

TITLE: 'Because they just don't want to': dairy products, consumer preferences, and the nutritional transition in Spain in the 1950s and early 1960s

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Abstract: Prior to the mid-1960s, dairy products –one of the main carriers of the so-called nutritional transition– were not a major element in the Spanish diet. Through an analysis of the obstacles to the expansion of dairy consumption in the 1950s and early 1960s, this article argues that consumer preferences, and not only low consumer incomes or a poorly developed dairy chain, were important. Even though Spanish consumers were not hostile towards dairy products (at a time of intense propaganda efforts by physicians, agribusinesses and the State), their preferences were selective. As the cases of raw milk, powdered milk and cheese show, consumers' lack of enthusiasm about the characteristics of much of the dairy produce that was actually available to them hampered the expansion of consumption at a time when their economic situation was improving clearly. This suggests that the progress of the nutritional transition was not a necessary outcome of changes in consumer income and food production, but depended on an appropriate fitting of such changes with the evolution of consumer preferences.

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