Allotment gardens in former Eastern Bloc countries – a comparative study of spatial policy in Tallinn and Warsaw

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Abstract: Allotment gardens in former Eastern Bloc countries - a comparative study of spatial policy in Tallinn and Warsaw. This paper is based on the results of a Short Time Scientific Mission under COST Action TU1201 Urban Allotment Gardens in European Cities – Future, Challenges and Lessons Learned, which was completed in October 2013 at the Estonian University of Life Sciences. During a stay of two weeks in Tartu and Tallinn I collected data about the planning of allotment gardens both on a national scale and at city level (Tallinn). The data allowed me to compare the results from the STSM with results of research carried out in Warsaw in Poland. Current trends in many European countries show that allotment gardens are again very popular. The main aim of this paper is to describe differences and similarities in the development of allotment gardens in the capital cities of Estonia and Poland. I was interested in examining the situation in two former Eastern Bloc countries where in the past allotment gardening was partly understood as an element of doctrine. I was mostly interested in the planning system, which guarantees possible legal frameworks for allotment gardening and makes it possible to predict the future development of allotment gardens.

Key words: allotment gardens, urban agriculture, spatial planning, Tallinn, Warsaw, Eastern Bloc countries

INTRODUCTION

Allotment gardens, community gardens, city farms – today in many European countries these forms of urban agricul-

and scientists. In the structure of the city these places are fascinating examples of independent spaces which provide many ecosystem functions for the green infrastructure and make it possible to maintain sustainable development in the city in the context of ecology, economy and residents' quality of life [Arosemena 2012, Giedych Poniży 2013, Matos and Batista 2013]. Also the food production function protects the self-sustainability of the city, when many European cities are developing intensively to occupy rural areas [Matos and Batista 2013]. At the same time for many people these places provide the possibility of active recreation without having to go outside the city [Pawlikowska-Piechotka 2011]. The history of allotment gardens in Europe began over two hundred years ago with the Industrial Revolution and the problem of the large number of new city inhabitants who came to work in the factories. Plots given to those people allowed them to cultivate plants and provide food for themselves and their families [Pole 2006]. From the start, allotment gardens were planned spaces incorporated into the structure of the city mainly with the

protection of the factory owners [Pole

ture are again the subject of interest of

many entrepreneurs, local stakeholders

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2006]. Today we can observe that in many cities, especially those which have problems with large numbers of unemployed or immigrants, new allotment gardens are either planned by the local authority (Lisbon) or accepted as a bottom-up initiative (Berlin) [Rosol 2010, Matos and Batista 2013]. In general we can observe that the strategic planning of urban agriculture is of very great importance. There are many factors that should be considered in planning such spaces, ranging from social needs to the consideration of allotment gardens as a part of the green-blue structure of the city [Matos and Batista 2013]. Planners need to take care to choose the right location for them keeping in mind the needs of residents, food production, recreation, ecology, culture, aesthetics and changes in biodiversity, putting particular pressure on investors and local authorities to put good solutions into practice [Matos and Batista 2013]. Good planning also makes it possible to maintain an optimal number of allotment gardens in the city structure when the rapid development of urban areas requires new space for buildings [Irvine et al. 1997]. For this research I decided to examine policy documents relating to allotment garden development in two European cities: Tallinn and Warsaw. The choice of these cities was not an accident. Tallinn and Warsaw are the fast-developing capital cities of two Eastern European countries. They share a similar history, starting from the beginning of the 20th century, when after World War I both Estonia and Poland gained independence. After World War II Estonia and Poland became part of the

Eastern Bloc (Poland as a satellite state, and Estonia as the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic within the USSR). At the beginning of the 1990s, following the political and economic transformation, they became market economies, and in 2004 they became European Union members. The history of allotment gardens in both countries began in the early 20th century, but the rapid development and structuring of allotment gardens took place during the Soviet era, when urban gardening was part of the official doctrine [Bellows 2004]. Today we can see that in both capital cities the number of allotment gardens is decreasing. There can be many reasons for this; however, I decided to focus on the policy documents of Tallinn and Warsaw to find out how the current regulatory system relating to allotment garden development functions in those two cities. The research was carried out in two parts: the first in Warsaw, and the second in Tartu and Tallinn under a Short Time Scientific Mission at the Estonian University of Life Sciences. The main aims of the research were to:

- collect information about the legal framework of allotment gardens;
- examine the urban policies which relate to allotment gardens.

