

CONFERENCE – GREEN URBAN COMMONS?

Green urban activities in public space – between gentrification, privatization, socio-ecological transformation and right to the city

Friday 23rd – Saturday 24th Oct. in Vienna

Conference Issue: The role of green urban activities in contemporary processes of urban development

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COMMUNITY GARDENS AS SPACE OF ENCOUNTER?

The potential of co-responsibly organized activities in super-diverse neighbourhoods.

Even before community gardens became a revived popular urban movement and well-covered topic in urban research, they have always been serving as spaces for meeting, interaction, communication and self-organization amongst local actors. In this paper, we raise the question how far community gardens serve as spaces of encounter for different people from the neighbourhood. We aim at analyzing the potential of community gardens for creating a sense of neighbourhood belonging and for feeling responsible for the neighbourhood. Our case study analysis is based on a bottom-up initiated community garden in the 14th district in Vienna which is aiming at integrating a diverse range of participants through different low-threshold activities.

This case study is part of a qualitative comparative project in three European cities, namely Amsterdam, Stockholm and Vienna. Our research is embedded within a larger analysis on the effects of top-down and bottom-up measures aiming at group-based integration processes in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods. We use the new concept of “urban living labs” as a methodological approach to identify spaces of encounter within a neighbourhood where the community can meet, learn and collaborate as part of their daily life. In these spaces, for example a community garden, researchers engage with the community to gain an insight into how the community perceives local policy measures, neighbourhood identity and neighbourhood embeddedness.

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