17/2003).

9.2.1.5 Conclusions

In this last section, I will summarize what made possible the emergence of community gardening in Berlin, its possibilities and limits, and how to analyze it in the context of a changing character of citizen participation.

Many of the studied gardens on public land became possible only because of the appalling budgetary situation of the City of Berlin. Because the City was not willing or able to fund the foreseen collective infrastructure, land fell vacant. This opened up a possibility for interim uses like gardens. As a result however, the gardens will have to go as soon as the eventual use – like a kindergarten in case of the Kids’ Garden – has obtained financing and will finally be realized. Gardens on private land, on the other hand, became possible due to the specific situation of the real estate market in Berlin. The lots are empty because development is currently not profitable enough. In this case too, these gardens have no long-time guarantee. In

⁴One project, the “Kids’ Garden” however, highly values the financial independence of the local authorities because of fears of too much influence from their side. However, this garden is more membership focused and yields only limited access to the general public. Public access for anyone at anytime is a precondition for public funding in the other projects.

⁵Stone similarly argues regarding the New York City Green Thumb project that many benefits provided by community gardens depend on the gardener’s autonomy and self-governance (Stone 2009).

their contract, the community gardeners had to agree that they will clear the land as soon as private investors show interest and, subsequently, a building permit is issued (Garden Dolziger Straße).

Insofar as this new acceptance of community green spaces is not a general appreciation of independently run green spaces and the support is only for temporarily uses of urban brownfields, the tenure of community gardens in Berlin is fragile. The current arrangements are only valid until “big investors” come back into the city. Comments by Berlin officials and their insistence on the term “interim use” suggest that gardens are seen mostly as a stop-gap measure or a second-best option in times of slow real-estate development. This is also related to the fact that the gardens meet certain aspirations of the municipality, but do not tackle the real problem: the maintenance of larger existing parks.

However, even if only temporarily, support from urban planners, which stems from limited financial resources and from a reorientation towards community responsibility and volunteering, has changed the possible fields of action of community greening projects. Therefore, a second series of questions is: What possibilities and problems does the new acceptance or even support of self-organized use of open space by the local state imply? Does it open up new opportunities? Is self-help the only chance for deprived urban areas to get any public green space? The study of the history of Berlin community gardening projects shows that the new situation leads to a complex outcome providing both opportunities and problems.

The acknowledgement and support of community gardens, on the one hand, make possible the emergence of new spaces with other uses, other designs and styles, with or without regulations. Also the gardens initiated and supported by the municipality open up former private and offer self-determined space, decentralized and non-bureaucratic solutions. These spaces are appreciated and used by local residents. In some cases, the gardens function as an important social meeting point of a neighborhood, and even if they were originally thought of as being only for interim uses, there is a good chance of securing them after they have successfully operated for a while and won enough support from residents and others.⁶

However, although the support of community garden projects opens up opportunities, this new acceptance of community groups is very ambiguous: it is both functional and fragile, given that only temporary uses are encouraged. Gardening groups have to acknowledge these new circumstances. They can use this support to promote their own cause, but have to be aware of the administrations differing interests.

If we look at the historical changes of community gardening in Berlin (Rosol 2010), we can find a shift from community gardening with strong connections to urban social movements towards community gardening as a form of voluntarism or the provision of social services. This, of course, has important implications for the question of participation. The changes discussed earlier of the character of civic

⁶See the longevity of the “interim” allotment gardens in Berlin, which have been in existence for more than 100 years now (Gröning 2000).

participation are relevant here. The withdrawal of funding from public infrastructures and the resulting outsourcing and privatization of state services as well as the responsabilization of citizens for the provision of services are especially obvious in the green space governance of Berlin today. Also, the increasing competition for public funding between different groups can be detected, although also new funding sources are opening up. The discourse of collaboration and participation as co-optation (see Sect. 9.2.1.3) are less important in the analysed cases.

This means that in the general discussion on civic participation and volunteering, we must be historically and geographically specific. Furthermore, I argue for an analytical rather than a normative approach towards questions of participation. With this, we are able to see how participatory experiences change with changes in society in general, and how this must lead to very different theoretical and political evaluations of the projects themselves.

9.2.2 *Subproject 2: A Network of Interests: Civic Participation Within “Urban Restructuring East” in Berlin (Miriam Fritsche)*

9.2.2.1 Participation Within the Framework of *Stadtumbau Ost*

That participation in style can be regarded as commonplace within recent planning theory as well as within political and social sciences. Several contributions to research on German local politics, having been published during the last years, show an upturn of participative approaches on a local scale (cf. Haus 2002; Haus et al. 2005; Geis 2005; Greiffenhagen and Neller 2005, for a research overview see Vetter 2007). According to these authors, not only the extent of participation is increasing, but there is also a shift occurring in the relation between citizens and local authorities. Under the label of “co-operative democracy” (cf. Bogumil 2002; Holtkamp et al. 2006), a duplication of roles in local politics intended for citizens is established: No longer do local political interests just focus on citizens as constituents and voters, but also as recipients, clients, and co-producers of local goods and services. Against this background, local politics is not only bound within the city hall anymore, but manifold “new governance spaces” (Taylor 2007) are set up, enabling state authorities, entrepreneurial actors, and citizens to take part in political decisions.

The following remarks analyse how the denationalization of urban planning interacts with public participation in a specific urban neighbourhood within the current German federal subsidy programme *Stadtumbau Ost* (“Urban Restructuring East”). Over the last few years, the shrinking of cities in the former eastern German states has become a hot topic in German urban development politics, and *Stadtumbau Ost* is likely the most ambitious current programme, envisaging the demolition of about 350,000 housing units in more than 340 municipalities. It is the goal of *Stadtumbau Ost* to remove the vast number of vacant tenements, as well as to alter

the course of urban politics by fitting east German cities to population decline. *Stadtumbau Ost* is of specific significance because unlike traditional state programmes of urban development, it is much more shaped by a co-operative approach. *Stadtumbau Ost* supports procedures of civic participation as well as a strong involvement of the housing industry in order to define the targets of urban development. The Federal Government as well as the Federal States (*Länder*) and their authorities have made both aspects as a precondition for granting subsidies. Accordingly, all *Stadtumbau Ost* municipalities are experiencing a boom in participation approaches (such as discussions, planning workshops, or advisory committees). At the same time, big housing companies are engaged in elaborating on the concepts of urban development to an extent previously unknown in Germany (cf. Hunger 2003).

