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Matas
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Urban and socio-cultural aspects of the collective garden phenomenon. The case of Soviet Lithuania.

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VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETAS
LIETUVOS ISTORIJOS INSTITUTAS

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Kolektyvinio sodo fenomeno urbanistinis ir sociokultūrinis aspektai. Sovietinės Lietuvos atvejis

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SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

When one thinks of the urban and architectural heritage of Soviet-era Vilnius, Kaunas or any other Lithuanian city, the first thing that comes to mind are the mass-housing districts or the more important public buildings, but these reflect only a part of the spaces and rituals that accompanied the inhabitant of the Soviet city. In order to better understand urban development and urban life in Soviet Lithuania, it is important to analyse the less visible but no less significant urban formations. One of these was the mass of collective gardens that surrounded the cities, where hundreds of thousands of Lithuanian families actively spent their time - in 1987 there were 1 064 garden societies in Lithuania and about 143 300 members of gardeners' societies[1]. Collective gardens have become an integral part not only of the city's body but also of its memory. Today, existing and former collective gardens are still a tangible part of the urban fabric, and their users and user relations are inevitably influenced by the physical and social structures that have developed in the past, which, if not appreciated, make it difficult to explain the processes of urban transformation that have taken place not only in the past but are still taking place today.

Although urban gardening and horticulture has long been and still is a common feature of many cities and countries in Europe, collective gardens, in the form in which we know them in Lithuania, are a phenomenon that emerged in the Soviet Union during the Soviet period. Therefore, this paper seeks to find out how collective gardening was introduced in Soviet Lithuania, what are the stages of

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[1] Bronušas Henrikas, *Kolektyviniai sodai, jų užstatymas ir tvarkymas: analitinė apžvalga*, Vilnius: LIMTI, 1988, p. 9.

its development and its material legacy; how it has affected the environment around us; what formal and informal practices it has shaped? As the dissertation topic suggests, the research will seek to comprehensively examine how, why and under what conditions collective gardens were created in Soviet Lithuania, highlighting the relationship between social and urban space. Therefore, **the object of** this **dissertation** is the phenomenon of collective gardening in Soviet Lithuania.

Aim and objectives of the study. This dissertation aims to extend the research on the urban, architectural and artistic environment and everyday life of the Soviet era by focusing on collective gardens as a little-studied aspect of Lithuanian urban space and culture. The thesis hypothesises that the mass spread of collective gardening in Lithuania formed a phenomenon similar to the so-called "kitchen culture" of the Soviet era[2]- collective gardens were a space of specific cultural and social practices that transcended the boundaries of official ideology. The **aim of** this **study** is to investigate the phenomenon of collective gardens in Lithuania, the preconditions for its emergence and its development from 1944 to the restoration of independence in 1990-1991**:**

1) To examine how the collective gardens that emerged during the Soviet era stand out in the context of their regional and global counterparts.

2) To analyse how the political conditions that shaped the collective gardening process changed and how this was reflected in the regulation of gardeners' activities in Soviet Lithuania in 1949-1991.

[2] Reid Susan E., „Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev“, *Slavic Review*, 2002, No. 61(2): 211 – 252.

3) To examine the design and construction of collective garden houses as a phenomenon of urban and material culture of the Soviet era.

4) To investigate the patterns and practices established in the collective gardens and their relationship to the formal function of the collective gardens, looking for signs of contradiction or compatibility.

Spatial and chronological boundaries of the study.

Gardening has existed in the world's cities for centuries, and the establishment of gardens in different countries has been resorted to as a means of coping with economic and social tensions[3]. After the Second World War, collective gardens were officially established in the Soviet republics in 1949 by decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR[4]; the first collective garden society was established in Vilnius in 1953[5], and from 1959 the establishment of collective gardens became a general phenomenon with the establishment of the Lithuanian SSR Horticultural Society[6]. Although the processes leading up to this began during the first Soviet occupation (1940-1941), the study has decided to concentrate on events from 1944 onwards, since it was the post-war famine and the attempts to overcome it that provided the impetus for the emergence of collective gardening.

The year 1991 was chosen as the end of the study, when not only the political situation in the country changed, but also the active

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[3] Bassett Thomas J., „Reaping on the Margins: A Century of Community Gardening in America“, *Landscape*, 1981, No. 25(2): 1-8.

[4] USSR Council of Ministers Resolution No 807 of 24 February 1949 "On Collective and Individual Gardening and Gardening of Workers and Employees".

[5] Štembokas D., „Vilniečių kolektyvinis sodas“, *Mūsų sodai*, 1959, Nr. 3. p. 11.

[6] Bronušas Henrikas, *Kolektyviniai sodai, jų užstatymas ir tvarkymas: analitinė apžvalga*, Vilnius: LIMTI, 1988, p. 6.

development of collective gardens stopped completely. This was the year when housing was allowed and the last new collective garden areas were created. The new phase that began after the restoration of independence is interesting as an illustration of the post-Soviet urban transformation, but it requires a separate, detailed study to reveal it properly.

In terms of space, the study is limited to the phenomenon of collective gardens in Lithuanian cities, but understanding that this was part of a process that took place throughout the entire Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (hereafter the Soviet Union), it draws attention to the policy, regulation and coordination of collective gardens, which were common to the entire Soviet Union. It also contrasts the situation and cases in Lithuania with the processes in Moscow, the centre of political power, and other Soviet republics. However, these examples are used contextually and are not the focus of this study.

A critique of historiography. Research on the phenomenon of collective gardening is scattered between different spaces, different authors and their disciplines, but most of it falls into one of three categories: political history, material culture studies and anthropological works.

In texts devoted to political history, such as Kastytis Antanaitis dissertation[7]or Vytautas Tininis book "In the Shadow of the Forerunner"[8], we see collective gardens as a space of privileges for the nomenklatura.

Lithuanian scientists have not yet studied the phenomenon of collective gardening in Soviet Lithuania in detail. The aforementioned historians Kastytis Antanaitis and Vytautas Tininis, as well as Tomas

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[7] Antanaitis Kastytis*, Sovietinė Lietuvos, Latvijos ir Estijos nomenklatūra (1953–1990 m.). Dėsningumai ir ypatumai: daktaro disertacija.* Kaunas: VDU, 2001, p. 242.

[8] Tininis Vytautas, *Pirmtako šešėlyje*, Vilnius: LGGRTC, 2017, p. 60.

Vaiseta[9] and Algirdas Jakubčionis[10], who have analyzed the Soviet era and the nomenclature, have touched upon the topic in their research and scientific publications. However, the subject of collective gardens in these studies is usually only one of the cases illustrating everyday life, privileges and leisure in the Soviet period. For example, Antanaitis doctoral thesis discusses collective gardens together with other privileges received by the Soviet elite, but the author views collective gardens only as a part of the lifestyle and culture of the nomenklatura, and the examples he gives are limited to information recorded in the minutes of party meetings and commissions.

The theme of collective gardens appears from a similar angle in Tininis book on the personality of the first secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party, Petras Grishkevics. It discusses different episodes of his activity, including the fight against the abuse of office by local nomenklatura. According to Vytautas Tininis, one of the most prominent cases of the fight against abuses was the so-called "garden house case", a garden inspection started in the early 1980s, during which some of the nomenclaturalists who had lost their "party vigilance" received various penalties. Although the garden huts are only one of the sub-topics, it receives a fair amount of attention, with detailed descriptions of how the disciplinary process evolved, what real or demonstrative measures were taken, and which individuals received more attention.

