

# Open air food markets around Montpellier

Places for community building and re-localisation of urban food systems or just ordinary shopping places?



An exploratory research in Geography

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# French open-air markets : a renewal

- **1945-90'**: **decline** of farmers' markets (FM) with the rise of **large-scale retail stores**, but open-air weekly food markets exist in all cities
- **2000's**: **7000 food markets** in France in 2005  
**renewal and diversification** : new forms of open-air food markets (FM, organic food, *terroir* products...)  
**new interest of researchers** (AFN-SFSC: Chiffoleau, 2008, Poisson, 2010, link with agriculture: Delfosse & Navarro, 2011; Arnal 2012)
- **Montpellier**: mostly a **consumers'** perspective (Dury, 2008 ; Reboul *et al.* 2009)



# An exploratory research in periurban localities around Montpellier

## **Objectives:**

1. How to explain this renewal? Which factors can cause the growth/decline of markets? Difference between inner-cities and peri-urban localities?
2. Are markets places of reconnection between city and agriculture? How can they contribute to the re-localisation of urban food systems?

# An exploratory research in periurban localities around Montpellier

## **Methodology:**

- Cartography on 34 municipalities
- Observation + 169 quick surveys with sellers on 21 periurban markets
- 27 in-depth interviews with sellers, mayors, technical staff on 6 markets + with farmers' & sellers' representatives.





# 1. A growing number of open-air food markets around Montpellier

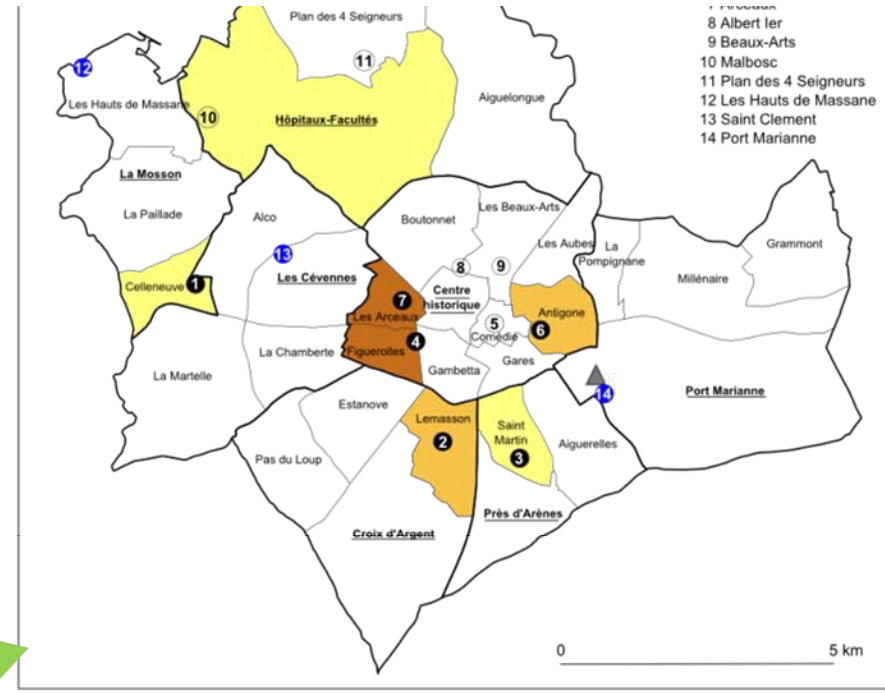
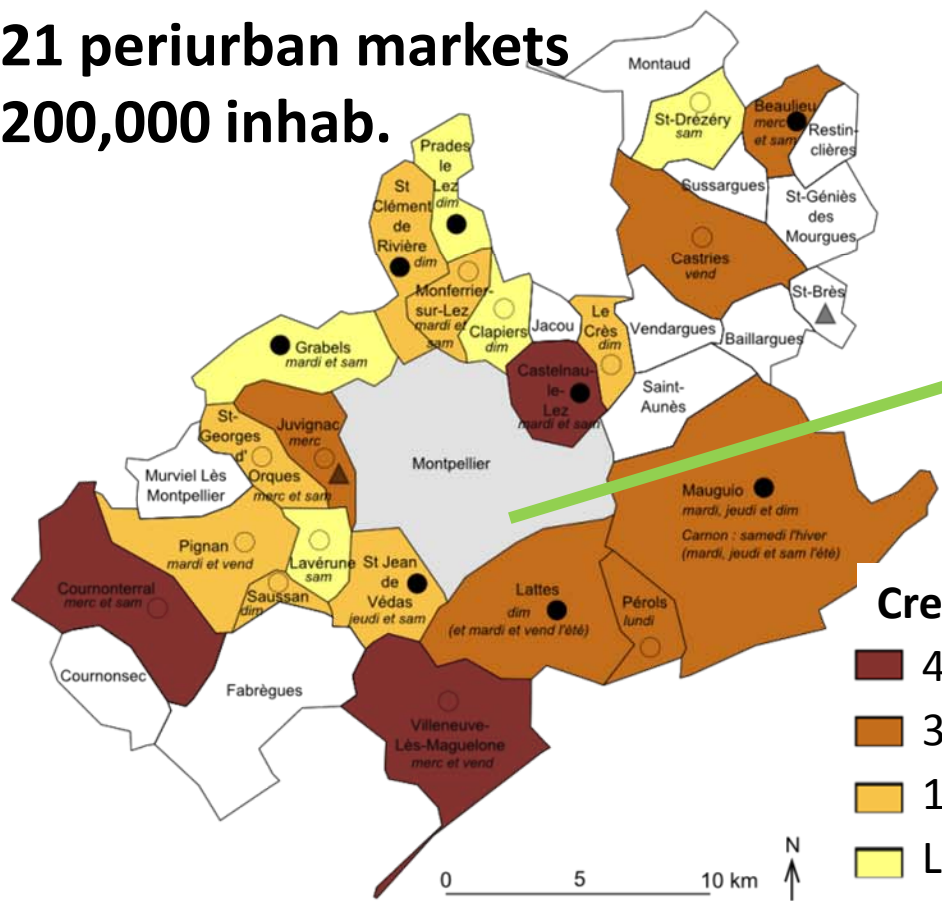
Factors of growth or decline of the markets?

