# ‘Life is made of courage and coffee’

## An ethnography of specialty coffee in São Paulo, Brazil

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For my father.

1954–2020

Should we wish to understand all the admirable qualities of coffee (…one of man's best friends), we would exceed, by far, the boundaries we have prescribed for this brief paper.

—Alexandre Grimod de la Reynière,
*Almanach des Gormands* (1805, p. 207).

# DECLARATION

No part of this thesis has been accepted or is currently being submitted for any degree, diploma or certificate or other qualification in this university or elsewhere.

In accordance with the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography guidelines, this thesis does not exceed 100,000 words. The total word count is 99,684 words.

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23 April 2021

# ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the ways in which specialty coffee is consumed in Brazil, the world's largest coffee-producing nation and a rising consumer power. A central aim of this thesis is to address how the consumption of a globalised and modern good such as specialty coffee is experienced in a culture and context that has historically been exploited for the production of that very good, and that now finds itself unevenly positioned in the global consumer market. Based on twelve months of ethnographic fieldwork with specialty coffee enthusiasts and professionals in the city of São Paulo, this thesis explores how a network of individuals that I call the '*apaixonados*'—those passionate about coffee—engage individual aspirations and passions to navigate the boundaries and frictions between their local coffee consumer culture and what is discursively constructed as a 'global coffee community.'

To explore how global consumer inequalities are manifest in Brazil, I begin by introducing the emic idea of '*tipo exportação*,' a classificatory and experiential notion used to describe goods that are produced domestically but perceived to be of exportation (i.e., high) quality, and are typically destined for foreign consumption. Through my engagement with how *tipo exportação* is lived, I show how echoes of Brazil's colonial past inform contemporary structural constraints that stifle *apaixonados*' access both to foreign specialty and Brazil's own best coffee. I examine the ways in which *apaixonados* work within, through, and against these trade structures to obtain the coffees they desire, and show how the consumption of specialty coffee is used to mark specific forms of cosmopolitan aspiration and local prestige. The practical adaptations my participants make to key concepts in this 'global coffee community'—namely, authenticity and origin—in response to trade regulations that prohibit the importation of green (raw) coffee into Brazil reveal possibilities for the incorporation of more forms and spaces of labour into the wider ethical consumption discourse by taking account of the 'view from the South.' By adding a hybrid producer–consumer perspective to prevailing models of coffee consumption experiences—which have historically been centred in coffee-importing nations and drawn much of their meaning from coffee's travel from its agricultural origin and subsequent exoticism—this research contributes to anthropological debates on the politics and economics of food and consumption cultures in a globalising but unequal world.

# RESUMO

Esta tese trata das maneiras pelas quais os cafés especiais são consumidos no Brasil, o maior país produtor de café do mundo e um poder de consumo em ascensão. Um objetivo central é abordar como o consumo de um bem globalizado e moderno, como o café especial, é vivenciado em uma cultura e contexto que têm sido historicamente explorados para a produção daquele bem, e agora se encontra de posição desigual no mercado consumidor global. Baseada em doze meses de trabalho de campo etnográfico com entusiastas e profissionais de cafés especiais na cidade de São Paulo, esta tese explora como uma rede de indivíduos que eu chamo de 'apaixonados', ou aqueles que são apaixonados por café, envolve aspirações e paixões individuais para navegar nas fronteiras e fricções entre sua cultura local de consumo de café e o que é discursivamente construído como uma 'comunidade global do café'.

Para explorar como as desigualdades do consumidor global se manifestam no Brasil, começo introduzindo a ideia êmica de 'tipo exportação', uma noção classificatória e experiencial usada para descrever bens que são produzidos internamente, mas que são percebidas como de qualidade de exportação (ou seja, de alta qualidade) e tipicamente destinados ao consumo estrangeiro. Por meio do envolvimento com a forma como o tipo exportação é vivido, mostro como as reverberações do passado colonial do Brasil informam as restrições estruturais contemporâneas que sufocam o acesso dos apaixonados aos cafés especiais estrangeiras e aos melhores cafés brasileiros. Examinarei as maneiras pelas quais os apaixonados atuam dentro, através e contra essas estruturas comerciais para obter os cafés que desejam, e mostrarei como o consumo de cafés especiais é usado para marcar formas específicas de aspiração cosmopolita e prestígio local. Adaptações práticas feitas pelos participantes aos conceitos-chave dentro desta 'comunidade global do café'—a saber, autenticidade e origem—em resposta às regulamentações comerciais que proíbem a importação de café verde (cru) para o Brasil revelam possibilidades de incorporação de mais formas e espaços de trabalho no discurso de consumo ético mais amplo quando uma 'visto do Sul' é incorporada. Ao adicionar uma perspective híbrida de produtor-consumidor aos modelos predominantes de experiências de consumo de café—historicamente centrados em países importadores de café e que extrai muito de seu significado das viagens do café desde sua origem agrícola e subsequente exotismo—esta pesquisa contribui para debates antropológicos sobre a política e economia das culturas alimentares e de consumo em um mundo globalizado mas desigual.

# List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABIC — *Associação Brasileira da Indústria de Café*

BBC — Brazilian Barista Championship

BSCA — Brazilian Specialty Coffee Association

C-market — Commodity market price of coffee

ICMS — *Imposto sobre Operações Relativas à Circulação de Mercadorias e Sobre Prestações de Serviços de Transporte Interestadual, Intermunicipal e de Comunicação* (Merchandise and Service Circulation Tax)

II — *Imposto de Importação* (Import Duty)

IPI — *Impostos sobre Produtos Industrializados* (Industrial Product Tax)

MAPA — *Ministério da Agricultura, Pecuária e Abastecimento* (Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Food Supply)

PAC — *Prático, Accessível e Confiável* (Practical, Accessible, and Trustworthy), the Brazilian postal service's basic shipping option

SCA — Specialty Coffee Association

SIC — *Semana Internacional do Café* (International Coffee Week)

WBC — World Barista Championship

# A Note on Translations and Currencies

All translations, unless otherwise noted in the references, are by the author.

Most currencies are given in Brazilian *reais* (BRL or R$); however foreign-purchased goods and green coffee prices are given in US dollars (USD or $).

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# PROLOGUE

## COFFEE: FOCUS, STRENGTH, AND FAITH

The road to the farm wasn't even close to the worst I've been up—though it did feature a seriously steep gradient and plenty of football-sized rocks—but Rodolfo's car wasn't quite up to the task. After bottoming out a few times with some fierce bang!-whack!-bam!-thuds along the way, we finally reached a point on the hill where there simply were no more gears to use. So, we parked the car—by now far from the gleaming and sleek black city sedan in which we'd slipped out of São Paulo before dawn that day, being covered in states and miles of dust—and went on foot the rest of the way. We were on the hunt for a fledgling coffee farm said to have the potential to produce mind-melting coffees through its particular agroecological methods, and had two missions to complete. The first was to see if we could guarantee a purchase in advance of the upcoming harvest. It was only the second harvest, and it would be small: thirty kilos, with any luck. The second mission? To see if the owners would sell some of the land itself.

Some hours later, we were sipping water and snacking on bananas grown on the farm, eventually noticing the sun starting to slip a little lower, a little nearer the hills. After we had walked back down the hill, we spied the pool of oil creeping from under Rodolfo's car, and working its slippery way back down the long slope to town.

João Pedro, the owner of the farm, followed us down the hill in his pickup truck, only to find Rodolfo and me lying on our backs in the dirt, assessing the damage to the car's undercarriage. He promised to guide us to a trusty mechanic he'd frequented for years, and we wound our way back to town—this time taking more care with the potholes and rocks.

Good though he may be, even this mechanic was no match for the *greve dos caminhoneiros* [lorry drivers' strike] that had paralysed much of Brazil; he didn't have a spare to replace the broken part and there was no saying when it could arrive from São Paulo. (Didn't you hear? No? What have you been doing all day? Ah, yes, farming. Someone's got to do it, you know? Not much left around here if the coffee goes. Well, anyway, now they've blockaded the highways near here. They've lit fires. No one is coming, no one is going. They're going to cripple the country, you see. Which union? Many. I don't know. None. I thought the leaders called it off, I mean, they did, but the workers are still striking. They're going to bring the country to its knees. So, no, we're not really sure when we can repair your car. You could try taping it and driving back, but there's no guarantee they'll let you through. You might just be sitting on the highway with this tape until all the oil drains from this hole—it's really a sizable hole, friend, good job—while they light bonfires and shout. You might just be sitting on the highway until, well, who can say, really?)