Almost every *Stadtumbau Ost* programme document emphasises the necessity of comprehensive civic participation. For example, in the call for proposals of *Stadtumbau Ost*, it demands that, “participants from urban planning, the housing industry, and all affected citizens should be involved, from the beginning, in decisions concerning the necessary measures of restructuring” (BMVBW 2001: 3; own translation). Furthermore, the “concepts aimed for specific areas have to be examined in close coordination with affected property owners, users, and residents,” (ibid.: 8f.; own translation).

The national German *Urban Development Report* of 2004, released by the former Red-Green Federal Government, likewise acknowledges the commitment of civil society as decisive for a successful urban development. For example, it says, “Economy, citizens, and local authorities are called upon to define together the aims and goals for their city. This is the basis for a comprehensive and consensual strategy of realisation,” (BMVBW 2005: 8; own translation).

The same arguments are used by urban development politics at the level of the Federal States. According to the *Brandenburg Department for Building and Construction*, even the general success of *Stadtumbau Ost* is closely tied to the comprehensive participation of affected inhabitants – as the following quotation illustrates: “The successful realisation of ‘Stadtumbau Ost’ depends on the quality of public relation as well as upon the participation of residents,” (MSWV Brandenburg 2002: 6; own translation).

Participation does not only enjoy a good reputation among politicians. The national umbrella organisation of housing companies in Germany also alerts its members to the fact that, “without the commitment of citizens as those being affected as well as co-designers of a public community, ‘Stadtumbau Ost’ cannot be afforded,” (vhw 2003: 67; own translation). Similar quotations can also be found from other actors. The responsible Federal department, the *Länder* administrations, the housing industry, and public agencies all agree that *Stadtumbau Ost* needs participation.

At the same time, *Stadtumbau Ost* is characterised by an extreme fragmentation of decision-making structures. The Federal Government outlines the framing design, whereas funding guidelines are defined by the Federal States, and approval is given by local authorities. Yet, *Stadtumbau Ost* is only workable if landlords and homeowners are involved. Because of instruments of legal protection of property

they are able to veto every proposal to dismantle – it is up to them whether they want to see their properties demolished, rebuilt, or renovated. Hence, each project of the *Stadtumbau Ost* relies on the co-commitment of the housing industry.

Tenants in the areas affected by *Stadtumbau Ost* can also influence the process, because a high number of vacant tenements does not necessarily mean that any particular building is fully unoccupied. Remaining tenants have to be persuaded to move before demolition starts. Therefore, residents' willingness to take part is likewise essential for realising any measures of the *Stadtumbau Ost* programme. The position of residents towards *Stadtumbau Ost* is shaped by comprehensible interests (cf. Kabisch et al. 2004, 2007; Hagemeister and Haller 2009). In contrast to the presumptions that prevailed during the early stages of the *Stadtumbau Ost* programme, most residents are not against demolition in general. Rather, they attempt to preserve existing qualities of their residential area and – in case their removal is caused by a demolition – to gain control of the removal conditions in the greatest possible extent. Demolition of only parts of a building, renovations or upgrades easily find acceptance among residents. However, residents often refuse total demolitions. Affected tenants demand that housing alternatives are provided that do not differ from their previous apartments in terms of floor plan, rent, and fittings.

Here, a paradox becomes apparent: Although all participants appreciate cooperative procedures, the affected inhabitants experience a decline in their opportunities to influence the procedures when actors from the housing industry become involved. A cost of co-operation with economical players comes at the cost of democratic participation.

In order to explain this observation, the example of a large housing estate in the Berliner district of *Marzahn* serves as an illustration of civic participation in the *Stadtumbau Ost* programme. Taking the local *Stadtumbau Ost* as an example, the following paragraphs show what the handing over of communal liabilities means for the scope of participation.⁷

9.2.2.2 *Stadtumbau Ost* Between Residents' Participation and Housing Corporation's Interests: The Case of *Marzahn-Nord* in Berlin

Marzahn-Nord is the youngest part of East Berlin's large housing estate *Marzahn*, where about 60,000 prefabricated housing units (*Plattenbauten*) were built between 1975 and 1989. In 1989, the district of *Marzahn* had about 160,000 inhabitants. After 1990, the status of this housing dramatically shifted: House building in Berlin and its environs and increasing rents in *Marzahn* produced internal migration processes that led to a population decline, leaving behind a vast number of vacant tenements, and a change in population structure (cf. Schulz 2004).

Between 1992 and 2000, the population of *Marzahn* declined by 20%. Within the neighbourhood of *Marzahn-Nord*, directly adjoining the city limit, the loss was

⁷The following case study draws in parts of Fritsche (2008) and Fritsche (2010).

particularly dramatic. The population, which was once around 29,000 inhabitants, decreased by a third (cf. Weeber and Partner 2003). Accordingly, the number of unoccupied tenements increased. Hence, the neighbourhood was designated by the Berlin *Stadtumbau Ost* programme as a main area for demolition (cf. Cremer 2005). Besides the complete demolition of 170 housing units, the concept envisaged a partial reduction of eleven-story high-rises in the middle of the neighbourhood down to 3–6 floors. This meant a demolition of another 1,300 housing units, as well as the modernisation of the remaining 450 tenements (cf. BMVBW/BBR 2003: 64–67).

In *Marzahn*, civic participation did not start with *Stadtumbau Ost*. From the beginning of another federal subsidy programme, *Soziale Stadt*, in 1999, the district has been one of the areas designated under the “Neighbourhood Management” (*Quartiersmanagement*) planning programmes (cf. Abgeordnetenhaus von Berlin 1999). The professional neighbourhood managers, according to their own estimations, did not find any organised interests of residents, who were suitable to include into the process. Therefore, in addition to various single events, they initiated a residents’ advisory committee (*Bewohnerbeirat*) that has been meeting on a monthly basis since mid-2000. The neighbourhood managers then consulted with this committee concerning all matters of relevance to the neighbourhood.

With the emergence of *Stadtumbau Ost*, the *Bewohnerbeirat* got into a changed situation: Relevant questions were no longer presented and discussed within the residents’ advisory committee. Instead of intensive discussions simple and quite short-termed information was released. Just 14 days after affected tenants had learned from Berlin newspapers exactly which buildings were destined for demolition (cf. Berliner Morgenpost 2002), the state-owned housing corporation began their clearance. This information politics mobilised protest against *Stadtumbau Ost*. Voices in the neighbourhood’s newspaper and at hastily summoned meetings criticised how ignorantly and disrespectful affected tenants were treated by the housing corporation.

