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## CAN THE MARKET FOR SUPERIOR QUALITY CHOCOLATE BE A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM PRODUCERS?

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### ABSTRACT

The consumption of quality food has generated new forms of production and, consequently, new market niches in rural areas. The main transformation is related to the origin of raw materials and the characteristics of production and marketing, and not just the physical, chemical and microbiological parameters that guide the production of industries. The aim of this article is to analyze the determining elements in the construction of the uniqueness of superior quality chocolate in southern Brazil. The research involved literature review, combined with a qualitative content analysis and, finally, were interviewed in depth "chocolate makers", researchers and experts in the area. It appears that alternativity and uniqueness are rooted in specific territories, associated with intangible issues (tacit and acquired know-how, production practices and customs) and the tangible that is associated with the almond, from planting, harvesting, fermentation and alchemist factors in chocolate production. Differentiation criteria and judgment devices are the result of the negotiation process, in which the actors transact values that are associated with distinct terroirs, in the institutionalization of the variety and genetic rarity of the almond, and the cocoa and chocolate production methods, that creates entry barriers for small producers.

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## INTRODUCTION

Cocoa, for many years, was the main source of income in Bahia, Brazil. In the 1970s, the high price of cocoa coincided with record harvests, which brought high profits to the producer, promoting a boom of prosperity throughout the southern region of Bahia (SANTOS, 2009). This scenario, however, began to change in the 1990s as a result of a crisis that began with the reduction of international cocoa prices and aggravated by the emergence of the disease known as "witch's broom", which drastically reduced productivity (SANTOS ; SANTOS; SANTOS, 2016). To face this crisis, a production recovery program was established, technologically well structured, but without propositions regarding market demands. In the search for alternatives such contributions, it was found that high-quality cocoa, identified as thin type or flavor, organic and sustainability certification, has become a major source of income to producers (SANTOS, 2009). Thus, the distinction between commodities and superior quality markets arises. The case of the market for chocolates is emblematic in this connection, given that is still clearly establish process model differentiation patterns emerging

directed to the segment of "high quality chocolates" in relation to "industrial chocolates."The main distinguishing element in this market is the direct quality relationship between cocoa beans and chocolate. For such a question, what is, after all, a good chocolate? What kind of qualitative attributes do the best chocolates contain?

There are different costs involved in the production of these chocolates, but here, this variable is not the only one with explanatory power. According to Karpic (2009), this classic function has less relevance for the judgment of quality, which doesn't fit in a socially constructed market with multiple actors. It is widely know that an "economy of qualities" requires new analytical tools to understand the functioning of markets and the logic of economic actors (KARPIC, 1989; CALLON; MÉADEL; RABÉHARIOS, 2002).

The discussion about quality standards has shown that the process of social construction of quality requires judgment devices and material support, which is credited with standardized technical specifications recognized nationally and worldwide, with the unequivocal purpose of valuing and protecting the environmental heritage , economic and cultural (ASCB, 2016). The quality is not only cognitive construction,

the interaction between different actors which necessarily involves the presence of goals used to form equivalence between heteroclitic conceptions and stabilization of social relations (NIERDELE, 2011). This shows that the quality of a chocolate is not simply a reflection of mental images that consumers produce about it. conscious and critical consumers require a material basis "objective" so that this image is perpetuated. No person will associate a chocolate with the beautiful landscape of the Atlantic Forest or the southern region of Bahia, if it doesn't have an authentic argument or foundation, even if modified by different cultural repertoires or symbols. In this context, alternative strategies emerge to the cocoa and industrialized chocolate system in the southern coast of Bahia. New local forces cause the reorganization of the production and distribution of "superior quality chocolate". Segments of cocoa producers and new rural entrepreneurs are making changes in the recommendations of official bodies and non-governmental organizations to be inserted in the face of changes in the consumption of these products. These factors are related to the view on environmental preservation and the growing demand situation in this type of market. To such questions arise: how alternative is built? What is the intrinsic quality of cocoa almonds and its importance for the production of "superior quality chocolate"? What factors can influence this process? Who are the actors involved? The research there are intention to present scientific investigations that contribute to the construction of knowledge around the economy of qualities. The general objective is to analyze the determining elements in the construction of the uniqueness of superior quality chocolate in southern Brazil. This article is structured in three sections. The first treatise discusses the criteria of "quality". Second Section Methodological Procedures. In the third section, the factors that influence the construction of the uniqueness of superior quality chocolate are presented. Finally, the final considerations are presented.