Like Antanaitis, Tininis mainly relies on the minutes of meetings of the party structures, but the author concentrates on the analysis of a specific case and reconstructs the course of the "case", the participants and the scale of the case quite thoroughly. However, in both of these authors' studies, the subject of collective gardening emerges

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[9] Vaiseta Tomas, *Nuobodulio visuomenė: vėlyvojo sovietmečio Lietuva (1964–1984): daktaro disertacija*. Vilnius: Vilniaus universitetas, 2012, p. 306.

[10] Jakubčionis Algirdas, „1972-ųjų Kauno reminiscencijos“, *Kauno istorijos metraštis,* Kaunas, 2003, Nr. 4, p. 49–55.

exclusively through the prism of the life of the nomenklatura. There are no scholarly works in the Lithuanian historiography that touch in more detail on the processes of forming collective gardens, the everyday life of the collective gardens, or the experiences of the ordinary population, and only sporadic mentions can be found. For example, Tomas Vaiseta, in his doctoral thesis, discusses the widespread use of official working time during the Soviet period to manage private affairs. He illustrates this with the material from a friendly court about a factory worker's attempts to take care of the fertilisation and watering of his garden during working hours.

Material culture studies reveal issues of garden planning, house design and construction. Marija Drėmaitė, Vaidas Petrulis, Indrė Saladžinskaitė, Epp Lankots, Triin Ojari and others write from this perspective. Perhaps the main material symbol of collective gardens, garden houses, their design and construction have received attention from researchers studying Soviet-era architecture. Here it is worth mentioning the collective monograph "Architektūra sovietinėje Lietuvoje " by Marija Drėmaitė, Vaidas Petrulis and Jūratė Tutlytė, which extensively covers the specifics of the built environment and the formation of housing during the Soviet era, and also mentions collective gardens. The monograph presents not only the architecture of the Soviet era itself, but also the political and social context that shaped its formation. However, the publication does not analyse the gardens in any detail, and limits itself to the issue of the fight against illegal "individual" construction[11]. Collective gardens are discussed to some extent in Marija Drėmaitė book "Baltic Modernism. Architecture and Housing in Soviet Lithuania"[12]. The monograph also discusses the limited possibilities of individual construction in Soviet

[11] Drėmaitė Marija, Petrulis Vaidas, Tutlytė Jūratė, *Architektūra sovietinėje Lietuvoje*, Vilnius: Vilniaus dailės akademijos leidykla, 2012, p. 46.
[12] Drėmaitė Marija, *Baltic Modernism: Architecture and Housing in Soviet Lithuania*, Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2017.

Lithuania. Collective gardens are touched upon as one of the few areas of life that allowed for the realisation of private architectural and building ambitions.

The architect Indrė Saladžinskaitė has also studied the design and architecture of garden houses in her final master's thesis on the urban and architectural development of collective gardens in Vilnius city[13]. Saladžinskaitė discusses typical designs of garden houses, examples of garden zoning, and the experiences of other countries. However, this work focuses only on the city of Vilnius, and its axis is an empirical study of the architecture and urban structure of specific garden communities and territories - the author clearly identifies different morphotypes of development of garden territories, and identifies the directions of development and architectural tendencies. However, the historical and social aspects of the phenomenon are touched upon in a rather limited way. For example, the preservation of horticultural traditions is linked exclusively to communal relations, bypassing cultural and economic factors.

Estonian architectural historians have devoted considerable attention to the planning of collective gardens and the construction of houses. In the summer of 2020, the Estonian Museum of Architecture hosted an exhibition on leisure architecture, Leisure spaces. Holidays and Architecture in 20th Century Estonia, which focused on summer houses and collective garden houses. The exhibition was accompanied by a book of the same name in Estonian and English (edited by Epp Lankots and Triin Ojari)[14]. Although the authors of the study deal specifically with the Estonian case, it is an excellent comparative case when looking at garden house design processes in Lithuania. The Estonian case is interesting because of the earlier start of the garden

[13] Saladžinskaitė, Indrė, *Urbanistinė ir architektūrinė kolektyvinių sodų raida Vilniuje: Baigiamasis magistro darbas*, Vilnius: VGTU, 2016.
[14] Lankots Epp, Ojari Triin, *Leisure Spaces - Holiday And Architecture In 20th Century Estonia*, Tallinn: Eesti Arhitektuurimuuseum, 2020.

house design process and the stronger tradition of summer house construction.

Many studies on the phenomenon of *dacha* (Russian: *дача*), collective gardens in Russia and other post-Soviet countries, use an anthropological approach and combine it with cultural history. Anne C. Bellows, Alexandra Kasatkina, Elizaveta Polukhina, Melissa L. Caldwell, Stephen Lovell - all of them analyse people and their relationship to the subject from the past to the present, and they observe *the dacha* and the collective gardens as primarily a cultural and social phenomenon. The focus here is not only on Russia, but also on Poland, where collective gardening as a popular horticultural movement began to emerge quite early. This process continued in Poland during the Soviet period, but took on new political and social overtones, which are explored in one of her texts by the geographer Anne C. Bellows[15] . Bellows does not focus on the issue of garden houses, but rather on the emergence of amateur gardens in Poland and their appropriation during the Soviet period. One of the author's main points is that, despite the tangible benefits of gardens to people's lives, the promotion of collective gardening was not driven by altruistic governmental ambitions, but by pragmatism - delegating the solution of social problems to the population itself, especially to women, in order to reduce discontent and possible social tensions within society. Bellows approaches the subject of gardening from the perspective of gender relations, human rights and food security, so that collective gardens are a medium in which different political, social and cultural aspects of food security are revealed.

Another group of anthropological research that cannot be ignored when writing about collective gardens is the scholarship on everyday life and housing in the Soviet era, and in particular on the phenomenon

[15] Bellows Anne C., *One hundred years of allotment gardens in Poland. Food and Foodways*, 2004, No. 4, p. 247–276.

of *dacha*[16] in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia. Briefly, *the dacha* can be defined as a typology of the summer house, typical of the Russian tradition. Although in Tsarist Russia in the 17th and 18th centuries *dacha* emerged as a privilege of the nobility, the amount of people willing and able to spend their summer days in their own or rented country residences gradually expanded, and the *dacha* became an important attribute of the urban lifestyle. The transformation of the *dacha* phenomenon in the late Soviet period, when this practice gradually became intertwined with collective gardening, is relevant to the research. Alexandra Kasatkina, Elizaveta Polukhina, Melissa L. Caldwell and other researchers have devoted their research *to* Russian *dacha*[17]. Polukhina[18] takes a sociological perspective on the *dacha* and undertakes a site-specific study of a single area by interviewing users, visiting the site and collecting data on the daily routine of *dacha users*. The territory she is studying is essentially what we in Lithuania have come to call a collective garden. Caldwell[19] seeks to capture the lifestyle of today's *Dachniki* through a more personal and broader ethnographic analysis. For the author, *dacha* is not just a physical

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[16] *Dacha culture* in Lithuania and its relationship to the culture of Tsarist Russia has been studied by historian Juozapas Paškauskas, who has researched the culture of leisure - in his paper "Between Town and Country: Dacha Culture in Lithuania in the Second Half of the 19th Century and in the Beginning of the 20th Century", presented at the Interstate Conference "Everyday Life History and its Approaches to Writing the History of Twentieth-Century Europe", Vilnius, 2019, unpublished.

[17] Struyk Raymond J., Angelici Karen, „The Russian Dacha phenomenon", *Housing Studies*, 1996, 11 (2), p. 233-250.

Clarke Simon, *Making Ends Meet in Contemporary Russia: Secondary Employment, Subsidiary Agriculture and Social Networks* (PDF), Cheltenham, England and Northampton, Massachusetts: Edward Elgar, 2002.

[18] Polukhina Elizaveta, „Extending the Space of Domesticity in Post-Soviet Russia or How the Dacha is Transforming into a Suburban Home in Moscow Region", *Городские исследования и практики* 2018, 3(4), p. 152–163.