**New markets are created every year!**

**35 markets for 450,000 inhab.**

**14 markets inside Montpellier city**  
**250,000 inhab.**

**21 periurban markets**  
**200,000 inhab.**



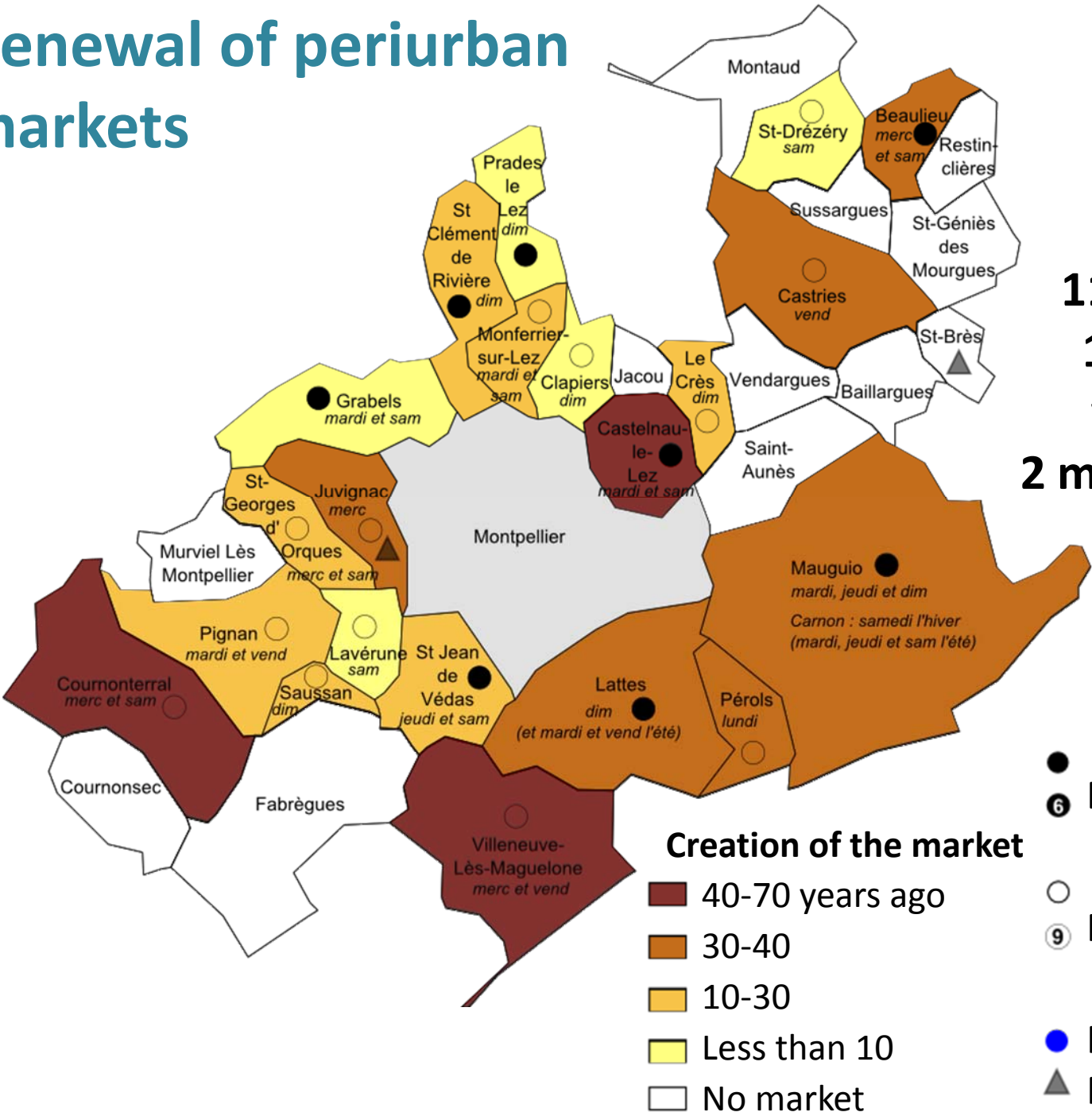
**Creation of the market**

- 40-70 years ago
- 30-40 years ago
- 10-30 years ago
- Less than 10 y.
- No market

- 6 Dynamic market
- 9 Fragile market
- Former market
- ▲ Market in project

Source : fond IGN - carte réalisée avec ArcGIS 9.3 et Inkscape 0.48

# Renewal of periurban markets



**10 old markets**  
**11 recent markets**  
**11 municipalities**  
**without markets**  
**2 markets in project**

**Creation of the market**

- 40-70 years ago
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Dynamic market  
 Fragile market  
 Former market  
 Market in project



