

Exploring the Co-Construction and Sharing Methods of Urban Public Space from “Shared Gardens”

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Abstract:

City is place inhabited by human beings. The level of how we concern about sharing urban public space reflects not only the level of development of city's politic, economy and civilization, but also the level of integration between people and city. Shared garden (Jardin partagé) refers to garden collectively managed and shared by residents in urban or rural area, which land composed of urban public green space, residential green space, urban idle land, etc. According to the 13th Five-Year Plan of China, Public green space in China will increase from 5 m²/p in 2005 to 12 m²/p in 2020. How to use, manage and share these green spaces? How to make these green spaces grow effectively? Citizens' sharing and safeguarding of this public resource is key issue of whether city is viable and sustainable. Based on all these factors, the thesis explores sharing mechanism of urban public space by studying planning and distribution of shared gardens, citizen participation, and construction management mechanism and so on, provides experience for public space construction problems currently faced by domestic cities. Gradually realization of urban public space co-constructing and sharing mechanism to enhance city's comfort and harmony.

Keywords:

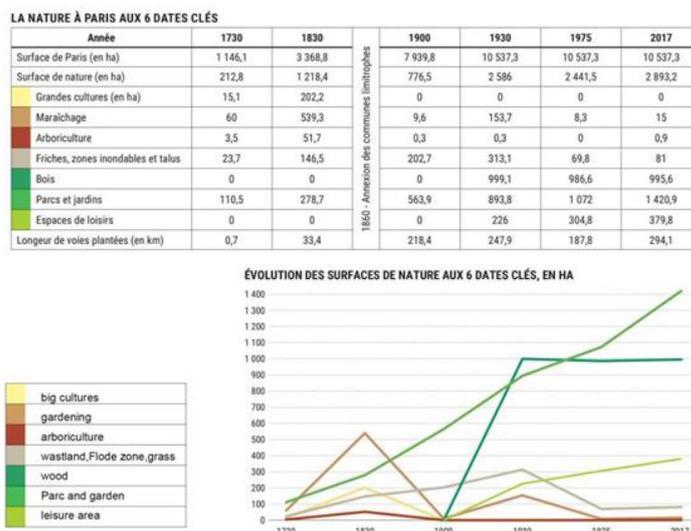
Urban Public Space, Shared Garden, Comfort City, Co-Construction, Public Participation

1. Introduction

City is place inhabited by human beings. Public space is an important part of city. The level of how we concern about sharing the urban public space reflects not only the level of development of city's politic, economy and civilization, but also the level of integration between people and city. It's one of the key points which can enhance vitality of city. The World Environment Conference 2015 proposed that everyone has equal rights and obligations to enjoy and protect Earth's resources, which shows that, ideal and reality are in opposition about sharing of urban hardware such as urban housing and public space as resources of earth. It shows practical significance to find

ways to enhance sharing features of urban resources by characteristics of urban public space. In order to reflect characteristics of sharing at urban public space and emphasize practical research methods, the thesis chooses the “shared garden”, a typical case which is closely connected with reality, as object, and mainly focuses on problems related to co-construction and sharing of urban public space.

Table 1. Evolution of the surface of nature on 6 dates sles In Paris. Source : Documents about évolution de la nature a paris de 1730 a mous jour, APUR,2017.



The Shared garden (Jardin partagé) refers to garden collectively managed by residents in urban or rural area. The garden land consists of urban public green spaces, residential green areas and idle urban area etc., From the 18th century to the present in Paris, the park green space and leisure green space in the city have seen a substantial increase. (Table 1, Figure 1) In order to meet the need for communication and recreation which brought by changes in lifestyles of contemporary people, the French government and a large number of scholars in planning, architecture and landscape architecture proposed to promote generalization of sharing at gardens. The French government began the work since 2012. Being accepted widely, the public participated in actively, and the number of shared gardens continues to grow stable (Figure 2). The purpose is to create shared garden to promote social relations and enhance influence of cultural and educational activities, so as to make reality the expectation that citizens and governments build cities and beautify cities jointly and enhance city's vitality to the last. Deep value of the practice lies in exploring the methods by which citizens can participate in urban planning, exploring way of enjoying shard garden daily, and telling how to get along with other sharers. By the way in which government guide public to build and share urban public facilities jointly, harmony and vitality of urban can be promoted effectively, and meet public need for better life by perfecting system of urban planning, design and management such as garden in city and cultural communication. 2017, the strategic plan was proposed in the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China that at this stage, the principal challenge that China faced has been shifted to "the challenge of the people's growing need for a better life and an imbalanced and inadequate development". According to the 13th Five-Year Plan of China, Public green space in China will increase from 5 s m²/p in 2005 to 12 m²/p in 2020, China's urban green space is growing year by year (Table 2), The urban green space in 2015 has tripled since 2006, Among these growing green areas, park-type green spaces account for a

