



INTERCULTURAL GARDENS: THE USE OF SPACE BY MIGRANTS AND THE PRACTICE OF RESPECT

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ABSTRACT: *The experience of intercultural gardens entails questions of respect and of use of space. By definition, being a migrant means being in search of a new space of life. Migrants often lack spaces of interaction outside the limits of their home and work environments, spaces that would allow them to construct social capital. This place of interaction can be considered a human fundamental need that is essential for integration into a society. Intercultural gardens respond to a specific need of migrants, implying the active respect and collaboration of other societal actors and offering a space for practicing self- and mutual respect. Examination of the experience of intercultural gardens will help us understand how the use of space by migrants can be constitutive of respect and important for the realization of self-respect.*

The experience of intercultural gardens has developed throughout Germany during the last 15 years. Intercultural gardens are one of a number of instances of urban agriculture (Mougeot, 2005; Veenhuizen, 2006). As is often the case with urban agriculture, intercultural gardens are mostly initiated by marginalized groups and, like urban agriculture, they are a grassroots experience building on perceived local needs (Smit & Bailkey, 2006). In intercultural gardens, migrants from different countries of origin gather on a piece of land in order to garden and share common experiences around gardening and related activities. It is an exemplary case of the interrelatedness of the use of space and the practice of respect.

Regarding the use of space, these intercultural gardens, bringing together individuals and families from different cultures, function as spaces of encounter and of collective action. The notion of space is apprehended here both as a geographical space that allows action and as a social space; that is, the milieu of interpersonal relations that allows social exchanges. Such a space of collective action and of encounter is decisive for migrants who are, by definition, in need of a new space of life in the country of residence. They may be blessed with a house or an apartment, but they are still in need of spaces of interaction outside of the workplace. Between the private house and the working place (should there even be one), there exists a fundamental human need for a place to interact socially and to build social capital.

In order to be successfully implemented, intercultural gardens must be based on the practice of respect. They do not simply insist on tolerance, understood in its traditional liberal meaning in the sense of a passive practice of noninterference with others, rather, they require the more demanding notion of respect. New approaches to the concept of tolerance emphasize its proactive quality. Rainer Forst has recently developed a respect-based conception of tolerance which rejects the “passive” character attached traditionally to the concept of tolerance (Forst, 2003). In a similar way, Anna Elisabetta Galeotti (2010) offers a renewed definition of tolerance by associating it closely to recognition and respect. This respect-based tolerance is interesting because it adds the “active”

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quality of respect to the “passive” quality of tolerance. Yet, because the traditional comprehension of tolerance is still largely dominating, this work concentrates on the sole concept of respect. By “respect,” I mean a form of “action” which is often promoted in relation to migrants in a liberal society.

The main assumption of this work is that intercultural gardens require and foster the practice of respect. The question is whether the practice of intercultural gardens actually lives up to the expectations that the theoretical notion of respect implies. Respect can be understood in different ways. The definition depends on the actors involved and the relations they entertain with each other. First of all, in a classical sense and closer to the concept of tolerance, one can say that respect can be granted by a subject to an object. In this case, respect still seems distinct from the somewhat passive stance that tolerance implies because it entails an active behavior on the part of the majority society (Galeotti, 2010). It is this primary understanding that is referred to in the case at stake here of the majority society (*Mehrheitsgesellschaft*) granting respect (or not) to migrants. In the case of intercultural gardens, we should question if the societal actors and the local governments effectively show respect or if they merely tolerate the gardeners, or simply grant them the needed space for gardening out of self-interest. Second, the practice of respect in the context of intercultural gardens can take the form of the gardeners’ own self-respect. Self-respect implies that a person is aware of her own capabilities and achievements. This person gains self-respect from the knowledge that there are some things she does well (Middleton, 2006), which in the case at stake is the production of something through the activity of cultivating the land. We should probe whether the practice of gardening actually helps in forging this self-respect. Finally, respect in the practice of intercultural gardens can take the form of mutual respect among the gardeners. Mutual respect should be understood as directing people to communicate with each other in such a way that they create common spaces of life and interaction even if differences exist (DeLue, 2006). Regarding the difficulties that the cultural differences among the gardeners can produce, we will take a close look at the practice and estimate to what extent mutual respect is actually practiced in these gardens.

