

IC - (20855) - GROWING TOGETHER - TOWARDS A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF AGRICULTURAL PROSUMPTION IN SWITZERLAND

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1 - Agroscope

Background and objectives

Prosumption, i.e. the interrelatedness and conjunction of production and consumption, can be seen as a way to change food sovereignty and the agricultural landscape as a whole, especially in urban areas. Regardless of its potential benefits for society and ecology, it has been a neglected research topic for agricultural sociologists. With our work, we establish a broader understanding of different forms of agricultural prosumption for urbanized European countries using a data and theory driven approach. Thereby, we look into the possibility of widespread change in consumption behaviour towards a sustainable, green way of generating food, whilst rebuilding local, urban communities.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

Through qualitative and ethnographic fieldwork, we established a theoretical structure to differentiate and characterise varying types of prosumption activities, such as community supported agriculture, allotment gardens or private gardening. This structure consists of three main concepts: barriers, activity and effects. The framework illustrates the heterogenic specifications for various socio-demographic groups, concerning the accessibility and the consequences of the group's corresponding ecological and social surroundings.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

Using Bourdieu's theory of capital, we further expand our proposed structure. We show how specific community-based forms of prosumption transform different forms of capital and use their social network to form a circular amplification of these capitals. This amplification of symbolic capital is the reason for the popularity of prosumption. It also shows why prosumption is hardly ever established in low-education, low-income households or neighbourhoods.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

Our broad, theory and data driven analysis of the potential of agricultural prosumption shows the importance and the obstacles of shifting to a more sustainable way of feeding large populations in urban areas. Our work aims to improve the situation of prosumption organisations, and provides a guideline to politics on a local and national level. Further research can use our structural framework to ground their work in an underlying theory.

Palavras-chave : Switzerland, prosumption, commons, capital, urban food sovereignty, Bourdieu