small proportion (Table 3). How to use, manage and share these green spaces? How to make these green spaces grow effectively? Citizens' sharing and safeguarding of this public resource is key issue of whether city is viable and sustainable.

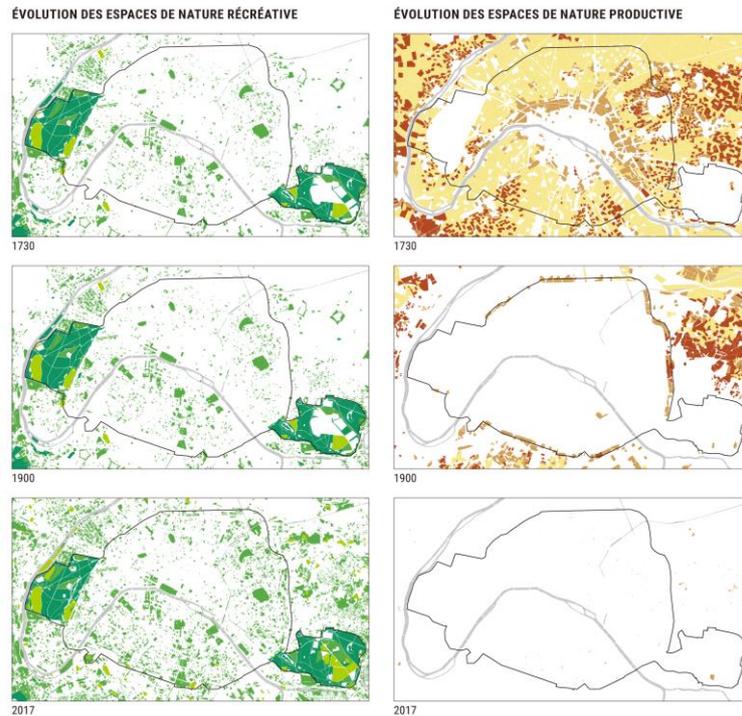


Figure 1. Paris city green area and type change map. The change of lifestyle has led to an increase in the green space of recreation and communication functions. source: Documents about evolution de la nature a paris de 1730 a nous jour, APUR,2017.

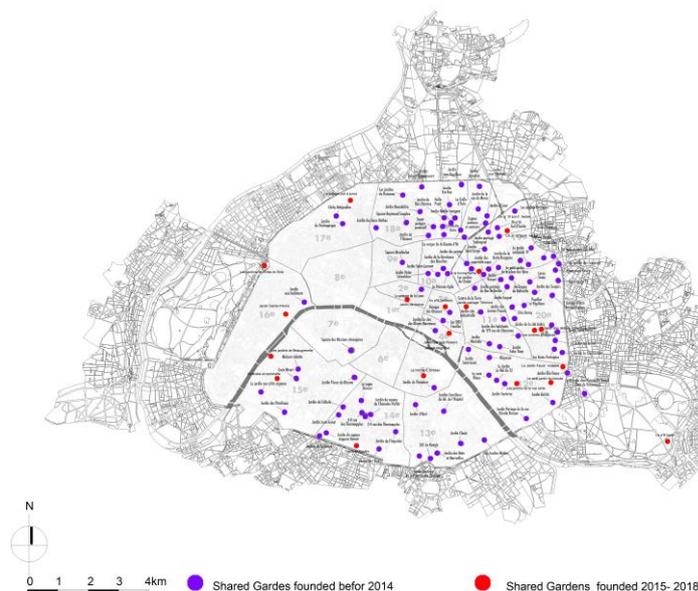


Figure 2. The shared garden map of Paris, it's increased by 20 from 2014 to 2018, drawn by Wang Jiequan.