**"Quality" – Criteria:** For Whatmore et al. (2003), the RAAs differ from conventional markets and support their alternative in three main dimensions in the food market. The first dimension refers to the redistribution of values to smallholders through the network, as opposed to the logic of mass production of goods. The RAAs are intended to promote the economic viability of local agriculture by supplying stable local markets and shorter value chains. (ALLEN et al., 2003). In this market, the promotion of community agriculture, delivery of baskets, farmers' fairs and agricultural enterprises independent in small-scale. (SI; SCHUMILAS; SCOTT, 2017; BRUNORI et al., 2011; KNEAFSEY et al., 2008; MACIAS, 2008; TREAGER, 2011). Some empirical studies show that, in some cases, RAAs don't ensure higher incomes for small local producers (BROWN; MILLER, 2008; GOODMAN, 2009). The second dimension of alternativity is to restore trust between producers and consumers. This "reconnection", together with "relocation", is seen by scholars in the agri-food area as one of the most important characteristics (KIRWAN, 2006; WATTS et al., 2005; HOLLOWAY et al., 2006; WISKERKE, 2009). This alternative is under the logic of short chains, with the ability to resocialize and respatialize foods (*local foods e folk foods*). To this end, the markets are based on niches or specificities, as in the case of handcrafted products, denomination of origin and organic and/or biodynamic products (MALUF, 2004; NIERDELE, 2009). For Brunori (2007), the trust relationship is one of the principles that allow the consolidation of different ways of producing and consuming. From this perspective, Ferrari (2011) analyzed the consumption of products at the Agro ecological Fairs in Chapecó (SC) and found that the trust attributed to the fair products comes from both the set of relationships established between producers and consumers, as well as the shared knowledge around the products typical. Likewise, Cassol and Schneider (2017) analyzed the Producer's Fair in Passo Fundo (RS). The data show that this food network is guided by a social representation that is shared by producers and consumers, justifying the search for these products by their origin of "field" and build action strategies supported the appreciation of traditional / colonial lifestyles, natural or produced fairly.

The third dimension is expressed by new forms of political association and market governance. RAAs initiatives are seen as potential catalysts for changes in institutional structures of food supply, where various actors struggle to reconfigure food production, consumption and regulation (SI; SCHUMILAS; SCOTT, 2017). In addition to these dimensions, a fourth dimension can be included, which is also highlighted, in part, in the literature, as ecological agri-food initiatives. (GOODMAN, 2003; JONES et al., 2010; ALLEN et al., 2003; MARSDEN; SMITH, 2005); specifically, organic agriculture and other ecological parts of production. (DIAS; RÉVILLION; TALAMINI, 2017; DAROLT; LAMINE, 2017); a reduction in the impact of the greenhouse effect by reducing food miles (food miles) and the carbon footprint involved in long-distance transport of food (PRETTY et al., 2005; SI; SCHUMILAS; SCOTT, 2017). Certification systems serve to legitimize products on the market, particularly in cases where attributes are not easily identified by buyers. On the other hand, this market certification is a barrier to entry for new entrepreneurs, especially for small producers (SAES, 2006). Furthermore, the existence of this quality of products was necessary to develop innovation strategies in plantations, process and distribution.

Barbosa's (2009) research demonstrates that the consumption of alternative foods takes place on issues of health and individual well-being. Concerns around nutritional value and disease prevention (healthiness) reflect the appreciation of typical/traditional products, natural or produced fairly. For Radomsky (2010), the consumption of certified and ecological foods from the Ecovida network is linked more to the lifestyle of consumers than to concerns about individual health or well-being. This demonstrates that the products sold in a network don't depend only on the label, but on a diversity of symbolic attributes that are agglutinated in these labels, which are shared, through values and lifestyle, between producers and consumers. The vast majority of work on RAAs is concentrated in the US and Canada, with a more activist focus, exploring aspects related to the sustainability of production and consumption of organics, as well as issues related to food security and sovereignty (ALKON; MARES, 2012; TREGAR, 2011; GUTHMAN, 2008; DUPUIS; GOODMAN, 2005). Research by Alkon (2008), in California (USA), and by Beckie et al. (2012), in western Canada, analyzed farmers' fairs that provide spaces for cooperative and networked actions among food activists seeking changes in public policy. In Europe, studies are more focused on health and food safety issues, consumer rights to have access to clean and differentiated products, as well as rural subsistence (JAROSZ, 2008; ILBERY et al., 2006; KIRWAN, 2006).

