Discourses of Alternative Food Organizations in the canton of Geneva

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Introduction

Citizens are increasingly concerned about the food that they eat. The interest about food is associated with worries but also with cooking skills and pleasure. On the one hand, multiple food scandals have shed light on agro-industrial food processes and they have altered relations of trust between food producers and consumers. The latter worriedly discovered what might happen to the food that they it as it goes through long food chains. In these regards, the central concern of food consumers relates to the impact of food on their health. However, questions related to health are not the only ones. Some also enquire about the impact of the food that we eat on animal welfare or on the environment. In Switzerland, recent food-related popular initiatives sought to bring together issues of social justice and environmental action. Between September 2017 and September 2021, Swiss citizens have voted on five popular initiatives (e.g. on food security, food sovereignty, fair food, and two related to the use of pesticides). Swiss citizens voted in favor of only one of these popular initiatives, the one on food security. Yet, in Geneva, the canton that we study in this report, the population also voted in favor of food sovereignty. Thus, showing citizens' support for far-reaching changes in the food system. On the other hand, famous *chefs* and initiatives associated with the slow food movement among others have highlighted the importance of food quality and its relation with enjoyable moments. Cooking regional and seasonal products, enjoying time with family and friends around the table, and showing how pleasure is associated with shared meals. Overall, this means that we observe a renewed attention paid to the food that we eat.

Alternative Food Organizations (AFOs) seek to promote and propose food produced through standards set to protect the environment, defend social justice, and/or contribute to citizens' health. They are engaged in food production, transformation, and/or distribution. In addition, some of them raise consumers' awareness around these issues, they facilitate sustainable choices, and/or offer opportunities to acquire new skills related to food. During the last decades, such AFOs have grown in different cities in Switzerland (Bigler 2016, Bougouin and Dind 2019, Sahakian 2017). In Swiss cities, participatory supermarkets opened and new community-supported agricultural project brought together food consumers and producers. This tendency follows a more general trend visible in many cities around the global North (see Alkon and Guthman 2017, Counihan and Siniscalchi 2013, Holt-Giménez 2011 for an overview of recent initiatives). In Geneva, participatory supermarkets, community supported agriculture, vegan restaurants, and other food related initiatives have developed over time (Huber and Lorenzini 2020). In this report, we analyze the discourses produced by a broad range of AFOs active in the canton of Geneva in the spring and summer 2019. We examine how Alternative Food Organizations contribute to public discourses around food focusing on the discourses that AFOs publish on their websites. More specifically, we seek to understand what are the alternatives that AFOs present on their websites. Thus, we examine how they talk about problems in the food system and solutions that they experiment with or seek to promote. We also analyze how they present themselves and how they seek to mobilize citizens. **Our goal is to analyze to what extent AFOs inform citizens about problems in the food system and which kind of solutions they promote to solve the identified problems**.

In the report, we first discuss the relevance of AFOs' public discourses. Then, in a second part, we present the data and methods that we used to retrieve and analyze the discourses that AFOs publish on their websites. Third, we move on to the presentation of some descriptive findings. We present what are the framing used when talking about food, but also the actors discussed, the action used, and the issues addressed. Lastly, we conclude with a discussion of future prospects for Alternative Food Organizations in Geneva.

AFOs' public discourses

Alternative Food Organizations produce public discourses related to food. Many AFOs have a website where they present their organization, its values, its identity, but also the kind of action that they do. These actions span a broad range of activities such as producing and selling food, but also protecting the environment or informing citizens. In addition to their websites, AFOs participate in public debates when they engage in political campaigns around food initiatives or participate in the climate strike demonstrations for instance. When they take part in public discourses, AFOs might explain how the food system works, what are the problems in the current system and how to transform or change it. These discourses contribute to the politicization of the issue of food. They help citizens understand better how food is produced, transformed, and distributed but also its impact on health, the environment, and socioeconomic relations in society. Furthermore, it allows citizens to grasp the economic, social, and political challenges related to food, as well as the economic, political, and social power at play in the food system.

AFOs play an important role for the politicization of food. As other Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), they offer alternative sources of information to understand the issues, challenges, and solutions beyond the discourses of established powers – in this case the agro-industrial complex. CSOs engage in both organizational maintenance activities and instrumental actions related to their goals. The latter set of activities, the instrumental ones, all have a political dimension and they can either be policy- or client-oriented (Lelieveldt, Astudillo and Stevenson 2007). Policy-oriented activities include both the representation of interests, as well as the mobilization of citizens. The representation of interest is more often associated with political parties and trade unions, while many social movement organizations that seek to mobilize specific social groups and/or large segments of the population. The client-oriented activities, include either offering services to clients or seeking the activation of specific population, as is the case for self-help groups in particular. In the case of AFOs, they also engage in all these activities – organizational and political, including both representation of interests (in the case of farmers' unions for instance) or mobilization (in the case of citizens' advocacy among others). The study of their public discourses sheds light on the kind of political work that AFOs do.