The urbanization of European countries has entered new stage, and one of the core tasks of urban design is to seek new engine of urban develop with promotion of cultural and social structure against the backdrop of slowdown in urban population growth rate and facility construction, in the way to maintain vitality and attractiveness

of city. For the reason, urban administrators will focus on establishing an interactive relationship between citizens and cities, and to deepen this relationship further through various measures. France is pioneer in the field and has conducted many explorations. The “shared garden” is one of the typical attempts. Its experience provides new ideas and methods to inspire co-constructing and sharing of many public spaces existing in China’s current urban construction.

2. Emergence and Development of the Shared Gardens

2.1. Historical Background of the Shared Gardens

Retaining certain amount of public space in city, which originated from land privatization system, has long history in Europe and is both confrontation with the system and inheritance of the system. During the Middle Ages, land policies were relatively loose, and landlords were free to combine in order to defend their rights of land. In 1890, due to the need to build church, French priest JULES LEMIRE distributed a piece of land to workers of the building. Workers could use the land for free, in exchange; they provided some free work for construction of the church. This method soon began to spread nationwide. By 1921, more than 47,000 "workers' gardens" had been established and the "National Workers Garden Association" had been established. Since the beginning of World War II, due to scarcity of supplies caused by the war, people have further expanded the scale of crop planting in public space. By the peak of 1945, there have been more than 250,000 workers' gardens or similar urban green spaces. In the following period, a wider range of urban occupants participated, and families became main users of these gardens. They mainly planted vegetables and fruits in garden. Therefore, in 1952, these gardens were renamed "Home Garden" and the "National Worker Garden Association" organization was also renamed "National Family Garden Association." However, after the 1970s, with development of economy, the economic role of this family garden has dropped significantly, and its influence has gradually disappeared.

2.2. Shared Gardens Development in Foreign Countries

In the 1970s, there were waves of environment renewal in American cities. Some citizens began to transform the urban wasteland surrounding their place of residence into community garden to improve their living comfort level. Liz Christy is one of the representative figures. She is an artist who lived in the East Side of Manhattan, New York. At that time, there were desolate spaces around many living communities. She tried multiple methods to use “seed bombs” (what she calls the street garden) to beautify these neglected lands. In 1973, the first step of the "Green Guerrilla Project” (planting abandoned land in cities and turning these abandoned lands into gardens), a wasteland located at the intersection of Manhattan’s streets and Po Wei Streets, was transferring to testing ground for agricultural cultivation, in assistance of participation of community residents. It has also become place where social groups hold gatherings and activities. It has been the first urban shared garden in New York City. In the following few years, the "Green Guerrilla Project" campaign spread throughout the city, resulting in profound change in the pattern of green space in New York: abandoned land became community garden, new social space was created, community integration and security sense was keep rising. These green spaces played decisive role even in the struggle to achieve ethnic and social isolation. The New York City government gradually joined in the process and launched green thumb program in

1978 to promote development of these gardens further. All these lead to the American community garden movement and eventually lead to the establishment of the American Community Garden Association (ACGA). In early 1990s, American shared garden of new models gradually reversed its influence on France. In 1997, the French Horticultural Foundation organized the first national forum in Lille under theme of "Gardening and Citizenship". By inviting members of relevant associations in New York and Quebec to explain their experiences to the public, the conference led to the formation of "multi-form garden", a French shared gardens network, which provided platform for gardeners, politicians and local authorities' technical staff to communicate between the networks. In 1997, the first French garden community was designed in Lille, "(re)discovered gardens". Since 2002, 104 shared gardens have been built in Paris. All agencies that provide related services and manage the "shared gardens" have been invited to sign the "shared garden Charter" of the Paris Green City Project to guarantee that participants must ensure respect and maintenance, biodiversity enhancing and improvement of living environment. At the same time, the shared gardens have also become space for government to provide public services. By 2015, with the support of the Paris city government, the shared gardens have spread to every district of Paris (Figure 1), New York City has completed the construction of more than a thousand community gardens and has driven shared gardens to bloom all over the world. It greatly enhances the comfort of New York citizens. Most citizens can reach the park green space near their place of residence within 10 minutes. More importantly, the shared gardens increase the possibility of citizen interaction (Figure 3, Figure 4).The shared gardens are spread in urban such as New York, Montreal, Tokyo, Berlin, Paris, and Lille. They produce large amounts of fruits, vegetables, and honey each year. From the practices, these gardens not only beautify the city, produce food, but also promote the integration of social relationships. During festival, people hold celebrations and even weddings in the community gardens.