The article is organized as follows. Section 1 gives an overview of the history and realization of intercultural gardens in Germany. Section 2 shows how finding geographical space for intercultural gardens implies questions of respect, in the sense of public actors or other societal actors taking into account the specific needs of migrants in terms of physical space. This “active” respect implies involvement on the part of these societal actors, most often through the allocation of land. Section 3 makes the case for the experience of self-respect through the cultivation of the land. Finally, as we shall see in section 4, the practical organization of intercultural gardens, which are a space with blurred status, both fulfilling the need for an extension of the private space of migrants and the opening of migrants to the public space understood also as the public sphere, also leads to interpersonal relations that should, to be successful, be impregnated with mutual respect.¹

INTERCULTURAL GARDENS’ MAIN CHARACTERISTICS

In nineteenth-century Germany, as in other industrializing countries, urban gardens developed to facilitate the alimentary subsistence of workers who had left the countryside to find work in the city. After the world wars, they continued to play an important role in the subsistence economy. They were called *Kleingärten* or *Schrebergärten* in Germany, *allotment gardens* in the United Kingdom, *community gardens* in the United States, and *jardins ouvriers* in France (Evert, 2001). Geographically, these gardens were not directly attached to workers’ houses (there were no backyards in the classical sense of gardens) but a gathering of gardens on pieces of land solely dedicated to this purpose. By the end of the twentieth century, these spaces were mostly used for recreational activities for relatively well-off neighborhood residents² (Müller, 2007). Generally, if they are still used for food production today, it is less for subsistence but rather a concern for organically-grown biological food that is decisive. Currently, however, these gardens are partially regaining their original subsistence function in a situation of acute economic crisis leading to higher rent expenses and lower budgets for food purchases. Although today’s intercultural gardens build on early experiences, they deliberately add a supplementary objective to the subsistence and recreational aims of the community gardens, which is

“intercultural communication and integration” (Müller, 2007). In fact, the original *Kleingärten* were already tied to the experience of migrants (Dünzelmann, 2007). For the most part, these migrants came as a group from the same country, but were nonetheless culturally displaced. They came from the countryside and were new to the rapidly industrializing cities. Hence, in the nineteenth century, for displaced workers the *Kleingarten* combined different functions: they were a place of integration, a site of food production that ensured survival in the new environment, and a bridge to migrants’ own origin and identity. Today’s intercultural gardens are meant to bring migrants, refugees,³ and Germans together in a shared life experience, and to construct an otherwise missing social capital.

The experience of today’s intercultural gardens started in Göttingen in 1996. A group of female refugees from Bosnia, lacking a real perspective in their new country of residence, wished to do something (Abid, 2010). Because most of them had had a garden attached to their house in their country of origin, they expressed their desire to do some gardening. With the help of Tassew Shimeles, an Ethiopian agrarian engineer, they looked for a piece of land for cultivation. Ultimately, the members of this first intercultural garden (named “international garden”) were refugees and migrants from Ethiopia, Iran, Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Iraq, and there were also two German women. As the project developed, the activities at the garden were not limited to gardening. Najeha Abid, one of the founding members of the Göttingen gardens, who migrated from Iran where she had been a teacher, noticed that some members were illiterate. She decided to teach them basic German skills, enabling formerly illiterate persons to (for instance) do an apprenticeship or get a driver’s license (Abid, 2010). Depending on the everyday needs of its members, new activities were added. Especially during the winter months, when activities in the garden were less intense, language and computer courses were offered. In this way the gardens became a place for building social capital through learning processes. Consequently, the gardens participated in realizing a civil society due to the networks they helped to foster, and the shared values and commitment they helped to produce (Falk & Harrison, 1998).

Most intercultural garden projects in Germany since then have been inspired by the Göttingen experience. Nonetheless, specific concepts were developed, for example, women’s gardens. Given the fact that gardening is mostly a female practice in many parts of the world (Müller, 2007), it is hardly surprising that women should be overrepresented in intercultural gardens, but certain gardens are deliberately solely composed of women.

