Chapter 2
Social Innovation Practices in Services for Sustainable Consumption:
The Case of Turkey

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ABSTRACT

Overconsumption is fueled by the idea that the more people buy, the happier they become; however, this is not compatible with sustainability and the future of the planet. Deep concerns about the sustainability of nature and natural resources give rise to discussions of sustainable consumption, and social innovation applications may lead the way to sustainable consumption. Thus, this chapter aims to provide a picture of social innovation practices in services for sustainable consumption in an emerging economy. Although the chapter focuses mainly on contemporary social innovations, an overview of the social innovation concept and possible historical roots of social innovations from Turkish history are also provided.

INTRODUCTION

It has been claimed that capitalism has introduced a "Homo Economicus" typology by enabling a fundamental change in production systems (Tandaçgüneş, 2011; Wallerstein, 2006). The development of the mass production paradigm has led to a significant change in people's consumption patterns, and the development of technology has broadened these patterns with the introduction of mass customization and personalization paradigms. Today's consumption culture is mainly based on the idea that the more people buy, the happier they become. Global mass media, tourism, immigration, the export of popular culture, and the marketing activities of transnational firms foster continuous consumption (Ger & Belk, 1996). Personal image became the dominant logic behind the passion of consuming more, as the need to belong to a social group or the need for approval by that group became the main motivation behind consumption. These global consumption influences are more apt to produce social inequality, class polarizations, consumer frustrations, stress, materialism, and threats to personal health and the environment (Ger & Belk, 1996, p. 271) and have resulted in natural resource depletion and the spread of environmental pollution on a global scale, thus provoking discussions of sustainability. This deep concern about the sustainability of nature and natural resources gives rise to the concept of sustainable consumption. Sustainable consumption aims to offer a better and higher quality life by saving the environment for future generations and is defined as

The use of goods and services that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while minimising the use of natural resources, toxic materials and emissions of waste and pollutants over the life-cycle, so as not to jeopardise the needs of future generations. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2002, p. 2)

The action plan introduced at the 2004 G8 Sea Island Summit in the United States for sustainable development emphasised the Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle (3R) concept, which can well be applied to sustainable consumption. A promising approach to reduction of consumption is being discussed within the context of collaborative consumption, which is the peer-to-peer-based activity of obtaining, giving, or sharing access to goods and services, coordinated through community-based online services and offering an appealing alternative for consumers (Hamari, Sjöklint, & Ukkonen, 2015, p. 1). Moreover, the need for creating new ideas and ways to reduce consumption is vital for sustainability. Social innovations that aim to develop and implement new ideas (products, services, and models) to meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations (European Commission, 2013) are considered a viable path for promoting sustainable consumption. Social

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