Data and method

In order to analyze the discourses that AFOs produce, we analyzed their websites focusing on the welcome page, as well as the presentation of their values, their project, and their identities. The websites are interesting because they offer information to both members and non-members. The websites offer an opportunity to present in details the activities that the organizations undertake and their motivations to do that, but also to inform members (and potential members or sympathizers) about their specificities. How they differ from others, what they do differently, and why. Thus, also pointing, eventually, to problems in the food system. In order to code the discourses that AFOs publish on their websites, we used a standardized codebook. This codebook explains how to identify the sentences that refer to food. Then, for the relevant sentences (those referring to food), it presents how to code them (see codebook). For each such sentence, we coded the framing, then the subject, the action, the target, and the issue. Four trained coders performed the coding.

Below we present in more details the different variables and we provide inter-coder reliability scores. But before we discuss the selection of AFOs included in the frame analysis.

Who are the AFOs that we study?

As a first step in our research project, we mapped AFOs based in the canton of Geneva. We included all the organizations, which produce food, distribute food, defend food workers' rights, or engage in consumers' advocacy. This means that we cover organizations such as participatory supermarkets, community-supported agriculture, farmers, peasants, or workers' unions, and other civil society organizations. We only included association, cooperatives, foundations, federations, and members of food-related federations that seek to transform the food system. These federations are the social and solidarity economy (APRES-Genève), organic food labels (Bio Suisse, Demeter), community supported agriculture (FRACP), and the Genevan movement for a peasant and citizen agriculture (MAPC). This means that we included civil society organizations (CSOs), as well as private enterprises, which accept to limit their profit to reduce the impact of food production on the environment or to advance the issue of social justice. In our approach, we defined "the alternative" before engaging in the fieldwork and systematically sought to include all the organizations that correspond to our definition of alternative food organizations.

For the frame analyses, we included in our data collection all the AFOs who took part in the organizational survey which was part of the same research project (see Huber and Lorenzini 2020) when they have a website. This corresponds to 108 AFOs for which we have organizational survey data and data about their online discourses. In addition, we coded the websites of 64 organizations who did not answer our survey in order to compare their discourses and to identify potential biases in our organizational survey. Hence, our frame analysis are based on the coding of 172 AFOs' websites.

What are the variables that we coded?

Regarding the framing, our main goals was to distinguish sentences that correspond to the definition of different frames discussed in the social movement literature. These are diagnostic, prognostic, mobilization, and identity frames (Benford and Snow 2000). The coders were instructed to determine the framing of the sentence before coding any other element of the sentence. We distinguished between the four aforementioned framings. First, sentences that correspond to diagnostic frames mention problem or something that is wrong in the existing food system. Second, prognostic frames present solutions and what AFOs do or what should be done to do to improve the food system. Third, mobilization frames call for action. They seek to mobilize the reader and to gain their active participation. Last, identity frames present who the actor is but also who are is allies and opponents. Identity frames point at the collective identity of the organization.

After having identified the framing, the coders were instructed to search for the subject of the sentence, the action, and the issue at play. For the actors, the coders asked themselves: who is causing the problem, part of the solution, should mobilize, or corresponds to the identity of the organization? These questions help identify the subject of the sentence. Once identified the subject is coded following a list of actors. For the action, the coders need to identify the main verb in the sentence and to categorize according to a listing of different action forms. Lastly, the issue corresponds to the topic of the action. The issues fall into nine pre-defined categories. Subsequently, the coders inductively created specific codes for more fine-grained analyses of the issues discussed. In addition to these three variables, sometimes the sentences also included a target.

Inter-coder reliability scores

To guarantee a high quality for the data collected, four coders were instructed and trained to code AFOs' websites. During two weeks, they learned how to identify the relevant webpages on AFOs' websites and how to apply the codebook. Following these training sessions, the codebook was adapted and improved to facilitate the coding work. During the training and at the end of the training, we calculated inter-coder reliability scores to measure the quality of the data collected.

Table 1 presents the inter-coder reliability scores. First, we observe that the agreement score is high regarding the sentences that coders should code. When looking at the sentence identified as relevant and, therefore, coded, we observe an inter-coder agreement score of 78.4 percent. In addition, the scores are also high for the variables that are easier to identify such as the framing (98.7 percent of agreement for shared sentences) and the subject (87.4 percent). The inter-coder agreement score is lower when we consider the target (77.8 percent), the issue (74.5 percent), and quite low for the verb (only 52.1 percent). In general, we observe that the scores are lower when the number of categories increases. To code the issues, the task is quite difficult, with 27 categories. The scores are also lower when we consider all the sentences (last column in the table), in fact not having identified a sentence as relevant further reduces the inter-coder agreement since we have no codes for some of the coders in this case.

