



Just being a consumer ? The role of social and solidarity based economy in a sustainable food system

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Just being a consumer ?

The role of social and
solidarity based economy
in a sustainable food
system.

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AESOP – Montpellier
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Context and Issues

- What could be the contribution of SSE to the sustainability of the Food System ?
- One reason of the « unsustainability » of this system : disconnexion of urban consumers and agricultural production`.



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- SSE : democratic mode of governance facilitates this « reconnexion »
 - Market transaction = Politic engagement (Sen, 2000)
 - Allows involvement in decision making among the value chain (Dubuisson-Quellier et Lamine, 2004; Chiffolleau et Prévost, 2013)

Hypothesis : the more the structure is democratic, the more the Food System knowledge of consumers is high

Context and Issues (2)

→ Exploratory work – Surfood program



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→ Montpellier SSE organizations as case study

→ Training Simon Da Cunha – May-September 2013

SSE organizations in the food system

SSE : mixing economic activity and social issue

<i>Link to solidarity</i>	Philanthropic solidarity	Political solidarity
<i>Link to the market</i>		
Predominantly non market SSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centers for the homeless • Worksite insertion • Food Aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursery • Shared Gardens • House of the unemployed • Networks of reciprocal knowledge exchange • Authorities neighborhood
Predominantly market SSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration Enterprises • Gardens insertion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associations supporting small farming • Purchasing groups • Production cooperatives • Consumer Cooperatives • Solidarity based finance

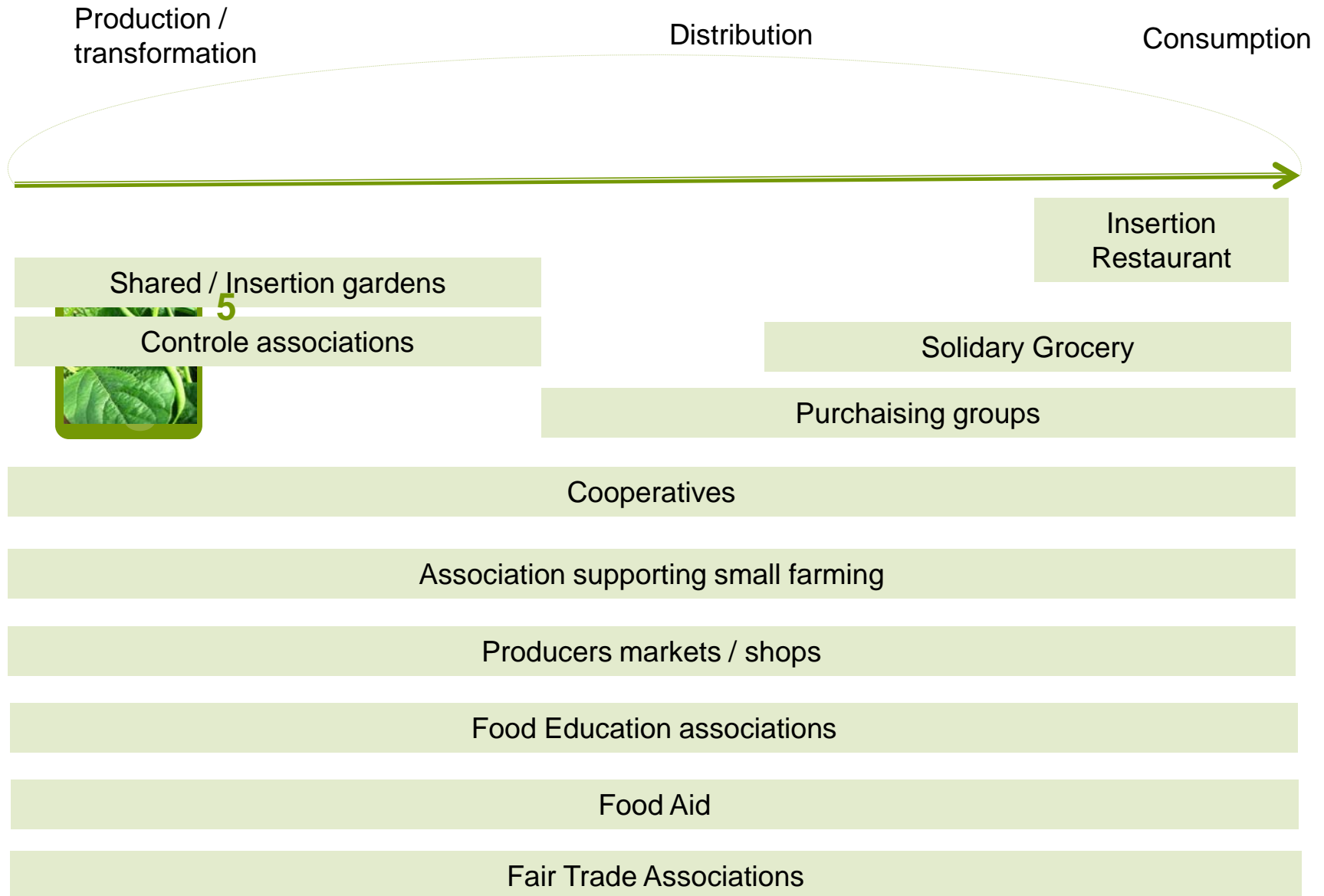
(Adapted from Lévesque & Mendell, 2005)

