



An ecological-economic analysis of allotment gardens in Vienna from a Degrowth perspective

Bachelor Thesis for Obtaining the Degree

Bachelor of Business Administration in

Tourism and Hospitality Management

Submitted to Dr. Christian Kerschner

Marie Greiner

61900552

Vienna, 9 August 2022

Affidavit

I hereby affirm that this Bachelor's Thesis represents my own written work and that I have used no sources and aids other than those indicated. All passages quoted from publications or paraphrased from these sources are properly cited and attributed.

The thesis was not submitted in the same or in a substantially similar version, not even partially, to another examination board and was not published elsewhere.

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Abstract

Under the current economic situation, society is facing an imminent socio-economic and ecological crisis that threatens human well-being. In order to address these multiple crises in a sustainable manner, the Degrowth movement calls for the abolishment of the hegemony of economic growth and to instead focus on a prosperous frugality and sustainable living within planetary boundaries. Urban gardening is one of the strategies that is considered in line with Degrowth ideas. Urban gardens contribute to food security of cities and green spaces, which have been shown to relate to better physical and mental health.

Although allotment gardens are the oldest and most prominent type of urban gardening, they have not been given significant attention in the degrowth discourse. This is partly because many allotment gardens are characterized by high fences, privatization and single-family homes. Nevertheless, there is evidence in qualitative data from various books and studies that show that values such as democracy and conviviality are present in the allotment gardens of Vienna today. Therefore, this thesis aims to find out to which extent allotment gardening in Vienna could be considered a degrowth strategy and a desirable convivial technology. The data was generated through an online survey, sent to 140 allotment garden compounds. The results show that the majority practices fruit and vegetable gardening, and the yield covers 10% to 80% of the fruit and vegetable needs of the households. The results indicated high life satisfaction and autonomy in the allotment gardens, however, participation in club-related events is rather low. In general, socializing is of low importance to the participants, however, trust and mutual help is present within the neighborhood. To conclude, not all elements of allotment gardening in Vienna are in-line with Degrowth principles. Yet they offer valuable benefits for their tenants, owners and the city of Vienna. In addition Vienna's allotment gardening offers good potentials as a Degrowth technology from a conviviality perspective, but further research is needed into other criteria such as feasibility and viability.