[19] Caldwell Melissa L., *Dacha Idylls, Living Organically in Russia's Countryside*, University of California Press, 2010.

space, but primarily experiences and practices. Her book Dacha Idylls is a juxtaposition of narratives about the intimate and natural world of everyday life *in Dacha*, gathered through field research, with a variety of written sources, fiction and periodicals. Some of the author's ethnographic research methods can be applied to the phenomenon of collective gardens in Soviet Lithuania.

One of the most comprehensive and widely known publications on the subject is Stephen Lovell's socio-cultural study "Summerfolk: A History of the Dacha, 1710-2000"[20]. Although this book focuses on *dacha* in the broadest sense, the processes explored reveal how collective gardens were used and valued by the masses during the Soviet period. The tradition of leaving the city in the summer to spend time in nature took centuries, intertwined with the emerging new habits of workers and servants, as well as with the rituals of the upper classes, as Lovell brilliantly shows. However, both Lovell and Caldwell's relationship to the subject is somewhat complicated. Despite their depth in the subject and the richness of material they have gathered on the culture and history of *the dacha*, they sometimes speak like mendicants interested in an exotic phenomenon, romanticising or comparing the life of *the dacha* with the very different processes of suburbanisation in the West.

However, Lovell provides a broad analysis of the development of *the dacha* from the tsarist period to the present day. His chronological account of events inevitably touches on the Soviet era and the collective gardens, which became one of the most widespread places that provided Soviet citizens with the opportunity to summer in nature. He discusses both the legal issues of ownership and the cultural specificity of *the dacha* in the Soviet era: the attitudes of the elite, the intelligentsia and the working class. Lovell notes the ideological tensions that developed in Russia in the early Soviet period: a relic of

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[20] Lovell Stephen, *Summerfolk: A History of the Dacha*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003.

the bourgeois past, but it helped to solve the problem of housing shortages and was therefore tolerated and even used as a privilege for the elite. After the Second World War, according to Lovell, the concept of *the dacha* was transformed and became directly intertwined with collective gardens[21]. Similar ideological tensions and ambiguous treatment of gardening processes in the Soviet period can be observed in Lithuania.

The link between collective gardens and the *dacha* is not only noted by Lovell, but also by anthropologist Alexandra Kasatkina. She has written a number of texts on collective gardens, one of which examines how such gardens came to be called *dacha* in everyday language[22]. Kasatkina draws on archival documents of the Leningrad City Council - resolutions and minutes of meetings - to trace the change in terminology. According to her, in the 1970s, garden houses that were built without observing the space and functional restrictions were already called *dacha,* and gradually gardeners were also called *dachniki*. Eventually, by the end of the Soviet era, collective garden and *dacha* became almost synonymous in the Russian-speaking lexicon. These observations by her and other researchers [23]only confirm that research on collective gardening in the Soviet period cannot exclude studies on the phenomenon of *dacha*, as these phenomena had meaningful and typological links.

The theme of collective gardens is also related to **economic, social or political** processes in the Soviet Union, so researchers who have written not about gardens or everyday life, but about the system itself and its development, are relevant for understanding the context.

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[21] *Ibid.* , p. 163.

[22] Kasatkina Alexandra, *Как садовый участок превратился в дачу. Конструируя советское*, 2010, pranešimo tezės.

[23] Alexandra Kasatkina has applied the term "public privacy" to collective gardens, borrowed from Ekaterina Gerasimova. Invented to describe the feeling of the inhabitants of communal flats, this description is also perfectly suited to the fenceless, small garden plots of open-air *communal gardens*.

Authors such as Barrington Moore, Alexei Yurchak[24] and Christopher I. Xenakis[25] examine the perspectives of different Sovietologists and the social, economic and political transformations experienced by the system itself. These transformations are undoubtedly reflected in the material environment and everyday life of the Soviet period. Equally relevant are publications specifically devoted to Soviet everyday life, such as Sheila Fitzpatrick's Everyday Stalinism [26]or her co-authored Sedition: Everyday Resistance in the Soviet Union [27]. Although these and similar texts may not be specific enough in the context of the topic at hand, they serve a dual function: they contribute to a broader understanding of the transformations experienced by the Soviet system, and they help to define the theoretical models or vocabulary used.

For example, the political sociologist and Sovietologist Barrington Moore has suggested that the Soviet system had a formal and an operational ideology[28]. He pointed out that in the ruling circles the ideological line was not only revised or adjusted, but several ideologies coexisted in parallel: a formal ideology that was officially declared and an informal operational ideology that guided practice. Moore observes that these two ideologies inevitably interacted with each other, with stronger changes in the operational ideology accepted by the ruling elite sooner or later being reflected at the formal level.

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[24] Yurchak Alexei, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More*, Princeton University Press, 2006.
[25] Xenakis Christopher I., *What Happened to the Soviet Union? How and Why American Sovietologists Were Caught by Surprise*, Westport: Praeger, 2002.
[26] Fitzpatrick Sheila, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
[27] Kozlov Vladimir A., Fitzpatrick Sheila, Mironenko Sergei V., *Sedition: Everyday Resistance in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev and Brezhnev*, Yale University Press, 2011, p. 70.
[28] Moore Barrington, *Soviet politics - The dilemma of power*, Routledge, 1976, p. 420.

Although Moore wrote about duality specifically in the attitude of the ruling class and specifically in the early Soviet period, a similar line could be drawn in other Soviet contexts. For example, the formal ideology, which was not lacking in symbolic phrases, proclaimed women's emancipation, equal rights and the creation of a new Soviet family as some of its core objectives. This idealised narrative did not change much throughout the Soviet era, but at the pragmatic operational level it tended to focus on economic, military or demographic interests. This is not to say that formal ideology, the needs of the population or other factors were completely ignored during the Soviet period. In the post-Stalinist period, for example, the state was increasingly responsive to the moods and processes of society, so that not only was the state influencing society, but societal transformations were also reflected in the decisions taken.

The suggestion of this ideological duality has its own dangers - Moore's statements appeared in the 1950s, when the Soviet system had not yet undergone part of its transformation, and academic Sovietology was dominated by a totalitarian model of history that stressed the all-embracing power of Stalin and his entourage[29]. This simplistic approach was later criticised by[30] the revisionist school, which believed that the Soviet system had to react and adapt to changing social factors. Although Moore's book Soviet Politics - The dilemma of power examines the power structures of the totalitarian state, his argument is broadly in line with revisionist thinking, and behind it is a desire to move beyond the totalitarian viewpoint and to look at other parallel factors. Moore himself has also referred to the

[29] Månson Per, *Sovietology: The knowledge of the Soviet Union*, Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg, 2019, p. 26.
[30] The removal of the so-called Smolensk archive to the US and opening it up to researchers has contributed to this changing attitude.

proximity between his own approach and the revisionist claims in his later writings[31].

In the end, Moore not only became an authority in political science, but also one of the heralds of the historical institutionalism developed by other scholars. Historical institutionalism not only emphasises the importance of history in the functioning of institutions, but also recognises that institutions have their own internal logic of functioning, which depends on both formal rules and informal habits. This dichotomy, which has been explored in research to date, is quite similar to the distinction between operational and formal ideology proposed by Moore, and confirms that such a distinction is still relevant for the study of political and social processes during the Soviet period. For example, in 2014, historian Vilius Ivanauskas referred to the distinction between formal and informal attitudes in relation to [32]writers' ideological groups and interrelations in Soviet Lithuania.