Some of those organizations are present in the food system

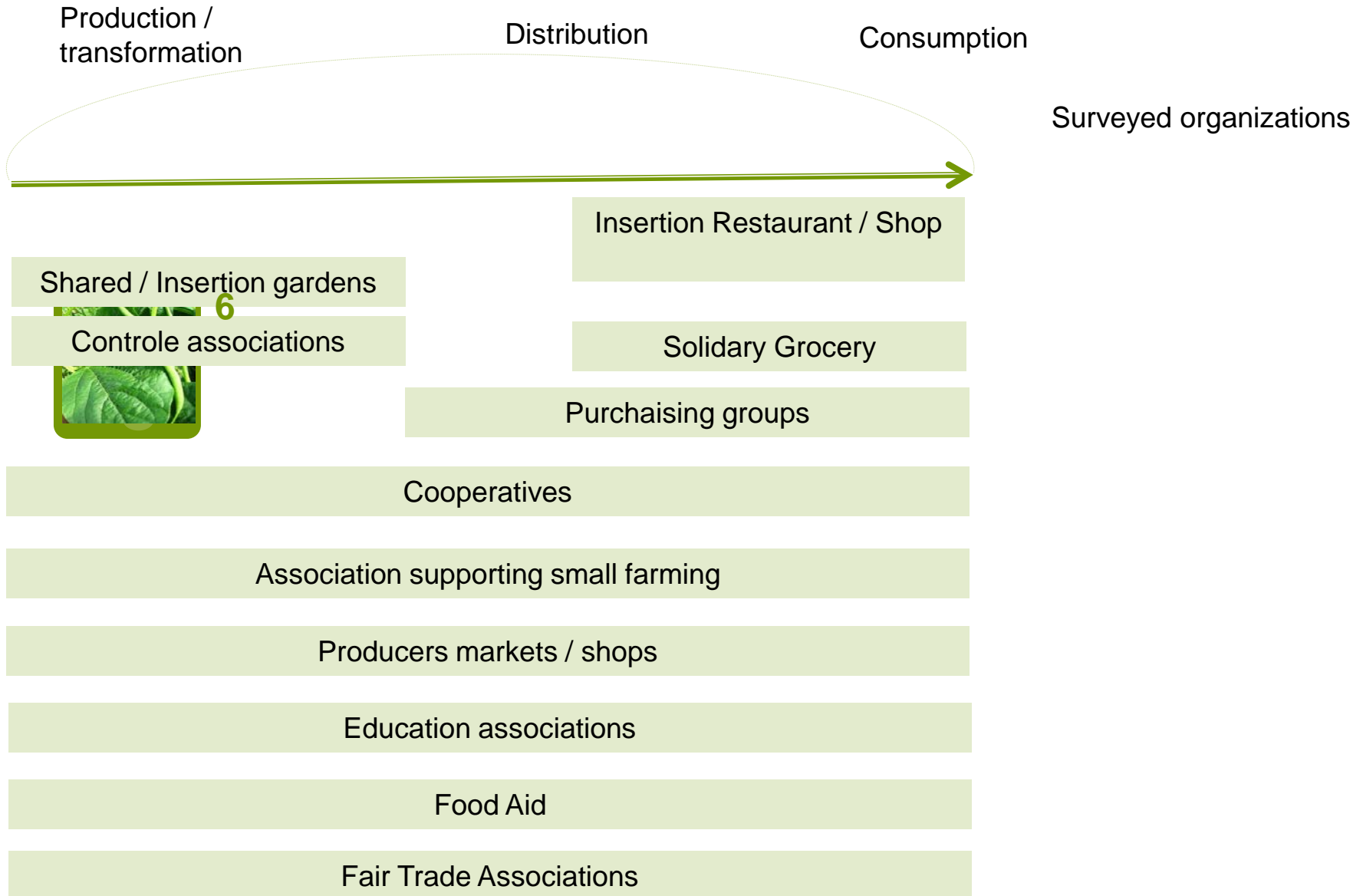


