

Participatory Guarantee Systems in Spain

A case study of three PGS initiatives

Master Thesis

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List of Abbreviations

EU	European Union
FACPE	Andalusian Federation of Organic Consumers and Producers
ICS	Internal Control Systems
IFOAM	International Foundation for Organic Agriculture Movements
ISO	International Standards Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OA	Organic Agriculture
PGS	Participatory Guarantee Systems
TPC	Third Party Certification

Abstract

The increasing number of organic producers as well as consumers causes the need to guarantee the organic characteristics of products. Certification is a tool to bridge the information deficit between demand and supply about product characteristics, conforming that a product is in conformity with specified standards. Today, third party certification (TPC) is the prominent impartial conformity assessment tool for organic products. However, the suitability of TPC for small scale farmers has been criticized and alternative certification systems were developed, like e.g. Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS). PGS are quality assurance systems, in which various stakeholders are involved for ensuring quality claims made by producers. PGS initiatives have been developed worldwide, incl. in Spain.

This thesis studies three PGS initiatives in Valencia, Murcia and Granada (Spain). The research methods applied are semi-structured interviews with 6 key actors involved in PGS in Spain, which contribute to assess the status quo of PGS in the country. 29 members were interviewed with a structured interview with open questions. Aim was describing structure, functionality and challenges of these PGS initiatives.

The studied PGS initiatives have different structures, depending on their local needs. The internal regulations of the studied PGS initiatives are based on the EU Organic Farming Regulation (EC) 889/2008, but also include socio-economic criteria and IFOAM principles. Interviewees mention participation of stakeholders and efficiency of internal organization as main challenges. The missing official recognition of PGS in Spain and insufficient dissemination of PGS are also seen as challenge. Interviewed producers perceive the community built in their PGS initiatives and the added value to products given by PGS as important motivations. Although PGS has the potential for developing in Spain, it still needs more support and official recognition.

Kurzzusammenfassung

Die steigende Anzahl von Bauern sowie von Konsument, erfordert eine Garantie für die biologische Erzeugung der Produkte. Die Zertifizierung ist ein Instrument, um das Informationsdefizit zwischen Nachfrage und Angebot über Produktmerkmale zu überbrücken und zu bestätigen, dass ein Produkt mit bestimmten Standards übereinstimmt. Die Eignung dieser Zertifizierung für Kleinbauern wurde allerdings kritisiert und alternative Zertifizierungssysteme entwickelt, wie z.B. Partizipative Garantiesysteme (PGS). PGS sind Qualitätssicherungssysteme, in denen Stakeholder zur Sicherung von Qualitätsansprüchen der Produzenten beteiligt sind. PGS-Initiativen wurden weltweit entwickelt, inkl. in Spanien.

Diese Arbeit untersucht drei PGS-Initiativen in Spanien. Die angewandten Forschungsmethoden sind halbstrukturierte Interviews mit sechs Hauptakteuren, die an PGS in Spanien beteiligt sind und die dazu beitragen, den Status quo von PGS im Land zu beurteilen. 29 Mitglieder wurden mit einem strukturierten Interview mit offenen Fragen interviewt. Ziel war es, Struktur, Funktionalität und Herausforderungen dieser PGS-Initiativen zu beschreiben.

Die untersuchten PGS-Initiativen haben je nach den lokalen Bedürfnissen unterschiedliche Strukturen. Die Regelungen der untersuchten PGS-Initiativen basieren auf der EU-Verordnung für Ökologische Landwirtschaft (EG) 889/2008, umfassen aber auch sozioökonomische Kriterien und IFOAM-Grundsätze. Interviewpartner erwähnen die Beteiligung der Stakeholder und die Effizienz der internen Organisation als zentrale Herausforderungen. Die fehlende offizielle Anerkennung von PGS in Spanien und die unzureichende Verbreitung von PGS werden auch als Herausforderung gesehen.

Interviewte Produzenten betrachten die Gemeinschaft in ihren PGS-Initiativen und den Mehrwert für ihre Produkte durch PGS als wichtige Motivationen. Obwohl PGS das Potenzial für Entwicklung in Spanien hat, braucht es noch Unterstützung und offizielle Anerkennung.

Table of Contents

1.	State of the art.....	9
1.1.	Organic certification.....	9
1.2.	Participatory Guarantee Systems	11
1.3.	Participatory Guarantee Systems in the Spanish context	14
2.	Research aims	17
2.1.	Problem description.....	17
2.2.	Aim	17
2.3.	Research questions	17
3.	Methods	19
3.1.	Study areas.....	19
3.2.	Interviews with key actors	22
3.3.	Structured interviews with open questions.....	23
3.4.	Data collection	23
3.5.	Data analysis	24
4.	Results	25
4.1.	Organisation of the studied PGS initiatives	25
4.2.	Internal regulation of the studied PGS initiatives	29
4.3.	Challenges perceived by the members of the studied PGS initiatives.....	43
4.4.	Personal motivations of the members of the studied PGS initiatives	50
5.	Discussion	56
5.1.	Organization of the studied-PGS initiatives	56
5.2.	Internal regulation	57
5.3.	Challenges and problems.....	58
5.4.	Personal motivations	59
6.	Conclusion	61
7.	Bibliography.....	62

8.	List of figures.....	66
9.	List of tables.....	66
10.	List of illustrations.....	67
11.	Appendix.....	68

1. Introduction

In the recent decades, organic agriculture has evolved together with the development of regulations, support programs and subsidies (Coiduras Sánchez et al., 2006). At a European level, organic agriculture is regulated by the Council Regulation No. 834/2007 and the Commission Regulation No. 889/2008 and No. 1235/2008 (European-Commission, n.d.). Based on these regulations a control and certification system for organic production was developed. Currently, third party certification (TPC) is the most common system used for organic certification (Cuéllar Padilla, 2009).

TPC assesses and verifies a company's compliance with the organic standards. TPC bodies are independent organizations that are perceived as objective and impartial (Tanner, 2000, Deaton, 2004). The EU regulation includes some of the ethical principles of organic agriculture defined by IFOAM (International Foundation for Organic Agriculture Movements), but it leaves out some of those principles. Besides, TPC has been criticized for having high costs for farmers, not being locally adapted, being difficult to reach by small producers and being too bureaucratized (Tanner, 2000, Meirelles, 2003, Getz and Screck, 2006, Jahn et al., 2005, Cuéllar Padilla, 2008, Albersmeier et al., 2009, Padel et al., 2009, Velleda Caldas et al., 2014, Coscarello and Rodríguez-Labajos, 2015).

Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) are discussed as an alternative to TPC. PGS provide an organic guarantee based on the participation of producers together with other actors. They are claimed to be based on participation, trust, social networks and knowledge exchange. Furthermore PGS seem to adapt to the local context and to empower small producers (Fonseca, 2004, Källander, 2008, Coiduras Sánchez et al., 2006, Cuéllar Padilla, 2008).

Due to the disconformity with the current TPC in Europe, the first PGS initiatives in Spain were initiated in the year 2008 (Cuéllar Padilla, 2008). Although these PGS initiatives do not exist anymore, they served as the basis for the development of other PGS initiatives in Spain (Cuéllar Padilla, 2011, De la Cruz, 2015). Nowadays there are several PGS initiatives in Spain and since 2015 they have been trying to create a network among them. Unfortunately there are only few studies on PGS in Spain and the movement seems to be quite unknown in the country. Thus, the objective of this project is to provide information about three PGS initiatives in the south-east of Spain in order to understand how they work, what the motivations of the members are and the challenges and benefits of PGS in Spain.

Personal Interest

In 2014 I wrote a paper about PGS in Andalusia (Spain) for the course „Global, Private and Participatory Organic Guarantee Systems“. That was the first time I heard about this kind of guarantee system. At first I believed these initiatives were not to be found in Europe, but after some research I found the PHD Thesis of Cuéllar Padilla (2008) about PGS in Andalusia. It really impressed me how they could initiate the development of three different PGS initiatives in Andalusia and how they developed.

There are many studies about PGS in countries of Africa, Asia or Latin America, but only a few in Europe. And, although it is in general a very interesting topic, the European context is very different to the others and I am particularly interested as it is where I live and come from. So, I decided to write my master thesis about this topic in order to understand how PGS initiatives work in Spain and if they really are a viable alternative to TPC in a European country.

1. State of the art

1.1. Organic certification

In Europe, organic agriculture (OA) was originated in the 1920's and 30's by farmer's groups. One important pioneer of OA at that time was the Austrian Rudolf Steiner, who gave one of the first courses on OA (Vogl et al., 2005, Paull, 2011). But it was not until the 1930's and 40's that farmer's groups developed the first OA movements in most industrial countries in response to the industrialization and intensification of agriculture (Lotter, 2003, Vogl et al., 2005).

In the 1970's, groups of organic farmers started organizing themselves in order to develop their own private organic standards, which were controlled by the associations farmers belonged to. At the end of the 80s these associations lost their importance in certifying their members as governments started regulating OA (Vogl et al., 2005). Certification was viewed as a necessity in a growing market for improving the efficiency of the market by creating a 'common language' (Hatanaka et al., 2005). Food labels gave information to consumers about the organic legal requirements, as organic attributes cannot be distinguish by simply looking at the product (Padel, 2010, Velleda Caldas et al., 2014).

In the European Union (Padilla Bravo et al.) organic farming was first regulated in 1991 aiming to protect OA by ensuring fair competition between producers and transparency in the production system (Padel, 2010). The Regulation (EEC) 2092/91 set the rules for labeling a product as 'organic', 'biological' or 'ecological' (Padel et al., 2009). These terms are protected by the EU Regulation (Padel, 2010). Although the EU Regulation establishes the minimum criteria for organic certification, the member states of the EU may establish stricter rules that are more detailed in some production areas (Padel et al., 2009). Currently, OA in the EU is regulated by the Council Regulation (EC) No. 834/2007 and the Commission Regulation (EC) No. 889/2008 and No. 1235/2008 (European-Commission, n.d.). The inspection and certification in the organic sector can be done by private or public institutions, being private ones the most popular in the European member states (Padilla Bravo et al., 2013).

Certification is a process through which written assurance confirms that a product, process or service conforms to specified requirements (Corsin et al., 2007). In the case of OA, certification is used to guarantee marketing claims for organic quality attributes (Jahn et al., 2005). A key characteristic of a certification system is that impartial bodies do the inspections according to the standards developed by external organizations (Albersmeier et al., 2009). Nowadays TPC is the prominent assessment system (Hatanaka et al., 2005). According to Deaton (2004, p. 615), third-party certifiers are "*external institutions that assess, evaluate and certify quality claims*". TPC bodies are independent and therefore are perceived as objective and transparent (Tanner, 2000, Deaton, 2004, Hatanaka et al., 2005).

Some of the values of TPC are (Tanner, 2000, p.415): reduced risk; strengthened due diligence defense; greater confidence in regulatory compliance; competitive advantage; improved access to markets; national/international acceptance; reduced costs and improved profitability; and more effective management. The importance of TPC is increasing in the international quality food markets due to the need of consumers for clear and reliable signals about the quality and safety of foods (Anders et al., 2010). Third-party certifiers have to prove their capability to carry out inspection through an accreditation (Figure 1). This accreditation is based on the ISO/IEC 17065:2012 standards (Vogl and Axmann, 2016).

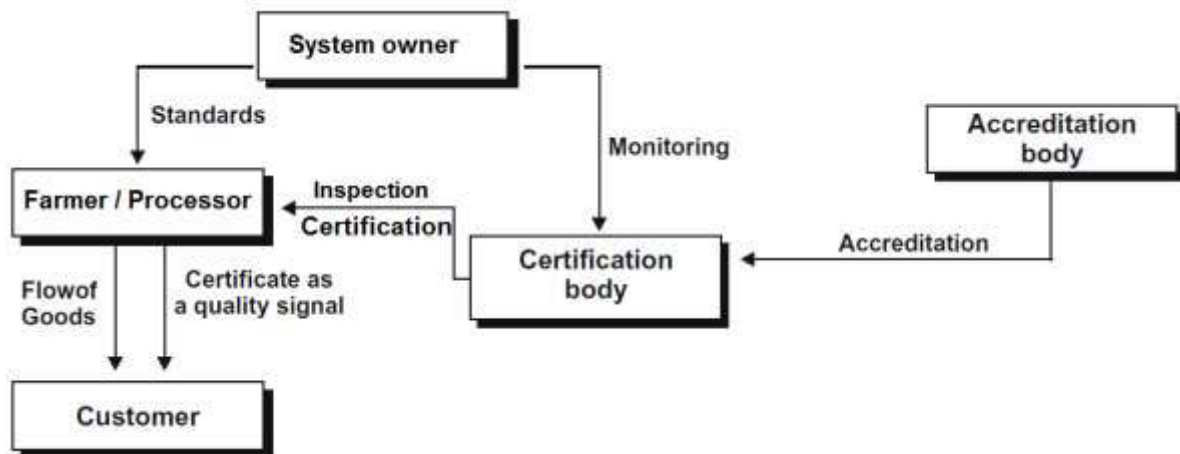


Figure 1: Organization structure of TPC (adapted from Albersmeier et al. (2009))

In 1972, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) was founded by EU and US leaders of the OA movements due to the need for communication and information exchange among different countries (Klein and Winickoff, 2011). Although organic producers cannot be perceived to have identical beliefs, IFOAM developed the core value basis of OA: health, ecology, fairness and care (Padel et al., 2009). These values were accepted in the EU and were even used as a base to define organic crop production in the EU organic policy (Klein and Winickoff, 2011). Nevertheless Padel et al. (2009, p. 248) argue that these values are not well represented in the EU standards. The rules usually focus on areas easy to examine and those values more difficult to evaluate are not included (Padel et al., 2009). Moreover, it might not always be clear what procedures the TPC bodies are implementing and the analysis of socio-economic characteristics are not easy to monitor by a third party certifier and therefore not included in OA certification (Velleda Caldas et al., 2014, Albersmeier et al., 2009). Besides, smallholder producers have to fulfil the same standards as big entrepreneurs who cultivate several hectares or focus on export (Coscarello and Rodríguez-Labajos, 2015). Other disadvantages of TPC seem to be: the costs for the farmers; over-price products for consumers; no adaptation to the local circumstances; difficulty to reach by small holders; bureaucratization of agriculture; simplification of the production processes, among others (Table 1) (Tanner, 2000, Velleda Caldas et al., 2014, Albersmeier et al., 2009, Meirelles, 2003, Getz and Screck, 2006, Jahn et al., 2005). Certification systems seem also to be vulnerable to opportunistic behavior as the producer can choose its own auditor and so misleading incentives may occur (Jahn et al., 2005).

Table 1: Advantages and disadvantages of TPC as discussed by: Tanner (2000), Deaton (2004), Albersmeier et al. (2009), Padel (2010), Velleda Caldas et al. (2014), Jahn et al. (2005), Getz and Screck (2006), and Meirelles (2003)

Advantages TPC	Disadvantages TPC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consistency on application and interpretation of rules - Impartiality - Good knowledge (experts) - Quick respond to adversities - Common national and international signals - Access to markets, generating higher prices - Able to control the whole supply chain - Increase of information on specific attributes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remote from the local context - Bureaucracy - Costs (for producers and consumers) - Slow to react to local problems - Homogenization of OA - Exclusion of values, principles and ethics of OA - Information asymmetry - No empowerment of producers - Certification methodology: suspecting the farmers (discomfort) - Competition between certification bodies - Many labels – Confusion of consumers - No flexibility

It is important to develop OA and its standards in a respectful and coherent way to the traditional ecosystems, cultural diversity and technological knowledge of farmers aiming participation, respect and democracy (Vogl et al., 2005, Padel et al., 2009). In this context alternative certification systems appeared. Smallholders in the so-called ‘developing countries’ developed producer group structures to certify themselves instead of depending on inspectors from European control bodies (Padel et al., 2009). Two examples of these alternative certification systems are Internal Control Systems (ICS), defined by the IFOAM as *“part of a documented quality assurance system that allows an external certification body to delegate the periodic inspection of individual group members to an identified body or unit within the certified operator”*; and Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS). The main difference between the two systems is that in the ICS there is an external full control of the group that evaluates the efficiency of the ICS (Padel et al., 2009).

1.2. Participatory Guarantee Systems

It was in 2004 when the term Participatory Guarantee Systems was first used in a global level. The PGS initiatives were presented and analyzed during a workshop organized by the Latin American Organic Agriculture Movement (MAELA), IFOAM and the Centro Ecológico in Torres, Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil) (Källander, 2008). As a result of this workshop, the concept of PGS was developed and its general characteristics of PGS were described (Källander, 2008). PGS share a common goal with the TPC bodies, which is providing a reliable organic guarantee to the consumers. The difference lies on the approach and other goals (Table 2). Moreover, the main goal of the PGS is not the certification itself but the improvement of the production and the relationship between producers and consumers. Thus, the PGS create trust between producers and consumers. The PGS, as its name already points out, is based on the participation of producers and consumers (IFOAM, 2007). They work as a network of people and organizations involved in the production, distribution and consumption of the products. All the actors of the system share the responsibilities of the guarantee process (Fonseca, 2004).

May (2008) defines PGS as: *“quality assurance initiatives that are locally relevant, emphasize the participation of stakeholders, including producers and consumers and operate outside the frame of third party certification”*. Furthermore, PGS are built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange (IFOAM, 2008). This certification seems to be culturally appropriate, have less

paper work load than TPC and to be linked to local and alternative commercialization channels (Table 2) (IFOAM, 2007, Padel et al., 2009, May, 2008). Alternative commercialization channels are considered as those based on the re-connection and close communication between producer and consumer, that build new ways of relations and governance of the network of actors (Sánchez Hernández, 2009). PGS are also appropriate for small producers due to the participatory and horizontal structure that allows more suitable and less costly systems of certification (Padel et al., 2009).

Table 2: Main differences between Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) and Third Party Certification (TPC). Adapted from De la Cruz (2015, p.75)

Element	PGS	TPC
Market orientation	Domestic market Regional and local markets	Domestic and export markets
Commercialization channels	Proximity channels	Long distribution channels Export Retail distribution Specialized shops
Organic market function	Make visible and facilitate the access of small producers to local markets Give value to local market strategies Participation of consumers	Increase the size of the global market and the knowledge about organic products
Consumer's profile	Engaged and involved in changing the current food system	Health and environmental motivation. Low engagement in changing the current food system
Producer's profile	Small producers Diversified production linked to the local/regional culture	Medium to big producer or entrepreneur linked to the national or global agribusiness Monocultures
Involvement in the system	Producer participates in the system	Producer obtains a certification
Legal recognition	Recognized in some southern countries. Not recognized in northern countries. The products cannot be referred to as 'organic'	Worldwide recognition
Impact in the global market	Increase in the number of small producers, diversity of products and local/regional markets Strengthening of local organizations and structures	Further increase of the certified area than the number of certified producers (concentration of certification) Increase in sales through conventional commercialization channels

The basic elements of a PGS according to the PGS guidelines developed by IFOAM are (May, 2008):

- **Participation:** producers, consumers, retailers, traders and other stakeholders like NGOs are involved from the initial design of the system. Moreover, stakeholders are involved in an ongoing learning process and have a collective responsibility for ensuring the organic reliability of the products. (In some documents the learning process can be found as an own basic element, (IFOAM, 2007)).
- **A shared vision:** stakeholders have to support the main principles of the PGS. These principles guide not only the production of the products but also the functioning of the system itself.

- Transparency: everyone one has a basic understanding of how the system works or has a way to find it out. Thus, all stakeholders know the standards, the guarantee process and how decisions are made.
- Trust: the PGS is founded on this element. Producers can be trusted and the system is just an expression and confirmation of this trust. The producers have the compromise of protecting nature and consumers' health.
- Horizontally: it is a non-hierarchical system. There is a democratic structure, decisions are taken in a transparent way and the members share and rotate responsibilities.

In addition, the following key features of a PGS should guide the system to put the key elements into practice (IFOAM, 2007):

- Norms conceived by the stakeholders democratically and in a participatory procedure. These norms are developed based on the already established definition of an organic product and they should stimulate the creativity of the producers.
- Grassroots organization: this certification should be the result of a social dynamic where all stakeholders are active.
- Is appropriate to smallholder agriculture: the participation and horizontality of the system allow more adequate and less costly mechanisms.
- Principles and values: promote organic agriculture and increase the wellbeing of the producers' families.
- Documented management systems and procedures: a minimum documentation is needed of showing the producer's compromise and ecological integrity.
- Mechanisms to verify farmer's compliance: they should promote participation, organization and allow a learning process for all stakeholders.
- Mechanisms for supporting farmers: e.g. field advisors, newsletters, websites, farm visits, etc.
- Should have a bottom-line document, e.g. a farmer's pledge, in which they agree with established norms.
- Seals or labels that confirm the organic status of a product.
- Clear and previously defined consequences for those not fulfilling the norms.

PGS seem to help producers improving their production, achieving a political independence, improving their life conditions and establishing personal relations with consumers and other producers. A PGS should reflect a community's capacity to prove trust through the implementation of diverse social and cultural control instruments in order to provide information to guarantee the integrity of their organic farmers (Källander, 2008).

PGS are already functioning in Latin America, USA, India, New Zealand, South and East Africa and Europe (May, 2008, Katto-Andrighetto, 2013). Even though local conditions and cultural contexts are different, all PGS initiatives appear to share the basic elements and principles mentioned before and also to be similarly organized (Torremocha, 2012). According to Bouagnimbeck (2014) a typical PGS initiative includes producers, consumers and other stakeholders like NGOs, university members or government representatives. The producers are organized in local groups and take care that everyone follows the standards defined by the PGS. Every year an inspection group formed by different stakeholders visits the farm of each producer. The results of the visit are compiled in a report that the farmer group uses to take decisions on the (non-) compliance of the producer with the rules. The certification decisions are then transferred to a higher level, like a regional or national council representing PGS stakeholders (Figure 2).

