

Transformations towards resilience within the food system: scaling up two organic food value chains in Sweden

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The present context of a compounded environmental, climate and socio-economic crisis points to a need for transitions towards a more resilient society. In short, resilience involves the capacity to cope with change through adaptation, continual development and renewal. Transitions to resilience are needed not least within the global food system, which has failed to meet core sustainability challenges in terms of reducing environmental, climate and social destruction.

Organic food value chains are among the emerging alternatives to the hegemonic food system. However, there are few examples of such chains that have expanded substantially beyond their niches, without becoming incorporated into the mainstream food system. This paper discusses two cases of organic food value chains in Sweden: Ekolådan, an organic box-scheme, and Upplandsbondens, a farmer owned cooperative selling organic meat. The study explores the internal and external challenges and opportunities for scaling up these mid-scale organic food chains. While the two case studies have followed different trajectories and have sprung from different contexts, they have both dealt with growth and crisis in more or less resilient ways.

The first analysis shows that cross-scale resilience is crucial for the successful growth of the studied cases. This means there is a need for resilience on multiple scales, in terms of generational/professional regrowth, diversity, food citizenship, political support, and ethical/value shifts, as part of wider transitions towards resilience within the context of a hegemonic food system