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Localized or territorial? Different perspectives on the ecologisation of agrifood systems at the local scale

Pisa, 20th of April, 2015

- in echo to Bowen and Mutersbaugh, 2013. *Local or localized? Exploring the contributions of Franco-Mediterranean agrifood theory to alternative food research*

Their argument =

- In the AFN literature, local = positionalist (in the chain) vs in the SYAL one, local is linked to (socially constructed) territories (see also Fonte, 2008, 2010)
 - Alternative vs territorially anchored structures (like GIs)
 - In the SYAL approach, more focus on collectivity (institutions and shared forms of knowledge- « know-how » - and identity) and also on regulatory processes and institutions and governance in general
 - But the SYAL scholars are less critical tw the political and social implications of underlying power dynamics, unequal distribution of costs and benefits (some are, i.e., Tregear, Brunori and Rossi etc.)
- > the AFN literature is much more diverse than the SYAL one (= an approach), and the contrast between AFN/Syal is not that sharp
- > Franco-Mediterranean should not be just French (influence of the French convention theory and ANT, but also Italian literature and others)
- > attempt to trace the influences and links between different perspectives
- > other reasons to suggest another approach = SYAL's single-commodity vision

1. The theoretical landscape and larger context of AFN research in the US and in Europe in the 2000s (largely based on Goodman et al., 2012)
2. Debates over localism and relocalisation
3. Debates over the transformative power of AFNs
4. A territorial agrifood system approach (SYAT)
5. Comparing SYAL and SYAT approaches

Analytical, oppositional

Political economy approaches (of **production**) (FRT, Friedman, McMichael, Buttel etc.)

Consumption turn; critical AFN studies Goodman, Guthman, Allen etc.

Cultural studies (of **consumption**) (Ritzer, Fischler etc.)

Optimistic AFN studies (food democracy) Kloppenburg, Hinrichs etc.

Production perspective

Consumption perspective

SYAL and GI studies

Conventions theory

Rural development approaches Marsden, Van der Ploeg, Murdoch, Renting etc.

Network approaches (Short circuits)

Giddens+ Ecological Mod theory

ANT, Collective action

Governance and cooperation

Normative, reformist

Debates over localism and relocalisation

Optimistic views: trust based on direct links, emancipatory food agenda (Kloppenburg et al., 1996; Hendrickson & Hefferman, 2002 etc.), empowerment, food democracy

Debates over some negative aspects of localism

To assume that local economic embeddedness precludes exploitative relations is to confuse spatial relations with social relations (Hinrichs, 2003; Selfa & Qazi, 2005)

Elitism, issue of social justice (Allen & Guthman, 2006) -> raising literature about access to food (ex food urban strategies)

Little attention to issues of power within the farms but also uneven development (Goodman, 2004) -> a risk to depoliticize the local

Forms of normalization imposed on producers (eg., within Amaps)

Debates over the transformative power of AFNs

Optimistic views: local producers and consumers gain power on the definition of their modes of production/consumption; requalification of consumers (Jaffe & Gertler, 2006); a new agrarian eco-economy (Marsden 2006)

Transformative power or just alternatives? (cf Allen et al., 2003)

Homogeneisation (Dahlberg, 2001); forms of mainstreaming/recuperation, endogeneisation of social critique via segmentation, CSR etc. (Wilkinson 2009)

-> but also re-differentiation processes

Hybrid patterns (Ilbery & Maye, 2005)

AFN as part of a neo liberal governmentality (Allen & Guthman, 2006)

Need to couple local initiatives and larger political movements

Collective action-oriented approaches

how social actors act (together) to change their lives/relations etc.

