

The new season of urban vegetable gardens in the city of Bologna: intergenerational exchanges and environmental sustainability?

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Allotment for working classes in 19th and 20th century



French family in a jardin ouvrier

The research on social gardens in Bologna

- participant observation in a municipal allotment area in Bologna
- interviews with contact persons of 4 municipal allotment areas (Barca, Nicholas Green, Maggiore, Ca Bura)
- 18 in deep interviews with “young” gardeners (with Giulia Cecchelin PhD)
- in depth-interviews or conversations with political actors and participation to meetings on vegetable gardens public policies



October 2011-September 2012
Mai 2013-Augus 2013

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The institutional framework of gardening practices in Bologna: the evolution of a municipal policy

integration of elderly retired people and promotion of their active leisure and self-organization

recover abandoned and illegally cultivated land



The building of an allotment area in the Eighties



The social evolution of vegetable gardening in Bologna

Today

2677 municipal plots

321 of them (12%) are assigned to “young” gardeners (18-50 years old)

more than 1300 citizens are waiting for a municipal plot



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Are gardens spaces of development for a culture of environmental sustainability?
JUST PARTIALLY

Do young gardeners participate in the traditional “generosity of gardeners”?
YES, BUT...

responsible styles of food
production and consumption

**direct connection with
nature**



“Gardener’s generosity” and gift culture

Intergenerational exchanges

Elderly recognition



To conclude

Young gardeners introduced a deeper sensibility towards nature and responsible styles of cultivation

Young gardeners experience connection with elderly generation, contacts that in everyday life are lost



Thank you for the attention!

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My publications on the topic:

Orti e giardini collettivi: pratiche grassroots e politiche urbane, in «Autonomie locali e servizi sociali», n. 3, 2012, il Mulino, Bologna.

Mappare la campagna in città: immagini tra New York City e l'Italia (with Pierluigi Musarò), in «Sociologia della comunicazione», n. 44, 2/2012, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

Pratiche di consumo e civic engagement: il consumo impegnato di natura in città, in *Comunicazione e civic engagement*, R. Bartoletti, F. Faccioli (eds), FrancoAngeli Milano 2013.



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