Table 1. Inter-coder reliability scores for shared sentences coded by all coders and for all the sentences coded

Variable	Variable type	Number of codes	Sentences coded by all coders	All sentences coded
Sentence identified as relevant	Dichotomous	2	78.4	
Frame	Categorical	4	98.7	81.3
Subject	Categorical	10	87.4	76.1
Verb	Categorical	15	52.1	58.0
Target	Categorical	22	77.8	62.5
Issue	Categorical	27	74.5	70.5
Inductive issue	Categorical	275	39.1	54.5
Average			**78.2 / 71.2**	**69.4 / 66.2**

Note

Issues cover three main categories (problems, solutions, ideals) and nine sub-categories (environment, inequalities, health, etc.). Subsequently, within each sub-categories coders inductively created codes to point at specific issues (e.g. pollution, plant-based diets, short food chains). It is very difficult to reach high levels of agreements on the lowest level, specific issue codes since there are 275 categories at this level of precision. In table 1, we present agreement at the higher and lower level for the issue variable. When focusing on the upper-level, inter-coder agreement score reach sufficient levels. For the analyses presented in this report, a super coder verified all the specific issues to harmonize the categories and avoid overlapping issues.

On average, that is taking into account all the variables that we have coded, the inter-coder reliability score is 78.2 percent for the shared sentences. This overall score drops to 69.4 percent when we also take into account discrepancies related to sentences that were not identified and coded by all the coders (presented in the last column of table 1).

The inter-coder reliability scores presented here show that the training of coders allowed reaching a high consistency with regard to how different coders code AFOs' public discourses. For the easier categories, the one with fewer possible alternative codes, inter-coder reliability scores display high agreements levels. Although the scores are lower for some variables, in particular when we consider the variables with many alternative codes. Hence, given the difficulty of the task, we consider that the inter-coder reliability score presented here reach acceptable levels. In the next section, we turn to the presentation of some of our empirical findings.

Discourses around food

Our detailed coding of AFOs' websites allows to examine AFOs' discourses around food and to understand how they define problems in the food system, what are the solutions that they propose, who should be acting and how, as well as who they are. In this section, we examine in turn, the framing, the subjects, the actions, and the issues of the sentences that we coded. This offers an overview of the descriptive findings drawn from the framing dataset.

Framing

First, we are interested in examining the frequency of diagnostic, prognostic, mobilization, and identify frames on AFOs' websites. Table 2 below shows that diagnostic frames represent only 6.2 percent of AFOs' discourses. A small share of the discourses available on their websites talks about problems in the food system. Quite on the contrary, AFOs dedicate a large share of their online discourses to discuss solutions and to present how they seek to transform the food system. Overall 70.0 percent of their online discourses are dedicated to presenting solutions, thus using prognostic frames. The second most important type of framing that we identified on AFOs' website is identity frames. AFOs commit 17.0 percent of their online discourses to presenting themselves, their partners, and in some cases their opponents. Lastly, 6.8 percent of their framing aim at mobilizing members, sympathizers, and bystanders. In this case, the identified sentences call for action and seek to recruit new participants.

Table 2. Types of framing on the websites of surveyed organization compared to organizations mapped who did not answer the survey (percentages)

	Total	**Answered the organizational Survey**	**Mapped but did not answer the survey**
Diagnostic	6.2	**6.8**	5.2
Prognostic	70.0	69.0	**71.8**
Mobilization	6.8	**8.2**	4.3
Identity	17.0	16.0	**18.7**
N	6'163	3'873	2'290

Note
We calculated adjusted residuals to identify statistically significant differences between the two groups, bold indicates percentages that are higher than expected (with adjusted residuals >= 1.96) and underscore indicates percentages that are smaller than expected (with adjusted residuals <= -1.96).

When comparing AFOs who responded to our survey to a sample of those who did not answer the survey, we find that the former are slightly more likely to talk about problems (6.8 percent compared to 5.2 percent). Similarly, for the other types of framing, statistically significant differences appear between AFOs who answered the organizational survey and mapped AFOs who did not answer this survey. We observe that surveyed AFOs are more likely to present diagnostic frames and mobilization frames (in this case 8.2 percent compared to 4.3), whereas they are less likely to present prognostic frames (69.0 vs. 71.8 percent) and identity frames (16.0 vs 18.7 percent). These findings show that AFOs who answered the survey tend to be slightly more oriented towards the construction of public discourses that highlight problems in the food system and call for action.

Examining the four frames that AFOs use in their public discourses shows that AFOs tend to highlight the solutions that they propose and that they seldom speak about the problems that exist in the food system. Hence, they offer opportunities to identify actions to transform the food systems. Yet, they do not create an opportunity to learn about problems that exist in the food system. This would be especially important for readers who are not aware of problems related to the environment, social justice, health, and other issues.