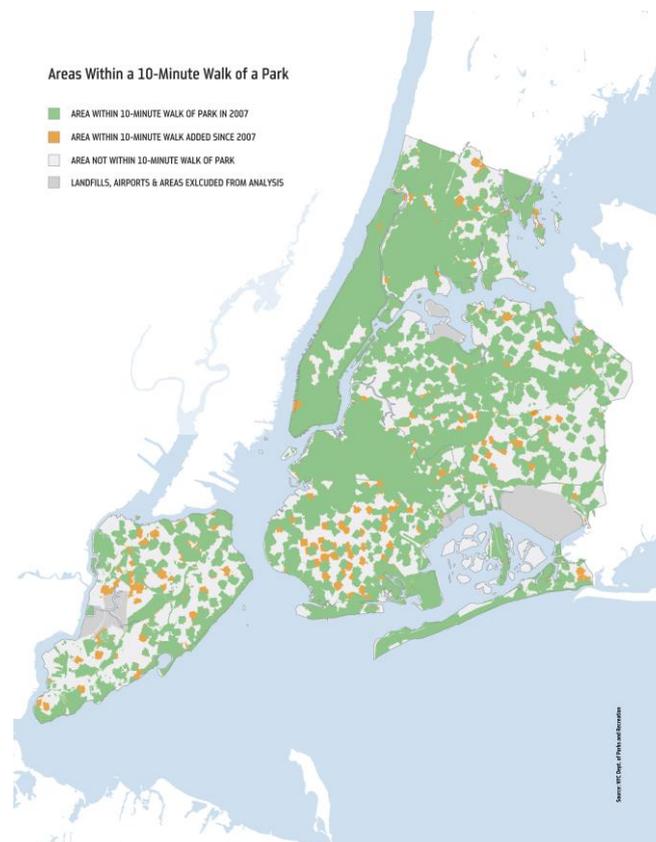


Figure 3. Analysis of New York City Parks reachable within 10 minutes in 2007 source: PlanYC 2011.

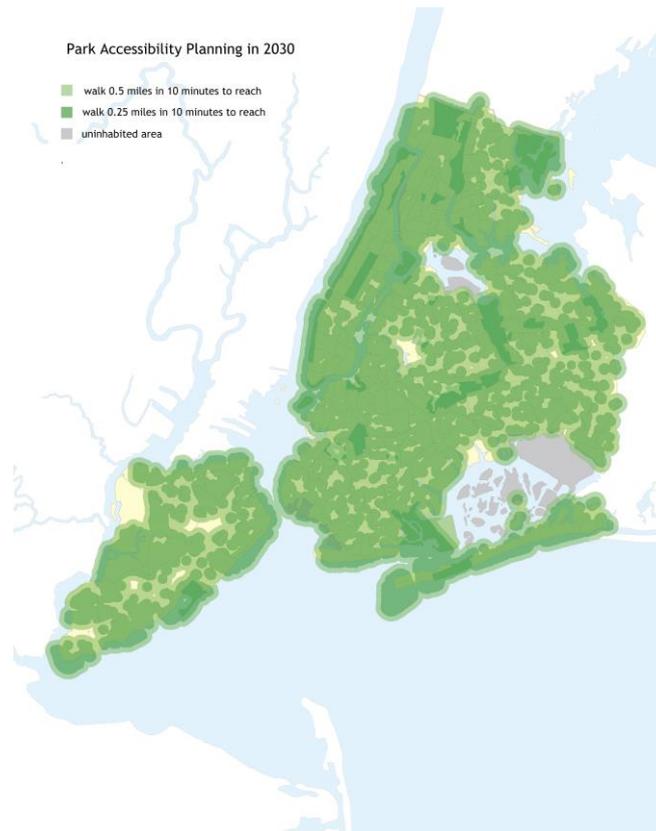


Figure 4. Planning of New York City Parks reachable within 10 minutes, source: PlanYC 2011.

