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School canteens as a transformation tool for more sustainable food systems?

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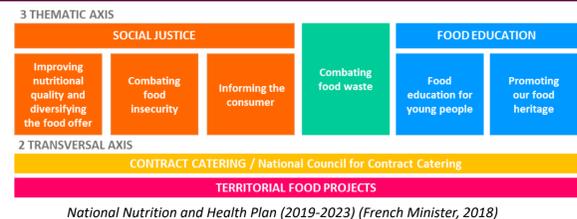


Introduction

Context

- French public policy is exerting regulatory pressure to encourage the transition towards more sustainable food systems. This pressure is exerted in particular through the **National Food Programme** and the **Egalim 1** law requires public canteens to include:
 - 50% sustainable products or products** with origin and quality labels (including at least 20% organic products) in the composition of meals served from 1 January 2022;
 - Combat the use of plastic** and food waste;
 - Diversify the composition of menus by offering **vegetarian menus**.

In 2019, 86% of the organic food offered by canteens was provided by school restaurants (Agence Bio, X), bearing in mind that in 2018, 21% of French school canteens shared this offer (Fondation pour la nature et l'homme, 2019).



National Nutrition and Health Plan (2019-2023) (French Minister, 2018)

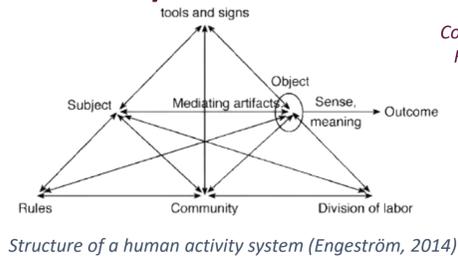
Research question

What organisational changes and changes in practices have been made by those involved in supply chains and school canteens as a result of the inclusion of organic food? How are these changes helping to transform food systems towards greater sustainability?

- H1. The type of management of a canteen (direct management or concession management / on-site kitchen or central kitchen) has an influence on the organisational change associated with the integration of organic food.
- H2. Depending on the environment in which these organisations operate, the difficulties and organisational changes are not the same.
- H3. Introducing organic food changes the way actors cooperate and coordinate within value chains.

Material and Method

Analytical Framework



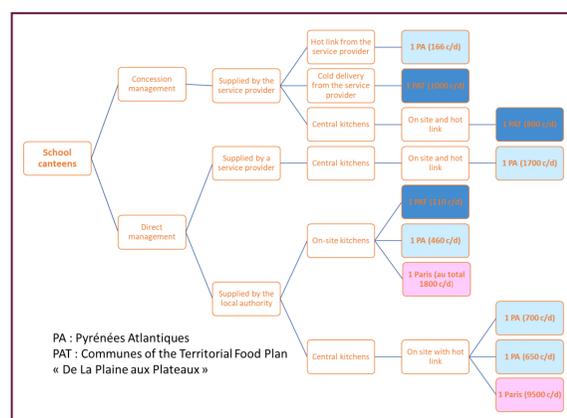
Structure of a human activity system (Engeström, 2014)

Poles of the activity triangle / objects studied	Poles definitions
Subject	Committed individual
Tools	Artefacts to achieve the objective
Rules	Norms and habits
Division of labour	task allocation
Community	Individuals involved
Object	Gives direction to the activity

Study of three territories



Canteens studied



Semi-structured interviews of 1 hour with the head chef and/or manager of a canteen and the elected official in charge of catering or the head of a company (20 interviews)

- In addition, interviews were conducted with:
- 1 national wholesaler
 - 1 fruit and vegetable cooperative
 - 1 frozen vegetable company
 - 1 bakery
 - 1 chicken farmer

Topics discussed with canteen staff: cost of a meal, the place of organic products in their supplies, the dynamics and difficulties of introducing it, changes in activities due to its introduction, the perception of eaters, the impact on relations between people in the canteens and with suppliers, future prospects.

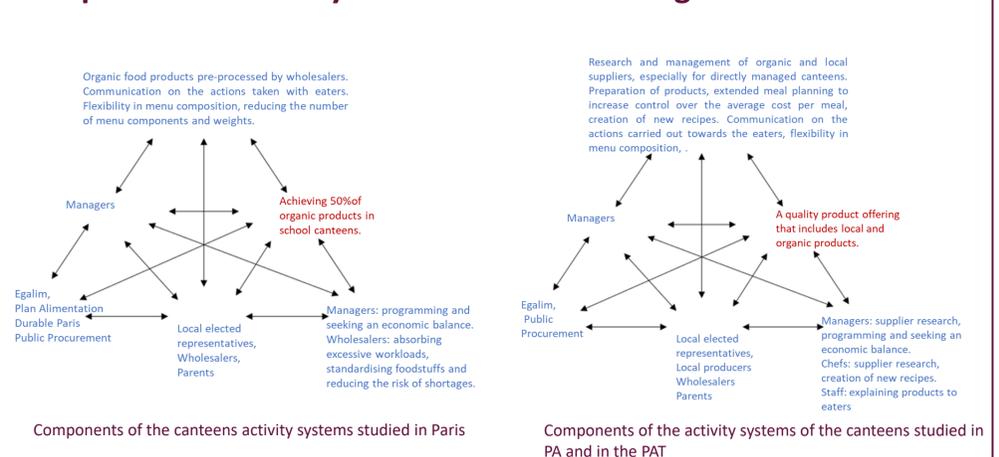
Topics discussed with producers and suppliers: place of organic products in their activities, interactions with the catering industry, cost of organic food, difficulties encountered, changes in activities, changes in relations between CV operators, future prospects.

Results

Main Gross Results

- The highest organic rates in the canteens surveyed were in Ile de France, which is not a production area. to non-organic local produce.
- Outside Paris, there was a strong shift from organic to non-organic local produce. This finding is based on two types of supply channels:
 - (a) Procurement carried out by canteen managers or chefs.
 - (b) Procurement is essentially carried out by national or international wholesalers.
- Case (a) implies (i) additional work for managers to identify suppliers, contract with them and manage small specific batches of supplies; (ii) a questioning of the criteria for product acceptability, with the criterion of localism making acceptable foodstuffs that are rejected in the dominant supply chains.
- Case (b) allows canteen managers to delegate the tasks of sourcing and contracting. They also have to manage the uncertainties of supplies associated with organic and local products to wholesalers. In return, the traceability of products is reduced and their geographical origins are often not taken into account.

Comparison of Activity models in the three regions



Conclusions

- We observed two types of organisations, revealing different degrees of transformation and roles for Supply Chain players
 - Organisations that emphasise localism, wish to retain control over their supplies and compromise with certain criteria in their purchasing specifications (size, skin defects, etc.), leading them to introduce changes to food standards, at the cost of considerable effort on the part of managers, chefs and staff alike.
 - Organisations that promote high levels of introduction of products whose agricultural production practices are considered to be more sustainable, while limiting the impact that these changes may have on their own practices. In these cases, it is the wholesalers who take on the new activities of finding suppliers and the associated negotiations, pre-processing, defining acceptable quality thresholds and managing the agricultural production hazards associated with organic and agro-ecological production.

- The use of local products in preference to organic products is observed in the two non-Paris areas in our study. The reasons given are the lower prices of these products and the desire to work in partnership with local actors.

Perspective for further researchs

- Need to extend the study sample.
- Study the role of shared regional storage and processing platforms in reducing the workload for producers and canteen managers.
- Take into account the effects of inflation on the objectives of the types of supplies used by canteens.

Fundings

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