

Consumption | Individual communication

IC - (21174) - THE ROLE OF LOCAL SOCIAL INNOVATIONS DRIVING SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES

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Background and objectives

Green consumption has become the focus of research on climate action and the promotion of sustainable lifestyles and several authors (Kastner & Matthies, 2014) have highlighted the need to empower people, and educate and motivate consumers to be able to seek new opportunities for sustainable behaviour. The purpose of this study is to deepen the understanding the educational role that grassroots innovations play in the food domain, studying the social learning processes nurtured within these bottom-up organizations and its relevance for the adoption of new climate-relevant behaviours.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

Following a qualitative approach, a multi-method design was used, which combined three data-collection techniques: participatory observation, document analysis and 26 in-depth interviews with members and ex-members of eight local food coops located in the Galician region (Spain).

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

The results of the study show that the Galician initiatives of responsible consumption function as spaces for collective experimentation that also favor learning processes in the individual sphere and in the collective sphere of the participants, transforming the meanings, competencies and shared structures. Learning in the individual sphere corresponds to the acquisition of new knowledge and attitudes, awareness of global and complex problems, as well as political awareness, which causes the understanding of new worldviews and interpretive frameworks. The collective sphere includes learning of a cooperative, democratic and relational nature, linked to new ways of doing, relating and organizing in the economy, promoting cooperative organization models and horizontal participation formulas. These include, among others, the development of skills for democratic participation, effective communication or cooperative management.

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

The study highlights the relevance of social learning processes that emerge within conscious consumption initiatives that constitute innovative formulas of environmental participation, which foster the acquisition of new knowledge, skills and abilities as a result of collaborative action. , social interaction and joint reflection that occur in the social innovations.

Palavras-chave : social innovations, green lifestyles, food-coops, social learning, climate action