Rodolfo and I left his car with the mechanic and climbed into João Pedro's truck. We were stuck.

We determined that there was nothing left to do, except go to a bar.

We were joined at the bar by Juliana, our friend who had tipped us off to the existence of João Pedro's farm. She owns a specialty coffee roastery on the edge of this town, and drives her beans into São Paulo to hand-deliver them to clients (including Rodolfo's café) once a fortnight. She had once worked at the Inter-American Development Bank office in New York, happy to be thousands of miles from the dusty outpost where she now lives, and where she'd spent her childhood, but one day, in an upscale café she frequented in New York, she saw the name of one of her father's friends on a package of coffee. As she later explained it to me, she became possessed by an all-consuming question: 'Why is it that I, who used to live 40 minutes away

from his farm, never tried his coffee, but people in the United States are drinking it?' It wasn't long before Juliana decided to pack up her life in New York and return to Brazil to reconnect with her coffee heritage.

Rodolfo and I had two missions to complete, and while we were seated outside the bar on plastic chairs with Juliana and João Pedro, deals were struck. Half of the total harvest would be sent to us in São Paulo when it was ready, where it would be roasted by Juliana. Rodolfo would return to the farm in the following month and together with João Pedro would stake out a small plot of land on which he could begin growing experimental coffee lots. Hands were shaken and the deal confirmed. João Pedro passed me a small handful of green beans—a souvenir of a memorable night.

In the morning, we picked up Rodolfo's car from the mechanic. The solution to the hole was, indeed, duct tape. Our steadfast mechanic friend exhorted us to stop every hour or so and make sure that we still had oil.

The lorry drivers were blocking the highway and stopping all non-striking commercial vehicles, but passenger cars were slowly being waved through the barricades. Burning drums abounded, as did groups of men holding the increasingly common placards displaying messages of support for the political right such '*intervenção militar já*!' (military intervention now!), but they let us through with no hassle. Our gold—the coffee samples—was safe inside my rucksack, and the coffee that we were delivering for Juliana was resting in the boot under our coats. No one suspected us to be anything other than some friends out for a drive, and we cheerfully limped back to São Paulo, precious cargo secure.

We made our final check on the oil just before we descended down the Serra da Cantareira and into the spread of São Paulo below. Rodolfo was worried about the prospect of issues arising with the car while we were tangled in traffic, so wanted to make sure that the tape was

secure and that as little oil was leaking as possible before we hit the city limits. We pulled over at a vantage point, and I was staring out at the city sprawling out before us when my phone connected to a network and chirped with the notice of new emails. Reclining against the side of the car while Rodolfo tinkered with its insides, I opened my mail app and discovered a message from my department back in Oxford, inviting me to an event on contemporary Brazil they suggested attending 'if you are as puzzled as we are about the Brazilian crisis affecting so many millions of people.'

The next email was a message from a local Brazilian coffee delivery service, reminding me that its bicycle couriers can still deliver coffee, even though everything else is shut down. The message begins:

> CHAOS? DRINK A GOOD COFFEE AND HAVE THE STRENGTH TO FIGHT! Yes, we are living in difficult times for our country and not just in recent weeks. Yes, it was a coup! But delicious and quality coffee helps us maintain focus, strength, and faith [*foco, força e fé*]. It's not just about coffee; it's about people.

'Hey, we're good. Let's go,' Rodolfo said, slamming the bonnet shut.

Just before I got back in the car, I took the green coffee beans João Pedro had given me on the night before out of my pocket, cupped them in my hands, and gave them a sniff. Green coffee smells like hay. It smells like just-cut grass. It does, in fact, somehow smell *green*.

Later, I tried to remember the smell as Rodolfo and I unloaded the car, parked in front of his café on a street where rubbish collection had been halted all week on account of the strike. Hauling the bags of coffee, I thought to myself: focus, strength, and faith. It's not just about coffee; it's about people.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 PROBLEMS AND PARADOXES

It is difficult to overstate the prevalence of coffee in the quotidian Brazilian experience, both historically and today. Even slave owners were once instructed that 'slaves, soon after they wake up, should have well-made and sweetened coffee, the equivalent of two cups; this coffee should be made with a clean selection of beans free from dirt and should be roasted well' (cited in Aguillar, 2000). Several of the participants in this research who did not grow up in the middle-class milieu into which they have now ascended recalled their participation in the government scheme whereby poorer families are given coffee as part of their monthly welfare allowance, in which it often serves as a meal replacement and source of energy in the mornings when there is not enough food for children to eat before going to school. It has been estimated by anthropologists that 'over 95% of Brazilians of all classes eat bread, butter and coffee for breakfast' (Barbosa and Veloso, 2014, p. 170). Indeed, the term for 'breakfast' in Brazilian Portuguese is *cafe da manhã* ('morning coffee'), and such is the association between coffee and breakfast that even the verb is different: one does not 'eat' (*comer*) breakfast as one might lunch or dinner; one 'drinks' it (*tomar*).

In Nancy Scheper-Hughes' classic work on life (and death) in a Brazilian *favela* (shantytown), *Death Without Weeping*, we are introduced to a family of eight who, after pooling their weekly earnings, 'came up with one and a half minimum salaries from which they purchased the following groceries on market day:

1 kilo of *farinha* [flour]
4 kilos of sugar
2 kilos of brown or black beans
1 (or 2) kilos of rice

> 3 (200 gram) packages of cornmeal (*fubá*)
> 1 package of inexpensive coffee
> (sometimes 1 or 2 packages of *macarrão* [pasta], a substitute for rice)
> cooking oil, salt, garlic, parsley for flavouring, as needed
> (a chicken or 1/2-1 kilo of chicken parts, if possible)
> 1 small plastic sack (200 grams) of the cheapest powdered milk for the nine-month-old baby soap'
>
> (Scheper-Hughes, 1992, p. 149). [My emphasis]

Coffee is available for free in thermoses and carafes in nearly every office, waiting room, and petrol station in Brazil. Small, disposable plastic cups are provided next to these thermoses and, more often than not, Brazilians boil the water with sugar, so that the coffee is sweetened from the moment it's brewed. Midway through my fieldwork, I was taken ill. When I passed out after a blood draw at a hospital, it was not water or juice the nurse gave me when I came to: She tasked my husband with helping me to hobble from the examination room into the corridor, gestured to a chair next to the capsule coffee machine, and left us with instructions as to how to make a restorative coffee.

Mornings across the country start with mothers and grandmothers making coffee for their families, typically in a concentration that is much stronger than that to which Europeans and North Americans are accustomed, and served with milk and sugar to dilute the bitterness. It is consumed morning, afternoon, and—to my great distress and constant sleeplessness—not infrequently after dinner or before bed. An analysis of the more than 34,000 responses to the 2008–2009 National Dietary Survey conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, a federal agency, found that across all ages, genders, and income levels, coffee is the second most commonly consumed 'food' in the nation, surpassed only by rice (Souza et al., 2013). Despite the fact that Brazil consumes an extraordinary amount of coffee, it is primarily known as a producing nation: it has been the world's single largest producer of coffee since at least 1850 (Morris, 2018). It is this unique combination—being both a monumental producer and consumer of coffee—that shapes Brazil's relationship with coffee, and that drives the main

questions that guide this thesis: What are the boundaries of production and consumption? In what ways could the academic literature have failed to account for certain consumer experiences, given that for so long the world has firmly distinguished between producing and consuming nations? And, to what extent is it relevant that for coffee, just as for many other agricultural goods, a line is often drawn between the Global North and South, between former colonising countries and their colonies, and between 'developing' and 'developed' countries?