Thus, by departing from the division of Soviet reality into two levels used by different authors, it is possible to try to decode not only the processes of state governance, but also various other elements of Soviet reality and the paradoxes that lie within them. For example, in the case of collective gardens, there could have been, and probably was, a tension between what was declared, what was allowed and what was actually done. In this case, the discourse on the aims of collective gardening found in legal documents, commemorative declarations and the 'official' press should coincide with, and essentially reflect, formal

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[31] Moore Barington, *Social origins of dictatorship and democracy*, Boston: Beacon Press: 1966, p. 510.

[32] Grišinaitė Rūta, „Vilniaus simpoziumas – šiuolaikinio sovietologo salonas. Apie penktąjį vėlyvojo sovietmečio ir posovietinio laikotarpio klausimams skirtą vilniaus simpoziumą“. *Lietuvos istorijos studijos*, 35 (rugpjūtis), 2015, p. 185–189.
Ivanauskas Vilius, *Įrėminta tapatybė: Lietuvos rašytojai tautų draugystės imperijoje*, Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 2016.

ideology. The mass and state-promoted gardening had to find its place in the narrative of the communist citizen and the construction of the new society, because its existence and development had to be justified in some way. However, alongside the official discourse, there was also the more mundane everyday life and society of the Soviet era, which, according to Ainė Ramonaitė, *was full of paradoxes that have not yet been grasped*[33].

To summarise the critique of the historiography, several trends can be noted. First of all, there are not many historical studies on the phenomenon of collective gardens, especially those that are not limited to one narrower aspect of gardening (the life of the nomenclature, the architecture of the garden houses, the *dacha*). In the Baltic States, the architectural-urbanist strand of the subject dominates, and there has been little consideration of the circumstances of the emergence of collective gardens, the socio-cultural aspects of gardening, the transformation of gardens into summer house zones, the role of informal relationships, or the everyday life of the Soviet era. These issues are discussed in a much more nuanced way in the texts on the *dacha* phenomenon in Russia. Although the collective garden is often not the main subject of such publications, these terms overlap with each other and it is not possible to deal with one without seeing the proximity of the other. Another example would be the case of Poland, which Bellows discusses, where the term *'dacha'* does not appear, but the social motivations for the emergence of collective gardening and gender roles in the context of gardening are examined. In this case and many others like it, gardens, summerhouses and *dacha* are primarily approached from an anthropological perspective, but there are not many such studies specifically on collective gardens.

[33] Ramonaitė Ainė, *Nematoma sovietmečio visuomenė*, Vilnius: Naujasis židinys-Aidai, 2015, p. 9

Research methods. Research on everyday life in the Soviet era is confronted with the problem of information unevenness. In order to fully analyse a phenomenon, different groups of sources of varying quality are used, each of which often reveals only part of the phenomenon or the processes involved. At the same time, the information encountered cannot be accepted directly because of the specific Soviet political system and the jargon and codes of meaning used in public discourse. An analytical look at the collected material reveals a dichotomy between the official rhetoric and the informal processes that existed in practice - different sources may contain opposite representations of the same phenomenon.

Recognising that collective gardens were part of Soviet policy, planning and everyday practices, different research approaches were chosen. In order to reveal the **duality of the** collective gardening **phenomenon,** this study attempts to reconstruct the officially declared mission of collective gardening (the political-ideological level) and to juxtapose it with the different practices that were manifested in collective gardens and that may have contributed to the popularity of the gardens (the user perspective). The formal approach is explored through the documents that regulated the activities of the gardeners, the details recorded by the bureaucratic apparatus, and the press or authors who were dependent on the power structures. This picture is contrasted with the reality behind the formal representations, recorded in memoirs, works of art, satire or non-public minutes. This reconstruction is not intended to examine the institutions that were in place or their development (from the political centre in Moscow to local gardening societies), but to analyse the factors that shaped the phenomenon and the collective garden itself as a prominent feature of everyday Soviet life.

Therefore, the study attempts to synthesize the official and unofficial, the fictional and the real images of the same process and to study them **through a comparative analysis.** The synthesised images of the phenomenon under study are broken down into sub-images, their attributes are identified and similarities or differences are sought.

The study also uses a **historical comparative approach**, breaking down the development of collective gardening in Lithuania into phases and comparing how the characteristics of the phenomenon, attitudes towards it or legal regulation have changed over time. At the same time, an attempt is made to assess the relationship between other phenomena of everyday life in the Soviet era, which took place in parallel, and collective gardening, and their possible interdependence.

In order to synthesize different representations of the same phenomenon, a **critical analysis of sources** (archival documents and the press) was used, during which the information gathered was compared not only with each other, but also with the data gathered during **oral history interviews**. The need to use oral history arose from the observation that collective gardening processes were not lacking ambiguous situations where one thing is said officially and another is done practically. Thirty-two semi-structured interviews were carried out in order to gather more data on the informal side of the phenomenon. Only half of these interviews (15 out of 32) are quoted or directly referred to in the thesis in order to avoid duplication of information or to avoid digressing into localised details that are less relevant to the topic, but all of the interviews were valuable in one way or another to the research process. Also useful, although not necessarily directly mentioned, were those interviews that pointed towards other potential interviewees or helped to better understand the context around them. In order not to be limited to one city, gardeners and their relatives were interviewed not only in Vilnius, but also in Klaipėda, Kaunas, Šiauliai, Tauragė, Alytus and Visaginas.Many of the interviewees were linked by age and shared interests (gardening), and can therefore be seen as a group, or groups, with their own identity. Therefore, the strategies used in ethnographic research, **narrative analysis**, and attempts to historicize different people's experiences, social experiences and attitudes are used in interpreting and explaining the information gathered during the interviews.

The methodological approach formulated for the study can be summarised in several content levels:

1) Cultural and social processes that became prototypes for the phenomenon of collective gardening, or parts of it; in other words, whether collective gardening was an exclusive Soviet phenomenon or a phenomenon of modern urban culture that was ideologically appropriated by the Soviet government for its own purposes.

2) The formal, ideological conception of the collective garden is declared at the political level and in the regulation of collective gardening; in other words, it examines how ideological aspirations have been conveyed in official documents regulating space, relations and activities.

3) Representations of the formal concept of the collective garden in the press and in public discourse; in other words, it examines the ideal image and aspiration of collective gardening that was promoted at official level.

4) Informal practices in collective gardens and their reflection in the official discourse (tolerating or combating deviance); in other words, it looks at what were the gardeners' needs and goals to engage in collective gardening, and how did this correlate with the official level.

5) The concept of the collective garden from the personal perspective of the gardeners and those involved in gardening and their practices; in other words, all the practices carried out in collective gardens and their material culture/legacy are considered.

Sources of research.

The research covered both published official documents, laws, decrees, minutes of institutional meetings, as well as a variety of unpublished personal material from the gardeners met during the fieldwork, such as garden layout diagrams, receipts for material purchases, cadastral files. As a counterbalance to the documentary and iconographic sources, which provide a better view of the official side of collective gardening, interviews with gardeners were conducted, and the press, films and other cultural products of the period were analysed, which are able to provide additional narratives about collective gardening and its 'untold' side.

Both the official and unofficial sides of the collective gardening phenomenon are well reflected in the periodical press - in the specialised magazines "Statyba ir architektūra" (subordinated to the State Committee for Construction Affairs of the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR), "Švyturys" (published by the Publishing House for Newspapers and Magazines of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania), and others. The most important **periodical** in the context of this topic would be the magazine "Mūsų sodai", launched in 1959. It was inseparable from the activities of the Lithuanian Society of Gardeners (LSD) - the magazine appeared only after the establishment of the Society, which was one of the publishers of the magazine together with the Ministry of Agriculture of the Lithuanian SSR. The content of the magazine basically reflected the "party line" and the official approach to collective gardening. For example, the first editor of the magazine was Jonas Kriaučiūnas, an agronomist, chairman of the Lithuanian Horticultural Society, an employee of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania, who also served as first deputy minister of agriculture. After the magazine's publication was transferred to the Association of Newspapers and Magazines "Periodika" in 1966, the journalist Pranas Keibas soon took over the management of the magazine and continued in this position from 1967 to 1989.

