Exploring relations between community gardens and cultural institutions in terms of diverse governance models: A case study of Warsaw and Poznań, Poland

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Abstract: The ongoing academic debate shows that urban community gardening has diverse governance models with differing roles for governmental organizations, NGOs and local communities. However, the perspective of community gardens governed by the involvement of institutions is rarely explored in academic research. This paper use a two-case study approach to explore the relations between community gardens and cultural institutions. We first identify factors that promote and impede the functioning of community gardens in partnership with cultural institutions. Next, we recognize initial governance models for selected case studies. Finally, we try to identify any changes in these governance structures, depending on the different stages of garden development and determine the reasons behind them. The results show these gardens are characterized by a changing governance model, shifting towards a top-down model, in which community members have no influence on strategic decisions. The involvement of cultural institutions in running community gardens is not assessed in a solely positive light. Although it facilitates their longevity, at the same time it may disempower their viability.

Keywords: urban agriculture, urban community gardens, governance, cultural institutions, Poland.

Introduction

Community gardens emerged at the grassroots level as initiatives for reclaiming and locally transforming urban life and wastelands (McKay, 2011), as contested spaces subject to land-use conflicts and interests, and as battlegrounds for the "right to the city" (Staeheli & Gibson, 2002). Over time, however, they have also become subjects of institutionalization, for example, through municipal and NGO programmes that allocate funds and confer permanent status. Such institutionalization standardizes these gardens and integrates them into the abstract spaces of planners, policymakers, and markets (see e.g., McKay, 2011; Bach & McClintock, 2021). Consequently, the perception of community gardens varies widely, ranging from guerrilla gardens that resist neoliberal subjectivity (Schmelzkopf, 2002; Crossan et al., 2018) to spaces perceived as reinforcing neoliberal domination (Rosol, 2012; Kanosvamhira, 2023). As a result, these gardens offer a venue to experiment with different governance approaches, as they can be described as "hybrid parts of the city that belong both to the built environment and the green infrastructure, to both public and private spheres, and to both planned and unplanned spaces" (Fox-Kämper, 2016, p. 366).

The origins of community gardens in Poland can be traced back to the start of the 2020s, when the urban space in large Polish cities entered a stage of intense changes relating to patterns of both top-down and bottom-up spatial production, changes that were questioned by citizens. In addition to new roads and squares, sports centres, office buildings, schools and hospitals renovated using EU funds, flowers planted at night, benches or boxes placed without formal permission with vegetables also appeared (Zielińska, 2020, p. 182). Single initiatives of this kind have proved so inspiring for many local communities that in the middle of the second decade of the twenty-first century, we can even start talking about a certain fashion for creating urban community gardens (Maćkiewicz et al., 2018, p. 136). However, it is worth mentioning that it was the cultural sector that played a leading role in the development of this trend. Various types of cultural institutions and organizations, e.g. museums, theatres, art galleries and even art festivals have been involved in creating of community gardens (see Maćkiewicz et al., 2018; Škamlová et al., 2020). A community project created by Malta Festival Poznań, known as the Generator Malta, made history in 2014 by organizing Poland's first-ever international convention of community garden creators. This meeting aimed to look at how these gardens operate and, above all, to identify what underlies these activities. This meeting facilitated the networking of individuals involved in creating community gardens in Poland, resulting in numerous beneficial outcomes related, among other things, to discussing approaches to the governance of these gardens.

The ongoing academic debate shows that urban community gardening has diverse governance models with differing roles for governmental organizations, NGOs and local communities (see e.g., Fox-Kämper et al., 2018; Willman, 2023). There are also studies on community gardens created at various types of institutions, such as universities (De Young et al., 2016) and hospitals (George and Ethridge, 2023), or thanks to the support of the city administration (McCann et al., 2023).

Against this background, this article aims to unveil the evolution of governance models of community gardens run in partnership with an institution, in this case, a cultural one. It aims to answer two main questions:

1. What are the factors that promote and impede the functioning of community gardens in partnership with cultural institutions?
2. What are the governance models of community gardens run in partnership with cultural institution, and how and why do they change at different development stages?

In this paper, following the definition adopted by Jacob and Rocha (2021, p. 557), a community garden is a space involving a group of people caring for plants and/or animals in a space collectively operated, which differentiates community gardens from private ones but also from allotments designed for individual gardening even if paths and other facilities are collectively used (Göttl & Penker, 2020). Here, a cultural institution refers a public entity created by state or local government administrative units for which cultural activities are the main purpose of operation, whereas NGOs operating in the field of culture and art are non-governmental cultural organizations (Kosińska, 2020).

Governance of community gardens

"Political processes in community gardens are expressed through the distribution of power and the governance structure of the gardens: Who is involved in decision-making? Who creates the rules and regulations?" (Ponstingel, 2021, p. 21) Community gardens can be classified as top-down or bottom-up, depending on their governance structure, who initiated them, and their day-to-day decision-making (McGlone et al., 1999, Nettle, 2014; Jacob & Rocha, 2021). Top-down refers to those gardens where governmental or non-profit organizations manage and operate a garden autonomously, including decision-making, with no input from community members on management committees (Table 1). Bottom--up gardens are run and managed almost exclusively by local communities. Responsibility for management and day-to-day running thus remains with local communities, although they sometimes receive support from other organizations on their own terms. In addition to these two governance structures, McGlone et al. (1999) proposed three other categories, introducing a structural management gradient: top-down with community help, bottom-up with professional help, and bottom-up with informal help. Then, Fox-Kämper et al. (2018) expanded these five different governance structures by adding a new sixth category called "bottom-up with political and/or administrative support (PAS)", in which the establishment of garden projects benefits from bottom-up dynamics in combination with continuous top-down (governmental) support. Finally, Zhang et al. (2022) completed the list with a seventh item, i.e. top-down with public engagement driven by non-profit organizations.