-> **Collective action approaches / sociology of social movements**

AFN's modes of action: lobbying, new production/consumption systems, consumers education (Dubuisson-Quellier et al., 2011)

Utilitarian solution of the market as opposed to a marxian rejection of it (Goodman et al.) -> rather a co-presence and a pragmatic alliance of these visions

Analysis of AFNs' alliances (with other AFNs / other actors)

-> **transition theories approaches**

How practices change within niches, changes in daily routines, through the incorporation of values (Brunori et al., 2010, Rossi, 2010)

Territorial agrifood system approach

Rationale:

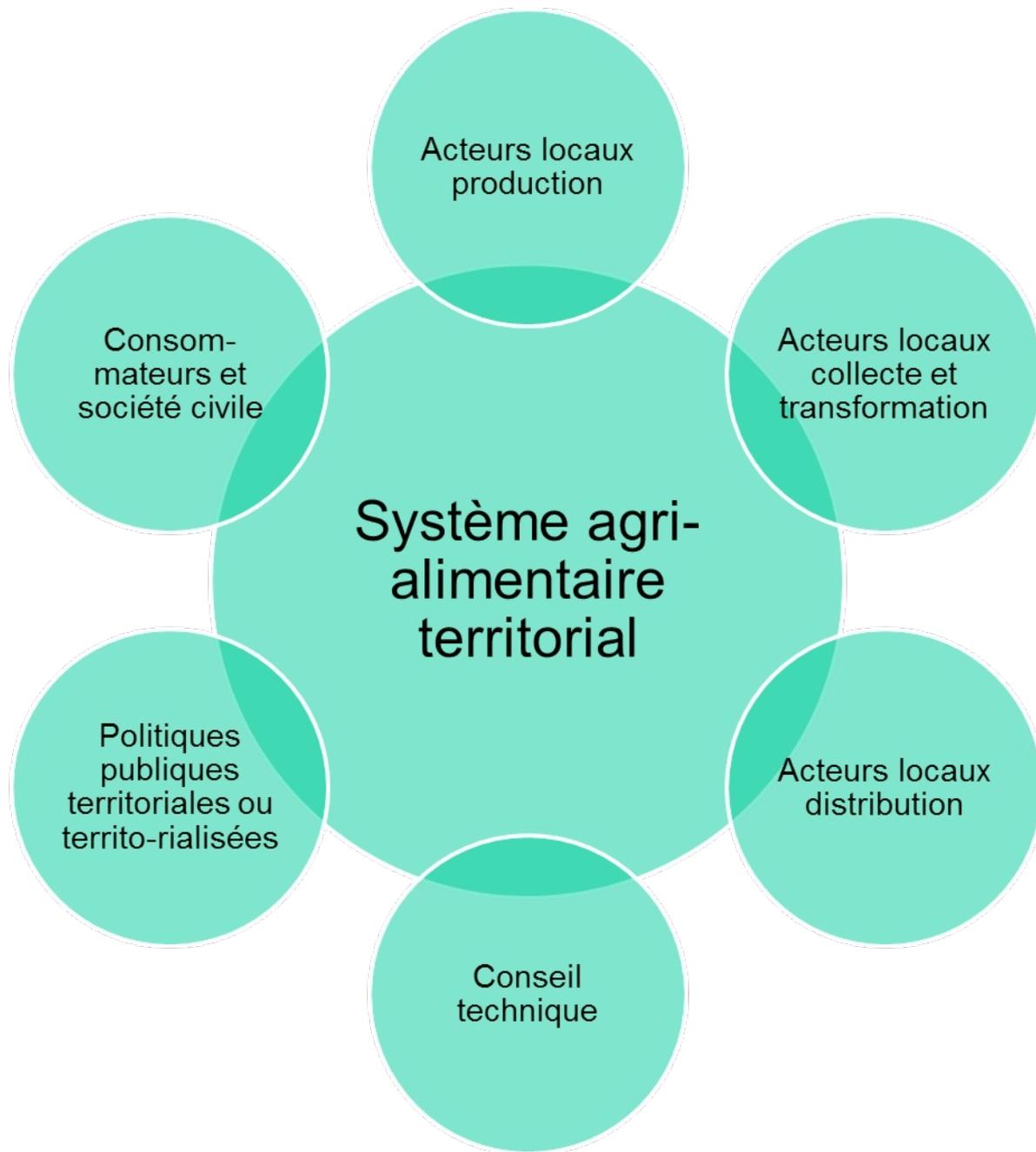
- AFN studies often focus on the producers/consumers links and neglect the other actors
 - They also tend to neglect hybridity, i.e., changes within so-called conventional structures (or read them as simple conventionalisation process)
 - Empirically often focused on a given initiative/network
- > the territorial agrifood system approach considers the diversity of initiatives on a given territory, either emerging from radical/alternative or more conventional actors and visions...