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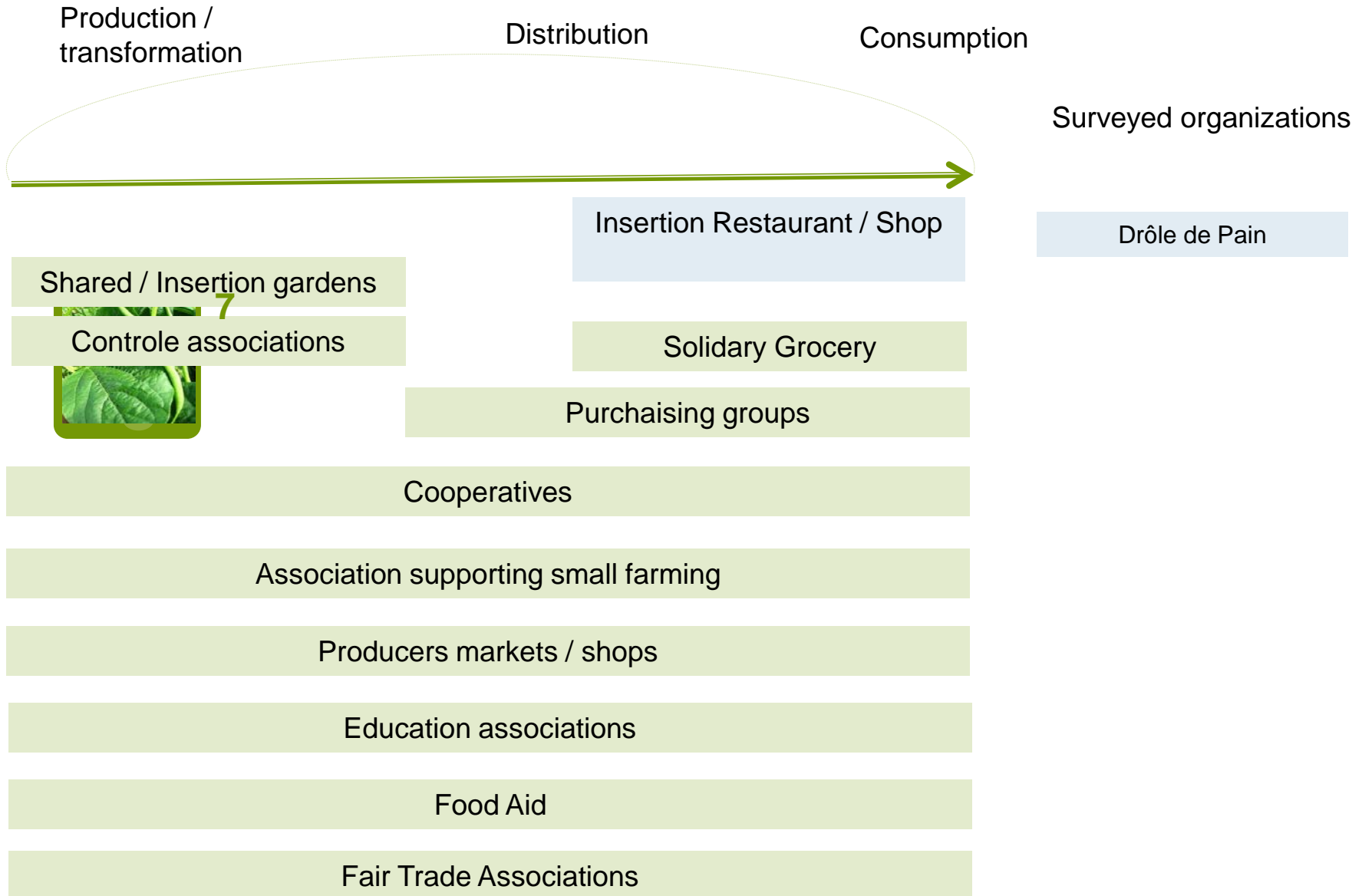
SSE organizations in the food system