Subjects

In this section, we analyze who are the subjects of the sentences that we coded. The subject can either be the person who should be part of the solution (as in the prognostic frames) or act to contribute to the transformation (mobilization frames) or part of the problem (diagnostic frames). Table 3 presents the subject for each sentence that we identified as relevant and therefore coded. Most importantly, table 3 shows that a very large share of all the sentences refer to AFOs. In fact, in 87.1 percent of all coded sentences, AFOs are the subject. Other actors are much more seldom mentioned on AFOs' websites. Among them, we find social groups such as inhabitants of a city, the urban population, the Swiss population, students, or children among others. These social groups appear in 2.5 percent of all the coded sentences. In addition, AFOs also speak about persons that fall in three distinct categories, as individuals, citizens, or consumers. Individuals appear in 1.9 percent of the sentences, citizens appear in an equal proportion, whereas consumers appear in a slightly lower one with 1.4 percent. AFOs also talk about institutions and organizations; among them we find the state, food chains, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), market actors, and International Organizations (IOs) mentioned in 1.7, 1.0, 0.8, 0.6, and 0.2 percent of all sentences respectively. Lastly, some political actions appear as the subject of the sentence (0.8 percent). This is the case when AFOs assess the validity of specific action forms. In fact, most sentences with a political action as a subject are prognostic frames (they present the solutions that the AFOs propose) and some are related to their identity – these actions contribute to the definition of who they are.

In fact, table 3 allows digging into a comparison of subjects mentioned across types of framing. This allows us to understand who is mentioned in relation to problems, solutions, or actions and identities. Let us first consider AFOs themselves, when they appear in their public discourses, they are mostly associated with solutions (74.0 percent of all sentences that include AFOs as subject are related to prognostic frames). In addition, when AFOs appear as the subject, the sentences often present identity frames (18.9 percent). In these sentences, AFOs define who they are in relation to others. More seldom AFOs appear as the subject in sentences that present problems in the existing food system (2.9 percent) or

attempts at mobilizing others (4.3 percent). Regarding the other subjects, some are more likely to be associated with problems while others are more likely to be associated with solutions. Let us examine these differences in more detail.

Table 3. Subjects of the coded sentences, overall and by types of framing (percentages)

	AFOs discourses	Diagnostic frames	Prognostic frames	Mobilization frames	Identity frames
AFOs	87.1	2.9	**74.0**	4.3	**18.9**
Social groups	2.5	**19.4**	44.8	**17.2**	18.7
Individuals	1.9	7.7	59.6	**29.8**	2.9
Citizens	1.9	8.0	47.0	**41.0**	4.0
State institutions	1.7	**29.0**	44.1	-	**26.9**
Consumers	1.4	8.2	76.7	15.1	-
Food chain	1.0	**18.9**	77.4	-	3.8
CSOs	.8	**47.7**	47.7	-	4.6
Political actions	.8	-	**97.6**	-	2.4
Market actors	.6	**93.3**	3.3	-	3.3
IOs	.2	**41.7**	50.0	-	8.3
Other	.2	40.0	60.0	-	-
Total	100	5.1	71.6	5.7	17.6

Note
We calculated adjusted residuals to identify statistically significant differences between the two groups, bold indicates percentages that are higher than expected (with adjusted residuals >= 1.96) and underscore indicates percentages that are smaller than expected (with adjusted residuals <= -1.96).

Focusing on the subjects associated with diagnostic frames, we find that market actors (93.3 percent), CSOs (47.7 percent), IOs (41.7 percent), state institutions (29.0 percent), social groups (19.4 percent), and the food chain (18.8 percent) are over-represented among the subject of diagnostic frames. All these groups have adjusted residuals that are higher than 1.96, which means that they are mentioned, in diagnostic framing, more often than expected according to their overall representation in the dataset. Similarly, we can focus on the subjects of prognostic frames. In this case, we observe that AFOs themselves (74.0 percent) and political actions (97.6 percent) are over-represented among the subject of sentence presenting solutions to transform the food system. Off course, some other actors are also mentioned in relation to solutions. In the case of consumers, 76.7 percent of all the sentences where they appear as subject are related to prognostic frames. This is also the case for 59.6 percent of all the sentences where individuals are the subject. In addition, about half of all the sentences that include citizens (47.0 percent) and social groups (44.8 percent) as the subject present solutions. Turning to mobilization frames allows us to see who should take action according to AFOs. Here, we find that larger than expected percentages appear for citizens (41.0 percent), individuals (29.8 percent), and social groups (17.2 percent). Putting the bulk of the burden of action on the shoulders of societal actors be they individuals or groups. Lastly, concerning identity frames. AFOs define their identity mainly in relation to state institutions (26.9 percent) and other Alternative Food Organizations (18.9 percent).