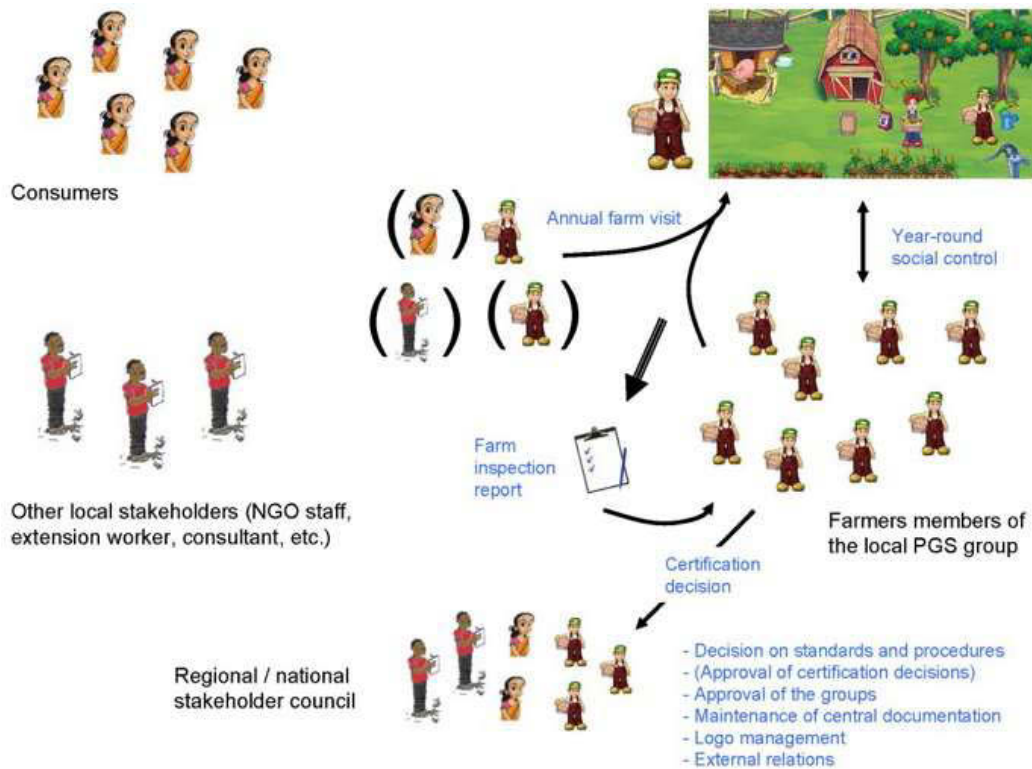


Figure 2: Diagram of the organization of a typical PGS initiative (Bouagnimbeck, 2014)

There are no objective reasons why PGS initiatives (as well as other group certification systems) should be limited to smallholder producers in ‘developing countries’ and not be allowed in Europe. PGS systems could be a way to minimize certification costs for European farmers, especially those who market directly to consumers (Padel et al., 2009).

1.3. Participatory Guarantee Systems in the Spanish context

The first pioneers of the organic agriculture in Spain appeared in the 50’s. Nonetheless it was not until the 80s that farmers founded the first producer’s organizations for organic agriculture in the country. In 1988, the name “Organic Agriculture” became official in Spain through the royal decree 759/1988 and the Regulation Council for the Organic Agriculture (Consejo Regulador de la Agricultura Ecológica, CRAE) was created (Cuéllar Padilla, 2008). Since then, there has been a continuous development of this sector, in both number of farmers and cultivated land (Figure 3). Nowadays, Spain is the 5th country in the world and the 1st in the EU according to the surface dedicated to OA. But the domestic organic market has not developed in line with the existing productive potential. Around half of the national organic production is destined for export (López Salcedo, 2015).

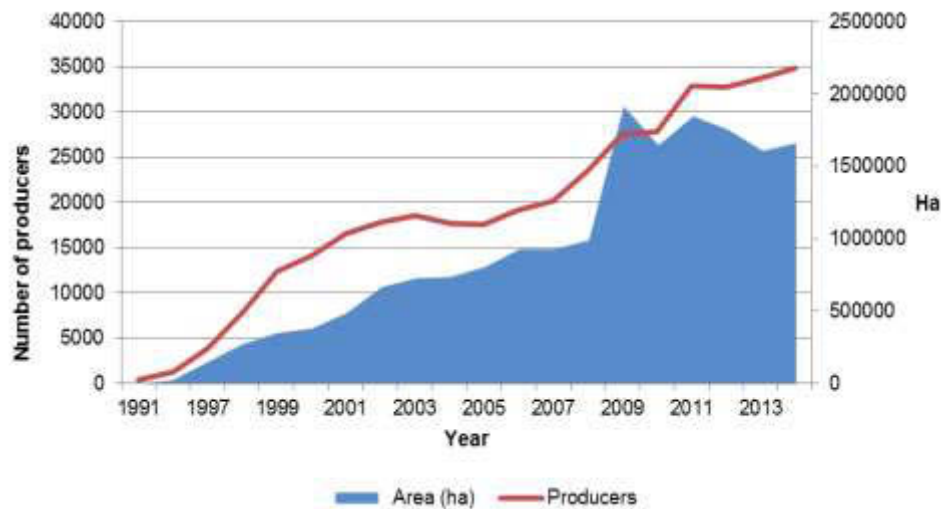


Figure 3: Evolution of organic agriculture in Spain between 1991 and 2014 (López Cifuentes, 2016, data from Subdirección General de Calidad Diferenciada y Agricultura Ecológica (2015))

In 1993 the Spanish state transferred the powers in agriculture to the seventeen Autonomous Communities and each of them created its own control bodies for OA dependent to the public administration (Calafat, 2010). All control bodies were public until 2002 that the first private certification body was authorized in Spain. The Autonomous Community of Andalusia was the first one implementing private companies for the certification process (Cuéllar Padilla, 2009). Currently, there are three Spanish Autonomous Communities certifying through private certification bodies: Andalusia, Castilla-La Mancha and Aragón (Eco-Agricultor, n.d.). This privatization might create competitiveness in the private economic sector and so the quality of the certification might be questioned (Dankers, 2003).

Cuéllar Padilla (2008) argues that TPC might cause the loss of associations and networks that were to be found at the beginning of the organic movement in Spain. Moreover, certification seems to lose its connection to the particular local context, as it does not appear to take socio-political aspects of agriculture into account (Cuéllar Padilla and Torremocha, 2008). As a consequence, a concentration of the properties in this sector has been created and so the bigger farms are those been certified, while the small and medium size ones have been left aside. Small and medium size farmers (farms with less than 10 ha) are not able to compete in the organic market and, in Andalusia for example, they represent 95% of all farmers (Boza, 2010, Cuéllar Padilla and Calle Collado, 2011).

In this context, producers' groups of Andalusia warned the general director of organic farming at that time about the need of examining the organic TPC. Producers complained about their lack of control over the market processes, the difficulties selling their products and expressed their disconformity with the organic TPC they needed in order to sell their products as organic (Cuéllar Padilla, 2009, Cuéllar Padilla and Calle Collado, 2011, Boza, 2010). The Spanish Directorate-General for Organic Agriculture considered these complains and decided to try to create PGS initiatives in the communities the producers came from. Thus, in 2005, this initiative was started in the communities of: Serranía de Ronda (Málaga), Sierra de Segura (Jaén) and Castril and Castilléjar (Granadapedia). Together with the Directorate-General for Organic Agriculture, the Institute of Sociology and Peasant Studies of the University of Córdoba and the Association "Ecologistas en Acción", these communities created their own PGS initiatives, which started functioning in the year 2008 (Cuéllar Padilla, 2008).

These three PGS initiatives were the first ones created in Spain. The community in Málaga did not continue with the establishment of the PGS due to a lack of believe in the project (Cuéllar Padilla,

2008). The other two PGS initiatives continued until the general director was replaced. After his replacement, the project lost public support and could not continue working on the legalization of PGS in Spain. As a consequence, the activity of the PGS initiatives in Jaén and Granada decreased until they disappeared (Cuéllar Padilla, 2011). However, these PGS initiatives were embedded in the thought and actions of groups and institutions that study perform and/or develop OA. Moreover, they served as the basis and incitement for the development of following PGS initiatives in Spain (De la Cruz, 2015).

Currently, there are PGS initiatives working in different regions of Spain (Figure 4). There might be more than the ones showed in figure 4 as it is an active movement in Spain in constant change. There are also other groups interested on forming new PGS initiatives in other parts of Spain (for example, Almería and Cuenca). In November 2015 took place the first meeting of the Spanish PGS in Valencia, where some of the PGS and other groups related to the movement got together to share, exchange and start creating a PGS network in Spain. A second meeting was organized in Galicia in June 2016.



Figure 4: Map of Spain with the different Autonomous Communities (grey dotted lines). Drops: established PGS initiatives in Spain in the year of research (2016); in red letters: studied PGS initiatives: Ecollaures, Vecinos Campesinos and Ecovalle (López Cifuentes, 2016)

2. Research aims

2.1. Problem description

At the national and European levels there are more and more voices asking for a space for alternative production and commercialization systems based on social, economic and agro-ecological standards, like for example PGS (Cuéllar Padilla and Torremocha, 2008). However, the maximum external difficulty remains to be that PGS are not legally recognized in Europe. In countries like Spain, where the organic market is legally regulated, the problem appears when one wants to access far national or international markets. Due to the lack of legalization of the PGS, farmers organized in a PGS are not allowed to use in their logos or descriptions with the words that are protected by the law: ecological, biological, organic and derivate names. As a consequence, they cannot access public grants, nor sell their products as organic (Cuéllar Padilla, 2008, Källander, 2008).

Besides the administrative and political problems, there are other challenges these PGS initiatives still have to overcome or improve. An external difficulty to the systems themselves is the lack of trust in this kind of system because it does not follow the establish TPC system. The dissemination of the benefits and safety of PGS is difficult (Cuéllar Padilla, 2008).

There are not only external problems in these alternative systems. Time constraints seems to be a problem as PGS initiatives are based on voluntary work. Time constraints is also a problem for consumers and other actors. They have to be willing to participate and engage themselves in the PGS initiatives (Cuéllar Padilla, 2008; Cuéllar Padilla & Calle Collado, 2011). Communication is another problem every kind of organization seems to face. All actors have to learn how to communicate mistakes or disagreements to other members. Teamwork is therefore important in order to overcome these problems. In relation to this point, taking decisions might also be problematic in the initiative. The agreement on the requirements or the criteria of the inspections can be hard. Moreover, in the first three PGS initiatives of Andalusia, some participants complained because they did not feel qualified for evaluating the producers. This factor together with the lack of trust among the participants themselves, were the reasons why the PGS initiative initiated in Malaga could not be established at the end (Cuéllar Padilla, 2008).

2.2. Aim

The purpose of this project is to obtain a better understanding on how the Spanish PGS initiatives work and what the ideas, believes and challenges are behind them. Better understanding of this topic is essential to develop more PGS initiatives, improve those already existing and eventually create a national network of PGS.

2.3. Research questions

Based on the main findings from prior research, research questions and associated hypotheses for investigation have been formulated in this section.

RQ1: How are the three studied PGS initiatives organized?

RQ1.1. Who are the different actors of the studied PGS initiatives and how can they be characterized?

Attributes:

Producers: Sex, age, occupation, studies, size of the farm, location of the farm, etc.

Consumers: Sex, age, occupation, studies, daily consumption in the PGS, etc.

NGOs, other organizations: size (number of workers), age, field of interest etc.

RQ1.2. How are the actors linked to each other, i.e. what is the structure of the PGS?

RQ1.3. What are the functions of the different actors?

RQ2: How are the studied PGS initiatives internally regulated?

Each PGS has its internal rules and principles it is based on. Every member should know, agree on and follow those rules (May, 2008). The internal regulation is the basis of the PGS functioning and therefore important for this study.

RQ 2.1 How are standards elaborated and by whom?

RQ 2.2 What is the content of these standards?

RQ 2.3 How are the principles and characteristics for PGS issued by IFOAM implemented in the PGS of the case study?

RQ 2.3.1 With which IFOAM principles do the actors have “a problem”, i.e. they are not implemented?

RQ 2.3.2 Which IFOAM principles seem to be implemented?

RQ 2.4 Who can become a member of each PGS initiatives and which rights and obligations do the members have?

RQ 2.5 What kind of procedures does the PGS have to build confidence?

RQ 2.6 What kind of products are certified?

RQ 2.7 Do the PGSs have their own labels? If so:

RQ 2.7.1 What are the regulations for the use of the label?

RQ 2.7.2 How do the labels look like?

RQ 2.8 How do farmers sell their products?

RQ3: What internal challenges and benefits do members of the studied PGS initiatives perceive?

RQ4: What motivations and underlying beliefs towards participatory guarantee do stakeholders of the studied PGS initiatives have?

3. Methods

The first step of this research was a literature and web review that gave an overview on the history and current status of organic farming, particularly in Spain, and on participatory guarantee systems (PGS) as an alternative to third party certification (TPC). With this information and the support of a local expert, three research initiatives were selected.

This was followed by an exploratory research through qualitative interviews with key actors, in order to get an overall perspective of the Spanish PGS in the south of the country and draw a detailed picture of the system's status quo. Then, a structured interview with open questions was designed, checked and used with the members of the studied PGS initiatives. Furthermore, interviews were complemented with documents, a field diary and participant observation.

3.1. Study areas

The three studied PGS initiatives were chosen mainly based on their proximity and characteristics. The three studied PGS initiatives are well-established and initial information could be found in internet. Their differences in size, structure complexity and actors also influenced the choice.

The studied PGS initiatives are located in the south-east of Spain in the regions of Valencia (PGS Ecollaures), Murcia (PGS Vecinos Campesinos) and Granada (PGS Ecovalle) (Figure 5). The projects participating in Ecollaures are mainly situated in the literally translated 'vegetable garden area of Valencia' (L'Horta de València in the autochthonous Valenciano). In the case of Vecinos Campesinos, the projects are distributed all over the region of Murcia. Ecovalles projects are located in a valley approximately 30km from the city of Granada (Valle de Lecrín).



Figure 5: Map of the south-east of Spain. In red: areas where the projects belonging to each studied PGS initiative are located (from right to left: L'Horta de València (Ecollaures), region of Murcia (Vecinos Campesinos) and Valle de Lecrín (Ecovalle)) (López Cifuentes, 2016, based on Google Maps)

The main demographic difference between the three areas is the population density. In L'Horta de València population density is much higher than in the other two regions. This is not only due to the difference in population but because the area covered by the Vecinos Campesinos is significantly

bigger and the areas of Ecollaures and Ecovalle. Besides, the climate is quite similar between Murcia and L'Horta de València, while in Valle de Lecrín temperatures are generally lower, especially in the winter, and there is more precipitation (Granadapedia, n.d.) (Table 3).

Table 3: Basic demographic characteristics of the areas where the members of the studied PGS initiatives are located (INE, 2016, CREM, n.d., Hidalgo Sánchez et al., 2015, Granadapedia, n.d.)

	L'Horta de València	Region of Murcia	Valle de Lecrín
Population (n° of inhabitants)	1,541,047	1,467,288	22,800
Surface	669 km ²	11,313 km ²	461.3 km ²
Population density	2303.5 inhabitants/km ²	129.7 inhabitants/km ²	49.4 inhabitants/km ²
Average Annual Temperature	19.5 °C	20 °C	15°C
Average Rainfall	231.9 l/m ²	236.5 l/m ²	550l/m ²

The city of Valencia has been characterized for millennia by its vegetables gardens around the city (L'Horta in the autochthonous Valenciano) (Illustration 1). So important is L'Horta in Valencia that its agrarian iconography influences the local folklore, literature, regionalist politics and the built city itself. In 2001 even emerged the Popular Legislative Initiative of 'Per L'Horta' in order to protect the landscape of L'Horta from the growing of the city (Prytherch, 2009). Similarly, the region of Murcia has a long tradition in vegetable gardens that has influenced the culture and tradition of the region (Pajarón, 2003). In contrast, the Valle de Lecrín is a rural area where the new generations have lost their interest in agriculture. Moreover, the agriculture in the Valle de Lecrín is more bucolic and recreational than productive. People tend to focus more on trees than vegetables and generally prefer to use the land for rural tourism than agriculture (De la Cruz, 2015).



Illustration 1: Vegetable production from a producer of Ecollaures. In the background: Village of Picanya, L'Horta de València (López Cifuentes, 2016)

The three studied PGS initiatives involve different stakeholders and evaluate the farms and their management methods. In the case of the PGS Ecollaures, the members wanted to start their own certification system in order to develop their own standards and values, which go beyond the European regulation for OA in topics like for example biodiversity and socio-economics. At first they were a group of producers who created an association in order to form a network of producers with

the same values, goals and production philosophy. In 2010, this group of producers began to develop a certification system that they called 'Participatory Social Certification' (Certificación Social Participativa, CSP). Then, they realized that this kind of certification already existed in Latin America, due to the experience of some members of Ecollaures with Brazil and Argentina, and that it already had a name: PGS. In this process of development of the PGS they asked for help to different organizations that then joined the PGS. They also looked for the consumers' support and got in contact with one FoodCoop¹ that it has been present since the early stages of the PGS. To help producers connect with consumers and later on improve their participation and communication skills during the assemblies, Ecollaures had the help of a student of the University of Valencia, first for his master thesis and then for his PhD thesis.

Vecinos Campesinos was founded in 2011. At the beginning it was a group of consumers with some producers that started to coordinate and distribute their crops. But the group of consumers did not buy all the production and so producers started to meet separate from consumers (with only one consumers group). These producers were not interested on TPC and so after some meetings and based on a master thesis and the internal regulation of Ecovalle, they created the PGS Vecinos Campesinos.

Ecovalle started in 2008 as a group of people from their rural environment, who shared an interest on organic and family agriculture. They organized workshops, specialized formation and other activities related to this topic (Ecovalle, n.d.). In 2010 they were around 12 young people of in average 27 years old who wanted to live from agriculture. Most of them had a university degree linked to agriculture but had no practical experience. Nonetheless they shared an ideology, agro-ecological vision and they were really critic with TPC (De la Cruz, 2015). In 2010 they started working on the development of their PGS initiative with the help of a PhD student of the University of Córdoba. Ecovalle is both a production cooperative and a PGS initiative. For becoming a member of the PGS one has to be a member of the cooperative, but if a producer is a member of the cooperative there is no obligation to join the PGS. Besides, after the research in Ecovalle for this project (May, 2016), the association fused together with 'el vergel de la vega', another cooperative in the Valle de Lecrín. After this union the cooperative changed the name to 'Valle y Vega', but the PGS is still called Ecovalle and is independent from the cooperative.

Also in 2010, an Andalusian PGS was developed: the PGS FACPE (Andalusian Federation of Organic Consumers and Producers). Ecovalle, among other organizations, was part of the FACPE and due to the different guarantee systems implemented by the different groups, they saw the need to develop common standards for the members of the FACPE. Because of the knowledge on some Latin American experiences, the first PGS in Andalusia and the fact that some groups were starting their own PGS initiative, the members of the initiatives belonging to FACPE decided to develop a common PGS (De la Cruz, 2015). The PGS FACPE established some basic standards developed by its members and a permanent coordination of all the PGS initiatives involved. There are currently four PGS initiatives in the FACPE (the ones in the region of Andalusia in Figure 4: La Ortiga, La Borraja, El Encinar and Ecovalle). Some members of these PGS initiatives form the coordination team of the PGS FACPE and collect all the information and documents from them. The PGS initiatives belonging to the PGS FACPE must fulfil its basic standards, share all the visit guides of their producers, make one soil analysis for new producers and attend the annual assembly.

¹ A FoodCoop (Food Cooperation) is an association of consumers that are self-organised and purchase organic and local products SENSE.LAB, E. V. 2009. *Fair, bio, selbstbestimmt: Das Handbuch zur Gründung einer Food-Coop*, Germany, Books on Demand GmbH.(Sense.Lab, E.V., 2009)

The 'Visit Guide' and 'Internal Rules' are the main documents of the three studied PGS initiatives (Agroicultura, 2015, Vecinos-Campesinos, n.d., Ecovalle, n.d.). These basic documents are in continuous development. The visit guide allows the exchange of knowledge, monitoring of the farms and proposal for improvements. The document "Internal Rules" is what the IFOAM (2007) defines as the norms conceived by the stakeholders democratically and in a participatory procedure. These norms are developed based on the already established definition of an organic product and they should stimulate the creativity of the producers.

3.2. Interviews with key actors

Following Miles and Huberman (1994) this project alternates qualitative and quantitative data collection, beginning with an exploratory fieldwork, that led to the development of a structured interview with open questions. The exploratory fieldwork was done through semi-structured qualitative interviews with key actors. The semi-structured interview guide was the same for all key actors and was developed directly in Spanish (Bernard, 2006, Miles and Huberman, 1994, Döring and Bortz, 2016). The results of these interviews were then used to revise and adapt the questionnaire designed by Kaufmann (2016) in order to create a structured interview with open questions.

The semi-structured interview guide:

- How are you/is your organization involved in the PGS initiative?
- Who are the different actors involved in the PGS initiative?
- How is your PGS initiative structured?
- How are decisions made in your PGS initiative?
- Is your PGS initiative officially registered? Do producers from your PGS initiative have other certifications besides the PGS-guarantee?
- How do producers from your PGS initiative sell their products?
- Who and how can become a new member of your PGS initiative?
- Questions about the internal regulation of the interviewee's PGS initiative:
 - How was the internal regulation developed?
 - What is contemplated by the internal regulation?
 - How is the certification process?
- Why did you decided to join the PGS initiative?
- Have you found any challenges during your participation in the PGS initiative? (Which ones?)
- How could your PGS initiative be improved?
- What are the strengths of your PGS initiative?
- Does your PGS offer any kind of workshops, talks or similar?

Thus, key actors dealing with and involved in PGS in Spain were consulted to get a better understanding of the current situation of PGS in Spain. The key informants were:

KI-1: PhD student who included Ecollaures in the research for his master's and PhD's thesis

KI-2: Member of a NGO participating in Ecollaures

KI-3: Member of Ecovalle

KI-4: Member of Vecinos Campesinos

KI-5: Employee of the PGS El Encinar. This PGS initiative is not studied in this project

3.3. Structured interviews with open questions

In a first step the questionnaire from Kaufmann (2016) was taken and modifications and adaptations to the Spanish context were made based on the results from the literature research and the expert interviews. This draft was discussed with Dr. Mamen Cuéllar Padilla, local expert of the University of Córdoba who co-supervised my project. First, the focus was on seeing the relevance of the topics covered for the Spanish context. Then, other issues of interest were discussed, in order to be added or addressed more in detail.

The final version of the structured interview (Appendix) was tested with three Spanish individuals who knew about the topic but were not involved in the studied PGS initiatives. Afterwards, the questionnaire was improved by changing details for a better comprehension and was finally ready to use on the interviewees.

Depending on the kind of actor (producer, consumer or entity), the kind or formulation of the questions may vary. Thematically the questionnaire is divided into 6 parts for all interviewees. The first part surveys the interviewee's experiences with and opinion about his/her PGS initiative. The interviewees are asked several open questions about the initial process for joining the PGS initiative. Besides, the interviewees are shown a table of different issues of the PGS initiative that they have to evaluate. Their level of participation in their PGS initiatives and opinions about different related issues are also included in this first part of the questionnaire. This part ends with questions related to the trust interviewees have on PGS.

The second part includes questions about the internal regulation of the interviewee's PGS initiative. The aim of this part is to determine if the interviewee is familiar with the internal regulation of the PGS initiative and how satisfied he/she is with it.

In the third part, the interviewees have to give an opinion about the guarantee process of their PGS initiative. In order to do so, they have to grade different aspects of the guarantee process. To complete these answers some open questions are included.

The fourth part is about the learning process within the studied PGS initiatives. This part is used to confirm some statements from the semi-structured interviews and collect information about the opinion of the interviewees on the topic 'learning processes'.

