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Title:

Barriers to the upscaling of sustainable food. The case of Spain

Abstract: In many European countries, sustainable food initiatives have experienced a certain boom over the last three decades, but they have barely managed to spread, through alternative food networks (consumer groups, agro-ecological markets, online sales platforms, etc.), beyond the borders of the most aware or activist consumers. With the exception of France and certain territories, the real impact of sustainable food initiatives on the transition of agri-food systems has so far been quantitatively low, particularly in Spain, the area covered in this communication.

This low impact contrasts with the situation where many European consumers are expressing aspirations for healthier, more environmentally friendly and more local food, which also incorporates social justice criteria. Growing segments of European consumers are increasingly demanding value-based food attributes. However, several important barriers to scaling currently exist: they refer to *access* and to *affordability*, which in turn can comprise both supply-side constraints and demand-side constraints.

From the point of view of supply, we note two types of constraints in the Spanish case. The first one concerns restrictions on *access to land*, as many of the young people who want to engage in agroecology are neo-rural and are therefore not the children of farmers who can inherit the land. The cost of renting land is often high compared to the income derived from its productive vocation. Some solutions to this problem, from the perspective of territorial public policies, are land banks and agricultural parks.

The second type of supply constraint is the limited accessibility of producers to sustainable food logistics and redistribution centres. In general, the logistics and distribution of agroecological food is often done on an individualised and non-professionalised basis, sometimes in polluting vans: all of this has a negative impact on the living conditions of producers, on distribution costs and on the carbon footprint of transport. Food hubs, or cooperative logistics centres of local producers, agroecologically-oriented, can solve the above problem, professionalising and obtaining

economies of scale in logistics and wholesale distribution. This new type of institutionality is essential to undertake the public procurement of collective canteens.

From a demand perspective, two basic requirements for scaling up are, from a logistical and commercial point of view, the following: achieving affordable consumer prices for different segments and, secondly, improving consumers' accessibility to sustainable food purchases. Two main types of demand constraints are, in our view, the following.

Firstly, there are the difficulties of consumer access to knowledge about values, agroecology and sustainable food consumption, which requires long-term consumption awareness policies and strategies, targeting both the general population and specific groups.

Secondly, in our towns and villages, there are real problems of accessibility for consumers to sales and delivery points where they can find, at affordable prices, different types of sustainable food, enough to do the family shopping in a single act of purchase. In particular, we consider an outlet inaccessible when it is located beyond the 'fifteen-minute city'. The main alternative to solve these problems is to expand the model of cooperative and participatory agro-ecological supermarkets in each neighbourhood. Once there is a network of supermarkets in the city, it will be possible to develop a common online shopping system, which shares the 'last mile' distribution asset.

Strong public policies at the territorial level to promote sustainable food can enhance the efficiency and scope of the processes driving the scaling up of alternative food networks.

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