The results of the two parts are presented and compared in this paper. It includes the main similarities and differences in the legal frameworks and current planning systems for allotment gardens in Tallinn and Warsaw. There are also analyses of past national and urban policies which formerly shaped urban agriculture (allotment gardens) in the two cities.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The political situation and social structure shapes the landscape of every country [Cosgrove 1998 (1984), Tuvikene 2010]. In the context of the planning of allotment gardens in former Eastern Bloc countries this is particularly noticeable. During Soviet times allotment gardens were part of the landscape of many cities in the Soviet Union and its satellite states. There existed legal frameworks that established this form of urban agriculture based on a similar structure. Today, with the fast development taking place in the post-Soviet countries, allotment gardens are very often perceived as obstacles that occupy space which could be used for further building development. A good example of this situation is found in Warsaw [Giedych and Poniży 2013, Kosmala 2013]. It is possible that without the regulations relating to allotment gardens, they would have suffered increased destruction as has occurred in Tallinn. In this research I wished to compare policy documents of Poland and Warsaw which mention allotment gardening with similar documents of Tallinn and Estonia, to see how current regulations have influenced changes in the allotment garden network in two cities with a similar geopolitical background. This paper contains an analysis of past and current policy documents and maps which refer to allotment gardens in Warsaw and in Tallinn. Data were collected in cooperation with researchers from the Warsaw University of Life Sciences, the Estonian University of Life Sciences and Tallinn University, through consultations with city planners, and using the libraries and archives in Tallinn (Fig. 1).

To analyse the problem I examined many documents within the scope of allotment garden planning. At national level in the case of Poland these were the Act on Family Allotment Gardens of 2005 (Ustawa z 8 lipca 2005 r. o rodzinnych ogrodach działkowych), the Act on Planning of 2003 (Ustawa z 27 marca 2003 r. o planowaniu i zagospodarowaniu przestrzennym), the Act on Environment Protection of 2001 (Ustawa z 27 kwietnia 2001 r. Prawo ochrony środowiska), the Act on Nature Protection of 2004 (Ustawa z 16 kwietnia 2004 r. Prawo ochrony przyrody) and the Act on Agricultural and Forest Land Protection of 1995 (Ustawa z 3 lutego 1995 r. o ochronie gruntów rolnych i leśnych). Estonian documents referring to allotment gardens on a national scale included the Act on Privatization of Gardening and Summerhouses Cooperatives adopted on 15 June 1992 (Aiandus-ja suvilakooperatiivide vara erastamise kohta), the Land Cadastre Act of 1994 (Maakatastriseadus), the Act on Sustainable Development of 1995 (Säästva arengu seadus), the Act on Land Reform of 1991 (Maareformi seadus) and the Categories of Land Use and Procedure for Determination of 2008 (Katastriüksuse sihtotstarvete liigid ja nende määramise kord). The city-level documents considered were, for Warsaw, the Study of Conditions and Directions of the Spatial Management of the City of Warsaw, 2010 (Studium uwarunkowań i kierunków zagospodarowania przestrzennego m.st. Warszawy. Uchwała LXXXII/2746/2006 Rady m.st. Warszawy z 10 października 2006 r. zmieniona uchwałą L/1521/2009 z 26 lutego 2009 r., uchwałą LIV/1631/2009 z 28 kwietnia 2009 r. i uchwałą XCII/26889/2010 z