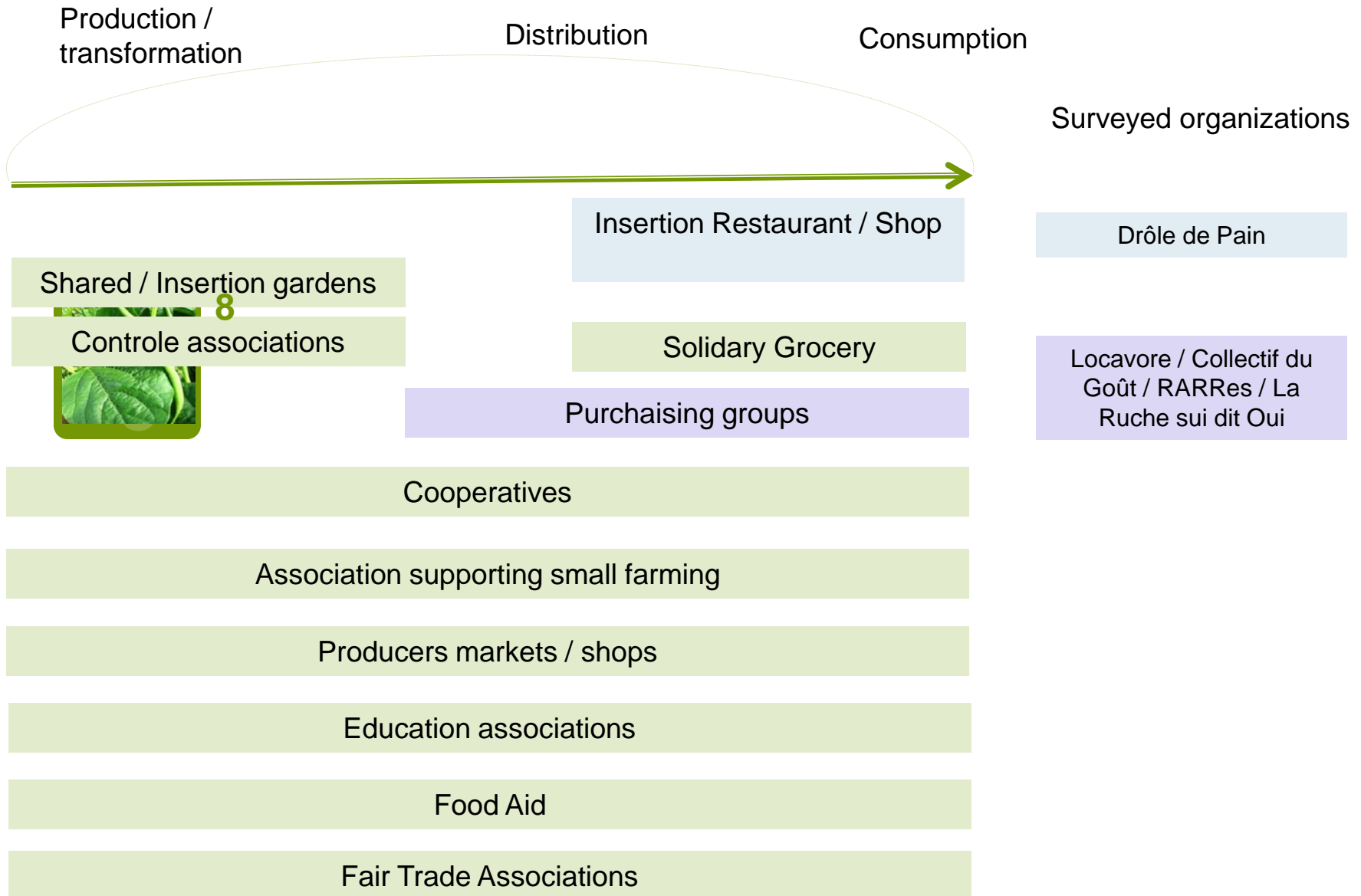
SSE organizations in the food system in Montpellier