Despite different arrangements, intercultural gardens share certain common features. With regard to the geographical layout, the gardens are usually composed of a collective area and individual plots. Because attempts to create completely collective gardens have failed (Rosol, 2006), the responsibility for each respective plot is borne by a single individual or family. Unlike traditional gardens, where there is a cabin on every plot, in most intercultural gardens there exists only one hut for collective use. The common area, where the hut is located, is central to the idea of international gardens which encourages collective activities (*Gemeinschaftlichkeit*) and discourages individualism (Pukall, 2010). It is where the gardeners meet, where their children play, where community events and meetings take place, creating a real social life. While in traditional *Kleingärten* fences demarcate the different plots, in intercultural gardens fences are rare; where fences are present, they are not too high in order to enhance ongoing contact between neighbors. In any case, boundaries are discreet. Fences around the whole garden are also rare, so they are fully accessible any time. If fences are erected, it is mostly to protect the gardens against young local troublemakers (Müller, 2007). In the latter case, gardens are still open to the general public as soon as a member of the garden community is present.

In terms of formal organization, intercultural gardens are usually registered as associations, but actually they are more loosely organized, without a formal written structure. Sometimes they emerge from already existing associations, or cooperate with such associations to integrate an intercultural garden into a larger association. Belonging to an association fosters the willingness to take responsibility for the whole organization and not solely for one’s own plot of land (Dünzelmann, 2007). *Stiftung Interkultur*, an organization created to coordinate already existing intercultural gardens and which provides advice on how to create a new garden, encourages the creation of an association. It considers associations to be a privileged place for “civic engagement” (Müller, 2007). But some intercultural gardens, such as the one in Marburg, refuse to create an association. The founders of the Marburg gardens prefer to leave the structure open (Pukall, 2010) in order to prevent the habitual games of power that typically develop in institutionalized structures.⁴

The central idea of intercultural gardens is to promote intercultural diversity. Hence, the statutes (where they exist) of most gardens stipulate that as many nationalities as possible should be represented (*Nationalitätsschlüssel*) in order to avoid the overrepresentation of one nationality. In most gardens there is an unwritten rule to recruit new members from the waiting list, not according to waiting time but on account of the diversity of the nationalities in the garden (Abid, 2010). This measure has been applied in order to counter homogenizing tendencies that have been observed from the onset. For example, in the case of areas with large Turkish or Russian populations, intercultural gardens tend to be transformed into monocultural gardens (Dünzelmann, 2007). Another important common feature of intercultural gardens is that the common language spoken by the members is German.

RESPECT PRACTICED BY THE MAJORITY SOCIETY: TAKING ACTIVE CONSIDERATION OF THE MIGRANTS' NEED FOR SPACE

In their new country of residence, having access to spaces to live, to interact, and to express themselves is a key concern for migrants. Finding geographical space for intercultural gardens implies questions of respect in the sense that local governments or societal actors take into account the specific needs of migrants. One can wonder, regarding the actual practice of allocating space, if the local actors, from local governments to religious and social organizations, show respect or solely toleration towards the migrants.

The experience of intercultural gardens first was and still is primarily a bottom-up experience. It started with a group of migrants and refugees expressing a need. We are not dealing here with public policy in a top-down approach, which tries to figure out what the needs of the migrants are, or what is the best way to integrate migrant populations. In that sense, public actors, when involved, rather than trying to determine the needs of the migrants and best solution for integration, respond to a formulated demand rather than generating one. Initiatives come for the most part from the migrants themselves, yet for the projects to be realized they need the support of local governments or organizations. Public institutions hence play a decisive role when they take the expressed need seriously and support it without taking over its organization. The active involvement of the communal and social actors in finding the necessary piece of land is crucial and constitutes a test case for showing respect on the part of the majority society towards migrants.