Analyzing the public discourses of a broad range of AFOs shows that some actors appear mostly if not only as part of the problem in their public discourses. Most evidently, this is the case for market actors, which are seldom mentioned in relation to prognostic frames, only 3.3

percent. When we consider CSOs and IOs, we find a more balanced presence in both diagnostic and prognostic frames. Similarly, state institutions and social groups appear in both diagnostic and prognostic frames. In spite of a large imbalance in favor of the former, they are also considered when discussing solutions.

Actions

Next, in table 4, we turn to the actions mentioned on AFOs' websites. Examining the actions that AFOs propose and present in their public discourses, in particular in relation to prognostic frames that present solutions to improve the food system, allows us to understand which kind of actions they use to transform the food system. Social change in relation to food takes different forms (Lorenzini and Forno forthcoming). The actions that we study here include actions set in the economic sphere to transform markets directly, but also political actions related to institutional or contentious politics as well as cultural actions seeking to change how people think about and relate to food.

Table 4. Actions proposed in the prognostic frames, for all prognostic frames and by subject of the prognostic frames (percentages)

	ALL	**BY SUBJECT OF THE PROGNOSTIC FRAMES**					
	Prognostic frames	**AFOs**	**Social actors**	**NGOs / IOs**	**State**	**Market actors**	**Other**
Direct social action	35.7	80.5	**6.1**	.7	.9	-	11.9
Create new narratives	13.7	81.0	3.1	-	-	-	**15.9**
Diffuse information	11.2	80.0	2.6	-	1.3	-	**16.1**
Create contacts	10.6	**87.3**	3.4	-	1.1	-	8.3
Support change	7.4	74.6	**9.3**	**2.9**	1.0	-	12.2
Train others	6.1	**86.8**	2.7	.4	1.6	-	8.5
Enact change	5.8	**91.1**	4.9	.8	.8	-	2.4
Represent or defend rights	4.4	77.3	-	-	-	-	**22.7**
Protest	1.6	68.7	7.5	-	-	-	**23.9**
Support financially	1.2	59.2	**20.4**	**4.1**	**8.2**	**2.0**	6.1
Market-like action	1.0	56.1	-	-	-	-	**43.9**
Force change through regulation	.8	85.7	-	-	2.9	-	11.4
Democratic or associative action	.4	56.3	6.3	-	**12.5**	-	25.0
Subsidies to encourage change	.1	100	-	-	-	-	-
Total	100	81.0	4.8	.6	1.0	< .1	12.8

Note
We calculated adjusted residuals to identify statistically significant differences between the two groups, bold indicates percentages that are higher than expected (with adjusted residuals >= 1.96) and underscore indicates percentages that are smaller than expected (with adjusted residuals <= -1.96).

Table 4 presents only the actions that appear in sentences coded as prognostic frames. Looking at the first column, which offers an overview of all actions mentioned in prognostic frames, we observe that a third of all the prognostic frames include a verb referring to direct social action (35.7 percent). Direct social actions is a term used to refer to citizens' political actions that seek changes directly in their everyday life (Bosi and Zamponi 2015). In this case, citizens do not seek or demand state intervention. Instead, they seek to implement solutions directly. In our study, direct social action includes, for instance, producing fruit and vegetables, protecting the environment, re-using, recycling, reducing waste, etc. These actions correspond to the idea of prefigurative politics (Jaster 2018). Prefigurative politics includes action that encourage citizens to be the changes they want to see happening on a

larger scale. In addition, some actions correspond to market-based politics (Lorenzini forthcoming). In this case, the changes are related to consumption and consumption choices.

The second most frequent form of action relates to the symbolic or ideational dimension of politics, it includes all the actions related to the creation of new narratives (13.7 percent). This means, finding new ways of imagining food production, distribution, and consumption. The creation and spreading of new imaginaries is key to transform the food system. Scholars working on political participation and democracy show that not only citizens tend to avoid politics (Eliasoph 1998) but their political imaginaries are very narrow (Perrin 2009). Citizens have difficulties envisioning how they can engage in politics and shape the world around us. In this context, creating new narratives plays an important role to attract citizens and to expand their understanding of what is desirable and feasible.

The next two items also relate to the diffusion of ideas and alternative practices. These two actions are diffusing information and creating contacts between organizations but also reaching out towards other populations. Each represent about a fifth of all prognostic frames (11.2 and 10.6 percent respectively). In addition, the following actions are supporting change (7.4 percent), training others (6.1 percent), and enacting changes (5.8 percent). Again, these actions are related to the diffusion of innovations among different economic, social, and political actors and groups.

The lower part of table 4 includes contentious political actions such as representing or defending rights (4.4 percent) and protesting (1.6 percent). The defense of rights is related to trade unions, farmers' unions, or advocacy groups that seek to improve workers' rights for instance, but also to develop the concept of food justice and food rights. Interestingly, we find that actions directly related to protesting represent a very small share of all prognostic frames with less than 2 percent of all the solutions that propose this kind of contentious action. In addition, democratic or associative action is seldom presented as a solution in the public discourses that AFOs publish on their websites (.4 percent of all prognostic frames).

