

Sustainable consumption beyond the market**Relevance and perspective of informal consumption in the context of environmental change**

Keywords: Sustainable Consumption; informal consumption; consumption patterns; behaviour change; self provision; DIY

Abstract:

This paper addresses the relevance of informal consumption for sustainable consumption. It is based on a sociological perspective on consumption, opening up the concept to individual activity beyond just attending to products generated by a system of provision. Following, it is being argued that practicing DIY and self provision affects an individual's consumption behaviour towards having less environmental impact. In the literature, informal consumption is not recognised as an ecological potential, it rather remains invisible and marginal as an economic and social practice. While there is political attention and a growing demand for environmentally sensitive products offered on the market, the various practiced forms of informal consumption and their potential effects on consumption patterns don't seem to be recognised accordingly. After framing the subject within the current scientific debate, this analysis substantiates the proposed relevance of practicing DIY for sustainable consumption and describes two dimensions of impact on consumption behaviour. In the final part, the paper brings attention to social structures and institutional arrangements hindering a proliferation of informal consumption. Concluding, I outline a research design to empirically underscore the theoretically demonstrated relevance for an advancement of sustainable consumption patterns, to provide validated knowledge for consumer policy design.