FIGURE 1. Methodology of the research

7 października 2010r.) and the Programme of Environment Protection for the Years 2009-2012 (Uchwała XCIII/2732/2010 Rady Miasta Stołecznego Warszawy z 21 października 2010 r. w sprawie przyjęcia Programu Ochrony Środowiska dla m.st. Warszawy na lata 2009-–2012 z uwzględnieniem perspektywy do 2016 r.); and for Tallinn, the Master Plan of Tallinn (Tallinna linna üldplaneering) and the Plan for Environment Protection (Tallina Rochealade Teemaplanering). To understand better the current differences in planning policy relating to allotment gardens I also looked at historical acts, decrees, and publications about historical acts both in Poland and in Estonia. The acts and decrees considered were, in Poland, the Decree on Allotment Gardens of 1946 (Dekret z dnia 25 czerwca 1946 r o ogrodach działkowych), the Act on Workers' Allotment Gardens of 1949 (Ustawa z 9 marca 1949 r. o pracowniczych ogrodach działkowych) and the Act on Workers' Allotment Gardens of 1981 (Ustawa z 6 maja 1981 r. o pracowniczych ogrodach działkowych); and for Estonia, the Resolution on Collective and Individual Horticular Production of 1949 (О коллективном и индивидуальном огородничестве и садоводстве рабочих служащих), the Standard Statute of Garden Cooperatives of 1956, the Land Use Act of the Estonian Soviet Republic (official text with changes and annotations) of 1970 (Министерство Юстиции Зстонской СССР Земельный Кодек Естонской СССР Официальный текст с изменениями и дополнениями на 1 мая 1970 года, Таллин издательство "ЗЗСТИ PAMAT" 1970), the Land Use Act of the Estonian Soviet Republic (official text with changes and annotations)

of 1983 (Министерство Юстиции Зстонской СССР Земельный Кодекс Естонской СССР Официальный текст с изменениями и дополнениями на 1 мая 1983 года, Таллин издательство "ЗЗСТИ PAMAT" 1983), the Protection of Agriculture Directive of 1960 (Põlumajandus alaseid direktiiv, seadusandlikke akte, EEsti Riklik Kirjastus Tallin 1960), the agro-industrial complex directives of 1986 (Agrotoostus Kompleksi Alaseid direktiive, Seadusandlikke ja Ametkondlikke Akte, 1986) and Estonian SSR State Committee on Agribusiness Information and Implementation in Government, of 1989 (EEst NSV Riikliku Agrotööstuskomitee Info-ja Juurutusvalitsus, Tallin, 1989).

Other information about allotment garden planning was obtained from publications which deal with that topic in Estonia and Poland; however, there are not many publications dealing with the legal frameworks for allotment gardens in the two countries. In Estonia, helpful explanations were obtained from the municipality of Tallinn in the course of telephone conversations conducted by researchers from the Estonian University of Life Sciences.

RESULTS

Allotment gardens in Poland

In the STSM report I presented the results of research conducted in 2013. In December 2013, parliament passed a new Act on Family Allotment Gardens. Based on these changes, in this paper I wish to describe the current legal framework for allotment gardens in Poland and to com-

pare it with that provided by the previous Act. Figure 2 presents the main differences between these two Acts which to a large extent determine the structure of allotment gardens. The differences noted are relevant to planning policy.

The new Act on Family Allotment Gardens of 2013 gives a general overview of the structure, function and importance of allotment gardens in Poland. This document lays down that responsibility for the planning of allotment gardens remains at the level of the municipal authority (gmina). The municipality has the right to establish and liquidate allotment gardens by issuing legal conditions for such land use. It also gives permission to a selected association to take responsibility for the management of allotment gardens.

Other acts that support the existence of allotment gardens and protect them

are the Act on Environment Protection of 2001, the Act on Nature Protection of 2004, and the Act on Agricultural and Forest Land Protection of 1995. Another document that indirectly provides a legal basis for allotment gardens is the Act on Planning of 2003. The aforementioned acts affect the position of allotment gardens, but not in a direct way. They regulate the protection of agricultural and green areas in general, and so many of their provisions are applicable also to allotment gardens.

