

Abstract WEEC 150604-1666

5. (Re) emerging concepts for environmental stewardship and sustainability

Thinking the Earth whole: values and world visions in groups of immigrants in Italy

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Preferred presentation type: Oral

Introduction: The human responsibility in the planetary changes is undeniable. The emergence of new and increasingly strong environmental crisis emphasizes the need to focus on the relationships between humans and nature and the values underpinning them. Many international studies in this field were made with different ethnic groups, but there are no studies investigating whether and if the environmental values of the original cultures change once people live in a new cultural context.

Objectives: Inside this perspective, grounded on the relevance of humans' values and world vision guiding their behaviours, this research aims to investigate people's values and some aspects of humans' cultures related to environmental and sustainability issues.

Methods: The attention is focused on people from different ethnic groups immigrated to Italy. With the above aims in mind, the sample was selected, gathering people from Immigrants Associations in two areas: Milano, Parma and their provinces, where these associations are widespread and usually promote integration through their activities and initiatives. Foreign adults, from different ethnic groups, immigrated to Italy as first generation will be selected, do not forgetting that the study aim is not to obtain quantitative results on a large scale but it is an in depth analysis of individual thinking. In consideration of this framework, a mixed approach, composed by a quantitative tool and a structured interview with multiple choice answers on Lickert scale, along with a qualitative narrative interview, promoting the narration of experiences referred to the respondents' original culture, was elaborated. The tool is based on previous quantitative studies, mainly conducted among psychological, sociological, economic disciplines, based on scales aiming to investigate values, awareness, knowledge and declared pro-environmental behaviours. Several aspects, such as the level of schooling and knowledge of Italian language are taken into account to adapt the instrument to the key respondents' peculiarities.

Results: Considering that the instrument is just arranged, the interviews will begin in January 2015; so, in this contribution, the preliminary results of the research will be discussed.

Conclusion: Starting from these results, connections between individual's values and declared pro-environmental behaviours will be researched and put in relation to knowledge and awareness, to re-discover and utilize indigenous ways of knowing as a contribution to explore new and blended ways of 'thinking the Earth whole'. In addition, the results could be useful to underline and identify some education needs related to environment and sustainability from different groups of immigrants, with the aim to contribute to a wide citizen engagement in socio-ecological-environmental issues.

Disclosure of Interest: None Declared

Keywords: Environmental ethics, environmental values, pro-environmental behaviour, interviews, immigrants