Allotment gardens: Definitions, forms and Examples of urban agriculture

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Outline

- Objectives
- Background
- Allotment gardens: Definitions and forms
- Other examples of urban agriculture
- Socio-demographic profiles of urban farmers in Benin
- Concluding remarks
Objectives

Globally: Present some facets of urban agriculture, with focus on Benin’s conditions

Specifically

- Clarify the concept of urban agriculture and its specificities in Benin
- Elaborate on the concept of allotment garden and the diversity behind it, especially in Benin’s conditions
Continuous growth of cities and peri-urban areas, at an exponential rate, especially in the developing countries.

Locus of poverty in Africa: Slow shift from rural to urban areas (WRI: more than 56% poor).

Livelihood support: a problem for up to half of city dwellers (60-80% income of the urban poor spent in food).
Background …

Poverty + High food prices

Reduction of quantity of food consumed; Influence on the nutritional quality of the food purchased

Food security of many urban households (poorest of society), is undermined
Increased attention to urban agriculture

- Food security, food supply and urban food systems ==> challenge for decision makers
- Existence of a demand for high food quality from the middle class
- The issue of unemployment, especially among young and women
- Problems with the disposal of urban wastes and waste water

Background ...
Background

- Urban agriculture

«Cultivation of plants and the raising of animals with food purposes, inside and around the cities including, even, other uses and activities related such as the production and the delivery of inputs, and the processing and commercialization of the products» (Game and Primus, 2015)
Allotment gardens: Definitions and forms ...

- **Urban gardening** ⇒ significant component of urban agriculture
  - Large variety of food production forms centered within and around cities
  - Terms of land tenure and stakeholder labor

- **Allotment gardens** ⇒ Type of urban gardening
Allotment gardens: Definitions and forms ...

- **Emergence of the concept**

  Development of allotment gardens in Europe during the 18\textsuperscript{th} century

- **Equivalent concepts:**
  
  - Allotment
  - Community garden.
Allotment gardens: Definitions and forms ...

Definition

- Plot of land made available for individual for gardening or growing food plants

- Subdivided into a few or up to hundreds of units

- Parcels are cultivated individually, contrary to other community garden types where the entire area is tended collectively by a group of people.
Allotment gardens: Definitions and forms …

- Characteristics (Matos and Batista, 2013):
  - Use of urban resources, production for urban citizens;
  - Proximity to the markets;
  - High competition for the land;
  - Limited space, utilization of organic resources;
  - Predominant production of perishable goods, and a high degree of specialization;
  - …
Allotment gardens: Definitions and forms …

Forms: ⇒ Typology of allotment gardens

Three major urban and peri-urban horticulture systems in southern Benin (FAO, ibid)

1. Very extensive production on the food plains north of Cotonou
2. Moderately extensive systems in the coastal areas of Grand-Popo and Agoué

3. Fully urban, very intensive gardening on plots of less than 0.3 ha
## Other examples of urban agriculture …

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home gardens</strong></td>
<td>Cultivation of a small portion of land which may be around the</td>
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<tr>
<td>or Private gardens</td>
<td>household or within walking distance from the family home</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional gardens</strong></td>
<td>Small to large food-producing gardens or orchards located on</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>private or public institutional property in a residential,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>commercial or mixed-use area, gardened by an organization or</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>business</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other examples of urban agriculture</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hobby chicken keeping</strong></td>
<td>Small-scale keeping of chickens in residential areas or other public land areas for personal use or for commercial use</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Market gardens</strong></td>
<td>Small- to medium-scale production of food-producing or ornamental plants, bees, fish, poultry, or small farm animals located on public or private property and designed and managed for commercial purposes using a variety of growing techniques</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other examples of urban agriculture ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban animal husbandry</th>
<th>Breeding animals in and around the cities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Rabbit farming</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Poultry (egg, meat)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Pig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Sheep</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Cattle</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>o …</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Other examples of urban agriculture ...

<p>| Urban aquaculture | Farming of aquatic organisms, including fish, mollusks, crustaceans and aquatic plants within the urban environment |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hobby beekeeping</th>
<th>Small-scale keeping of honeybees for personal use. Beehives can be co-located with gardens or non-garden uses, on underutilized spaces in residential, mixed-use, or other public land areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edible landscape</td>
<td>Use of food-producing plants in the design of private and public outdoor spaces in residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments, attended to by an individual or business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Other examples of urban agriculture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continuous Productive Urban Landscape (CPULs)</th>
<th>Non-built and urban landscape, economically, social-culturally and ecologically productive, situated in a landscaping strategy to a metropolitan scale, built to include living and natural elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Urban countryside</td>
<td>Every agricultural activity of control and management of a biological cycle of either plant or animal, together with the activity developed by a farmer in the prosecution of the act of production or sustained by the companies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Socio-demographic profiles of urban farmers in Benin

- Gender: 61% men; 39% women (Shakleton et al., 2009).

- Education: Unemployed (Young undergraduates!!)

- Urban farming combined with other activities (traders, employees, civil servants…)
Concluding remarks …

- Allotment gardens ⇒ opportunity to reduce poverty and improve food security in cities

- Existence of challenges:
  - Competition for land;
  - Risks of environmental degradation;
  - Need of quality support service;
  - Health concerns: cohabitation between humans and animals.
Concluding remarks

- Urban agriculture/Allotment gardens expected to receive increased attention in the policy agenda

- Contribution of this project:

  Generate decision-making tools, so as to enlighten policy makers.
Thanks for your attention