Based on the model of governance in community gardens, the decision-makers might be gardeners, managers, external organizations, or a local government (McGlone et al., 1999; Fox-Kämper et al., 2018). No matter what their beginnings, however, gardens can follow a mix of these forms of governance and the approach can change between the stages of planning, implementation and management (Jacob & Rocha, 2021).

Jacob and Rocha (2021) also note that while the community gardening practices are well documented, more information is needed about the internal policies and day-to-day management issues in different development stages. Our study analyses the governance structures of two community gardens from their very beginning in 2013 to the present day, i.e. for more than ten years, covering all, i.e. planning, implementation and management development phases and taking into account the perspective of all stakeholders, i.e. cultural institutions, NGOs and gardens users. This study is intended to shed more light on these issues and contribute to filling the indicated research gap.

Methods

We used an original methodological approach in this research, following the mixed-methods research concept (Creswell & Clark, 2007). The case study method was supported by purposive sampling and exploratory walks.

First, following Yin's (2018) methodological guidelines, we used a two-case study approach to illustrate different strategies for creating a community garden with the involvement of a cultural institution. The community gardens selected were the Common Garden at the Służewski Cultural Centre in Warsaw and the Łazarz Garden in Poznań, and

Table 1. Governance models of community gardens

Governance approach	Description
Top-down: projects managed and run by professionals	Gardens initiated by outside organisations that make strategic decisions with no input from community members on management committees. Governmental or non-profit organizations manage and operate a garden entirely, including decision-making.
Top-down with community help: projects managed by professionals but run by paid workers/ volunteers	Governmental or non-profit organizations manage a garden, including decision-making. They hire workers or seek for volunteers to run a garden. The community helps mainly by running the garden, which means that their influence in shaping the project is limited.
Top-down with public engagement driven by non-profit organizations: projects managed by the government with a think-tank and feedback support provided by non-profit organisations	Government run the garden following the advice of non-profit organisations. The public is engaged to participate in decision-making.
Bottom-up with political and/or administrative support (PAS): with political and/or administrative support, which includes funding, land tenure, and advising	Gardens are planned, implemented, and/or managed by a community with administrative support from government or non-governmental organisations. Community members manage and operate a garden. Decision-making is run by local communities, while the government or non-governmental organisations provide funding, land tenure, and/or consultancy.
Bottom-up with professional help: projects managed and run by local communities with the help of paid workers and professionals	Community members manage and operate a garden with the help of hired workers and professionals. Decision-making involves both local communities and paid professionals. Paid professional help is mainly in the planning and implementation stages.
Bottom-up with informal help: projects managed and run by local communities with informal support from a professional	Gardens conceived by the community in which volunteers, in an unstructured and unpaid form, help to plan and implement the project. Community members manage and operate a garden with the unpaid (unstructured) help of professional organizations, including NPOs. Professionals can offer advice, provide funding, and participate in some decision-making.
Bottom-up: projects managed and run by local communities	Community start and manage all project without external support. Community members manage and run a garden exclusively, including decision-making. Sometimes gardens can obtain external support on their own terms, including advice and funding. Usually there is no consistent funding.

Source: Authors' compilation based on Fox-Kämper et al. (2018), Jacob and Rocha (2021), Ponstingel (2022) and Zhang et al. (2022).

share a common feature – cultural institutions are involved in their governance. However, at the time of their creation in 2013, two different governance models were applied. The case study covers the period from the foundation of the gardens to the present. At this stage, in order to collect data and factual information, we also searched through scientific publications about community gardens in Warsaw and Poznań, grey literature and online sources about these gardens.

Next, to gain deeper insights into relations and governance models in the community gardens selected, we used the purposive sampling method (Etikan et al., 2016). Long-

-term and active involvement in the community garden was a key requirement for selecting participants for the sample. The sample includes individuals representing diverse stakeholders involved in the community garden, i.e. institution managers, representatives of non-governmental organizations and residents; thus, it explores the perspective of both the institutional and civic part of the gardens community.

Only one interviewee was not directly involved in the gardens selected. However, this person was one of the cofounders of a neighbouring community garden and was part of many initiatives at the city level. Some interviewees have or have had in the past an economic interest in the operation of the community garden. To tease out unique aspects of each interviewee's context, we used in-depth interviews as our preferred data collection method. We built an interview script covering three essential areas: (1) topics focused on understanding the governance structures and the roles of different stakeholders as well as how they change at different stages of community garden development (e.g. planning, implementation, past and present management); (2) issues of characterisation of the place and practice, i.e. community garden design and goals and characterisation of volunteers and users both past and present; and (3) the vision of the community garden knowing that one of the stakeholders involved in its running would be a cultural institution.

Between June 2023 and March 2024, we conducted in-depth interviews (n = 10) (Table 2). To avoid oversimplifying interviewees' profiles, we decided to provide broader descriptions of them. Among the people interviewed, a balance was maintained between the Warsaw and Poznań cases, i.e. 5 people commented on each of them.

All interviews were conducted orally and audio was recorded. Some were carried out face to face (1), while others were online (4) or by phone (5). The interviews were conducted in Polish (9) and in English (1). Using available tools, the interviews were transcribed and then the authors translated their content into English. Each interview lasted 55 min on average.

At the end, to gain a hands-on insight into both cases, we organised 50-minute exploratory walks around the gardens with people responsible for their management. We chose this method because of its potential, as it goes beyond the "walking interview" formula, and offers the participants an active role as experts or guides in the space familiar to them. This method is promising because of the possibility of knowing and strengthening social cohesion on the local scale. Moving together in cognised space stimulates participants to perceive spatial manifestations of local cohesion or its deficits, leading to involvement, participation, collaboration and acting for change (Bazuń & Kwiatkowski, 2022, p. 565). We conducted these walks in pairs. The walks helped us identify positive aspects of spatial management of the gardens, the areas that need improvement, and signs of sometimes conflicting approaches to the garden space. We also used this opportunity to verify the information we collected during the interviews. To enhance the data collection process, we captured photographic documentation and took field notes. The exploratory walks complemented the interviews and helped us to triangulate our methods in qualitative research design (Flick, 2007).

