

Short circuits, relocation and social change: the example of a farmers' market in Drôme

Short food circuits are experiencing a major revival. A visible symbol of this dynamic is the media craze and the success of the AMAP system. However, short circuits are not a novelty. On the contrary, they are one of the traditional forms of exchange of food products (markets and farm sales among others). They crystallize expectations and stakes of various natures. This renewed interest from multiple actors invites us to question short food circuits through the prism of the concept of social innovation. Both the various actors involved and the research community are asking themselves the question of the potential for social transformation that short circuits would bring. This notion, while regularly presented in the literature as unstable and polysemic (Richez-Battesti et al. 2012, Chiffolleau and Paturel 2016) and having a normative political and institutional dimension, is the subject of a growing number of publications (Klein, Laville and Moulaert 2014; Levesque, Fontan and Klein 2014). Its highlighting with the question of short circuits makes it possible to distinguish three levels of social change. The first would aim at an organizational transformation of market exchange by giving more autonomy to consumers and producers. From this point of view, it would be a question of valorizing a traditional modality of food exchange while coexisting with conventional modes. The second, with reference to the ranking proposals of Richez-Battesti et al (2012), is that of their potential to transition to a broader scale. In a more or less assertive and explicit way, short circuit devices would be an alternative to the conventional model. Here is added a goal of transformation or even opposition to the conventional food system. Finally, the third is the renewal of questions around participation and food democracy (Deverre and Lamine 2010; Chiffolleau et al, 2017). We think of the founding article by Prévost and Chiffolleau (2012), which highlights an interpretation based on capability (Sen, 2003) and empowerment. We will examine these three dimensions (organizational, alternative and democratic), which would make it possible to qualify the social dynamics that short circuits would carry, by confronting them with empirical material collected in our field, that of a producers' market in the Drôme. The central hypothesis of this intervention is that the two main stakeholders (the "eaters" and the farmers) would share a common social experience that would constitute the basis on which logics of social transformations would develop. We will see in particular that it is based on a reflexive posture and lifestyles: a "problematization" of daily practices (food for some and work for others). That the alternative aspect is less the product of a critical opposition than of a dialectic between delocalization and relocalization (Giddens, 1994). Finally, we will show how it is part of the circulation of local social capital, which necessarily implies a local character to the dynamics of social change.

Main organizers



Co-organizers



Sponsors

