



Quietly degrowing: food self-provisioning in Central Europe

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- Global food crisis - massive scale and consequences
- Metabolic rift
- Alternative approaches to food provisioning in search for responses to crisis:
 - initiatives like CSA, farmers' markets, Fair Trade, community gardening
- BUT: small scale (1% of global food trade is organic and FT), niche, precarious, elitist and unstable



- Alternative response to metabolic rift: food self-provisioning (**FSP**) (Pungas 2019)
- Growing food in home gardens and on allotment plots
- Neglected but significant way of food production (widespread, socially embedded, inclusive and longstanding)
- FSP compatible with principles of degrowth in objectives, methods and outcomes



- FSP in Central Europe: neither a remnant of pre-capitalist tradition nor a coping strategy of the poor
- % of population engaged in FSP in the 2010s: Hungary 36%, Czechia 41%, Poland 54%

Table 3.1 Sources of selected types of food in food-growing households: based on respondents' estimates

Type of food	Household self-provisioning (%)	Received gifts or sharing (%)	Purchase (%)	Total (%)
Vegetables	34.8	5.8	59.4	100.0
Fruits	32.6	7.6	59.8	100.0
Potatoes	27.9	6.7	65.4	100.0
Eggs	27.4	10.2	62.4	100.0
Meat	8.4	4.3	87.3	100.0
Honey	4.7	22.5	72.8	100.0

Czechia:

1/3 of fruit and veg & 1/4 of eggs and potatoes consumed in food-growing households are supplied by home gardening

46% of fruit & veg consumed by 13 food growing households in Brno self-produced (Sovova 2015; food logs)

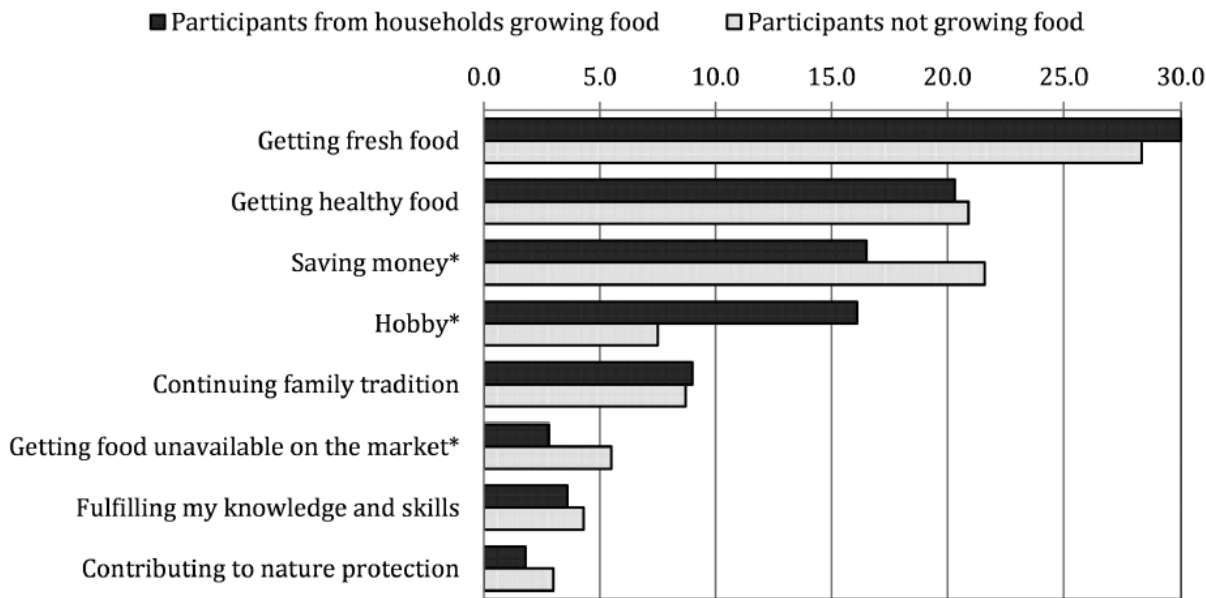
Plus: sharing: food gifts

- Diverse economies (Gibson-Graham 2006):
 - market, alternative market and barter food
- Modified concepts of endowment and entitlement sets (Sen 1984):
 - exchange, transfer and production of food
- Greater diversity of entitlements makes households and the food system less vulnerable and more resilient



FSP as a convivial rather than economic practice

- Main reasons for growing food non-economic: fresh food (30%) and healthy food (20%)

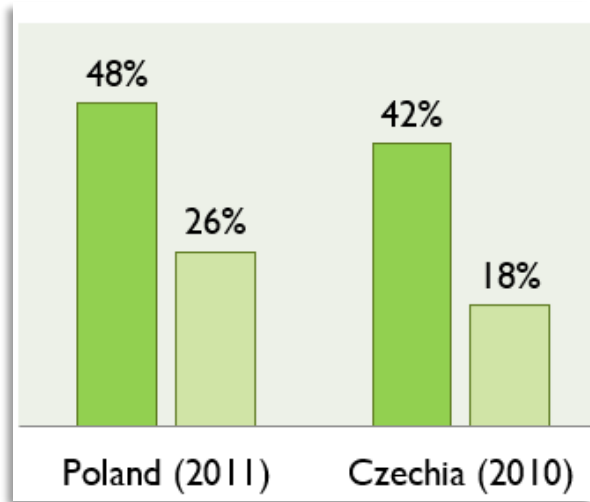


Czechia 2015, N=2,058

FSP concentrated

- neither among economically disadvantaged groups of society
- nor in peripheral regions.....

- Nearly ½ of Polish and Czech food growers produce non-certified organic food (dark green)



- compared to the same amount of purchased fruit & veg, FSP practices reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 3-5%
- FSP leads to reduced food waste (Sosna et al. 2019)
- 61% of Czech population = recipients of home-grown food
- food relocalisation: 81% of food sharing networks within 10 km radius
- 65% of respondents involved in networks which include people outside their family

- FSP practices – alternative but also antithetical to principles of growth underlying neoliberal capitalism
- Gardens + sharing networks ≠ residual and defensive places
- Instead: nuclei of degrowth society valuing conviviality, creativity & productivity for the sake of local people and ecosystems, not ideologies
- FSP not driven by desire to remedy the global food system and not motivated environmentally – but environmentally positive outcome
- Central European FSP: inspiring, effective and enjoyable response to acute problems of the global food system



Thank you