Research has also been carried out in emerging countries, such as the study by Si, Schumilas and Scott (2017) in China, which unfolded the dimensions of alternativity into healthy, ecological, local, seasonal, small-scale, strengthening social ties and of interpersonal relationships, socially just and political. RAAs in China showed evidence of alternativity associated with the "healthy" character and nutritional value of foods, but little representation in terms of social and political elements, reconnection, social justice and norms of political association. Gromasheva and Brunori (2017) identified the current conditions for the development of short food supply routes in Russia, which were categorized into three types: 1) reconnection platforms in markets, fairs and internet platforms; 2) interaction initiatives mobilized by producers via producers' points of sale, foodtrucks, selling machines and milk tanks; and 3) mobilized initiatives by consumers through individual or collective direct purchases, the place of production and internet stores or cooperatives. It is noteworthy that initiatives mobilized by consumers are more favorable to small producers, as well as to sustainability values. Another way to differentiate the quality and identity of agri-food products is through the terroir of certain geographic regions, a fact that ends up allowing a counterpoint to the growing commoditisation of food, arising from the intensified dynamics generated by economic globalization (BLUME, 2008). The French agrifood economy introduced the French concept of "terroir", which is translated as "terre" in several areas. (LENGLET, 2014; ELAYDI;

MCLAUGHLIN, 2012). It is also translated as “territoriality”, “connection to territory” or “affinity based on location”. Several contributions on the meanings and approaches to terroir can be found in several case studies (BÉRARD; MARCHENAY, 2004). In the case of farmers in France, Spain and Italy, the qualification process is generally associated with the *terroir* and *localization* of the products in specific territories.(SONNINO; MARSDEN, 2006; CASABLANCA et al., 2013; CERDAN, 2013). These particularistic strategies are different in other countries, such as the United Kingdom, Germany and the Netherlands, where quality has been primarily referred to health and food safety, being remotely associated with territories (SONNINO; MARSDEN, 2006).

## METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

In the qualitative research, the documentary and bibliographic method will be used to analyze the market for "superior quality chocolate" in southern Bahia Brazil. It is a qualitative research characterized as descriptive and explanatory. In its descriptive character, its primary objective is to describe the characteristics of a given population (in the case of chocolate makers) or establish relationships between the elements (GIL, 2000);

**Research steps:** In the first stage, the “documentary-descriptive” discussion is presented, through the use of secondary data, collected from different sources, in the data collection, information, on CAPES platforms, *Web of Science* and Scielo. Data also from the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO), the Cocoa and Fine Chocolate Institute (FCCI), the minutes and documents of the Cocoa Producers Association of the South of Bahia and the Executive Committee of Cacao Farming – CEPLAC. This information will serve to assess the macro environment, providing a broad view of how the superior quality market was established. In a second stage of the research, an empirical analysis will be carried out, through field research, which aims to collect elements that aren’t available, which enables certain knowledge of a more real object, of facts that are being researched (FERRARI , 1982). At this stage, the micro environment in which chocolate makers are inserted is considered in order to understand the norms, mechanisms or measurements that qualify the market for “superior quality chocolates”.

**Field research:** The empirical research began with two field visits in the southern region of Bahia, which took place in July 2017. Based on in situ observation, bibliographical research (newspapers, magazines, reports, etc.) and non-structured interviews. exploratory steps enabled an initial contact with local actors and helped to delimit the scope of the study. Contacts were made with cocoa researchers, president of the Cocoa Producers Association, Director of *Instituto Cabruca*, President of the Rural Workers Union, CEPLAC Researcher and some chocolate makers, during the International Chocolate Festival, in the city of Ilhéus (BA) . The selection criteria adopted to interview chocolate makers, both in Brazil and Peru, were as follows: (a) minimum 50% cocoa content in chocolate, (b) awards received, (c) visibility, (d) availability of the brand in the market and (e) superior quality almond collected in 2017. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and analyzed. The most representative excerpts are incorporated in italics throughout the thesis, taking care to keep the names of people confidential, but identifying the informant by category and location, according to the information presented below.

