

# Opacity by Design - Transparency of the Allotment Gardens' Market in Warsaw

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## SUMMARY

Allotment gardens (AG) are widespread across European cities. These privately managed green spaces generate positive externalities for city dwellers. In Poland, since the Covid-19 pandemic, the demand for AGs has skyrocketed. However, there is no research on the characteristics of this market and this paper is the first to fill this gap. Obtained freely from the government, individual gardeners can transfer usage rights at a 'price' that covers investments (buildings and plantations) but not on the land itself. As transactions are not directly observable, this market is opaque. This research focuses on Warsaw (Poland's largest market) and use hedonic price modeling based on online price postings to characterize the AGs' 'market value'. While the 'market value' was found to be sensitive to private investments, there is also evidence for rent-seeking on land. This calls for regulatory changes to avoid illegal exploitative pricing and to minimize private investments affecting city's social welfare.

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