The first allotment gardens in Poland appeared at the beginning of the 20th century, but the current strong position of allotment gardens within the Polish legal system is a legacy of the period of the Polish People's Republic. From 1946, when the first decree was published (Decree on Allotment Gardens of 1946), allotment gardens became an

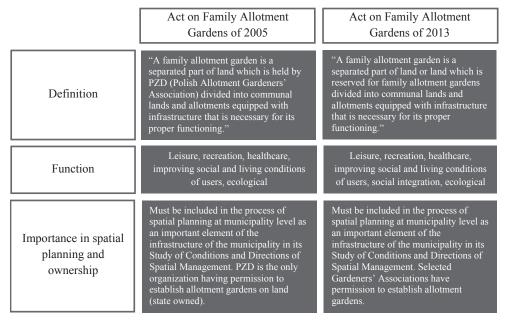


FIGURE 2. Main differences between the old and new Act on Allotment Gardens in Poland

important part of the landscape in many Polish cities. The decree established both permanent and temporary allotment gardens, and gave the rights to the land containing allotment gardens to communities and workplaces to distribute plots among manual and white-collar workers (and their families). Each permanent allotment garden was required to have at least 40 plots each measuring 100--500 m². The decree described the functions of allotment gardens as recreation, improvement of health and food production. Three years later, in the 1949 Act on Workers' Allotment Gardens, the provisions of the decree were expanded. This Act required allotment gardens to be established in all neighbourhoods where at least 20% of the inhabitants lived in multifamily housing with no access to a garden. The Act gave the right to administer all allotment gardens to one organization, the Association of Trade Unions, and liquidated all small associations. In 1981 a new Act on Workers' Allotment Gardens was published. This Act gave the exclusive right to control all allotment gardens in Poland to the Polish Gardeners' Association. With this Act all workers' allotment gardens became "permanent objects" for an indefinite period. According to this document, allotment gardens were also allowed (temporarily) for at least five years in places assigned a different function in the Spatial Management Plan. Also the required area of plots was increased to 300–500 m², or up to 1500 m² in temporary allotment gardens. This Act substantially shaped the structure of allotment gardens as it can mostly be observed today.

Allotment gardens in Warsaw

Today in Warsaw there are 166 allotment gardens with 29,588 plots, occupying a total area of 1181.66 ha¹. Allotment gardens account for over 58% of all green space within the city. This shows how great a role they play in the ecological system of Warsaw [Giedych and Poniży 2013].

According to Polish law there are two documents that provide a legal basis for allotment gardens at city level. These are the Study of the Conditions and Directions of the Spatial Management of the City of Warsaw of 2010, and the Programme of Environment Protection for 2009–2012. In Warsaw these two documents classify allotment gardens within the structure of green areas, specify their function and provide information about the future development of these areas. In the Study of the Conditions and Directions of Spatial Management, allotment gardens are classified as green spaces with leisure, recreational and nature protection functions. The Programme of Environment Protection categorizes them as agriculture land with leisure, nature protection and food production functions. There are also differences as regards the specified directions of future development. The Study of the Conditions and Directions of Spatial Management gives permission for the transformation of this land into public green spaces. The land can also be used for other purposes connected with urban development. The Programme of Environment Protection suggests that allotment gardens that

¹According to data from the Mazovian PZD official website: http://mazowiecki.pzd.pl/ogrodywarszawskie/ [accessed 30 September 2014].

occupy land belonging to the Ecological System of Warsaw should be redesigned as public green spaces.

Allotment gardens in Estonia

Allotment gardens are not in fact protected in Estonia. There are few documents that directly or indirectly refer to allotment gardens. One that deals with allotment gardens is the Act on Privatization of Gardening and Summerhouses Cooperatives of 1992 (Aiandus-ja suvilakooperatiivide vara erastamise kohta). This document provided a legal basis for the privatization of cooperatives (the Estonian name for the Soviet allotment gardens). According to this document, assets of cooperatives are transformed and terminated by a "general meeting of cooperative members" and this can be performed by "members of cooperatives, wives, husbands, descendants who are living in Estonia, siblings and their descendants", and "the whole property can be privatized". Other documents that can apply to land occupied by allotment gardens include the Land Cadastre Act of 1994, the Act on Sustainable Development of 1995, and the Act on Land Reform of 1991. These acts, like their equivalents in Poland, in general refer to allotment gardens indirectly. The regulations are mainly applicable to various types of land, including agricultural and green areas, which means that they also deal with allotment gardens. The Act on Land Reform contains more specific information concerning summerhouses with gardens outside cities, but these are not true allotment gardens.