In order to reach a broad public, a circle of protestors, organised around the existing residents’ advisory committee, got active. It published a position paper (cf. *Bewohnerbeirat Marzahn NordWest* 2002) that demanded information on standards that underlie the planned demolitions. Furthermore, the residents demanded more consideration of their needs as well as clarifications as to the social, juridical, and financial implications of *Stadtumbau Ost*. At the beginning of the year 2003, a turbulent information event with about 350 participants was held that dealt with local *Stadtumbau Ost* process. It turned out that the holding back of information was a result of disagreements between the Berlin Senate Department for Urban Development (*Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung*) and the housing corporation. They were unable to reach an agreement about the financing of the modernisation procedures for those apartments remaining within the buildings that were designated for reduction (cf. NORDWEST 2003). Unlike the demolition, which was financed by *Stadtumbau Ost*, assistance for modernisation had to be granted by the State (*Land*) of Berlin. However, the responsible *Senator for Urban Development* was reluctant to provide benefits for *Marzahn-Nord* because he regarded it as

a residential area with weak future prospects and therefore favoured a complete demolition of the eleven-story high-rises. Due to this mixture of divergent interests, unstable financing, uncoordinated strategies of *Stadtumbau Ost*, and restricted deliveries of information, the original plans, that had hoped for ambitious civic participation, fell behind.

Members of the *Bewohnerbeirat*, who were meanwhile convinced by proposals of partial demolition linked with modernisation, founded a rent control initiative (*Mieterschutzinitiative Marzahn-Nord*) and circulated leaflets with the header “Nobody Has To Move” into the letterboxes of affected buildings. The committee thereafter recorded a significant increase in the number of people who attended its meetings.

However, the fact that the financing of demolition remained secured while the modernisations remained further uncertain had not changed. In May 2003, since the Senator reacted neither to the position paper nor to an invitation to visit the neighbourhood, the residents’ advisory committee decided to go public. They wrote to the mayor of the neighboured municipality of *Ahrensfelde* (located in *Brandenburg*) and asked for support. After a devastating account of the situation (“the residents’ advisory committee cannot help thinking that *Marzahn-Nord* is already written off and – visually spoken – buried by the capital”, *Bewohnerbeirat* 2003; own translation), the advisory committee requested the mayor to check if it was possible to incorporate *Marzahn-Nord* into the local authority of *Ahrensfelde*. Copies of this letter had been sent to various newspapers in Berlin together with a press release. This, “attempt to escape to Brandenburg,” (*Preußing* 2004) generated a broad media coverage in the following days. Local TV stations reported from the neighbourhood and gave inhabitants a chance to speak. Mobilisation led to success (cf. *Cremer* 2005). In December 2003, the Senate assured grants for modernisation, thereby enabling the realisation of the *Stadtumbau Ost* project, that became known as *Ahrensfelder Terrassen* (Figs. 9.1 and 9.2).

But already in springtime 2007, the constraints of the local negotiation structure that was established during the first period of *Stadtumbau Ost*, were becoming obvious. *Stadtumbau Ost* in *Marzahn* was planned for a second round, initially putting another 200 housing units in the neighbourhood of *Ahrensfelder Terrassen* up for consideration of reconstruction (cf. *Fritsche and Lang* 2007). Due to the problems during the first phase of *Stadtumbau Ost*, the neighbourhood managers initiated a participation procedure in good time. It was supported by the local neighbourhood advisory board (*Quartiersbeirat*)⁸ and the steering committee for *Stadtumbau Ost*, and it included representatives of the Senate, the local authority of the district *Marzahn-Hellersdorf*, the housing corporation, and the neighbourhood

⁸The neighbourhood’s advisory board, established in spring 2006 as a new committee of the local implementation of *Soziale Stadt* programme, includes representatives of the residents as well as of third sector agencies, associations, educational institutions, and housing companies. It decides on the allocation of all funds from the *Soziale Stadt* programme. In Berlin, the distribution of assistance from *Soziale Stadt* for all areas of neighbourhood management is meanwhile in the responsibility of the particular neighbourhood advisory board (cf. *Fritsche* 2008).

Fig. 9.1 Marzahn-Nord before reconstruction



Fig. 9.2 Marzahn-Nord after reconstruction



managers. An external applicant, who proposed to hold a *Charrette*,⁹ was selected to realise the procedures of participation. The *Main Charrette* was held during several days in March 2007 amidst the affected area.

At the same time, a smouldering conflict over the extent of forthcoming demolitions broke out. During preparation of the planning workshop, it was communicated that the volume was restricted to the complete demolition of 132 housing units in two eleven-story high-rises. However in the meantime, the housing corporation had

⁹A *Charrette* is an open planning workshop that should carry on at least 4 days. On the basis of a question concerning urban development or public spaces, an interdisciplinary group including various interest groups, affected residents, policy makers, and experts elaborates on a common solution that should be articulated as a development concept or master plan (cf. Kegler 2005).

altered its plans – to the surprise of all other local actors. Another 3 six-story buildings (with almost 130 housing units) were scheduled for complete demolition. Originally, they had been designated for reduction with complementary modernisation in the manner of the *Ahrensfelder Terrassen*. This enlargement of the demolition setting burdened the whole participation procedure. The residents' advisory committee and the rent control initiative together accused the housing corporation of abusing the workshop, seeking for pseudo-participatory legitimation, and disregarding the agreements and communication channels established during the first period of *Stadtumbau Ost*. Residents protested against the housing corporation's decision with open letters, press releases, and their pointed absence from the *Charrette*. The planning workshop was eclipsed by developments, which let it now appear as a starting point of expanding demolition.¹⁰ The *Charrette*, intended to plan the further development of the area, initially had the support of all actors of the neighbourhood (including representatives of residents as well as the housing corporation). However, now this participation instrument came into fatal difficulties.

This was due to the solo effort of the housing corporation torpedoing cooperative agreements. It defined its decisions as a consequence of a renewed evaluation, dealing with the business-oriented strategy of *Stadtumbau Ost*. Because this consequence should not be up for any public consideration, further debates were completely unfounded. The housing corporation's view was implicitly supported by the *Senate Department for Urban Development*, whose responsibility was to control the programme and to provide benefits. In 2005, it laid down that, "decisions on demolition, renovation, or selling of the housing stock (...) are to be made by the management of the housing corporation on its own responsibility," (Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin 2005: 2; own translation).

