

Abstract

Boom of the farmers' markets in 2010 represented a brand new phenomenon in the so far rather calm development of the Czech alternative food networks (AFNs). Unprecedented was the extent of political support at the local and state level as well as the interest of media and consumers. My PhD project originates in the desire to understand this phenomenon. I realized qualitative research of practice and discourse of the farmers' markets in the territory of Prague metropolitan area (PMA) during the years 2011 and 2012. The main research methods included interviews with organizers, observation at the markets, and the content analysis of the mass media. In the course of the research it became obvious that the current academic discourse, rooted primarily in the Anglo-American context, cannot be applied to the Czech reality. Also, the specific features of the farmers' markets in the PMA could only partially be explained by the differences between the Czech post-socialist context and "the West". An interpretation of the boom of farmers' markets in the PMA, consistent with the results of my research, was only enabled by an innovative approach which combines the concept of the travelling theory, postcolonial sensitivity to the mutual relations between source and target contexts, and the findings of the studies of post-socialism. I was able to identify a complex geographical embeddedness of the phenomena and differentiated effects of post-socialism in the process of concept travelling. In other words, the farmers' markets in the PMA are not only embedded in the local context. Via their organizers and other actors they are simultaneously embedded in many other often relatively distant geographical contexts. Not one but several different concepts of the farmers' market travelled from diverse "western" contexts to the pos-socialist Czechia. The resulting mutation of farmers' markets is a result of the mutual interaction of these travelling concepts as well as their clash with the specific local context. My PhD thesis enhances the academic discourse of the AFNs with the finding that the new AFNs in "non-western" contexts cannot be interpreted without understanding their complex relationships with "the West" and formulates an approach to their analysis.