The next part contains questions about the difficulties, problems and challenges the interviewees might experience in their PGS initiatives. This part consists of mainly open questions. Finally, the sixth part collects the basic information of the interviewees: age, gender, place of birth, education level and occupation. Furthermore, it includes specific questions in relation to basic data of the different kind of actors (producer, consumer or entity).

3.4. Data collection

The research took place from the beginning of March until June 2016. Most of the interviews were conducted either at the homes or at the work places of the interviewees (fields, farms or offices). Only a couple of interviews were done after or before the control visits in different places (coffee place, restaurant, and car). All interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder (SONY ICD PX333). In the case of Ecollaures some interviewees answered in Valenciano.

In order to get a better understanding of the functioning of the studied PGS initiatives and complement the interviews, participant observation was also used. I participated in assemblies, visits to producers, field work and social events. The information gathered during those activities was recorded in the form of field notes (field diary) and pictures (Bernard, 2006). Moreover, the members

of the studied PGS initiatives were willing to share all their documents (internal regulation, visit guides and others), that are also used as data in this project.

Due to the lack of information on the members of the studied PGS initiatives, the snowball sampling method was used (Bernard, 2006). The local expert Mamen Cuéllar Padilla was first contacted because of her work with PGS in Andalusia (Spain). She provided the contact information of KI-1 and KI-3. Through these two key informants, data about KI-2, KI-4 and KI-5 was gained. The key informants gave me information about the different stakeholders participating in their PGS initiatives and first contact data of some members. Due to the participation of different stakeholders and division of two PGS initiatives into different areas, I used purposive sampling in order to get informants from all stakeholders and areas. Afterwards, contact data was gathered from interviewee to interviewee and the sampling frame grew with each interview (Bernard, 2006).

The selection criteria used for the purposive sampling were:

- at least one interviewee per kind of actor (producer, consumer, NGO, shop)
- at least one per function (Ecollaures: commissions, tutor; Vecinos Campesinos: padrino, secretary, area manager; Ecovalle: coordinator)
- at least one founder,
- at least one per area (Ecollaures: north, south, west of Valencia and Alicante; Vecinos Campesinos: four regions of Murcia; Ecovalle: just one area)

Most of the contacted people were willing to participate and had time for an interview. In two cases the person did not want to participate due to a lack of interest. In total there were 70 members in the three studied PGS initiatives at the time of the research, but only 29 were interviewed. No more interviews could be done because of time constraints of the interviewer or difficulties making an appointment with the participants.

Table 4: Number of structured interviews per studied PGS initiative and kind of actor

	Ecollaures	Vecinos Campesinos	Ecovalle	Total Interviewees
Producers	10	8	4	22
Members of Consumers' groups	2	1	0	3
Members of NGOs	3	0	0	3
Shops	0	1	0	1
Total Interviewees	15	10	4	29

3.5. Data analysis

Recorded interviews were first transcribed using the program "Listen N Write". The qualitative data from the interviews, documents from the studied PGS initiatives collected and the field diary were then coded with Atlas.ti. Descriptive and values coding were used for creating the codes. In order to organize qualitative data by concepts and variables, a conceptually order display was created in an Excel table (Microsoft Office package) (Bernard, 2006, Saldaña, 2009).

All raw quantitative data were stored in an Excel table (Microsoft Office package) and analyzed with SPSS (version 21) for Windows. The analysis applied were descriptive analysis, cross tables and the Fisher exact test (Bühl, 2016). The data was tested with the Fisher Test for differences between the three studied PGS initiatives and the different actors participating in all PGS initiatives. The Fisher Test was carried out at a significance level of 5 percent. In case the condition for this test ($p > 0.05$) was not fulfilled this was noted in the results. The data was tested for differences between the three studied PGS initiatives and, in some cases, between the different actors involved in the studied PGS initiatives (producers, consumers, entities and shops).

4. Results

4.1. Organisation of the studied PGS initiatives

4.1.1. Actors and their functions

85.7% of all members of the three studied PGS initiatives are producers. The number of producers corresponds to the so-called 'units of production', i.e. more than one person might be involved in a unit of production but they will be counted as 1 producer. Ecovalle is formed only by producers, while in Ecollaures and Vecinos Campesinos other actors participate, such as NGOs, FoodCoops, shops or consumers associations (Table 5). Although each group of actors has its own particular characteristics and functions, all actors shall participate in the organisation of the PGS equally.

Table 5: Actors involved in the studied PGS initiatives and their functions

Actor	Ecollaures	Vecinos Campesinos	Ecovalle	Function
Producers	25	29	6	Production
NGOs	3	0	0	Support (technical, economical...) Dissemination Access to public administrations Outside (third) point of view Political
FoodCoops	2	0	0	Support the PGS initiative
Consumers association	0	1	0	Consumers point of view Distribution and consumption
Shops	0	4	0	Support the PGS initiative Dissemination Commercialization of products
Total	30	34	6	

The arithmetic mean of the age of the members interviewed is 40.3, with a range between 27 and 60 years old. The arithmetic means of age for each studied PGS initiative are: Ecollaures 36.7 years old; Vecinos Campesinos 46.2 years old; and Ecovalle 37.6 years old. The members of Ecovalle have all a university degree and none of them is originally from the region of Granada (Figure 6 and 7).

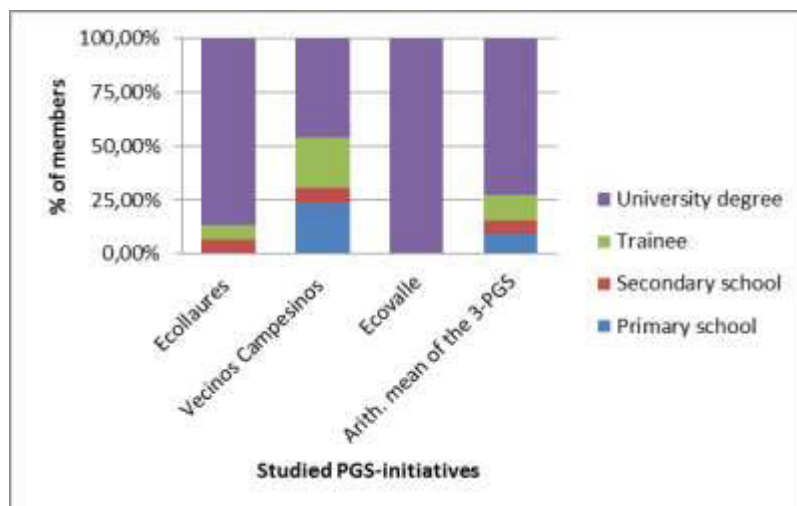


Figure 6: Education level of the interviewed members of the three studied PGS initiatives (Ecollaures: n=15; Vecinos Campesinos: n=13; Ecovalle: n=5)

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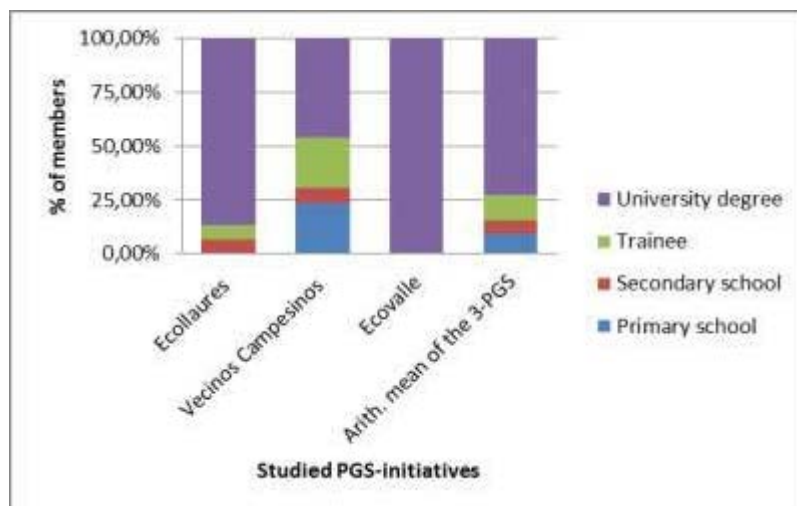


Figure 6: Education level of the interviewed members of the three studied PGS initiatives (Ecollaures: n=15; Vecinos Campesinos: n=13; Ecovalle: n=5)

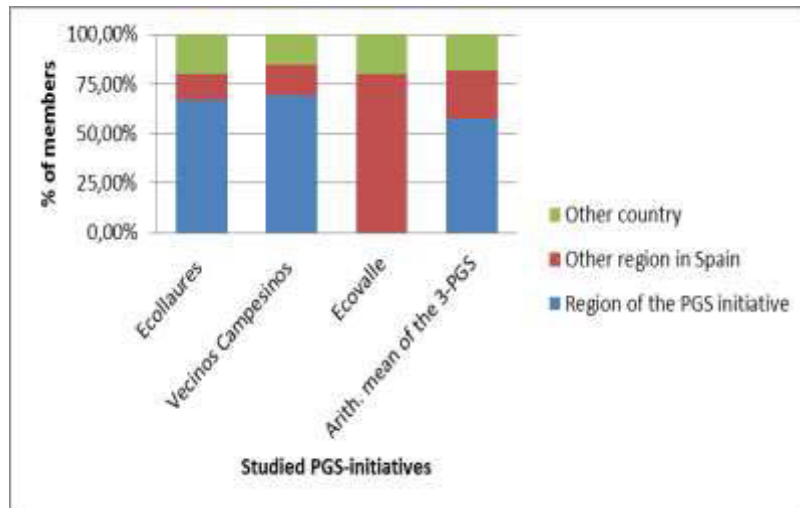


Figure 7: Place of birth of the interviewed members of the three studied PGS initiatives (Ecollaures: n=15; Vecinos Campesinos: n=13; Ecovalle: n=5)

No individual consumers are participating in the studied PGS initiatives. In Ecollaures they are present through two FoodCoops. Each FoodCoop has representative members that assist to the assemblies of Ecollaures and inform the rest of the members of the FoodCoops about the news in Ecollaures. In the case of Vecinos Campesinos there is an association of consumers called Biosegura that has two employees in charge of the organisation of the association. The employees represent Biosegura within Vecinos Campesinos and they were present during its foundation. Although Ecovalle has no consumers directly involved, one of the projects participating is, as literally translated, a 'self-production cooperative'. This 'self-production cooperative' is a group of consumers that produce their own organic food. They have three hired farmers, but each member has to help in the fields at least once a month (Illustration 2). One of the farmers represents the cooperative in Ecovalle.



Illustration 2: Daily work in the fields of the 'self-production cooperative' with two farmers and four consumers in the Valley of Lecrín, Granada

NGOs are only present in Ecollaures. Per l'Horta is a local movement in defence of the territory and was involved from the beginning in Ecollaures. Afterwards the NGOs Engineers Without Borders and the Centre for Rural Studies and International Agriculture (CERAI, from its Spanish initials) joined Ecollaures.

From the 21 producers interviewed, 5 are able to live only from organic agriculture. The other 16 producers have another income next to agriculture, either from them or their partner. Organic agriculture represents 54% of their income (arithmetic mean) (Figure 8). Producers from Ecollaures have the highest percentage of income from organic agriculture from the three studied PGS initiatives (73.5% arithmetic mean, Fisher exact, $n=24$, $P<0.05$). The cultivated area varies between 3000 m² and 13 ha, with an arithmetic mean across the studied PGS initiatives of 2.4 ha (Figure 9). Furthermore, the fields used by the majority of producers of the three studied PGS initiatives are either rented or leased.

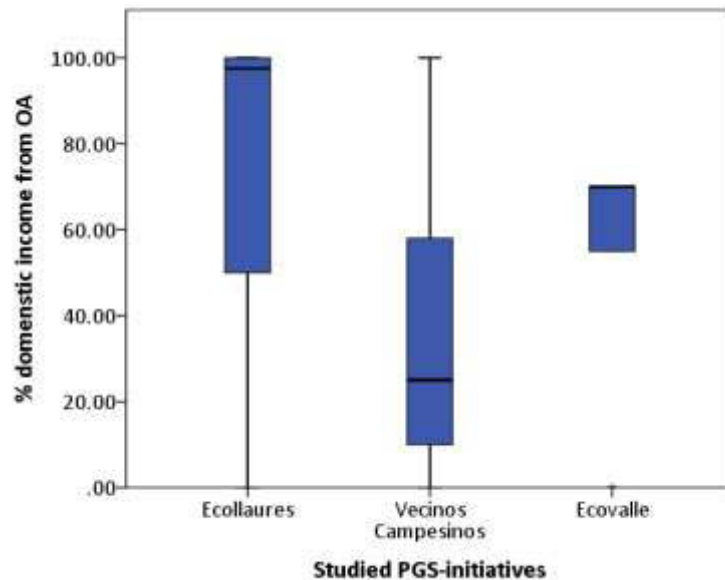


Figure 8: Percentage of domestic income coming from organic agriculture per studied PGS initiative (Ecollaures: $n=10$; Vecinos Campesinos: $n=9$; Ecovalle: $n=5$). Significant difference between studied PGS- initiatives (Fisher exact, $n=24$, $P<0.05$)

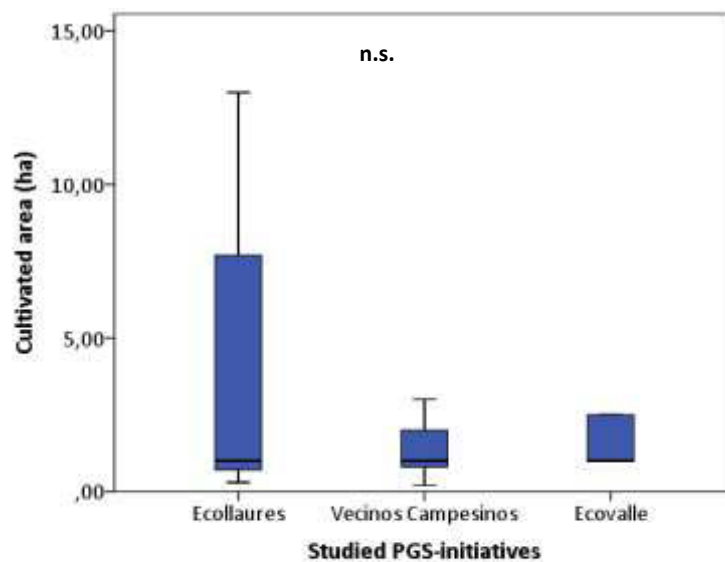


Figure 9: Size of cultivated land (ha) of the producers of each studied PGS initiative (Ecollaures: $n=10$; Vecinos Campesinos: $n=9$; Ecovalle: $n=5$). N.s. = no significant difference between studied PGS initiatives (Fisher exact, $n=24$, $P>0.05$)

Interviewees evaluated the importance of the participation of different actors in the studied PGS initiatives. The listed actors are: producers, consumers, entities, university and other actors. Under other actors respondents suggested: doctors, lawyers, labour unions, official certification bodies, other PGS initiatives and public agents. From those actors only the public agents were suggested by more than one member (14%). 59% of respondents consider producers as the most important actors in their PGS initiative. 10% consider consumers are the most important actors and another 10% consider that producers and consumers are equally important. On the other hand, more than 50% of interviewees consider the participation of the university not important. In general, the members of the studied PGS initiatives perceive the participation of NGOs more important than the participation of university in the PGS initiatives.

4.1.2. Structure

Each studied PGS initiative has its own structure (Table 6). In Ecollaures members are divided in commissions with different functions. Each member can choose the commission he or she wants to join. They also have the ‘tutors’. A tutor is any member of Ecollaures with experience that is designated to a new member. Ecovalle and Vecinos Campesinos have a similar structure. One (in Ecovalle) or two (in Vecinos Campesinos) people are in charge of the organisation of the two PGS initiatives. In the case of Ecovalle, members rotate every year, so every member has to do this function during one year. On the other hand, the two members in charge of the organisation of Vecinos Campesinos (two female producers), the so-called ‘secretaries’, do not rotate and have always been the same ones. These secretaries receive a monetary incentive from the other members of Vecinos Campesinos (part of the fee members pay is used for this purpose).

Vecinos Campesinos has the ‘padrinos’ (godfathers), similar to the tutor from Ecollaures. The tutors carry out their function for a short period of time, until the new member is self-sufficient within the system, and are assigned by the quality commission after the acceptance of the member. By contrast, padrinos present the new members in the assembly (usually their acquaintances), have the duty to do the first visit and are responsible for the new member. In order to become a padrino, a member has to be part of the Vecinos Campesinos at least one year. The members who are the longest in the Vecinos Campesinos are padrinos of many members and they are divided into regions within Murcia (Vega del Segura, Campo de Lorca, North-east and Cieza), so each padrino is responsible for the members of his/her area (area manager).

Table 6: Structure of the three studied PGS initiatives and functions

PGS	Structure	Functions
Ecollaures	Admission Commission	Receive and manage application forms Designate tutors
	Information Commission	Communication outside the PGS Talks, workshops, meetings, etc.
	Quality Commission	Development of the documents for the monitoring process (visit guides)
	Working Groups	Formed for punctual work
	Tutors	Inform and orientate the assigned new member
Vecinos Campesinos	Secretaries	Organising assemblies, internal communication, documents’ management, etc.
	Padrinos (Godfather)	Inform and orientate the new member Responsible for the new member First visit of the new member and participation in the following visits
	Area Manager	Inform and orientate other padrinos Organisation of the visits of the area

		Management of documents from all area members Management of violations
Ecovalle	Coordinator	Organising assemblies, internal communication, documents' management, etc.

The members of each studied PGS initiative meet in the assemblies of their PGS initiatives. During the assemblies they discuss relevant topics for each PGS initiative and make decisions by consensus. Every decision must be taken during an assembly (admission of new members, changes in the internal regulation, current difficulties...). The periodicity of the assemblies differs among the three studied PGS initiatives: Ecollaures minimum 4 per year; Ecovalle minimum 1 per year; and Vecinos Campesinos minimum 2 per year. In Ecollaures, the commissions have some independence and can make decisions relevant for their work, but the assembly has to be informed.

The three studied PGS initiatives are officially registered as associations. In Spain, there is no legal entity with a horizontal organization, so the studied PGS initiatives had to adjust to the standard structure for associations. They had to designate a president, a treasure and a secretary. These roles are only for the legal form of the PGS initiatives and do not have any real power in the studied PGS initiatives.

4.2. Internal regulation of the studied PGS initiatives

The members of each studied PGS initiative have developed their own internal regulation and to do so they took experiences from other PGS initiatives and experts. Ecovalle was established as a PGS in 2010 and in order to develop their internal regulation they had the help of a PhD student from the University of Cordoba. Vecinos Campesinos used a master thesis to help them build the PGS in 2011. They also used the internal regulation of Ecovalle as a basis for theirs and asked the author of the master thesis to give a talk for the members of Vecinos Campesinos in order to get a better understanding of participatory guarantee systems. In the case of Ecollaures, some members knew about other PGS experiences in Latino America (Brazil and Argentina) and started the creation of their internal regulation based on those in 2011.

Almost 80% of the interviewees are (very) satisfied with their internal regulations. But they consider their own PGS as an active system that is continuously developing, and so is the internal regulation. Even though they are happy with the results, they perceive it could be improved and some things should be revised as it was first done without any experience. In the case of Ecollaures, they are currently reviewing the internal regulation.

"está todavía en construcción (...) siempre va a estar en movimiento" (P7)

"it is still under construction (...) it will always be active" (P7)

"Hay puntos que se aprobaron por inercia, ahora leyéndolo por ejemplo " no usaremos variedades híbridas" y eso es totalmente desde el desconocimiento de la producción" (P23)

"There are points that we agreed without attention, reading it now for example "we would not use hybrids" and this is totally from the ignorance about production" (P23)

"Entonces creo que hay que darle una vuelta, de hecho estamos en ello ahora" (P26)

"I think we should turn it around, actually we are now doing it" (P26)

4.2.1. Standards development

According to the interviewees, who participated in the development of the three studied PGS initiatives, the process was slow and their PGS initiatives seem to have been the biggest challenge.

They perceive that it was difficult to agree and capture all those ideas in paper. Moreover, it was difficult for them to find the tools to differentiate themselves from the TPC and to precisely define what organic production is (members of Ecollaures used the word agro-ecological instead).

"la ideología también es algo que es arduo porque cada uno tenemos nuestra idea de las cosas y cuando las tienes que escribir y plasmar pues muchas veces también las personas como que somos intransigentes" (P9)

"the ideology is also hard because everyone has his/her own ideas and when you have to write them down... many times we are inflexible too" (P9)

"fue muy tedioso, muy pesado, muchas reuniones, muchas visiones diferentes de cómo se deben formalizar las cosas" (P12)

"it was very tedious, very hard, a lot of meetings, many different visions on how to formalise things" (P12)

"Iban tan lento... (...) no estaba para nada conformado y cada uno llevaba una idea" (P15)

"They were so slow... (...) there was nothing defined and everyone had his/her own idea" (P15)

"Establecer las diferencias con la certificación, la simplicidad. Nuestro reto fue simplificarlo lo máximo posible" (P17)

"Differentiate ourselves from the certification, the simplicity. Our challenge was to simplify it as much as possible" (P17)

"venía gente que quería hacerlo todo, la certificación, la comercialización... (...) hubo que aclarar que era para certificar no para comercializar" (P18)

"there were people who wanted to do it all, certification, commercialization... (...) we had to clear up that it was for certifying and not for commercialization" (P18)

"establecer las normas, tardamos años e incluso estuvimos a punto de desaparecer" (P19)

"define the norms, it took us years and we were even about to disappear" (P19)

Some members of Vecinos Campesinos perceived the establishment of a maximal cultivated surface a challenge. Members of Vecinos Campesinos perceive the maximal cultivated surface as an important aspect of their internal regulation in order to differentiate themselves from big producers and prevent big producers to join the PGS initiative. Vecinos Campesinos was the only PGS initiative that had a group of consumers (association) which participated in the creation of their PGS initiative. On the other hand, interviewees from Ecollaures and Ecovalle perceive the involvement of consumers in their PGS initiatives a challenge; Ecovalle has not been able to do include consumers yet (Table 7).

"éramos productores, cuando conseguimos que la mirada de otros consumidores/colectivos entrara de forma regular, también ha habido un salto importante" (P15)

"we were producers, when we manage to have a regular interest of other consumers/collectives, that was also an important step" (P15)

"interaccionar con los consumidores para que participaran también" (P22)

"interact with the consumers so they also participate" (P22)

"Involucrar a los consumidores en el SPG, y aún no lo hemos conseguido" (P26)

"involve consumers in the PGS, and we haven't achieved it yet" (P26)

The establishment of a structure within the system was also mention as a perceived difficulty. For example, Vecinos Campesinos had a structure similar to the one of Ecollaures, with commissions and working groups, but this structure did not work and they had to change it. The organisation of the studied PGS initiatives is also related to the participation of the members. Everyone should equally

participate in the PGS initiatives and so the structure was the way of dividing tasks and not having the same people doing everything.