This unusually high level of consumption in an economy that is traditionally associated with production is one of the central tensions of this project. Even before the 20th century, foreign visitors would remark on the enormous quantities of coffee consumed by Brazilians. For example, an 1894 report in *The New York Times* asserted that 'the whole country is perpetually in a state of semi-intoxication on coffee—men, women and children alike … At all hours of the day and night, in season and out, everybody literally guzzles it' (quoted in Topik and Wells, 1998, p. 52). Although estimates of how much coffee is consumed per country can vary, depending on which measurement metric is employed, Brazil's consumption has risen by over 40 per cent since 1990, and it is on track to 'outpace the United States as the world's foremost coffee-consuming country within the next few years' (Reichman, 2018, p. 257) and in 2016 it became the world's number one consumer by volume (Fischer, 2017). Despite this, however, Brazil is not commonly viewed as a consuming country in the contemporary global imaginary; I have come across countless resources that briefly mentioned the fact that Brazil consumes more coffee than any other producing nation, before immediately moving on to the next talking point, without reflecting further on this matter.

In Brazil, it is de facto illegal to import green (raw, unroasted) coffee into the country, meaning that while Brazilians consume more coffee per capita than almost any other consumer group on the planet, they almost exclusively consume Brazilian-grown coffee. Standard models of coffee consumption in the global marketplace conceive of coffee as an internationally traded

good that is grown in certain exporting nations and later consumed in importing countries; for instance, the International Coffee Organization maintains statistics divided into two distinct categories: 'exporting countries' and 'importing countries'. How, then, should we approach a major coffee-consuming country that does not import coffee, and therefore can be said to possess a hybridised coffee culture? Ultimately, this thesis asks the following question: How is the consumption of a globalised and modern good such as specialty coffee experienced in a culture and context that has historically been exploited for the production of that very good, and that now finds itself unevenly positioned in the neoliberal global consumer market, a market that largely remains defined by and exists in response to Global Northern economies and practices?

## 1.2 CONTEXTUALISING SPECIALTY COFFEE

Coffee has joined a host of other beverages and foodstuffs that have experienced a surge in artisanal forms in recent decades, particularly in developed economies. While 'specialty coffee' can, in its broadest definition, refer to the material quality of a raw coffee (in terms of aroma, taste, and the presence or absence of any physical defects), the term is technically restricted to coffees graded at 80 or above on the Specialty Coffee Association's (SCA) 100-point grading scale; the designation is a much an abstract construction of social value as is it an indicator of a coffee's material quality. The SCA—the foremost international organisation dedicated to specialty coffee—publishes 'trusted reference instruments' that are intended to be 'a quantifiable and qualifiable measure, based upon scientific testing, [and] which set values and/or ranges for coffee' (SCA, 2018, p.4). Before specialty status is awarded, professional coffee tasters assess the tastes and aromas of brewed coffee, looking for the presence of defects in a process known as cupping.[1] This is done first at the farm where the coffee is grown, and

[1] Cupping involves coating one's palate with a coffee's flavour and aroma, to which end practitioners slurp and spit a given coffee at varying temperatures, and then assigning scores based on their assessment. The process is

then repeated throughout the supply chain, as the coffee moves toward the consumer. For this evaluation, the taste, aroma, and visuals of a coffee are assessed and given scores that are then tallied to give a final total on a 100-point scale. A specialty coffee must maintain its minimum score of 80 points at all stages to keep its classification; as the SCA puts it, 'specialty can only occur when all of those involved in the coffee value chain work in harmony and maintain a keen focus on standards and excellence from start to finish' (2021).

Many high-end specialty coffee establishments today identify with 'third-wave' coffee, a coexisting classificatory category that somewhat clarifies the tension between the social and material definitions of specialty. According to the late food critic Jonathan Gold, third-wave coffee is a movement that advocates beans that are 'sourced from farms instead of countries, [where] roasting is about bringing out rather than incinerating the unique characteristics of each bean, and the flavour is clean and hard and pure' (2008). It promotes a focus on quality at both ends of the production chain, and many specialty professionals like to compare high-end coffee and fine wines, in terms of the respective industries' emphasis on *terroir* and the geographic rootedness of the base agricultural product. Second-wave coffee is exemplified by the Starbucks model; informed by the Italian espresso culture, it sought to bring reliably good espresso-based coffee beverages to the general population. Starbucks does not fit within current industry understandings of specialty or third-wave coffee, partly because it does not necessarily use beans that meet the 80-point criterion and partly because of the company's reliance on automatic espresso machines, which streamline operations but automate much of the work of the barista.[2] Third-wave coffee places significant emphasis on machinery and technology—

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reminiscent of the much noisier process of wine tasting, except that rather than avoiding inebriation, the professional must seek to limit over-caffeination.

[2] Within this framework, 'first-wave coffee' refers to commodity coffee and the low-quality coffees that one tends to find in large tins the supermarkets that offer little or no information about flavour or origin. Large brands such as Folgers or Maxwell House are typical examples of this.

Although the 'waves' framework is useful for parsing out a general definition of specialty coffee, the waves themselves are not necessarily applicable cross-culturally. Coffee drinking trends did not proceed necessarily in

which, according to sociologist John Manzo, 'facilitate and militate a social form that one does not find in chain "second wave" shops' (2014, p. 5)—but the technology is employed simply to extract the absolute highest-quality coffee, rather than to achieve maximum efficiency. The presence of a high-end piece of coffee equipment is not valuable in itself; a technically-skilled barista is also required to craft the best coffee possible, in concert with the machinery. Overall, specialty coffee is differentiated by an emphasis on certain aspects of coffee such as its unique sensory characteristics, while downplaying other aspects such as its role as a commodity.

International trade organisations define specialty as high-quality coffee that has unique flavours and tastes, and is grown in (and, crucially, marketed as being from) specific geographic microclimates known as 'origins.' One of the ways in which specialty coffee is 'made special' is through the discursive emphasis on sensory and quality differentiation based on geographic origin and *terroir*. A specialty coffee connoisseur, therefore, needs to possess broad knowledge of the sensory characteristics of various global origins (Shaker Ardekani and Rath, 2017; Ott, 2018; Weissman, 2011); Chapter 4 of this thesis offers an in-depth discussion of coffee origins. The findings of this research indicate that due to the trade policies that have been put in place to protect Brazilian agriculture, resulting in a near-total ban on the importation of green coffee, Brazilian coffee drinkers are obliged to almost exclusively consume Brazilian-grown coffee.[3] Moreover, I show that due in large part to historic trade flows and the need to contend with the higher purchasing power enjoyed by the coffee-importing countries in the Global North, it

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this order in Brazil, so my participants did not speak in the language of waves, or even consider it a useful point of differentiation.

[3] The commercial importation of green coffee is illegal under Brazilian law for the stated reason of protecting the domestic crop from pests and diseases such as coffee rust, a fungal infection of the coffee plant (McCook, 2019). With appropriate documentation and the permission of the Ministry of Agriculture, it is technically possible to bring up to 2 kg of coffee into Brazil for personal use. However, participants reported that even when travelling with small amounts of coffee *and* with the required documents, their coffee has nevertheless been confiscated by customs officials. As a result, there is a thriving cottage industry of smuggling high-quality coffee into the country, explored in depth in Chapter 3. It is also permissible to import roasted coffee (whole-bean, ground, or soluble) into Brazil, but as explained in Chapter 3, this was of little appeal to my participants because it conflicts with the community maxim that 'fresh is best.'

is difficult for Brazilian consumers to access top-quality Brazilian specialty coffee; their consumption is effectively limited to the domestic coffee that is left over, once foreign firms have had their pick. This complicates and diminishes my participants' claims to possess and engage in coffee connoisseurship, as it is conceived under the normative foregrounding of 'origin' in the definition of specialty coffee, and thus hints at possible limitations to the framing of specialty coffee enthusiasts as all partaking in the same 'global specialty coffee community,' given that there cannot be said to be equal access to the goods around which that community is built.