Table 2. Individuals who were interviewed in-depth

Interviewee	
Code*	Description
IW1	Sociologist, urban gardener for six years (2015-2021) associated with the Common Garden at the Służewski Cultural Centre, member of the Agro-Perma-Lab Foundation and the Bujna Warszawa programme promoting urban gardening. Educator and activist working for food sovereignty.
IW2	Former coordinator of the ecological education department at the Służewski Cultural Centre. Currently, works for Otwarty Jazdów – a community of a Warsaw estate of wooden Finnish houses, running social, cultural, educational and artistic activities for the public; coordinator of the ecofund's pilot operation at the Staromiejski Cultural Centre.
IW3	A naturalist by education and passion. Co-founder of several dozen community, rain, sensory and educational gardens. For over 18 years, associated with NGOs in Poland and abroad. Created the Alter Eko foundation, which since 2013 has been working for the sustainable development of cities, protection of natural resources and development of eco-civic attitudes.
IW4	Director of the Służewski Cultural Centre, and long-time chairman of the Służewiec Residents Association, which includes active people working in various fields.
IW5	American artist and urban activist living in Warsaw. Co-founder of the Jadalnia Warszawa collective, which mapped the wild vegetation of Warsaw, author of the book „Hungry for Green Warsaw" (2018), co-creator and one of the coordinators of the Common Garden at the Służewski Cultural Centre in the years 2013-2014.
IP1	Sociologist, theatre expert, cultural animator. In the years 2010-2023, associated with the Malta Festival (since 2014, curator of the Malta Generator and other educational and socially engaged projects). Initiated such ventures as: City Academy, Wolno Dzieciom, Community Gardens in Łazarz, Wilda and Jeżyce, Micro Cultural Centre „Lotaryńska 6". In Poznań, also known for large-format poetry on walls. Co-founder of Poznańska Garażówka. Person of culture of the 2019/2020 season. Resident of the Łazarz district.
IP2	Working at the Krąg Cultural Club since 2007, initially as a cultural and educational instructor. Since 2010, an instructor of the Łazarz Tribe, leading a cub scout group and a team of senior scouts. The founder and first leader of the Wagabunda Band. At the beginning of 2023, took over as manager of the Krąg Club.
IP3	A resident of the Łazarz district. Mother of two teenagers who were little children at the beginning of the garden. From 2014, as a resident, involved in the creation and running of the Łazarz community garden. Later become the leader of residents engaged in the garden.
IP4	Landscape architect, teacher and animator. Designing public green spaces for several years and organising educational projects on: common space, participation, local and pro-ecological activities. Member of the NGO Kolektyw Kąpielisko, which co-ran a community garden in Łazarz district and the Coalition ZaZieleń Poznań, which works to design nature in the city.
IP5	Biologist, botanist, science populariser. A natural expert in the diagnosis of taxa and natural habitats, creating reports on the impact of projects on the environment and shaping programmes for the protection of species, habitats and landscapes. Co-founder and president of the board of the Kasztelania Ostrowska Association.

*Where W stands for Warsaw and P stands for Poznań.

Running community gardens in partnership with cultural institutions

Respondents' opinions on the benefits of having a community garden affiliated with a cultural institution were divided. Apart from both managers of these institutions, none of the interlocutors took a clearly positive stance. However, all respondents emphasized some benefits resulting from this fact, such as access to the following: land, water, electricity, various types of amenities and basic funding (Table 3). From an organizational

perspective, it was also pointed out that a cultural institution can provide significant support for the functioning of a community garden, e.g. by ensuring cleanliness and order, assistance in obtaining grants, and the possibility of conducting professional promotion. However, for all this to boost a garden's viability, what is required is the appropriate people to connect the institution with the garden community, and clear rules regarding the division of responsibilities. Much also depends on the community itself and its willingness to act. However, interviewees also highlighted that some people do not have the same impulse to participate fully in co-determination and prefer to be part of a larger structure and to be taken care of. That is why community gardens where the institution is a partner respond to their needs.

On the other hand, the interlocutors emphasized the limitations in how the community garden functions, as a result of obligations to the institution. They pointed to the framework that the institution by necessity imposes, which may hinder self-organization, creativity, the ability to cooperate and build shared responsibility for this place. This is

Table 3. Success factors and imitations of community gardens resulting in being part of cultural institutions.

Code	Success factors	Code	Limitations
IW4	It should be with the institution because of the funding. It is to get a grant and then account for it.	IP2	The responsibility for the site rests with the institution, and it will never be such a fully independent space.
IP2	There is always money somewhere at the end, and thanks to the institution, at least these basic funds are there.	IP1	Certain restrictions exist, such as a 6 p.m. closing time.
IW5	There must be cooperation and agreements on responsibilities.	IP1	There is a risk that the institution will suppress and limit grassroots activities.
IP2	For a garden to function, it must have land, water and electricity. We, as an institution, provide all this.	IW2	In cultural institutions, the director has one-person legal liability. That is, anything bad that happens, something with GDPR, whatever occurs, someone falls down because the stairs were uneven, broken – it's always one person's responsibility and the case can go to court.
IP4	Even just the fact that there's a toilet and you can come for a longer period of time, and not be afraid of not having anywhere to take care of your basic needs in a while.	IP4	Where there is a cultural institution, there do not necessarily have to be residents. And then it's not a community garden.
IW3	It is essential who, on behalf of the institution, is the link in the garden. It should be a person who can connect people.	IP1	Suppose the person from the institution is a real jobsworth. Someone who sticks very much to some set rules and does everything rigidly generates an unpleasant atmosphere.
IW5	To make things work, you need charismatic leaders.	IW1	If a cultural institution is ossified and bureaucratic, it can be difficult to navigate.
IWP4	It all depends on the potential and activity of the resident, whether that resident is there, and whether he or she is willing.		
IW1	Being part of a cultural institution allows easily combine the garden with various fields of arts and crafts.	IP3	If the residents are not consulted by the institution, and if they have to ask for permission for everything they want to organize, cooperation is discouraged.
IW5	Institutions have PR departments, and they're the ones who face the public.		

especially true where the institution is ossified and operates according to very rigid rules. Attention was also drawn to the huge personal responsibility of directors in cultural institutions and the fact that in the event of an accident, for example, they can be liable. Finally, it was also noted that the mere existence of a cultural institution does not guarantee that a community develops around it.

