Green for commons: paths of development in Hungary, Germany and Georgia

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Introduction

In the past few years public awareness of green spaces in cities has evolved. Rapid urbanization, population growth, expansion of industrial plants, among others, have led to the occupation of land by buildings, roads, contemporary constructions for different purposes. More of the left green spaces are progressively taken away, showing little consideration to the value of human life, the air quality and nature.

Our cities have increasingly become central in the environmental protection-related processes, as they represent a focal point of sustainability, and the political and economic strategies of the countries. However, the process of transforming our cities into sustainable green cities needs to start at a local level, and this has started to become evident in different ways. People have started to seek for green areas, to think about the effects of city pollution and the value of green. They have teamed up to protect trees and green parks (e.g Stuttgart 21), to take care of the animal life and natural biotopes (e.g. FFH Directive), to help protect biodiversity or try to recover it (e.g. breeds threatened by extinction), to plan urban gardening or common gardens, to question what is in the food we consume, to show concern for the well-being of animals and plants. Moreover, people have realized that sustainability is important for communities' survival, thus trends towards self-provider communities (e.g. with renewable energy, or food) have emerged. Different examples show that the development of green is broad and is not only limited to green spaces.

This paper is based on the theory of negotiations and of common goods. It presents and discusses some planed, some successful and less successful examples of the development of green from Hungary, Germany and Georgia.

Background and Literature review

Nowadays the environmental problems are appearing everywhere – from scientific work to shopping habits of everyday life. Hence protecting the environment is necessary and requires long-term thinking.

The protection of natural attractions is needed via legal and other ways. This kind of protection does not mean that these areas are not utilized. These areas have to be involved into the socio-economic utilization. The utilization shall be done according to the current and future environmental requirements. The natural values could be the generators of the socio-economic life of the cities and country sides. Sustainability is a 'special' requirement not only of nature, but of the society and the economy. Cities will be necessity play an increasingly important role in adressing the environemntal protection, the growing consumption and sustainability. (Beatley, T. 2000)

Accordign to J. Ahern to make a sustainable and succesfull green urban infrastrucre the common work and the common sence of local stakeholders is needed. (Ahern, J. 2007) It is necessray to engage decision makers, scientists and engineers and challenge planners and designers to innovate. However this kind of process the most difficult because of the different meaning of demand. We are going to introduce some examples from different countries from differing approaches because of our dissimilar background.

From three different countries we are going to introduce the examples of city planning. However there is a mutual decision to make a sustainable, green and liveable cities all over Europe.

Green as commons

Some cities like Essen and Vancouver developed a strong communic ation system and set goals like Essen, 40 % CO2 emission reduction by 2020 compared to 1990 or Vancouver, Greenest city in the world by 2020. Today in cities like Essen (green capital 2017) you can reach a park very quickly, you can spend attractive, fruitful time in nature. Here the concept for the European Green Capital Award was developed through a process of negotiation and communication.International Groups like the ECDS (European Landscape Contractors Association) were asked to participate as well the citizens.

Since 2009 cities all over Europe compete for the European Green Capital Award. Cities with more than 200.000 inhabitants from 28 member states can apply. Eleven points are addressed in the competition. The topics shall ensure that it is a process of sustainability, carbon, waste and ecosystems are the

bonding elements. But not only positive arguments accompanying such decisions, they always get critical evaluations, too. That way the process stays alive.

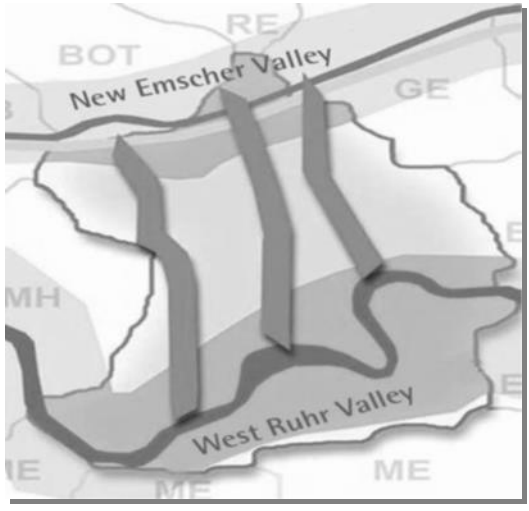

Figure 1. Map of connection of water ways through green routes (*Source: Simone Raskob, Geschäftsbereichsvorstand Umwelt und Bauen der Stadt Essen 27.1.2016*)