Even if, most of the time, intercultural gardens are and have been grassroots initiatives, now that experience has demonstrated their success and gained visibility the initiative can also be a top-down one. Existing social and cultural organizations may take the initiative to look for a piece of land and build institutional structures for migrants to use. In fact, intercultural gardens often reflect the objectives of certain public policies and are consequently encouraged. This is the case with of local applications of Agenda 21, the initiative of the United Nations to support sustainable development. National governments, as is the case in Germany, have legislated or advised local authorities to take steps to implement the plan in their areas. The criteria of Agenda 21 include, among others, the equal participation and integration of migrants, the promotion of a resource-oriented culture of diversity, and consistent environmental standards. On this basis, many local Agendas 21 in Germany have supported the founding of intercultural gardens. This was the case, for example, with Berlin's first intercultural garden, in Köpenick. These projects also find support at the national level. For example, the Ministry for Education and Research, as part of its initiative "citizens initiate sustainability" (*Bürger initiieren Nachhaltigkeit*), supports the international gardens of Dietzenbach. Intercultural gardens show concrete and visible results, which helps foster support from the public as well as associational actors. On a practical level, local governments support the gardens by providing them with a legal basis, helping with applications and organizing roundtables. They facilitate contacts with municipal gardening departments, discuss issues with actors involved in developing urban policies, and organize the land use jointly with interested parties (Müller, 2010). But it is the allocation of the land that represents the decisive involvement of the local actors.

The land on which intercultural gardens are located most often belongs to public institutions, like local governments, or to semi-public or private entities like churches⁵ or foundations. Space in a city is a precious and limited good. Especially in dense urban agglomerations, available land often

has a high market value, which renders use for intercultural gardens difficult. In Munich, despite its notoriously high real estate prices, an intercultural garden was created in the city center at the site of the former garden of an orphanage (Böhlau, 2005). In a city like Berlin, on the contrary, where space is more easily available, there are many opportunities for installing intercultural gardens (Rosol, 2010). For example, there is an intercultural garden close to Potsdamer Platz, and gardener groups have staked out claims to use parts of the surface of the recently closed Tempelhof Airport (Meyer-Renschhausen, 2010b). Leases are often limited in time, mostly five years and renewable every five years. Frequently, the land is leased for free. The drawback of this financially advantageous deal is that different uses of the land might be favored once the lease expires. In Göttingen, for instance, one of the gardens is located on land belonging to a local school board (*Schulamt*). Over time, this public institution has utilized more and more space for its own needs, always leaving less space for the gardens. In the light of the dependence on the goodwill of donors and the realities of the real estate market, gardening initiatives are often precarious and in regular need of negotiation. The fact that intercultural gardening associations never plant trees is emblematic of this uncertain situation (Pukall, 2010). Trees are not welcome because landowners want to keep the possibility open for another use of the land. Still, when garden projects prove to be successful for a certain period of time and win the support of residents and other societal actors, there are good chances of securing them for the longer term (Rosol, 2010).

In light of all these examples, one might question the real needs of the migrants. As long as they do not consider a different use of the land, the owners can be said to simply tolerate its use by the gardeners. But as soon as another—possibly more profitable—use is envisaged, the intercultural gardens can be in danger. We are hence confronted with a case of toleration more than one of respect. Moreover, one can suppose that the positive publicity intercultural gardens bring to the institutions providing the land may sometimes be a decisive reason for allowing the use of the land. Indeed, especially for local governments who directly deal with the question of integration, intercultural gardens offer a tangible, visible, and positive image to be advertised (Pukall, 2010).

The notion of respect is tied, first, to the recognition of particular needs, and second with the active implication of the majority society in the realization of these needs, in this case aid in allocating space. We have seen how local governments, churches, and other institutional or private actors take an active role in providing the members of intercultural gardens with the means and the space to engage in garden activities. Contrary to the passive attitude of simply tolerating migrants, here an active, financial and “spatial” support is implied. But is it respect, which is a more demanding concept than tolerance, that prevails over these primary good intentions? To be a case of respect, the action of the local government, rather than being driven by self-interest, should directly relate to the needs of the migrants.

SELF-RESPECT RESULTING FROM THE CULTIVATION OF THE LAND

Space is understood here mostly as land, as the land one cultivates, as fertile land. The experience of intercultural gardens enables migrants, in their capacity as gardeners, to landscape and tend this land, and often to regain lost self-respect. By producing and sharing experience, knowledge, and products, members of intercultural gardens recover a sense of their own worth which may have been lost in situations of social exclusion or uprooting. This regaining of self-respect then becomes the first step towards developing mutual respect.

Self-respect in the context of intercultural gardens denotes one’s sense of worth. As Robin S. Dillon puts it, “self-respect is often defined as a sense of worth or as due respect for oneself; it is frequently (but not always correctly) identified with or compared to self-esteem, self-confidence, dignity, self-love, a sense of honor, self-reliance, pride” (2010, e-pub). In other words, self-respect is a matter of viewing oneself as entitled to the same status and treatment as every other person. It has to do with a sense of oneself as a person, as a responsible agent, as someone capable of participating in some sort of public life, as a person who has something to offer. It implies making a contribution to the society.