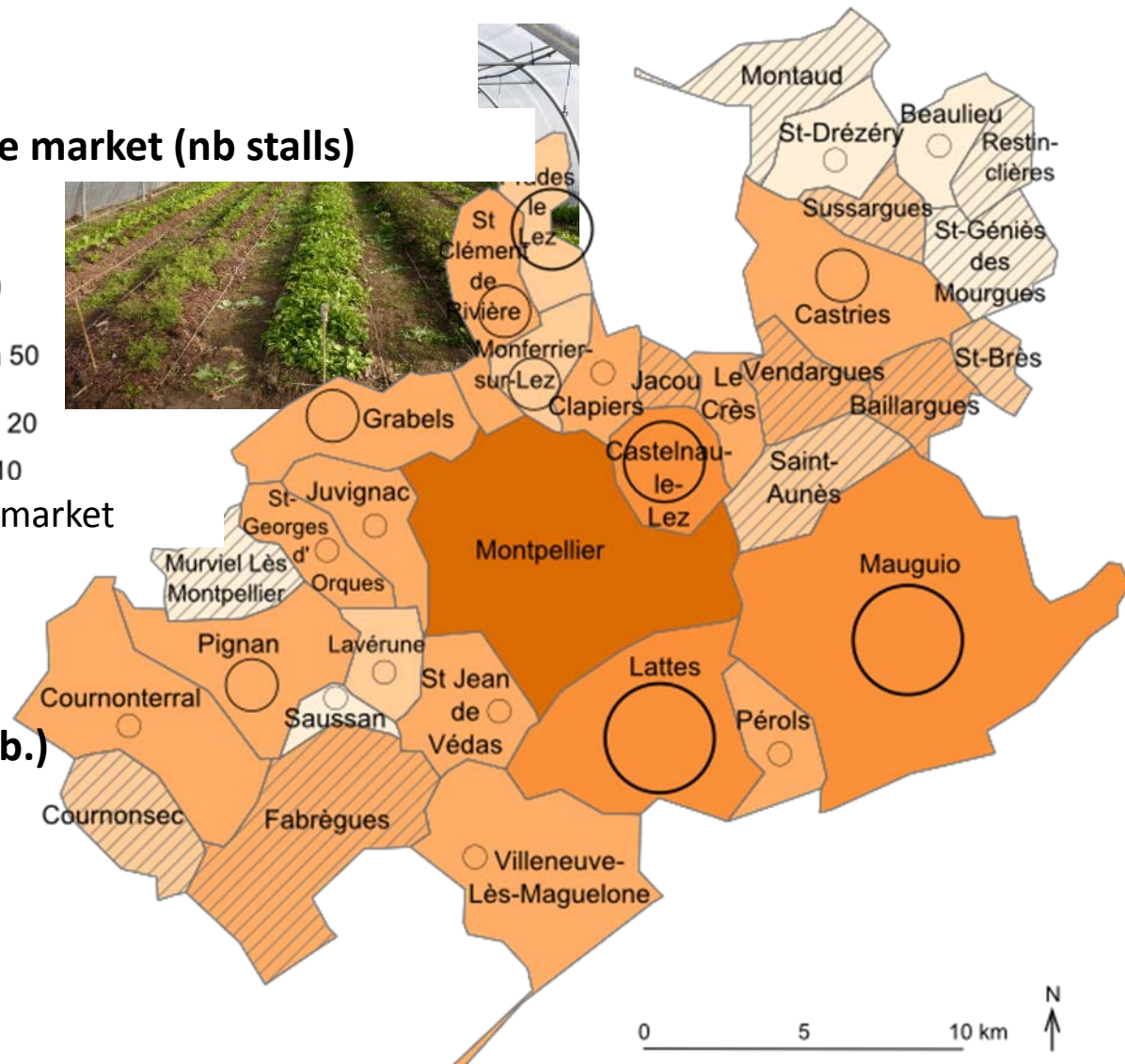
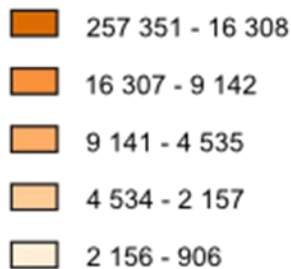
# Factors of growth/decline?

- History: biggest markets are older
- Proximity to Montpellier
- Demographic treshold (> 6000 inhab.)

Size of the market (nb stalls)



Population (nb inhab.)

