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“Filling gaps and removing traps
for sustainable resource management”

What Is the Flavour of Good Intentions?: On Interest Divergence and Responsibility in the Cacao-Chocolate Industry

CARLA D. MARTIN

Harvard University and Fine Cacao and Chocolate Institute, United States

Abstract

In recent years, the cacao-chocolate industry has increasingly focused on taste - quality of flavour and the ability to discern quality - as a vehicle of market differentiation. At the same time, many of the marketing tools of specialty chocolate rely on linking good taste to social and economic goodness. The links among these elements remain blurry, are not yet clearly defined by specialty cacao or chocolate producers, and often rely on interpretations of work from related but different industries. A critical examination of the value chain indicates that the interests of those who produce chocolate frequently diverge from the interests of those who produce cacao, creating gaps and traps in work on social and environmental responsibility. The often contrary goals that impact the industry must thus be interrogated to determine the place of sustainability, and in whose best interests different players act. We must ask: what is the flavour of good intentions?

Keywords: Responsibility, value chain