Among the various horticultural literature, both today and in the Soviet era, there are books that present the past of horticulture, but the texts are uncritical and the authors are usually connected in one way or another to collective gardening organisations and processes. For example, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Lithuanian Gardeners' Association, a booklet entitled ' Mėgėjiškai sodininkystei Lietuvoje – 50 metų, (50 Years of Amateur Gardening in Lithuania') compiled by Feliksas Marcinkas, appeared. In 2011, the Institute of Horticulture and Gardening published Irma Dubovičienė book ' Kaip buvo kuriama Lietuvos daržininkystė' (How Lithuanian horticulture was created), dedicated to the memory of Edmundas Šmatavičius, the

Head of the Horticulture Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and a long-time functionary in the field.

Jonas Kriaučiūnas, the already mentioned editor of the magazine "Mūsų sodai" ("Gardens and the history of their development in Lithuania", etc.), has produced a large number of publications during the Soviet period, but his books focus on the topic of gardening and fruit growing rather than the phenomenon of collective gardening. The author provides a great deal of information on agriculture, which, although slightly updated, often passes from publication to publication in a form and scope that has changed little. Although there is much to be learned about some of the facts from similar publications, the information must be checked and particular care must be taken with the interpretations presented, which go beyond describing the events and people involved to assessing their significance, contribution or motives.

The study was much more useful when Henrikas Bronušas' book "Collective gardens, their development and management" appeared in 1988. The book focuses on the urban and architectural aspects of collective gardens, providing statistical data and discussing planning principles. This publication, which appeared at the very end of the Soviet era, in a way summarises the experience of collective gardens, although it lacks temporal distance. The author's approach is non-historical and has very pragmatic aims, namely to take stock of the situation and to propose principles that should guide the future management of collective gardens. Thus, because of the nuances mentioned above, these and other similar publications are more suited to the category of sources than to that of historiography.

The **archival sources** used in the study are stored in the Central State Archive of Lithuania, the Lithuanian Archive of Literature and Art, the Vilnius Regional State Archive, the New Archive of the Lithuanian States and the Lithuanian Special Archive. The large bureaucratic apparatus created by the Soviet system recorded a wide range of issues related to the life of society and the functioning of the institutions, and among the documents it produced, it is easy to find

those that record formal processes related to gardening, such as the establishment of gardens, the work of the institutions or the fight against irregularities.

The Vilnius Regional State Archive (VRVA) Fund 1011 "Urban Planning and Architecture Division of the Vilnius City Board" covers data from 1933 to 1994. It contains the minutes of the Vilnius City Building and Architecture Board, data on the allocation of plots of land, spatial planning and construction in the city. The documents in this collection have been compiled and stored in quite different ways, with some of the earlier files being accompanied by more varied graphic material and additional information relating to different projects, but the documents have become simpler over the years, and the information stored has become more concise and formal. As the Urban Planning and Architecture Unit has dealt with many different issues related to construction, it is quite difficult to identify which files may contain references to issues related to collective gardening. Some of the additional information relating to the projects under preparation is recorded in the Urban Construction Design Institute's file No 1036.

The problematic areas of horticulture can be felt more vividly by looking through the minutes of the meetings of the Central Committee (CC), which are kept in the Lithuanian Special Archive (LYA), Fund 1771. Although the decisions themselves are formulated in laconic, bureaucratic language, they are sometimes accompanied by reports of collective garden inspections or transcriptions of speeches. These documents give a vague idea of the behind-the-scenes nature of some of the decisions, the people involved, or a clearer idea of the scale of the problems at stake. The minutes report on the irregularities detected during the audits, the more brazen cases of abuse. The minutes of the CC meetings prompted comparisons with the situation in neighbouring countries, which led to a search of the Estonian National Archives (Rakhvusarhiiv) for data on similar audits, and contacts with investigators working in Ukraine.

Of particular importance for the research is the Fund 143, which is kept in the Lithuanian State New Archives (LVNA) and contains the

documents of the Lithuanian Horticultural Society from 1953 to 2003. The documents documenting the very beginning of the Society's establishment and further development can be found here. The fonds contains not only various resolutions and decisions of the Board of Directors, but also documents of congresses, drafts of speeches, letters, correspondence with institutions, financial statements. Although many of the activity documents are not eloquent, the minutes or transcripts of congresses and board meetings organised by the Society were particularly useful for the research. They record not only celebratory speeches, but also discussions on the problems affecting gardeners, clashes of opinion, and shortcomings of the organisation. Some of the reports of the audit commissions on the activities of the branches are also revealing, describing the irregularities found, sometimes including quite blatant cases of fraud.

Another organisation related to amateur gardening and the Lithuanian Horticultural Society was the editorial board of the magazine "Our Gardens". The Central State Archive of Lithuania (LCVA), in fonds R-757, preserves the documents of this editorial office, including not only staff and budget documents, but also the material of the magazine's own issues: articles, drafts, photographs and illustrations. The collection also contains minutes of meetings of the editorial board, which discuss changes in content, the desire to change themes in the light of changing government attitudes towards amateur gardening or new decrees adopted. This material, although predictable, confirms the fact that the publication was official and sought to accurately reflect the official government position.

The study uses the oral history **method** as one of its sources. The material gathered through **interviews and field research** helps to grasp informal practices, processes that remain outside the official discourse, and to better demonstrate the dichotomy of the horticultural phenomenon, where the one is documented and the other is done in practice. It is the formal side of collective gardening that is most revealing in the Soviet-era press, minutes of meetings or archival documents - who the gardens were for, or what was identified as the

aims of collective gardening. Meanwhile, the wide range of different, unconnected respondents makes it possible to compare their accounts and to find patterns, contradictions or parallels with the official narrative in the personal experiences of the gardeners. This helps not only to juxtapose information, but also to reconstruct a collective portrait of a group of people engaged in gardening in the Soviet era. Together, these interviews allow for the identification of atypical, distinctive experiences, for the identification of personalities whose activities or positions made it possible for extraordinary, striking situations to occur, and most importantly, for the participants to hear how they view the processes from today's perspective. As historian Aurimas Švedas puts it, the layers of information revealed during the interviews allow us to "experience forms of individual or collective consciousness that are an integral part of the past and, at the same time, create active links between the 'then' and the 'now' [34].

Interviews with contemporaries who were themselves involved in collective gardening during the Soviet era, or with their relatives, are a valuable source, but one with its own limitations and risks. The interviews with gardeners, chairmen of societies or members of gardening organisations were conducted in the course of the study and were not limited to one geographical location, social or age group. The interviews varied considerably in terms of the interviewees' characters, the way they talked and their personal aspirations. Although a great deal of interesting information was gathered, it is necessary to look at it critically, especially when assessing the statements of interlocutors who belonged to the nomenclature or specific professions. Some interviewees may not only censor themselves, but also hyperbolise in their portrayal of events or

[34] Švedas Aurimas, „Sakytinės istorijos galimybės sovietmečio ir posovietinės epochos tyrimuose (atminties kultūros ir istorijos politikos problematikos aspektas)“, *Lietuvos istorijos studijos*, 2010, Nr. 26, p. 148–161.

participants, give a one-sided version of the situation, fail to remember or mix up details due to the passage of time. Other interviewees relate events in which they themselves were not involved or were involved when they were children, so this information should also be treated with caution.

Insertions or indents made in quotations from interviews and other sources are indicated in square brackets in the text.