The ability of individuals to respect themselves is heavily dependent on social circumstances. When self-respect is threatened or lost, it has to be regained, or one has to struggle to develop or maintain

it in a hostile environment. Migrants and people who are socially excluded possess knowledge and competences that are often not recognized or not put to use in the country of immigration. In Western economies, individuals are either salaried or, if they are unemployed or unable to work, part of the assistance system. The sphere of social relations is hence restricted; it lacks the sphere of informal work that is extensive in traditional economies. Work is often the golden door to integration and self-respect, but in times of high unemployment migrants are often deprived not only of the subsistence element that work permits but also of the social dimension in terms of integration into the society and of the self-realization that work allows.

The experience of gardening in intercultural gardens, that is, producing and exchanging on a nonmonetary basis, recreates this missing social dimension of nonsalaried work. Thanks to their activity in the intercultural gardens, and taking into account that self-respect is based on action (Middleton, 2006), migrants regain the possibility to be social actors, to produce and even to give away the product of their gardening, and not merely be in a situation of receiving (social aid, for example). The gaining or regaining of self-respect through garden activities is particularly operative in the case of migrant women. Migrant women are often excluded from the workforce, which jeopardizes their integration and self-respect even more. Women, who are often the drivers of intercultural garden activities, gain the possibility of leaving the domestic sphere, to which they are often confined, to recover a social function as well as an economic function through the subsistence economy. The gardens restore a socioeconomic role to migrant women, which is central to their self-respect. Members usually cultivate plants and herbs from their countries of origin, testing if they can grow in German soil. They gain experience and share knowledge on agriculture from different regions of the world. The gardeners shape the land, watch the product of their work grow, compare experiences with other gardeners, and exchange views on the growth of plants and about their successes and failures (Müller, 2007). But food production transmutes into something more encompassing. As Ms. Abid, one of the founders of the Göttingen gardens, formulates it: When one woman has baked something, she brings it along; someone else brings tea, someone else coffee, home-made juices. We swap recipes. When there is a festivity, everyone cooks their own specialities, everyone brings their own music along. We show each other our dances, but also seeds, plants, herbs and fruit. (quoted in Müller, 2001, pp. 189–201)

Involvement in intercultural gardens conveys to migrants a feeling and experience of participation. Many intercultural gardens are committed to sustainable urban development and ecology, which means that many gardeners recognize they are not only working for themselves (Müller, 2007).

Even though the respect showed by the majority society in the case of the allocation of the land is still not fully established, considering the short leases granted and the self-interest of the contributor, the experience of intercultural gardens fulfills the expectation of self-respect. Gardeners are social actors, exchanging knowledge and the products of their agricultural labor. Self-respect as practiced in these gardens opens the path to mutual respect; and a self-respecting person encourages respect from others (Middleton, 2006). To say that self-respect is a condition for mutual respect may be understood in the sense of worthiness being granted by an external person or institution, but that is not what is implied here. The sense of worth has to be generated and felt by the person herself. Respecting oneself—independent of the norms and expectations of the majority society—is a precondition for enabling migrants to “offer” themselves for the respect of others. You do not have to be worthy of respect; you must offer yourself for respect by respecting yourself first.

THE PRACTICE OF MUTUAL RESPECT WITHIN THIS SEMI-PUBLIC SPACE THAT ARE INTERCULTURAL GARDENS

The phenomenon of intercultural gardens implies the gathering of people of different origins and different social backgrounds on a piece of land that they cultivate together. This space of encounter and common activity can be seen as a semi-public space where mutual respect has to be practiced in

order to function properly. The land bonds the gardeners together and makes them dependent; they can't take their land and walk away (Zurawski, 2010). Gardeners are obliged to look for means of resolving conflicts under the imperative of mutual respect.

