

UNIVERSITÉ DU SUD TOULON - VAR  
FACULTÉ DES LETTRES ET SCIENCES HUMAINES

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Voting with your trolley

Can you really change the world just by buying certain foods?

Has the supermarket trolley dethroned the ballot box? Voter turnout in most developed countries has fallen in recent decades, but sales of organic, Fairtrade and local food - each with its own political agenda - are growing fast. Such food allows shoppers to express their political opinions, from concern for the environment to support for poor farmers, every time they buy groceries. And shoppers are jumping at the opportunity [...]

Before the advent of ethical and organic labels the usual way to express political views using food was to impose boycotts. But such labels make a political act out of consumption, rather than non-consumption - which is far more likely to produce results [...]

Food is central to the debates on the environment, development, trade and globalisation - but the potential for food choices to change the world should not be overestimated. The idea of saving the world by shopping is appealing; but tackling climate change, boosting development and reforming the global trade system will require difficult political choices. "We have to vote with our votes as well as our food dollars," says Mr Pollan.

Conventional political activity may not be as enjoyable as shopping, but it is far more likely to make a difference.

The Economist December 9<sup>th</sup> 2006