

The role of responsible consumption initiatives in promoting sustainable lifestyles

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Research Goals

In-depth investigation on sustainable grassroots movements in Spain as learning spaces to foster responsible consumption and sustainable lifestyles

Understanding **bottom-down participatory** processes related to **social learning/social innovation** for **sustainable behavior** and **transitions** towards low-carbon societies

Theoretical framework

- Socio-psychological factors and contexts which condition **environmental behaviour** (Gifford & Nilsson, 2014) and **sustainable consumption** (Jackson, 2005). **Spillover effects?** (Thøgersen & Ölander, 2003; Nilsson et al, 2016).
- (Intrinsic) **motivations** to engage in sustainability (Ryan & Deci, 2000; De Groot et al, 2015).
- **Social learning** through environmental participation (García Mira, 2009; Heras, 2007) and **Transformative Social Innovación** (Dumitru, Lema-Blanco et al 2016, 2017).

Research questions

- What **motivations** do members of responsible consumer initiatives share?
- Which -personal, structural, social- **factors influence** members' **consumption patterns**?
- How do the **internal contexts of grassroots initiatives** influence members' responsible behavior?
- What **learning processes** - individual, collective, social - are enhanced/enabled by these initiatives?

Method: research phases



Phase I. **Case-study archival analysis** of primary and secondary documents of 22 local organic-food buying groups and responsible consumption cooperatives.

Phase II. **Qualitative -in-depth interview** to 25 food activists from a sample of 5 consumption cooperatives.

Fase III: **Survey** distributed to a wide sample of food activists (10-15 initiatives).

References

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Preliminary results from exploratory analysis

WHAT DO MOTIVATE PEOPLE TO JOIN THE COOPERATIVE?

- **Values, worldviews, identity & self-responsibility.**
- Searching for new spaces for **political participation** (political identity). **Autonomy**: desire of control on consumption choices.
- **Intrinsic motivations: connectedness- need of belonging** to a group of like-minded people.

FACILITATING AND PROMOTING LOW CARBON CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

- Facilitate well-informed consumption of locally-produced organic and fairtrade products.
- Promote responsible attitudes (“prosumers”) and new forms of relations (*among members, with food producers*), which motivates members’ engagement and commitment to action (volunteering).
- **Beyond “green consumption”**: Enhance low carbon patterns in mobility or waste management. Support cooperative models of renewable energy production and ethical finances.

RELATIONAL SPACES WHICH FOSTER MUTUAL LEARNING AND COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

Practitioners **support themselves and learn from each other** alternatives to be more coherent in their behaviours. Members develop **new relational and participatory skills** through new models of governance and decision making, which provide social skills and **competences for social transformation.**