**Table 1. Description of informers**

Code	Category	Quantity
CMB	Brazilian chocolate maker	19
Tec	Technician	4
Pes	Researcher	4
APB	Association of cocoa producers in Brazil	1

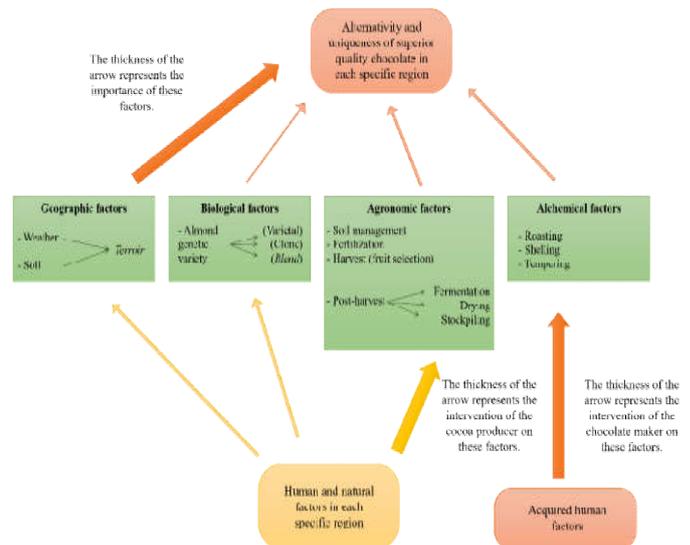
Source: Elaboration by the author of this document.

The purpose of this convention is not only to facilitate the description, but to minimally situate the context from which the interviewees express themselves. When people talk, they don’t pronounce speeches

loose, ie, meaningless; they express livingness, experiences, information and knowledge in the sector in which they operate. The analytical treatment of the collected information was the same given to the interviews carried out in the southern region of Bahia: recording, transcription and qualitative analysis. The choice of these regions not only proved to be timely to ensure comparability between different fields of study as opened up new research questions in relation to the Brazilian qualities. Thus, we concluded the research with a return to the southern region of Bahia for a last stage of in-depth and semi-structured interviews between May and June 2018.

### Uniqueness aspects and alternativity of "superior quality chocolate"

To construct the alternative market of top quality chocolate is required technical performance of the production of cocoa almond process. In this case, the superior is conceived as an instrument for modernization and standardization of production practices in order to create a chocolate with essential attributes: uniqueness associated with cocoa identity. The objective is to produce a chocolate that, regardless of where it is produced, whether in the south of Bahia or another country, can express a set of organoleptic and sensory characteristics, with uniform standards. The first very clear conception of the alternativeness and uniqueness of superior quality chocolate is the result of changes in geographic, biological, agronomic and alchemical factors. The second perspective conceives terroir as a “natural factor”, like soil and climate. Third, an understanding that human factors affect the quality and uniqueness of superior quality chocolate in the domain of production techniques (mainly “agronomic factors” and “alchemical factors”), as described in 1 below.



Source: Elaboration by the author of this document from research data.

**Figure 1. Factors influencing the uniqueness of superior quality chocolate**

The process starts from the selection of genetic varieties, proper planting, harvesting the ripe fruit, without a witch's broom, in the case of southern Bahia. And, above all, a good fermentation, as this is a fundamental step for the production of quality cocoa. In it, the aroma and flavor precursors of a special almond will be formed. The fermentation is essential because it reduces the amount of water in the seed (reduces moisture); reduce the acidity and bitterness of almonds; kill the embryo or cocoa germ; turn the almonds color to brown; and form the aroma and flavor precursors (FERREIRA, 2017).

[...] *CEPLAC created a form to issue a technical report of fine cocoa as excellent, good, regular, non-standard fine and disqualified on fermentation and smoke smell... this report is determined by the fermentation index. cocoa is considered of*

*excellent quality when fermentation is 75% (total brown), 15% partially fermented (brown) and 10% violet(Pes 2).*

In the Brazilian market, one of the parameters to assess cocoa quality is the percentage of almond fermentation, which varies from 70% to 100%; and producers who are able to carry out a 70% fermentation will have the same premium percentage above the New York Stock Exchange quotation, and the same happens with those who achieve 100% fermentation. They can also receive a premium price, 30% more, if it is organic. However, producers who can't reach the minimum percentage of fermentation (70%) are forced to look for other buyers' markets, which generally operate at the value declared by the New York Stock Exchange.

