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Title:

*Consumerism versus happiness:
the case of Alternative Food Networks in Barcelona*

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ABSTRACT

Overcoming consumerism is one objective of the degrowth movement, to be achieved through a great social transformation by building alternatives. It inherently embraces material needs downscaling, self-sufficiency, voluntary simplicity and getting clear of neoliberal capitalist logics. Food cooperatives have the potential to embody such features, constituting a strategy for new social movements. In this paper, we compare the functioning of five different food cooperatives in the city of Barcelona and explain their role in the universe of degrowth proposals. Hereby, we emphasize the interrelations between consumer choice, seasonality and voluntary simplicity, as well as between the levels of participation and those of subjective well-being. We critically examine the degree of market orientation of the different cooperatives, i.e. their dependence on consumer choice, their degree of commercialization as in the commodification of the products as well as their focus on 'the local', likewise putting these features in relation with their members' experienced happiness. Lastly, we briefly introduce and analyse the organized *freeganism* (i.e. dumpster diving) movement and its participants experience of well-being in the city of Barcelona.

Keywords: food cooperatives, alternative food networks (AFNs), degrowth, subjective well-being, voluntary simplicity, neoliberalism, localism, consumer choice