When we speak of a category such as that of migrants, it encompasses a heterogeneous magma of people from different parts of the world. What this heterogeneous blend of people have in common is the fact that they are displaced, come from somewhere else, and are in need of somewhere to settle down—to find a place to engage in new social exchanges. Yet the cultural and social differences between them are often considerable. A migrant from Ethiopia may not have much in common with a migrant from Vietnam or another from Iraq. Or, within a specific geographic area, one can be a Kurd from Turkey or a Turk, which is a significant cultural difference. What is more, migrants and refugees come from different social backgrounds. Some migrants are illiterate, others are educated or were well-off in their country of origin. Hence intercultural gardens are characterized by a complex cultural and social heterogeneity that can give rise to all sorts of conflicts.

Many migrants find themselves in difficult economic circumstances and, as a consequence, suffer problematic housing conditions. Intercultural gardens offer migrants, who often dwell in small apartments, an enlarged private living space but also an opening toward a public space or even a public sphere. Western individualized societies are characterized by a clear-cut differentiation between private and public spheres,⁶ which is incongruous with the habits of many non-Western societies, which are often community-based. The way particular migrant groups experience space is often different: migrants of Turkish origin, for example, are habitually not accustomed to this stringent public/private divide. In their country of origin, domestic environments are permeable and open to their neighborhoods. People visit each other frequently. In the individualized culture of modern Germany, these migrants find themselves in closed and often cramped accommodation, creating the need to re-establish contacts. Intercultural gardens offer this opportunity and lead to the blurring of the boundary line between private, individualized space and public, collective space. Because living space is limited, sharing a plot of land can be perceived as an “extension of living space” (Müller, 2007). In that sense, intercultural gardens become expansions of the private space. Given the fact that migrants' houses and apartments are usually too small, the intercultural garden becomes the place where family and friends gather. But while traditional gardens are habitually part of the domestic sphere (Meyer-Renschhausen, 2002), intercultural gardens open this private realm to the larger public space. Intercultural gardens are thus both an extension of private space and an entrance to public space; in other words, they function as a link between the private and the public.

In this semi-public space, the experience of respect towards co-gardeners is central. The internal organization of the space of intercultural gardens implies responsibility and interactions for coexistence. There are two levels of comprehension of the concepts of tolerance and respect. In everyday language, the term tolerance might be more appropriate for the case of intercultural gardens. Tolerance is the expression used in the charters of the different organizations. *Stiftung Interkultur* offers, among other services, a statute template that can be used for the creation of an association. This template uses the word tolerance in the first sentence of the paragraph concerning the goals of the association.⁷ The charter of the intercultural garden at Dietzenbach uses the text provided by the *Stiftung Interkultur*, but also adds the word “tolerance” another three times. By contrast, the term respect may carry a negative connotation in the vernacular language. For example, in some cultures, as is the case in Arab cultures, respect is not a positive concept. Respect is what one owes to older people. Its signification implies a position of submission and obedience (Abid, 2010). It is compensated by compassion (*Mitleid*) from the elders for the younger. In this understanding, respect does not allow an individual to have a different opinion and to express it. But in the understanding retained in this article, respect is more valuable than tolerance. Tolerance, in its classical passive sense, can easily imply the fact that everyone has their own private space and should not interfere with others. Public space then tends to become smaller. In a merely tolerant society everyone withdraws to their own private sphere. Intercultural gardens, by contrast, create openings and counter this tendency. In intercultural gardens, private space is not quite private; there are interactions taking place at various levels. This semi-public space demands more commitment, which implies respect because

interactions are encouraged, even though, wherever interactions happen, conflicts exist, and indeed intercultural gardens are by no means conflict-free spaces.

One of the goals of intercultural gardens is to maintain cultural diversity and at the same time to foster communication, to construct bridges between people of different cultural backgrounds. Although respect is often conceptually understood, after Kant's approach, as everyone being worthy of respect qua person, irrespective of his or her achievements or intrinsic characteristics, this abstract understanding lacks the practical implementation of this virtue. Respect is performed as soon as real persons can affirm their difference and express their disagreement. Moreover, mutual respect directs people to communicate in such a way that they create common spaces of life and interaction even if differences exist and persist (DeLue, 2006). Interactions in intercultural gardens are sometimes even more difficult when one considers that some migrants, especially refugees, have fled from wars and conflicts in their countries of origin, and therefore have difficulty handling situations of conflict (Müller, 2002). In addition, cultural differences among members imply different practices of conflict resolution and different ways of discussing problems, often not compatible with each other (Müller, 2002). The question can be raised whether it is the presence of a majority of women in the garden that facilitates the resolution of conflicts. Indeed, daily conflicts due to cultural differences arise all the time. For example, despite certain issues that regularly provoke conflicts (like the presence of dogs, which are considered impure by Arab members, or the wearing of bikinis, which poses a problem for Muslims who expect women to cover themselves), compromises are nonetheless found (Abid, 2010). Interestingly, the more profound reasons for conflict, the more political issues like the rivalry of Kurds and Turks, are not present in the gardens.

