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## What business models for the food justice?<sup>1</sup>

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### **Summary**

The Food Justice Movement is a grassroots initiative now reaching public, political and academic spheres. Our purpose in this article is to explore how do these organizations manage to solve the coexistence of food justice imperatives and economical ones in their business models. Thanks to a qualitative study, we propose a framework to understand the diversity of business models that take in charge the food justice issue, and a typology of business model for food justice.

**Keywords** : food justice, business models, hybrid organization, social enterprise

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### **Résumé**

Les questions de l'accès à l'alimentation de qualité pour tous et de justice alimentaire constituent un impératif d'action publique, politique et académique. L'objectif de notre contribution est d'explorer comment des organisations se saisissent des enjeux de justice alimentaire à travers leurs modèles d'affaires. A partir d'une enquête qualitative, nous proposons et discutons une typologie de modèles d'affaires favorisant la justice alimentaire.

**Mots-clés** : justice alimentaire, modèles d'affaires, organisation hybride, entreprise sociale

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# What business models for the food justice?

## Introduction

Food constitutes the source of multiple problems in public health. The links between economic disparities, agro-industry food and health problems (obesity, food-related pathologies) are more and more obvious. Figures are alarming. In France, we consider that individuals experiencing food insecurity represent 12,2 % of the population<sup>2</sup>. Far from being a right for all, the access to a good, quality and healthy food stays a privilege for those who have enough economic or cognitive resources (Chiffolleau and Paturel, 2016).

The Alternative Food Systems - AFS later - that emerged from the late 2000s to propose an alternative to the agro-industry and reconnect producers and consumers (Le Velly, 2017) are today confined in a niche. The diverse new markets of AFS helped to introduce the idea of a transformation of agriculture and food toward an alternative (Kirwan 2004). AFSs may have impacts on the wider food system by “sending a signal to other actors within the food system that may in turn influence their actions” (Kirwan 2004, p. 412). However, it concerns a certain part of the population. Rural and/or perirurban populations and more generally poor populations do not yet have access to these innovative and alternative food systems.

The notion of food justice emerges in this context to embody both social justice dimension and food sector transformations (Hochedez and Le Gall, 2016). Seen as an imperative for public action, the notion of food justice has an ambiguous status, between activist and academic spheres. Generally embedded in the solidarity economy, more and more experimental initiatives intend to fight against the forms of exclusion inside the alternative food systems. Solidarity food boxes, community gardens, buying groups of sustainable food, local supply of food aid, social groceries are some example of such initiatives (Darrot and Noël, 2018).

While the criticism of the food aid system and the food justice movement is already embodied by literature, the modus operandi of organization acting for food justice is however still confusing and fragile. The question about the nature of the business models that allows and stabilize the food justice project is crucial.

This article aims to explore how these initiatives manage to answer the food justice issues, focusing specifically on their business models, and how these firms address the hybrid nature of their activities. These initiatives constitute hybrid organizations as they intend to solve a social problem by relying on hybrid, public, commercial and social resources and modes of operation (Santos et al., 2015). It involves mobilizing business models that combine economic value creation and social value creation. The balance is delicate to find since an imbalance poses a risk either on the *raison d'être* or on the economic viability of the organization. We explore how they solve the contradictions of the economic and social logics, which they have to face, and how the concept of food justice is embodied in the practices of these organizations.

The first part introduces the concept of food justice and considers the ways in which it can be embodied in the business models of organizations. We propose to mobilise the typology of Social Business hybrids developed by Santos et al. (2015). The second part

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<sup>2</sup> Bocquier A, Vieux F, Lioret S., Dubuisson C., Caillavet F., Darmon N. (2015) « Socioeconomic characteristics, living conditions and diet quality associated with food insecurity in France », Public Health Nutrition, vol. 8, n°16, p. 2952– 2961

presents the methodology, the area of analysis explored. The last part gives our results and their discussion.

## **1. Articulate business models and food justice missions**

In this section, we present the concepts of food justice and Business Model hybrids that will form the framework of our empirical analysis.

### **1.1. Food Justice as a Mission: Organizational Issues**

Even if they are concerned with food access inequalities, the AFS have difficulties to serve the poorest or the most vulnerable people (Darrot and Noël, 2018). In reality, AFS's consumers are mainly from the middle class with a strong cultural capital (Dubuisson-Quellier, 2013). Therefore, areas which the AFS pretends to create or recreate regarding the dominant food system, also become excluding areas and create new inequalities (Hochedez and Le Gall, 2016). A food justice movement was recently developed to alert on this risk of two-tier system (AFS and quality food for the rich people, conventional system and junk-food for the poor people) and to propose solutions. It seeks to ensure that the benefits and risks of where, what and how food is grown and produced, transported and distributed, and accessed and eaten are shared fairly (Gottlieb and Joshi, 2010). The academic literature seized this concept of food justice to define outlines, in particular towards the concepts of food accessibility and food security. Hochedez and Le Gall (2016) consider that a just food system has to act at three levels: to address the food accessibility issue; to ensure food security and to act on the roots of inequalities. According to Cadieux and Slocum (2015), we need to be more clear on what it means to *do* food justice. In this objective, we review the literature in order to identify what an organization can do to address the three issues of a food justice mission.