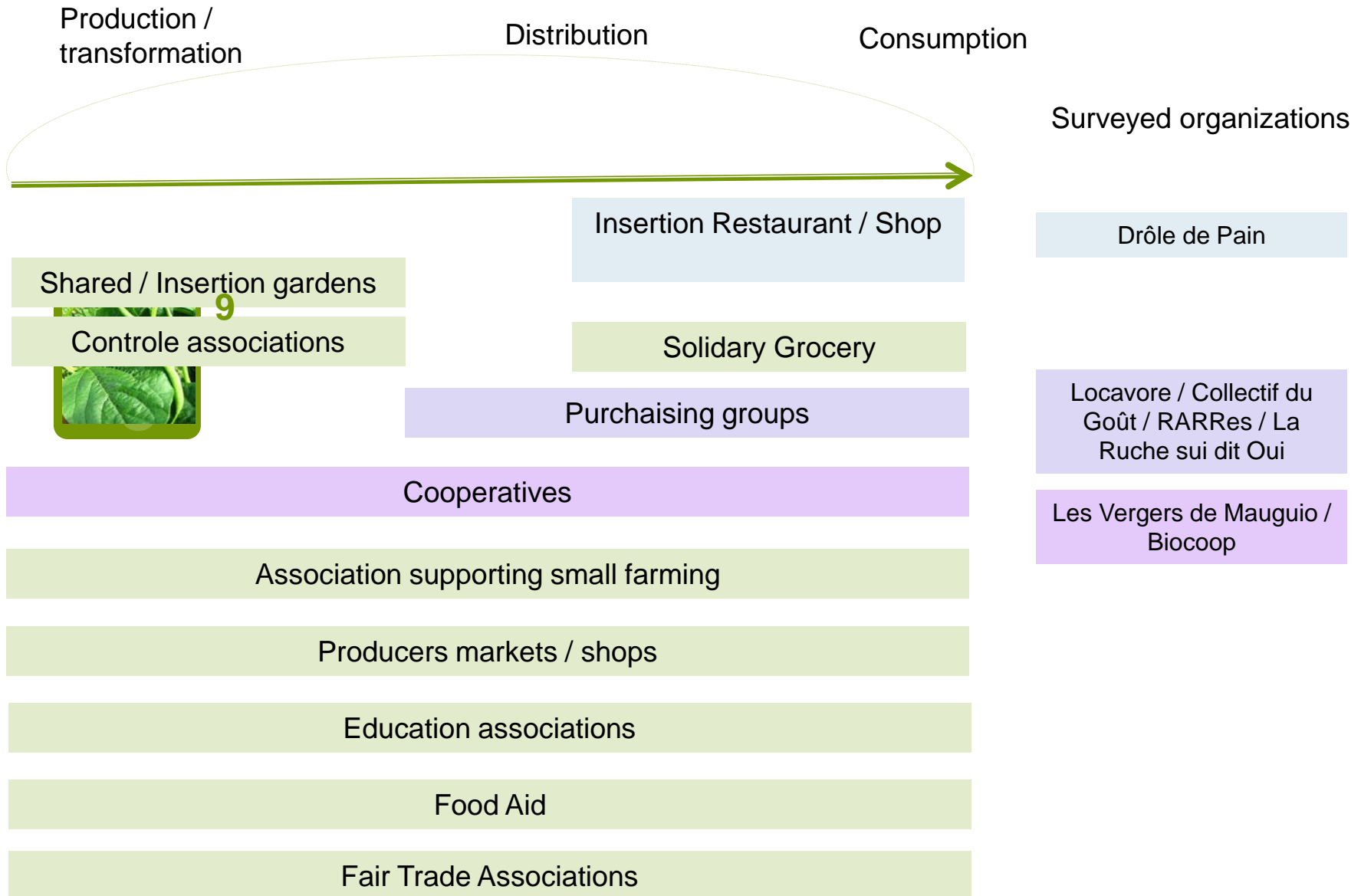
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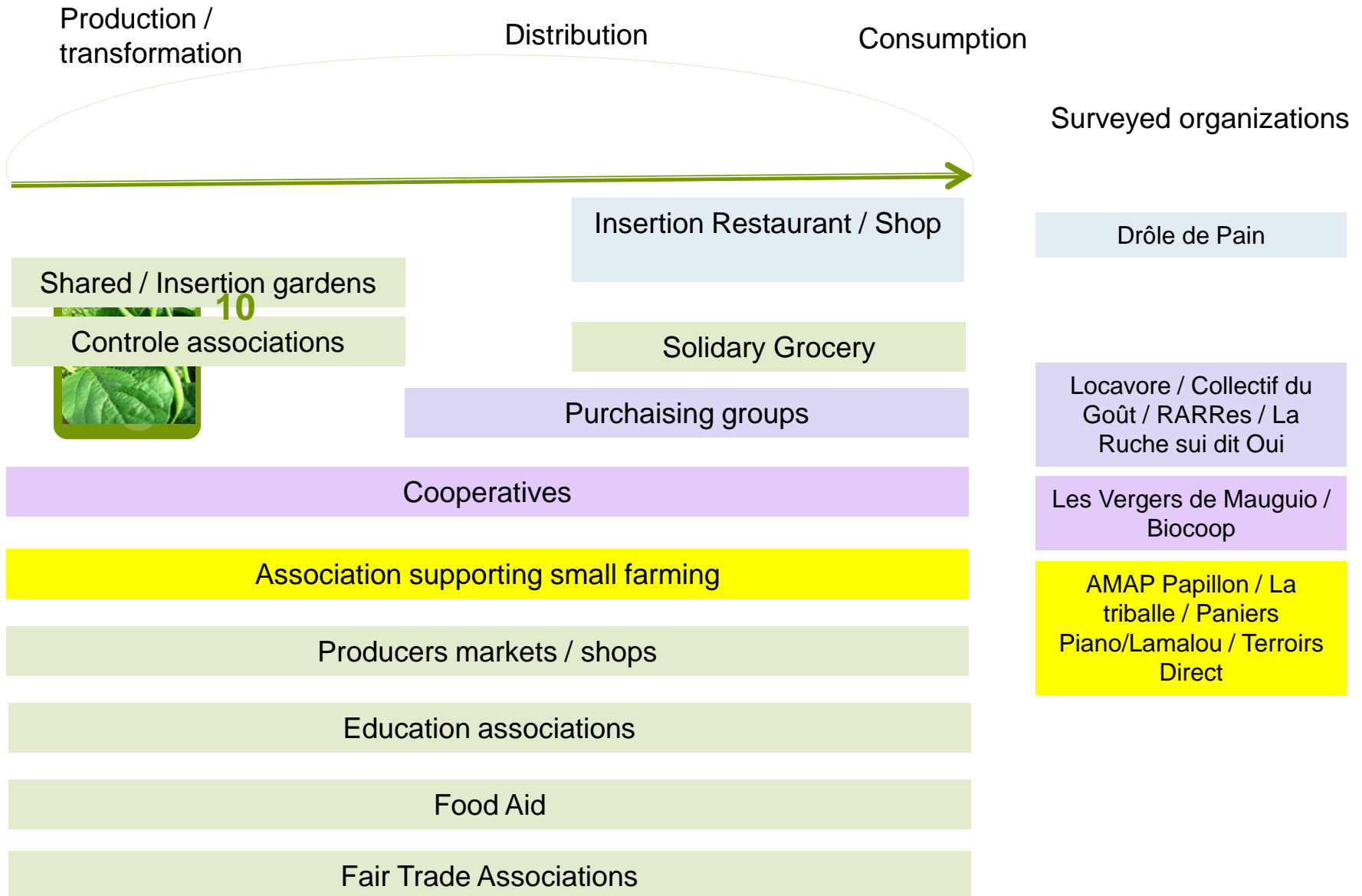