Structure of the paper. The thesis consists of an introduction, three parts and conclusions. The first part discusses the background to the emergence of the gardening phenomenon and the cultural, social and political context that led to the further development and popularity of gardens. The second section chronologically examines the development of collective gardening in Lithuania, focusing on the changing official objectives, legal regulations and public attitudes that have led to the different waves of garden formation(s). The third chapter aims at revealing collective gardens as part of the urban built environment, examining the issues of garden planning and the construction of houses; it discusses the agents involved (politicians, administrators, designers, users, etc.), their influence and experiences. The importance of the practice and phenomenon of collective gardening in the consciousness and everyday life of the city dweller is examined, revealing the tension between the objectives of gardening and the practices actually carried out in collective garden arrays.

1. THE ORIGINS AND BACKGROUND OF THE COLLECTIVE GARDENING PHENOMENON

An examination of the origins of collective gardens shows that collective gardening emerged as a phenomenon influenced by both the internal realities of the Soviet system and global factors. The processes of amateur gardening that have taken place in Europe since the 18th century are common to many countries, and collective gardens could be described as just one of the many forms of amateur gardening that have many parallels with neighbouring processes:

- The creation of amateur gardens is linked to the reduction of social tensions.
- The creation of amateur gardens accompanies rural-urban migration and accelerating urbanisation.
- Amateur gardening is proposed as a response to industrial development and pollution.
- The creation of amateur gardens accelerates in times of scarcity, war or social upheaval.
- Amateur gardens are seen as a means of recreation for workers and are often born as a companion to leftist movements.

At the same time, however, collective gardening in the Soviet era has its own specific characteristics. First of all, nowhere else was the process of developing amateur gardening so massive and widespread as in the Soviet Union. This process was part of the urban transformation that cities were undergoing as a result of the development of mass housing estates. As with the block of flats, buildings of similar technology were being constructed all over the world, but the Soviet Union stood out for the scale and length of time that this process took. Secondly, it was not until after the war that Soviet-era collective gardens emerged and began to grow in number, while in many European countries the demand for and popularity of gardening in society declined after the post-war hardships. The need to deal with social tensions and to provide for the population persisted throughout the Soviet period, so that the system could be said to have been in a state of permanent crisis.

Looking at the subject of collective gardens from the perspective of socialist city-building, the tension between different attitudes to the issues of reconciling the city and nature, the worker and his or her time, becomes apparent. In urban utopias and the concept of the urban garden, gardens and gardening are used as one of the cornerstones of a full life in the city, a benefit for the city and its inhabitants. However, these more moderate ideas of egalitarian city-building are opposed by

the Marxist line, whose apologists reject amateur gardening as an inappropriate form of activity. Looking at the city from the perspective of the class struggle, they see gardens as relics of the bourgeois past, hindering rather than helping the establishment of universal communism.

Another ideologically charged aspect of socialist city-building is the desire to reform the living cell, to reduce the space of housing and to move some functions outside the home. The designers of the socialist city were aware, and repeatedly mentioned, that optimising the size of housing inevitably requires finding compensatory mechanisms for the inhabitant's connection with nature and recreational opportunities. The possibility of going outside the city, the allocation of small plots of land and miniature 'villas' are mentioned as one of the possibilities which, albeit indirectly, were made possible by the development of collective gardening.

The theme of summer houses (*dacha*) is also important for understanding the cultural context of collective gardening. It is probably no coincidence that the promotion of collective gardens coincided with the decline of *dacha* cooperatives as a tolerable form of organisation. Pragmatic objectives meant that the old *dacha continued* to be used after the war, but new ones were created as a privilege. But as this phenomenon was eliminated, collective gardens seemed to have taken over some of the habits associated with the *dacha* culture and gradually became a more modest substitute. However, along with the term *"dacha"*, ideological tensions have also been transferred to gardens - whether the garden with its garden house is a welcome sign of modern Soviet society or a relic of the "bourgeois past" to be fought against. The term *"dacha capitalism"* has even come into use, and in the 1960s it came to be used to criticise the privileged

elite or those who "violated the egalitarian values of early Bolshevism in the pursuit of wealth, a summer house (dacha) or other luxuries" [35].

Ideological tensions existed not only in terms of the construction and well-being of the collective garden, but also in terms of the mission of gardening in general. The official emphasis was on collective gardens as part of modern, Soviet leisure and as an instrument for the formation of a new, more progressive society. The working week is being shortened and the remaining free time is being given over to new rituals, including collective gardening. Meanwhile, in practice, for many gardeners, gardens have become the substitute of a lost village, a continuation of past agrarian traditions or a privilege that reinforces the status of the individual in Soviet society.

The phenomenon of collective gardens has thus been fraught with a series of inevitable internal contradictions since its inception. Collective gardens intertwine the traditions of the new construction of society and the traditions of the past, the utopianism of the socialist city and the solution of everyday domestic issues, the tendencies of global amateur gardening and the local issues of the Soviet world. The collective garden can be at once a means of combating *dacha* and at the same time an opportunity to continue building them, albeit on a more modest scale. It simultaneously solves and creates problems.

2. COLLECTIVE GARDENS IN SOVIET LITHUANIA

An examination of the formation and development of collective gardening in the Lithuanian SSR shows that it grew out of Soviet Union-wide initiatives to provide food for the population after the war. Collective gardens, pre-agricultural plots and, eventually, collective gardens were used to solve agricultural problems. The process

[35] Kozlov Vladimir A., Fitzpatrick Sheila, Mironenko Sergei V., *Sedition: Everyday Resistance in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev and Brezhnev*, Yale University Press, 2011, p. 338.

coincided with the pseudo-scientific ideas of Lysenko, which became popular in the Soviet Union during Stalin's reign, and the attempts to form a movement of naturalist Michiurin. It is no coincidence that when the first more formal gardening organisations began to emerge, they were dominated by scientists and agriculturalists, and it was only later that collective gardening gradually began to become a nationwide, nationwide phenomenon.

The spread of collective gardening throughout Lithuania coincided with the struggle against individual construction that began after Stalin's death, and especially against the attempts of the nomenklatura to build summer houses. As individual construction was restricted in the cities, violations of building regulations in collective gardens soon began to be recorded and fought not only in Lithuania but also in other republics. Thereafter, similar attempts to discipline violators were repeated in Lithuania every decade or so and became an integral part of the life of collective gardening.

Throughout the Soviet era, the regulation of collective gardening was influenced by two different aspects: gardening as a source of food and gardening as a space for individual construction. The first aspect was that gardening was encouraged and supported by the central government: in the face of economic difficulties, measures were taken to promote the self-sufficiency of the population in food production and to increase agricultural productivity, and with these waves, amateur gardeners were given more and more freedoms and incentives. Meanwhile, construction in gardens remained the main reason for restricting and disciplining gardeners from the 1960s until the fall of the Soviet Union. Between these two states, encouragement and restriction, the whole process of collective gardening and schizophrenic legal regulation was balanced. The Soviet authorities would restrict gardeners by forbidding them not only to build houses, but also to set up on fertile land, and then they would start encouraging them to actively develop collective gardening and to increase the production of agricultural products.

Based on the key changes in the regulation of collective gardens and in the approach to gardening, the development of collective gardens can be further divided into the following phases:

- Post-war (1944-1949) - Urban gardens are used as a way to solve post-war food security problems.
- Reaction to the famine (1949-1953) - Moscow officially instructs the republics to develop collective gardening and horticulture in response to the famine, and the first attempts in Lithuania begins in Kaunas.
- *Mičiurininkai* (1953-1959) - The formation of *Mičiurininkai* groups in Lithuania and the beginning of the official activities of the Vilnius Gardening Society.
- The formation of the LSD (1959-1961) - the Lithuanian Horticultural Society is formed and the process becomes clearly coordinated and hierarchical.
- The first wave of disciplining (1961-1966) was the fight against abuses and a critical attitude towards amateur gardeners.
- The Quiet Period (1966-1969) saw the growth and popularity of horticulture and the introduction of the possibility to build houses of up to 25 square metres.
- Criticism intensifies (1969-1974): recommendations and hints are made, urging people not to abuse the opportunities offered by horticulture; inspections of gardens are launched.
- The second wave of discipline (1974-1977) was an active fight against abuses and construction violations in collective gardens, with tighter controls throughout the Republic.
- The Great Buildings (1977-1981) encouraged the development of horticulture and opened up the possibility of building much larger houses (up to 45 square metres).