#### **1.1.1. To address the food accessibility issue**

The food accessibility is the object of diverse works, in particular around the notion of "food desert" (Guy and David, 2004) where people lack access to foods that meet their nutritional needs (VerPloeg et al., 2009). As people tend to make food choices based on the food outlets that are available in their immediate neighbourhood, these works underline the problems of physical accessibility on a healthy and culturally-appropriate food. The food stores can be geographically far (in terms of access time in public transportation in particular), but moreover when food stores exist nearby, they propose a choice of less wide products.

Accessibility is also envisaged from an economic point of view. The lack of financial resources presents a barrier to healthy eating and the price is an often-advanced obstacle to make a commitment towards food of quality<sup>3</sup>. However, if the price sensibility is strong for low-income population, their flexibility in the substitutions between products remains weak, which is quite paradoxical. For example, in spite of competitive prices compared with markets and supermarkets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) have difficulty

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<sup>3</sup> Lionel J, François M., Chiffolleau Y., Hérault-Fournier C., Sirieix L., Costa S. (2015), La consommation alimentaire en circuits courts : enquête nationale, rapport programme Programme CODIA : Circuits courts en Europe : opportunités commerciales et dialogue avec la société.

in opening socially, including when they opt for a price reduction strategy for low-income populations (Mundler, 2013).

Indeed, the accessibility issue is not a question of commercial equipment or price reduction. In the case of Toronto, Loopstra and Tarasuk (2013) study, there was a very low participation of households of poor areas on programs such as community gardens, community kitchens and food box programs. They showed it is more understandable by a lack of accessibility (geographical but also lacked knowledge about/of programs) and of practicality (programs did not fit with the needs, interests and lives of study participants) than for financial reasons. To attract new consumers in alternative food networks, some studies recommend developing shopping forms with least efforts possible for the consumer<sup>4</sup>. The food practices are strongly inherited from the parents and from the social background. The exposure with new standards is not enough; the individuals have to be inclined to modify the pre-existent standards. It depends on the legitimacy that the individuals agree in the FAO choice of their own practices and the legitimacy that they grant to the influencers (Dubuisson-Quellier, 2016). From then on, we can translate the food accessibility mission in organizational issues as to implement healthy food stores in the popular districts, price reduction strategies but also awareness activities and adaptation to consumers more taken away socially from sustainable food practices.

### **1.1.2. To address the food insecurity issue**

Food security is the object of a consensual definition since the World Food Summit of 1996. It exists “when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”<sup>5</sup> However, in a food justice perspective, food security needs to evolve from a matter of logistic and world production to a food associated with the “health” of the people, the planet and the economy (Alkon, 2012, quoted by Hochedez and Le Gall, 2016). Beyond a better availability of food, it is well the asymmetries of power in food systems that it is necessary to question.

Thus, AFS have been particularly seen as sustainable and social innovations: in deed, they appears as able to create new practices, that go against essential aspects of the dominant food system as the exchanges at long distance, the homogenization of products or their detachment of places and conditions of production (Le Velly, 2017). We need to consider the nature of the foods that are circulating in the networks and their production processes, the networks used to arrange the supply of food, and the mechanisms of coordination. The table 1 describes the main features of AFS that could contribute to sustainable and social innovation.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> FAO,1996, Sécurité alimentaire, notes d’orientation n°2

**Table 1. Main features of AFS as a sustainable and social innovation**

<b>Perspectives</b>	<b>Core characteristics</b>	<b>Exeamples</b>
The nature of the foods and their production processes	Products as “natural” (unprocessed and/or without additives) Environmentally benign (using artisanal or traditional production methods)	Organic food label Ecological production
The networks used to arrange the supply of food	Reduced distance between producers and consumers, which relates to the network and distribution arrangements	notions of localness, small size of networks, transparency, information, and “shortening” the supply chain.
The participants and the mechanisms of coordination	New forms of market governance, or new ways to coordinate production, purchasing and commercialization	Community Supported Agriculture, consumer or producer cooperatives, Fair

Source: authors from (Forssell, Lankoski, 2015)

AFSs can bring potential food security through this criterion and particularly thanks to the inclusiveness of coordination rules. All AFSs do not tackle all these dimensions. Consequently, other approaches adopt a more nuanced method, describing AFS as a mosaic-: from WEAK experiences, enacting partial change, to STRONG experiences, committed to radical change practices (Watts et al., 2005). “Strong AFSs” seem better suited to create social and political change because they challenge the foundations of the conventional food system (Follett, 2009). Increasingly, they represent spaces where producers and consumers go beyond the practices and relationships related to food provisioning and become engaged together in new, more significant forms of food citizenship (Renting et al., 2012). Strong AFS (SAFS) prioritize social usefulness, democratic governance, fair trade and support of peasant and organic agriculture of economic projects.