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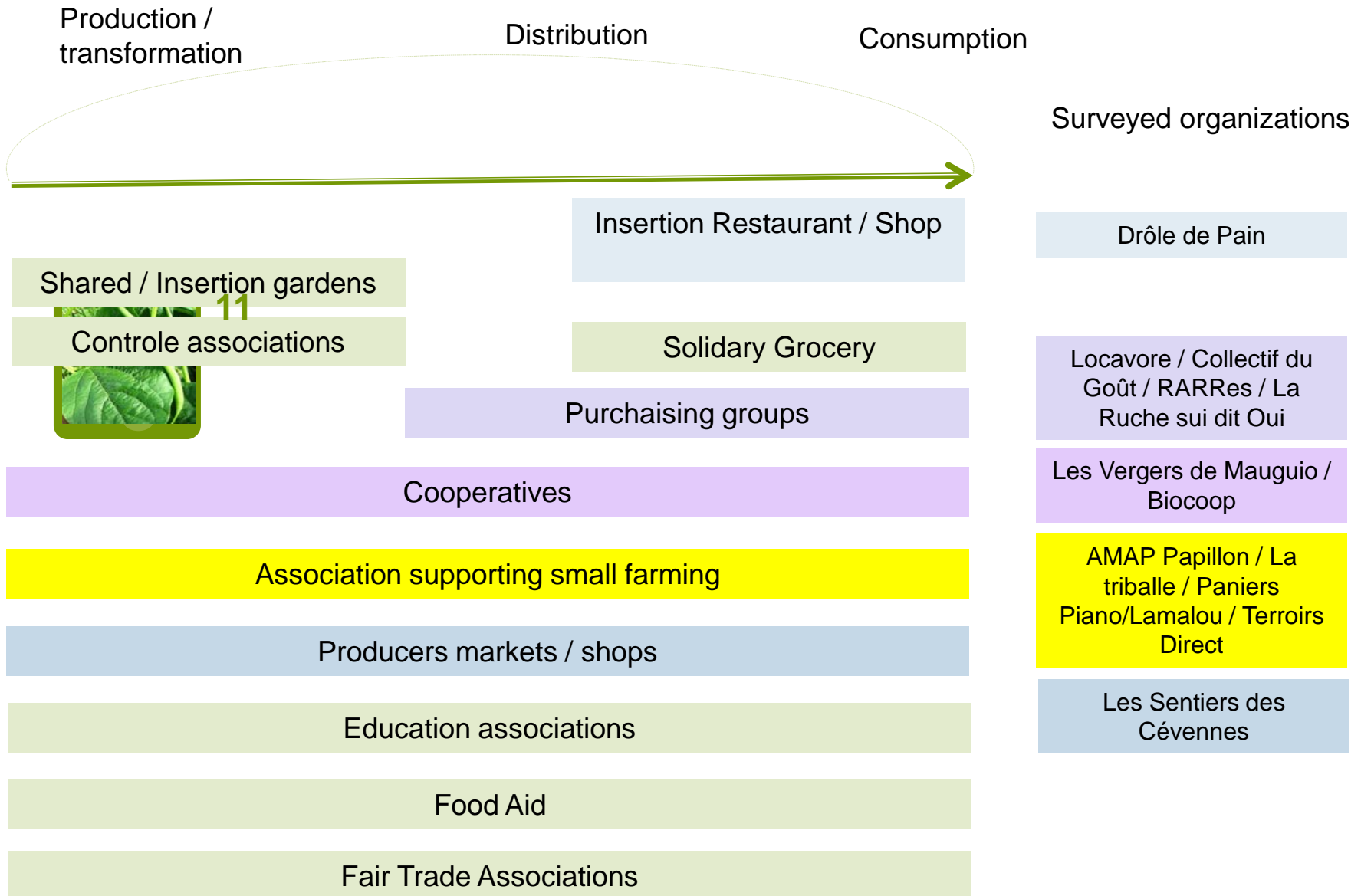