There is also a document that indirectly provides the possibility of creating new allotment gardens. This is the Categories of Land Use and Procedure for Determination document of 2008, a government ordinance based on the Land Cadastre Act. It allows an allotment garden to be created on land with unregulated purpose, agricultural land or public land used as a green area.

In Estonia allotment gardens can be recognized under entities with different names: garden cooperatives, cooperatives, dachas (summerhouses), community gardens and garden associations. The first three of these date from Soviet times. Cooperatives and garden cooperatives were intended for "creation of climate, horticulture, beekeeping and for the recreation of workers"2. Summerhouses were houses with gardens in the suburbs of cities, very popular in the Soviet era. The last two names refer to allotment gardens in post-Soviet Estonia; there is no official definition for them, but the name Garden Association is a new name for garden cooperatives, and community gardens are mostly those organized by activists.

Laws in force in Estonia today have led to the liquidation of many allotment gardens (garden cooperatives) in that country. However in the past, similarly as in Poland, they held a more privileged position, this being related to the doctrine and policies espoused in the whole of the Soviet Union [Rudomina 2011]. In 1949 the government issued the Resolution on Collective and Individual Horticular Production of 1949, whose provisions also related to allotment gardens. According to this document, workers could obtain a plot for their own use (land was

²Ministry of Justice, Estonian Soviet Republic, Land Use Act of the Estonian Soviet Republic, official text with changes and annotations, of 1983.

the property of the state, but plots were allocated by workers' organizations) [Rudomina 2011]. The sizes of the plots were between 600 and 1200 m² [Rudomina 2011]. Seven years later, in 1956, the Standard Statute of Garden Cooperatives was published. This document provided a legal basis for the establishment, running and closure of garden cooperatives [Rudomina 2011]. After this, in 1965 the first garden cooperative was established. During the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic issued several documents dealing with issues relating to garden cooperatives. These included the Land Use Act of the Estonian Soviet Republic (official text with changes and annotations) of 1970, the Land Use Act of the Estonian Soviet Republic (official text with changes and annotations) of 1983, the Protection of Agriculture Directive of 1960, the agro--industrial complex directives of 1986, and the Estonian SSR State Committee on Agribusiness Information and Implementation in Government of 1989. These documents contained more specific provisions concerning the organization of garden cooperatives in Soviet Estonia.

Allotment gardens in Tallinn

There is no legal framework for allotment gardens in Tallinn. The two main documents, the Master Plan of Tallinn (Tallina Uldplaneering) and the Plan of Environment Protection (Tallina Rochealade Teemaplanerin) contain no information about allotment gardens. Today there are not many allotment gardens in Tallinn. The city authorities have no current statistics about the number of allotment gardens in the city. Some of them have existed since Soviet times, while others have been set up by social activists during recent years. The only official information today concerns users of summerhouses in the suburbs of Tallinn [Leetmaa et al. 2011]. That publication reports that exactly equal proportions of women and men (50% of each) use such gardens, and that 4% of users are aged 0-14 years, 19% are aged 15-29 years, 29% are aged 30-49 years, 29% are aged 50-64 years, and 22% are older than 65. Summerhouses are mostly popular among people with secondary education, who make up 53% of the study group. The second largest group (34% of the total) consists of people with only primary education, while university graduates are in the minority, accounting for only 14% of the study group.

DISCUSSION

The process of political and economic transformation has led to completely different reactions with respect to allotment gardens in these two former Eastern Bloc countries. While in Poland the law has protected allotment gardens for many years and continues to do so, Estonia has in fact mostly terminated their existence through the process of privatization. This was in fact a result of the radical change of course towards liberal laws taken at the beginning of the 1990s, and of the land reform [Roose et al. 2012]. Although allotment gardens originated in Western European countries, in countries like Poland and Estonia, they are perceived as a holdover of Soviet times [Kosmala 2013]. Also in Poland (as in any other country) they are seen as a barrier to urban development [Bellows 2004].

