

Sustainable Community Movement Organizations

OSE Lunchtime Session

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Outline

- Political Consumerism and Sustainable Community Movement Organizations (SCMOs): the Research Project
- Research Questions and Dimensions of Analysis
- Worlds of SCMOs: A Typology
- Conclusion

The Research Project

- Special Issue of Journal of Consumer Culture (2014) devoted to «Sustainable Community Movement Organizations»
- Theoretical article (Forno-Graziano) plus empirical articles (Balsinger, Bossy, Carfagna and others, Parigi and Gong, Sage, Zamwel and others) on various types of SCMs

Broad research questions

- Are there new characterizing features in recent social movements focused on ‘sustainability’?
- Can we consider ‘sustainable community movement organizations’ linked by similar attitudes?
- If so, what are such common traits shared among various movements?

Political consumerism and SCMOs

- Political consumerism as a political action (not only individual behaviour) put forward by critical citizens through:
 - Boycotts
 - Buycotts
 - Organized socialization of consumption
- The *market* becomes the most important 'battlefield'

Political consumerism and SCMOs (II)

- **Focus:** SCMOs as organized forms of political consumerism aimed at
- **Dimensions of analysis:**
 - origins
 - repertoire of action
 - targets
 - scale of action

Research strategy

Exploratory research – based primarily on secondary literature – with a typological goal, covering the following key issues:

- **Origins** - what is the link with the previous existing social movements?
- **Repertoire of action** - what are the main actions and strategies pursued?
- **Targets** - what are the goals in terms of mobilization?
- **Scale of Action** - what are the territorial levels of SCMOs?

Origins

- In 2000s, after the difficulties experienced by the *Global Justice Movement (GJM)*, greater focus on consumption and the market as a forum for (organized) political action
- Strong cultural links with GJM, but differences regarding especially the ***repertoire of action***, **targets** and **scale of action**

Repertoire of action

- Organization and promotion of **‘alternative’ or ‘anti’-consumption strategies** (for example, gathering and communicating via internet specific information on products and production processes)
- **Policy-specific actions** (environment, urban policies and social justice issues are the most important areas of action)

Repertoire of action (II)

- **Events' organization** (most frequently not *protest* events but *promotion* events)
- In sum: limited space for contentious politics, and articulated but different attitudes towards consumption (particularly relevant dimension of analysis)

Targets

- Consumers (as 'citizens with purchasing power' which may use such power politically)
- Civil society organizations (as possible partners for action)
- Markets (as arenas for political activities)
- Institutions (as actors which may 'institutionalize' new forms of consumption)

Scale of action

- Within the 'glocal' scale of action paradigm, SCMOs focus primarily on the local level of action, although different mixes of 'local/global' scale of action may be identified
- From local communities (such as the Solidarity Purchasing Groups and AMAPs) to international trade relationships (Fair Trade)
- Second key dimension of SCMOs variation

Worlds of SCMOs

Attitude towards consumption

Scale of action

		Alter-consumerism	Anti-consumerism
Global		<i>Global boycotts Organizations</i> <i>Fair Trade Organizations</i> <i>Clean Clothes Organizations</i>	<i>Degrowth Organizations</i> <i>Simplicity Movement Organizations</i> <i>Casseurs de pub</i>
Local		<i>Farmers' markets</i> <i>CSA Organizations</i> <i>Community Food Networks</i> <i>Slow Food</i>	<i>Time Bank Organizations</i> <i>Transition Towns</i> <i>Ecovillages</i>

Conclusion

- SCMOs are original types of social movement organizations if we consider:
 - consumerist culture
 - predominant repertoires of action
 - hierarchy of targets
 - ‘glocal’ scale of action
- Future research: *impact* of SCMOs on policy process (especially at the local and urban level)