Most of the factors mentioned above apply to virtually all types of institutions. However, as several interviewees pointed out the cooperation of a garden and a cultural institution creates unique opportunities and influences the kind of activities undertaken. The possibility of combining gardening with art or crafts can significantly expand the range of actions carried out in the garden. Thanks to this, such a garden can be much more than a collectively cultivated green area or a place of environmental education.

Governance models and their changes over time

The Łazarz Garden

The trend of community gardening, emerged for the first time in Poznań thanks to the Generator Malta programme[1], which was launched as part of the Malta Festival Poznań[2] in 2013 (Maćkiewicz et al., 2018; Lewczuk & Garczarczyk, 2021). The gardens were to be established in degraded areas lowering the life quality of city-dwellers, in places requiring revival and revitalisation. As regards informing residents about the project of creating community gardens, taking their suggestions and opinions, help in this respect was received from students from the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at Adam Mickiewicz University (AMU), as well as from the Academic Circle of AMU Sociology Students and the Academic Circle of Landscape Architecture Students (the Poznań University of Life Sciences). In the summer season of 2013, numerous picnics and meetings devoted to horticulture were held in the 6 community gardens, among which was the Łazarz Garden, initiated by Generator Malta. A significant role in the process of founding the gardens was played by local partners who supported the activities of Generator Malta. Each garden received support on the partnership principle.

The Łazarz Garden is a neighbourhood square between blocks of flats, with a tree in the centre – a weeping willow, the symbol of this place. The garden is open; it is not surrounded by any fence, as it is a transit area between buildings. The land on which it is located belongs to the Grunwald Housing Cooperative, which includes the Krąg Cultural Club. In the case of the Łazarz Garden, this cultural institution was a local supporting partner (Maćkiewicz et al., 2018; Lewczuk & Garczarczyk, 2021).

At the planning stage, the governance model of the Łazarz Garden was top-down (Table 4). During this stage, which lasted about a year, two entities were mainly invo-

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[1] Apart from the concert stage, dance and theatrical performances, the Malta Festival also opens up space for dialogue, sharing experience and new ideas. The Malta Festival is run by a cultural organization (i.e. an NGO), the Malta Foundation.

[2] The Malta International Theatre Festival is one of the most important cultural events in East-Central Europe. It has been held in Poznań during summer season since 1991. At first, the festival aimed to promote outdoor, unconventional and experimental theatres. Over the course of time, the scope of activities of the project started to comprise other spheres as well. Since 2010, the subject matter of the festival has centred on topics important for understanding the contemporary world, especially Europe, its culture, social situation and the future (Maćkiewicz et al., 2018, p. 138).

lved in creating the garden, i.e. Generator Malta and the Krąg Cultural Club. Although they operated in partnership, at that time the driving force behind the garden of the garden was Generator Malta. This cultural organisation provided the idea of setting up a community garden, experts, action programme and funding, while the Krąg Cultural Club guaranteed a convenient meeting place and supported the events logistically and organizationally.

> "You know what, I would probably dare to say that it was such close cooperation right from the start. Yes, I mean, well, the fact that because it was on the cooperative's premises, we had to carry out these activities in close cooperation with the Krąg Cultural Club, but Krąg was also simply interested in being open to these activities." (IP1)

> "The cooperation between the Krąg Cultural Club and Generator Malta went very smoothly right from the start." (IP2)

Because it was a preparatory stage only introducing the foundations for future activities, local residents were not yet directly involved in creating the garden.

> "Yes, because those beginnings actually were a bit stiff, that was my impression, not that I was looking out of the window, because I had a one-year-old daughter at the time, or less than a year old, at what was going on there, it was from my perspective, like "What were they doing there"? They're sitting on chairs and they've got some sheets of paper, they're writing something there, they're drawing, it was so much more intellectual, but it was probably also like an introduction to it all maybe not, these kind of lectures, so much more intellectual." (IP3)

During the implementation phase, the governance model transformed into a top-down with community help (Table 4). At that time, Generator Malta began to organize events inviting and involving the local community and entities operating in the district.

> "Well, because we were the ones who took matters into our own hands, not the housing association, a little bit like some external entity, but mainly with the participation of the residents, because it was the residents with their own hands. Then they convinced the neighbours and so on and so forth..." (IP1)

> "You know what? Generator Malta is the one that introduced the core, sort of, like the idea of it. Well, we didn't really see what, what to do with it next, as it were. No, it was such a way, such a light-hearted way, such an inspiring way, such a brave way, that they kind of infected us with this 'enthusiasm', in inverted commas, to create these events and this whole community.... and us with this enthusiasm. In my opinion, from the point of view of a resident, it was necessary for someone to have knowledge of the subject and also the means and ideas from other places where similar things had happened, that was the foundation. I think that was very important, well, also some funding was needed from that as well." (IP3)

> "So I think it was 2014, and that was the first season we were there. That we attended such an open meeting organised by Generator Malta at the Krąg Cultural Club, where there was a sort of "open call" for all community groups, any people who are interested, sort of taking up the idea of setting up such a garden. But sorry, no, the meeting was about the state of culture in Łazarz. And this, as it were, was about cultural activity in general and the prospects for social action in this area. There was this idea that we should help because we said there that we also deal with these issues, more so with nature, that we are biologists. And it was a bit like falling out of the sky, because horticulture behind technology, it was a bit underrep-

resented at that time, so there was also an idea to kind of strengthen it, the substantive wing, and the social wing at the same time. The invitation came from the Krąg Cultural Club and Generator Malta, but it's not really clear who was first, who was the first to speak up so that maybe we could take part in such a garden in creating such a garden." (IP5)

The Krąg Cultural Club continued to serve as a supporting base. However, already around the second year of implementation, the club began to organize its events in the garden, which it promoted on its Facebook page.

