

Promoting Organic Food in Public Catering: A theory-based approach to sustainable public catering systems

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Abstract

The paper focuses on public catering as a significant service provider in modern society and a potential large-scale user of organic food. In order to argue for the use of organic food by public catering, the traditional nutrition-oriented public catering is reframed and repositioned as a sustainable public catering system, responsible in mediating the well-being of both the biophysical environment and individual consumers. The repositioning is based on the theory of ecological communication within social systems by Niklas Luhmann. The development of sustainable public catering systems is examined by analyzing Danish and Finnish public catering cases, which make visible the role of economy, law, science, politics, and education in contextual networks governing public catering. This theoretically based approach confirms the networks and their mutual communication as bearing on the use of organic food, rendering public catering organizations “centers of sustainability” in the everyday life of (post)modern citizens.

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