As a result, a divided participation policy was established. On the one hand, the local authority welcomed the involvement of affected residents. On the other hand, it did nothing to ensure that the state-owned housing corporation would stay on the uncomfortable path of participation in case of conflict. Participation therefore turned out to be an "act of grace" that the housing corporation would afford. When hard decisions are on the agenda, "goodwill-cooperation" barely withstands. The inhabitants interpreted the housing corporation's approach of simply casually and belatedly informing them of altered demolition decisions as an attempt to overwhelm them. As they saw it, the housing corporation not only wanted to create a *fait accompli*, but also attempted to give it a participatory air by joining the planning workshop.

¹⁰This view was widely shared by people outside the residents' advisory committee – which was seen when a head teacher decided to withdraw his promise that the pupils of his school would participate at the *Charrette*. He criticised that the changed demolition setting turned the procedure into an "alibi-participation, abusing any commitment".

9.2.2.3 Conclusion: The Participation Paradox of *Stadtumbau*

Marzahn-Nord experienced a long forerun of participation before the beginning of *Stadtumbau Ost*. Procedures and structures of participation had been already established under programmes such as *Soziale Stadt*. As a consequence, active groups of inhabitants had already existed for years, being engaged in the interests of their neighbourhood where they are well-known and rooted. Various participation procedures were adopted in the course of *Stadtumbau Ost*, based on approaches that had been tested already. The range contained public meetings, planning workshops, advisory boards, and regular platforms for discussion.

But this participation always has had a subordinated status. Inhabitants were neither involved into the conception nor informed about the plans in time. Against this background, it is daring to speak of a broad cooperative approach within local *Stadtumbau Ost*. It can be rather emphasised, that existing platforms of participation were excluded whenever sensitive issues affecting the housing problem were under discussion. The above-mentioned “disregarding” and attempted “overwhelming” of the residents’ advisory committee shows this.

Reasons for this are easy to detect. Since the housing corporations began to be crucial for the operability of *Stadtumbau Ost*, they brought in a higher veto power to the negotiation table than did the residents. The unequal distribution of resources is immediately reflected by the different chances that residents and housing companies have in profiting from cooperative procedures. This situation can be described as *participation paradox of Stadtumbau Ost*. On the one hand, *Stadtumbau Ost* is much more cooperatively oriented than previous programmes, including players from the housing industry in the process of defining targets and implementing them afterwards. On the other hand, this stronger involvement leads to a loss of opportunities for citizens to decisively influence the programme.

Neither a shortage of grassroots participation culture nor a lack of willingness, on the part of the administration, is crucial for the failure of participation procedures – at least, not in the presented case of *Marzahn-Nord*. It is equally valid to suggest that failure is caused by the choice of wrong participation techniques. It is rather problematic that the scope of participation within *Stadtumbau Ost* depends on a specific network of operating necessities on the part of housing companies. When citizenry and state start establishing cooperative solutions within the framework of participation events, they are in danger of reckoning without the host. The course of *Stadtumbau Ost* is not determined by the model of a cooperative democracy (however it is shaped), but rather by the logic of practical constraints. It is an incidental mixture, differing from place to place, and resulting from an interaction of distribution of property, assistance policies, and situations of mortgage – giving important control capacities to housing companies.

In summary, one has to draw a disillusioning image of cooperative democratic approaches within *Stadtumbau Ost*. The scenery of a harmony of interests, shared between housing corporations, administrations and citizens, that enables them to just sit around a table, to speak openly about problems and to actually find a broad

consensus obviously does not mirror reality of local politics. Wherever conflicts of interests occur, procedures based on participation concepts are quickly annulled – like in the case of the *Charrette* being held in *Marzahn-Nord*.

The few existing evaluations that deal with *Stadtumbau Ost* and its concrete measures underpin these results. Already the first analysis of integrated concepts of urban development, having been elaborated in a nationwide contest, contains rather sobering findings:

“The concepts [were] partly presented at panels and also partly discussed with residents during workshops. Whereas in the sensitive area of determining the reduction of specific objects, local authorities and housing societies often shared the legitimate concern that a public involvement, especially with the affected tenants, starting too soon could make the realisation of the plans more difficult,” (BMVBW/BBR 2003: 25; own translation).

In contrast to “common definition of goals”, “closed coordination” and “early inclusion”, like it was intended by the programme, the practice is rather dominated by one-dimensional information events, where residents learn about decisions, which nevertheless had been already made. While the programme acknowledges citizens as co-deciders and partners, during realisation, they are positioned as the shy deer that could be scared up by too much information. The 2006 status report of *Stadtumbau Ost* came to a similar conclusion (cf. BMVBS/BBR 2006). It showed that the fear of civic participation from the preparatory period of *Stadtumbau Ost* has continued during its realisation:

“As a result, in many cases information about ongoing negotiations and necessary measures of reduction was held back for a long time. Nevertheless, they were often brought on public focus by using ‘intricate paths’, what understandably caused resentment among persons affected. (...) Participation regularly happened as information after planning came to an end, without keeping the possibility open to take part or even to object,” (ibid.: 79; own translation).

Due to these findings, an appropriate civic participation within *Stadtumbau Ost* can be considered as wishful thinking.

Considering that *Stadtumbau Ost* is a significant policy field of urban development in Germany, with benefits of about 2.5 billion Euros and more than 340 participating communities, the often met positive opinion of “cooperative democracy” seems to barely correspond with reality. Moreover, an interesting paradox is emerging. Although all actors want more involvement, the reality of participation falls back far behind.

From this, a shift of perspective within the field of urban research and especially for studies of urban neighbourhoods within political sciences is arising. Instead of taking a crypto-normative position that considers participation as good by definition, it should be examined who is participating, for which purposes they take part, who is able to enforce his or her interests, and by which means. The example of *Stadtumbau Ost* in *Marzahn-Nord* shows clearly that interests of private enterprises or interests of those players acting along the requirements of private economy are of crucial importance within such a context.

9.2.3 *Subproject 3: From Brownfield to Blossom? Sustainable Urban Development Through Gardening Exhibitions (Martin Klamt)*

9.2.3.1 Effects of Gardening Exhibitions on Cities

It's not about flowers. Gardening exhibitions, based on a tradition of more than a century in Germany (Preisler-Holl 2002: 161), have become major events and prominent instruments of urban development in recent decades. In this article, I will draw on the development of gardening expos and their effects on urban sustainability in terms of implementation of planning principles, city image production, and participation.