*[...] Dengo is a Brazilian company that buys cocoa based on fermentation that must have at least 70% well fermented almonds pays a premium of 70% above the stock exchange, 80%... which can reach a total premium of 145% ... 30% more when organic and 15% when varietal. If the cocoa has 65% fermentation it is good cocoa, but not of high quality, the producer will sell at a stock exchange price(Pes).*

*Some foreign companies want to buy almonds from the chuncho, but we don't have amount. There is not enough. They even pay \$07 an arroba and the New York Stock Exchange is quoted at \$2 an arroba[...] (Tec).*

Fine Brazilian cocoa is not yet recognized by ICCO to gain notoriety, as other producing countries do. National and international luxury chocolate industries, as well as international research centers, CIRAD in France, for example, recognize and recommend fine Brazilian cocoa. Varieties, such as Maranhão, Pará and Parazinho, are rare and unprecedented and serve as instruments to differentiate Brazilian cocoa. In blends, PH 16, TSH 1102 and PS 1319 varieties are used, which are new genetic materials. Combinations of letters and numbers that represent the paternity of your new cacao trees are used. These new varieties don't exist in other countries, as they are the result of genetic crossings of rare varieties existing in the Brazilian plantation. This means that genetic clones<sup>1</sup> have also entered the alternative market and not just native varieties (SANTOS; SANTOS; SANTOS, 2016). In the Bahia region, the Geographical Indication (GI) for the southern region of Bahia, approved in 2018, also adopts the requirement criterion that must meet the following requirements: (a) minimum of 65% (sixty-five percent) of almonds totally brown; (b) not having a maximum of 15% (fifteen percent) of under-fermented almonds (violet); (c) have a maximum percentage of 3% for defects, such as: internal mold, insect damage, germinated, flattened; (d) maximum 1% for slate; (e) have a final moisture content of 6 to 8%; (f) be free from impurities and strange material; (g) have a good external appearance and (h) have a natural aroma (FERREIRA, 2017).

*The indication of origin seal guarantees the quality standard through traceability. [...]. Today there are companies that want to exhibit on the packaging that make chocolate with the almond indication of origin, to inform the consumer about the quality (Tec).*

The premium price paid to the cocoa producer is related to tangible aspects (for example, flavor and variety) and can be defined as the result of an interaction between good genetics and efficient processing (MARTIN, 2017). It is important to relativize this synergy between superior quality and technical innovations.

*The protagonist of this process is the cocoa almond and, for that, it is necessary to have a good fermentation, of at least 80%. You can't make a good chocolate if the almond has astringency and bitterness, there's no way to get rid of that when processing the chocolate. That's why I go to the farm and control how many days of fermentation are done, how is the drying process, to ensure quality at all stages (CMB).*

The social construction of a market with a differentiated irreversibility terroir requires technical knowledge to follow the new fermentation protocol to obtain high quality cocoa. The great barrier is in the people who work in the cocoa plantation, who, in large part, are low-skilled and have difficulties in dealing with the adoption of new technologies, such as, for example, reading a temperature thermometer. The established quality conventions require collective tacit know-how or knowledge, in a limited geographic space, based on the physical environment, such as agrarian biodiversity, and a set of human factors, which provide the typicality to leverage the reputation of this product through differentiation in the terroir (SANZ-CANADA, MUCHNIK, 2016; BAJOUB et al., 2016; CASABLANCA et al., 2005; BARHAM, 2003).

*All cocoa has an aroma and flavor that depends on the variety and that's where human skill comes in, the know-how and the environment interfere, the same outsider here is different from the outsider in Peru, this know-how enhances the flavor(Pes).*

*[...] whoever does the work is illiterate...manager or needs to know how to read thermometers, or needs a skilled workforce and therefore receive better remuneration. Quality requires new knowledge from the worker (Pes).*

One of the major barriers to producing this type of cocoa is the time and labor required, compared to the production of the cocoa commodity, which requires available financial capital to meet production costs, as described by one of these interviewed producers:

*[...] to make quality it needs to be capitalized for at least 1 month, there are 7 days of fermentation, 15 days to dry and 1 month to benefit, and for that you need money in the cashier. When you sell to a large industry, it doesn't matter the quality, sometimes in 07 days you make money(CMB).*

*[...] the fine and aromatic cocoa is not paid with the price of the stock exchange, you need to receive 2-3 times more, quality cocoa has value. This type of cocoa is only made if there is a market that pays well... At CEPLAC they have always encouraged to make better quality cocoa, but the producer was under capitalized to invest in production (CMB).*

One of the barriers to entry into this market is the investment required in this sector, which requires skilled labor and installation of the necessary equipment to ferment and dry the almonds, as proposed in the protocol. For a de-commoditization production, a higher price for this type of product is necessary.(SANTOS; SANTOS; SANTOS, 2016). The innovation represented by "superior quality chocolate" involves certain "social technical itineraries". This reveals that innovation doesn't focus on a specific and isolated component of the production process, but on an articulated set of practices that make up an itinerary. In addition, it defines a degree of "irreversibility" to the processed choices, that is, to the product's qualification trajectory (CALLON, 1986; WILKINSON, 2003). Therefore, it is essential to define a stable and rigorous institutional arrangement to guarantee and allow more flexible innovations that take place in techniques, organizational forms, marketing, consumption, etc. In conventional commodity markets, there are no parameters to identify the environmental and social quality of production. This institutional absence reflects an incompatibility between the rules that are in place and the multiple dimensions that quality can assume; not only the uncertainty of intangible attributes, desired by consumers, which are difficult to be observed, but also due to the different views and interests of the actors involved in the new markets with the valorisation of organic and agroforestry production associated with conservation.