"el proceso de organización, de ver cómo hacíamos diferentes grupos de trabajo, qué hacía cada grupo..." (P6)

"the process of organisation, see how we could do different working groups, what each group had to do..." (P6)

"y luego la participación por supuesto" (P7)

"and then the participation of course" (P7)

"Dinamizar de manera interna a la gente involucrada, porque al principio la participación fue escasa" (P22)

"organise the people involved, because at the beginning the participation was very low" (P22)

"recaer las cosas sobre la gente más dinámica, con más iniciativa" (P12)

"things go to dynamic people with more initiative" (P12)

The members of the three studied PGS initiatives perceive that the creation of a list of prices for products during the foundation of their PGS initiatives was hard. Prices should not be too high so consumers cannot afford organic products, but also not too low so producers cannot live from agriculture. Ecollaures has a list of prices (minimum and maximum) that their producers can use to sell their products. Ecovalle has also a list of minimum prices in the cooperative, but not for the PGS initiative itself. Vecinos Campesinos has an unfinished list of prices and they are still working on it. In relation to the prices, the topic of commercialization channels, the marketing choice of the producers, seems to have also been a challenge (Alboiu, 2011). PGS are supposed to support local production, and so defining 'local' or the commercialization channels they wanted to allow is also perceived as a difficulty.

"los precios con los que venden fuera si se van a tal mercado concreto... ese tema es algo a debatir" (P14)

"the prices producers sell their products with if they go to a specific market... this topic has to be discussed" (P14)

"tuvimos que trabajar el tema de unos precios mínimos, para que nadie los baje si tienen un excedente" (P18)

"we had to work on minimum prices, so no one lowers them if they have excess stock" (P18)

"el aspecto de distribución canales cortos o canales largos, eso fue una cuestión clave" (P7)

"the issue of short or long distribution channels, that was a key matter" (P7)

"Como queremos ponernos como si fuéramos una cooperativa o un simil, pues el llegar a hacerlo" (P16)

"as we want to become a cooperative or similar, achieving it" (P16)

"No estaba claro si lo que queríamos era una cooperativa para vender todos juntos, y ya definir el querer una certificación, el problema de comercialización hay que separarlo" (P18)

"it was not clear if we wanted a cooperative for selling all together, but when we decided to define a certification, we had to separate the commercialization problem" (P18)

Moreover, violations and penalties is a matter included in the internal regulation of the studied PGS initiatives which seems to have been a challenge for those participating in the creation of their PGS.

"no sabemos cómo decir "bueno, (...)¿hasta dónde vale el que tú me estés dando excusas siempre de que es que estás tú solo, es que no hay otra manera de tal...?" eso es complicado" (P12)

"we do not know how to say "well, (...) until when can I accept that you are putting excuses, that you are alone, that you have no other way..." this is complicated" (P12)

“cómo entra un colectivo y cómo sale o cómo se mantiene latente, un año decide que no quiere participar del SPG pero al siguiente sí” (P14)

“how to join a collective and how to leave it or how the person stays inactive, one year decided that he/she does not want to participate but the next year yes...” (P14)

Table 7: Challenging topics perceived by interviewees during the standards development of the three studied PGS initiatives

Challenging topics perceived during the standards' development	
	Commercialisation channels
	Definition of (agro-)ecology
	Flexibility
	Growth management
	Implication of consumers
	Legal form (association)
	Maximal surface
	Organization of the PGS
	Participation
	Prices
	Penalties

4.2.2. Content of the internal regulation

The internal regulations are divided into main topics which are different for each studied PGS initiative (Table 8). The only common chapter for the three PGS is the admission process, although the content is different (chapter 5.2.4). The chapter of violations and penalties is not included in the regulation of Vecinos Campesinos, this topic under 'control processes. On the other hand, Ecollaures and Ecovalle clearly define the violations and their corresponding penalties (chapter 5.2.5).

Table 8: Main topics of the internal regulations of the studied PGS initiatives

Ecollaures	Vecinos Campesinos	Ecovalle
Actors		Actors
Admission process	Admission process	Admission process
Structure and organisation	Structure and organisation	
Control process	Control process	
Violations and penalties*		Violations and penalties*
Conflict resolution		Conflict resolution
Production guideline (adapted EU guideline)**	Production guideline**	Production guideline (EU guideline)
Expenses		
Other elements	Documents and information management	

*More information in tables 11 and 12

**More information in table 9

The control process is very similar for the three studied PGS initiatives (chapter 5.2.6), even though Ecovalle does not include it in their internal regulation. During the control process, members of each studied PGS initiative examine the different productive projects and see that their production guideline is fulfilled. The socio-economic criteria considered by the three studied PGS initiatives are:

- legal and fair contracts for the workers with decent salaries;
- family work is accepted with attention to children welfare;
- use of short commercialization channels.

Ecollaures and Ecovalle use the European regulation (EC) 889/2008 as their production guidelines. In the case of Ecovalle, the members have added some modifications or observations to the European regulation (Table 9). On the other hand, the members of Vecinos Campesinos have elaborated an own production guideline in detail according to their needs and preferences (Table 9).

Table 9: Topics added to the European regulation (EC) 889/2008 in the production guidelines of Vecinos Campesinos and Ecovalle

Ecovalle	Vecinos Campesinos
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of local varieties is recommended - Biodiversity in the fields is essential - Allowed the use of self-produced and local seeds - No used of hybrids, exceptions can be made but it has to be discussed in the assembly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Biodiversity:</u> At least 10 different crops per year for vegetable production. Crop rotation at least every two years Use of local varieties, no hybrids, self-produced seeds allowed - <u>Origin of inputs:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fertilizers: if not certified, it must come from extensive farms of goats, sheep or equine • Pesticides: EU guideline • Machines and materials: promotion of mechanical machines and draft animals • Water quality: avoid instability (for example vegetable production in dry lands), responsible use of water. If treated water or wastewater is used, an analysis is mandatory • Recycle: Reduction of inputs recommended • Energetic efficiency: energy balance of the farms is mandatory and has to be approved - <u>Soil quality:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If agrochemicals were used more than a year before joining the PGS, the transition period is of one growing cycle • If agrochemicals were used less than a year before joining the PGS or the previous use of the land is not known, the transition period is of one year - <u>Product quality:</u> specific for every kind of vegetables

4.2.3. Implementation of IFOAM principles

4.2.3.1. Participation

Ecollaures and Ecovalle establish in their internal regulations that members have to participate in at least 50% of their assemblies. The members of Vecinos Campesinos have to assist to at least one assembly per year, but this expectation is not documented. Ecollaures is the only studied PGS initiative with a minimum in participation to control visits (2 per year). 64% of the interviewees (n=29) affirm that they assist to (almost) all assemblies, while 57% admit they do not participate so often (sometimes/hardly ever) in visits. Thus participation is the involvement of the members of the studied PGS initiatives in its activities, i.e. assemblies, visits, commissions, working groups, organisation, etc.

72% of the members interviewed consider the participation of the consumers enrolled in their PGS as low to very low. On the other hand, 77% consider producers' participation to be normal to high.

Members of the studied PGS initiatives complain about the low participation of the consumers. They would like to have more consumers involve in their PGS initiatives and that those, who are already there, are more active. In the case of Ecollaures, entities were also evaluated, 73% evaluate their participation as (very) high. The members of Vecinos Campesinos generally consider that only one shop is actively participating.

The learning process is also considered part of participation. The studied PGS initiatives do not offer courses or workshops to their members. They have had the help of some experts when establishing the PGS initiative and, in the case of Ecollaures, they had a PhD student who offered them some workshops, but the studied PGS initiatives themselves do not offer workshops. Members might individually offer different kind of workshops or even give talks at different institutions. The interviewees perceive the visits as an opportunity to learn about production and assemblies for learning about the system, communication skills and participation.

4.2.3.2. A Shared Vision

In order to become a member, the applicant has to sign a certificate of commitment. By doing so, the new member affirms that he/she has read, understands and agrees with the internal regulation and the basic values of the PGS initiative and that he/she commits him-/herself to the PGS initiative.

The members of the studied PGS initiatives support the vision of their PGS initiatives at first by signing these documents and then with their continuous support and participation. This vision is not static, it can be discussed and changed with the development of the PGS initiatives. Moreover, the vision of each PGS initiatives is communicated to other people, like their consumers. In the case of Vecinos Campesinos some producers interviewed, as well as one shop and the consumers association, try to always give the consumers (particularly the new ones) a flyer of Vecinos Campesinos with the main values of the PGS initiative (Illustration 3).



Illustration 3: Flyer of Vecinos Campesinos with their main values (López Cifuentes, 2017)

On the other hand, one producer of Ecovalle complained about the lack of interest of other members of the PGS initiative to give information about PGS to their consumers. So is the case of the self-production cooperative participating in Ecovalle, whose consumers do not seem to know about the PGS Ecovalle.

4.2.3.3. Transparency

All documents of the studied PGS initiatives are available for their members. They all use internet tools like drop box or google drive to upload their documents. Members generally know where to find the information and if not they all know who to ask to for getting the documents they might want. The fulfilled visit guides can also be found in these online tools.

To assure transparency the visits are open to everyone, not only for members of the PGS initiatives. Even more, producers can be contacted and are willing to show their projects to anyone interested. Many of the producers are neighbours of other members of their PGS initiative and visit each other regularly. Some interviewees considered this very important as the transparency is total and the visits are on a continuous, practically daily basis, and not only during the official visits.

4.2.3.4. Trust

The trust interviewees have in their producers goes from high, very high to total. This trust is built through the commitment certificate, the assemblies and the visits to the projects. On the other hand, the level of trust they have in producers from other PGS initiatives is lower. Only 10% have full trust on the producers from other PGS initiatives, while 24% answered to have full trust on their producers (n=29). Moreover, 6 interviewees did not evaluate their trust on producers from other PGS initiatives because they did *“not personally know those PGS initiatives and producers”*.

Members of Ecovalle have a lower trust in producers from other PGS initiatives in average than members from Ecollaures or Vecinos Campesinos. But according to the quantitative analysis, there is no significant relationship between the level of trust on producers from other PGS and the PGS initiative the interviewee belongs to (Fisher exact test, n=25, p=0.07). Despite this result, the qualitative data shows that members of Ecovalle repeatedly revealed their distrust on Andalusian PGS initiatives that do not belong to the PGS FACPE.

4.2.3.5. Horizontality

The three studied PGS initiatives have a non-hierarchical structure. All decisions are made in the assembly by consensus and in a transparent way. Decisions are communicated to all members by sending them the protocols of the assemblies per email. In Ecollaures, members share responsibilities by dividing the work into commissions. Ecovalle has one responsible for the organisation of the PGS, but they rotate every year. Alternatively, Vecinos Campesinos divides the work among the padrinos and the secretaries. These secretaries do not rotate but they cannot make decisions beyond their tasks without consulting the assembly.

4.2.4. Becoming a member

The admission process is different for the studied PGS initiatives. The first contact with the studied PGS initiatives is through the information commission in the case of Ecollaures, through any member in Ecovalle and through the padrinos in Vecinos Campesinos (Table 10). Thus, in Ecovalle and Vecinos Campesinos the potential new member has to already know a member of the PGS initiative. In all three studied PGS initiatives the potential new member has to fill a document with the characteristics of the project and a motivation letter. The applicants have to fulfil the internal regulation of the respective PGS initiative and, in the case of Ecovalle and Vecinos Campesinos they also have a prerequisite, i.e. soil analysis and association's membership in Ecovalle and a surface smaller than 1.5 ha per person in Vecinos Campesinos (Table 10).

There is a fee for all members of the studied PGS initiatives (Table 10). Ecovalle is the only one without a “direct” PGS fee. As mention in chapter 4.1.1, Ecovalle is an agricultural cooperative and its members are not forced to join the PGS. But, in order to become a member of the PGS, the applicant has to first be a member of the cooperative and pay its fee. Thus there is no extra fee for the PGS itself in Ecovalle.

Table 10: First contact and prerequisites of the three studied PGS initiatives for applicants

	Ecollaures		Vecinos Campesinos	Ecovalle
First contact	Information commission		Padrino	Any member
Prerequisite			Maximum of 1,5 ha per person (exceptions for trees)	Soil analysis (paid by the interested person) Being a member of the association/cooperative
Annual fee	Producers/FoodCoops Entities	30–50€ 50–100€	Association fee (15€)	Initial 30 € Annually 20–30€ *
Following steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tutor assignment 2. Test period of one year - Participate - No fee/label - Visit (for producers) 3. Assembly's decision 4. Commitment certificate, fee 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visit (padrino) 2. Assembly's decision 3. Commitment certificate, fee 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Association member 2. Visit (for producers) 3. Assembly's decision 4. Commitment certificate 5. Test period of 6 months

*The annual fee was introduced in 2016 (research year) and there was some controversy about the exact amount. Interviewees' answers were between 20 and 30 € or they did not know about the annual fee.

After the first contact with the studied PGS initiatives, the process has some differences between the studied PGS initiatives:

Ecollaures

The admission commission assigns the applicant a tutor to guide and help him/her in the process. The potential new member has a test period of one year in Ecollaures. During this year, he/she does not have to pay the fee but has to participate in the activities of Ecollaures, i.e. assemblies and visits. If the applicant is a producer, some members of Ecollaures do a visit of the land and see that everything is correct according to the visit guide and so the internal regulation. The members of Ecollaures are currently discussing and trying to develop visit guides for consumers and entities.

After this test period, the members decide in the assembly whether the applicant may officially join Ecollaures or not. So, apart from the prerequisites, the assembly considers the report from the visit (production methods and social-criteria according to the PGS's standards), the participation of the potential new member during the test period, the commercialization channels used and his/her values and principles, in order to make a decision. If the applicant may join the PGS, he/she has to sign a commitment certification and gets the logo of Ecollaures.

Vecinos Campesinos

The padrino has to get all the signed documents from the applicant and do a visit to its project (for both producers and shops/FoodCoops/associations). All this information is sent to the secretaries who then send it to all members of Vecinos Campesinos via email. In the next assembly the members discuss and decide if the applicant may join the Vecinos Campesinos. So, apart from the prerequisites, the assembly considers the report from the visit (production methods and social-criteria according to the PGS's standards), the commercialization channels used and his/her values

and principles, in order to make a decision. If the applicant may join the PGS, he/she has to immediately pay the initial fee and the padrino will be the responsible for the new member.

Ecovalle

The applicant must be a member of the cooperative. Then, the potential new member of Ecovalle receives a visit from the members. After this visit the members will decide in the assembly whether the applicant may join the PGS or not. So, apart from the prerequisites (soil analysis is of especial importance), the assembly considers the report from the visit (production methods and social-criteria according to the PGS's standards) and his/her values and principles, in order to make a decision. If he/she may stay, the applicant has to sign a certificate of commitment and confirm that he/she has read the internal regulation. Then, there is a test period of 6 month. During these 6 months the new member has to participate in the PGS, fulfil the internal regulation and is not allowed to use the logo of the Ecovalle.

4.2.5. Violations and penalties

Vecinos Campesinos sets in its internal regulation that if a member commits a severe violation (not specified) of the internal regulation, the assembly may temporally or permanently suspend him/her. Thus the excluded member (producer or shop) is not allowed to use the logo during the agreed period (or permanently). Ecollaures and Ecovalle on the other hand, specify the kind of violations they have (Table 11) and their corresponding penalties (Table 12).

Table 11: Division of violations depending on its importance for Ecollaures and Ecovalle

Violations	Ecollaures	Ecovalle
Very severe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuous lack of participation unjustified - Deliberate deception (against internal regulation) - Precarious employment - Repetition of severe violations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliberate deception (against internal regulation) - Repetition of severe violations
Severe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not to mend faults already mention by the assembly (unjustified) - Repetition of mild violations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-deliberate deception - Non-attendance to more than 50% of assemblies in 6 months (unjustified)
Mild	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other violations not considered as very severe or severe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not to mend faults already mention by the assembly (unjustified)

Table 12: Division of penalties depending on the level of gravity of the violations for Ecollaures and Ecovalle

Penalties for:	Ecollaures	Ecovalle
Very severe violations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expulsion* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expulsion
Severe violations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Temporally suspension (2-12 months) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Production violation: soil and plant analysis before joining again the PGS o Participation violation: suspension until the assistance is more than 50%
Mild violations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suspension until compliance of the recommendations

*The quality commission is in charge of controlling and apply the penalties. In the case of a very severe violation, this commission proposes the expulsion of the member after finding the violation and it has to be decided in the assembly

In Vecinos Campesinos, if the members suspect a member is deceiving their internal regulation by using agricultural techniques they do not allowed, the members may ask the suspected producer to make a soil and plant analysis. If the result of this analysis is negative, i.e. no fault has been committed, Vecinos Campesinos pays the analysis. But, if on the contrary, the analysis is positive, the accused member has to pay the analysis and leave Vecinos Campesinos. This is not written in the internal regulation though.

4.2.6. Procedures to build confidence

The main procedure of the studied PGS initiatives to build confidence is the control visit, also called just visit. Visits are done to the producer's fields and, in the case of Vecinos Campesinos, to the shops too. Visits are opened to every member of each PGS initiative and external people who might be interested. The members participating in the visit check that the internal regulation is fulfilled, i.e. production is done according to the production guidelines in an organic way and socio-economic criteria are respected. Each studied PGS initiative develops its own visit guide, which is used during the visits (Table 13).

Vecinos Campesinos has two different visit guides: one for producers and another for shops and consumer groups (FoodCoops, associations). The first guide they did for producers was for vegetables and fruits. Nowadays, if a member that produces something else joins the Vecinos Campesinos, he/she has to develop a visit guide according to what he/she considers important for this production. This new guide has to be approved in the assembly.

Ecollaures and Ecovalle have a fix visit guide only for producers (vegetables and fruits). Even though, producers of Ecollaures have other products. During an extra assembly from Ecollaures and some visits, members discussed the idea of having different guides for different products and actors. One consumer mentioned her intention of developing a guide for FoodCoops with her colleagues. The commission of quality is in charge of improving and developing the visit guide in Ecollaures. The guide was actualised during my visit (March 2016) and the members perceived the changes as very positive.

Each studied PGS initiative has a logo that identifies them (Table 13). This logo is also a way of building confidence. The producers of the studied PGS initiatives can use the logo for selling their products so that people have the certainty that the products have the guarantee of the PGS. Moreover, in Andalusia, the FACPE (see chapter 4.1.1) has created a common logo for all its PGS (they just add their name). So, Ecovalle has this logo that guarantees that they follow the guidelines from their PGS initiative and from the PGS FACPE.

The members of Ecollaures have to fill out the visit guide before the visit takes place. It is a self-evaluation guide, so each producer must complete it by themselves. During the visit, the participants check that everything written is right and complete it if necessary. If they forget to fill the guide, they just do it during the visit or afterwards. On the other hand, Ecovalle and Vecinos Campesinos have a guide that is filled out during the visit by another member, not by the one who is being examined. In the case of Vecinos Campesinos this member is the padrino. The guides of the three studied PGS initiatives have some common points, but they differ from each other depending on what they consider important (Table 13).



Illustration 4: Annual visit of the fields of a producer from Ecollaures in Picassent, Valencia (López Cifuentes, 2016)

Ideally, at least one member of each kind of actor (producers, consumers, entities) should attend the visit, so that every actor is represented. Producers were asked about the actors that have participated in the visits to their fields. In the case of Ecollaures, all producers interviewed (n=7) have had at least in one visit other producers and entities participating in the visits to their fields, while consumers did not visit all the producers asked (Figure 10). Producers are the ones attending the most in the studied PGS initiatives. Some of the producers had members of the university attending their visits, for example students doing an internship with them. Although Ecovalle has no consumers in the PGS, they sometimes have external consumers participating in their visits.

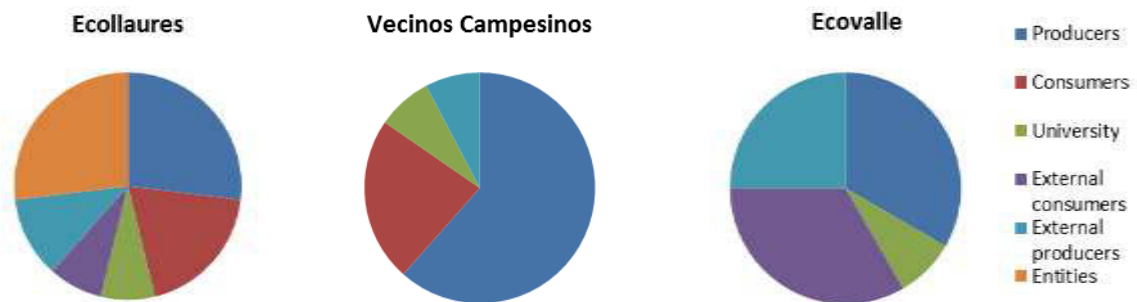





Figure 10: Actors that have attended at least one visit of the producers interviewed (Ecollaures: n=7; Vecinos Campesinos: n=8; Ecovalle: n=4)

Table 13: Topics included in the visit guides of the studied PGS initiatives

		
Characteristics of the project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal organization List of products Contamination problems 	Information about the visit (n° participants, time, basic information of the producers)	Information about the visit (data from producer and responsible of the visit)
Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific minimum for assemblies and visits Proactive 		
Commercialization channels used <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kind of channels Distance from producer Accessibility 		
Biodiversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N° of crops/varieties N° animal species 	Biodiversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Association of plants Crop rotation 	Biodiversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hedges and barriers Local varieties Crop diversity and rotation Association of crops Mulch
Agro-ecological methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soil and weed management Pest management Mulch and refugees for micro fauna Waste management Local knowledge 	Fertilizers used and characteristics Vegetable production: varieties, origin of seeds/seedlings, amount of production Soil and weed management Pest and diseases management	Seeds and seedlings Fertilisers Pest and diseases management
Neighbours and property limits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Division type (hedges) Distance of fields 		Neighbours and property limits
Inputs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy consumption Seeds, seedlings, fertilizer, tractors, machines, packages Water 	Inputs (technology, machines) Water quality and management	
Education (educational activities, dissemination...)		Socio-cultural criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main activity Social compromise
Economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs covered Funding Collective distribution Diversity of products Diversity of activities External economy 	Others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pruning management Chemicals in the property Plastics and garbage Suspicion of use of chemicals - Observations, recommendations 	

4.2.7. Commercialisation

Producers of the studied PGS initiatives without TPC are not allowed to sell their products as 'ecological' ('organic' or 'biological'), as this word is protected by the EU Regulation (Padel, 2010). Ecollaures and Ecovalle use the word 'agro-ecological' instead, but one member of Ecollaures was already reported for defining his products as 'agro-ecological' in his online homepage. So, the members of the studied PGS initiatives try to emphasize the socio-economic criteria their PGS initiatives include in order to sell their products. The producers of the three studied PGS initiatives do not sell their products in big super markets; instead they have some small shops that accept their products as organic (Figure 11). Some of these small shops might be part of the PGS initiative (Vecinos Campesinos), belong to other PGS initiative (Ecovalle, shops from other PGS FACPE) or members of the PGS initiative may have a personal relationship with the owner of these shops. Especially in Ecollaures, producers also sell their products to FoodCoops (do not have to be members of the studied PGS initiatives).