"I don't remember in what year it was, maybe even the second year, the Krąg Cultural Club started to put on events on its own. I sort of remember this statement from Janusz Heller, who used to be the manager. Well, actually, for the whole time of this collaboration project with Generator Malta. That it's just...., well, that they gained another room for their events, just a room open to nature outside, so giving completely different possibilities opening up more heads and so on. A bit of a terrace. It was primarily Krąg that ran the social activities there. They certainly started with a feast for senior citizens. Yes, that is, they just used to put on a feast in their room indoors, and then they decided that it would be nice to have fun in the garden." (IP1)

Therefore, at the end of the implementation stage, local residents as well as the Kasztelania Ostrowska Association were already involved in activities around the garden, in addition to the Malta Generator and the Krąg Cultural Club. Galeria Łęctwo, acting on the invitation of Generator Malta, also provided professional support and created a kind of external gallery where three artists prepared site-specific works (sculpture, mural and installation) (Fig. 1).

In the first two years of the management stage, the governance model remained top--down with community help (Table 4). It was a period when many events took place in the garden, initiated by Generator Malta, Klub Krąg, the Kasztelania Ostrowska Association, the residents themselves and Generator Malta.

"However, most of our organisational time was spent on how to build a community around the garden, how to get people to want to come, and to take care of the area, well, first, to choose a place, after all, the whole process was so contrived, to get people involved from the start, and therefore also to attach a little bit to the place to the idea. Well, from the beginning because we planned to withdraw from there and leave the residents with the project, although, in my opinion, this is a bit utopian, especially being such a strong organisation as the Malta Foundation". (IP1)

"After a year or two, there were probably activities that just started to involve us. At the beginning, it was that the coordinator from Generator Malta would commission some things, and maybe you could arrange it, maybe you were able to? Or maybe you could speak to someone? And to the best of our ability, we started doing these little things. Us and there a couple of neighbours. And then, after we were introduced like that, well, that started to happen eventually too, and that was just such a beautiful moment." (IP3)

As a result of multiple activities, certain tensions and organizational problems emerged regarding the coordination of events, their schedule, information flow, etc. Due to the intensity of the events, residents started to complain to the estate administration about noise and lack of opportunities to rest. On the other hand, the open transit area of the

garden was also a regular venue for drinking alcohol for some residents. However, the debris of this consumption, i.e. bottles and cans, was not cleaned up by the drinkers and thus "blended" into the garden.

In the first two years of the management phase, there was a separation of powers in the garden, i.e. an increasingly important group of residents associated with Generator Malta, the Krąg Cultural Club and the Kasztelania Ostrowska Association operated in parallel, sometimes cooperating and sometimes implementing their ideas and tasks.

> "There was a moment when there was quite a mishmash there. From what I recall, a lot of events were taking place. A schedule of sorts was created, but in the graphical sense it was all no longer exclusively under the Malta Festival, i.e. no one was defending all the events from them. So there was a festival event, a club event, neighbourhood events." (IP 5)

However, over time, administrative and technical issues understood as maintaining order and peace, i.e. garbage collection, and preventing hooligan acts, were entirely taken over by the Krąg Cultural Club, which also began to organize more and more events.

> "Out of necessity, the Krąg Cultural Club also began to organise more things in this space and also to take over activities related to general responsibility for this site, which was a consequence of a particular conflict about the function of this place. They had little choice. It was an ultimatum. The housing association said that if they didn't get on with it, the garden would be closed down immediately. And that's when Krąg's role gradually began to grow in importance. At a certain point, they had the biggest role, then there were the residents, we were third, and Generator Malta was then already withdrawing." (IP5)

The arrangement of the garden space, i.e. furniture, selection of quarters, and functions of individual parts, was decided throughout all this period in a very participatory manner. However, in matters related to the selection of plants, the Kasztelania Ostrowska Association acted in an expert capacity. In areas with more sun, flower beds were arranged and the residents planted them according to their own creative ideas. A collection of wild plants was planted in the shadier part of the garden (Fig.2). These were supposed to recall the vegetation that once existed in this place and bring wildlife closer to the city centre.

The Malta Generator finally left the garden in 2017. A year later, due to its moving from Poznań, the Kasztelania Ostrowska Association also ended its involvement. As a result, since 2019, the governance model in the garden has been top-down (Table 4). Residents associated with Generator Malta tried to continue their activities in the garden for some time, but they gave up.

> "Myself and another friend were still dragging it along, but at some point it just ended. Somewhere inside there were these questions: Do I have the drive to do this on my own and invite the neighbours? Do I have to ask permission from others and ask what the club manager thinks about it? And this led to a kind of withdrawal, where was the moment when my friend and I preferred to go for a coffee three benches away rather than stay in the garden as always." (IP3)

We can talk about the complete disappearance of the former Łazarz Garden community established by Generator Malta, whose members assess the current formula of the garden's operation as devoid of freshness and originality.

"There's no Łazarz Garden community any more. There are none of the people who used to come. It's as if it's back to that pre-garden state again. It just has nicer infrastructure benches, plants, flowers, murals. And I don't participate at all anymore either. Though when the manager of the Krąg CLub passes me and invites me to an event, I smile and say 'I'll see', but then I don't go along." (IP3)

Despite several workshops being held before the withdrawal of Generator Malta, this proved insufficient to equip this group with sufficient tools and competences.