### **1.1.3. To act on the roots of inequalities**

Accessibility and food security are not enough in defining food justice. Social justice appears to be a prerequisite. The social justice dimension of a food justice mission is not obviously well-to-do to achieve so much it is difficult to fight against structural inequalities (economic, sociocultural, demographic, geographical, etc.) and to overtake the presupposition that local food systems are necessarily socially just.

In the literature, we identify diverse types of possible organizational practices to act on the causes of the food inequalities. It imply a commitment dedicated to the social justice (a prioritization of this objective), a creativity in the ways to incorporate vulnerable people into a deliberative democratic process and a fight against opposite ideologies in this justice (Allen, 2010).

First, social inclusion and creation of social links appear to be an impact of social justice initiatives. Studying a buying group in a Montreal suburb, Enriquez and Klein (2014) show, for example, that this one allows to obtain quality food at a good price but at the same time to break the isolation of people affected by diverse forms of exclusion and to favour mutual aid, empowerment and skills development.

For Cadieux and Slocum (2015), food justice implies to acknowledge and confront trauma and persistent race, gender, and class inequalities and to design exchange mechanisms that build communal reliance and control. Moreover, successful food justice

initiatives involve systemic change around inequalities based on race, gender, and class as well as promotion of economic exchange and labor systems that foster empowerment and autonomy among historically marginalized groups (Allen, 2010, Gottlieb and Joshi, 2010).

Second, empowerment of poor people is a great concern of the food justice movement, which concerns also the capacity to make one's voice heard so as to have access to food and resources. For example, food aid is well criticized because it depends on non-sustainable products and it does not empower the beneficiaries, sometimes going as far as depriving them of the choice of their food (Darrot and Noël, 2018). Chiffolleau and Paturel (2016) seek to understand how to overtake a charitable approach (which does not finally touch the causes of the inequalities) and to favour the participation of precarious people. They study two cases and show that the status of the beneficiaries evolves. These social innovations transform the "poor man" into a competent citizen, conscious of consequences of cheap food for the farmers and the environment. Education and (cooking, gardening, sourcing, etc.) skills development appears to be key tools.

Finally, to address the root causes of food inequalities, it appears necessary to move beyond a discourse of individual choice and to link with other social movements (Allen, 2010). For example, Myers and Sbycca (2015) study new forms of alliances between alternative food activists and labor activists, which fight in a common way to require a bigger economic justice in the conventional food system.

## **1.2. Diversity of social hybrid business models**

If organizations implement practices of food justice, these practices have to be coherent with their model of value creation. So, the Business Model (BM) is a relevant prism to study the functioning of organizations. It demonstrates the feasibility of a project and reports choices which the company makes "to generate income, ..., choice which concern at the same time the resources and the skills to be valued or to be developed, on the offer or on the offers developed from the valuation of these resources and skills, and finally, on the implemented organization" (Demil and Lecocq, 2008, p. 115). In a shared meaning, Osterwalder and Pigneur (2011) draw a BM as the principles according to which an organization creates delivers and captures value. Therefore, the BM allows us to understand the activity of an organization through the description of its valuable offer, its target and the type of customer relationship, its cost structure and resources, his main partners, its distribution channels. Created value, although generally economic, may also be social. Specific frameworks picture this coexistence of social and economic value, by taking into account social impacts on beneficiaries.

In addition, social organizations allowing access of the precarious populations to a quality food can be compared to social business hybrid enterprises defined by Santos and al. (2015, p. 38): "social business hybrids primarily use commercial means to achieve a social or environmental mission and adopt different legal forms depending on their regulatory context (e.g., associations, cooperatives, [...])". Thus, practices and objectives of food justice join the globally social logic; it is then a question of understanding how these organizations articulate their practices of food justice with a more traditional logical, generating economic value.

Santos and al. (2015) propose a typology of social business hybrids. This typology is built on two dimensions. The first one concerns the modalities of generation of the social value. The commercial relation can directly generate it («automatic value

spillovers»). On the contrary, social values can be produced in an indirect way in the commercial relationship, through associated services ("contingent value spillovers").

The second axis deals with ways of capturing economic value. Thus, the activity may be funded, first directly by the costumers that receive the benefits of the action. Second, the funder may be another actor that does not get any direct benefits from the social action. It results in four types of models, which are associated with organizational design principles in terms of structure, governance, human resources and performance as shown in table 2 below.