When the first horticultural exhibitions started in the early nineteenth century, for about a hundred years their predominant function was to show exotic plants and gardening art (Panten 1987: 9 ff.). The early federal expos, set up as a biennial event after the second World War in Germany (*Bundesgartenschau*), were used to repair destructions caused by war and to establish urban green strips (Meiberth 2002: 9). In the 1970s and 1980s, a more economic function came to the fore in terms of city marketing and tourism. The 1990s brought an additional emphasis to the expos: against the background of German reunification, political, economic, and demographic changes, horticultural exhibitions displayed their function as instruments of sustainable urban development, of urban resilience and transformation in bright light.

While community gardens work as places of social integration on micro-scale level and while urban renewal projects are often meso-scale urban phenomena, large-scale urban areas demand their very own instruments regarding transformation processes of the city. At first glance, gardening exhibitions are likely to be associated with landscape planning, botany, and horticultural design. Yet, their role, in fact, is of a broader political, economical, and social character, that deeply affects the prosperity of cities and greater regions.

For the city, winning an expo also means winning large amounts of public subsidies and private investment (Häußermann et al. 2008: 262). Like the Olympic Games (Garcia 1993) it means gaining media attention and attracting tourists (Häußermann et al. 2008: 260). Additional funds are generated in the prospects of developing large-scale urban free space and housing areas in an aesthetic and sustainable way, which would otherwise simply not have been possible. Furthermore, setting up an expo venue speaks to the needs of creating urban parks, producing or even changing the image of the city, and accelerating urban renewal (Meiberth 2002: 9). In the end, the expo vision has a disciplining effect on the political and economic stakeholders of the city who concentrate their power on this single project (Härtig 2002: 44; Klamt 2009: 37). Of course, there might be also consequential problematic effects because less prominent problems and projects might simply be overridden by the sole planning of the big event (Häußermann et al. 2008: 265). Therefore, it should be examined whether, and to what extent, there are

sustainable effects of the exhibition after its 6 months of ephemeral “show time” (cf. Härtig 2002: 41).

The German federal gardening expos are held every 2 years and are organised not only in major cities but also in smaller and less attractive cities and regions. In other words, horticultural exhibitions are not only well adapted to a city’s functional needs in terms of the subsequent use of the site, in aiming at long-term development of large-scale urban areas, they also entail easier application processes, in particular for cities dealing with serious structural and social problems that would otherwise have little chance of hosting other major events. The venue itself is often planned for an inner-city park for *everyday* use afterwards. For these reasons, gardening exhibitions could be seen as an exceptionally fitting instrument of sustainable urban development.

To sum up, horticultural expos are large-scale urban projects with far-reaching effects on the city’s ecology, economy, and quality of living. Currently, there are three federal and two international exhibitions planned in Germany (Koblenz 2011, Hamburg 2013, the Havel region 2015, Berlin 2017, Heilbronn 2019), as well as four to eight exhibitions every year at the regional level of the federal states of Germany (cf. Hauser 2010). Other countries like Austria, China, the Netherlands, Japan, Taiwan, and the UK have been aiming at similar goals with their own gardening expos. Yet despite its impact on urban development, the phenomenon of federal and international horticultural exhibitions has only rarely been investigated systematically (but see Theokas 2004). Hence, this is the initial point for this research project.

In this article, firstly the main objectives of research as well as the case studies of the federal gardening exhibitions of Munich and Schwerin will be introduced. Against the background of the theoretical framework, empirical methodology is explained secondly. Main results derived from empirical research are shown in terms of the general function of the expo for urban development in these cities as well as of city image, planning principles, and participation. Finally, a conclusion is drawn, also sketching some future perspectives.

9.2.3.2 Objectives and Case Studies

Still, while the goal of sustainable urban development is the same, the outcomes might be different in each city. Löw has stated that knowledge about which strategy works best in which city has not been systematised yet (2008: 11). It shall be analysed then how the same instrument of sustainable urban development is interpreted by the main actors of each city government, economical players, and civil society. What are the plans, the goals, and the outcomes as appraised from different perspectives of these actors?

The main objectives of this analysis of the sustainable factor of gardening expos are: what are the effects of gardening exhibitions regarding urban sustainability in terms of a city’s image, planning principles and outcomes, public spaces and participation? According to this, one main field of research is to examine the effects

of a gardening exhibition on *city image* (as external perception and city marketing product) and identity (as perception of citizens). City images serve as soft locational factors with high relevance in contemporary urban politics. A second main aspect is to study the specific *planning principles* of each city and the role of the gardening exhibitions to enhance them in practise. Regarding the problem of how (sustainable) *public spaces* such as parks, city squares, and open spaces in housing areas should be and can be designed, the question arises as to whether or not the horticultural expo is a proper instrument here. Furthermore, the process of planning and the influence of *participation* are to be investigated.

There are two central case studies to be analysed. First, there is Munich as a major German city of growth. Here the federal gardening exhibition of 2005 was used to develop a former airfield as a whole new urban district with large housing, business, and park areas based on planning principles of sustainability. As a contrast, Schwerin, a shrinking eastern German city, implemented the federal gardening exhibition 2009 in the very heart of the City to recreate a new and attractive eco-city profile to stop degradation and to manage structural transformation by enhancing urban resilience. The comparison of these quite different case studies is to be completed in the broader research framework by further examples of future venues in Germany as well as of Asian cities.

9.2.3.3 Theoretical Framework: Sustainability, Festivals, and Urban Politics

The theoretical framework is provided by analysing the paradigm of *sustainability*, as well as the phenomenon of urban “*festivalisation*”, and the urban politics of *aesthetisation*. These theoretical approaches shall be introduced here briefly.

Sustainability is generally seen as being based on the three pillars of economy, the socio-cultural, and ecology. Gardening exhibitions playing a role as an instrument of urban development and setting free political, financial, and specific local resources, are affecting all three of these pillars (cf. Härtig 2002: 49). Yet, the research project focuses mainly on the socio-cultural aspect of sustainability. It includes a comparison of the politician’s and planner’s view with the outcomes shaping everyday life of urban residents as well as (seemingly) soft factors such as urban images, and questions concerning the influence of participation (Cranz and Boland 2004; Preisler-Holl 2002: 163). There are many faces of sustainability and the term is used in almost every context. For this reason, it has to be sharpened (cf. Zeemering 2009) to get a tangible term that is suitable for empirical operationalisation. In this context, sustainability shall be defined as long-term optimisation of urban images and socially successful implementation of planning visions and building measures.

