



## Editorial

### Behavioural Views in Environmentalism

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During the last decade, the position of the environmental movement both in the Czech Republic and globally can be described as growingly defensive. According to Binka (2013), we've witnessed various approaches and reactions to this situation which have one thing in common: they are rather useless when we aspire to change the situation. Be it the blaming position, the 'more of the same' approach, or simple disregard (see Binka 2013: 7–8), the environmental movement and its prominent representatives have not managed to react progressively to the growing environmental fatigue (Wilson 2007), pessimism or even disgust (Schellenberger and Nordhaus 2004) spreading through society. As a more appropriate strategy, Binka (2013: 8–9) suggests developing a more critical and empirically based approach – strengthening the research-based environmentalism embedded in social sciences and also focusing specifically on the process of transmission and communication of environmental issues to a broader audience.

Taking this suggestion to heart, this special issue provides nine exclusively empirical studies all researching in one way or another non-trivial relations between environmentally relevant human behaviour, stated preferences, environmental attitudes and more general environmental values and ethical positions. This issue thus brings a very diverse picture in terms of 1. different methodologies (not only qualitative or quantitative but often mixed approaches allowing for a more complex description and understanding of the studied phenomena); 2. a varying scope ranging from particular activities and related individual motivations to European-wide statistical pools covering representative samples of EU citizens; and 3. a diverse scale ranging from the specifically Czech context to comparisons with European and in one case the US milieu as well. All the presented papers should enable a more empirically-rooted environmental debate, informed in terms of the sociological, psychological, economic and ethical views of pro-environmental behaviour, its causes, forms and consequences.

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Starting at the local level, *Lucie Sovová* brings a unique study of gardening habits, real food outputs, and the production potential of allotment gardeners in Brno, Czech Republic. Using a combination of consumption diaries, interviews, observation and gardening plot categorization, she provides quantitative data on surprisingly significant amounts of food produced within the Brno urban area as well as qualitative information on the level of environmental friendliness of the gardening practices and on the motivations of the growers. Although mostly a „quiet sustainability“ practice (see Smith and Jehlička 2013) without any explicit green intentions, the impact of the existing scale of allotment gardening on local food production and food sovereignty is enormous.

The following text, by *Vojtěch Pelikán* and *Hana Librová*, remains on a personal level, looking at the motivations of activists who took part in the blockade against logging in the Šumava (Böhmerwald) National Park in 2011. The profiles and motivations of the activists expressed both during the blockade and one year later via two email surveys are interpreted using three categories of normative ethics: teleological, deontological and virtue ethics. Surprisingly enough, most of the blockaders did not primarily follow the practical purpose of protecting the trees from being cut down; more significantly they were driven by the virtue ethics of devotion to certain principles. Hence, the interpretation of the blockade as a failure (many trees *were* cut down) is too simplistic and misses the important point of the mental resilience of the blockaders.

Moving from the individual to the household level (albeit a single one), the paper of *Lukáš Kala* investigates the growing phenomenon of one-person households and focuses on the environmental aspects of the lifestyle of singles and their consumption patterns. Thanks to a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches (in-depth interviews and questionnaires) the author has, for example, revealed that environmentally-friendly changes of lifestyle can distinctly reduce the overall considerable environmental impact of solo living.

Several texts move beyond description and theory-based interpretation to include explicit questions about the possibilities of influencing people towards more pro-environmental behaviour. Community-Based Social Marketing represents one such possibility: this specific approach for fostering pro-environmental behaviour in a target population is based on identification of the barriers to such behaviour. In a quantitative study, *Jan Krajhanzl* and *Jan Skalík* present seven specific barriers to climate-friendly behaviour and their importance. In a group of current and former Greenpeace Czech Republic donors, the authors also showed that pro-environmental attitudes are limited predictors of pro-environmental behaviour.

Similarly, *Bruce Johnson* and *Jan Činčera* addressed the environmental attitude-behaviour relationship, this time in the context of a residential outdoor education programme – “The Earth keepers” – that was aimed at the environmental attitudes and behaviour of children. The mixed-method study compared one-year-after effects of this education programme on participants in the U.S. and the Czech Republic.

The following text is also similarly directed, presenting a research experiment in which a team of researchers (*Tomáš Chabada*, *Tomáš Hampejs*, *Jan Skalík*, *Eva Bujnošková* and *Jaroslav Hlinka*) tried to detect the imminent effects of emotionally presented information about environmental threat on one’s attitudes towards nature and its protection. The authors designed an experimental study in which the manipulation of environmental problem salience

played a key role. The results of the research correspond with the work of others (Binka 2013; Krajhanzl 2012) who criticize the apocalyptic approach as ineffective for communication of environmental threats to the public.

The team of *Jan Vávra, Vera Peters, Miloslav Lapka, Tony Craig* and *Eva Cudlínová* focused on behaviour related to heating in households. This rather technical issue (but with substantial impact on the environment) was analysed in a three-region comparative study that showed significant differences between Scotsmen, Germans and Czechs. The differences in room temperature, however, could be explained only partially by socio-demographic factors, housing characteristics, and environment-related attitudes.

Differences across Europe in environmental activist behaviour are examined in the article by *Audrone Telesiene* and *Aiste Balzekiene*, who utilized the International Social Survey Programme data (ISSP 2010, Environmental module). In accordance with other research findings, their calculations confirmed that the public-sphere engagement of environmental activists is lower in Central and Eastern Europe compared with Western Europe. Based on the analysis of potential factors, the authors incline to the opinion that normative factors and worldview predict the activists' behaviour better than other factors.

Using the same data source (ISSP 2010: Environment III), *Eva Kyselá* presents an empirical study of the acceptability of environmental policy instruments in the Czech Republic. The basic topics include: willingness to accept economic sacrifice, civic engagement in environmental issues, environmental concern, the preferred role of government in environmental protection and confidence in politicians. The text complements similar analyses in the Czech Republic and abroad and is a contribution to the emerging field of environmental sociology.

As is apparent, the presented articles cover a very broad range of topics, methods, subjects and scopes. Although mostly dealing with specific areas of environmentally relevant consumption, we are pleased that other realms of human behaviour such as production, activism, civic engagement and communication of environmental issues have also found their place in this volume. Still, when compared to the expectations from the original call for papers, some topics and insights are surprisingly missing, such as more economically oriented studies or e.g. studies of the influence of direct contact with nature. Thus some questions still remain, and we hope there will be another opportunity for these and other themes to be researched and discussed in the future.

For the present, we are very grateful to all the authors for their efforts in environmentally oriented research and we hope you will enjoy reading their work greatly.

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