2.3. Standards and Requirements for the Shared Gardens at Now Time

Today, French local governments have further developed their requirement on the shared gardens. Their purpose has shifted to co-development with citizen at economy and social promotion, especially co-constructing of the city. The first is to encourage citizens to participate in sustainable development of the city. Government hopes to build a variety of types of community gardens: the residents shared gardens, the teaching-style gardens, the embedded gardens, and the family gardens. These gardens should be the result of collective creation and coordination. They become an organic part of the city's sustainability. The second is to create social connections by using the shared gardens as open place. It is beneficial for people of different cultures and ages to communicate with each other, to get connect with associations, educational institutions, elderly activity centers and other social sectors. The third is to conduct cultivation practices in the shared gardens and allow participants to understand biology diversity, to achieve purpose of maintaining and protecting of environment; the fourth is to allow participating citizens to register to the shared gardens, which is conducive to management of government.

Most of the existing shared gardens in Paris, France have signed regulations for urban greening management. They comply with the following rules:

- i. Open to the public: Establish an association of the shared gardens and open it to any member of the association. Garden must be open for more than two half days each week. Members of the association can be French citizens as well as foreigners who live in Paris for long or short term.

ii. Friendly construction: organize gardening competitions no less than once every season.

iii. Information disclosure: Each garden needs to be affixed with the “main greening” sign of the city, and indicate name of the garden, opening time of the garden, seasonal activities and organization plan for events.

iv. Responsibility: The association has responsibility to develop collective strength, impart knowledge, and formulate rules for garden operations.

v. Site management: The association organizes members to participate in management and arrange management plans.

2.4. Experience of Shared Gardens in Foreign Countries

At development process, we can see that construction of the shared gardens is in following key points: The first, construction of the shared gardens needs to solve problem of ownership about land, main measure is to divide ownership and using-rights of land by its attribute of public welfare. The second, it needs to find the best balance point between public participation and government management. It is important to fully release the spiritual needs of the people’s creativity and desire for nature, and it is important to establish organizations and form uniform rules under supervisor of government to maintain openness and equality. Lead to basic values of society, the process not only strengthen spirit of the contract, but also maintain principle and flexibility in practice.

When talk about main body of construction, management and using of the shared gardens, it is important to take collective organizations such as associations as main body to avoid tendency of individuals about privatizing on the one hand and keep away from government’s vicious circle of inadequate implementation on the other hand. By the way of give advice to management of these associations, government has enabled construction of shared garden to fully integrate into the overall development plan of city and achieve better growth. The model, to some extent, reflects problem of balance between urban co-construction and sustainable development. It is true reflection of internal needs of urban development at the stage.

Avoiding land transfer and facility construction, investment of the shared gardens is mainly planting and maintenance of plants, daily expenses of management, and expenses related to organization of activities. General approach is that governments provides funds for the bottom-up, but mainly depend on associations and members themselves to solve financial problems. Due to public benefit of the project, citizens participate in garden for their love, and they are willing to provide free services. This is the reason why funding problem is the easiest problem in whole process.

When in use, the shared gardens are not completely open. They open part of the time each week. This means that in rest of the time, these gardens can maintain certain level of privacy. This is the way to reward managers and builders of these gardens. From the perspective of proportion, more time is in closed situation. On the one hand, builders are respected. On the other hand, public welfare of garden is consolidated, so that whole society can participate in using, which will enable participating of whole society in construction and to maintain vitality and continuity of construction of the shared gardens.

On the management issue, practice of the shared gardens emphasizes its openness as well as its urbanity. Collective association is the main body of management,

government supervised by assistance of upper level associations. In the way, management of garden can be specific and can remain flexibility under the overall framework. Government does not formulate rules unilaterally. Instead, it initiates signing of “charter” and other forms of joint rules signing. Through social and public welfare, it arouses participants’ sense of social responsibility and brings power of moral restraint into field of urban construction. Original monotonous construction process can be colorful, problem of gaps between builders and users has generally been solved, and entire project has become vivid and plentiful. In the perspective, sense of ownership and neighborhood of residents has been released, which has given impetus to construction of gardens. This is an important reason why shared gardens can be promoted.