Festivals have become important instruments in pushing urban planning projects and city marketing (Häußermann and Siebel 1993). There are two main challenges cities have to face and can accept by implementing horticultural exhibitions as an instrument. On the one hand, some cities have to deal with shrinking and degradation processes, as well as declining economies and lower tax revenues due to fundamental industrial and political transformation. Cities and regions in eastern

Germany were struck particularly hard by this development. On the other hand, against the background of globalisation, cities increasingly have to compete with other (and more) places (Häußermann et al. 2008: 263; Löw 2008: 12 f.). In this regard, both shrinking and prospering cities are affected by competition (while the specific impact and the city's potentials to shape it positively are quite different, of course). As a consequence, urban politics often aims at sustainability in terms of creating characteristic attractions and distinctive urban spaces. To that end, festivals are used as an instrument.

The aspect of festivalisation is therefore paralleled by urban politics of *aesthetisation* which means that city governments are increasingly aiming at urban improvement measures to refurbish and *clean out* the city, and to compete with other cities of comparable rank e.g. by means of image production (Paul 2004: 573; Rutheiser 1996) and tourist attractions (cf. Löw 2008: 118 ff.). But generally, aesthetics is not quite the same comparing a planner's and a layman's view which Tessin (2008) has shown. In addition, within this framework of city improvement the less wealthy may have to give way to rising rents and gentrification processes in an aestheticised neighbourhood (Häußermann et al. 2008: 277 f.; Garcia 1993: 257 ff.). Gardening exhibitions do have an impact on both of these scenarios and therefore have to be analysed empirically in this regard.

Due to this assumption, a gardening expo might work as an instrument here. When it comes to planning the future of urban areas available as a result of deindustrialisation, or developing urban brownfields (Meiberth 2002: 11) and former airfields, applying for a federal or international horticultural expo seems to be a proper option. Still, the applicant cities do have to deal with quite different challenges. Hence, I will have a look at if and how this instrument works in terms of urban sustainability in different cities.

9.2.3.4 Methodology

The perspective of experts and urban residents is evaluated with qualitative and quantitative techniques of empirical social research. The main method was to conduct qualitative interviews with experts of the exhibition management, urban governments, and economy, as well as with residents of (former) exhibition areas and everyday users of these urban landscapes. So far, 50 persons have been interviewed, among them representatives of city governments, exhibition management, different political parties, nature conservation organisations, tax-payer associations, real estate management, urban planning and landscape architecture. Additional interviews were conducted with experts of future expos in Germany and of contrastable projects in Japan and Taiwan. The function of these interviews was to find out about the different motives, strategies, influence, and aims of the stakeholders and managers on the one hand. On the other hand, subjective perceptions of the situation, evaluation of the planning and its outcomes by laymen can be found by analysing and interpreting their interview's transcripts. As can be seen, planning large-scale projects like gardening expos is a matter of key players of

urban society while the outcomes are observed best through the eyes of the persons affected by the project as users of city spaces in their everyday routines.

In addition, a quantitative survey with citizens in Munich and Schwerin was completed in 2009. The questionnaire covered three pages of questions, which were presented to residents of each city in a face-to-face situation. Its function was to mirror the findings resulting from other methodology. This proved reasonable in particular when it came to finding out how the image of the city was influenced (cf. Rutheiser 1996) by means of the horticultural exhibition and to what extent the specific planning principles can be regarded sustainable in terms of a high resident's acceptance of the parks. Until now, more than 520 people have taken part in the survey, approximately half of them in Munich and half of them in Schwerin. From the findings based on this empirical research, both the critical factors of success as well as the specific outcomes in different cities and the problems created by this kind of planning shall be derived, with an eye on applicable solutions for future exhibitions in different cities.

9.2.3.5 Results

From these data sources first results can be derived. The focus here is firstly the general role of gardening exhibitions within urban development processes, secondly sustainability in terms of city image and urban planning, and thirdly the aspect of participation.

The General Function of Gardening Exhibitions for Urban Development

Especially from the perspective of planners, expo managers, and politicians, federal gardening exhibitions are clearly used as an instrument of urban development. Their objectives are – at least ostensibly and regarding German expos – to establish sustainable urban structures both by means of the built environment and the economy, as well as to address issues such as social integration, political participation, and city image. It was, arguably, a consensus among the interviewed experts that the exhibition is not a proper instrument to *compass* urban planning strategies. It should rather be a means to advance and accelerate already *existing* and *consistent* planning visions. In other words, gardening exhibitions work as motors rather than as initiators of urban development. Recently, aiming at sustainable urban development through gardening expos in Germany points to long-term economical and socio-cultural effects on city and region rather than above all reaching for short-term economic success and a maximum of visitors. Urban renewal, management of structural change, optimising infrastructure and public spaces were important objectives, too, within a planning period that began usually about 5–10 years in advance of the expo.

Gardening exhibitions are therefore a fitting instrument for developing urban areas that are large-scaled and of high relevance in the context of urban ecology. In

some cases of course, organising an expo may politically lead to unforeseen conflicts, and economic problems to be solved (Theokas 2004: 264 f.): where there is no sufficient basis for cooperation of the leading actors, where the residents are not widely supportive of the project, or where financial calculations are all too optimistic or short-sighted. The international gardening expo in the maritime eastern German city of Rostock in 2003 (cf. Preisler-Holl 2002: 166), with its large and expensive exhibition halls, is one of the examples where planning seemed to be focused mainly on setting up the venue for the exhibition itself due to available financial support, and less on the probable uses of the area afterwards (see Thwaites et al. 2007: 5ff.). Thus the City was left not only with a deficit after the event but with permanent future costs of maintenance. This also emphasises the political scope of horticultural exhibitions, interrelating the issues of sustainability, urban development, and major projects with social and monetary aspects.

Urban Sustainability in Terms of Image and Planning Principles

A main research objective was to find out about the effects of the gardening expo on urban sustainability in terms of a city's image and implementation of guiding principles of urban planning.

Munich 2005

There are cases where the effects of the event as a motor are not as strong and as positive as they probably could have been. The *Bundesgartenschau* of Munich in 2005 accepted the challenge of promoting an attractive image for the whole new urban district of the *Messestadt Riem* which was established on the former airfield on the urban fringe, and to set up a modernly designed landscape park.