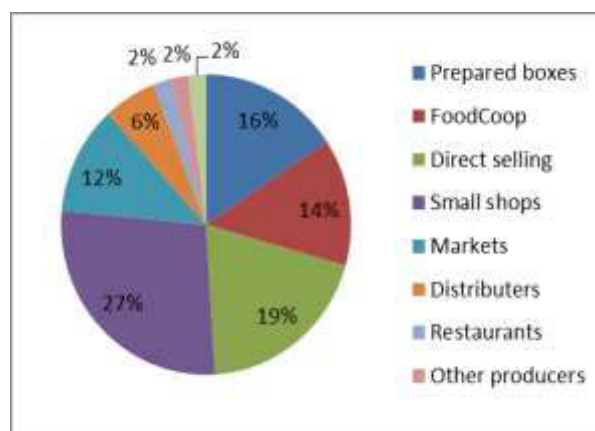


Figure 11: Percentage of interviewed producers using the different commercialization channels (n=21)

Other ways of commercialization are prepared boxes, direct selling from farm gate or small distributors. Markets are also important. There are some bio-markets in the provinces of Granada and Valencia that accept the PGS as a guarantee for organic production. Members of Ecollaures perceive that, due to the political change in Valencia (a left party is now present in the local and regional government), more markets are currently opening their doors to PGS.

As explained in chapter 2.4, Ecovalle is an agricultural cooperative and its members sell their products together, but they can also sell part of their production individually. The cooperative sells the products in prepared boxes, markets and small shops. The cooperative as a way of selling is not included in Figure 11, but the way they use to sell the common products, i.e. direct selling, prepared boxes, markets, etc.. Producers of the studied PGS initiatives might also exchange products, but this is also not presented in Figure 11.

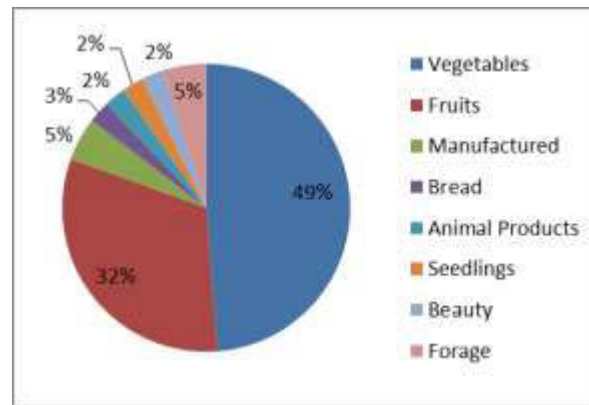


Figure 12: Percentage of interviewed producers producing the different goods (n=22)

The main products of the studied PGS initiatives are vegetables and fruits, but some producers have opened to new markets by producing some other products (Figure 12). Two producers have forage (Vecinos Campesinos and Ecovalle); one of them for his own draft animals and the other sells the forage to a conventional company that produces animal feed, so it is not sold as organic. There is no one producing meat or milk products, the only animal products are eggs and honey. The three studied PGS initiatives have tried at some point to include animal production, like cheese, but they have not managed to do it yet. Besides, there is only one producer of seedlings who belongs to Vecinos Campesinos, but they also have TPC in order to sell the seedlings outside the PGS initiative. In total, 43% of the producers interviewed have TPC as well as the PGS-guarantee. Moreover, not all producers are selling the products guaranteed by the PGS. For example, one producer wants to support her PGS initiative but her products are for exchanging and self-consumption; one produces bread but it does not have the guarantee of his PGS initiative, he certifies his fields where he has currently no production. So, these producers who are not selling the products guaranteed by the PGS are not included in the commercialization graph (Figure 11).

4.2.8. Contradictions between the internal regulation and the interviewees' statements

The detailed analysis of the internal regulations and the interviews shows some contradictions between them. These contradictions are mainly about the point 'violations and penalties'. To the question "what happens to a member who commits a violation?" the answers did not always agree with the written regulation. For the quantitative analysis I differentiated between contradictory and valid answers:

- Contradictory answers: the interviewee did not know the procedure explained in the internal regulation in case a violation was committed by a member
- Valid answers: the interviewee knew about the different levels of violations and penalties; or at least described the steps to follow according to the regulations (studying each case, letting the person justify him-/herself and agree on a penalty in an assembly)

According to this differentiation, more than 40% of the interviewees gave a 'contradictory answers', where "nothing happens" or "he/she has to leave the system" were the most common answers. Some members did not know the answer and others did not answer to this question. 12% knew about the different levels of violations and penalties. There is no significant relationship between the different studied PGS initiatives and the answers given (Fisher exact, $n=24$, $p>0.05$).

"El año que no se cumple pues no tendrá el sello" (P1) *"The year that the regulation is not met, he/she won't get the label" (P1)*

<i>“Actualmente nada, nos falta un régimen de sanciones interno” (P2)</i>	<i>“Currently nothing, we lack a system of internal penalties” (P2)</i>
<i>“de momento nada” (P4)</i>	<i>“at the moment nothing” (P4)</i>
<i>“puerta” (P16)</i>	<i>“out” (P16)</i>
<i>“fuera, está claro” (P23)</i>	<i>“out, it is clear” (P23)</i>
<i>“que se fuera, expulsión total” (P30)</i>	<i>“out, total expulsion” (P30)</i>

In the case of Vecinos Campesinos there is one more contradiction. Some members mentioned that during the development of the internal regulation, they had to make clear that *“the PGS was for certifying and not for commercialization”*, i.e. each producer has to take care of the commercialization and Vecinos Campesinos is not meant to be an agricultural cooperative or similar. Besides, there is nothing written about commercialization in their internal regulation. On the other hand, other members perceive Vecinos Campesinos as a potential commercialization tool and think one *“objective of the PGS is to centralise the production”* and become a cooperative.

Interviewees perceive ‘flexibility’ as one characteristic of PGS and so it can be found that some of the points of the internal regulation (especially in production) are not met by everyone. If this is the case, the PGS initiative has to be informed and discuss the matter. One example is the case of one project of Ecollaures. This project is in a village where the irrigation community has decided to add synthetic fertilisers to the water system of the area. The producers of the project that belongs to Ecollaures have no other option but to water with it. Ecollaures has studied this situation and, as it is not the fault of the producers, they admitted the project and inform the consumers about it. The members of Ecollaures support the producers of this project and help them fighting against the irrigation community, so they stop adding synthetic fertilizers to the water.

4.3. Challenges perceived by the members of the studied PGS initiatives

Interviewees were asked about the current status of some aspects of their PGS. The results show that there is no significant differences among the studied PGS initiatives (Fisher exact, $n=29$, $p>0.05$), so the answers from the members of the three studied PGS initiatives are presented together (Table 14). More than 80% of the interviewees consider the possibility to participate in decision making very good. On the other hand, only 17% evaluate the dissemination of their PGS as good, most of them (62%) consider it not so good which makes it the aspect with the worst rating.

Table 14: Interviewees’ evaluation of some statements about the current status of each PGS ($n=29$), arithmetic mean across the three studied PGS initiatives (Fisher exact, $n=29$, $p>0.05$)

Statement	%	Very bad	Bad	So-so	Good	Very good
Feeling of community with the members		0	0	0	51.7	48.3
Organisation		0	0	34.5	65.5	0
Communication among the members		0	0	20.7	75.9	3.4
Dissemination of the PGS		6.9	13.8	62.1	17.2	0
Possibility to participate in decision making		0	0	0	17.2	82.8
Relationship between the member		0	0	0	48.3	51.7
Internal communication ways used		0	0	27.6	62.1	10.3
Process of decision making		0	0	10.3	65.5	24.1

Some members of the studied PGS initiatives perceive the dissemination of their PGS as a challenge still to overcome. Interviewees find the publicity of their PGS in the media too low and would like to change this. Ecollaures is still working on its website, whereas Ecovalle and Vecinos Campesinos have a WordPress site.

"supongo que no se nos conoce bien" (P2)

"I guess we are not well known" (P2)

"creo que tiene que tener presencia en los medios, tanto en internet, dar charlas, conferencias, talleres... y estar en todo lo que esté relacionado con el medio rural, la alimentación, la sostenibilidad y todos estos temas" (P3)

"I think it has to be present in the media (internet, talks, conferences, workshops) and be everywhere related to the rural areas, food, sustainability and all those topics)" (P3)

"lo difundimos mal" (P12)

"we disseminate it the wrong way" (P12)

"el tema web, el tema marketing, el tema de reconocimiento está verde" (P13)

"the website, the marketing, the recognition is all bad" (P13)

"el SPG no ha trabajado en una difusión en su territorio, no se ha trabajado cosas sencillas en los mercados, yo no sé si todos los productores siempre llevan su sello, o si todo lo que hacemos siempre lleva el sello del SPG por delante" (P14)

"the PGS has not worked on local disseminations, we have not worked on easy things on markets, I do not know if producers always have their PGS-stamp with them, or if all the things we do have the PGS-logo" (P14)

"Yo en el fondo el sello no lo uso para nada, tengo un papelito y lo pongo en el mercado y tal pero porque lo tengo y lo tengo caducado..." (P15)

"Actually I do not use the stamp, I have a paper and I put it in the markets because I have, and it is expired..." (P15)

"A lo mejor nos tenemos que plantear tener a alguien que se dedique a hacer publicidad del SPG..." (P17)

"Maybe we have to think about getting someone in charge of publicity of the PGS..." (P17)

"la gente que participa en el SPG no ha comunicado a sus consumidoras/es cuáles son las vías de participación del SPG y para qué sirve" (P23)

"people participating in the PGS has not told his/her consumers which ways there are to participate in the PGS and what it is for" (P23)

"Se debería hacer mejor marketing de forma común y no cada uno de forma individual" (P28)

"We should do better marketing on a collective way and not individually" (P28)

Dissemination could raise awareness among the population. The members of the three studied PGS initiatives perceive that one reason why consumers might not participate in their PGS initiative is because they do not about it due to its low dissemination. In general, the implication of consumers seems to be a general concern. Members of the studied PGS initiatives perceive the low participation of consumers as a challenge they do not know how to address. The interviewees proposed some other reasons for the low participation of consumers: disinterest, other priorities, the lack of need, or that consumers do not find it attractive.

"hay muchos grupos de consumo que me da la impresión que me da que no saben muy bien cuál sería su papel dentro del SPG" (P8)

"I think there are many FoodCoops that do not really know what their roll within the PGS would be" (P8)

"la gente no puede estar en todos los sitios" (P13)

"people cannot be everywhere" (P13)

"habría que ver qué interesa al consumidor en las visitas, a lo mejor una excursión bonita, que les des algo de comer, si es posible sin pagar... entonces a lo mejor participan más" (P19)

"we should find out what the interests of the consumers in the visits are, maybe a nice excursion, something to eat, without paying if possible... then they might participate more" (P19)

"Al principio estaba muy enfocado a la producción y puedo entender que no sea muy atractivo para el consumidor" (P22)

"At the beginning it was very focus on production and I can understand that it is not very attractive for consumers" (P22)

"la gente que participa en el SPG no ha comunicado a sus consumidoras/es cuáles son las vías de participación del SPG y para qué sirve" (P23)

"people that participate in the PGS have not informed their consumers what the way for participating in the PGS are and what it is for" (P23)

"a lo mejor al consumidor no le llega la información correcta a veces" (P25)

"maybe some times consumers do not get the correct information" (P25)

Although 77% of interviewees (n=29) consider producers' participation to be normal or high, they mentioned participation of all members (not only consumers) as one of the main challenges, problems or things to improve. The interviewees consider the low participation of the members of their PGS as a problem that could develop in few members doing all the work (burn out).

"es un proceso participativo con tantas cabezas pensantes que claro... a veces se intenta no llegar al síndrome del activista que se quema, para que no caiga sobre una o dos personas. Está este riesgo que alguien se puede quemar un poquito" (P6)

"it is a participative process with so many thinking heads that sometimes we try not to get to the point where some people are tired, that everything does not fall on one or two people. There is the risk that someone can be a bit consumed" (P6)

"definir los roles que mejoren la participación" (P14)

"define the roles that improve participation" (P14)

"En realidad el SPG es participativo, pero eso no lo entiende la gente, la gente lo que quiere es que le hagas las cosas" (P17)

"Actually the PGS is participative, but people do not understand thin, people want that you do everything for them" (P17)

"El trabajo está diluido entre poca gente y no debería ser así" (P28)

"The work is distributed among few people and it should not be like that" (P28)

The term of efficiency was frequently used by the interviewees. Based on what the interviewees said, efficiency is defined mainly by the assemblies (duration, communication between members, capacity of making decisions, participation of the members, capacity to focus on the topics relevant for the PGS initiatives), but also by the quality of the visits and the work done during the year (dissemination, workshops, publicity, document management, involvement of the members...)

Efficiency seems to also be a challenge for the studied PGS initiatives. Interviewees perceive that the progress of their PGS initiative is slow. They mentioned that, because it is a participative system, it is difficult to make progresses. Moreover, the Spanish culture was described as a *"non-participative-society"* and so people do not know how to work on a participative way. Making decisions in a participative and horizontal assembly seems to be a challenge. Thus the efficiency of the assemblies is perceived as a challenge that they are trying to overcome, they say they are still learning how to work in assemblies. Related to the efficiency of the studied PGS initiatives are also the communication ways they use, mainly emails and WhatsApp, which are not always perceived as the best ones. One interviewee mentioned the lack of seriousness during the visits as a problem as it might reduce the reliability on PGS. Furthermore, organization was mentioned several times as a problem, for example, in the case of Vecinos Campesinos, members would like to have a calendar of visits but they have not been able to do it yet. They find that this calendar would help people organising, as they would know in advance the dates of the visits, so they can more often assist to the visits.

<i>"siempre me ha dado la sensación que perdíamos mucho el tiempo, que todo nos costaba mucho avanzar sobre todo al principio, en la toma de decisiones" (P3)</i>	<i>"I have always had the feeling that we lost a lot of time, that everything took so much effort, especially at the beginning in the decision making" (P3)</i>
<i>"aprender a hacer asambleas más eficientes, eficaces..." (P1)</i>	<i>"learn how to make assemblies more efficient, effective..." (P1)</i>
<i>"aprender a trabajar de forma asamblearia, de forma horizontal" (P9)</i>	<i>"learn how to work in assemblies, horizontally" (P9)</i>
<i>"hay una experiencia muy mala, porque hay asambleas con mucho choque, y la gente ya no va" (P19)</i>	<i>"we have a very bad experience, because there are a lot of conflicts in the assemblies and people do not assist anymore" (P19)</i>
<i>"Gente tan dispar montar una asamblea y poder comunicarnos con un orden sin irnos por las ramas" (P28)</i>	<i>"different people making an assembly and being able to communicate without getting off the subject" (P28)</i>
<i>"tomar decisiones de manera participativa no siempre es fácil" (P8)</i>	<i>"making decision in a participative way is not always easy" (P8)</i>
<i>"ahora yo creo que los retos más importantes es el que funcione, o sea que esta rueda de gente diferente, de proyectos, de personas... pues que todo eso podamos encauzarlo hacia un camino de trabajar" (P9)</i>	<i>"I think, now the most important challenge is that it works, so that this wheel of different people, projects... that we can channel all of it towards a working process" (P9)</i>
<i>"No estamos acostumbrados a avanzar de forma colectiva" (P9)</i>	<i>"we are not used to move forward in a collective way" (P9)</i>

During the interviews, the interviewees made a difference between three kinds of recognition: legal recognition, institutions recognition and social recognition. The first one refers to the question asked, that the PGS is considered a legal guarantee system like the TPC bodies. Interviewees consider institution recognition as the acceptance of the PGS by the institutions, so that they have a political voice without being an official certification body. The last one, social recognition, is merely the consumers acceptance of the PGS as a valid guarantee system they can trust.

<i>"reconocimiento a nivel social podría ayudar en la comercialización de los productos y la visibilización de los proyectos" (P1)</i>	<i>"social recognition could help with the commercialization of the products and the publicity of the projects" (P1)</i>
<i>"para mí sería muy importante es a nivel consumidor, que lo valore y lo conozca" (P27)</i>	<i>"for me it would be very important in a consumers' level, that consumer value and know it" (P27)</i>
<i>"A nivel de que más gente conozca esto sería muy interesante" (P28)</i>	<i>"In a way that more people know it would be very interesting" (P28)</i>
<i>"que seamos un interlocutor a nivel político con el cual establecer un diálogo" (P7)</i>	<i>"so we are a representative in a political level with which to establish a dialogue" (P7)</i>
<i>"ahora mismo sí que hay cierto reconocimiento oficial, a nivel de que hay ayutamientos que sí que reconocen el SPG como una certificación válida para participar en un mercado (...) es importante para que los productores puedan participar en un mercado" (P8)</i>	<i>"currently we have some official recognition, in the way that there are some city halls that recognise the PGS as a valid certification for participating in a market (...) it is important so producers can participate in a market" (P8)</i>

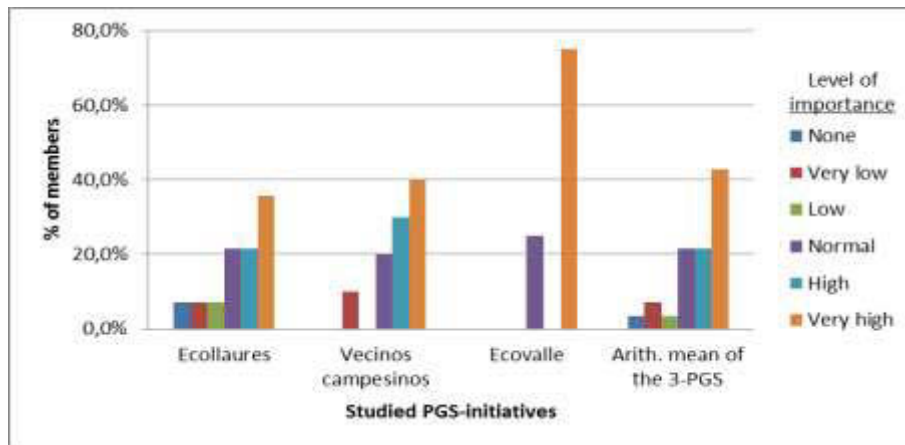


Figure 13: Perception of the interviewed members of the studied PGS initiatives on the level of importance of a possible future legal recognition of PGS in Spain (Ecollaures: n=14; Vecinos Campesinos: n=10; Ecovalle: n=4)

Some of the members that consider the importance of the legal recognition of the PGS as (very) low perceive a social recognition more important than a legal one. They consider that social recognition could be enough for helping producers with commercialisation. Other respondents perceive that an institutional recognition is important so the PGS can stablish communication in a political level. There are also those who do not consider any of these recognitions important and perceive the current independence as an advantage (Figure 13).

Regarding the documents of the studied PGS initiatives, 64% of interviewees are (very) satisfied with their visit guides. But they think the visit guides could still be improved. The general guarantee process, visit guide plus visit, is also perceived as (very) good (67% of interviewees). In the case of Ecollaures they would like to have different guides for different products and actors, but they are still working on it. Almost 80% are (very) satisfied with the internal regulation. On the other hand, the guarantee process was also perceived as not good or serious enough.

“estamos en un camino de desarrollar eso y estaría en un camino entre regular y buena, quiero decir, me parece buena en cuanto a que el esfuerzo es tal, y regular en cuanto a que seguramente tenemos aún muchísimo que avanzar” (P12)

“we are on the way of developing it (visit guide) and it would be between good and so-so, I mean, I find it good because of the effort, and so-so because most probably we still have to progress a lot” (P12)

“tenemos un registro de lo que hacemos en las visitas pero para mí no es suficiente” (P26)

“we have a register with the information from the visits, but for me that is not enough” (P26)

“está demasiado puesto para el actor, de Autoevaluación, y yo pienso que hay que aprovechar la visita y dejar que el resto diga algo al final” (P13)

“it is too focus on the self-evaluation, I think we should use the visit and let the others say something at the end” (P13)

“hubo un momento en que hubo que decir que esto era serio, que las visitas no eran ir a tomar una cerveza a la finca, después bien pero durante tiene que ser en un tono serio (...) con confianza pero exigir que se enseñen todos los productos e ir al detalle” (P28)

“there was a moment where we had to say that this was serious, the visits were not for drinking a beer, afterwards it is ok but during the visit it has to be serious (...) with trust but we have to demand that the producers shows all the products and go into detail” (P28)

Other problems mentioned are personal matters between the members, the economic viability of the projects and the prices of the products (Table 15). The dispersion of the members is perceived as

a problem by the members of Ecollaures and Vecinos Campesinos. Most of the members of Ecollaures live nearby Valencia, but some are in villages further from the city or even in the southern region of Alicante. The problem is more pronounced in the case of Vecinos Campesinos, as all its members are distributed in the whole region of Murcia, even in Alicante. The distance between the furthest members of Vecinos Campesinos is of approximately 140km (Figure 14). The members of Ecovalle, on the other hand, live in the same Village within a walking distance.

Table 15: Problems and challenges perceived by the interviewees in the studied PGS initiatives

Problems and challenges
Consumers' implication
Economic viability
Efficiency
Legality / Official recognition
Members dispersal
Participation
Personal matters
Prices

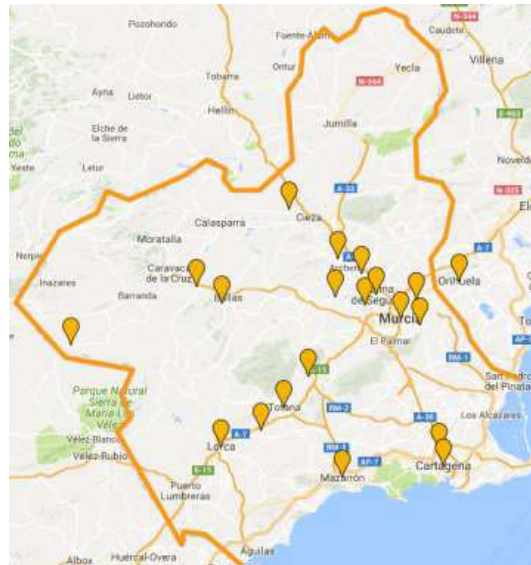


Figure 14: Members' distribution of Vecinos Campesinos. Marked area: Region of Murcia. Drops: places with members of the Vecinos Campesinos (López Cifuentes, 2016, based on Google Maps)

4.3.1. Possible improvements

The interviewees mentioned aspects they would like to improve from their PGS and even made some suggestions (Table 16). Many interviewees perceive the necessity to have a hired person who is in charge of the organisation of their PGS. They find producers have a lot of work and do not have time for doing the entire organisation of their PGS. They think an employee could help making progress with their PGS initiative as this person would have more time for specific tasks. The studied PGS initiatives are based on voluntary work but *"sometimes it is too much (...) and a level of specialization might be good"*.

