

Consumption | Individual communication

IC - (21093) - COVID-19 RESHAPING PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOURS? THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES

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Background and objectives

Factors leading to pro-environmental behaviours during global crises are still relatively unknown. Some individuals are oriented for pro-environmental behaviours due to having pro-environmental values (Steg & Vlek, 2009). Also, both lay people and research imply that only after basic needs are fulfilled, people get environmentally concerned, which is at odds with recent research showing that members of socio-economic minorities are just as concerned as majorities (Pearson et al., 2018). Regardless, structural/contextual transformations can facilitate changes in habits enabling pro-environmental concerns and practices (e.g., Verplanken et al. 2008). Taking the Covid-19 pandemic as such transformation, the present work aims at understanding if environmental concerns, behaviours, and changes during the pandemic 1) are more associated to high socioeconomic status and if 2) happened in the scope of the pandemic, and how.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

Two studies were conducted during confinements. Study 1 (N=173) was a qualitative questionnaire on concerns raised by the pandemic, while Study 2's questionnaire (N=273) included quantitative questions regarding behaviors and sociodemographics, and qualitative questions regarding motives underlying concerns and changes. Data were analyzed through content analysis and multiple correspondence analysis.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

Study 1 showed that 28% of the participants presented an increased concern about environmental causes during the pandemic. Moreover, Study 2 showed that socio-economic variables discriminate on job situation and needs met, but not on the pro-environmental behaviours' dimension. Also, changes were driven by motives such as: more time available to implement desired behavioural changes (e.g., recycling; walking regularly); increased awareness of the interdependence between overconsumption and environmental problems (e.g., pollution).

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

Taken together, our findings suggest that pro-environmental concerns and behaviours are not a privilege of the wealthy and/or educated. Despite their socioeconomic status, people will not necessarily privilege the economic argument over the environmental one, as it is often implied by economic theories and translated to public policies (Dimitri, 2021).

Palavras-chave : Pro-environmental behaviour, Covid-19, Socioeconomic status, Environmental concern, Change