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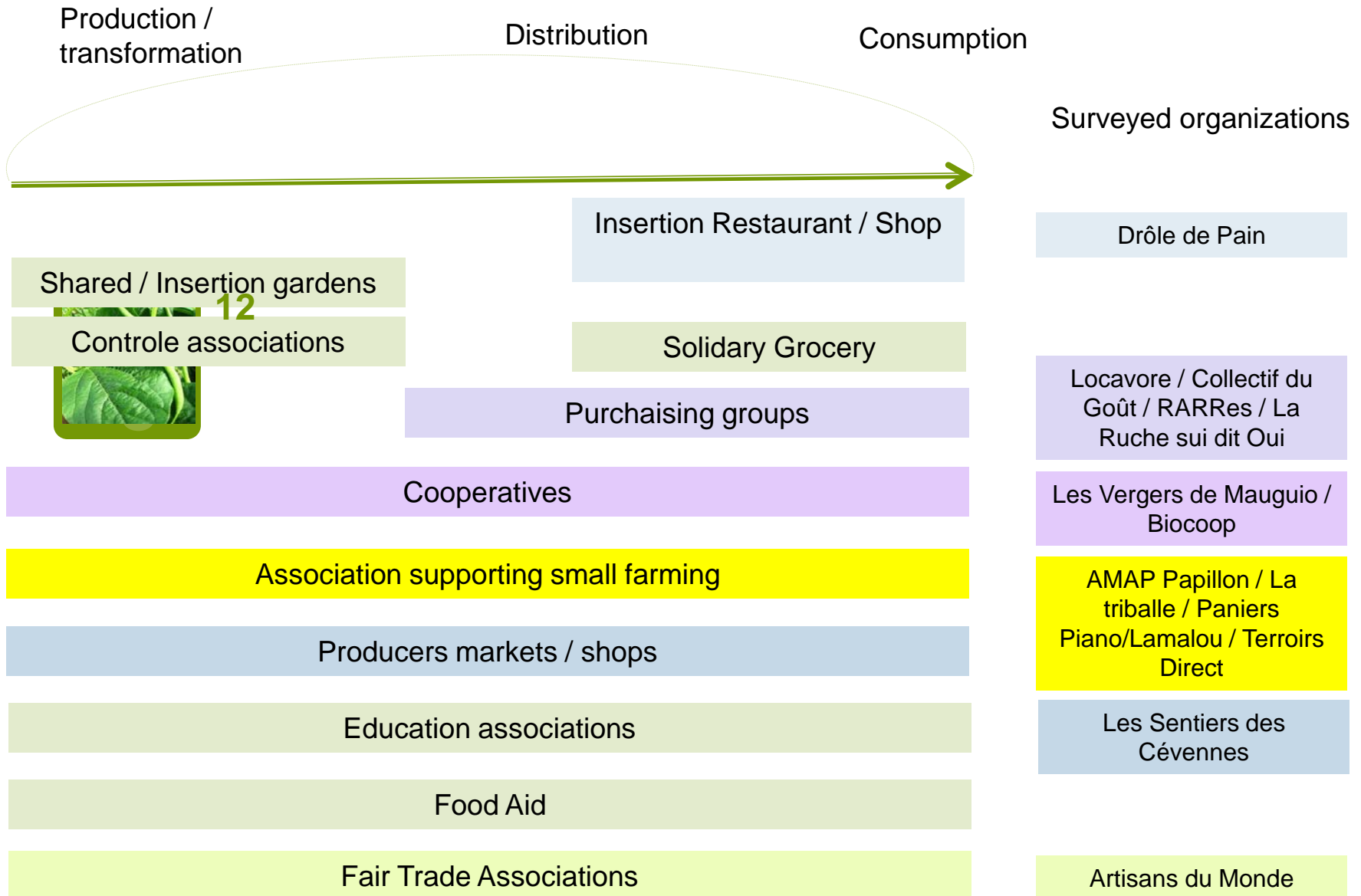
SSE organizations in the food system in Montpellier