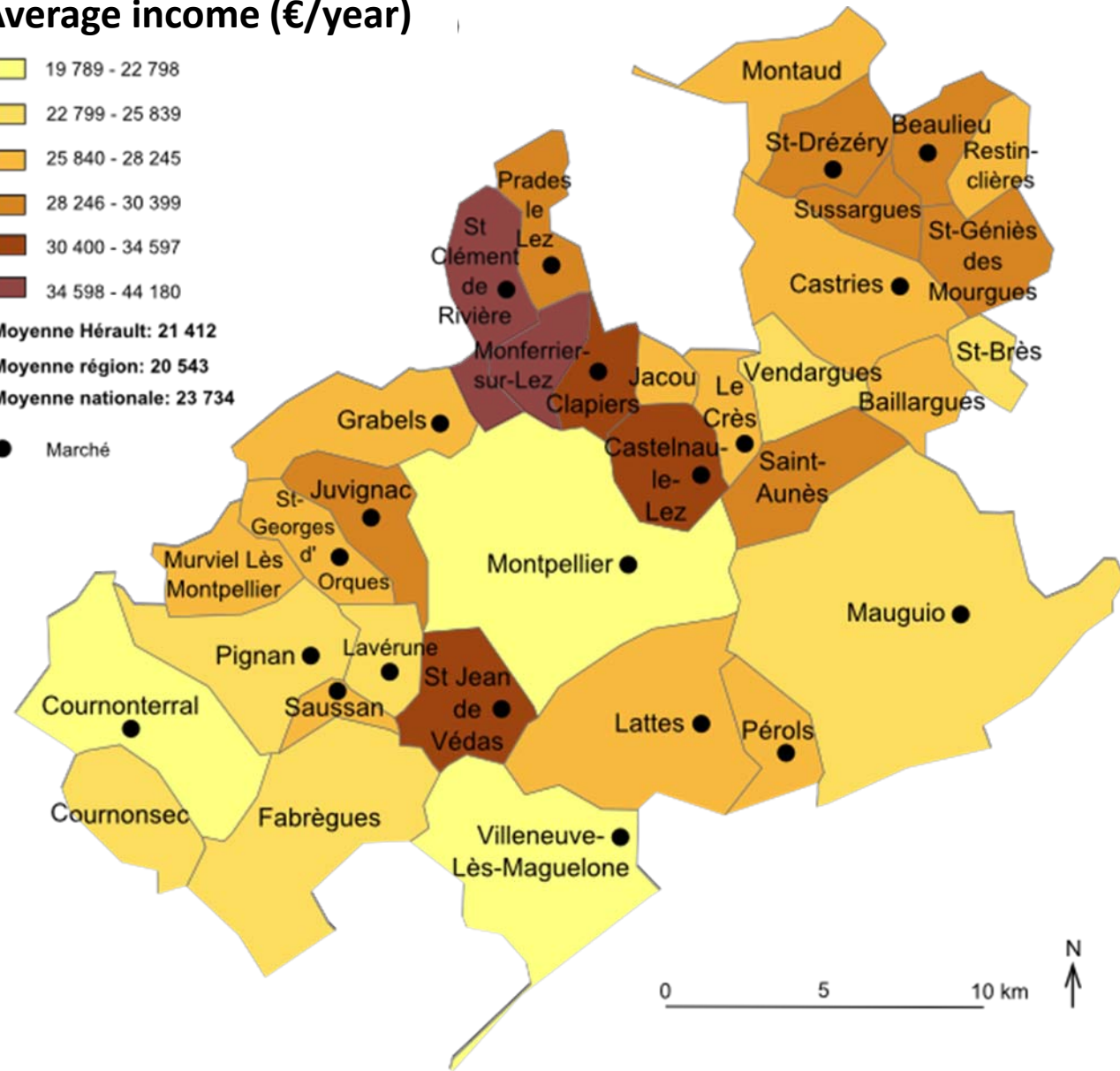
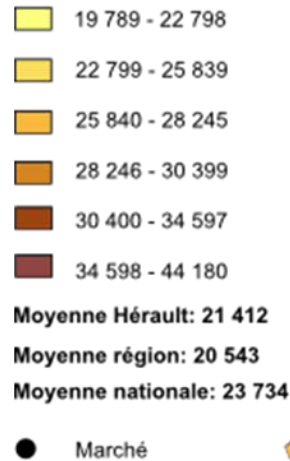




# Factors of growth/decline?

- History: biggest markets are old
- Proximity to Montpellier
- Demographic treshold (> 6000 inhab.)
- Elderly people (> 25% older than 60)
- Wealthier population

## Average income (€/year)



# A growing number of periurban markets since 20 years

- Especially in the municipalities directly bordering Montpellier, that have an older & wealthier population...
- But not all the markets are big or dynamic!
  - Weekends vs. week days
  - Diversity of products
  - Accessibility (parking)
  - Management/involvement of municipalities

# Role of local authorities in this renewal

- Uneven involvement
- Promote the market as a place for **community building** / social cohesion

« A village without market is dead »

« A meeting place between generations »

- Organise activities (tasting, cultural events...)
- Foster dialogue with **local food stores** (often in decline).