Study of the actors', institutions' and initiatives' trajectories over time

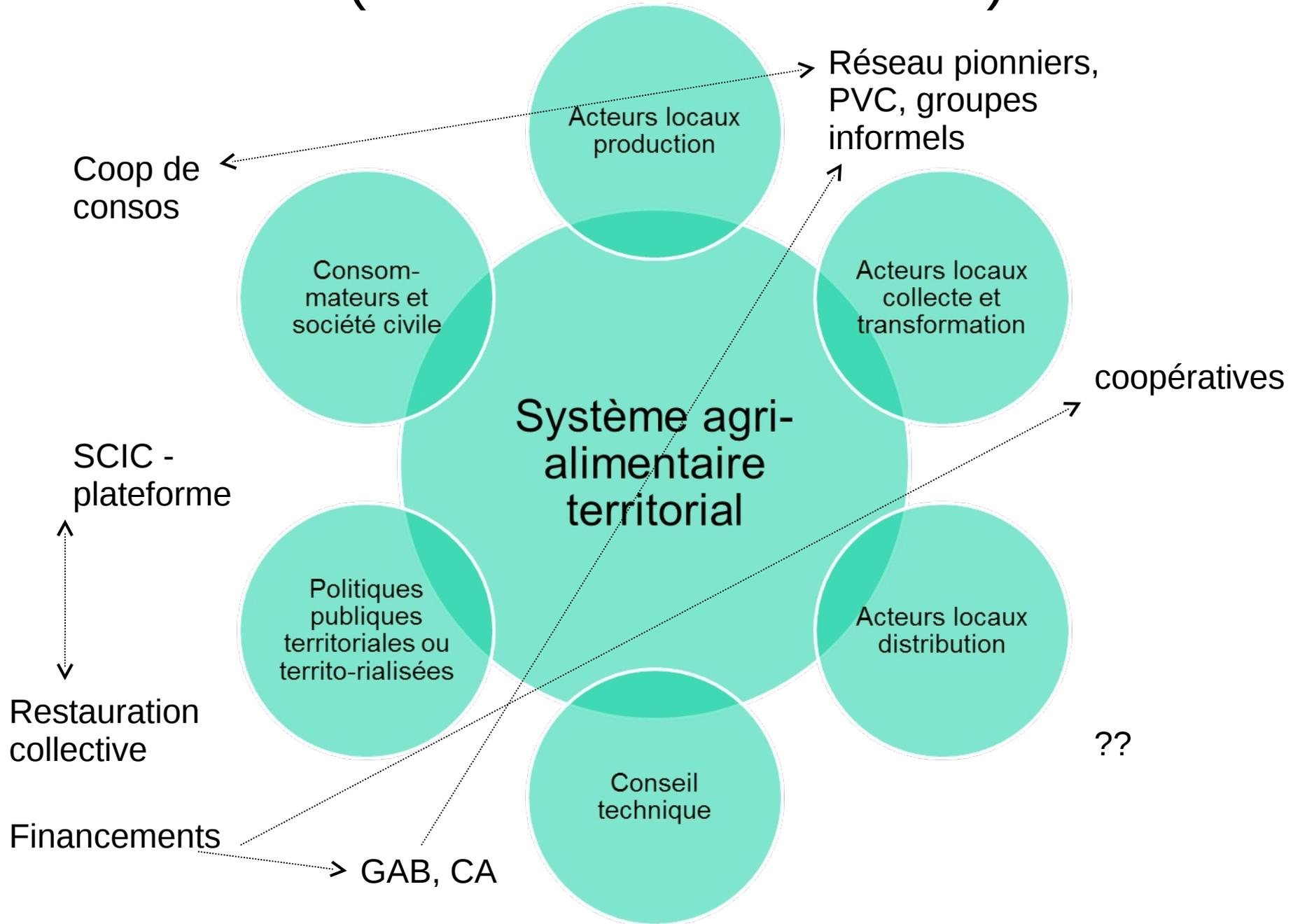
... of their interdependencies, and modes of coordination