The history of the Hungarian city planning – from the side of calls

The period of 2004-2006 focused on the reconstruction of disadvantages, dilapidated parts of the cities. The other additional goal was to give a new function to the former military buildings. These programmes haven't got a complex approach and couldn't solve the main problems of the cities – lack of green spaces, lack of playgrounds, lack of bicycle ways, etc. There was a conflict of interest among citizens and policy makers. (City planning Manual, 2009)

In the period of 2007-2013 according to the European Commission' recommendation the main approaches were to enlarge the role of the cities, to develop public transport, to enhance environmental protection, to make an integrated city planning, to involve local stakeholders and benchmarking. This concept has prepared the next period's approaches and has started to support complex city planning' initiations.

The European Green Cities strategy is one of the top priority of the 2014-2020 programming period of the European Union. Besides of the challenges of our age we can not ignore long-term problems, such as pollution, the decrease of the number of green territories in cities and therefore the deterioration in the quality of human life. The new strategy provides a solution to these challenges,

considering the aspects of economic and community development. Settlements with various handicaps have special needs, so they need different solutions. The program is financed on the basis of the current practice of Community funds, and member states are supervise the process.

The connected call to this strategy has came out in Hungary. During the construction, corporate and the private sector are involved too. The success of this strategy will greatly contribute to making the Hungarin cities more livable. It will increase the amount of green spaces in citites and will make them family-friendly. Moreover, new opportunities will be created for the use of renewable energies. In the future, this program could be a sample for the next programming period's similar initiatives and long-term objectives.

Nowadays the most preferable developments in cities are: increasing green spaces with plants ; city climate repair-based solutions – for example climate suffering trees ; shaping of new active recreation places with pathways, outdoor training possibilities, supporting of common gardening, school gardening (which has an old story [long history] in Hungary), utilization of rainwater, to use renewable energy, local products' supporting, etc.

Thanks to the last projects in Hungary green spaces have increased consideration of settlement structure of 2014. (Central Statistical Agency, 2014) The rise of playgrounds, resting-places, and the number of local markets with local (traceable) foods have also significantly grown in the cities. The complex approach-based time in city planning sets in.

Georgian example

In Georgia there is a current example of a common central park which belongs partially to the French Embassy in Tbilisi, private marionette theatre and the municipality.

The outdoor space right now is in a bad condition. Odor and waste are spoiling the place, making it a shabby place for the embassy as well as the city. The municipality may be interested in a recreational area and in reducing the criminality. In return this would save money by less police activity and better air quality which results in a healthier life with less cost to the insurances. People would have a place to go and because they like it they would take care of it.

If this park gets additional functions like a tennis court, preserving areas for birds and plants (administrative tools like natura2000) the municipality can even gain money through taxes paid by local business people. It could develop an active green path visited by dwellers as well as travellers, giving the city a good reputation.

It would be a great advantage for Tbilisi to develop an urban solution for green rehabilitation and increasing the green zones combining nature with commercial profits and interests.

German example

In Germany, the ecological significance given to trees and green parks has increased over the past years. Two examples show that green stands for high quality of life.

The first example regards Germany's and Europe's largest urban renewal projects, called Stuttgart 21, started in 2010. Its main aim is rebuilding the central train station. By moving the railroad tracks under ground, the city center would gain more space, usefull for different purposes. Six years after the project's start, people and groups such as "Die Parkschützer" (the park protectors) are still fighting against this multibillion euro project. The construction area required cutting of 176 trees, however, after a "Bürgerforum" (civic forum) was hold only 108 trees were cut and the other 68 pieces replanted. Citizens decided to use the wood of those 108 trees for an art project (e.g. sculpture park), and for a biotope wood concept in the forest of Stuttgart to be used for educational purposes.