- The third wave of discipline (1981-1986) was another phase of inspections, controls and an active fight against construction irregularities.
- The apogee of collective gardening (1986-1991) was another attempt to solve the problems of farming and food security by encouraging gardeners, and the last period of growth of gardening in Lithuania.
- The decline of collective gardening (1991-present) - the growth of collective gardening stops, new land is no longer allocated to it, and the transformation of the existing masses around the major cities into low-rise residential areas takes place.

An examination of the central and local government resolutions regulating gardening shows that throughout the Soviet era, the process of collective gardening was regulated from Moscow - decisions were taken at the level of the USSR on the promotion or restriction of gardening, on the basis of which analogous resolutions were approved by the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR, and then on the basis of these decisions the documents of gardeners' organisations, the statutes of the society and the societies were adjusted accordingly. Whether it was a tightening or loosening of restrictions on gardening, it was accompanied by press publications, not only in the official magazine "Our Gardens", but also in other publications, uniformly repeating criticism or praise in a clichéd manner, in line with the rhetoric of the newly adopted or to be adopted resolutions.

Friction and divergent positions are becoming more pronounced in documents of lower importance - in the minutes of the gardeners' congresses one can find clashes of different positions. In the documents of everyday activities, the clichéd phrases about the importance of gardening are also repeated, but here there are hints of tensions between those who want to expand the possibilities of individual action for amateur gardeners and those who, following the political background, propose to restrict more strongly the sentiments

of 'private owners', to prevent the assignment of individual plots to gardeners, to prevent the construction of individual buildings, and so on. Here the duality of the gardening process becomes apparent: the central government promotes gardening because of the general need to provide food for the population, the gardeners themselves use the gardens as a space to pursue their personal interests, and the local government navigates between these two positions, trying not to enrage Moscow, but to maintain the privileges of gardening at the same time.

3. FORMAL AND INFORMAL PRACTICES IN COLLECTIVE GARDENS

An examination of the formal and informal sides of collective gardening shows that the formal level is manifested through the regulation of gardening and public speaking in the official press. The practical benefits of collective gardening were primarily food security and the easing of social tensions, but the official declaration of the social objectives of collective gardening was much broader and ideologically acceptable to the system: active recreation of the population, the education or even re-education of the public and especially of the young, the connection with nature, a more varied diet, etc. The division of gardens into individual plots and the "private ownership" of gardeners, which were less in line with Soviet ideology, were counterbalanced by talk of the noble and noble mission of collective gardening and the benefits for workers.

At the informal level, it was not the system but the personal aspirations of the gardeners themselves that manifested themselves, often in dissonance with the noble official aims of horticulture. The public and the authorities were aware of gardeners' activities that were teetering on, or even over, the permissible limits of the time. This included not only individual gardeners making a living from selling their harvests or irregularities in the construction of houses, but also the organisational structures of horticulture, the chairmen of the

gardens, and the people who worked in the Society's shops. At various levels, ways were found to turn the process of collective gardening, which was formally permitted and encouraged, in their own favour.

The construction of a garden house as a second home or summer house was a very common aspiration of gardeners, as there were very few other options for individual construction. This is where the architecture of garden houses becomes important, as a legacy of the material culture of collective gardening. Through the design of garden houses, gardeners and architects have sought to make the best use of the opportunities that have opened up, both in functional and aesthetic terms. Meanwhile, the authorities, through the control and typification of garden house architecture, have tried to control the avalanche of unauthorised construction and constant infringements. Although at the beginning the architecture of garden houses was dealt with in a rather localised way, at the level of organisations and republics, as the typification of garden houses became more rigorous, the control of standard designs rose to the union level. This process of strict typification was interrupted by the collapse of the Soviet Union, and its consequences for the environment of collective gardens were limited.

The most visible irregularities in the construction of garden houses or gardens are found among the more influential gardeners of the Soviet-era organisations. From the very beginning of the development of collective gardens throughout Lithuania, violations were recorded and regular disciplinary actions were taken. Although inspections and disciplining of gardeners was almost constant, it did not lead to any substantial changes, and gardeners, especially the Soviet elite, continued to exploit the gardens for their own personal needs. Often more severe measures were taken when violations were brought to Moscow's attention, but even then some of the actions were merely demonstrative, with offenders receiving punishments that were later watered down or not implemented in full. Perhaps the most notable restriction resulting from the fight against infringement, which

affected senior officials, was the ban on those in positions of authority having a collective garden.

On a cultural level, collective gardening manifested itself through the opposition between intellectuals who saw the garden as a continuation of rural traditions and the agricultural past, and those who emphasised the conflict between gardening practices and the new Soviet reality being created, with its ideologised norms of behaviour. Although formally the collective garden as a substitute for the countryside did not fit in with Soviet ideology, at the operational level the aim was not to destroy the rituals prevalent in society, but rather to integrate them into the official narrative. Similarly, the conflict between gardening as an artefact of the archaic "bourgeois" past and the creation of a modern new Soviet society was also addressed. Paradoxically, the fiercest critics of horticulture were not only met with a negative public reaction, but also with pressure from the system, and their ideologised position was not supported.

In sum, collective gardening was not only bureaucratically initiated and supported "from above", but inevitably took on the official, system-approved face of "rich leisure" and "outdoor recreation". Despite ideological contradictions, collective gardening was needed by both the authorities and the enthusiasts who were immersed in gardening, and neither was willing to completely interrupt the process. For gardeners, collective gardens became a space for informal, personal action. This activity was expressed both through cultural practices - leisure, creativity, festivals - and through economic and financial "adventures".

Informal practices manifested themselves differently in the gardens of the workers and cultural elite or the party nomenklatura, but for all of them the collective garden became a kind of place of compensation, a place of decompression - an officially tolerated patch of the Soviet city within which individual desires could be fulfilled, at least partially. Some saw it as a way to earn money or improve their material condition, others used the garden as a substitute for a summer house and a status symbol, and still others sought self-expression, or

hints of rural life of the past. The standard six-acre patch of land became an opportunity to create a personal microcosm, to fill this vessel with all kinds of desires that could not be realised in the city, or that were unwilling to be.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The origins of collective gardening and the experience of different countries show that the establishment of collective gardens in the Soviet Union was based on the continuity of ideas that had already begun to spread in Europe at the beginning of the 19th century. With the growth of cities and the expansion of industry, urban gardening has been used in different countries to address food security issues, reduce social tensions or promote social change. After the Second World War, the popularity of amateur gardens declined in Europe, while collective gardens in the Soviet Union began to be actively established and steadily increased in numbers. After the Second World War, the Soviet Union was dealing with both economic and public image problems, and collective gardens became an option that could potentially solve both of them. Gardens were seen as a means of alleviating chronic food shortages and, at the same time, they helped to shape a more favourable image of the system and the prevailing ideology in society. This required a visible improvement in daily life, and the allocation of vacant land to the population in the form of gardens was a relatively quick and inexpensive way. The divergence of the trajectories of the development of collective gardens is a good illustration of the fact that these structures was not able to eliminate the problems of Soviet agriculture and the standard of living until the collapse of the system.