**Table 2. Typology of Social Business Hybrids (Santos et al., 2015, p. 45)**

Dimensions	Clients = Beneficiaries	Clients ≠ Beneficiaries
Automatic Value Spillovers	<p><b>MARKET HYBRID</b></p> <p><i>Examples: BOP initiatives for access to basic services (energy, health)</i></p> <p><b>Risk of Mission Drift:</b> Low</p> <p><b>Financial Sustainability:</b> Easy</p>	<p><b>BRIDGING HYBRID</b></p> <p><i>Examples: integrated business model with job matching for people with disabilities</i></p> <p><b>Risk of Mission Drift:</b> Intermediate (lower risk for more integrated models)</p> <p><b>Financial Sustainability:</b> Moderately Difficult</p>
	<p><b>BLENDING HYBRID</b></p> <p><i>Examples: Microfinance, integration models that require regular support or change of behavior for value to be created</i></p> <p><b>Risk of Mission Drift:</b> Intermediate</p> <p><b>Financial Sustainability:</b> Moderately Difficult</p>	<p><b>COUPLING HYBRID</b></p> <p><i>Examples: Work integration social enterprises that require a dual value chain that serves both clients and beneficiaries</i></p> <p><b>Risk of Mission Drift:</b> High</p> <p><b>Financial Sustainability:</b> Difficult</p>

The first hybrid model is qualified as "Market Hybrids"; it consists of commercial and trade mechanisms for the public with low consumption capacity. The model corresponds to the BOP model (Prahalad, 2004) which, thanks to organizational and technological innovations, allows opening new spaces of market with low prices to categories that were until then excluded from it. In this model, customers are thus the direct beneficiaries and no additional support is required to allow an improvement of the living environment (direct social impact).

The second model is qualified as "Blending Hybrids", because it does not associate the commercial and social dimensions directly. As in the purely market model, customers are the beneficiaries, but additional interventions are necessary to allow a real social impact (indirect thus). An example is an organization working in microfinance, education, which organize trainings to increase the proper use of the supplied good or service. In this case, beneficiaries are associated with the governance of the organization.

The third model is "Bridging Hybrids". It postpones the first ones because the beneficiaries of the activity do not participate mainly in financing the activity. The organization has to build from then a bridge between the group of the beneficiaries and that of the paying customers. On the other hand, as in the market model, the object of the commercial relation is enough to reach the social goal and no intervention is required. The authors take the example of a private hospital, which proposes cataract operations to middle or upperclass customers to create a financial margin and charge the same operations at reasonable prices for people in trouble. Here, the risk of mission drift and competition between the various activities is relatively strong; also, the way of structuring



the organization in an integrated or segmented way is crucial. For that purpose, beneficiaries can be integrated into the governance of the organization.

Finally, the last model is the most difficult to organize and to perpetuate. Qualified as "Coupling Hybrid", it associates paying customers and beneficiaries who are supported by specific actions. It corresponds to the model of Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs) in France, which offers at the same time a job to long-term unemployed people, and a social support with trainings etc. So, the organization has to take into account two types of stakeholders, but it offers different activities which can enter in competition and threaten the sustainability of the company. As in "bridging hybrids", the inclusion of the beneficiaries already constitutes an accompaniment of the commercial relation.

Our goal is, therefore, to test the concept of food justice to characterize the diversity of practices of organizations that intend to take charge, even modestly, of what they identify as a social problem. For this reason, the typology of hybrid models provides a fruitful framework for analysis.

## **2. Methodology and presentation of the cases**

### **2.1. An exploratory study**

In this exploratory study, we adopted an interpretative epistemological posture. It is a matter of understanding the intentions of the actors. The paper is therefore based on a qualitative methodology using three techniques (semi structured interviews, observations and documentations) triangulated to each other in order to consolidate the richness of information and gain additional perspectives on key issues. The data collection took place as part of a research program between March and November 2016.

We conducted semi-directive interviews with the founder of each studied organizations, as well as with three representatives of professional networks in which the studied organisations are embedded. These nine interviews (see Table 3), which lasted between one to two hours are the core of our material. The interview guide tries not to explicitly refer to notions of food justice and business models. All interviews were audio-recorded.

**Table 3. The semi-directive interviews**

<b>Interview</b>	<b>Organizations</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date of creation</b>
1	Légumerie	Awareness of sustainable food through cooking workshops	2009
2	Passerelle d'Eau de Robec	2 social groceries	2002
3	A deux prés de chez vous	Fruit and vegetables boxes (with price reduction for low-income people)	2012
4	Arbralégumes	Fruit and vegetables boxes (with price reduction for low-income people)	2008
5	VRAC	Buying group of organic products in popular districts	2014
6	Marmite Urbaine	Catering (BtoB) + urban agriculture in a popular district	2012
7	GESRA	Rhône-Alpes social groceries network	2004
8	Le Passe Jardin	Urban collective gardens network	1998
9	Le Bol	Alternative food cluster of Lyon	2015

In addition, we triangulate the data by participating observation of several meetings where the interviewees intervened: six meetings of the local group of Urbact programme "sustainable food", two meetings of the Local Sustainable Food Council of the city of Lyon, five meetings of the Bol, an alternative food cluster.