SSE organizations in the food system in Montpellier



SSE organizations in the food system in Montpellier



Methodology

Hypothesis : the more the structure is democratic, the more the level of food system knowledge of consumers is high



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- Survey in Montpellier – 4 voluntary organizations
- Stage 1 : Head of 4 structures, semi-structured interviews → Members' involvement in democratic life (evaluation on 23 items)
 - Participation in activities, individual and collective responsibility
 - Democratic decision process
 - Purpose of services to members and to the community
- Stage 2 : Consumers in these structures, online surveys, quiz of 12 questions → expertise level of consumers (117 respondents)
 - About agriculture, actors of food systems, consumption ...

Results (1) – Food System knowledge

Who are the respondents?

- Executive managers and intellectual professions / upper class : 32 %
- High level of education : 81 % « bac + 5 »
- Urbans : 64%
- Young : 54% < 30 years
- Women : 74 %



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Results (2) – Food System knowledge

- Knowledge of the Food System :
- Mean : 8,11/12 of correct answers



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- Better score:
 - « Rural » consumers (> « Urban » consumers)
 - Employees (> students>upper class professionals)
 - Men (>women)

No differences between the age groups.

Results (3) - Governance

- 4 organizations surveyed
- Participation to governance evaluation on 23 items



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- 2 organizations : democratic governance (18/23 et 19/23)
- 2 organizations : low participation to governance (3,5/23 et 4,5/23)

Results (4) – Food System knowledge and governance

■ Governance and FS knowledge



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	Governance	Knowledge
AMAP Berthelot	19/23	7,8
AMAP Main verte	18/23	8,1
La Bellevilloise	4,5/23	10,1
Court Circuit	3,5/23	8,1



Governance and FS knowledge don't seem to be linked

⇒ Hypothesis is rejected

Results (5) – Food System knowledge and governance



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- When we ask the consumers about the origin of their knowledge they think that it comes from :
 - Their general knowledge (53%)
 - Their specific interest on food (39%)
 - **The organization (14%)**

→ The link between organization and knowledge is actually weak.

Other results (1)

- What is a sustainable food system for the consumers?



Item cited	Number	Item cited	Number
Local (proximity, short value chains)	50	No GMO	8
Respect of environnement	41	Respect of animals	8
Respect of farmers (loan)	32	Less meat	8
Organic	26	Education and awareness	7
Accessibility (prices)	12	Less waste	5
Health	11	Link consumers/producers	5
Seasonality	11	North/South relationships	3
Diversity	10	Human size	3
Less intermediaries	9		

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Other results (2)



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- For consumers, a sustainable Food System is
 - 1) local (64%)
 - 2) environmentally friendly (53%)
 - 3) socially fair (41%)

- And SSE?

Linked with

→ territorial embeddedness

→ Social issues

→ Environmental issues (more recently)

Conclusion

We show that there is no link between governance and level of FS expertise (! Only 4 organizations)



21 Other tracks have to be found to understand the role of the SSE in the food system.

- Does the SSE changes the way of contracting and in the same way the organization of the value chains?
- How to interest urban consumers to the different dimensions of the sustainability of the food system?



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Thank you for your attention !