... of their alliances, discourses, controversies

Assess how they might redesign interdependencies within the territorial agrifood system in a virtuous way (hypothesis = alternatives can influence the whole system when some major components are involved, i.e., downstream actors, public policies etc.)



Transitions dans le système agrialimentaire territorial (cas Vallée de la Drôme)

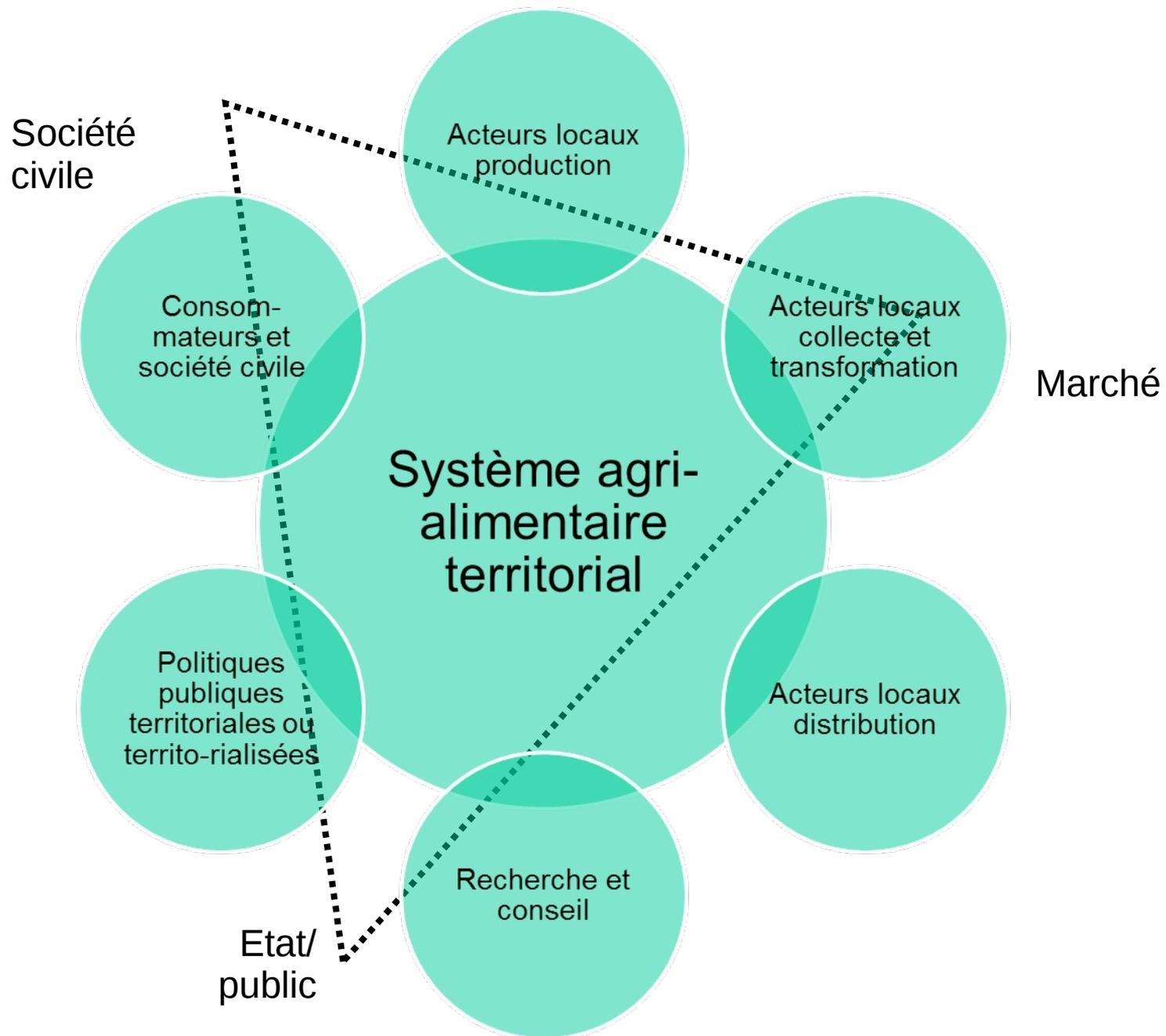


Building blocks:

- a socio-historical study of past changes
- an ethnographic analysis of on-going changes, within a systemic approach
- an analysis of the processes of alliance and exclusion at stake...

Related to the notion of change in the governance mechanisms with a larger role for civil society (cf Civic Food Networks, Renting, Wiskerke etc.),

Changer les mécanismes de la gouvernance alimentaire



	Syal – localized agrifood systems	Territorialized agrifood systems
Typical case studies	GIs	Diverse initiatives on a given territory
Food product qualification process	Specific	Generic
Common stake	Common agricultural and culinary heritage, material and immaterial patrimony	Common fate, reconnexion of local agriculture and food
Key concepts	Know-how, knowledge, resources	Interdependencies, coordination, commitment
Processes under study	Processes of products qualification and territorial anchorage	Processes of emergence, coordination, alliances
Theoretical approaches	Convention theory, territorial economy	Sociology of collective action (and controversies), ANT, FRT, Transition theories
Methods	4 themes (actors networks, food, know how, resources)	socio-historical systemic analysis + study of coordination and ongoing controversies and alliances

Conclusion/discussion

Hybrid does not necessarily means conventionalised, need for precise analysis of some « hybridity » mechanisms