Not only contentious political action and civic participation are seldom presented as part of the solution, but state-led solutions such as regulations or subsidies are even more rarely presented among the solutions that AFOs promote (respectively 0.8 and 0.1 percent of prognostic frames).

The second part of table 4, the six columns on the right side of the table, offers an overview of the action repertoires of AFOs by subjects that is, for each sentence, we know who is the subject (i.e. who should act). This part of the table allows comparing actions according to the subject of the prognostic frames. First, focusing on AFOs, we observe that AFOs are over-represented as the subject of actions related to enacting changes (91.1 percent), creating contact (87.3 percent), and training others (86.8 percent). Quite on the contrary, AFOs are under-represented when it comes to actions related to contentious politics. As in the case of defending rights (77.3 percent) or protesting (68.7 percent). But also to actions related to enhancing civic and democratic participation (56.3 percent). This gives us an overall picture of AFOs engaged in prefigurative politics to transform the food system but also engaged in the politicization of food through contentious political action.

Turning to other actors that appear as the subject of prognostic frames, we observe that social actors (individuals, citizens, consumers, and other social groups) are over-represented in solutions that involve supporting action financially, supporting change, and engaging in direct social action (with 20.4, 9.3, and 6.1 percent respectively). Similarly, NGOs / IOs and state institutions are over-represented in relation to financial support (4.1 percent and 8.2 percent respectively). State institutions are over-represented as the subject of sentences that

point to solutions related to civic and democratic participation with 12.5 percent. Lastly, market actors are the subject of prognostic framing only in actions related to offering financial support.

Issues

In this last part, we turn to the issues discussed in the sentences that we coded. The first column of table 5 presents that overall share of sentences that address issues that fall in one of the nine pre-defined issue categories. This first column shows that environmental issues are most frequently mentioned in AFOs' discourses. They represent about a third of all issues discussed (31.4 percent). The specific issues associated with this most frequent predefined category are, for instance, climate change, biodiversity loss, overproduction, agro ecology, and green urban planning. See appendix I for detailed information about the inductive codes that are part of the issue environment.

The second most important issue in terms of frequency of appearance in AFOs' discourses is inequalities. In this case, a fifth of all the coded sentences refer to issues associated with inequalities (21.2 percent). In this case, the inductive issue categories are, for instance, social inclusion, free food and free meals, fair working conditions, or food knowledge. For more information about the specific issue codes, see appendix II.

Three other issues represent between 10 and 15 percent of all coded sentences each. These are issues related to the market (15.6 percent), localism (12.1 percent), and democracy (9.2 percent). Among market issues appear crafts, community-supported agriculture, the quality of goods, and fair trade as some of the sub-categories inductively created while coding (see appendix III for more details). For localism, the inductive codes include social ties, local food, local economy, and the interactions between consumers and producers for instance (see appendix IV for details). Regarding democracy, the specific codes are, for instance, democratizing urban space, consumer-citizens, and citizens' participation (more details are presented in appendix V).

Lastly, four issues are seldom discussed on AFOs websites. Agricultural issues represent only 4.0 percent of all the coded sentences. Similarly, health is mentioned only in 3.1 percent of the coded sentences, animal welfare in 2.0 percent, and food in general in 1.5 percent. While agriculture and food are *residual* categories to code sentences that are vague or which cannot be linked to any or a single of the seven main categories. For instance, in the case of agriculture some inductive codes are urban agriculture, peasant agriculture and, for food, food sovereignty and food security (see appendix VI). These concepts span multiple issues such as inequalities, democracy, and localism for instance. Hence, the coders had difficulties identifying specific issues to code or they could not choose a single issue. Quite on the contrary, health and animal rights are *substantial* issues. For the two residual categories, the low percentage (low number of sentence that fall in these categories) attest of the efforts made to code precisely the issues. It can be interpreted as a sign that the quality of the data is high. The two substantial issues, instead, point to interesting information about the content of AFOs' discourses. In particular, it is striking to find that health with discussions related to healthy food, well-being, and physical activities (see appendix VI) appears only in 3 percent of all the coded sentences. This low percentage stands in sharp contrast with citizens' interest and concern for health issues. Among buy-cotters in Switzerland – those who buy products for political reasons – health appears among the three most commonly mentioned motivations (Lorenzini, Schell and Sahakian forthcoming). Regarding animal rights, in spite of

a growing interest and attention paid to veganism, this issue is marginal in AFOs' public discourses. Be it in relation to veganism or animal welfare.