From the point of view of consumption, these alternative networks bring opportunities to encourage changes in eating habits, encourage education for taste, organization. In this sense, these producer networks invest in knowledge and have participatory involvement.

According to an award-winning chocolate maker: “[...] the awards received encourage investments in the quality of almonds and chocolate, if there is no reward, quality is not made” (CMB). On the other hand, these mechanisms imply high costs and produce adverse selection effects, excluding certain chocolate makers from the category, which, due to their own production structure, cannot adapt to the formal logic and afford the necessary investments. Given these facts, for Goodman, this “market niche would be exclusionary”, as prices are much higher than in the conventional market. “Superior quality chocolate” is a market for consumers with a privileged income, awards such as: Chocolate awards, Paris Chocolate Salon, London Chocolate Academy, are considered the most important seals in building trust among chocolate maker and consumer, in relation to the quality of the product when compared to the organic label (as a technical criterion). These awards are important to give visibility to the product and, consequently, leverage the permanent adoption of the alternative market. For Homann (2018), the lack of knowledge of the consumer market, small-scale production and high production costs are trade barriers in this market. The seal of the awarded brands appears on the packaging with specific technical information, which has become an indispensable element for the “superior quality chocolate” market. The market with superior quality attributes must contain correct and complete information and the role of the specific packaging serves as a marketing, positioning and product promotion tool, which serves as a direct communication channel with the consumer, covering the marketing aspects of design that transform the packaging in a set of stimuli, incentives and needs, leading to the consumption of the product (AMPUERO; VILA, 2006; BORGES, 2015). This type of relationship between actors is increasingly transparent and based on principles, such as trust and social roots, and greater concern with issues related to environmental sustainability. Therefore, “bean to bar” and “tree to bar” mean the control of the entire production and the construction of identity from the cocoa producer. The norms and rules are necessary to the structure of the alternative of the “superior quality chocolate”. Intangible values, defined by a cognitive and moral orientation, act as signs of recognition and belonging. It should be noted that one of the greatest difficulties in analyzing and discussing the results of this work is related to comparisons with other works.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

To build a unique market, technical standards and protocols are needed, which must be followed to qualify cocoa almond and “superior quality chocolate” for the development of this new category. The parameter of this process is the index of fermentation and drying of the cocoa almond, which has become the key to this high quality market. This element serves as a parameter when establishing the premium almond price, paid by the chocolate maker, based on this criterion. According to the Brazilian Cocoa Innovation Center, with the almond fermentation process, the cocoa producer must reach at least 65% of fermentation to obtain a seal of origin, as the criteria established by the chocolate makers as a standard is at least 70%, which would be the minimum standard for producing good chocolate, both for Brazilians and Peruvians. These “technical” definitions form a social process of negotiation between actors as quality parameters that must be considered. In order to exist alternatively, parameters and norms that are articulated by multiple actors, from public and private institutions, are necessary. In the Brazilian case, associations of cocoa producers are fundamental in this process, as well as a research center. With CEPLAC, cocoa innovation center and cooperatives as a partnership, they make a collective effort to qualify the valorization and regionalisation of the production of “superior quality chocolates” in the south of Bahia. Local governance is responsible for leveraging and securing local identity. In the qualification process, uncertainties and information asymmetries are found, which are minimized through these rules and regulations to avoid opportunism. Some mechanisms, as in the case of national and international competitions, to reward the best cocoa producers and “superior quality chocolates” play a relevant role in building trust between consumers and chocolate makers. The national

and international awards received have become one of the most relevant criteria for differentiation. The information of these awards is explained on the product packaging, which gives the consumer the guarantee of qualification about the provenance of origin, that is, the identity of the producer, the legitimacy and the distinctiveness of the product. On the other hand, these award labels impose trade barriers for producers who are not in this select group, creating what Goodman (2017) called an “exclusive niche”, both for chocolate makers and for consumers who will pay a price well above the standard.

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