3. Development and Significance of the Shared Gardens in China

3.1. Sprouting of the Shared Gardens

In the 1970s and 1980s, there were cases in China which resembled the early family gardens in France. As a welfare measure, some units divided unused vacant land in courtyard of unit to work gardens to alleviate lack of material resources to some extent. However, with the process of urbanization, the situation has gradually disappeared.

From 1990s to the present is in middle period of urbanization of China, yearning for urban life is the mainstream of social consciousness. Attention of groups in city is mainly focused on economic development and improvement of material living standard. Structure of social space of city shows tendency of discretization. Emotional connection which was established between urban occupants and living environment is generally weakened. Although urban managers have also built numerous street green spaces and public squares, they have never been able to establish connection with community residents in emotions and culture. Wu Liangyong, a famous Chinese scholar, proposed that one-third to one-half of the urban public space in China lacks careful design research, which not only greatly affects the lives of citizens, but also greatly affects the image of the city. There are a large number of built-up areas in Chinese cities, but the quality of urban space has become an urgent need of contemporary people. At the beginning of 21st century, as incomes increased, urban residents gradually increased their demands for environmental quality. People living in cities began to nourish their pastoral life. The once popular game of QQ farm is a direct reflection of people's strong yearning for pastoral life. With the development of rural land and economy, a large number of Eco-agricultural parks have emerged throughout the country. When people are after work, they go to the suburbs to find fun of planting ecological vegetables and fruits and are close to nature. In recent years, a group of special "peasants" have emerged in the surrounding towns and suburbs of many large cities. Most of them are "office workers" in the city. They use their leisure time on weekends to cultivate, grow vegetables, water, and weeding... By leasing land, planting vegetables, self-sufficient, joy of farming and fresh green vegetables can be experience. Urban farms had mushroomed like the Yuya lake gardens, the Chenggong Baihua Garden in Kunming, and urban farms in Chengdu. Roofs of commercial mall and public event center are designed to shared gardens, for example the Aegean Seaside shopping mall in Kunming. Shareholders can earn planting rights and harvesting rights each year after paying certain rent. Most users choose to rent. 1 to 3

square meters of roof top vegetable plots. All these phenomena can be seen as budding of shared garden's in China.

3.2. Significance and Feasibility of Promoting the " Shared Gardens" in China

In contemporary China, solving the " contradiction between people's demand for better life and insufficient and imbalance development" is one of the main tasks that architecture and city researchers must undertake. In 1958, Abraham Harold Maslow proposed five levels of needs, including physiological and safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem and self-actualization needs, self-Transcendence needs. In 2015, Robert Wald Dinger, Harvard University professor, suggested that only good social relations can bring people happy and joy. When analyzing China's contemporary cities, we can find that phenomenon is common in many contemporary cities such as children with heavy homework, unmarried older youth, strangers as neighbors and lonely old people. Social needs have not been met. Urban public space, as important elements of city, plays an important role in providing this place. Meanwhile, urban green space occupies proportion in urban public space. In 1974, Richard Sennett suggested that the significance of existence of urban public space lies in its ability to bring together people of different races, ages, classes and hobbies, through public communication in the city, to breakthrough and to build closeness and common personality, to provides unlimited possibilities for people to form extensive social relations and shape their personal identities in complex urban life.

The shared gardens have the characteristics of accessibility, commonality, variability and diversity of urban public space. In addition, the ecological characteristics have been added. China's land system allows the land of the shared gardens to be chosen in parks, public green spaces, community green spaces, residential green spaces, roofs and other areas, so would not own by individuals. The shared gardens need to be managed by associations. Community residents can spontaneously organize associations to manage them. Association is responsible for contact between residents and community residents' committees. Government can manage these public space "from top to bottom ", and citizens have generated "bottom - top" driving force in construction of urban vitality space during organization process. Flexible land use options and less money make the construction of shared gardens easy to implement. It also provides city center for organizing children's science popularization, neighbor exchanges, small party and exhibitions. People can enjoy the shared gardens in process of actively participating in construction. Responsibility and interests coexist, and China's urban status quo has conditions to promote construction of the shared gardens.