"I think what was missing was social-psychological care from an observer who, by observing this group of residents, would examine their predispositions and help to determine the group's internal structure. From the experience in our organisation, I think that once this structure is set up, it is good to have a one person responsible for tasks, so that we don't all do everything, but that there are people for certain things. (...) More time needed to be spent on helping to divide up the roles, on tutoring to make this group of residents independent, on taking such patronage in separating themselves and on evaluation. But to go back a little further, to ask if they are coping, if something needs to be done to help them? I also remember, for example, that there was an idea to set up some kind of foundation or association around the garden which could raise funds, which would include the residents, and not us or the Krąg Club." (IP5)

Currently, the Łazarz Garden is the garden of the Krąg Cultural Club and is effectively its outdoor space. It hosts events initiated and organized by Krąg and its direct cooperating partner, the non-governmental organization Horyzonty Centre for Intercultural Initiatives. Club employees, scouts and club members are involved in the logistics and organization of events. The club recently ordered a new mural and repainted the symbolic chair that had stood on the site and had originally been painted by community members (Fig. 2). However, these actions were not consulted with the residents previously involved in creating the garden. At present the garden's educational function is a priority for the club's management.

"I will do my best to give this place some educational character, mainly for children and young people. I dream that, apart from being recreational, e.g. a dance for senior citizens, a meeting for club members, the garden should be primarily educational, which is where, for example, the idea comes from of creating this mural at which you can do living history lessons." (IP2)

"So it's simply that it's changing because the user is also changing. But maybe it's also that there was an entity that just got involved in the area. And because of that it still kind of works too." (IP4)

It should be emphasized, however, that of all the gardens established by Generator Malta, only the Łazarz Garden has survived to this day. It was the only one of Generator Malta's gardens in which the initial partner was a cultural institution, and the only one to survive.

"This activity was created on the initiative of Generator Malta. Then 6 community gardens were established in our city, and we are proud of the fact that our garden survived; unfortunately, for various reasons, the others didn't. Some lasted a long time, others shorter, and somehow, luckily, ours has been with us for 11 years. The garden is functioning, running and doing well. Thank you for that, and I would like to keep going." (IP2)

Table 4. Łazarz Garden – CG management models at various development stages

		Planning stage year 2013	Implementation stage years 2014-2015	Management stage years 2016-2018	Management stage years 2019-2024
		cg governance model – top-down	cg governance model – top-down with community help	cg governance model – top-down with community help	cg governance model – top-down
	Land Access	• Krąg Cultural Club	• Krąg Cultural Club	• Krąg Cultural Club	• Krąg Cultural Club
	Water Supply	• Krąg Cultural Club	• Krąg Cultural Club	• Krąg Cultural Club	• Krąg Cultural Club
	Funding	• Generator Malta	• Generator Malta • Krąg Cultural Club	• Krąg Cultural Club • Generator Malta (until 2017)	• Krąg Cultural Club
	Professional support	• Generator Malta • The Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology's Students • The Academic Circle of Sociology Students • The Academic Circle of Landscape Architecture	• Generator Malta • Kasztelania Ostrowska Association • Łęctwo Art Gallery	• Kasztelania Ostrowska Association • Generator Malta (until 2017) • CIM Horyzonty Association (since 2018)	• CIM Horyzonty Association
	Decision Making	• Generator Malta • Krąg Cultural Club	• Generator Malta • Krąg Cultural Club • Kasztelania Ostrowska Association	• Krąg Cultural Club • Kasztelania Ostrowska Association • Generator Malta (until 2017)	• Krąg Cultural Club
	Networking	• Generator Malta	• Generator Malta • Kasztelania Ostrowska Association • Krąg Cultural Club	• Krąg Cultural Club • Kasztelania Ostrowska Association • Generator Malta (until 2017)	• Krąg Cultural Club
	Hands-on Help	• Generator Malta • Krąg Cultural Club	• Generator Malta • Local residents • Kasztelania Ostrowska Association • Krąg Cultural Club • Members of the Krąg Cultural Club	• Local residents • Kasztelania Ostrowska Association • Krąg Cultural Club • Members of the Krąg Cultural Club • Generator Malta (until 2017)	• Krąg Cultural Club • Members of the Circle Residents Club
	Programme	• Generator Malta	• Generator Malta • Krąg Cultural Club • Local residents	• Krąg Cultural Club • Local residents • Generator Malta (until 2017)	• Krąg Cultural Club
	Promotion	• Generator Malta	• Generator Malta • Krąg Cultural Club	• Krąg Cultural Club • Generator Malta (until 2017)	• Krąg Cultural Club

Exploring relations between community gardens and cultural institutions...

Fig. 1. Mural by Paweł Susid, one of the most important and inspiring Polish painters at present, prepared as part of the activities of the Łęctwo Gallery

Fig. 2. A chair brought by residents to the garden from the "Eki z Małeki" Square and painted by them and fragment of primeval vegetation in the shaded part of the garden arranged by the Kasztelania Ostrowska Association

Fig. 3. New mural presenting Kazimierz Nowak – Polish traveller, resident of the Łazarz district who in the years 1931-1936 travelled across Africa by bicycle and on foot – an initiative of the Cultural Club

SDK Common Garden

The Wspólny Ogród SDK (SDK Common Garden) is located in a fenced-off area on the playground at the Służewski Cultural Centre (SDK). It also borders directly on the greenery of the Dolinka Służewska Park. On the other side of Bach Street, where the community centre is located, the Służew nad Dolinka housing estate begins. The garden started at the new premises of the Służewski Cultural Centre, which was completed in 2014, although the first work on the garden, such as sowing green manure, had already taken place in autumn 2013.

The planning phase of the garden was dominated by a top-down model with community help (Table 5) and involved entities such as Służewski Cultural Centre, the WWA and 137 kilo architects' studios, and also the Jadalnia Warszawa (Warsaw Dining) collective, along with the community members interested in supporting the initiative. However, the idea of a garden at the house itself came much earlier.

> "But the history of the creation of the garden has its roots in the 1990s, because at that time the association[3] from which the Służewski Cultural Centre was founded brought a children's farm to the premises at 15 Bach Street. (...) there was an enclosure for goats. (...) There were no beehives, but there were pigeons. On the basis of this pigeon loft, the caretaker also conducted classes in how eggs are born, fowl. There was also a playground and a substitute garden. It was more of a rockery, (...) it was a small space, but there was a substitute of just this garden." (IW4)

The architects' studios, WWA and 137 kilo, who developed the architectural concept for the new community centre, were inspired by the previous location and incorporated the garden space into the design.