The findings of the survey documented that creating a positive image of sustainable urbanism by using the gardening expo turned out to be quite demanding. Indeed, the gardening exhibition helped gaining media attention to the new district and its park surroundings. Nevertheless, 4 years after the exhibition only 23% of the people asked continued to associate the Messestadt with the gardening expo. In this regard, the initial effect of 2005, promoting newly set up real estate projects near the park, can not be seen as sustainable.

Furthermore, it seems surprising that the character of the image itself does not refer to the positive connotations of the city's planning principles and the gardening exhibition as green, liveable, urban, ecologically sustainable, and economically successful. Instead, only 17% characterise the image of the former exhibition venue as positive. This result seems to be even worse in comparison with the image of the City of Munich itself which obtained 88% positive votes, a remarkably high value. Hence, the federal exhibition of 2005 neither constituted a *lasting* positive label for the new urban neighbourhood and it remained more or less irrelevant for the City of Munich in general. That is why subsequent long-term economic effects for

the location probably cannot be derived from the event itself, but rather from the new Munich fair located close to the housing area.

Still, the Messestadt is, according to the interviews, quite a liveable neighbourhood especially for young families and older residents. As the last phase of construction of the district has not even been finished yet, it will still need some time to establish stable identity structures (Koch 2006). There is a discrepancy between a positive perception of the former venue from the perspective of inhabitants (and planners as well) and a negative perception from people living outside Messestadt.

Planning and outcomes in Munich have to be analysed differentiated and not only from the perspective of the gardening expo itself, but in a broader context of the city's development policy. The city government of Munich implemented its planning principles for sustainable urban development – compact, urban, green – building an exemplary new district for 16,000 dwellers and a location of 13,000 jobs at the eastern city limits. Since the airport had already closed in 1992 and moved to a larger area out of the city, the planning visions for the subsequent use of the former airfield, with an area of 550 hectares, started long before the vision for a horticultural expo became tangible there. However, the federal expo then appeared to be a perfect instrument for transforming the vast area into a new city park, and for enhancing the development of a new and sustainable urban district.

Yet, a closer look at the urban conception as well as the contrast between the interviews conducted with planners on the one hand and with residents on the other hand reveals that the planning principles have led to antagonistic rather than integrative outcomes. While the compact city aims at sustainability in terms of shorter routes and urban density, it is, at least partly, interrupted by nice, but (to this end) interfering, spacious green areas. Urbanity should have been created by mixed use, but the chosen scale instead led to separated use in fact: the business area of the Munich fair is located in the north, spatially separated from the housing area by a mall, while the housing use in turn separates the vast landscape park in the south which in turn doesn't constitute an urban linkage to the surrounding districts. Furthermore, the architecture of buildings and streets is perceived as monotonous and therefore composes an improper framework to create urbanity. Ecological urban sustainability requires less car use. Yet, providing all too little parking space unfortunately did not seem to be the right planning tool here. Instead of resulting in less car use and less traffic, it increased the frustration of residents in the first place. These issues also point to the question of participation in urban development which I will discuss below. However, the federal gardening expo did not help to solve these issues of planning conceptions.

Schwerin 2009

Although the initial issue – managing transformation processes by developing inner-city areas in a sustainable way – was similar in the City of Schwerin, the background situation and outcomes were quite different. The venue of the federal expo of 2009 geographically covered the very heart of the formerly shrinking city – a

promising, yet quite challenging location. The planning concept was based on opening the city to the lakeshores which frame the centre district (*City at the waterfront*) (Fig. 9.3), and to put the meaning of the city's attractions like the castle, the historic centre, and historic parks to the forefront of both the constructions works and of all marketing measures. By doing so, conflicts with civil society groups and nature conservation organisations were inevitable. However, in the end the plans of the exhibition management and the city government became widely accepted, and paved the way for refurbishment measures visible throughout the cityscape (Fig. 9.4), bringing forward economic resilience, too: the survey and the interviews clearly indicate that Schwerin created a new profile as a tourist destination and regional cultural centre. The gardening exhibition is, to this end, particularly suited as it carries the image of a tourist attraction by labelling itself as aware of urban ecology and sustainable development. In accordance with that, 68% of the people asked confirmed that Schwerin got a new and positive image, while none of

Fig. 9.3 New perspectives on the city from the lake (Schwerin 2009)



Fig. 9.4 Urban renewal in the wake of the expo (Schwerin 2009)



them associated their city with the former characteristic of a “degraded” and “grey” city. A vast majority was even “proud” of hosting the *Bundesgartenschau*.

As an explanation, the plans for Schwerin focused successfully on the City’s genuine geographical characteristics, placing emphasis on the urban lakes and on the historic city centre, with its famous buildings and existing parks. The gardening expo worked as a promoting tool for urban renewal measures, and for managing economic transformation processes. In other words, the expo of Schwerin tied in with the city’s specific potentials, enhancing them to create new urban spaces now positively to be experienced for the citizens. Secondly, a new urban profile as a tourist destination and cultural centre linked closely to the surrounding natural landscapes was pushed. In combination with a coherent financial calculation, investment, and successful long-term planning measures put into effect, the federal expo of 2009 seems to have provided for promoting a process of sustainable urban development (cf. Klamt 2009).

Participation

Of course, even the best plan probably will not work out well in every detail. Participation might be particularly important here for two reasons. Major events like federal and international gardening exhibitions are always a bone of contention. They attract main attention by conflicting interest groups and shape everyday life of citizens by their built and social consequences. The latter is especially true in the case of gardening expos as they affect vast urban areas, which have proven to be particularly sensitive objects in terms of image, ecology, economy, and belonging.

Participation is therefore a proper instrument to firstly identify (future) needs of residents and to conceptualise urban and landscape design on this basis. This in turn is a crucial indicator of sustainability (cf. Cranz and Boland 2004: 114). Last but not least, it is also a question of democratic fairness (Hester 2006: 77). Secondly, there is a soft but nevertheless highly important effect of real participation. People not only get informed but *feel* that their perspective is needed and that there actually is a stage for them within the big project. This is ambivalent of course as this *feeling* might be exploited when participation is only a superficial proscenium without any influence on the outcomes. Meanwhile, the deals are made backstage by the stakeholders. The so-called communicative turn in planning strategies (Häußermann et al. 2008: 260) is therefore not enough.

Managing gardening expos to success means uniting those involved in, and affected by, the project – a task difficult enough, and to be handled by experts only. As participation has been recognised as an important factor that must not simply be overridden, a series of city governments as well as expo managers are trying to inform the public about the project at an early stage and to moderate between conflicting parties.