Table 5. Issues of all coded sentences and issues by frames (percentages)

	Total	Diagnostic	Prognostic	Mobilization	Identity
Environment	31.4	**37.5**	**32.8**	21.7	27.0
Inequalities	21.2	**25.2**	19.2	**31.0**	**24.0**
Market	15.6	**20.0**	15.2	12.4	16.8
Localism	11.9	0.8	12.3	11.7	**14.1**
Democracy	9.4	10.2	9.4	**13.8**	7.6
Agriculture	4.0	1.3	4.0	3.8	4.7
Health	3.1	1.1	**3.4**	2.4	2.9
Animal rights	2.0	1.8	2.3	2.9	0.8
Food	1.5	2.1	1.4	0.2	2.2
N	6'160	381	4'313	419	1'047

Note
We calculated adjusted residuals to identify statistically significant differences between the two groups, bold indicates percentages that are higher than expected (with adjusted residuals >= 1.96) and underscore indicates percentages that are smaller than expected (with adjusted residuals <= -1.96).

The other four columns in table 5 present the share of issues for each of the four frames that we analyze here. When we consider the issues addressed in diagnostic frames, we observe that issues related to the environment (37.5 percent), to inequalities (25.2 percent), and to the market (20.0 percent) are slightly over-represented in diagnostic frames – the percentage is higher than in the overall distribution presented in the first column. Quite on the contrary, issues related to localism (1.3 percent), general issues related to agriculture (1.3 percent), and health (1.1 percent) are under-represented in the discussion of problems.

The picture is different when we turn to prognostic frames. In this case, issues associated with the environment (32.8 percent) and health (3.4 percent) are over-represented while inequalities are under-represented (19.2 percent). Environment appears as a key issue for AFOs. Not only it is the most discussed issue on their websites, but it is over-represented in the discussion of both problems and solutions. This is not the case for the other eight pre-defined issue categories.

Next, we consider sentences that refer to mobilization, that call for action. In this case, we observe that inequalities (31.0 percent) and democracy (13.8 percent) are over-represented whereas the environment (21.7 percent) and food (0.2 percent) are under-represented. Similarly, among identity frames, inequalities are over-represented with 24.0 percent. In the case of identity, talking about local issues also represent a larger than expected percentage with 14.5 percent. For identity frames, the environment (27.0 percent), democracy (7.2 percent), and health (2.9 percent) are more seldom discussed than they appear on average among all coded sentences.

Conclusion

In this report, we presented descriptive findings resulting from the detailed coding of the discourses that AFOs publish on their websites. The data captures the discourses of 172 AFOs that were active in the canton of Geneva in 2019 – that is prior to the period of confinement, which led to changes in citizens' food related habits. The discourses are drawn from their websites and we coded all the pages presenting their project and their values in order to produce a dataset that allows studying their discourses through frame analyses. We developed a transposable method to capture the frames, the subjects, the actions, and the issues addressed in all the sentences that refer to food.

Our empirical analyses show that **AFOs seldom speak about problems, the bulk of their discourses are focused on presenting solutions**. Prognostic frames represent 70 percent of all the frames, while diagnostic frames represent only 6 percent. Moreover, few sentences seek to mobilize citizens. Only 7 percent of the coded sentences are dedicated to mobilizing citizens. The remaining 17 percent are dedicated to the presentation of the identity of the organization, who they are, with whom they work, and against whom they fight.

The analyses of AFOs' action reflect this focus on solutions. **Direct social actions represent the single most common set of actions in AFOs' online discourses.** They correspond to about a third of all actions presented on their websites and include actions such as selling organic fruit and vegetables, setting up a farmers' market, or reducing waste. This largest category of actions taken correspond to prefigurative actions that seek to experiment with and practice the changes they want to want to see happening on larger scales. At the same time, some of them correspond to market-based political actions in which political action is related to consumption choices and purchasing power. **Quite on the contrary, actions related to democratic institutions and contentious political actions represent a very small share of the actions presented on their websites**.

Lastly, our empirical analyses show that AFOs speak about a broad range of issues. Yet, **two issues stand out as the most commonly discussed on their websites. These are environmental issues and issues related to inequalities**. The picture is very different when we turn to health, in this case, AFOs dedicate a very tiny fraction of their online discourses to this issue. **In spite of citizens' interest for health, AFOs seldom speak about health on their websites**. In addition, to these issues, AFOs talk about issues related to local food as a way to reinforce the local economy and to create links between producers and consumers. As such, issues associated with the local are often discussed in relation to AFOs identity. Lastly, issues related to democracy are mentioned in a limited number of cases.

Overall, the analysis of AFOs' discourses shows that they seek to present solutions and alternatives to agro-industrial production and long food chains. Yet, AFOs offer discourses that are more suitable for readers who are already aware of problems in the existing food system. They do not offer a place where citizens can equally learn about problems and solutions to build a sustainable food system. AFOs could make an effort to further politicize the issue of food and inform citizens about problems in the food system to seek more far-reaching support for the solutions that they propose.