“ayudaría mucho a dinamizarlo todo y se avanzaría. Creo en el trabajo voluntario de la gente, pero creo que en este caso debería de haber una persona remunerada” (P3)

“determinados trabajos sí que estaría muy bien si hubiese alguien que se pudiese centrar” (P12)

“alguien liberado para la gestión, porque es bueno que se dé a conocer la agricultura ecológica pero el productor está produciendo y vendiendo, si además tiene que gestionar el SPG...” (P31)

“A lo mejor nos tenemos que plantear tener a alguien que se dedique a hacer publicidad del SPG” (P17)

“it would help organising everything and we would progress. I believe in voluntary work, but I think in this case there should be a paid person” (P3)

“it would be very good if there were someone who could be focus on some tasks” (P12)

“a hired person for the management, because it is good that people know about organic agriculture but producers are producing and selling, if they also have to manage the PGS...” (P31)

“Maybe we have to think about having someone in charge of publicity” (P17)

Table 16: Perceived aspects to improve in the studied PGS initiatives and suggested tools for improvement

To improve	Suggestion
Assemblies	Respect, good moderator, facilitation workshop
Consumers implication	Guide for consumers, dissemination, stablishing a physical headquarters, ludic visits
Economic viability / Costs*	Collective purchase of inputs, production of seedlings in the PGS, exchange of products
Dissemination	Person in charge of publicity, collective dissemination work, awareness campaign
Organization	Hired person, visit calendar**
Participation	Implication control, establishment of minimums
Quality	Different guides for different products
Equality	Different guides for different actors
Relation to other PGS	Creation of a Spanish PGS Network
Commercialization**	Collective commercialization (cooperative)
Rapid growth***	Duplicate the PGS, stop admission of new members for some time

*Only producers perceive it as something to improve and gave suggestions

**Only mentioned by members of Vecinos Campesinos

***Only mentioned by members of Ecollaures

Some producers are concerned about their production costs (inputs, machines, etc.) and would like to share some with other members of their PGS initiative. In the case of Vecinos Campesinos, some producers perceived the production costs as an important challenge and would like to form an agricultural cooperative and have a distributor selling the products of their PGS initiative. They mentioned their wish of having this distributor for more PGS initiatives so that producers from different PGS initiatives can sell their products together. Other members also mentioned their wish of having a PGS Network, but not for commercialization but for making the movement stronger. The Spanish PGS have already begun to get in contact with each other. In November 2015 and June 2016 there were two national meetings, where representative members of most of the PGS in Spain met in order to get to know each other and discuss common matters.

“Poner una furgoneta que vaya entre SPGs” (P16)

“Si pudiéramos resolver lo comercial y que pudiéramos canjear entre SPGs, pues ya podríamos alcanzar una satisfacción de más categoría” (P17)

“yo creo que al final o somos capaces de crear una red de grupos más pequeños, y aún así la gestión de la red necesitaría de una tarea de coordinación” (P12)

“a van that goes from PGS to PGS” (P16)

“if we could find a solution for commercialization and that we would exchange product among PGS, we would be more satisfied” (P17)

“I think at the end, we have to be able to create a network of smaller groups, and even so the network would need a coordinator” (P12)

“mejorar la coordinación con otros SPGs” (P14)

“improve the coordination with other PGS” (P14)

“que se haga una reunión de SPGs y que se pongan en común cosas y acercarnos lo unos a los otros” (P16)

“we should make a meeting of PGS where we put things in common and get closer” (P16)

As a way of improving the efficiency of the studied PGS initiatives, members perceive that the assemblies should be more efficient. They would like to learn how to better communicate, organise and work in a participative and horizontal way during assemblies. Interviewees from Ecollaures find the workshop received about communication skills in participatory-horizontal systems particularly helpful and would like to have more. The workshop was about facilitation tools for participative meetings. They perceive a great improvement in their assemblies since they did the workshop.

4.4. Personal motivations of the members of the studied PGS initiatives

4.4.1. Initial motivation

When asked about their motivation as they decided to join/create their PGS initiative, the interviewees had to evaluate the importance of a list of statements. The list for producers included reasons why they decided to guarantee their products with the PGS (Table 17), while the list for other actors included reasons why they decided to join the PGS (Table 18). In both cases, there is no relationship between the different studied PGS initiatives and the degree of importance (Fisher exact, $n=22$, $p>0.05$). So again, the results are presented as the arithmetic mean of all interviews.

Both producers and other actors consider PGS as a tool for social change and it was an (very) important reason for joining the PGS initiative, especially for consumers, entities and shops (100%). These members (consumers, entities and shops) also agree on the importance of the direct relationship between actors that it is built through the PGS and on the promotion of local production.

In the case of producers, more than 50% do not consider important the fact that the PGS-guarantee is cheaper than the TPC when they decided to join/create a PGS (Table 17). Moreover, the possibility of a higher income with the PGS does not seem to be a reason why producers joined the PGS. On the other hand, the establishment of a community of producers and mutual support are of great importance to the producers. To the first statement one producer indicated the importance of including consumers in it, as they should also be part of the community.

Table 17: Statements about the reasons why producers decided to guarantee their products with the studied PGS initiatives and their level of importance according to interviewed producers. Arithmetic mean across the three studied PGS initiatives ($n=100\% = 22$ per statement; Ecollaures: $n=10$; Vecinos Campesinos: $n=8$; Ecovalle: $n=4$; Fisher exact test, $n=22$, $p>0.05$)

Statement	%	None	Very low	Low	Normal	High	Very High
Promotion of local products	4.5	0	0	0	0	22.7	72.7
Direct relations with consumers	0	0	0	0	4.5	31.8	63.6
Arise awareness among consumers about organic agriculture	0	0	0	0	18.2	27.3	54.5
Possibility of a higher income with the PGS	19	9.5	19	33.3	14.3	0	
This PGS initiative establishes a community of producers	0	0	4.5	4.5	27.3	63.6	
PGS is cheaper than TPC	40.9	4.5	4.5	18.2	18.2	13.6	

The fact that the PGS is a tool for social change	0	0	0	0	22.7	77.3
The opportunity for mutual support with other producers	4.5	0	0	0	31.8	63.6
The opinion of my family/friends	45	5	5	30	10	5

More than 50% of the other actors (non-producers) asked perceive that all the statements were (very) important reasons why they decided to join their PGS initiatives, with exception of the prices (Table 18). In relation to the production, the organic characteristics of the products and the environmental care are especially important for these actors.

Table 18: Statements about the reasons why consumers, entities and shops decided to join the studied PGS initiatives and their level of importance according to interviewed actors belonging to a consumers group, entity or shop. Arithmetic means across the three studied PGS initiatives (n= 100 % = 7 per statement; Ecollaures: n=5; Vecinos Campesinos: n=2; Ecovalle: n=0)

Statement	%	None	Very low	Low	Normal	High	Very High
Support small producers	0	14.3	0	0	0	85.7	
The environment of this PGS initiative	14.3	14.3	0	0	42.9	28.6	
The organic characteristics of the products	0	0	0	0	28.6	71.4	
The opportunity to have a direct relation with producers	0	0	0	0	28.6	71.4	
The prices of this PGS initiative	28.6	0	14.3	14.3	42.9	0	
The quality of the products of this PGS initiative	14.3	0	0	0	42.9	42.9	
The promotion of local consumption	0	0	0	0	0	100	
The diversity of products of this PGS initiative	14.3	0	14.3	0	28.6	42.9	
Your Health	14.3	28.6	0	0	14.3	42.9	
The environmental care	0	0	0	0	28.6	71.4	
The opportunity to give your opinion about organic production	14.3	14.3	0	0	14.3	57.1	
The fact that PGS is a tool for social change	0	0	0	0	0	100	

To the open question about their motivations, some interviewees mentioned their disagreement with the current TPC as a significant factor for joining/creating the PGS initiative. They wanted to differentiate themselves from TPC and “*other kind of ecologic producers*”. One member said they do not want to certify products but “*certify or guarantee processes, projects and collectives, people*”. This interviewee was not the only one to use the word ‘guarantee’ instead of ‘certificate’. During the interviews, many interviewees preferred the use of the word guarantee when talking about PGS. The interviewees perceive that PGS is more interactive, real and fair than TPC. The socio-economic criteria included in the studied PGS initiatives seem to also be an important motivation for the interviewees; especially the fact that the studied PGS initiatives consider the working conditions of employees and supports the viability of the projects. Moreover, the community of people formed in the studied PGS initiatives, with similar values and ideology, is one of the main motivation factors mentioned during the interviews. Only one member mentioned that the commercialization was also a motivation for joining the PGS as “*it could help opening the doors for other kind of consumers*”.

The statistical analysis suggests that there is a significant relationship between the studied PGS initiatives and the political motivation of its members (Fisher exact, $n=29$, $p<0.05$). Whereas members of Ecovalle and Vecinos Campesinos did not mention any political motivation during the interviews, 40% of the members of Ecollaures interviewed perceive the PGS as a political tool. While participating in different activities of Ecollaures I could perceive that this PGS initiative stands by politics and social change, for example the topic of food sovereignty was mentioned several times.

“ser un elemento de presión para las instituciones” *“be an element of pressure for institutions”* (P4)

“este proyecto que incluía esa parte transformadora que para mi era esencial (...) lucha por la soberanía” *“this project that included that transforming part was for me essential (...) the fight for sovereignty”* (P7)

“que sea un proyecto de transformación social desde nuestro ámbito de trabajo” (P9) *“that it is a project for social transformation from our workspace”* (P9)

“agroecológico tiene una componente social y política que no la puedes separar” (P15) *“agroecology has a social and political component that you cannot separate”* (P15)

Related to this topic seems to be the use of the word ‘agroecology’ instead of ‘organic agriculture’. In the words of the interviewees, *“agroecology is not the same as organic agriculture”, “its definition is so broad and deep (...) that we have to break it down into its true meaning so the consumer realizes it is more”*. *“Agroecology includes the social factors”, “it is organic agriculture understood in a broad sense”*. Again there is a strong significant relationship between the studied PGS initiatives and the use of the word ‘agroecology’ (Fisher exact, $n=31$, $p=0.00$). 80% of respondents from Ecollaures ($n=15$) and 60% from Ecovalle ($n=5$) used the word ‘agroecology’ (or derivatives) during the interviews, while none of the members of Vecinos Campesinos interviewed ($n=11$) used this word.

On the other hand, members from Vecinos Campesinos were the only ones mentioning the trust generated through their PGS as a motivation to join/create it. Their disconformity with TPC is also a motivation, especially in relation to the diversity of crops, bureaucracy and costs. Some members perceive TPC easier for bigger producers with monocultures and that *“it does not answer the necessities of the small producers”*.

4.4.2. Possible producers’ motivation according to the members of the studied PGS initiatives

Interviewees were asked about their opinion on the possible motivations a producer may have for joining a PGS initiative. The most common answer is the community formed in the PGS initiative and the support producers get from it. Other motivations are the fact that their product is appreciated and that producers can differentiate themselves from the TPC. Some respondents suppose producers might be unhappy with the current certification system and they may see PGS as an alternative to it. The socio-economic criteria included in the studied PGS initiatives might also make the system more attractive than TPC for some producers.

There are interviewees who perceive that currently some producers might want the PGS-guarantee for commercial purposes and because they do not want to pay the TPC. Interviewees criticize these possible attitudes and believe producers with this kind of motivations do not know PGS. *“There is a lot of work behind the PGS”* and *“it might be easier to just pay the TPC than joining the PGS”*. They also perceive that producers that join the studied PGS initiatives have *“a strong ideology”* and *“might want to change things; there is a bit of an anti-system movement”*. Other perceived motivations are trust, direct relation with consumers, engagement and education.

4.4.3. Motivation for participating in assemblies and visits

There are no significant differences in motivation for participating in the visits between the studied PGS initiatives (Fisher exact, $n=29$, $p>0.05$). Interviewees mentioned the following reasons for joining the visits: get to know the members in a smaller group than during the assemblies, get to know the different projects, understand producers, social activities like lunch (Illustration 4 and 5), gossip, learn about the projects and agricultural techniques, exchange, support, understand producers and their obligatory character, as shown in some of the answers bellow.

<i>"cuando fui a la visita pues lo entendí todo mucho mejor y me gustó ir por eso porque entendí, entendí muchas cosas"</i> (P1)	<i>"when I went to the visit I understood everything much better and I liked going because of that, because I understood many things"</i> (P1)
<i>"cotillear a ver qué hacen, qué hacen bien, qué hacen mal"</i> (P3)	<i>"gossip what the other are doing right and wrong"</i> (P3)
<i>"almuerzas, pasas el día en el campo y no tienes que doblar la espalda y se está a gusto"</i> (P3)	<i>"have lunch, spend the day in the countryside and you do not have to work, you feel at ease"</i> (P3)
<i>"es un momento de convivencia importante en las que se crea grupo"</i> (P7)	<i>"it is an important time of coexistence, where the group is created"</i> (P7)
<i>"porque son divertidas y se come bien"</i> (P7)	<i>"because they are funny and the food is good"</i> (P7)
<i>"conocer la problemática, qué hándicaps pueden encontrar en la producción"</i> (P11)	<i>"meet the problems and handicaps producers might find in the production"</i> (P11)
<i>"es una obligación que nos hemos puesto entre todos, entonces si tomas esa decisión pues tendrás que cumplirlo"</i> (P12)	<i>"it is an obligation we have stablished, so if you make that decision you should fulfill it"</i> (P12)
<i>"algunas veces viene bien que los que llevan más años ayuden un poco para que la gente que lleva menos tiempo no cometa fallos que hemos cometido los demás"</i> (P18)	<i>"sometimes it is good that those involved during more years help the new ones so that they do not make the same mistakes"</i> (P18)
<i>"el estado actual de las fincas nos interesa mucho"</i> (P19)	<i>"we are very interested on the current status of the fields"</i> (P19)
<i>"encuentro entre los productores, donde se habla también de temas agrícolas, me resultan interesantes"</i> (P22)	<i>"the meeting among producers, where you can talk about agricultural issues"</i> (P22)
<i>"intercambiar experiencias"</i> (P25)	<i>"exchange experiences"</i> (P25)
<i>"ver que la gente lo está haciendo bien"</i> (P27)	<i>"see that the people are doing it right"</i> (P27)



Illustration 5: Lunch after an annual visit at the fields of one of the producers of Ecollaures in Valencia (López Cifuentes, 2016)



Illustration 6: Social gathering after an annual visit of Ecollaures in Valencia (López Cifuentes, 2016)

There is only one motivation for participating in visits mentioned by some interviewees from Vecinos Campesinos that was not mentioned by the other two PGS initiatives: 'control'. These members perceive the visits as a tool for controlling that the others are producing according to the principles to their PGS initiatives. Moreover, one member of Vecinos Campesinos explained that his low motivation to participate in the visits is due to the lack of a calendar of visits and of interest, as padrinos are the ones supposed to do the visits and there is no need for more producers but consumers.

The main reasons for attending the assemblies seem to be the decision making process, the organisation and management of the PGS and its progress. In general, members perceive the assemblies as a fundamental part of their PGS in order to move forward and they want to be present during the decision making. Again some members mentioned the obligatory character of the assemblies as a reason for attending and the fact that they committed to the PGS. Other perceived reasons are the learning process, the ludic part of the assemblies and the opportunity to meet with most of the members at once.

4.4.4. Benefits associated with the participation in the studied PGS initiatives

The community created within the studied PGS initiatives is the most common answer. Interviewees perceive the community, the network and the exchange within the PGS as important benefits. The fact that the PGS-guarantee gives the product an extra value that is linked to an ideology is also perceived as a benefit. Some other benefits mentioned are quality, transparency, control, education and personal satisfaction.

Interviewees from Ecollaures and Ecovalle also perceive the commercial opportunities and political fight as benefits. *“The PGS gives the opportunity to participate in some markets”* (P2). Some interviewees of Vecinos Campesinos on the other hand perceive the reduction of bureaucracy and costs a benefit compared to TPC. Moreover, there were two interviewees who mentioned not to currently obtain any benefit from their PGS.

“ninguno, estamos de acuerdo y simpatizamos con la idea y apoyamos, pero nosotros vendemos con el oficial no sacamos beneficios” (P29)

“la gente confía más que otra cosa” (P30)

“none, we agree and sympathize with the idea and we support it, but we sell with the official seal, we get no benefits” (P29)

“people trust on us more than anything else”(P30)

In the case of Ecollaures, the PGS initiative benefits itself from the participation of NGOs. These NGOs are able to access governmental grants. For example, Ecollaures won a price a 3000€ during the research period due to its participation in a local competition promoted by the city hall. The participation of Ecollaures in this competition was carried out by one of the NGOs member of the PGS initiative. Besides, NGOs support Ecollaures with dissemination work, political pressure in order to improve the legal situation of PGS in Spain, technical support, access to different markets and the participation of at least one of workers of the NGOs in the internal organization and guarantee process.

5. Discussion

5.1. Organization of the studied-PGS initiatives

The ideal PGS initiative includes producers, consumers and other stakeholders like NGOs, universities or government representatives (Bouagnimbeck, 2014). Furthermore, in other case studies of Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe most PGS initiatives were initiated by or with the help of NGOs, farmers organizations or, in the case of Mexico, a network of markets (Katto-Andrighetto, 2013, Bouagnimbeck, 2014). But this is not the case of the Spanish studied PGS initiatives, where farmers initiated the PGS initiatives themselves and the participation of other stakeholders is still low.

As most producers belonging to a PGS initiative, the majority of producers from the studied PGS initiatives have small scale productions and do not own the lands they cultivate (Bouagnimbeck, 2014, Katto-Andrighetto, 2013). But in comparison to other PGS initiatives in Latin America, Asia or Africa, where the majority of producers have a low education level (Meirelles, 2010, Bouagnimbeck, 2014), the majority of the members of the studied PGS initiatives in Spain are highly educated. This high level of education compared to other PGS initiatives might explain why their PGS initiatives were not initiated by another organization. The members of the PGS initiatives had the knowledge and capacity to create their projects themselves.

The participation of other local stakeholders seems to help PGS initiatives with their internal organization and external networking (Bouagnimbeck, 2014, May, 2008). The results supports this statement as Ecollaures, compared to the other two studied PGS initiatives, has the most complex organization system, has more access to local markets and grants and is more present in local political initiatives.

The structure and organization systems of the studied PGS initiatives demonstrates the diversity of approaches with which PGS initiatives may work (Torremocha, 2011). IFOAM suggests an organization system of a typical PGS initiative, as shown in Figure 2 (Bouagnimbeck, 2014). But research on the three Spanish PGS initiatives indicates a different basic organization system than the one proposed by IFOAM. Even though there are differences on the organization of the studied PGS initiatives (Table 6), all three share a basic organization structure (Figure 15). In the organization system found in the three studied PGS initiatives, all stakeholders participate in the certification decision and year-round social control, while in the one propose by IFOAM only farmers have this role (Figure 2 and 15).

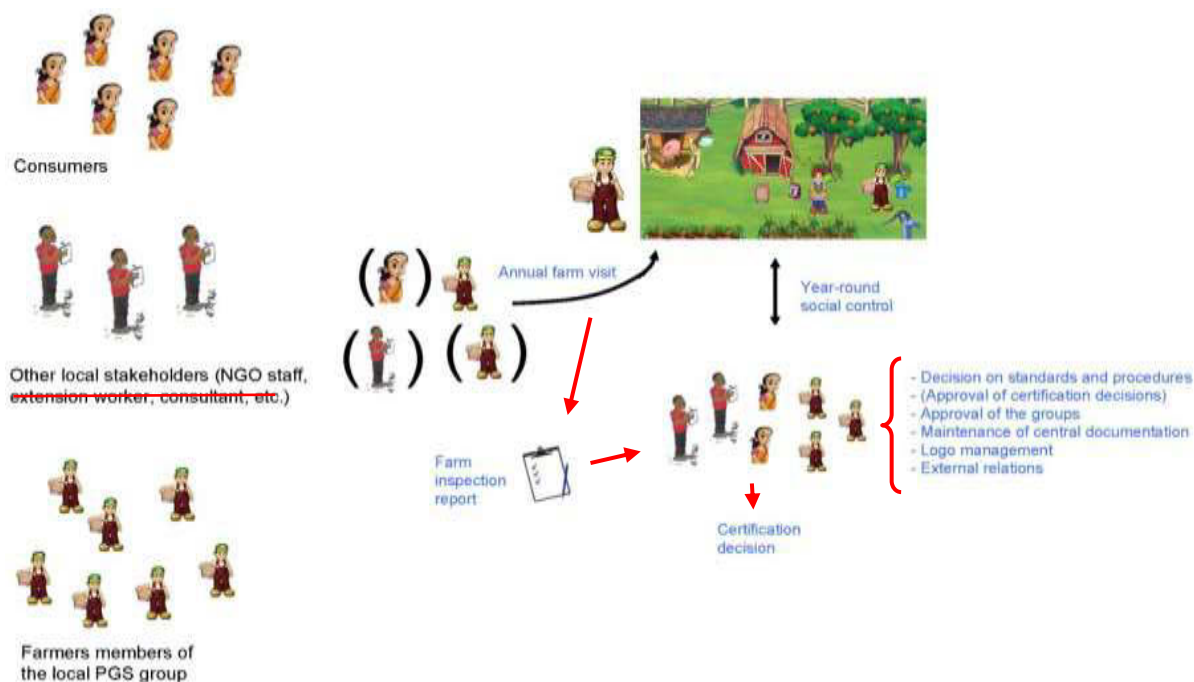


Figure 15: Diagram of the organization of the studied PGS initiatives based on the figure from Bouagnimbeck (2014). In red: arrows added by the author of this project according to collected data

Besides the typical structure of a PGS initiative, literature presents the concept of committees as a basic organization tool: the certification or monitoring committee, the ethical committee and the regional and national coordination committee (May, 2008, Bouagnimbeck, 2014, Fonseca, 2004, Källander, 2008, Cuéllar Padilla and Calle Collado, 2011). In the case of the first Andalusian PGS initiatives, they had different committees and organization structures according to their particular needs (Cuéllar Padilla, 2008). This study agrees with Cuéllar Padilla (2008) as each studied PGS initiative has a different structure. Besides, in Spain there is no national committee and, only in the case of Ecovalle, there is a regional commission coordinating the Andalusian PGS initiatives (PGS FACPE). Each studied PGS initiative has created not only their own structure and working procedures, but also other roles adapted to their particular characteristics. This demonstrates the flexibility and adaptation possibilities of PGS according to the different local and cultural contexts, knowledge of the members, experiences made in the sector, etc.