In the industrial context, coffee has traditionally been valued for its high caffeine content; the historian Steven Topik (2009) has written that '[a]s clanging factories gave birth to the industrial age, coffee came to represent not only leisure but also labor' (p. 94). Due to caffeine's stimulant properties, it quickly became positively associated with the workplace; merely its presence 'nearby confers the idea of productivity' (D'Costa, 2011, n. p.). Sidney Mintz included coffee in his famous list of 'proletarian hunger killers,' particularly given how readily it can be combined with sugar, a calorically dense food that helped to fuel the new urban working classes that arose during the Industrial Revolution (2013, p. 94). Likewise, Michael Jiménez (1995) has shown that coffee exemplifies many of the early-20th-century market transformations experienced by the United States, and that it was the coffee lobby's efforts to institutionalise 'the coffee break' within workplaces that made coffee more than just a beverage used to quell the hunger pangs of the proletariat. Coffee became a symbol of productivity first in the United States and then elsewhere, and this attitude eventually encompassed Brazil. However, despite the close association between coffee and work, productivity, and business, it has never stood entirely apart from leisure. Even the institutionalised 'coffee break' promotes the notion of rest and respite—albeit engineered in such a way so as to make workers more productive overall, thereby wrapping leisure and work tightly together. The specialty coffee boom has meant that the discourse of coffee as a 'craft beverage' that began with Starbucks has further troubled the

exclusivity of the workplace's association with coffee; it is now increasingly posited as something one should appreciate, savour, and take time over.

A short word is due here concerning what specialty coffee is *not*. Firstly, as is explored in greater depth in later chapters of the thesis, specialty coffee is not synonymous with the Fair Trade label or otherwise certified coffee; specialty *may* be Fair Trade, but is not necessarily so. Fair Trade certification for coffee requires that a specific set of trading practices be followed, and stipulates a minimum price that must be paid (at the time of writing, the Fair Trade minimum is $1.40/lb for conventional coffee and $1.70/lb for organic coffee), but Fair Trade does not serve as an indicator of a coffee's sensory quality. Conversely, 'specialty' is a measure of quality, but one that comes with no specific guarantee about the ways in which it has been traded or its environmental status (e.g., it may not be organic). The sensory characteristics of specialty coffee are prized extremely highly, and these coffees frequently fetch prices that are far higher than the Fair Trade minimum, but because purchases of specialty coffee typically occur outside such formal channels of international certification, a degree of trust is needed between consumer and coffee retailer, with regard to the ethical sourcing of the coffees in question. Finally, in the Brazilian context, specialty coffee is not synonymous with gourmet coffee (*café gourmet*). Gourmet coffees are those deemed to be at the high end of the coffees that, while acceptable, do not meet the requirements to be classified as specialty; these are often the higher-quality coffees produced at large-scale commercial farms, or the lower-quality coffees from specialty-focused farms that did not achieve the 80-point cut-off. Prior to the rise of specialty coffee consumption in Brazil, gourmet was seen as the high-end, more luxurious and refined coffee to consume, while today, it represents something of a bridge between conventional and specialty coffees. Many of the participants in this research first 'cut their teeth' on gourmet coffee, before 'graduating' to specialty. Major gourmet coffee brands in Brazil include Três Corações, Santa Monica, América, and Leão.

## 1.3 *APAIXONADOS*: DEFINING A POPULATION OF STUDY

Rogério, a former co-owner of the coffee shop Takkø, told me on one occasion: '[Specialty coffee is] not like a grunge thing. You can't see someone and be like, "Oh yeah, that guy with the jean jacket—that's definitely a coffee scene guy."' It was an insightful statement; the boundary that defines what is known as the 'specialty coffee industry' or the 'specialty coffee community' is nebulous, in that the term encapsulates a lengthy production and supply chain, from the agricultural origin of the product to the barista who serves a beverage to a customer—or the individual who quietly brews their own coffee at home in the morning. This nebulousness gives rise to a pertinent question: What, beyond business transactions, links these actors? In this work, I will look at both amateur enthusiasts and professionals who work with coffee in some capacity—the latter being most commonly baristas, but also roasters, quality-control specialists, farmers, and journalists.

One of the central aims of this thesis is to trouble the binary frequently cited in the literature of 'producers' and 'consumers,' and—within coffee discourse more specifically—'producing' and 'consuming' countries. Although amateur enthusiasts and paid professionals may engage with coffee in different ways, the similarities and overlaps are so great and the divisions not so clear cut that an artificial separation is required to render these groups as two distinct entities. Throughout the period of my fieldwork in Brazil, it was common to meet and observe a diverse range of professionals and enthusiasts at events and educational opportunities, many of whom straddled both halves of the binary; those I initially took to be coffee professionals often moved between coffee and other hospitality or service jobs, while many enthusiasts were former coffee professionals or hoped to work with coffee someday. Although I had intended to study exclusively consumers before moving to São Paulo, it quickly became clear that the professionals and enthusiasts who made up the specialty coffee landscape in the city could not be treated as discrete groups; together, they came to form a single unit of study.

I have termed this mixed-study population *apaixonados*—'passionate ones,' or those who are mad about coffee.[4] My participants frequently expressed their enthusiasm for coffee as a type of *paixão*, a 'passion'; they were excited and moved by coffee and the possibilities they saw in it. Some quit lucrative careers to become low-wage service workers like baristas, while others thought of it as a hobby that provided a sense of community in the unending grey sprawl of São Paulo. Among the participants, there was no consensus as to what specialty coffee aficionados ought to be called, no pre-existing epithet that applied to everyone. The most common term used to mark some sort of group boundary was the English phrase 'coffeelover' (typically, though not always, written as a single word), but I encountered generalised disagreement about whether 'coffeelover' referred to anyone who loves coffee (whether they work with it or not), or only to those who love coffee but do *not* work with it in any professional capacity, in the same way that 'aficionado' in English does not quite pass muster, in that it includes only people who are not industry professionals. In the absence of a more traditional bounded anthropological unit of study (e.g., 'the Makushi' or 'the Nuer') or even a participant consensus about the name of their group, *apaixonado* serves to designate the boundaries required in any study.

It should be noted here that not all specialty coffee drinkers in Brazil are *apaixonados*, in much the same way that not every patron of a craft beer bar is a die-hard beer enthusiast, nor every diner at an upscale restaurant a 'foodie.' Many customers of specialty coffee shops live or work nearby so visit them out of convenience, or do have a genuine taste preference for specialty over conventional coffee, but do not care to make a hobby of it. What distinguishes *apaixonados* from these general consumers is that their passion for specialty coffee is an important cornerstone of their lifestyle; they form and shape social networks around coffee, spend a good

[4] Fem: *Apaixonada(s)*.

deal of their disposable income and time on coffee and related goods (equipment, educational courses, trips), keep up to date with national and international coffee news across a variety of platforms (Instagram, blogs, magazine subscriptions), and, not infrequently, seek to 'convert' others to specialty coffee.

In focusing this study on individuals for whom specialty coffee, as a specific good, informs their lifestyle, my work thus diverges from more generalized studies of 'foodies' or gourmands, who cultivate distinction around a variety of foodstuffs (Johnston & Bauman 2014). Coffee is also differentiated from other tropical crops which circulate transnationally and between the Global North and South, in that—to the best of my knowledge—there are not active consumption communities centred around having competitions to best prepare, say, broccoli (Fischer & Benson 2006); or who meet up to try and visit as many places serving papaya in a day as possible (Cook 2004); or who want to fulfil a dream of working with soya in a professional capacity (DuBois et al., 2008). While we find stirrings of these communities among other artisan products which undergo value-added processing after arriving in importing nations, such as chocolate (Leissle 2017) and tea (Besky 2020), the physical space of coffee shops provides an anchor for the specialty coffee community (Ferreira et al., 2021) in a widespread fashion which does not exist for these other similar goods; indeed, while stand-alone speciality tea houses are rare outside Asia, specialty coffee shops world-wide typically keep a small amount of quality tea on hand for the occasional customers who prefer tea. In selecting specialty coffee consumption as a point of departure, I am taking a product which is consumed across the globe, which has specific forms and practices associated with its consumption, and which is a lifestyle good around which people cultivate communities. It is, as historian Augustine Sedgewick points out, a good which asks of us: 'What does it mean to be connected to faraway people and places through everyday things?' (2020, p. 12). In the local context of São Paulo, specialty coffee was a good which *apaixonados* used to make sense of their lives: it was more than a general foodstuff,

for when taken together with the practices and communities which surround it, specialty coffee served as a way to approach life.