2. The ideas of socialist urban planning and the reshaping of the living environment that existed at the time suggest that the steady reduction in the size of housing and the densification of the city were intended to compensate for the loss of connection with nature by providing opportunities to move to temporary housing outside the city

limits, surrounded by nature. "The Housing Question also highlights the different ideological postures of collective gardens: for some, gardening is a sign of concern for urban workers, while for others it symbolises an irrational use of resources and a return to a bourgeois lifestyle that is incompatible with the aspirations of communism. The role of the collective garden as a substitute for the summer house is particularly pronounced after Stalin's death (1953), when the construction of individual dwellings was banned in the cities and a shift towards rapid mass construction took place. The scale of urban transformation through the construction of new industrial estates contributed to the growing need for collective gardening. Lithuania is no different in this context, following the path of the entire Soviet Union.

3. An analysis of the political decisions and the regulation of collective gardening clearly shows a top-down process: instructions for the development of collective gardens came from the centre in Moscow, were echoed by local authorities, and were eventually implemented by an umbrella organisation - the Lithuanian Horticultural Society. Although the objectives of the agents involved in the different stages of collective gardening did not coincide, for many of them collective gardens became a space to pursue their own interests. In other words, at the operational level, collective gardens found their place and were needed by both the government and the gardeners themselves. In the regulation of collective gardening, it is clear that throughout the Soviet era collective gardening was encouraged and restricted all at the same time. Every decade or so, the cycle has gone from one extreme (inspections, discipline, bans on activities) to the other (praise, concessions, encouragement to speed up the process). This schizophrenic attitude is indicative of the internal contradictions inherent in the phenomenon: the daily routine of collective gardening, which was incompatible with the dominant ideology, was known, but the problems were often tolerated for economic or political gain. The internal contradictions and attitudes of collective gardening in the Soviet era confirm that formal and

operational ideologies were not fixed entities. They were constantly evolving and adapting to the situation, influenced by each other and reacting to the mood of society or the economic situation. When there was a practical need to develop collective gardening, there was an ideological explanation for it, which was anchored at the formal level and justified its continued operation. At the same time, the formal structures became the framework within which the agents acted to realise their personal goals.

4. The design and construction of collective garden houses shows that construction has been one of the main topics of discussion (alongside harvest) since the beginning of collective gardening. It was an issue that had been actively addressed even before the formation of the Lithuanian Horticultural Society, with organisations and gardeners themselves trying to gain as much freedom as possible. At the same time, the opposite process is taking place - with restrictions on the size of houses and standard designs, attempts are being made to control the chaotic construction processes in gardens. However, even in this process, there has been a good deal of autonomy, with standard designs for garden houses in Lithuania being drawn up by local specialists, and only in the late Soviet period was there an attempt to standardise designs across the Union. The aesthetic differences in the typical garden houses reflect not only the contribution of different authors, changing regulations and the preferences of the gardeners themselves, but also the wider changes that were taking place at the same time in the shaping of the built environment. Deviations from standard designs, which were ridiculed in the press before the collapse of the system, are no longer a sin, but an aspirational example. In the Soviet city, there were hardly any more spaces and architecture that the owner could create with his own hands. As a distinctive artefact of the urban and material culture of the Soviet era, the garden houses become an illustration of the transformations of the Soviet material environment.

5. An examination of informal practices and the officially declared aims of collective gardening shows that the official narrative that took

place during the Soviet era was very similar to the advantages of urban gardening mentioned in other countries. Slightly adapted, they found a place in the Soviet discourse, which proclaimed the improvement of living conditions for workers and civil servants, the creation of the new man, the fostering of collectivity and the care for nature. Some public figures saw collective gardening as a rudiment of the bourgeois past, incompatible with the new Soviet reality. However, this attitude was not shared by the general public or by the higher echelons of the system. The majority of those involved in collective gardening did not see gardening as an officially declared noble goal, but as an opportunity to use an institutionalized and even encouraged process as a medium for informal, and not always legal, activities. The examples gathered during the research show that a wide range of the population was involved in such activities, from factory workers to cultural figures, high-ranking officials and even ministers. Many of them teetered on the fringes of formal and informal activity. Juggling acceptable phrases in formal discourse, the gardeners masked opportunistic action for individual gain.

6. What started as a reaction to famine in the post-war period and was part of nature's transformation plan, has over the decades turned into a mass phenomenon, a tangible fragment of the body of Lithuanian cities, and a phenomenon that has touched hundreds of thousands of families, formed new rituals of everyday life, and sometimes continued old ones. The search for individuality, the typification of the living environment, poverty and excess have all found a place here. For some it became a space of opportunity and for others a space of control and limitation, a place where a new Soviet citizen was being created and at the same time the bourgeois past was being continued. Around the collective gardens and garden houses, as a part of the physical environment, a distinctive, paradoxical culture emerged, which "absorbed" the economic, social and cultural realities of the Soviet period into itself. A culture whose signs are still alive in Lithuanian cities and in the memory of its citizens.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Academic articles published on the subject of the dissertation:

1. Šiupšinskas M. „Kolektyvinių sodų nameliai – privačiosios statybos galimybė“, skyrius kolektyvinei monografijai *Gyvenamoji architektūra sovietinėje Lietuvoje: tarp masinės ir unikalios*. Sudarytoja prof. dr. Marija Drėmaitė (VU IF). **The publication has been accepted for publication in a scientific collective monograph.**
2. Šiupšinskas M. (2018) „Vasarnamio sublimatas: kolektyviniai sodai sovietmečiu“, *Acta Academiae Artium Vilnensis*, 88–89, p. 233–243. **Scientific publication published in a peer-reviewed, periodical scientific journal. The articles are included in the EBSCO Publishing list and in the Lituanistika database.**
3. Šiupšinskas M., Lankots E. (2019) „Collectivist Ideals and Soviet Consumer Spaces: Mikrorayon Commercial Centres in Vilnius, Lithuania and Tallinn, Estonia“. In: Hess D., Tammaru T. (eds) *Housing Estates in the Baltic Countries*. The Urban Book Series. Springer, Cham, p. 301-320. **The publication is part of the *Springer* series *The Urban Book Series*.**
4. Saladžinskaitė I., Šiupšinskas M., Žadeikytė R. (2016) „Kolektyvinio sodo idėja ir jos materializacija Lietuvoje“, *Science – Future of Lithuania / Mokslas – Lietuvos Atei*tis, Nr. 8(1), p. 102-111. **Scientific publication published in a peer-reviewed periodical (co-authored with co-authors).**
5. Šiupšinskas M. (2017) „Urban and Rural: Collective Gardens in Soviet City“, in: *Europe-2017: From Printed Word To Knowledge: Local Traditions And Global Transition*, Proceedings of the conference „Technology

and the City“, p. 162-169. **The scientific essay was published in the proceedings of the conference.**

6. Šiupšinskas M. (2017) „Ruralising the Urban, Urbanising the Rural“, in: *Sykhiv: Spaces, Memories, Practices,* Lviv: Center for Urban History of East Central Europe, p. 104–119. **The research essay was published in the publication dedicated to the results of the summer school.**

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Matas Šiupšinskas is a practicing architect, author of scientific and journalistic articles ("Volume", "Monu", "Archifroma", "Journal of Architecture and Urbanism"). His field of interest includes, but is not limited to, the history of urban planning, the development of mass construction, housing typologies, urban morphology and Soviet architectural heritage. In 2009, he graduated from VGTU Architecture Studies and later obtained a Master's degree in History and Theory of Architecture, worked in the studio of architect Rolandas Palekas, had internships in Luxembourg, Denmark and the Netherlands, and worked with Julija Reklaite on the architectural part of the publication "Lithuanian Culture Guide".

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