5.2. Internal regulation

The internal regulation of a PGS initiative has to grow from the grass-roots and be based on local, social, cultural and ecological realities. Each PGS initiative should have its own internal regulation, but this should be based on generally recognized organic standards (Källander, 2008). This is the case of the studied PGS initiatives that developed their own internal regulations based on the EU regulations. Overall, the characteristics of the internal regulations of the studied PGS initiatives agree with the self-evaluation guide proposed by IFOAM in order to analyze whether a PGS initiative fulfills the criteria of PGS (Källander, 2008).

One topic included in this self-evaluation guide is the 'systems for managing non-compliance'. According to it, there should be a defined system for managing non-compliances and farmers should be involved in it (Källander, 2008). This research shows that the topic of non-compliances seems to be a difficult point to define and put into practice by the studied PGS initiatives. As it is not clear for

many members of the studied PGS initiatives, this point should be discussed (or even elaborated) by all three PGS initiatives in order to fulfil the basic requirements of a PGS described by IFOAM.

In this study I provide evidence that the studied PGS initiatives are underpinned by the basic elements defined by IFOAM (May, 2008). Regarding the element of trust, the studied PGS initiatives trust that the producers of their PGS comply with their internal regulation. Whether or not they trust the system itself or just the producers participating in their PGS initiatives cannot be concluded with the data collected in this research. Only in the case of Ecovalle qualitative data indicate that its members trust the PGS FACPE and have their reservations about other Andalusian PGS initiatives which are not included in the PGS FACPE. But further research about the PGS FACPE in Andalusia is needed in order to make wider and more in deep conclusions.

5.3. Challenges and problems

This study shows that the studied PGS initiatives share three of the most common challenges reported in the literature, which are: involving consumers in the PGS initiative, gaining recognition and support from authorities and reliance on voluntary work. These challenges appear in PGS initiatives all over the world with disregard of the different socio-political-contexts (Källander, 2008, Cuéllar Padilla, 2008, Nelson et al., 2009, Boza Martínez, 2010, Katto-Andrighetto, 2013, Bouagnimbeck, 2014, De la Cruz, 2015).

The results indicate that the low involvement of consumers might be due to the lack of legal recognition and little dissemination of PGS in Spain. Even though many producers inform their consumers about PGS, there seems to be a high level of ignorance about PGS among consumers (Cuéllar Padilla, 2008, Katto-Andrighetto, 2013). Unfortunately, this topic is not included in this project and it should be studied in detailed in order to make further conclusions.

The lack of legal recognition might make consumers doubt about the credibility of the organic products from PGS if they do not know neither the producers nor the PGS initiative (Cuéllar Padilla, 2008). Credibility is a difficult concept in organic agriculture, so consumers have to trust in producer's quality claims. Dialogue with consumers to sustain trust can be more important than specific information about traceability, production techniques and so on (Thorsøe, 2015).

According to a study about organic certification in Spain and Brazil, public policies can substantially foster PGS and increase the involvement of the state and other public and/or private bodies (Velleda Caldas et al., 2014). This research indicates that an official recognition of PGS in Spain is necessary in order to improve the situation and increase the number of the Spanish PGS initiatives, as already suggested by Cuéllar Padilla (2008). For these reasons many of the interviewees consider important to have a certain level of recognition. The different levels of recognition given by the interviewees seem to be due to the concern that PGS could end like TPC if legally recognized. For this reason interviewees mention institutions and social recognition as these would not affect the core elements of PGS and they would keep their independence, while with a legal recognition the PGS initiatives could influenced by the public administration.

Although long distances or difficult access are generally not a problem for the studied PGS initiatives as for PGS initiatives in other countries (Bouagnimbeck, 2014), family reconciliation and free time are considered important challenges related to time constrains for producers from the studied PGS initiatives. One solution already proposed by producers in the first Andalusian PGS initiatives and that is working in some others PGS initiatives (for example PGS El Encinar, in Granada, Spain), is to have an employer that takes care of the administration, organization and dissemination of the PGS initiative (Cuéllar Padilla, 2008). But this solution might increase the annual fee of the PGS initiatives and they might need the support of other organizations (producers associations, NGOs, University...).

There are internal challenges shared by the three studied PGS initiatives that other PGS initiatives also have to confront (Cuéllar Padilla, 2008, Katto-Andrighetto, 2013, Bouagnimbeck, 2014, De la Cruz, 2015). Internal challenges are a part of PGS initiatives and should be internally discussed and improved. The internal communication among members is a general problem in the studied PGS initiatives that Ecollaures has been working through communication workshops. These workshops have significantly helped the members of Ecollaures with their communication skills and procedures and they could be used by other PGS initiatives to overcome this kind of challenges.

Particularly in the case of Vecinos Campesinos some members explained in detail what happens to members that deceive the internal regulation although there is no documentation about it. Other interviewed members of this PGS initiative mentioned the goal of converting Vecinos Campesinos into an agricultural cooperative, which is neither documented nor shared by all interviewees. These disagreements or misunderstandings within the PGS initiative might be the result of the geographical dispersion of its members and insufficient reflection on these matters since the foundation of Vecinos Campesinos. As already mention by some members, the division of the PGS initiative into smaller ones could be a solution to this challenge.

5.4. Personal motivations

The higher costs of TPC compared to PGS usually appears next to less paper work or bureaucracy as advantages of PGS (IFOAM, 2006, Coiduras Sánchez et al., 2006, IFOAM, 2007, Cuéllar Padilla, 2008, Källander, 2008, May, 2008, Torremocha, 2011, Bouagnimbeck, 2014, De la Cruz, 2015). Even though producers of the studied PGS initiatives agree on the importance of the low costs and paper load, these are not the main reasons for joining the PGS initiatives. The fact that the members are higher educated compared to PGS initiatives in other countries and most of them have another income, might be the reasons why costs and bureaucracy do not have such an influence in the studied PGS initiatives as in other ones.

According to the interviewees “PGS go further and give an extra value to the organic products, PGS show the real work behind organic production”. This kind of motivation was also found in the first Andalusian PGS initiatives (Cuéllar Padilla, 2009). The members seek to differentiate themselves from other organic producers that do not share their values and produce in a conventional way but with organic techniques (monoculture, big areas). This motivation might also be influenced by the education level of the members and by the socio-political context of Spain.

In this study I have found that some members of the studied PGS initiatives consider PGS as a political tool. This political motivation was already found in Ecovalle by De la Cruz (2015) and is also present in Ecollaures. For the members of these PGS initiatives political topics like food sovereignty seem to be important and they participate in different political actions with their PGS initiatives in order to fight for farmers’ rights. This political motivation was not found by the author in literature about other PGS initiatives. These might be due to the lack of studies about PGS initiatives in European countries with a very different context to Latin American, African or Asian countries.

The use of the word ‘agro-ecology’ is how the members of Ecollaures and Ecovalle show their political interest and differentiation from other organic producers with TPC. Although, there are many definitions of ‘agro-ecology’ in the literature, these agree with the common socio-political interpretation of this term. From this point of view, agro-ecology is a tool for defense, (re) configuration and transformation of rural areas and the key to the revitalization of small farming systems and food sovereignty (Cuéllar Padilla and Sevilla Guzmán, 2010, Altieri and Nicholls, 2012, Rosset and Martínez-Torres, 2012, Gómez et al., 2015)

In general, there are few studies about PGS including the motivations of the members of PGS initiatives, a part from the lower costs and bureaucracy. More research is needed in order to identify the reasons why not only producers but also consumers and other actors would want to join a PGS initiative and the differences between the different countries.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study shows that the three studied Spanish PGS initiatives, despite being in the same country and share basic values, are differently organized and have different structures and internal regulations. This proves the adaptability of PGS and how the studied PGS initiatives are locally adjusted according to their context and the particular needs of their members. Moreover, this study demonstrates that PGS could be a feasible alternative to TPC also in a European country. Although the Spanish PGS initiatives still need more support from public institutions in order to be recognized as a valid guarantee system for organic agriculture.

The main challenges perceived by the members of the PGS initiatives are the involvement of consumers, participation of the members, official recognition and time constraints. Moreover, communication among the members and some other internal problems seem to be a challenge for the studied PGS initiatives. In order to overcome the internal challenges external help is recommended, following the example of Ecollaures. The establishment of a Spanish network of PGS might be helpful in order to empower PGS and make pressure for being officially recognized. This network could work as the PGS FACPE in Andalusia and even have employer(s) that could take care of the organization and decrease the work load of the members.

The producers of the studied PGS initiatives look for a seal that really reflects the work and values behind their products. Their disconformity with the current certification system and the need for a system that assesses their way of production are the main motivations for joining the studied PGS initiatives. Moreover, the community created through the PGS initiatives is important not only for producers but also for consumers, shops and entities. For the last ones, PGS are a way of getting in contact with producers and learn about their reality. PGS have the potential to bring producers and consumers back together.

Currently the commercial advantages obtained from the studied PGS initiatives are very few. Instead, the main benefit perceived by the members of the studied PGS initiatives is the community created in their initiatives. The support, knowledge, exchange and social network of the community are some of the benefits of PGS.

There is a general desire of improving the studied PGS initiatives and grow. But as long as they do not receive some kind of recognition and more information is available for the public, this growth will be limited. The support of NGOs and other entities, as well as more research, may help developing PGS in Spain.

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8. List of figures

Figure 1: Organization structure of TPC (adapted from Albersmeier et al. (2009)).....	10
Figure 2: Diagram of the organization of a typical PGS initiative (Bouagnimbeck, 2014).....	14
Figure 3: Evolution of organic agriculture in Spain between 1991 and 2014 (López Cifuentes, 2016, data from Subdirección General de Calidad Diferenciada y Agricultura Ecológica (2015)).....	15
Figure 4: Map of Spain with the different Autonomous Communities (grey dotted lines). Drops: established PGS initiatives in Spain in the year of research (2016); in red letters: studied PGS initiatives: Ecollaures, Vecinos Campesinos and Ecovalle (López Cifuentes, 2016).....	16
Figure 5: Map of the south-east of Spain. In red: areas where the projects belonging to each studied PGS initiative are located (from right to left: L'Horta de València (Ecollaures), region of Murcia (Vecinos Campesinos) and Valle de Lecrín (Ecovalle)) (López Cifuentes, 2016, based on Google Maps)	19
Figure 6: Education level of the interviewed members of the three studied PGS initiatives (Ecollaures: n=15; Vecinos Campesinos: n=13; Ecovalle: n=5).....	25
Figure 7: Place of birth of the interviewed members of the three studied PGS initiatives (Ecollaures: n=15; Vecinos Campesinos: n=13; Ecovalle: n=5).....	26
Figure 8: Percentage of domestic income coming from organic agriculture per studied PGS initiative (Ecollaures: n=10; Vecinos Campesinos: n=9; Ecovalle: n=5). Significant difference between studied PGS- initiatives (Fisher exact, n=24, P<0.05).....	27
Figure 9: Size of cultivated land (ha) of the producers of each studied PGS initiative (Ecollaures: n=10; Vecinos Campesinos: n=9; Ecovalle: n=5). N.s. = no significant difference between studied PGS initiatives (Fisher exact, n=24, P>0.05).....	27
Figure 10: Actors that have attended at least one visit of the producers interviewed (Ecollaures: n=7; Vecinos Campesinos: n=8; Ecovalle: n=4)	39
Figure 11: Percentage of interviewed producers using the different commercialization channels (n=21).....	41
Figure 12: Percentage of interviewed producers producing the different goods (n=22)	42
Figure 13: Perception of the interviewed members of the studied PGS initiatives on the level of importance of a possible future legal recognition of PGS in Spain (Ecollaures: n=14; Vecinos Campesinos: n=10; Ecovalle: n=4).....	47
Figure 14: Members' distribution of Vecinos Campesinos. Marked area: Region of Murcia. Drops: places with members of the Vecinos Campesinos (López Cifuentes, 2016, based on Google Maps)	48
Figure 15: Diagram of the organization of the studied PGS initiatives based on the figure from Bouagnimbeck (2014). In red: arrows added by the author of this project according to collected data.....	57

9. List of tables

Table 1: Advantages and disadvantages of TPC as discussed by: Tanner (2000), Deaton (2004), Albersmeier et al. (2009), Padel (2010), Velleda Caldas et al. (2014), Jahn et al. (2005), Getz and Screck (2006), and Meirelles (2003).....	11
Table 2: Main differences between Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) and Third Party Certification (TPC). Adapted from De la Cruz (2015, p.75)	12
Table 3: Basic demographic characteristics of the areas where the members of the studied PGS initiatives are located (INE, 2016, CREM, n.d., Hidalgo Sánchez et al., 2015, Granadapedia, n.d.)	20
Table 4: Number of structured interviews per studied PGS initiative and kind of actor	24
Table 5: Actors involved in the studied PGS initiatives and their functions	25
Table 6: Structure of the three studied PGS initiatives and functions	28
Table 7: Challenging topics perceived by interviewees during the standards development of the three studied PGS initiatives	32
Table 8: Main topics of the internal regulations of the studied PGS initiatives.....	32
Table 9: Topics added to the European regulation (EC) 889/2008 in the production guidelines of Vecinos Campesinos and Ecovalle.....	33
Table 10: First contact and prerequisites of the three studied PGS initiatives for applicants	36
Table 11: Division of violations depending on its importance for Ecollaures and Ecovalle	37

Table 12: Division of penalties depending on the level of gravity of the violations for Ecollaures and Ecovalle .	37
Table 13: Topics included in the visit guides of the studied PGS initiatives.....	40
Table 14: Interviewees' evaluation of some statements about the current status of each PGS (n=29), arithmetic mean across the three studied PGS initiatives (Fisher exact, n=29, p>0.05)	43
Table 15: Problems and challenges perceived by the interviewees in the studied PGS initiatives	48
Table 16: Perceived aspects to improve in the studied PGS initiatives and suggested tools for improvement ...	49
Table 17: Statements about the reasons why producers decided to guarantee their products with the studied PGS initiatives and their level of importance according to interviewed producers. Arithmetic mean across the three studied PGS initiatives (n= 100 % = 22 per statement; Ecollaures: n=10; Vecinos Campesinos: n=8; Ecovalle: n=4; Fisher exact test, n=22, p>0.05)	50
Table 18: Statements about the reasons why consumers, entities and shops decided to join the studied PGS initiatives and their level of importance according to interviewed actors belonging to a consumers group, entity or shop. Arithmetic means across the three studied PGS initiatives (n= 100 % = 7 per statement; Ecollaures: n=5; Vecinos Campesinos: n=2; Ecovalle: n=0)	51

10. List of illustrations

Illustration 1: Vegetable production from a producer of Ecollaures. In the background: Village of Picanya, L'Horta de València (López Cifuentes, 2016)	20
Illustration 2: Daily work in the fields of the 'self-production cooperative' with two farmers and four consumers in the Valley of Lecrín, Granada	26
Illustration 3: Flyer of Vecinos Campesinos with their main values (López Cifuentes, 2017).....	34
Illustration 4: Annual visit of the fields of a producer from Ecollaures in Picassent, Valencia (López Cifuentes, 2016)	39
Illustration 5: Lunch after an annual visit at the fields of one of the producers of Ecollaures in Valencia (López Cifuentes, 2016)	54
Illustration 6: Social gathering after an annual visit of Ecollaures in Valencia (López Cifuentes, 2016)	54

11. Appendix

Encuesta para los miembros de los SPG españoles

Proyecto de trabajo fin de máster

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SECCIÓN I: EL SISTEMA PARTICIPATIVO DE GARANTÍA

1. Defina con sus propias palabras lo que es un Sistema Participativo de Garantía

2. ¿Cómo se enteró de la existencia de este SPG?

3. ¿Como parte de qué colectivo ingresó en el SPG?

☐ Productor ☐ Consumidor ☐ Entidad ☐ Otro: _____

4. ¿Cuándo ingresó en el SPG? [año]: _____

5. En el caso de productores: ¿Cuándo empezó a vender sus productos con el sello del SPG? [año]: _____

6. ¿Cómo fue el proceso de ingreso al SPG?

7. ¿Tuvo que firmar algún documento al ingresar en el SPG?

☐ Sí ☐ No

8. ¿Qué le motivó a unirse/impulsar el SPG?

9. ¿Participó usted en la creación del SPG?

☐ Sí ☐ No (*pase a la pregunta 10*)

En caso de que su respuesta sea sí,

10. ¿Cuáles fueron los retos más importantes durante la fundación del SPG?

11. ¿Cuáles son los beneficios más importantes que obtiene por su participación en el SPG?

12. ¿Cuál es su opinión en relación a la situación actual de los siguientes aspectos del SPG?

	Muy malo	Malo	Regular	Bueno	Muy Bueno
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
Su sentimiento de comunidad con los demás miembros del SPG es	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La organización de este SPG es	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La comunicación entre los miembros de este SPG es	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La difusión de este SPG es	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La posibilidad de participar en la toma de decisiones del SPG es	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La relación entre los miembros de este SPG es	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Las vías de comunicación utilizadas en este SPG son	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
El proceso de toma de decisiones en el SPG es	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. ¿Cuánto tiempo semanal invierte en el SPG? [promedio en minutos]: _____

14. ¿Usted participa o ha participado en: ...?

Visitas de control	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sí	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	(pase a la pregunta 17)
Asambleas	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sí	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	(pase a la pregunta 17)
Alguna comisión/grupo de trabajo	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sí	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	(pase a la pregunta 17)
Otro: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sí	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	(pase a la pregunta 17)

En caso de que su respuesta sea sí,

15. ¿Con qué regularidad participa o ha participado en: ...?

Visitas de control	<input type="checkbox"/> Siempre	<input type="checkbox"/> Casi siempre	<input type="checkbox"/> De vez en cuando	<input type="checkbox"/> Casi nunca
Asambleas	<input type="checkbox"/> Siempre	<input type="checkbox"/> Casi siempre	<input type="checkbox"/> De vez en cuando	<input type="checkbox"/> Casi nunca
Comisiones/grupos de trabajo	<input type="checkbox"/> Siempre	<input type="checkbox"/> Casi siempre	<input type="checkbox"/> De vez en cuando	<input type="checkbox"/> Casi nunca
Otro: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Siempre	<input type="checkbox"/> Casi siempre	<input type="checkbox"/> De vez en cuando	<input type="checkbox"/> Casi nunca

16. ¿Cuándo fue la última vez que ha participado en: ...?

En una visita de control _____

En una asamblea _____

17. ¿Cuáles son/eran las razones principales para participar?

En visitas de control

En asambleas

En comisiones /grupos de trabajo

En caso de que alguna de sus respuestas a la pregunta 13 sea no,

18. ¿Cuáles son las principales razones por las que no participa en: ...?

En visitas de control

En asambleas

En comisiones /grupos de trabajo

19. En su opinión, ¿cuáles son los principales motivos por los que hay una baja participación por parte de los consumidores?

20. ¿Cómo considera la participación de los miembros del SPG?

	Muy baja	Baja	Regular	Alta	Muy Alta
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
De los productores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
De los consumidores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
De las entidades	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
De otros actores: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

21. ¿Cómo le parecen los precios de los productos del SPG?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Muy Bajo	Bajo	Normal	Alto	Muy Alto
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

Preguntas solo para productores

22. ¿Con qué productos ingresó al SPG?

23. ¿Qué productos vende actualmente en el SPG?

24. ¿Cómo comercializa sus productos con el sello del SPG?

25. ¿Posee otras certificaciones además de la del SPG?

☐ Sí ¿Cuál(es)? _____ ☐ No

26. ¿Por qué certifica sus productos con el SPG?

Indique la importancia de los siguientes factores a la hora de elegir certificar sus productos con el SPG

	Importancia					
	Ninguna	Muy Baja	Baja	Regular	Alta	Muy Alta
	[0]	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
El fomento del consumo local	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La relación directa con los consumidores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
El hecho de que el SPG puede concienciar a los consumidores sobre la producción ecológica	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
El hecho de que en este SPG puede generar ingresos más altos	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
El hecho de que en este SPG se forma una comunidad de productores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
El hecho de que el sello del SPG más económico que la certificación oficial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
El hecho de que el SPG es una herramienta para el cambio social	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La oportunidad de apoyo mutuo con otros productores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La opinión de mis amigos/familia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Otra razón: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

27. Indique su nivel de confianza respecto a que otros productores del SPG cumplan con el reglamento interno del SPG:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ninguna	Muy Baja	Baja	Regular	Alta	Muy Alta	Completa
[0]	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]

28. Indique su nivel de confianza respecto a que los productores de otros SPGs cumplan los principios básicos de los SPG:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ninguna	Muy Baja	Baja	Regular	Alta	Muy Alta	Completa
[0]	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]

Preguntas solo para consumidores

29. ¿Consume productos certificados por el SPG?

☐ Sí, ☐ No

30. ¿Por qué participa en el SPG?

Indique la importancia de los siguientes factores a la hora de participar en el SPG

	Importancia					
	Ninguna	Muy Baja	Baja	Regular	Alta	Muy Alta
	[0]	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
El apoyo a los pequeños productores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
El ambiente de este SPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La característica ecológica de los productos del SPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La oportunidad de hablar directamente con el productor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
El precio de los productos del SPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La calidad de los productos del SPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
El fomento del consumo local	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La diversidad de productos del SPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Su salud	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
El cuidado del medio ambiente	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La oportunidad de opinar sobre la producción agroecológica	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
El hecho de que el SPG sea una herramienta para el cambio social	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Otra razón: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

31. ¿Compra productos ecológicos en otros lugares?

☐ Sí, ☐ No

32. ¿Cuál cree que es el papel de los consumidores en el SPG?

33. Indique su nivel de confianza respecto a que los productores del SPG cumplan con el reglamento interno del SPG:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ninguna	Muy Baja	Baja	Regular	Alta	Muy Alta	Completa
[0]	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]

34. Indique su nivel de confianza respecto a que los productores de otros SPGs cumplan los principios básicos de los SPG:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ninguna	Muy Baja	Baja	Regular	Alta	Muy Alta	Completa
[0]	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]

Preguntas solo para entidades

35. ¿Cuál es la función de su entidad en el SPG?

36. ¿De qué manera apoya su entidad al SPG?

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Económica | <input type="checkbox"/> Difusión |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Técnica | <input type="checkbox"/> Otras: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Formación (cursos, talleres...) | |

37. ¿Qué temas trabaja su entidad?

38. Indique su nivel de confianza respecto a que los productores del SPG cumplan con el reglamento interno del SPG:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ninguna	Muy Baja	Baja	Regular	Alta	Muy Alta	Completa
[0]	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]

39. Indique su nivel de confianza respecto a que los productores de otros SPGs cumplan los principios básicos de los SPG:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ninguna	Muy Baja	Baja	Regular	Alta	Muy Alta	Completa
[0]	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]

40. ¿Por qué participa su entidad en el SPG?