Although I consider the *apaixonados* to constitute a single unit (albeit one, as I hope to convey, that is by no means unified), this categorisation is a divergence from the extant literature on specialty coffee consumption, which to date has focused on hierarchies of social capital, either among or between consumers and professionals. I recognise the important mediating and teaching roles played by baristas in particular; they are, as the Brazilian sociologist Mauricio Lages has written, key to the 'mediation of taste' within the industry (2017, p. 44). This is especially true in Brazil, where knowledge of specialty coffees is not very widespread. This strand of the literature that considers internal hierarchies of social capital in relation to coffee is broadly orientated towards sociology and marketing in its theoretical and analytical approach, and builds upon the work of Kathryn and Michael LaTour (2010) and André Maciel and Melanie Wallendorf (2017) on aficionados and craft consumers. In the Brazilian context, marketing scholar Ronan Torres Quintão (2015; Quintão et al., 2017a, 2017b) has delineated between the three categories of professionals, connoisseur consumers, and regular consumers, while Elisa Reis Guimarães (another marketing scholar) and her colleagues (Guimarães et al., 2019) have realigned Quintão's categories 'according to [the individual's] levels of knowledge and engagement' in relation to coffee (p. 19). This approach comes closer to my own, in that it recognises that a professional association with coffee is common among experts, but not a requirement to be one. The analysis by Guimarães et al. offers another advantage: It expands its definition of 'coffee professional' to more coffee-related occupations than just barista (a shortcoming of Quintão), which better acknowledges the many coffee-related occupations that exist in both a developed consumer market and in relation to the agricultural side of coffee processing. I propose an ongoing reassessment of these terms and divisions, and aim to build ethnographically on the foundation laid by Guimarães et al.

The *apaixonados* are a group that includes amateurs, professionals, and experts who are emblematic of the passion and enthusiasm that characterise the literature on connoisseur consumption. This categorisation does not assume a link between professional identity and knowledge; although this is frequently the case, a passion for coffee does not necessarily mean that an individual will seek to work professionally with it, nor does extensive and deep knowledge of coffee entail that one works in the industry. My decision to consider the *apaixonados* as a single group allows for the recognition that just as in any social group, various individuals have and enact different roles and knowledges in the context of internal hierarchies. It also extends the theoretical underpinning of this thesis, which explores the overlaps among spaces and processes of production and consumption, to the conception of the unit of study and the participants themselves.

In the course of the development of this categorisation and accounting for the emergence of local commodity-specific consumer cultures, it is necessary to contextualise class in Brazil, and particularly the burgeoning middle, upper, and creative classes to which most of my participants belong. *Apaixonados* tend to have sufficient spare time and income to spend on their passion for coffee, but it should equally be recognised that many have only recently arrived at a point of economic stability, having been raised in the lower classes. The few *apaixonados* with whom I worked who still pertained to the lower classes were nonetheless mobile and aspirational; they were without exception young coffee-shop or roastery employees who traverse considerable distances on gridlocked public transit to commute to work, and towards the possibilities they saw it affording them.

The Brazilian economist Marcelo Neri's theory of the 'new middle class' has been taken up with gusto in the country, and his work has 'eventually [come] to symbolise this widely shared realisation that the low-income population could become avid consumers' (Spyer, 2017, p. 6). While this conclusion has been hailed as a sign of Brazilian economic success, social scientists

have been more sceptical of such changes, pointing out that greater purchasing power in terms of commercial goods does not necessarily entail a substantive improvement in wellbeing (see: Kopper, 2020; Pochmann, 2014). Moreover, Neri's work focuses on income, which is only one aspect of what constitutes 'class'; cultural aspects are absent from his analysis, which is subsumed under the old fallacy that the economic world exists in isolation from the social one.

While *apaixonados* can largely be said to slot into the 'new middle class,' very few are in immediate danger of slipping back into poverty as a result of recent economic and social instabilities, a phenomenon to which anthropologists Charles Klein, Sean Mitchell, and Benjamin Junge (2018) have drawn attention to define the precariousness of this social group. *Apaixonados* share a recent history of economic ascendency, but may be better described as forming part of the emerging creative class. The sociologist Richard Florida and his frequent collaborator Charlotta Mellander (2015) have traced a global shift 'from industrial capitalism to a new age of knowledge-based or creative capitalism … creativity [is] an infinitely renewable resource that is continually enlarging via education, job experience, and the spontaneous, often fortuitous combinations and recombinations of ideas that occur as people collaborate and compete' (p. 313). High-end coffee shops are an amenity whose presence is frequently associated with the emergence of the creative classes and creative cities (Machado, Simões and Diniz, 2013); informal 'third spaces' are particularly attractive to highly mobile 'digital nomads'—workers who need only a laptop and can in theory work from anywhere in the world (Reichenberger, 2018; Thompson, 2018, 2019). New forms of labour and a continued blurring of the categories of labour and leisure are widespread among *apaixonados*, who—if not working directly with coffee—hold jobs from independent market researcher through coder, architect, and book jacket designer to artisanal peanut butter maker; flexible working patterns contributed to the amount of time available to this population to spend in coffee shops. Such new creative classes have been the subject of intense debate and research on passion and labour,

thereby situating this work in a growing international discussion about neoliberalised forms of labour.

If we pay close attention to changes in styles of coffee consumption, what can we learn about contemporary Brazil, and particularly the country's increasing prosperity but continued social instability and anxiety? The intersection between passion and labour that characterises the *apaixonados* and that is studied in this thesis allows for an understanding of the subjectivities of class mobility and changes in contemporary urban Brazil; the prism through which this matter is examined is the space of the coffee shop and the material of coffee, both of which have historically been central to Brazilian social, political, and economic life. In her work on Brazilian food cultures, the anthropologist Jane Fajans (2012) briefly noted that there is a highly gendered, racialised, and classed dimension to the process of making coffee in domestic spaces in Brazil. I contend that in this context, in which it is typical for mothers to prepare coffee for their families, and for lower-class (and female) domestic workers to prepare it for the families for whom they work, the fact that an increasingly broad swath of the population now carefully prepares their own coffee at home contains implications that go beyond simple changes in the ways coffee is made and that indicate wider shifts in social practices, mores, and ordering.

An *apaixonada* named Gisele once told me that what she most values about coffee is the way it can bring together people of different social classes. There is hardly anyone in Brazil who doesn't drink coffee, Gisele explained; even those who are less affluent can usually afford an espresso in a specialty coffee shop, thereby purchasing temporary access to a social space of mobility more easily than they could in, say, the cocktail bar in which we were sitting while we conversed. 'Coffee has a marvellous affective value for us Brazilians,' Gisele said. 'I think it can bring us together across the many divides that exist in our nation … because it is so deceptively simple.'

## 1.4 SITUATING THE RESEARCH: FRAMEWORKS AND DEBATES

### 1.4.1 MODERNITY/COLONIALITY

My scholarly approach means that I engage theoretically with modernity/coloniality, a research strand that has been primarily developed by Latin American thinkers in the fields of social sciences and philosophy. Modernity/coloniality, which understands coloniality as constitutive of modernity, contends that modernity could not have arisen without the colonial project, and that the two remain inexorably linked (Mignolo, 2009, p. 39). I take modernity to mean a state of being and time characterised by: The perceived legitimacy of the nation-state as the main governance structure (the only strong challenge being neoliberal market ideologies); rationalist epistemologies as the only privileged truth, concurrent with belief in the transformative potentials of technology; fragmentation and alienation, or the separation of parts (e.g., the economy, politics, the individual) from the whole (society); and simultaneous possibilities of advancement and mass destruction of both ways of life and the environment. Its twin, coloniality, should be understood as 'an encompassing political, cultural, epistemological, and symbolic condition' created through acts of colonialism and that persists even after the formation of independent states (De Lissovoy and Bailón, 2019, p. 83). It is both the underlying logic that drove colonial projects and the organising principle that still shapes capitalism, such that even nations and societies that were never formally colonised are not outside the logics of coloniality (Mignolo, 2020). These phenomena are two sides of the same coin, and a scholarly emphasis on modernity at the expense of coloniality reveals only a partial picture of the world; what remains hidden is that which, under these systems, has always been subjugated and repressed, 'the dark side' of modernity. As a form of 'border thinking,' or a scholarly approach that concerns itself with the incorporation of alternative knowledges, languages, and cosmologies into hegemonic discourse as part of a decolonial orientation, modernity/coloniality has largely focused on the creation of divisions and hierarchies of race

(Maldonado-Torres, 2019), gender (Mendoza, 2015), and knowledges (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018).

