



[Claire Delfosse]
 [University of Lyon], [France]
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The changing role of middlemen: the example of creamers-cheesemakers

Research, and more generally work on food systems and quality chains, has done little to address the role of intermediaries. The latter is increasingly beginning to be taken into account in research on wholesale and retail trade. Few, however, deal with a particular trade and the evolution of the trade. Our communication aims to consider that of creamers-cheesemakers, which we have been able to study over a long period of time based on archival work and a hundred or so surveys carried out in France.

Under the term "intermediary" we do not actually feel the different facets of the profession: the different roles within the food chains and systems depending on the products, the customers, the territories and the merchants themselves and their sales methods (store, roaming, market). In addition to selling, the trader can also intervene in the quality of the product for the care he brings to it (collection, total or final refining...). They play a role both in local supply and in the promotion of local gastronomy. The role of a profession, such as that of creamers, can also evolve over time, particularly in this case in the promotion of local cheeses and nowadays of fresh local products.



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