The analysis of the data is interpretative and abductive. First, we described, for each case, the beneficiaries (people identified in a precarious situation with difficulty to access to healthy food), the sources of revenue (for each "clients", we identify the value proposition) and the value creation process. Then, we positioned the cases on the two axis of the typology of Santos et al. (2015) and associated each case with a Business Model of the latter (see Table 4). Second, the open coding began with the identification of food justice practices in the data and grouping them into first order categories. From this base, we pursued the analysis to search for relationships between and among first-order categories in order to assemble them into higher-order themes. Those emerging themes were discussed in the light of the literature to achieve aggregate dimensions (See Table 5). Third, we identify how each case considers food justice in its organizational mission.

## **2.2. The studied organizations**

The analysis concerns in a specific way six organizations anchored on the territory of the metropolis of Lyon. The metropolis of Lyon constitutes a dynamic territory with an average standard of living compared with the national average. It is indeed lined with rural or semi-urban territories with an important farming specialization. For several years, the territory is marked by the development of the food short supply chains. It also joins in a tradition of open markets and more recent initiatives as farmer-markets and farmer-shops, which are particularly well developed in the region of Rhône-Alpes.

However, the territory is also characterized by strong socio-territorial disparities with difficulties of access to sustainable food. The organizations which we consider join the context of the development of alternative food networks but they have for objective to solve the problem of sustainable food access for precarious people. So, most of them were created at the end of 2000s, in the phase of growth of the alternative food networks on the

territory of Lyon. The case of Passerelle d'Eau de Robec is older because it is dated 2002 and it constitutes in this respect a certain reference for other organizations. The six organizations that were studied emerge from the same diagnosis: the problem of inequality in access to a quality diet, but they each respond to it differently.

These six organizations have quite the associative status and develop an autonomous economic activity. Arbralégumes and A 2 près de chez vous (A2PC) deliver local fruits and vegetable boxes and organize events of raising awareness. Passerelle d'Eau de Robec is a part of the social groceries network GESRA (Interview 7). It is a shop for low-income people who are supported during six months by social workers to develop a personal project (beneficiaries), but also for classic consumers (solidarity customer). It offers animations of raising awareness to the peasant farming and the sustainable food. VRAC is a buying group of organic products (dry products and cleaning products) in some popular districts of Lyon. It is partially funded by public housing offices. Marmite Urbaine develops catering for enterprises and leads, in parallel, awareness-raising activities though gardening in popular districts. Finally, Légumerie organizes cooking-workshops to promote sustainable food.

The majority of these organizations deploy their activities in target areas of the city's policy and benefit from grants or local public support. Some of them are supported by a social incubator. They employ one to three employees and they regularly host "services civiques"<sup>6</sup> and volunteers.

### **3. Towards a typology of business models for food justice**

Our cases differ first in the choice of their targets and resources (3.1) and then in the choice of food justice logics (3.2). We finally propose a new typology of business models for food justice (3.3).

#### **3.1. Business models combining differently clients and beneficiaries**

An important dimension to differentiate the business models of these organizations concerns the nature of the target and exact correspondence between the customer who finances activity and the beneficiary. This question, tested in the first axis of the typology of Santos and al. (2015) introduces different modalities of financing and income generation.

Table 4 describes the organizations thought their business models, and precisely how and by what kind of actors the economic value is generated. In three organizations (A2PC, Arbralégumes and Passerelle d'Eau de Robec), beneficiaries are considered as customers. It means that there are no peculiar efforts to individuate beneficiaries; the inclusive scope of the organization appears in the general mission and activities of the organization. The economic model rests then on a principle of solidarity between customers. For example, A2PC and Arbralégumes offer boxes of local and organic fruits and vegetables to non-specific clients. The price lists of boxes are spread out according to income (students, basic welfare benefits). The Passerelle d'Eau de Robec is a social grocery. The public consists of customers with different profiles: classic customers-members who have access to the goods at market prices, or beneficiary customers-members having a rest to live to

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<sup>6</sup> "Service Civique" is a voluntary commitment whose duration can be from six to twelve months, with a state provided allowance, open to people aged between 16 and 25, where the community work assignments are recognized as a national priority.

feed of 2,80 € a day per capita. In these cases, prices of the sold goods are adapted to the situation of the beneficiaries, but commercial relation remains. Financial resources are crossed but still mainly marked based.

Other organizations distinguish the client and the beneficiary. In this case, social activities are financed by philanthropic organizations (VRAC), public actors in the form of a delegation of public service (Légumerie) or grants (VRAC), or by private commercial activities of the organisation (Marmite Urbaine). The economic model of Marmite Urbaine is built on the creation of a margin by selling meal trays in Business to Business, in order to finance awareness-raising activities and festive meals to people in precarious situations. *“We have the luxury of economic activity that can ensure our sustainability.... And so this commercial activity, it finances the associative side, it funds associative life, and awareness and all that. (...) »* (Marmite Urbaine). Social activities and funding activities are consequently distinct, and not completely interactive. In these three cases, the spatial dimension is crucial to achieve to identify and include the beneficiaries: they are precisely located in popular and suburbs district.

