



Leibniz Institute of
Ecological Urban and
Regional Development

Dresden planner's forum

Informal Food Production in the Gardens of Global North: Between Hobby, Financial Savings and Environmentalism

PhDr. Jan Vávra

University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice (Czech Republic)

Informal food production, also labelled as food self-provisioning, subsistence or gardening, is a very traditional way how to obtain food. Gardening activities did not disappear along with the increase of industrial agricultural production and globalized market and became object of interest of a growing number of researchers in recent years. Findings from various countries of the Global North suggest that in many regions about half of the citizens grows some food in their gardens and that the share of gardeners is significant in urban areas, though being smaller than in rural.

Gardening has been studied by environmental scientists, geographers, sociologists, ethnologists, economists, regional scientists, planners and many other social science scholars with special focus on different aspects of the activity. This includes financial motives, health aspects of the food and the physical activity, psychological benefits of gardening, its social and cultural context, and ecological benefits. Gardening has been interpreted as a subsistence strategy, hobby, postmaterialistic self-realization, resilience or even resistance to neoliberal capitalism.

The presentation will start with the overview of the research on gardening in the Global North with special focus on the distribution of gardening in the particular countries (e.g. EU countries, Russia, US or Canada) and varying, often contradicting, interpretation of the phenomenon. The core of the talk will then present the outcomes of the speaker's research on gardening in EU regions and mainly in the Czech Republic, based on large sociological datasets from recent years. The distribution of gardening, socio-demographic profiles of gardeners, their motivation and amount of food produced will be discussed, followed by the consideration of gardening's potential for environmental, social and economic sustainability. Special attention will be paid to gardening in urban areas, represented by home, allotment and community gardens.

PhDr. Jan Vávra works as a researcher at the Department of Regional Management, Faculty of Economics, University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice. He received MA (2008) and PhD (2012) in Culturology at Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague. His research mostly fits into the area of environmental sociology with focus on various aspects of human-environment relationship. Jan Vávra's current research themes include informal food production, social perception of soil degradation and bioeconomy. Recently, he was involved in the research of household energy use, carbon footprint and other social aspects of climate change.

Jan Vávra is currently participating in the EU-H2020 project POWER4BIO, COST Action European Network for Environmental Citizenship and is member of the Regional Centre for Expertise Czechia focusing on education towards sustainable development supervised by United Nations University. He has experience with quantitative and qualitative sociological research from previous projects including 7FP EU, COST Action and Czech Science Foundation funding schemes.

Apart from research activities, he teaches a Bachelor course in Sociology and participates in the Master courses Planning of Rural Landscape and Methodology of Scientific Work. At the Faculty of Economics, he organizes series of lectures "Pluralism in Economics" and co-organises the international multidisciplinary conference "Our Common Present".

**Wednesday
14/11/2018
5 p.m.**

Venue:
Leibniz Institute of
Ecological Urban and
Regional Development
Weberplatz 1
01217 Dresden

Moderation
Dr. Martina Artmann

Coordination
Dr. Andreas Otto



DRESDEN
concept



www.ioer.de