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Constructing quality: The multinational histories of chocolate

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Abstract

Geographic research on food quality, while considering many of the ways in which quality is socially constructed, has largely focused on the place-based aspects of the raw materials of food production. Here, we use French convention theory to look at a highly processed food in order to show how place associations in the social construction of food quality extend to manufacturing. For chocolate, quality is based on material characteristics whose relative importance in determining quality depends on the country in which different stages of economic innovation took place. Struggles over the definition of quality chocolate, as exemplified by the ‘‘European Chocolate War,’’ show how quality issues are connected to geographies of manufacturing and innovation.



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Keywords

Chocolate; Europe; Economic geography; Innovation; Manufacturing; Production; Quality

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