**Table 4. Business model of studied organizations**

	Beneficiaries = Clients			Beneficiaries ≠ Clients		
	A 2 prés de chez vous	Arbralégumes	Passerelle d'Eau de Robec	Marmite urbaine	VRAC	Légumerie
<b>Beneficiaries</b>	Low income	Low income	Low income + reintegration project	Isolated inhabitants of popular districts	Inhabitants of popular districts	Low income, physical or psychological weakness
<b>Clients</b>	Market clients	Market clients, rather young	District inhabitants	Entreprises	Social landlords	Municipalities, community centers
<b>Price for beneficiaries</b>	Cost price	Cost price	30% to 50% of market price	Low/free participation	Cost price	Low price, even free
<b>Products for beneficiaries</b>	Vegetable boxes	Vegetable and grocery boxes	Dry and fresh grocery, hygiene, local/bio/fair products, social support	Awareness-raising actions, workshops, ateliers, community gardens	Dry grocery, hygiene products	Cooking/gardening workshops
<b>Products for clients</b>	Idem	Idem	Idem except products coming from donation	Meal trays	Services for tenants	Service for users
<b>Income stream</b>	Sells	Sells	Sells (>50% of beneficiaries)	Sells	Sells	Service sells
	Indirect subsidies (subsidised contracts)	Indirect subsidies (subsidised contracts)	Subsidies	Subsidies	Subsidies	Subsidies
	Volunteering for administration	Volunteering for administration	High level of volunteering (388 people in 2015 for 2082 hours)	Volunteering	High level of volunteering (distribution)	Volunteering (10 people)
<b>Main resource</b>	Activity	Activity	Activity	Subventions	Subventions	Activity-subventions

### 3.2. Food accessibility, food security and social justice: different logics combined

The typology of Santos and al. (2015) retains as the second axis the direct or indirect nature of the commercial transaction effect. We adapt this axis by retaining as criterion the way the three logics inherent to the food justice mission are prioritized. Indeed, the social impact looked for by every structure is different. Some organizations primarily look for the improvement of their impact in terms of food security, the accessibility is then essentially envisaged in its financial dimension, and to a lesser extent spatial. It would correspond to the Automatic Value Spillovers of the typology of Santos and al. (2015).

Table 5 shows the different practices of food justice according to the three dimensions we identify in the literature. It appears firstly that the six organizations we consider are not taken in charge of all these dimensions; we observe rather a specialization on certain issues of the food justice.

The fruit and vegetables boxes A2PC and Arbralégumes clearly announce to prioritize the support for the small farmers. These structures address firstly activist customers. *"We have a public who is rather young and already enough committed. I think that there is already a reflection just a little on all which is alternative also at the level of the food."* (Interview, Arbralégumes). The offer they develop for low-income people (based on financial accessibility) meets however a reserved success and especially does not succeed to touch less activist customers. It is without a doubt understandable by the fact that the other dimensions of the accessibility (spatial and practical) are not implemented. For example, A2PC explains this mixed result, in spite of the attractive price *"For certain populations it is impossible not to be able to choose the vegetables"* (interview, A2PC).

In this category, we also find organizations whose main mission is raising awareness (by cooking/gardening workshop): Légumerie and La Marmite Urbaine. It is a question of *"handing urban people to the contact of their nourishing earths, to tempt them to cultivate oneself, to cook with vegetables"* (Interview, Légumerie). The food security always constitutes the main mission but the objective is more to transform the practices of consumption towards quality and to reconnect with farming than to directly support small farmers. It is a question of *"proposing to people a better food and while proposing a social support"* (Interview, Légumerie) and to break the isolation of the people in precarious situations. Besides the financial accessibility, these structures also work the spatial and practical dimension of the accessibility. They organize workshops as closely as possible to the targeted inhabitants

Other organizations favour the social justice as impact of their structure and handle food as a tool to try to act on the roots of economic and social inequalities. They work on all dimensions of accessibility: financial of course, but also spatial, and practical. The food security becomes then a secondary logic, envisaged essentially in its dimension "healthy food for people". It corresponds then to the Contingent Value Spillovers of the typology of Santos and al. (2015). We find in this category VRAC and the social grocery Passerelle d'Eau de Robec. These two organizations build themselves from a criticism of the dualistic system: criticism of food aid system and its purely quantitative treatment of the food inequalities for Passerelle d'Eau de Robec, criticism of the social segmentation

of the alternative food networks for VRAC. They wish "*to fight against the inequalities regarding consumption*" (Interview, VRAC). "*We wanted to make quality food accessible for all. And the word quality, it returned to us in teeth to a full speed*" (Interview, Passerelle d'Eau de Robec). They worked the food accessibility in all its dimensions: financial of course but also spatial and practical.