The notion of modernity/coloniality challenges the anthropological vision of multiple modernities that has dominated scholarship produced in the northern hemisphere since the 1990s. The notion of 'multiple modernities' asserts that the shape and form of modernity is contingent on local circumstances, to the extent that there is no one modernity shared by all (cf. Eisenstadt, 2002). This theory, whose proponents hope to account for diversity of experience and trajectories in the contemporary world, was partly articulated in order to challenge lingering ideas of linear modernisation, which is reminiscent of social evolutionary thinking, and to trouble the conceptualisation of 'modernity' as homogenous and homogenising. To be sure, the multiple modernities approach has afforded researchers greater nuance as they have sought to understand how groups with different historical and social backgrounds navigate and conceive of the contemporary world, in particular in the context of capitalism, but as Israeli sociologist Stavit Sinai (2020) has written, multiple modernities ultimately suffers from systemic 'analytical incoherence' (p. 304). This is perhaps in part attributable to its focus on national-level distinctions (over, for instance, ethnic or even sub-regional distinctions and experiences) and loose grasp of the differences between one modernity and another, and the potential effects of these differences (Schmidt, 2006). Furthermore, although the notion of multiple modernities references colonialism and imperial projects as the broad landscape within which modernity developed (Bhambra, 2007), it remains surprisingly ahistorical in its limited understanding of how these multiples have developed. Likewise, the 'losers' of modernities are conceptualised by a notion of the proletariat that is drawn from the particular forms of exclusion that occurred in relation to the Industrial Revolution in Europe, and this approach loses much of the nuance of experiences born of different historical contexts and different outcomes and processes of exclusion. According to Brazilian philosopher Luis

Fellipe Garcia, 'in a society such as Brazil, the notion of proletarian does not capture the specificity of the exclusion suffered by Indians, Afro-Brazilians, the descendents of former slaves, peasants, women, and so on' (2020, p. 137). In redressing the lack of historical situatedness, the modernity/coloniality framework approaches Latin America as situated at the margins of the modernity or modernities Northern scholars have presented and simultaneously squarely within an alternate framework of modernity/coloniality.

The Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos has argued that it is from the tension between anxiety about the past and the future, such as those that can be seen in Brazil, that epistemologies of the Global South emerge, or the creation of knowledge(s) 'anchored in the experiences of resistance of all those social groups that have systematically suffered injustice, oppression, and destruction caused by capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy' (Sousa Santos, 2018, p. 1). This is testament to the diversity of the various colonising and decolonising processes as they have unfolded in the modern world, many of which may share characteristics but which cannot be collapsed or unified into a single unit and must be considered in the light of their local and cultural specificities. As the Brazilian anthropologist Letícia Nóbrega Cesarino has put it, 'modernity's claims to universality are the result of a historical process of expansion of Western societies predicated on the hierarchisation and subjugation of alternative worldviews' (2012, p. 95). Modernity/coloniality draws upon work in dependency theory because it ascribes uneven economic development in global areas such as Latin America to such places' history of exploitation as colonies and continued struggles under the political and economic influence of powers in the Global North, yet in doing so it moves beyond a path-driven, determinist approach by stepping away from economic affairs as its sole focus. Questions around consumption and coffee in Brazil, of course, cannot be divorced from the economic context in which they clearly sit; this is one of Brazil's main export goods, after all, and its trade has for centuries been a link between Brazil and the rest of the world.

Modernity/coloniality, then, offers an avenue that is well suited to the needs of the anthropologist because it situates these relations of power within the complexities of the real world, in which the economic and social (not to mention the political, cultural, and symbolic) realms are recognised as intrinsically intertwined and reflexive in their constitution; this approach allows the researcher to explore the impacts of capitalism across both space and time.

Despite the recent emphasis in the social sciences on both understanding postcolonial experiences and building theories based on a de- or post-colonial approach, such work has emphasised recent decolonial projects, particularly those conducted in former British and French colonies. The sociologists José Bortoluci and Robert Jansen (2013) asserted in a review of social science scholarship on the Latin American postcolonial experience that these experiences have only been partially and unevenly incorporated into postcolonial studies as a field of theory within the social sciences and humanities. The contributions of Latin America are recognised more in critical studies of dependency, imperialism, and the subaltern (those groups defined by Antonio Gramsci as having been displaced to society's margins), but the different timelines and trajectories of decolonisation has set Latin America outside the dominant scholarly discussions of postcolonial theory. It is of fundamental importance to consider contemporary Brazil from a postcolonial perspective because it is essential to come to an awareness of the flows of history and power if we are to understand cultural dynamism, change, and—as is particularly pertinent to this thesis—current manifestations of consumer preference; to understand the landscape that consumers navigate, we must understand the *formation* of that landscape. The postcolonial approach is not new in anthropology; indeed, it is so well integrated that it is rarely a formal orientation. The discipline unevenly applies the methodologies of history,[5] but anthropologists have nonetheless been quick to recognise the

[5] See Palmié and Stewart (2016) for an overview.

importance of local histories at least since Evans-Pritchard's 1950 Marrett lecture, in which he proposed that if we can understand the provenance of a given social system and structure, we are better placed to understand its manifestation and meanings *in the present moment*. The publication of Edmund Leach's *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (1954) four years after Evans-Pritchard's Marrett lecture demonstrated the value of historical situatedness in the anthropological approach. In his analysis of the symbiotic, long-term interrelations between Kachin and Shan populations in Myanmar,[6] Leach helped to bring to the fore of the discipline the dynamism of culture and the centrality of change to society. This engagement with historical thinking and methodologies coincided with a spate of independence movements that took place across Asia and Africa, in which anthropologists embedded themselves or theorised about these changes as they unfolded. Anthropology's emphasis on understanding life from the point of view of a given people meant that even when scholars were not explicitly studying decolonising processes, they were nevertheless engaging with questions of power and representation in ways that ran parallel to scholars of postcolonialism across disciplines.

I contend that for anthropologists, it is useful to take a concentrated look at Brazil as a *postcolony*, in part because of essential differences in historical timelines; given that there were no anthropologists as we currently understand the term, no anthropologists were on the ground to witness Brazil's independence in 1822, or the dissolution of the Spanish Empire in Latin America that formally began with Venezuela's declaration of independence in 1811. However, the comprehensive corpus of anthropological work on the aftereffects and afterlives of colonisation and independence in Asia and Africa (see: Bertelsen, 2016; King and Wilder, 2003; Van Bremen and Simizu, 1999; among many others)—and here, we must acknowledge

[6] Fortunately for the discipline but rather less so for Leach—then a beleaguered PhD student—all of his fieldnotes and photographs were lost during his hasty exit necessitated by the Japanese invasion of Burma (Myanmar), thus forcing his hand with regard to the historical approach: Leach turned to archives to rebuild his research on the Kachin and Shan, and in doing so was able to see how power had shifted between the groups over time.

anthropology's role in colonial processes (Asad, 1973)—clearly show how entrenched these forms of power and organisation are, and it is against this background that in this thesis, I turn my attention to how they manifest centuries after the end of official colonisation, with a particular focus on the experiences of global capitalism within Latin America.

Despite the field's intimate connections with and ardent critiques of late-stage capitalism and neoliberal systems—both of which hinge on markets and consumption—modernity/coloniality has not been applied to many studies of contemporary consumption practices. It is perhaps not surprising that the majority of studies that approach consumption from a modernity/coloniality perspective are concerned with food cultures, given that such cultures represent cultural practices incorporated into the body through consumption. Furthermore, much of this literature focuses on the ways in which local practices or ingredients are mixed (or otherwise) with European-influenced cuisines.[7] The geographer Zilkia Janer has applied modernity/coloniality to an understanding of New World food cultures and the ongoing hegemony of French cooking, against which other cuisines are still measured. Janer shows how epistemological hierarchies manifest even in 'fusion' cuisine; Caribbean ingredients can be added to a French dish, or a French technique used for a Caribbean dish, but Caribbean techniques are never used to make a French dish. 'In both cases,' she writes, 'the Caribbean is valued for its raw nature while its culture is consistently undervalued' (2007, p. 402). The sociologist Karen Wilkes (2020) has observed the same pattern in the context of high-end luxury Caribbean resorts, whereby European cuisines are presented as superior, and even when local Caribbean foods are promoted, European food celebrities are frequently used in promotions to convey a legitimacy that such local food is understood to be independently lacking. Sarah

[7] Although my focus in this section is food *cultures*, there is a growing body of literature on the coloniality of food and nutrition that emphasises the long-term health consequences of colonised food systems and intersects with discussions on food sovereignty. For an overview, see Cuj, et al. (2020).