Resentment and jealousy are common in the gardens. A luxuriant plot may create a reaction of envy, and a badly kept plot may give rise to irritation on the part of the other gardeners (Abid, 2010). In Göttingen, the shelter on the plot of a Vietnamese member was set on fire twice (Abid, 2010).

There are also some unresolvable conflicts (Abid, 2010). Issues with the high consumption of alcohol of some members have led to differences that could not be reconciled. Berlin experiences show that, as soon as a certain number of Russians and Ukrainians join a garden community, they tend to separate from the rest (Meyer-Renschhausen, 2010a). Predominantly Turkish garden communities (such as Neukölln in Berlin) also tend to lose their intercultural character and hence their original purpose.

Regarding the experiences of intercultural gardens so far, one can conclude that those that ended up as monocultural gardens failed to promote the demanding virtue of mutual respect. In most cases, however, intercultural gardens in Germany have remained faithful to their objective of maintaining and fostering cultural diversity, and unavoidable conflicts are dealt with pragmatically on an everyday basis (Abid, 2010).

CONCLUSION

The space of intercultural gardens enables the practice of respect. First, this practice of respect can take the form of the active involvement of the majority society in supporting the migrants' projects of intercultural gardening by facilitating the finding and the use of a piece of land. Still, as we have seen, the attitude of the majority society as represented by the local government and other social actors oscillates between respect and tolerance. Moreover, the engagement of these actors in the migrants' project is often conditioned by their own interests. More research would be needed to detect the weight of the reasons underlying the help provided by public and private actors and to determine the actual importance of respect compared to self-interest and mere tolerance. Second, respect is practiced within the gardens in the form of mutual respect among the members, who often come from widely divergent cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, rendering the creation of a community of gardeners even more challenging than in the case of monocultural and similar socioeconomic profile membership. Most experiences of long-term intercultural gardens have proved to be able to handle conflicts successfully. But the application most manifest of respect in the gardens is by far the experience of self-respect. Acquiring and maintaining a degree of self-respect by migrants is facilitated because, due to the intercultural gardens, they can make visible their own worth in the

new country of residence. Indeed, the landscaped and tended land of the gardens heightens visibility. Migrants, in their capacity as gardeners, make the positive results of their action visible.

Intercultural gardens create a community of place. The participants share a common place of action and create an experience for integration arising out of the sharing of this space. As important as food production is the fact that it occurs within a specific space, or a *place*, and that the experience can not succeed without the practice of respect.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 This article is based on the results of a workshop organized at the Technische Universität Darmstadt in October 2010 with founders and members of intercultural gardens.
- 2 In French, they were renamed *jardins familiaux* to emphasize their recreational dimension.
- 3 In the 1990s, by the time the experience of intercultural gardens started in Germany, there were many refugees of the Balkan region involved.
- 4 An approach which has caused concerns on the part of the municipality because of the absence of an identifiable legal partner.
- 5 The evangelical and Catholic churches in Germany enjoy the status of “corporations of public law” (Ferretti & Moulin-Doos, 2010) and are among the largest landowners in the country.
- 6 Scholars have tried to come up with more precise subcategories (see Chioldelli & Moroni, 2014).
- 7 “The association aims to promote international attitude, tolerance in all areas of culture and international understanding” [*Der Verein dient der Förderung internationaler Gesinnung, der Toleranz auf allen Gebieten der Kultur und des Völkerverständigungsgedankens*]. *Stiftung Interkultur*, Modelstatute §2. Retrieved June 30, 2011, from <http://www.stiftung-interkultur.de/dmdocuments/Mustersatzung%20Interkulturelle%20G%C3%A4rten.pdf>

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