This approach is accurate yet not sufficient as the real influence of citizens is widely limited in most cases. The organisation of the international expo in Hamburg-Wilhelmsburg 2013 is worth mentioning here as special attention is paid to the

multiethnic interest groups in the district. A specific agency for participation and process management has been institutionalised within the organising company, especially taking care of the demands of citizens for useable and liveable public spaces (cf. Cranz and Boland 2004). Still, even efforts like that may not be fair enough to countervail the residents' fear of gentrification, or to even solve the problem itself. Still, it indicates the importance of the interplay of the protagonists here once again.

Regarding the federal exhibition of Munich 2005, the real influence of participation is not quite clear but the survey shows that about 40% people could declare to have been informed well, and that there was an opportunity to actively participate (which was actually taken by only about 10%, however). Despite these figures, the new landscape park cannot truly be named sustainable due to its (perceived) very modern design, vast geometric free spaces, and lack of convivial public space. In other words, the concept was not well-understood by its users, did not realistically seem to aim for social integration, and therefore now is not socially sustainable (see Ostermann 2009; Cranz and Boland 2004). However, the park was not a failure. Some parts remain quite frequented, the design is distinctive, and it will still require some years to fully develop its potentials. The question therefore is rather if it could have been done better and more in accordance with the user's perspective (Tessin 2008), and finally, if the effects and resources of the federal gardening exhibition could have made a more sustainable contribution to this.

Further problems of top-down planning are reflected in monotonous streets, buildings, and spatial arrangements of the new Munich district. Yet, not only the (green and grey) built environment caused arguable perceptions. The social pillar of sustainability in the new Messestadt included social housing and a diverse neighbourhood of multiethnic residents. This is one of the reasons why some Munich residents who live outside the Messestadt perceive the young district, despite this socially sustainable objective and its modern urban layout, as degrading already. The example illustrates that integration cannot simply be built even if planning principles and spatial framework are designed to that end. Still, it is not proven if a greater extent of participation could have helped to avoid such problems (cf. Hester 2006; Theokas 2004: 258). The case of Munich's former airfield nevertheless might serve as an ambivalent guide for the international expo planned for Berlin-Tempelhof 2017.

While the organisers of the federal expo of Schwerin 2009 managed to get some critics to join and to arouse high acceptance from the citizens, the sound of some voices was absorbed by the stakeholders, and even more by the success of the expo itself. Among them, some owners of small garden plots now fear removal due to planned real estate projects promoted by the dynamic expo effect. Another bone of contention is the relationship of the gardening expo and the preservation of nature. It comes as no surprise that the federal association for the protection of nature (*BUND, Friends of the Earth Germany*) even filed law suits against the building measures taken at the city lake of Schwerin as a preparation of the federal exhibition in 2009, and against the cutting down of trees, finally achieving an agreement in court.

Last but not least, there are two more aspects with a view to participation which will have to be analysed further in this project. Participation may also mean that private persons join the process of refurbishing the city by supporting it financially or even practically. Secondly, aesthetisation and refurbishment may lead to raising rents, displacement of the not so well-off, and to long-term gentrification processes as well (cf. Garcia 1993: 257 ff.). The international Flora exhibition 2010 in Taiwan's capital Taipei might become a striking example here: *Cleaning out the city* and *green washing*, as some experts call it, could probably mean that some owners will have to leave their homes due to dynamic real estate projects enhanced by a politics of making the city more beautiful in the wake of the expo. This constitutes the other side of the coin of using gardening exhibitions as an instrument of urban aesthetisation, economic success, and international recognition. In Germany, inner-city, neglected, and multiethnic neighbourhoods are by trend especially "endangered" by *expo urban renewal*. Less prominent need for action and "smaller" problems may be overshadowed by the big exhibition project. Hence, it is right that growth and integration are competing goals of postmodern urbanism (Häußermann et al. 2008: 277). Nevertheless, participation and sustainability mean to ensure that socially deprived residents will also profit from the benefits of the activated urban potentials rather than being crowded out or simply forgotten. Yet, the positive effects of such urban politics of renewal are not to be forgotten either. In the end, gardening exhibitions are thus about spatial justice, too (see Soja 2010).

9.2.3.6 Conclusion and Perspectives

As shown, horticultural exhibitions are more than just major events. They are deeply affecting social, ecological, economical, and political dimensions of the city (Meibeth 2002). Gardening expos might serve properly to develop large-scale urban areas. For these reasons, they constitute a specific subject of urban geography in general, and of urban ecology research in particular (cf. Cranz and Boland 2004). Despite a long tradition and a major function for urban development, the effects are not quite clear in detail yet. With the present project, I therefore analysed these main effects theoretically and empirically in the context of urban sustainability. The empirical data collected can be used to explain the effects of horticultural expos on urban planning and on the image of the city as well as the question why and how this works specifically in different cities.

Gardening expos work different according to the specific location of its venue chosen *within* the city, and according to the specific problems and structures of the city (Hauser 2010). Different forms of management and governance produce different outcomes. However, directly referring to the historic, built, and natural potentials of a city that can be activated and positively valued by the expo is a main criterion not only for a successful expo (Härtig 2002: 41) but for sustainable effects on urban development in a broader sense. Another important aspect is to analyse the planning principles applied in each city and how these are enhanced by the expo.

The advancement of already existing plans by the expo is acknowledged as basis for long-term success after the festival (Theokas 2004: 262).

Finally, participation is a complex subject intimately connected to success and failure both of horticultural exhibitions and long-term urban development processes. As a result, expert stakeholders are crucial for the execution of the event as well as for enforcement of the planning concepts. The success of expos is therefore closely related to individual expert knowledge of key actors. Apparently, both cooperation of the experts and integration of civil society at an early stage is an essential factor, too.

At least from the perspective of the German Association of Federal Horticultural Exhibitions (*Bundesgartenschaugesellschaft*), the cities of Cologne and Essen have established outstanding sustainable parks in terms of user's acceptance, tourism, and an eminent function of these green areas for their urban context (cf. Zeemering 2009). Thus, the cities were recently awarded the association's sustainability prize. Recently, the International Flora expo in Taipei 2010/11 strongly campaigned for introducing more *ecology* in the daily life of urban dwellers by using the instrument of the exhibition – at first glance, this seems reasonable. Still, it is arguable whether or not setting up urban parks and dissemination of plants or greening walls all over the city is adequate enough here. It has to be examined further how gardening expos bring forward sustainable urban structures and at the same time cause issues of incorrect planning and social deprivation. In the end, it is not all roses.

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