Kollnig's (2020) exploration of middle-class food practices in Cochabamba (Bolivia's 'food capital') brings modernity/coloniality into dialogue with the Bourdieusian concepts of habitus, taste, and distinction. Kollnig argues that there is a 'coloniality of taste': The incredibly selective appropriation of local Indigenous cultures and food practices into colonising powers' food practices has served to distinguish between social (understood also as racial) classes, which are themselves the result of colonial power relations. These findings mirror those found in the work of anthropologist Maria Elena García (2013, 2021), who has unveiled the power asymmetries inherent in urban Peru's recent gastronomic boom, showing the continued metaphorical and physical violence faced by both Indigenous Andeans and the non-humans who form part of this food system, but remain low in the hierarchy of actors. As I hope to make it clear throughout this thesis, this 'coloniality of taste' is also evident in the case of Brazilian specialty coffee consumption; the historical context of colonialism and its relation to coffee, as well as the ongoing 'allure of the foreign' and coloniality of taste, is discussed in depth in the following chapter.

The application of modernity/coloniality to questions of taste in the context of Global Southern consumption in general and Brazilian specialty coffee consumption in particular allows one to consider these experiences not as a deviation from a hegemonic norm of consumption but rather as multiple and simultaneously arising forms of consumption. This in itself is not a new orientation, inasmuch as multiple modes and meanings of consumption have been recognised in studies of globalisation ever since anthropologists first turned their eyes to this problem (see Miller, 1995, 1997), but this approach enables us to better trace questions of power and influence. Throughout this thesis, I will demonstrate Brazilian ways of 'doing' specialty coffee that do not inform the 'orthodox' specialty coffee culture—in much the same way as Caribbean food cultures do not influence the French—and how a transnational consumer culture is not required to be co-produced equally by all participants.

I will take the time here to note that my engagement with modernity/coloniality has shaped some of the language in this thesis—my choice to use the terms 'Global South' and 'Global North.' As the leading modernity/coloniality scholar Walter Mignolo has stated, the concept of the 'Global South' is less an attempt to describe specific geographies than it is 'a metaphor that indicates regions of the world at the receiving end of globalisation and suffering the consequences' and 'the places on the planet that endured the experience of coloniality' (2011, p. 185). These are terms that have some inherent limitations, and they have frequently been criticized for the ease with which one can collapse the diversity and complexity of colonial experience between nations. Nevertheless, anthropologists have observed certain historical affinities and contemporary commonalities woven throughout the Global South, and these are, in the context of the present project that entails a close look at coffee, salient: countries in the Global South share contact with colonialism (and neocolonialism), extractive enterprises, economic and social marginalization, asymmetric dependence, and uneven incorporation into global consumer economies. I thus choose to use the Global South/North as my preferred terminology, following Mehita Iqani, who deems it to be an imperfect choice but the best way to employ 'an affirming vocabulary that does not depart only from a position of deficiency' and serves as 'the most fertile term available for the description of what has otherwise been named the "underdeveloped", "developing", "postcolonial", "third", and "non-western world"' (2016, p. 3).

Bringing a modernity/coloniality approach to the study of consumption creates space for critical engagement with globalisation and the violence of capitalism. To think about specialty coffee within a modernity/coloniality framework is to consider how specialty coffee as a commodity, and as an entanglement of histories, meanings, representations, practices, and the senses, can both reveal and perpetuate specific power dynamics and the ways in which its consumption can be linked to specific ideas of the past and future, to troubles and aspirations.

### 1.4.2 (ETHICAL) CONSUMPTION IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Although there is a growing body of literature on consumption in the Global South, very little of it concerns ethical consumption. The notion of moral geographies of consumption, as understood in both human geography and anthropology, examines how the movement of goods and materials connects both spatially and socially (in either real or imagined ways) all those who interact with a product over the course of its life, and the ways in which the potential impacts of production and consumption are imagined and negotiated. There are two broad strands of research in the contemporary literature: networks of localised consumption and, on a larger scale, North–South relations. That there is a dearth of literature on ethical consumption beliefs and networks in the Global South reveals a number of preconceptions about who consumes what and where they consume it. It also reveals the gap that this present study is intended to address by probing the ways in which the geographies of specialty coffee are understood differently throughout its commodity-specific consumer culture, based on the specific geographic, political, and economic contexts of consumers.

Scholarly work on local consumption networks and activism frames this form of consumption as a directly social act that tangibly and immediately links persons, materials, and spaces (Counihan, 2019; Ho, 2020; Weiss, 2012). This is frequently contrasted with the alienation that occurs within globalised supply chains (Mincyte and Dobernig, 2016), particularly in the context of industrialised food (Nonini, 2013), and is framed as an act of resistance to capitalism (Mares and Peña, 2010). The literature on North–South ethical relations between producer and consumer primarily advances questions pertaining to the imagined 'other' and 'caring at a distance' as a performance of responsibility and sustainability that is orientated along axes that foreground ideals of conservation and justice (Carrier and Luetchford, 2015; Dolan, 2007; Eli et al., 2016; Silk, 1998; Trentmann, 2016). This literature almost unilaterally proceeds from the assumption that goods are produced in the Global South and consumed in the North.

Coffee has been studied extensively within these North–South moral geographies, largely due to coffee's links with Fair Trade programmes (Fischer et al., 2020; Fridell 2007; Jaffee and Howard, 2010, 2016; Luetchford, 2008; Lyon, 2006, 2018; West, 2012). Bob Doherty et al. (2013) has written that in the extant research into fair trade and ethical consumption practices, the area that has seen the least amount of interest 'has to be the producers,' about whom there has been 'a lack of rigorous research' (p. 181). I contend, however, that even more conspicuous by its absence in the literature is an understanding of consumers in the Global South. My work is thus removed from other studies of coffee, which share an assumption of a distant consumer who is participating in an 'ethics of care,' whereby they strive to show that they care passionately about producers, albeit from another country, culture, or even hemisphere, acting within neoliberal consumer-citizen ideologies, and their consumption can be thought of as a proxy for political engagement (Smith, 1998). In the case of the *apaixonados*, the geographical and social separation between the end consumer and the site of agricultural production has been collapsed and condensed, but there is still ample space for moral concerns and imaginings.

As I will show, in many ways, specialty coffee in São Paulo is consumed in a more localised manner than elsewhere, in that it is almost exclusively sourced from areas within the country, and not infrequently from farmers known personally to the roasters, baristas, and even customers, which also puts Brazilian coffee squarely in the realm of Southern production and consumption. Furthermore, specialty coffee in São Paulo is often explicitly linked by *apaixonados* with ideals of moral and ethical consumption. Most *apaixonados* work tirelessly to promote the virtues of specialty coffee among their co-workers, friends, and families—actions that not only increase the sensory pleasure of the coffee itself (by promoting the consumption of higher-quality coffee) but are also moral in nature: By paying more than the commodity price for coffee and extolling agricultural producers, *apaixonados* participate in a discourse of ethical

consumerism; they feel that they can right historical injustices, allow others in their unequal society to advance, and take better environmental care of their natural heritage.

Given the paucity of literature on ethical consumerism in the Global South and the preponderance of studies that emphasise consumer networks of care that place the South as their object, one might be forgiven for thinking that it is a place that it is cared about and for by others, but is not itself a place in which caring occurs. My examination of how networks of ethical consumption function within, across, and beyond the South—as viewed from the vantage point of the South—thus situates this research within a small but emergent body of work that is engaging with Nicky Gregson's and Raihana Ferdous's (2015) call for a research agenda that includes the middle classes and other active consumers of the Global South in consumption studies. This approach challenges the status quo in which 'ethical consumption in the global South is under-researched and under-theorized, despite the fact that the burgeoning middle classes within the so-called emerging economies are playing an increasingly significant role in the global politics of consumption' (Crang and Hughes, 2015, p. 132). As I engage with the ethical consumption literature through the prism of ethnographic evidence, my primary aim is to complicate the dominant spatial imaginings and theorising of consumption that posits a distant, producing 'other' in the Global South and a Northern-based consumer who participates in 'caring at a distance' (Silk, 1998)—a theorisation that derives from the way in which Northern consumption is structured. The moralities and geographies of specialty coffee consumption form the bedrock of Chapters 4 and 5.