> "When it came to designing the new headquarters of the Służewski Cultural Centre, everything that was on Bach Street, together with the children's farm, was transferred to the functional and spatial plan of the new headquarters." (IW4)

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[3] This refers to the Służew Residents' Association. Since its inception, the Association has been working towards creating a community centre in Służew.

The architectural design included a water supply, fencing for the area and separate beds and paths. A storage room for tools in the building was also planned. The programme of events was prepared by the Jadalnia Warszawa (Warsaw Dining) collective[4], which also collaborated with the Cultural Centre to organise a meeting with the local community, who were able to express their opinions on the planned project and register a desire to participate. The implementation phase was also dominated by the top-down model with community help (Table 5). The material and financial support provided by SDK allowed the Jadalnia Warszawa (Warsaw Dining) collective and the community to focus on the work of creating the garden without worrying about resources.

> "Of course, the institution provided space, tools, equipment, access to resources such as water – we never had to worry about that. That is, for example (...) for some such minor work, maintenance or repairs. There were often various problems connected with this, but it was still there. You didn't have to organise a whip-round and worry so much about finances, for example, because the institution provided them to a large extent." (IW1)

It is worth noting, however, that in 2015 and 2016 it was possible, with the support of community members, to obtain additional funding for constructing a bread oven and buying bags and soil for "bag cultivation" (Fig. 4), as well as the organisation of additional workshops. During that time, workshops were held even in winter. In the winter of 2015/2016, gardeners embroidered a map of wild edible plants that were collected during walks from the Jadalnia Warszawa (Warsaw Dining) series. The final work was then displayed at an opening event where the joint embroidery was showcased. Additionally, there was a winter series of lectures titled "Community Gardens of the World". During these lectures, participants learned about gardens in various cities and countries. During those years, a future leader emerged from the community that was active in the garden. This leader is now involved in promoting permaculture and establishing an urban farm in Warsaw. As many people caught the gardening bug, several of them wanted their own garden and moved to allotment gardens. In the first years, the collective also took on the promotional activities related to the garden's activities, but this was due to the institution's situation at the time (Fig. 5 and 6).

> "(...) I got rid of the position in promotion for two years. And for two years I didn't have anyone dealing with promotion. Yeah, and that kind of took its toll as well. So I say, it depends on the conditions of the institution. At the moment, there are two people involved in promotion." (IW4)

The 2017-2020 management phase was also dominated by the top-down with community help model (Table 5). Though SDK continued to provide material support and took on the bulk of the promotional responsibilities, there were voices among the community indicating that it was being treated too separately.

> "(...) I was asked what I thought, for some feedback on what is worth leaving in and what is worth changing. Well, I said that what is worth changing is to start looking at the garden as one of the studios. I mean, I think that this garden was not treated enough as one of the studios. I mean, I didn't have such cooperation between you or between us and the director

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[4] The Jadalnia Warszawa collective operated from 2011-2019 as a grassroots group without legal personality. It was involved in organising walks and mapping edible plants in urban spaces. One member of the collective cultivated a garden in the allotment gardens with a composter open to the community.

as, for example, between the photography and music studio. Well, I don't know, there, for example, there were always some performances at the end of the year, each studio bragged about what they had done, but here, for example, there was nothing like that at all. Even to appreciate a garden or a harvest festival like this, SDK was not involved enough in such a thing. They didn't propose anything like that, And the director said, 'well, it's always been like that, we've always looked at it like that'. Well, in that case, we didn't feel that enough." (IW1)

The institution saw it differently:

"it was always invited and there was always an openness to what the community or the instructor would propose. So at that level, the community garden was treated in exactly the same way as any other studio." (IW4)

However, the institution acknowledged that there were significant differences between the garden and other studios:

"the other studios are paid. And that's also what this specificity shows, that it's not really such a specialised studio, it's more such an area of activities, of gaining knowledge using trial and error – that was also the idea. Yes, it is a place of community. I think that's the main function of a community garden." (IW2)

At that time, the programme was prepared by the garden coordinator and implemented with robust support from the community, who were involved in organising events like cooking and gardening workshops.

The top-down model became the dominant model in the 2022-2024 management phase (Table 5). Entities such as SDK and the Alter Eko Foundation took part. This latter was in charge of looking after the garden, which was starting to change from a vegetable garden into a wild permaculture garden. The coordinator took charge of preparing the programme, and SDK did not really take part in creating the events.

"I think it's more, it's more of a foundation initiative and kind of an idea, because I have a bit of a feeling that SDK just agrees to these ideas of ours." (IW3)

SDK played the role of a passive host, taking an active role in communicating events to the outside world:

"And the Cultural Centre is responsible for (…) providing some kind of infrastructure for this, funding it, promoting these activities, recruiting people who come here. And actually, I think that's more or less it." (IW3)

During this phase, the garden community almost disappeared, and the garden transformed itself into an outdoor teaching space focusing on educational activities for SDK audiences and school groups. Alter Eko runs a number of workshops.