4. Exploration of Sharing Mechanism of Chinese Community Gardens and Similar Urban Public Spaces

4.1. Strengthen the Social Value of Shared Garden

Shared garden has function of guiding participants to protect environment. People of different ages participate in outdoor planting activities, which not only promote mutual exchange but also reduce maintenance cost of public green spaces. Some shared gardens can be allocated to schools and people who bring relevant educational projects use as a learning place for adults and children to recognize plants and discover wildlife and become small gathering place for neighbors; can also plant a variety of ornamental plants and edible plants to beautify landscape free of charge and

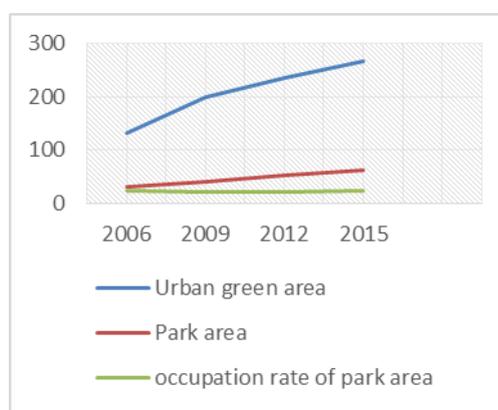
improve the ecology of city. From the perspective of lifestyle, social culture, and urban-rural coordination standards, there is still a large gap between China's current requirements for urban society. In other words, the quality of urbanization in China does not increase with the level of urbanization; speed and quality of urbanization do not match in correct level. In process of promoting urbanization in the future, we should pay more attention to improving the quality of urbanization and make core and key to promoting urbanization at improvement of the quality of urbanization.[Wei Houkai, China's urbanization quality comprehensive evaluation report, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences,2013.3]China's urban governance adopts a top-down management model. At the peak of urbanization, most cities are still in the stage of large-scale construction. New households brought by urbanization have not yet formed. The new social relationship and the instability brought about by changes have shifted social concerns. All these have weakened the willingness of citizens to participate in urban construction. Although there are many differences between urban construction and management in China and the West, the basic laws in the urbanization process are the same. For example, the pursuit of quality in the process of urbanization will eventually become the goal of the citizens. These phenomena appeared in projects such as Liz Christy of the United States, France's the shared garden and " Big Neighbor" of the 2018 Venice Biennale, has also become core point in China, where citizens began to face demand for "better life". The situation has not only been recognized by the top leaders of the country but has also been noticed by scholars in related fields. When people meet their basic living needs, they share common desire for better and more comfortable living environment. If the public gardens are constructed in an orderly manner, using urban public green space and centralized green space, it will have characteristics of large quantity, wide distribution, good accessibility, and high sharing, which will be conducive to the protection of urban ecology, and will become venue for urban exchanges and carrier of transmission for urban culture.

Table 2. China urban green space growth chart. Source: China Geography Information Monitoring Cloud Platform.

China Urban green area (10,000 hectares)				
district	2006	2009	2012	2015
Beijin	5.32	6.17	6.55	8.13
Tianjin	1.57	1.74	2.23	2.84
Hebei	4.73	6.09	7.35	8.13
Shanxi	2.03	2.8	3.57	4.2
Neimeng	2.12	2.96	4.67	6.31
Liao ning	6.35	8.41	11.83	12.42
Jilin	2.73	3.48	3.88	4.73
Heilongjiang	3.68	6.42	7.38	7.65
Shanghai	3.06	11.69	12.42	12.73
Jiangsu	15.29	21.5	24.7	27.41
Zhejiang	5.78	7.44	12.27	13.8
Anhui	6.3	6.73	7.96	9.38
Fujian	2.63	4.13	5.45	6.45
Jiangxi	2.45	3.76	4.69	5.41
Shandong	10.93	14.7	17.63	21.35
Henan	4.71	6.29	7.7	9
Hubei	4.16	5.49	6.88	8.03
Hunan	3.53	4.29	5.18	5.94
Guangdong	21.85	40.16	40.17	43.84

Guanxi	5.13	5.78	6.7	8.24
Hainan	0.67	4.89	5.07	1.49
Chongqing	1.78	3.25	4.72	5.59
Sichuan	5.45	6.68	8.32	8.71
Guizhou	2.68	2.78	3.29	3.67
Yunnan	1.32	2.24	3.53	3.94
Xizang	0.16	0.22	0.34	0.53
Shanxi	1.89	2.34	3.1	5.61
Gansu	0.92	1.47	1.85	2.36
Qinghai	0.27	0.33	0.4	0.57
ningxia	0.84	1.45	1.98	2.41
xinjiang	1.8	3.64	4.95	6.08
total	132.13	199.32	236.76	266.95

Table 3. China urban green space type growth chart source: China Geography Information Monitoring Cloud Platform.