## 2. Places of reconnection between the city and the agriculture of its hinterland?

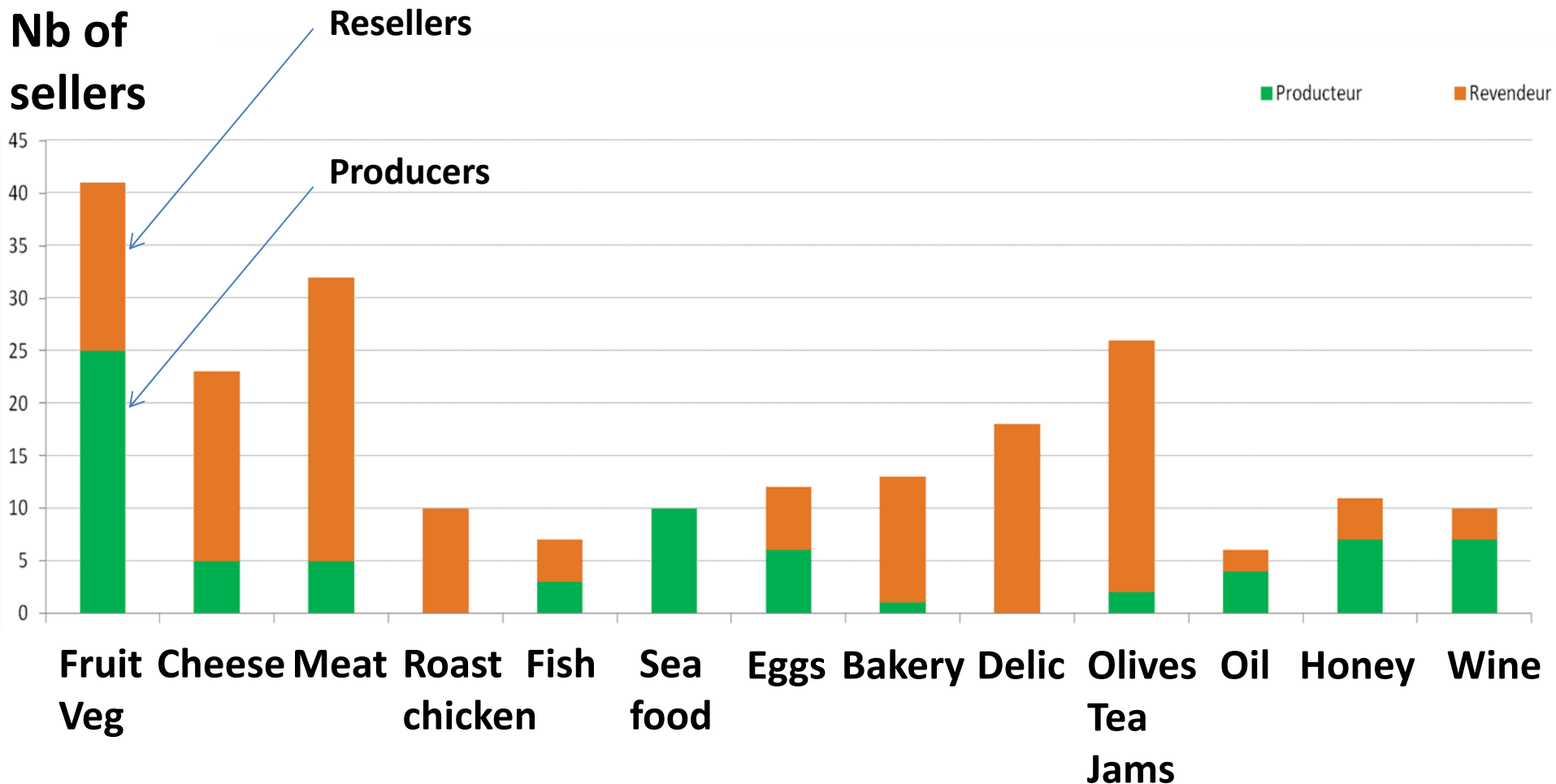
Contribution of markets to the re-localisation of urban food systems?