"(…) such ecological workshops. At least once a month they invite someone, some sort of ecology expert, and run these workshops. Apart from that, we have also greatly developed our meetings with schools. They were there before, but maybe less so. Now these schools are important to us." (IW4)

**Fig. 4.** *"Bag cultivation"* – bags purchased thanks to funds obtained together with the residents

Fig. 5. Common Garden in 2016

Fig. 6. Common Garden in 2016

Table 5. Common Garden – CG management models at various development stages

	Planning stage year 2013	Implementation stage years 2014-2016	Management stage years 2017-2021	Management stage years 2022- 2024
	cg governance model – top-down with community help	cg governance model – top-down with community help	cg governance model – top-down with community help	cg governance model – top-down
Land Access	• SDK	• SDK	• SDK	• SDK
Water Supply	• SDK	• SDK	• SDK	• SDK
Funding	• SDK	• SDK • Jadalnia Warszawa Collective	• SDK • Jadalnia Warszawa Collective	• SDK
Professional support	• Studio WWA • Studio 138 kilo • Jadalnia Warszawa Collective	• Jadalnia Warszawa Collective	• Jadalnia Warszawa Collective	• Alter Eko Foundation
Decision Making	• SDK • Jadalnia Warszawa Collective	• Jadalnia Warszawa Collective • SDK • Community (since 2015)	• Jadalnia Warszawa Collective • SDK • Community	• SDK • Alter Eko Foundation
Networking	• Jadalnia Warszawa Collective • SDK	• Jadalnia Warszawa Collective • SDK	• Jadalnia Warszawa Collective • SDK	• SDK • Alter Eko Foundation
Hands on Help	• SDK • Jadalnia Warszawa Collective	• Jadalnia Warszawa Collective • Community	• Jadalnia Warszawa Collective • Community	• Alter Eko Foundation • small community (3 people)
Programme	• Jadalnia Warszawa Collective	• Jadalnia Warszawa Collective	• Jadalnia Warszawa Collective	• Alter Eko Foundation
Promotion	• Jadalnia Warszawa Collective • SDK	• Jadalnia Warszawa Collective • SDK	• SDK • Jadalnia Warszawa Collective	• SDK

Discussion

Our research has limitations, as it only focuses on two cases and refers to the local context. However, through this preliminary study, we aim to start a broader discussion on the relationship between community gardens and cultural institutions. We hope our results will benefit community gardens where the cultural institution is a partner and encourage them to be proactive in developing a sustainable garden community.

Applying the categorization of governance models following McGlone et al. (1999), Fox-Kämper et al. (2018) and Zhang et al. (2022) proved useful for identifying relations between cultural institutions and other stakeholders participating in community gardens. At different stages of development, the governance structure in both gardens changed. This proves the results of Fox-Kamper et al. (2018), for example, namely, that a continuum i.e. of six types of governance of community gardens distinguished to date in the literature (see McGlone et al., 1999; Nettle, 2014; Fox-Kamper et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2022) is suitable for depicting more complex governance variations. However, our study shows that governance structures may also not be stable within the same development phase. In both cases, there was a change in the governance model during the management stage. The research revealed that despite slightly different governance models at the planning stage, in the last years of the management phase, both of the cases analysed were characterized by the same top-down governance model. This goes along with the suggestions in the literature that there is a risk of community disempowerment due to rigid control measures when governments/institutions become involved in the management phase of a garden to ensure its "success" (Fox-Kamper et al., 2018). When decision-making is entirely the remit of the government and external professionals, gardeners feel estranged from their gardens (Eizenberg, 2012). Governmental and non-profit organizations can impose their own interests and goals on the gardens and, therefore, the gardeners (Ghose et al., 2014). While a top-down governance model might sometimes be beneficial in planning a community garden (see Fox-Kamper et al., 2018), community involvement should increase over time (Austin et al., 2006; Firth et al., 2011). "Experts indicated a preference for top-down approaches in the planning phase; however, agreed that active community participation in implementation and particularly management phases were essential" (Fox-Kamper et al., 2018, p. 64.) According to various studies, the success of community gardens depends on the levels of gardeners' participation, and these are connected to the levels of power they hold in management and decision-making (D'Abundo & Carden, 2008; Ponstingel, 2021). Unfortunately, despite significant community involvement at some stage, none of the analysed gardens managed to move to bottom-up with political and/or administrator support (PAS) governance model. Fox-Kämper et al. (2018, p. 66) suggest this is an approach which guarantees mutual advantage, as "gardeners may receive support to overcome hurdles while planning, implementing, or managing a garden. (…) municipalities/administrators that support community gardens may benefit from an effective model for strengthening neighbourhoods and improving social cohesion". It is worth noting that in the case of the two gardens analysed, the attitude of the institutions in the final top-down model differed. While the Krąg Cultural Club was hyperactive and took over practically all activities in the garden, the Służewski Cultural Centre adopted a passive-host approach, relying entirely on the NGO coordinating the garden. What was common in both cases, however, was the inability of the garden com-

munity to self-organise after the departure of the NGO leaders animating the activities in the garden. The process in which gardeners develop into stronger collective that disseminates knowledge and organizes action (see Eizenberg, 2012) did not happen. If this grass-roots activity were vigorous, cultural institutions would provide a safe umbrella there that could thus help the community.

Although the cultural institutions examined here were able to provide many factors conducive to the longevity of community gardens, i.e. land tenure, water supply and some funding they did not manage to sustain active community engagement. This is why, despite their institutionally provided durability, they lost the vitality essential for community gardens. As previous studies revealed, "successful" community gardens involve collaboration between different organizations, strong social capital, and high levels of community engagement (Diaz et al., 2018; Fox-Kämper et al., 2018).

Conclusions

Community gardens have become strategic players regarding the future of some free urban spaces. There is widespread agreement on the functions that community gardens can perform and the benefits they can bring to today's cities. They are not only places for growing vegetables but also constitute cultural and political spaces that forge social bonds and generate new projects. However, in terms of their governance models, community gardens experiment with a whole spectrum of top-down and bottom-up approaches, which may change at different development stages, i.e. planning/design, implementation or management and even within these individual phases.

The research revealed that community gardens where a cultural institution is involved are characterized by a changing governance model, shifting towards a top-down model in which community members do not influence strategic decisions. The involvement of cultural institutions in running community gardens is not assessed in a solely positive light. Although it facilitates their longevity, it may limit their viability and community involvement. The example of both gardens analysed here shows that without emphasis on building a community around the gardens, they quickly transform into outdoor teaching rooms, thus losing the character of a community garden to a large extent.

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Unless otherwise stated, the sources of tables and figures are the authors', on the basis of their own research.

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