The fit with the needs of the target is a constant concern. "*We make many analysis of the target. Because it is the only way to not disconnect from needs, to not disconnect from problems*" (Interview, Passerelle d'Eau de Robec). Here food appears at the same time as an objective and as a pretext to support the beneficiary in his social and economic reintegration and develop actions affecting the causes of the inequalities. The beneficiaries participate in the creation of the offer (of products, animations, etc.) and are included in the governance of the structure. "*We are going to put them in the governance. They are going to manage the grocery, to make the decisions; we are going to be proactive to support them. At the same time as a result, we are going to train them on things, that can be good for some who want to get involved, that can help them to show their know-how.*" (Interview, Passerelle d'Eau de Robec). At VRAC, these activities of valuation of the skills of the inhabitants took the shape at first of a cooking competition and recently of the publishing of a cookbook, which generate income.

**Table 5. Food justice mission of studied organizations**

	LEVELS	Food justice practices	A2PCV Arbralégumes	Marmite Urbaine	La légumerie	VRAC	Passerelle d'Eau de Robec
To address the food accessibility issue	Spatial access	To implement healthy food (shop, workshop, urban agriculture) in the popular districts		X	X	X	X
		To make the healthy food offer known from targeted people (ex: social workers as prescribers)				X	X
	Practical access	To create a fit with the needs, interests and lives of the target (ex: studies on targeted people, culturally-adequate products)		X		X	X
	Economic access	Affordable prices	X	X	X	X	X
		Distribution cost reduction				X	X
		Price negotiation with some wholesalers (no farmers)				X	X
		Search for quality products at the lowest possible price: farmers donations, partnership with organic shops, etc.					X
To address the food insecurity issue	Healthy food for people	To aware inhabitants about sustainable food (gardening, cooking of raw products, etc.)		X	X	X	X
		To influence purchases towards nutritionally good products (labeling system)					X
	Healthy food for the planet	To support peasant agriculture: payment in advance, solidarity in case of bad harvests, commitment contract	X				
		To choose organic products, to limit travel, to reduce waste	X	X	X	X	X
	Healthy food for the economy	To do fair trade with wholesalers	X	X	X	X	
		To adopt a democratic governance	X	X	X	X	X
To act on the roots of inequalities	Social and economic inclusion	To mix classic and low-income consumers	X		X	X	X
		Creation of activities in popular district and willingness to hire		X		X	X
		To support a personal project with social workers					X
	Empowerment	To valorize inhabitants skills (cooking context, cookbook)				X	
		To develop gardening/cooking skills of targeted people		X	X		X
		To develop links between farmers and targeted people (farm visits)				X	
Inclusion of beneficiaries in the governance						X	

### 3.3. Food justice business models : a typology

Our analysis allows us to draw an exploratory typology of organizations associating for each business model, some dimensions of food justice (Table 6). As we saw previously, the innovative practices of food justice, described in Table 5, are not quite applied in all organizations, nor even in an unambiguous way. We observe that all the organizations develop actions to facilitate food accessibility through different modalities: price policy targeted at particular populations (direct spillovers) or measures of support (indirect spillovers), be the customers the beneficiaries or not.

On the other hand, the dimensions concerning food security and concerning social justice do not appear in all the organizations. The problem of food security (that we translated in efforts on the quality of products and construction of links with local farmers), is really taking care of direct spillovers, organizations which reach the social objective by direct effects (market and bridging hybrids). Indirect spillovers, organizations producing social value with also measures of support (VRAC, Passerelle d'Eau de Robec), act more on the roots of the inequalities. Actually, they increase food justice by measures ensuring empowerment of people introduced during the commercial transaction.

**Table 6. Business Models for food justice**

	<b>Bénéficiaries = clients</b>	<b>Bénéficiaries ≠ clients</b>
<b>direct spillovers focused on food security</b>	<p><i>Business Model</i> <b>Market Hybrid</b></p> <p><i>Food justice practices</i> Economic access Heath for the economy and the planet</p>	<p><i>Business Model</i> <b>Bridging Hybrid</b></p> <p><i>Food justice practices</i> Spatial and economic access Heath for the economy and the people Social links and education</p>
<b>indirect spillovers focused on social justice</b>	<p><i>Business Model</i> <b>Blending Hybrid</b></p> <p><i>Food justice practices</i> Spatial, practical and economic access Heath for the economy and the people Social/economic inclusion, education, inclusive governance</p>	<p><i>Business Model</i> <b>Coupling Hybrid</b></p> <p><i>Food justice practices</i> Spatial, practical and economic access Heath for the economy and the people Social links, valorization and education</p>

While all these organizations are developing food justice practices, the level of integration of these practices into business models is different. It can thus be said that, in a gradual manner, the integration is more extensive in the "blending hybrids" and "coupling hybrids" models and less in the more marketable "market hybrid" model. Our contribution thus makes it possible to bring two elements: that is the difficulty for organizations to integrate the diversity of food justice practices in their hybrid economic models and therefore the need to consider in a complementary way all of these practices, especially at the level of AFSs.



