

Spreading Race

Perceptions of the Coloniality of Imported Vegetable Fats in France and Germany between 1871 and 1933

As imports of oil and oilseeds from Africa and Asia intensified in the 19th century, fat – almost always in short supply in Europe until then – became overabundant. This trade inherited many of the structures of the former trade in human beings, including its colonial and racial ideology. How did the ideas of race which underpinned the vegetable fats industry suffuse French and German everyday life? The book examines the food systems of both countries, from import structures to commercialization and cookbook writing, combining approaches from economic, cultural and art history. It provides nuanced answers by exploring visible clues, e.g. adverts, as well as strategies in silencing.

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