Need to take into account not only internal alliances/controversies but also *inside/outside interplay* (Brunori and Rossi, 2007)

local food / locality food / localist food (Brunori, 2007)

Geographic Indications



Short food chains

**Bowen &
Mutersbaugh,
2013**

**Valeurs culturelles
partagées**

**Circuits de
distribution locaux**

Fonte, 2010

Référence à l'origine
pour principale identité

Qualification par des
marchés de proximité

Brunori, 2007

localized

Localist

Local

Source: Lucile Garçon, 2015

	Short description	Initiators	Type of coordination and commitment
producers' collective shops	Producers ran shops. Obligatory presence (egg., a half day every 2 weeks) <i>OF+NO</i>	Producers and, for the first one, a teacher in an alternative agricultural training system	Collective crops planning (for vegetables) Direct access to consumers' expectations through the presence of producers in the shop
Amap	CSA type box scheme <i>OF</i>	Consumers	Reciprocal producer/consumer commitment (written long term contract, weekly encounter)
Cooperative	New organic line for a big wholesaler <i>OF</i>	Cooperative and chamber of agricultura, with an organic wholesaler	long food chains classical criteria of quality, no contract, part of the production might be refused when the market is saturated
Organic farmers group	Collective expeditions to organic wholesalers <i>OF</i>	An experimented local OF	Marketing adjustments according to producers' possibilities and surplus but classical criteria of quality
School procurement	Informal producers' meetings organised by a local canteen <i>OF + NO</i>	School central kitchen	Collective crops planning (producers + school), adjustment of quality criteria
local organic consumer cooperative procurement network	Organisation of a network of local vegetables suppliers <i>OF</i>	The cooperative and its staff	Collective crops planning (producers + cooperative staff), adjustment of quality criteria