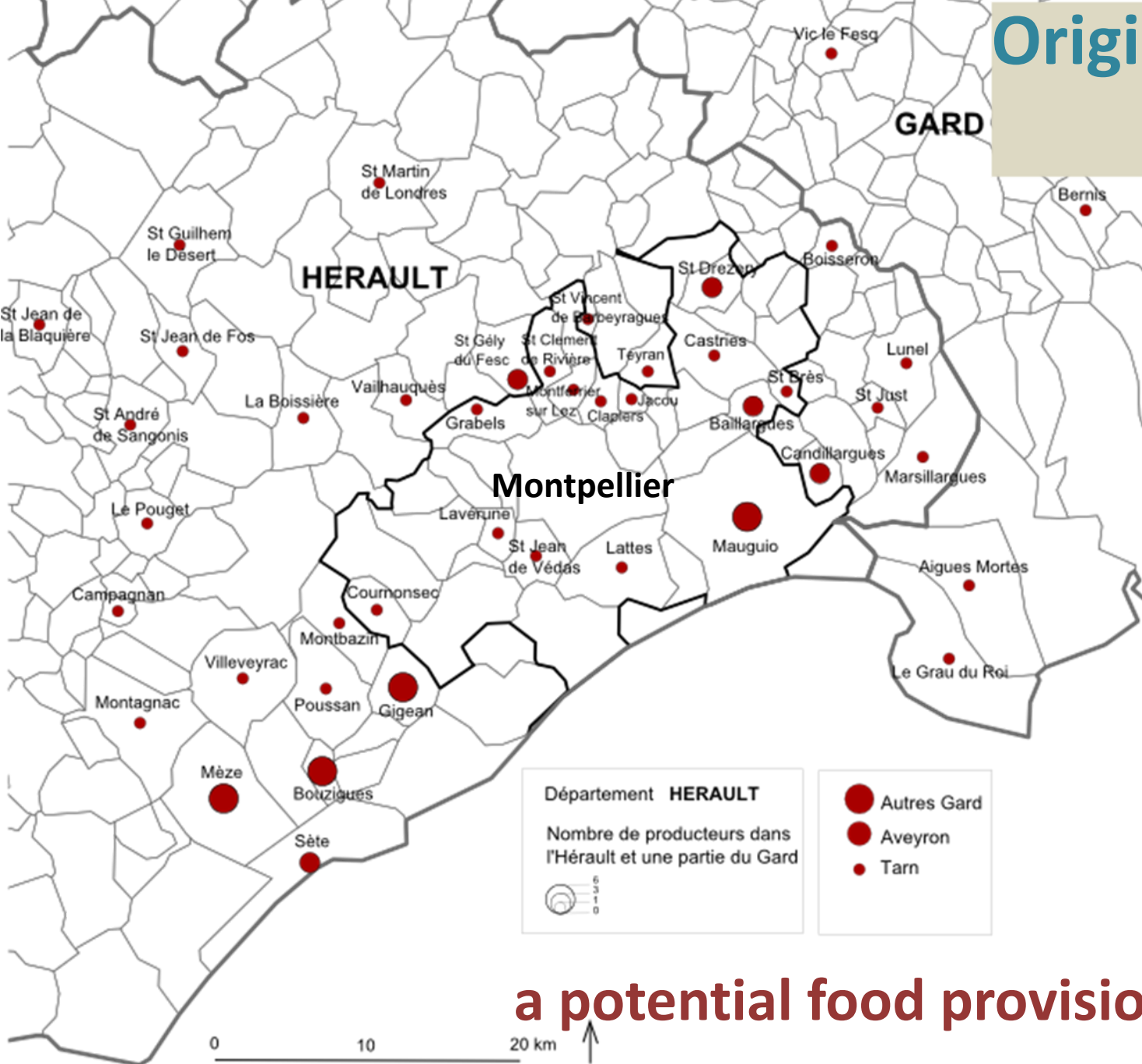
# Producers are a (big) minority

Producers = **36%** of the 169 sellers surveyed

(between 27% and 56% according to the market)



# Origin of the 60 producers



...depends on the product!



a potential food provisioning area for Montpellier?

# Which connection btw city & agriculture?

- Markets are places where city dwellers **meet** producers
- An answer to citizens' **claim for local/regional products?**  
but city dwellers do not always distinguish resellers from producers!
- A place for **profitable direct sale** of farm products?  
but producers suffer from the lower prices of the resellers
- A starting point for local projects linking urban & farming actors



Innovations



# Innovations around Montpellier

- **Adaptation of rules** to farmers' needs in order to attract producers (seasonality, stall's price, priority access...)
- Consumers' **education**: farmers' explanations, projects with schools
- More **transparency** about the origin of the products (labelling, charts : Chiffoleau *et al.*, 2013).
- Participatory governance: **market councils** including consumers, resellers, producers in order to improve the management





# Conclusions

- **Lack of knowledge/data** on open-air food markets: more producers than expected!
- Lack of **transparency & participation** in the management (top down without standards, choice of stalls, weak control of products)
- No **coordination** between municipalities
- **Uneven support /involvement of local authorities** in the market
- Markets are places of reconnection between city and agriculture but not always recognised /promoted as such.
- **Re-localisation of urban food systems:** markets + SFCs + food stores