## **Discussion: Diversity and risks of business models for food justice**

Our contribution and results are currently exploratory, and should be extended to other contexts and organizations for validation. Nevertheless, our first theoretical contribution is a better characterization of what it means to *do* food justice (Cadieux and Slocum, 2015) at the organizational level. We identify diverse practices, which can be implemented to act on the three gradients of food justice (Hochedez and Le Gall, 2016). It provides a reflexive framework for organizations already engaged for food justice in order to evaluate their practices. Some organizations focus more on the food security, the sustainable development and the solidarity with farmers. Others favour education and empowerment of disadvantaged consumers, even if it means relegating in the background the solidarity with farmers. We highlighted a certain specialization of organizations. The mission of food justice is with difficulty reachable by an isolated organization. The panel of food justice practices constitute a source of inspiration but not a to-do-list applicable to all. The question of complementarities between organizations on the territory raises itself from then on. The second theoretical contribution is the proposition of a typology of Business Models for food justice. We mobilized an existing typology to characterize the diversity of organizations leading a mission of food justice, according to their sources of revenues and the nature of the problem addressed primarily. This plurality of the social missions in itself allows us to enrich the typology of Santos and al. (2015), based on the direct/indirect social impact of the commercial activity.

We discuss the managerial implication of our research, by identifying, for each Business Models for food justice, risks and levers for reducing them. Indeed, the analysis carried out makes it possible to highlight the risks of institutional tensions that hybrids encounter. When the economic mission takes precedence over the social mission, we speak of mission drift (Ebrahim et al., 2014). If the company neglects the economic imperatives and the financial needs, it risks disappearing for lack of means. In a paradoxical way, the studied organizations are in a growing market: the sustainable food indeed constitutes a niche particularly appreciated by consumers. Consequently, they are exposed at the risk of seeing the economic imperatives overriding the social mission of food justice. Our results allow identifying in a finer way specific mission drift risks.

In the case of "Market Hybrids" (A2PC or Arbralegumes), the risk consists in not succeeding in realizing the mission in terms of accessibility. Their offer is completely coherent with moderate/high-income consumers, but less with low-income consumers who adopt less naturally this type of consumption. A price reduction strategy can not be enough to attract low-income consumers. To better reach this audience, "Market Hybrids" should be inspired by the practices of "Coupling/Blending Hybrids" in order to reinforce spatial and practical dimensions of accessibility. For example, they need to accept that some characteristics of their offer (localization, no choice) can constitute a barrier for the targeted people and that it is necessary to include them more in the definition of the offer.

The risk is rather close in the case of "Bridging Hybrid" (Marmitte Urbaine or Legumerie). Indeed, the frank segmentation between the economic and social missions can bring to the fast development of the branch dedicated to the economic logic to the detriment of that dedicated to the food accessibility. On this point, the hybridization of financial resources can be a railing; public authorities but also sponsors and customers scrutinizing the results in terms of social impact of the structure. To reinforce their social impact, "Bridging Hybrids" could be inspired by "Coupling Hybrids" that are able to

propose to the beneficiaries a support (education / skills valorisation), not directly connected to the paid service.

The model of "Coupling Hybrid" (VRAC) can be threatened by the dependence on funders, what requires besides an important work of fundraising, reporting and staying in coherence with their expectative. The sustainability imply a professionalization of the administrators. They need to develop a capacity to cross resources and to evaluate social impact. "Coupling Hybrids" could be inspired by "Market/Blending Hybrid" that are able to derive the majority of their income from their beneficiaries. But it also implies to recognize the hybridization of resources as a permanent and not a temporary model before a complete financial autonomy.

Finally, the "Blending Hybrids" (Passerelle d'Eau de Robec) model is built on a coherence of its food justice mission and economic model. Indeed, the integration on the beneficiaries into the governance of the organization is a "Blending Hybrids" practice, that can inspire others models. Moreover, the relative low dependence on external funds and the development of many peripheral actions testify to the soundness of the model. Built essentially as a counter model for food aid, the risk may be an excessive focus on the poorest and more activist populations. As farmer support is not a priority, "Blending Hybrids" could activate synergies with "Market Hybrids" in order to reinforce their social impact.

## Conclusion

The general purpose of the paper deals with the capacity of AFS to address food justice issues. We propose a first typology of four Business Models for food justice and discuss the risks and lever of improvement of each models. Finally, our research suggest the value of a system approach to create synergies between models in order to transform the system towards food justice. The question of the food justice concerns the economic sphere (from production to consumption) of course but also education, health, urban planning, etc. Food justice constitutes an opportunity of important research to extend and enrich the works on the alternative/local food systems (Le Velly, 2017).

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