Indique la importancia de los siguientes factores a la hora participar en el SPG

	Importancia					
	Ninguna	Muy Baja	Baja	Regular	Alta	Muy Alta
	[0]	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
El apoyo a los pequeños productores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
El ambiente de este SPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La característica ecológica de los productos del SPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La oportunidad de hablar directamente con el productor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
El precio de los productos del SPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La calidad de los productos del SPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
El fomento del consumo local	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La diversidad de productos del SPG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Su salud	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
El cuidado del medio ambiente	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La oportunidad de opinar sobre la producción agroecológica	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
El hecho de que el SPG sea una herramienta para el cambio social	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Otra razón: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECCIÓN II: REGLAMENTO INTERNO DEL SPG

41. Usted, ¿conoce el reglamento interno del SPG?

☐ Sí ☐ No

42. Dicho reglamento, ¿se encuentra por escrito?

☐ Sí ☐ No ☐ No lo sé

En caso de que su respuesta sea sí,

43. Usted, ¿posee una copia de dicho reglamento?

☐ Sí ☐ No

44. ¿Dónde puede encontrar el reglamento?: _____

45. Usted, ¿ha participado en el desarrollo de dicho reglamento?

☐ Sí ☐ No

En caso de que su respuesta sea sí,

46. ¿Cuáles fueron los puntos más difíciles de acordar durante la elaboración del reglamento?

47. ¿Se utilizó algún otro documento para desarrollar el reglamento interno?

☐ Sí, ¿Cuál(es)?: _____ ☐ No

48. ¿Cómo de satisfecho está usted con el reglamento actual del SPG?

Nivel de satisfacción

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nada	Muy Bajo	Bajo	Regular	Alto	Muy Alto
[0]	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

49. Si un miembro del SPG no cumple con el reglamento, ¿cuáles son las consecuencias?

50. Cuando se toman decisiones sin su participación, ¿qué le parece la comunicación de dichas decisiones?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Muy Mala	Mala	Regular	Buena	Muy Buena
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

51. Según su opinión, ¿cómo de importante es la participación de los siguientes actores para que el SPG funcione adecuadamente? Del siguiente listado ordene los actores por orden de importancia:

Una ONG u otra organización	
Los productores	
Los consumidores	
Una universidad (académicos, técnicos, estudiantes)	
Otro:	

SECCIÓN III: PROCESO DE CERTIFICACIÓN PARTICIPATIVA

52. ¿Qué palabras utilizaría usted para definir un producto certificado por el SPG?

53. Según su experiencia, ¿cómo evalúa la guía de visita utilizada actualmente?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Muy mala	Mala	Regular	Buena	Muy buena
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

54. En su opinión, ¿cuáles son los principales motivos por los que un productor decida certificarse con el SPG?

55. En su opinión, ¿cómo es el proceso de certificación del SPG que se está practicando actualmente?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Muy Malo	Malo	Regular	Bueno	Muy Bueno
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

Preguntas solo para consumidores y entidades

56. ¿Usted tiene que pagar alguna cuota para ser miembro del SPG?

☐ Sí ☐ No

En caso de que su respuesta sea sí,

57. ¿Qué cuota anual paga? _____ €/año

58. ¿Cómo evalúa dicha cuota?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Muy Baja	Baja	Normal	Alta	Muy Alta
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

Preguntas solo para productores

59. ¿Cuándo fue la última visita de control a su finca? _____

60. ¿Cuántas visitas de control ha recibido en su finca desde que ingresó en el SPG? _____

61. Indique cuáles de los siguientes actores participaron en las visitas de control de su unidad de producción:

- ☐ Otros productores del SPG
- ☐ Consumidores del SPG
- ☐ Miembros de alguna universidad ¿cuál? _____
- ☐ Consumidores externos al SPG
- ☐ Productores externos al SPG
- ☐ Miembros de alguna entidad perteneciente al SPG
- ☐ Otro: _____

62. ¿Usted tiene que pagar alguna cuota para obtener el sello del SPG?

☐ Sí ☐ No (pase a la sección IV)

En caso de que su respuesta sea sí,

63. ¿Qué cuota anual paga? _____ €/año

64. ¿Cómo evalúa dicha cuota?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Muy Bajo	Bajo	Regular	Alto	Muy Alto
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

65. Para usted, ¿cuáles son los beneficios más importantes que obtiene de la certificación participativa?

SECCIÓN IV: APRENDIZAJE, CAPACITACIÓN

66. ¿Cómo evalúa sus conocimientos sobre: ...?

	Nulo	Muy Bajo	Bajo	Regular	Alto	Muy Alto
	[0]	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
La agricultura ecológica	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La certificación ecológica participativa	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
La certificación ecológica oficial (CAE)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

67. ¿Se informa sobre la producción ecológica y la certificación participativa?

☐ Sí ☐ No

En caso de que su respuesta sea sí,

68. ¿Cómo? _____

69. ¿Ha recibido algún tipo de capacitación/curso por parte del SPG?

☐ Sí ☐ No (Pase a la pregunta 48)

En caso de que su respuesta sea sí,

70. ¿Sobre qué tema(s)? _____

71. ¿Quién le dio la capacitación/curso? _____

En caso de que su respuesta sea no,

72. ¿Le gustaría que el SPG ofreciera cursos/talleres para sus miembros?

☐ Sí ☐ No

En caso de que su respuesta sea sí,

73. ¿Sobre qué tema(s)? _____

74. ¿Cómo evalúa su nivel de aprendizaje durante las visitas de control?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Muy Malo	Malo	Regular	Bueno	Muy Bueno	No he participado
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	

75. ¿Cómo evalúa su nivel de aprendizaje durante las asambleas?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Muy Malo	Malo	Regular	Bueno	Muy Bueno	No he participado
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	

SECCIÓN V: DIFICULTADES

76. A lo largo de su participación en el SPG, ¿ha experimentado algún tipo de problema?

☐ Sí ☐ No

En caso de que su respuesta sea sí,

77. ¿Qué tipo de problemas ha tenido?

78. ¿Cómo de importante es para usted que el SPG sea validado a nivel oficial?

Importancia

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nada	Muy Baja	Baja	Regular	Alta	Muy Alta
[0]	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]

79. ¿Cuáles son los motivos de su respuesta anterior?

80. Según usted, ¿existen cosas que se podrían mejorar en el SPG? ¿Cuáles?

SECCIÓN VI: DATOS BÁSICOS

81. Año de nacimiento: ____

82. Sexo

☐ Mujer ☐ Hombre

83. Lugar de procedencia: _____

84. Indique el nivel máximo de sus estudios

☐ Primaria incompleta ☐ Universidad
☐ Primaria ☐ Doctorado
☐ Secundaria ☐ Otro: _____
☐ Formación profesional

85. Ocupación(es): _____

Solo para productores:

86. ¿Cuál es el tamaño de su finca? _____
87. ¿Desde cuándo practica la agricultura ecológica? [año]: _____
88. ¿Qué porcentaje de terreno dedica al SPG? _____%
89. ¿Qué porcentaje del ingreso total anual de su hogar viene de la agricultura ecológica? _____%

Solo para consumidores:

90. ¿Qué porcentaje de productos ecológicos consume a la semana? _____%
91. De estos productos, ¿qué porcentaje están certificados por el SPG? _____%
92. ¿De cuántos miembros se compone su hogar? _____
93. De los cuáles, ¿cuántos son menores de 18 años? _____

Solo para entidades:

94. ¿Cuántas personas hay trabajando en su entidad? _____
95. ¿Desde qué año funciona su entidad? _____
96. ¿A qué nivel trabaja su entidad: ...?

☐ Local ☐ Nacional
☐ Regional ☐ Internacional
☐ De la Comunidad autónoma

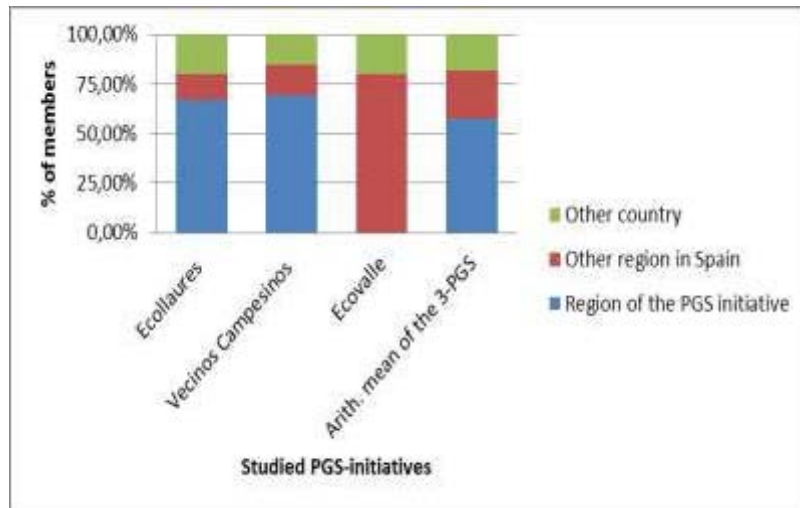


Figure 7: Place of birth of the interviewed members of the three studied PGS initiatives (Ecollaures: n=15; Vecinos Campesinos: n=13; Ecovalle: n=5)

No individual consumers are participating in the studied PGS initiatives. In Ecollaures they are present through two FoodCoops. Each FoodCoop has representative members that assist to the assemblies of Ecollaures and inform the rest of the members of the FoodCoops about the news in Ecollaures. In the case of Vecinos Campesinos there is an association of consumers called Biosegura that has two employees in charge of the organisation of the association. The employees represent Biosegura within Vecinos Campesinos and they were present during its foundation. Although Ecovalle has no consumers directly involved, one of the projects participating is, as literally translated, a 'self-production cooperative'. This 'self-production cooperative' is a group of consumers that produce their own organic food. They have three hired farmers, but each member has to help in the fields at least once a month (Illustration 2). One of the farmers represents the cooperative in Ecovalle.



Illustration 2: Daily work in the fields of the 'self-production cooperative' with two farmers and four consumers in the Valley of Lecrín, Granada

NGOs are only present in Ecollaures. Per l'Horta is a local movement in defence of the territory and was involved from the beginning in Ecollaures. Afterwards the NGOs Engineers Without Borders and the Centre for Rural Studies and International Agriculture (CERAI, from its Spanish initials) joined Ecollaures.

From the 21 producers interviewed, 5 are able to live only from organic agriculture. The other 16 producers have another income next to agriculture, either from them or their partner. Organic agriculture represents 54% of their income (arithmetic mean) (Figure 8). Producers from Ecollaures have the highest percentage of income from organic agriculture from the three studied PGS initiatives (73.5% arithmetic mean, Fisher exact, $n=24$, $P<0.05$). The cultivated area varies between 3000 m² and 13 ha, with an arithmetic mean across the studied PGS initiatives of 2.4 ha (Figure 9). Furthermore, the fields used by the majority of producers of the three studied PGS initiatives are either rented or leased.

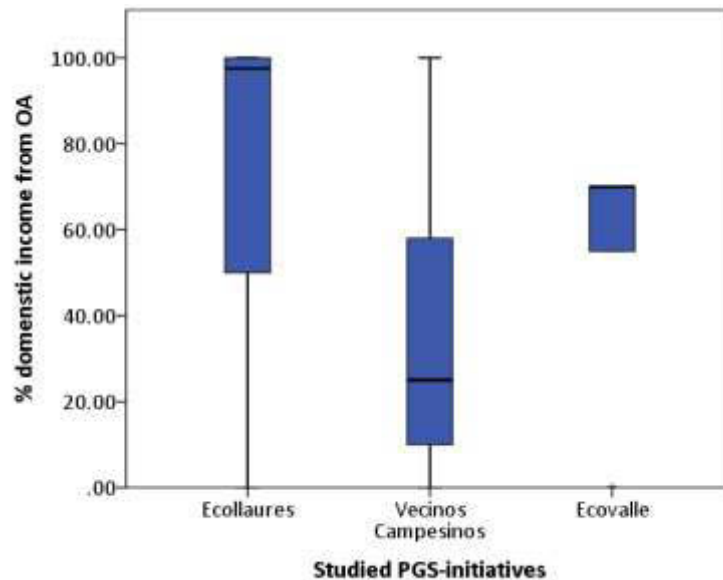


Figure 8: Percentage of domestic income coming from organic agriculture per studied PGS initiative (Ecollaures: $n=10$; Vecinos Campesinos: $n=9$; Ecovalle: $n=5$). Significant difference between studied PGS- initiatives (Fisher exact, $n=24$, $P<0.05$)

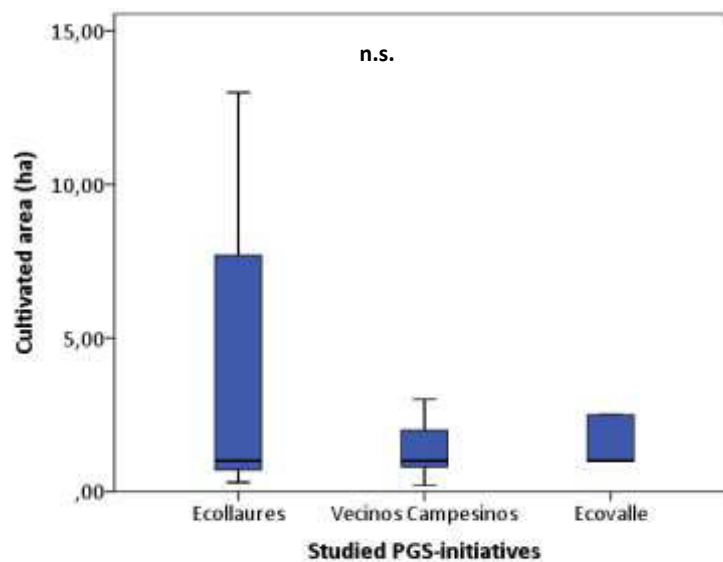


Figure 9: Size of cultivated land (ha) of the producers of each studied PGS initiative (Ecollaures: $n=10$; Vecinos Campesinos: $n=9$; Ecovalle: $n=5$). N.s. = no significant difference between studied PGS initiatives (Fisher exact, $n=24$, $P>0.05$)

4.2.7. Commercialisation

Producers of the studied PGS initiatives without TPC are not allowed to sell their products as 'ecological' ('organic' or 'biological'), as this word is protected by the EU Regulation (Padel, 2010). Ecollaures and Ecovalle use the word 'agro-ecological' instead, but one member of Ecollaures was already reported for defining his products as 'agro-ecological' in his online homepage. So, the members of the studied PGS initiatives try to emphasize the socio-economic criteria their PGS initiatives include in order to sell their products. The producers of the three studied PGS initiatives do not sell their products in big super markets; instead they have some small shops that accept their products as organic (Figure 11). Some of these small shops might be part of the PGS initiative (Vecinos Campesinos), belong to other PGS initiative (Ecovalle, shops from other PGS FACPE) or members of the PGS initiative may have a personal relationship with the owner of these shops. Especially in Ecollaures, producers also sell their products to FoodCoops (do not have to be members of the studied PGS initiatives).

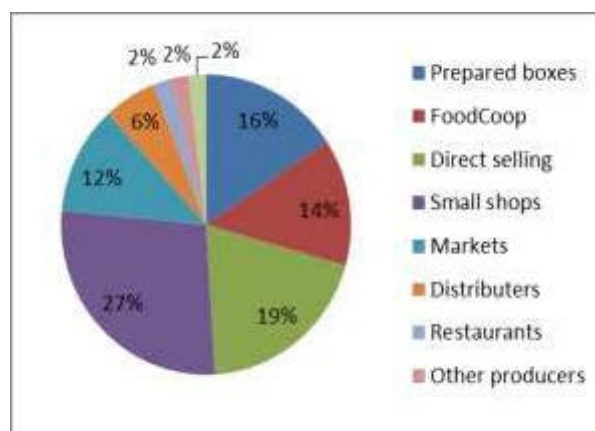


Figure 11: Percentage of interviewed producers using the different commercialization channels (n=21)

Other ways of commercialization are prepared boxes, direct selling from farm gate or small distributers. Markets are also important. There are some bio-markets in the provinces of Granada and Valencia that accept the PGS as a guarantee for organic production. Members of Ecollaures perceive that, due to the political change in Valencia (a left party is now present in the local and regional government), more markets are currently opening their doors to PGS.

As explained in chapter 2.4, Ecovalle is an agricultural cooperative and its members sell their products together, but they can also sell part of their production individually. The cooperative sells the products in prepared boxes, markets and small shops. The cooperative as a way of selling is not included in Figure 11, but the way they use to sell the common products, i.e. direct selling, prepared boxes, markets, etc.. Producers of the studied PGS initiatives might also exchange products, but this is also not presented in Figure 11.

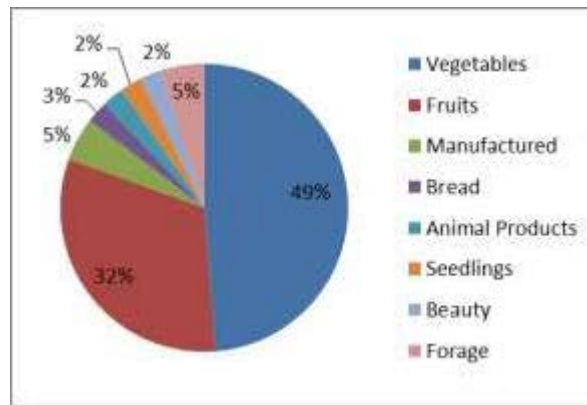


Figure 12: Percentage of interviewed producers producing the different goods (n=22)

The main products of the studied PGS initiatives are vegetables and fruits, but some producers have opened to new markets by producing some other products (Figure 12). Two producers have forage (Vecinos Campesinos and Ecovalle); one of them for his own draft animals and the other sells the forage to a conventional company that produces animal feed, so it is not sold as organic. There is no one producing meat or milk products, the only animal products are eggs and honey. The three studied PGS initiatives have tried at some point to include animal production, like cheese, but they have not managed to do it yet. Besides, there is only one producer of seedlings who belongs to Vecinos Campesinos, but they also have TPC in order to sell the seedlings outside the PGS initiative. In total, 43% of the producers interviewed have TPC as well as the PGS-guarantee. Moreover, not all producers are selling the products guaranteed by the PGS. For example, one producer wants to support her PGS initiative but her products are for exchanging and self-consumption; one produces bread but it does not have the guarantee of his PGS initiative, he certifies his fields where he has currently no production. So, these producers who are not selling the products guaranteed by the PGS are not included in the commercialization graph (Figure 11).

4.2.8. Contradictions between the internal regulation and the interviewees' statements

The detailed analysis of the internal regulations and the interviews shows some contradictions between them. These contradictions are mainly about the point 'violations and penalties'. To the question "what happens to a member who commits a violation?" the answers did not always agree with the written regulation. For the quantitative analysis I differentiated between contradictory and valid answers:

- Contradictory answers: the interviewee did not know the procedure explained in the internal regulation in case a violation was committed by a member
- Valid answers: the interviewee knew about the different levels of violations and penalties; or at least described the steps to follow according to the regulations (studying each case, letting the person justify him-/herself and agree on a penalty in an assembly)

According to this differentiation, more than 40% of the interviewees gave a 'contradictory answers', where "nothing happens" or "he/she has to leave the system" were the most common answers. Some members did not know the answer and others did not answer to this question. 12% knew about the different levels of violations and penalties. There is no significant relationship between the different studied PGS initiatives and the answers given (Fisher exact, $n=24$, $p>0.05$).

"El año que no se cumple pues no tendrá el sello" (P1) *"The year that the regulation is not met, he/she won't get the label" (P1)*

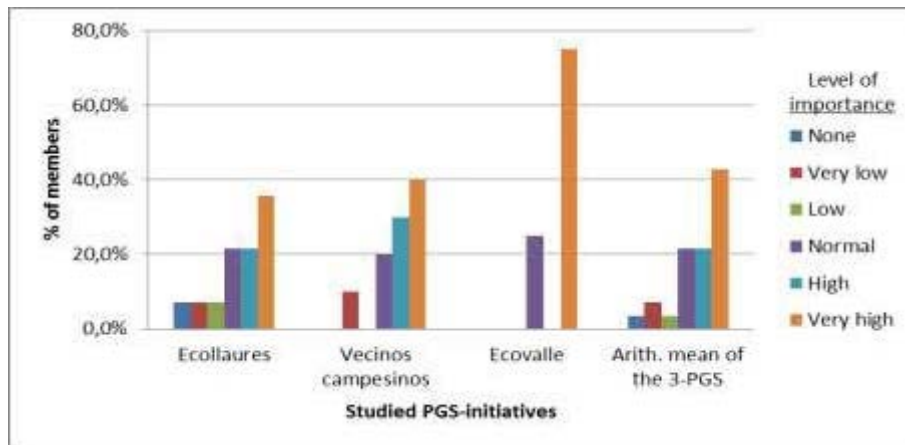


Figure 13: Perception of the interviewed members of the studied PGS initiatives on the level of importance of a possible future legal recognition of PGS in Spain (Ecollaures: n=14; Vecinos Campesinos: n=10; Ecovalle: n=4)

Some of the members that consider the importance of the legal recognition of the PGS as (very) low perceive a social recognition more important than a legal one. They consider that social recognition could be enough for helping producers with commercialisation. Other respondents perceive that an institutional recognition is important so the PGS can stablish communication in a political level. There are also those who do not consider any of these recognitions important and perceive the current independence as an advantage (Figure 13).

Regarding the documents of the studied PGS initiatives, 64% of interviewees are (very) satisfied with their visit guides. But they think the visit guides could still be improved. The general guarantee process, visit guide plus visit, is also perceived as (very) good (67% of interviewees). In the case of Ecollaures they would like to have different guides for different products and actors, but they are still working on it. Almost 80% are (very) satisfied with the internal regulation. On the other hand, the guarantee process was also perceived as not good or serious enough.

“estamos en un camino de desarrollar eso y estaría en un camino entre regular y buena, quiero decir, me parece buena en cuanto a que el esfuerzo es tal, y regular en cuanto a que seguramente tenemos aún muchísimo que avanzar” (P12)

“we are on the way of developing it (visit guide) and it would be between good and so-so, I mean, I find it good because of the effort, and so-so because most probably we still have to progress a lot” (P12)

“tenemos un registro de lo que hacemos en las visitas pero para mí no es suficiente” (P26)

“we have a register with the information from the visits, but for me that is not enough” (P26)

“está demasiado puesto para el actor, de Autoevaluación, y yo pienso que hay que aprovechar la visita y dejar que el resto diga algo al final” (P13)

“it is too focus on the self-evaluation, I think we should use the visit and let the others say something at the end” (P13)

“hubo un momento en que hubo que decir que esto era serio, que las visitas no eran ir a tomar una cerveza a la finca, después bien pero durante tiene que ser en un tono serio (...) con confianza pero exigir que se enseñen todos los productos e ir al detalle” (P28)

“there was a moment where we had to say that this was serious, the visits were not for drinking a beer, afterwards it is ok but during the visit it has to be serious (...) with trust but we have to demand that the producers shows all the products and go into detail” (P28)

Other problems mentioned are personal matters between the members, the economic viability of the projects and the prices of the products (Table 15). The dispersion of the members is perceived as