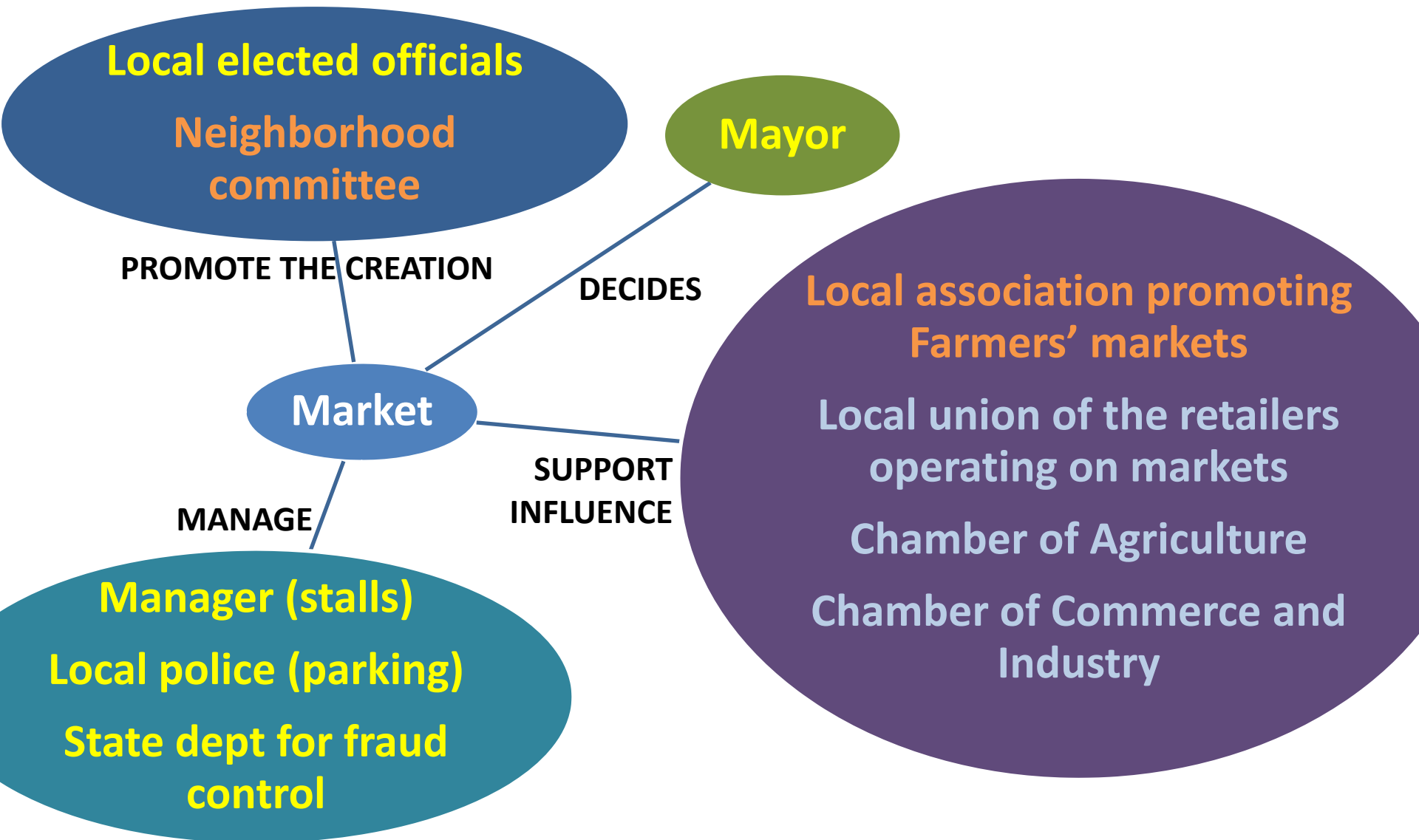
# Thank you for your attention!



Market in Montpellier, where your bus left this morning

En plus au cas où...

# How it works? Who is involved?





# Literature on French open-air food markets

## **Before 2000: lack of research**

- Economic geography focussing on the spatial distribution of retail facilities seldom deals with markets (Troin, 1982),
- Case studies on markets in big cities (Paris: Nordin, 1983; Roy, 1998; Lyon: Bléchet *et al.*, 1985)

## **Since 2000: renewal**

- AFN, short food supply chains (Chiffoleau, 2008)
- Spatial distribution (Poisson, 2010; Scheffer, 2013)
- Link with agriculture (Delfosse & Navarro, 2011 ; Arnal 2012)
- Montpellier: mostly a consumers' perspective (Chafotte & Chiffoleau, 2007; Dury, 2008): 10% population buy fresh fruit/veg at a market (Reboul *et al.*, 2009).

## **Gaps :**

- factors of growth or decline of the markets? (Machell & Caraher, 2012)
- Difference between inner-cities and peri-urban localities?
- Contribution of markets to the re-localisation of urban food systems?