

Are Alternative Food Systems Socially Sustainable? A Case Study from Finland

(based on results EU-INTERREG IIIB BERAS-project case studies in Finland)

Authors: Marko Nousiainen, Peivi Pylkkinen, Fred Saunders, Laura Seppinen, Kari Mikko Vesala

Journal of Sustainable Agriculture, Volume 33, Issue 5 July 2009 , pages 566 - 594

Abstract

This paper explores the importance of alternative food systems in delivering social sustainability to local communities. The perceptions of local and organic food systems actors regarding equity (or fairness) between the actors and viability of the local communities are examined to analyze social sustainability in Juva, Finland. The findings lend conditional support to the positive relationship between localized food systems and actors within these systems feeling empowered and influential, while also supporting other research emphasizing the limitations of farmer influence on vertical distributional channels, irrespective of production methods (i.e., organic or conventional).

Keywords: local food systems; social sustainability; community; equity; sustainable agriculture; rhetorical social psychology