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Appendix

Appendix I. Inductive codes for environment

	Frequency	Percent
Agro ecology (e.g. organic)	231	12.0
Sustainability	201	10.4
Green urban planning, spaces	172	8.9
Respect for nature	126	6.5
Biodiversity	111	5.7
Species preservation	92	4.8
Natural cycles	90	4.7
Renewable energy (less non-renewable)	84	4.4
Voluntary simplicity (less consumption)	81	4.2
Environment	78	4.0
Less food waste	76	3.9
Natural manure (less fertilizers)	71	3.7
Sustainable development	69	3.6
Environment ideals	64	3.3
Less air pollution & CO2 emissions	51	2.6
Permaculture	51	2.6
Sustainable food consumption	48	2.5
Soft mobility (or less transports)	44	2.3
Climate change	34	1.8
Recycling (waste)	16	0.8
Pollution	15	0.8
Loss of natural resources	14	0.7
Urban sprawl, lack or agricultural land	14	0.7
Less water pollution	14	0.7
Environment	13	0.7
Chemicals	12	0.6
Over-consumption	12	0.6
Long distance transport	9	0.5
Climate change	9	0.5
No GMOs	7	0.4
Climate justice	7	0.4
Overproduction	6	0.3
Biodiversity loss	4	0.2
Lack of respect for natural cycles	3	0.2
GMO	2	0.1
Population growth	1	0.1
Food knowledge	1	0.1
Total	1,933	100

Appendix II. Inductive codes for inequalities

	Frequencies	Percent
Social inclusion	226	16.9
Free food, free meals	180	13.5
Social inclusion through work	180	13.5
Fair working conditions	151	11.3
Food knowledge	133	9.9
Fair wages	84	6.3
Solidarity	59	4.4
Low prices	52	3.9
Working conditions	46	3.4
Free housing	41	3.1
Inequalities	37	2.8
Fair prices for producers	29	2.2
Respect for human beings	28	2.1
Food rights	18	1.4
Inequalities	17	1.3
Anti-discrimination	16	1.2
Lifelong learning	11	0.8
Inequalities	8	0.6
Discrimination	5	0.4
Poverty	3	0.2
Racism	3	0.2
Low wages	3	0.2
Land grabbing	3	0.2
Isolation, loneliness	2	0.2
High prices / not accessible	2	0.2
Developing countries	1	0.1
Total	1,338	100

Appendix III. Inductive codes for market

	Frequency	Percent
Crafts	167	17.4
Community-supported agriculture	163	17.0
Quality of goods	156	16.3
Fair trade	147	15.3
Controls, norms, etc.	64	6.7
Short food chains	48	5.0
Traceability	42	4.4
Free exchange, non-monetary exchange	42	4.4
Globalization	22	2.3
State subsidies for farming	19	2.0
Financial stability	12	1.3
Profit driven	11	1.2
Labels and commodification of political	11	1.2
Economic knowledge	10	1.0
Capitalism	8	0.8
Pressure on producers	7	0.7
Lack of diversity	6	0.6
Agro-industrial food	5	0.5
High volatility in food prices	4	0.4
Investment and returns	4	0.4
Market	3	0.3
Large farms	2	0.2
Goods quality	2	0.2
Free markets	1	0.1
Cost of production	1	0.1
Transparence des prix	1	0.1
Total	958	100

Appendix IV. Inductive codes for localism

	Frequency	Percent
Social ties	209	28.5
Local food	177	24.1
Local economy	115	15.7
Consumer-producers ties	106	14.4
Local culture, heritage	81	11.0
Sharing knowledge	44	6.0
Rural world remote from consumers	2	0.3
Total	734	100

Appendix V. Inductive codes for democracy

	Frequency	Percent
Democratizing urban space	150	25.6
Consumer-citizens	145	24.7
Citizens' participation	124	21.2
Human rights	90	15.4
Seed sovereignty	17	2.9
Consumers' rights	12	2.1
Activists judiciary pursuit	11	1.9
Financial independence	7	1.2
Confrontational politics	6	1.0
Unequal power	5	0.9
Activism	5	0.9
Lobbies	5	0.8
Anti-corruption	2	0.3
State subsidies	2	0.3
Democracy	2	0.3
Administrative burden	1	0.2
System is too slow	1	0.2
Common good	1	0.2
Total	586	100

Appendix VI. Inductive categories for the other four issues

		Frequency	Percent
HEALTH	Healthy food	87	44.6
	Health for everyone	64	32.8
	Health knowledge	22	11.3
	Well-being	10	5.1
	Physical activity	7	3.6
	Health	5	2.6
	Total	195	100
ANIMAL RIGHTS	Animal welfare	92	73.6
	Veganism	30	24.0
	Animal exploitation	3	2.4
	Total	125	100
FOOD	Food sovereignty	55	59.1
	Pleasure to eat	27	29.1
	Food	6	6.5
	Food security	5	5.4
	Total	93	100
AGRICULTURE	Urban agriculture	103	42.2
	Peasant agriculture	91	37.3
	Agriculture	26	10.6
	Sustainable agriculture	24	9.8
	Total	244	100