4.2. Land Selection for Shared Gardens

Selection of land for shared gardens requires radius of activity of social groups in construction and management as the main basis for distribution and determine with spatial distribution of residential areas (Table 2, Table 3). According to the present situation of China, in 2005, public green area per capita of urban planning in the country reached more than 8 square meters; in 2010, public green area per capita reached more than 10 square meters. The State Council recently issued the "13th Five-Year Plan" for Environmental Protection. According to the "Plan", by 2020, the per capita park green area of the city will reach 14.6 square meters, and the green area rate of the urban built-up area will reach 38.9%. Public green spaces such as community parks, residential parks, abandoned railway lines, and urban waterfront green belts can be used as shared garden land.

4.3. Guide Public to Participate in Co-Construction

Citizen participation can effectively compensate for subjective problems in current domestic urban construction. From development history of European countries and The United States, it can be seen that, on the one hand, citizen enthusiasm is key point. Free shared gardens and public lands with popular science can be provided to the citizens, so that the shared garden can bring benefits to the physical and mental health of the citizens and become places of social interaction and places attracting citizens to take initiative of participating. On the other hand, the government also needs to actively guide and provide certain support such as workers, finances and materials. Protecting the sponsors' dominance, they must also maintain the openness of

construction and management, and regularly organize training, festivals, exhibitions, and exchanges.

4.4. Construction Management Mechanism, Sharing Guarantee

If construction and management work is simply handed over to individuals or teams, shared garden construction will face risk of premature death due to conflicts and inability to coordinate. Therefore, it is equally important to maintain orderly and effective management mechanism. With reference to the experience of Paris, government can guide public in setting up shared garden management committee to coordinate with other institutions such as city greening management office, community greening management committee, shared garden management association and so on. The association is in response for formulating management regulations for shared gardens and reporting them to relevant management departments for approval, meanwhile is in response for daily maintenance, use of venues, and organization of events. Government arranged bottom-up funds, all the participants publicized their work, and, with the approval of association, allowed business operation to obtain funds for sustainable development of the garden but kept supervision, and finally established in whole city unified garden shared network. In this way, smooth and effective operation of shared garden can be maintained.

5. Conclusion

The shared garden is a window to the urban land's possession and use, as well as the understanding of urban cultural spirit and how to contact with urban ecological. In the West, the land is heavily privatized, and the government and citizens find ways and means to create public space such as the shared garden for the citizens, providing a place for cultural exchanges and a window of contact with the natural environment. In many cities in China, with the development of economy and culture, people's demand for culture spirit and communication will become higher and higher, the shared garden will be a suitable place for citizens to communicate and contact nature too. And, it is a good condition that the public green land in Chinese cities is fully owned by nation, the government makes it easier to implement part of the public green space in the city as a shared garden (Table 2).

In the future, shared garden will be placing to win rights of urban life, the right to quality of life in city. It should not be excluded from core facilities provided by city. These shared gardens also express deep needs of city for self-management, as important as other places such as squares, parent nurseries or bars and restaurants. It will play an important role in city's independent participation in restoration and protection of ecological environment, creation of sharing green space, and dissemination of urban culture. It is one of the most important public places to improve comfort of citizens. Whether in the process of launching, building, maintaining, and using the shared garden, the citizens and the urban construction have truly interacted with each other, and due to personal energy and capital investment, the citizens who are urban users and the shared gardens that are the environmental facilities. There is a spiritual connection that brings together people and urban development, creating conditions and values for the integration of the two at a greater level and more content. This is the value and significance that shared gardens can bring. It is window and channel for future cities to become more integrated, more open, and more dynamic. Radiance of human nature care is exactly what our current city urgently needs. This research about shared gardens is an innovative research on

construction of high-quality urban environment in contemporary cities. It can provide way for co-construction and sharing of urban public space and make future urban life better.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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