

THE URBAN COMMUNITY AGRICULTURE PRACTICES IN CHINESE CITIES

—CASE STUDIES IN NANJING

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Introduction

With the urbanization and the change of citizen's living pattern, the situation of social stratification and spatial isolation is becoming more and more obvious, and the corresponding community problems are also coming one after another. For example, the residents lack a sense of community identity and insufficiently participate in community activities and community building. Under these backgrounds, the urban community agriculture practices may be a particularly important approach.

Since the 1990s, nurturing plants and reaping the harvest, an intuitive yet civilized activity, had seemed unpractical and inconclusive for metropolis dwellers in China. However, urban farmers are changing the public life in a formal and informal way with food as medium as well as catalyst in the last decade in China. This paper aims to unravel the context and highlight the potential value of urban agriculture.



(Residents arbitrarily occupy the community public space to plant vegetable)

Methods

With observation, interview, questionnaire and map making, the authors investigate two groups of people, residents of Suojin community, residents of Nanjing Forestry University, who are keen on planting vegetables.

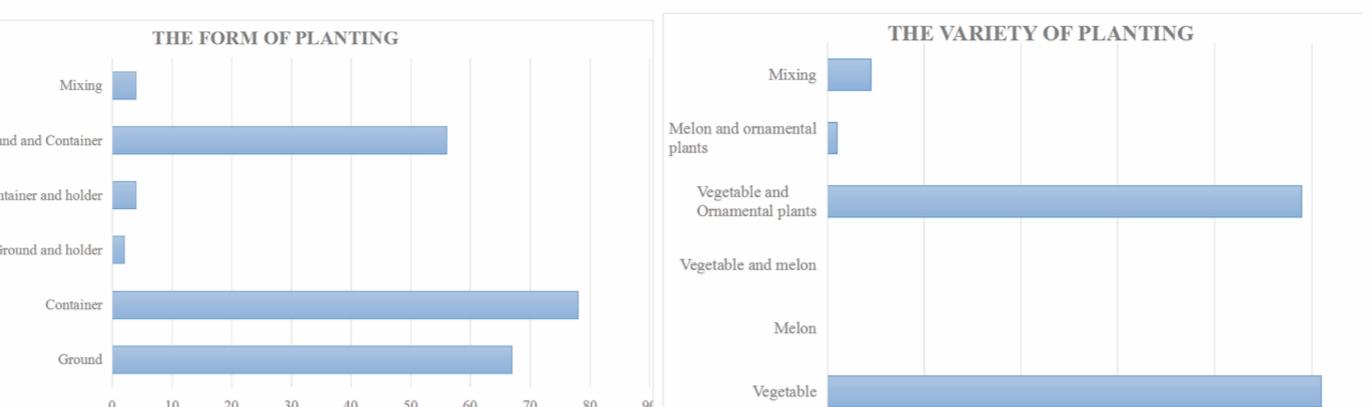
Method	Time	Respondents	Form
Observation	2018.11.5 to 2018.11.12	Residents of Suojin community Residents of Nanjing Forestry University	Take 15:00, 16:00 and 17:00 as observation time, recording the use of vegetable garden
Interview	Preliminary interview: 2018.11.5, 2018.11.8 Through interview: 2018.11.12	Residents of Suojin community Residents of Nanjing Forestry University	Planters and other residents were randomly selected to memorize orally
Questionnaire	2018.11.12	Residents of Suojin community Residents of Nanjing Forestry University	Planters and other residents are randomly selected to record answers by oral or fill in questionnaires voluntarily
Map marking	2018.11.5 2018.11.8	Residents of Suojin community Residents of Nanjing Forestry University	Take 15:00, 16:00 and 17:00 as observation time, recording activity level characteristics

Results

Planting pattern analysis:



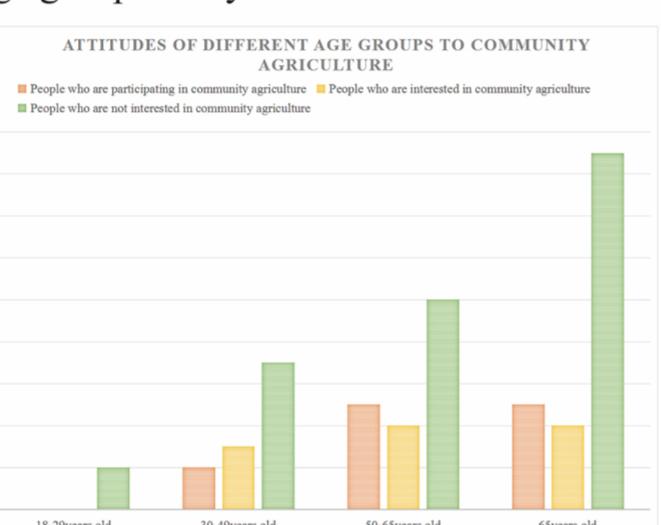
● Ground ● Ground+Container ● Container ● Mixing ● Ground+Holder ● Container+Holder



Through the observation of the community, finding that gardeners mainly use six planting forms: ground, container, ground and holder, container and holder, ground and container, or mixing, accounting for 31.7%, 37.0%, 0.9%, 1.9%, 26.6%, 1.9% respectively. In which the forms of planting, containers are the most popular form, because they are easy to move and do not occupy the public space all the time.

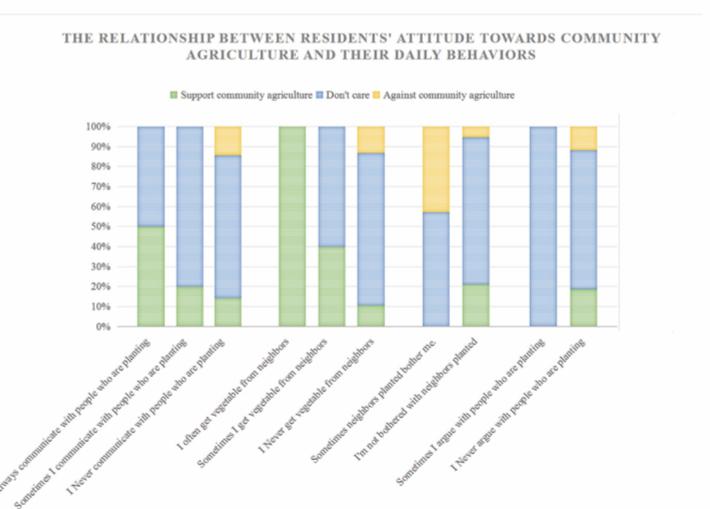
The variety of planting include vegetable, melons and ornamental plants. Vegetable is the most popular form, with the proportion of 48.3%. The vegetable grown are onions, peppers, taros, etc. These types of plants grow fast, which is ordinary families need in daily life, and have ornamental value.

Age groups analysis:

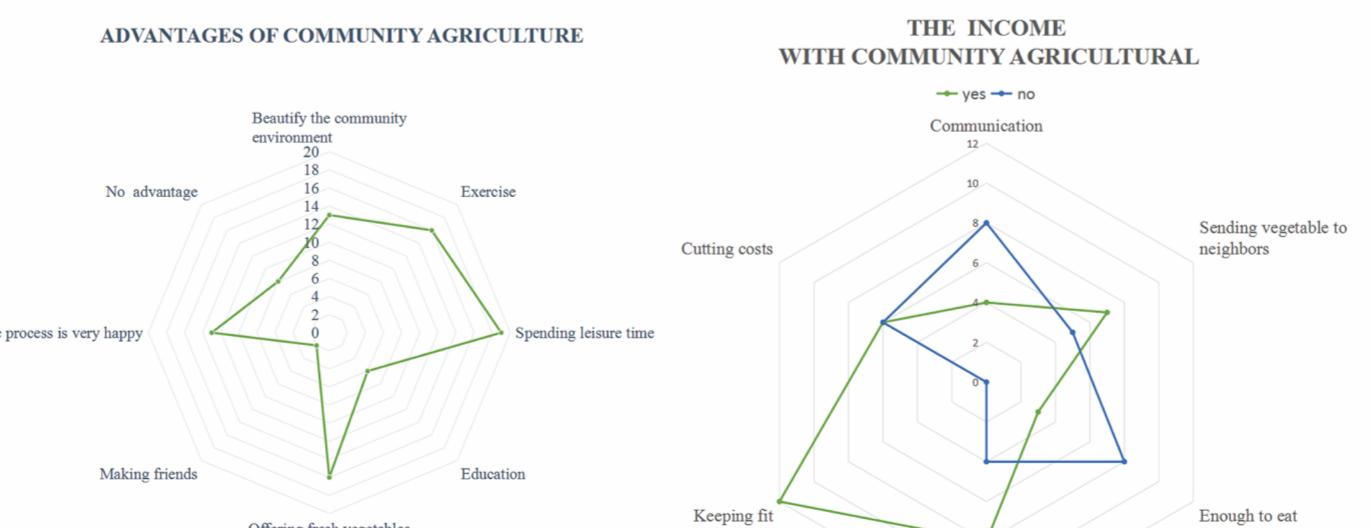


By interviewing the residents, 20.3% of them are participating in community agriculture. Most of residents who participate in community agriculture live in the first floor with backyards. 19.7% of the residents are interested in community agriculture and want to experience the joy of rural life. They hope that the community can collect abandoned public space to provide space for residents to plant. 60% of the residents said they were not interested in community agriculture, probably because there are more elderly people in the surveyed area, who don't have the energy to plant.

Behavior analysis:



Advantages and income analysis:



20.4% of residents believe that the advantage of planting is spending leisure time, followed by 17.2% of residents think that the advantages of planting are keeping fit and getting fresh vegetables. But in fact, the biggest gain from planting vegetable is to make the body healthy, especially mental health, and to make more friends. In other words, urban agriculture promotes communication between neighbors, which contributes to the construction of a harmonious community and the development of a healthy city.

Analysis of Longitudinal time: in Nanlin 1st Community and Suojin 3rd Community



(Data resource: the field of surveying and mapping, and paper "nanjing forestry university campus environment analysis II — informal community garden landscape design, Qian Peng, 2015")

Conclusion

1. The rise of community agriculture reflects the needs of urban residents in the process of urbanization. In recent years, the agricultural community is gradually increasing, especially in abandoned public space. Community agriculture is a resource-based landscape that combines economic, aesthetic, and regenerative characteristics. At the same time, it is a positive place where people build, work and interact with each other. The traditional form of public green space is passive and cannot meet the deep demand of residents. Urban agriculture is the product of residents' diversified community life and active participation in community building.
2. The construction of community agriculture enhances the harmonious neighborhood relationship of the community. On the one hand, community agriculture provides a platform for neighbourhood interaction. On the other hand, it breaks the isolation caused by closed communities and effectively links public spaces between communities. Community residents work together and interact in community gardens, which will prompt residents to gradually develop a sense of belonging.
3. The development of community agriculture requires community organization and coordination. At present, community agriculture is mainly a spontaneous individual behavior. It cannot avoid disputes between residents because their personal interests are encroached. If it can be managed and maintained jointly by the community and residents, and the residents can participate in the construction of community agriculture in an organized manner, the neighborhood disputes can be reduced. Taking into account the interests of most residents, it can promote the development of community agricultural.

Discussion

With the urbanization process, the increasing differentiation of social strata has caused residents to repel different classes in urban residential areas. The lack of communication opportunities in the neighborhood, leading new communities to constantly split the original spatial structure of the city. The gap between the rich and the poor has formed a different spatial order, the emergence of community agriculture reduces the occurrence of this situation. However, at present, community agriculture is not in the form of green space in the planning of residential construction land in China. Therefore, it is difficult to popularize this form of green space. Moreover, no matter what kind of way residents participate in community agriculture, they need a management agency. Otherwise, it is a private activity. The planting of vegetable by individuals need to be effectively managed and distributed in order to ensure the interests of the majority of residents. Finally, the process of residents participating in the construction of community agriculture is actually the process of establishing mutual trust and solidarity. This mutual trust actually promotes the realization of the value of social capital.

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