However, current research shows that it is very important to recognize allotment gardens as a part of the green structure of the city and a means of supporting biodiversity in the city; thus they are of great importance for sustainable development within the city [Irvine et al. 1999, Ahrne et al. 2009, Holland 2004]. Accordingly, the strong position provided to allotment gardens by Polish law should be viewed in a positive light. At the same time, the situation in Tallinn should be hoped to be the subject of improvement. The absence of any official data on the number and area of allotment gardens shows that both Estonia as a country and the city of Tallinn are failing to perceive that allotment gardens actually bring many benefits for society, ecology and the economy. At the same time, however, citizens of Tallinn have developed several community gardens on their own. Bottom-up initiatives have established new allotment gardens in places where there was a real need for them. The example of Tallinn may be useful today in Warsaw, where under changes in the law residents will be able to establish allotment gardens outside the control of the Polish Gardeners' Association (PZD).

CONCLUSIONS

The history of allotment gardens in Poland and Estonia is similar to a large extent. In the past many things were managed in line with the ordinances of the Soviet system, which were similar in both countries. During the political transformation in the 1990s the process of reprivatization brought about changes in land use policy, including in the context

of allotment gardens. Nevertheless we can observe that today, under the market economy, the two countries have developed different models for the planning of allotment gardens. The first difference relates to the fact that allotment gardens in Poland are protected by the law to a greater degree than in Estonia. There is a special Act on Allotment Gardens, which was updated in 2013. Under the new ordinance, municipalities are obliged to provide new land for allotment gardens on each occasion when previous such land has had to undergo a change of use. It also allows the creation of new allotment gardens outside the control of what was previously the one single authorized association. This provides a chance to modify the structure and function of allotment gardens according to the needs of the municipality and potential users. In Estonia, since 1992, due to the Act on Privatization of Gardening and Summerhouses Cooperatives, allotment gardens can exist only in places where the owner of the land gives permission for such use. As a result of this policy, today allotment gardens can only occupy private land or land without a designated use.

It is also easy to notice differences in policies at city level. In Warsaw, allotment gardens are still perceived as an important element of open green spaces [Giedych and Poniży 2013]. There are documents which support the existence of allotment gardens in the public space. In Tallinn the city authority appears not to be interested in the issue of allotment gardens. Under the Master Plan of Tallinn, land containing allotment gardens has been designated for other purposes.

Although allotment gardens policy is today more developed in Poland, the case of Estonia shows that allotment gardens can develop without regulatory protection. Old-type urban allotment gardens are slowly being replaced by modern collectives of people who want to cultivate land in the city. If the position of these groups becomes stronger, we can expect that in the future these new gardens may bring about changes in the policies of both Tallinn and Estonia as a whole. It should also be remembered that the research was completed in November 2013. In December 2013 Poland passed a new Act on Family Allotment Gardens. Due to this Act some general parts of the law have changed, and it is not known how the situation of allotment gardens will change in the future.

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Streszczenie: Ogrody działkowe w krajach byłego bloku wschodniego – studia porównawcze systemu planowania przestrzennego w stolicach Estonii i Polski, Tallina i Warszawy. Artykuł ten powstał na podstawie wyników Short Term Scientfic Mission w ramach programu COST Action TU 1201 Miejskie Ogrody Działkowe w Miastach Europejskich - Przyszłość, Wyzwania i Wnioski, która miała miejsce w październiku 2013 roku na Estońskim Uniwersytecie Przyrodniczym. W trakcie dwóch tygodni pobytu w Tartu i Tallinie próbowałam zebrać dane dotyczące sytemu planowania ogrodów działkowych w skalach kraju i miasta (Tallinna). Zebrane dane pozwoliły mi na porównanie rezultatów STSM z wynikami badań przeprowadzonych w Warszawie, w Polsce. Obecne trendy w wielu krajach europejskich pokazują, że ogrody działkowe stały się ponownie bardzo popularne. Głównym celem tego artykułu jest pokazanie różnic i podobieństw w rozwoju ogrodów działkowych w stolicach Estonii i Polski. Byłam zainteresowana jak sytuacja tych obiektów wygląda w dwóch krajach byłego bloku wschodniego, gdzie przydziały na ogrody działkowe dla klasy robotniczej było po części rozumiane jako element doktryny. W moich badaniach byłam głównie zainteresowana systemem planowania przestrzennego, który gwarantuje możliwe ramy prawne dla obecności ogrodów działkowych i pozwala częściowo przewidzieć dalszy rozwój ogrodów działkowych.