The second example is the city of Essen, which was awarded the European Green Capital 2017. Essen has shown its engagement and innovative practices regarding the improvement of its environmental performance by reducing water consumption, as well as protecting nature and biodiversity. In terms of green areas it represents more than 700 parks, 1750 ha forest and 150 ha of special green area for rare birds, fauna and flora. Moreover, within the city green and blue corridors have been built (Simone Raskop, Jan. 2016, EuropGreecapitalEssen160127_IPM). Further investments in green infrastructure have been made, such as the development of the Krupp Belt, where citizens, stakeholders and the community have worked successfully together. The re-development of the entire Krupp Belt has been possible only as a result of the cooperation between private and public funding and investors.

Goals and Objectives

To raise visibility, sensibility, functionality among the inhabitants of Georgia, Hungary and Germany for nature and common grounds an intense communication between all parties is the main key.

The rapid urbanization provokes intensive occupation of the territories by buildings, squares, constructions which oppresses forests, valleys and green spots all over the world. Bordered areas for commons can be created by municipality for special assignments and other profits.

The different stakeholders – local dwellers, administrators, citizens, scholars, world organizations – are trying to protect the cities from economic and ecologic decline but in spite of that we have a conflicts between the green commons and other urban demands today.

Our investigation was dedicated to find additional mechanisms of greens protection. To raise awareness of green commons within the society.

Method(s)

It is very important to go deeper to the properties of greens, to split them into the subsystems and thus find the common interests, profits toward a win-win solution. As more we are able to divide the components the more common elements we can find between them (coincident interests) and create thus the set of possible solutions and correct them by the weight of importance according to their past, present and future value.

Limits identify a strict line which has to be kept – the vector of sustainability. It is very important to define this vector and its mandatory points of requirement. Our research is based on system analyzing to find the components of vector – Vector of sustainability.

These points can be displayed as the limits of possible solutions (no more, no less) in each group (dwellers, politicians, businesspeople, tourists, stakeholders) which are necessary to keep the balance in the system.

According to our background and knowledge the Green has different points of environmental interaction, like:

- Sensibility (health, positive emotions, beauty, ethics - traditions, cultural heritage),
- Functionality (functions, communication system, availability, activity),
- Visibility (technical condition, human values, impression of safety)

Each direction has to be made active and people have to take responsibility for their presense and livability by the way of right Administration, Policy making and urban planning tools.

Discussion

All examples from the different countries show that the protection of nature and common land have a rising awareness in the population. The value of special locations in the city is currently in discussion between different stakeholders, citizens and communities. Negotiations are ongoing and as described above are successful in cities like Essen and not so successful in cities like Tiblis. It is important to acknowledge that agreements can be an advantage for one and can be the advantage of another too: commons communities establishing rules to archive that. In ordinary communities the people take responsibility for the nature, society, education, culture and the internet. They establish rules for each common which then grow and prosper. You can see these ideas live throughout the world and only with managing the commons there could be answers to important questions like education, climate change and food security.

Conclusion

Findings of this study identify three main factors of green's existence and sustainability: *sensitivity, visibility* and *functionality*. These represent the level of integration of green into the urban context. The recommendations suggest that green can be saved and sustained by planning its urbanization, referring to alternative sources they may create for transportation and communication ways, for movement, for public gatherings, for leisure purposes, while protecting the ecosystem. Moreover, green can also be used in situations of emergency such as natural disasters, for evacuation or logistical purposes, as temporary accommodations for homeless people, or refugees. Finally, green may be used as the brand of a city, which in turn may increase cities' economic profit, recovering previous investments.

Also the green's in the city connects the citizens to nature which helps to identify themselves with the earth and the nature they belong to. If you cut this bonding the results will be devastating for earth and human beings. Nature is the origin for any kind of inspiration.

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