The current state of research on within-South consumption and moral geographies reflects the socioeconomic disparities that have come to characterise the hemisphere. There is a growing body of literature than examines the consumption decisions of the elite (Badaró, 2020; Diniz, 2014; Sharda and Bhat, 2018), particularly in relation to the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), while some scholars have looked at the consumption habits of

the marginalised and disadvantaged within the Global South, particularly the urban poor (Chipp et al., 2016; Hoelle, 2017; Pinheiro-Machado, 2018). However, by far the majority of Southern consumption literature—and the strand that is most relevant to this study—relates to the growing 'global middle classes,' or rather, those populations that have historically been low-income and have recently ascended to more stable economic positions, and whose increasing spending power (it is hoped) will contribute to ongoing consumption-driven economic growth. Nevertheless, middle-class consumers in emerging economies have begun to complicate research into ethical consumption; there is often a higher cost associated with such goods (due to the higher cost of producing them), and therefore ethical consumption is 'often considered to be a luxury available only to wealthy people and rich countries' (Guarín and Knorringa, 2014, p. 158). Now that ever more people in ever more countries are able to afford higher-priced goods, it is likely that the landscape of ethical consumption will shift. As Cheryl McEwan, et al. (2015) have pointed out, however, much of the current discussion on these new middle classes is missing 'an understanding of how ethical interpretations and behaviour differ in various consumer markets around the world' (p. 233). Furthermore, Rakesh Kochhar (2020) has noted that 'even those newly minted as middle class enjoy a standard of living that is modest by Western norms,' and so it may come to pass that ethical consumption in the Global South is linked to different goods or purchasing acts than might be the case for those in the Global North who retain an even higher level of purchasing power (p. 16).

It is not obvious that consumers in the South should (or will) care for the same populations and problems in the same way and through the same products as consumers and economies in the North, who have shaped the dominant ethical trade discourse through programmes such as Fair Trade. In their analysis of Fair Trade consumers in the United States and Canada, Ian Hussey and Joe Curnow (2013) have shown that the Northern consumers' desire to alleviate poverty—and belief that they Northern are the ones who *should* do it, typically through

purchasing (known as the 'helping imperative')—is 'built upon and reinscribes colonial ideal of progress and development rooted in assumptions of evolutionary time and the denial of coevalness of producers' (p. 59). This particular ethical orientation is typically accompanied by a homogenised and essentialised view of the Global South as a place where everything remains unchangingly bad, and that cannot change by itself. The ethical considerations that inform consumer preferences, choices, and practices will naturally change, depending on one's standpoint. An example of this truism in the present thesis is the *apaixonados*, who, by dint of living in the Global South, naturally have a radically different relationship to it and understanding of what it is, what changes (in any) should be made, and how and by whom this might be done.

The extant literature on ethical consumption in the Global South has a strong socio-environmental bent and an emphasis on 'sustainable consumption'—the consumption of goods with a minimum of impact on the environment. In this vein, Tomas Ariztia et al. (2014) have explored the institutional contexts of consumption in Brazil and the ways in which the state has engaged with and supported ethical consumption. They identified particular environmental measures that have been implemented such as encouraging recycling and the incorporation of environmental issues into public administration as key to the ongoing development of ethical consumption in Brazil. In their otherwise excellent article on the differences between discourses on and everyday practice of sustainability, the Brazilian anthropologists Livia Barbosa and Leticia Veloso (2014) equated 'sustainable consumption' and 'responsible consumption,' without further interrogation of how these labels might intersect with ethics and how these definitions are formed. This focus on the environmental impacts of rising Southern consumption may simply reflect anxieties around the probable or potential climactic and environmental effects, if Southern consumers start to consume at the rate and style of their Northern counterparts. Ethical consumption—considered as a set of consumption practices

and decisions that are shaped by social values and the principles of responsibility and morals—is contingent upon local expressions and definitions of relevant values, principles, and local problems; they are, in sum, deeply embedded in both culture and place.

### 1.4.3 PASSIONATE LABOUR AND ASPIRATION

The single strongest link that tied together the *apaixonados*, who were otherwise a diverse group of people, was their *paixão*, their passion for specialty coffee. My discussions of the labour *apaixonados* perform is inclusive of both passionate 'work' (i.e., paid labour) and passionate 'consumption,' and both are held to be forms of labour. I consider consumption to be passionate labour because these coffee consumers are active co-creators of the specialty community; they organise events, volunteer in shops, and connect online, developing and forging real emotional and social connections with and among others, based on a shared interest in coffee. Many *apaixonados* could be classed as 'prosumers,' given that their production and consumption is interrelated. This can occur straightforwardly (such as by purchasing coffee and brewing it at home), but also in ways that intersect more abstractly, such as by providing (unpaid) labour in the form of active digital marketing and content for coffee companies. Passionate consumption, then, becomes a form of 'conspicuous leisure'—leisure that is 'imbued with knowledge and productivity in the same spirit as work' (Currid-Halkett, 2017, p. 20).

Passionate work—often summarised by the maxim 'do what you love'—can be seen as a form of 'creationist capitalism,' whereby work and play blend into each other and 'labour is understood in terms of creativity, so that production is understood as creation' (Boellstorff, 2008, p. 206). If one can do what one loves, individual fulfilment and self-actualisation are foregrounded (Tokumitsu, 2015); pleasure becomes the criterion upon which success at work is measured, rather than advancement or economic or social stability, while this approach also complicates solidarity networks by making it harder to trace class-based linkages (Sandoval, 2017). Although this phenomenon is often represented positively in popular and media

accounts, it does have a 'dark side,' in that it can be used to shield exploitative and unequal workplaces and mask the need for structural change, inasmuch as the onus falls on the individual to evince sufficient passion to overcome obstacles (Duffy, 2017). In popular and self-help literature, passionate labour has traditionally been associated with positive values of self-fulfilment and actualisation (James, 2019; Jobs, 2005; Parkin, 2016), but it has become a point of engagement for labour scholars to approach these values in the context of a critical reflection on neoliberal ideologies. Passionate labour intersects with other theorisations of new forms of labour such as aspirational (Duffy, 2016, 2017), hope (Kuehn and Corrigan, 2013), venture (Neff, 2012), and visibility (Abidin, 2016), to name but a few, but my focus lies on passion because it emphasises personal agency and motivations, rather than end goals or outcomes, and is not necessarily tied to any specific industries.

In their studies of professional work and passion, social scientists have primarily been concerned with the passionate work that takes place in creative industries; I argue, however, that it is also useful to examine the geopolitics of these industries' countries of origin and who is portrayed as partaking in them. In an important rejoinder to the geographic focus on the Global North within studies of passionate labour, the sociologists Ana Alacovska and Rosalind Gill have critiqued the fact that 'creative labour studies focus almost exclusively on Euro-American metropolitan "creative hubs" and hence the creative worker they theorize is typically white, middle-class, urban and overwhelmingly male' (2019, p. 195). The authors offer a refinement of the theory that underpins labour studies, rather than considering a shift in geographies to be an end in itself, and warn against labour policy solutions that are drawn from drastically different sociopolitical contexts, and their uncritical deployment in emerging economies whose creative industries may be even more precarious than those in the Global North, as well as more serious labour abuses that have the potential to be obscured through the discourse of passionate labour. In this vein, there has been a trickle of recent work that has critically explored

passionate and creative labour outside the Global North. In the same volume curated by Alacovska and Gill, media scholar Mehita Iqani (2019) shows how the labour of South African social media influencers is similar in form to that of influencers in the Global North—and, crucially, is also spoken about in terms of passion and love—but needs to be read with reference to specific local histories and contexts. Local race and economic disparities in South Africa are particularly salient to the context in question because they intersect with and shape the ideas of belonging, citizenship, and aspiration that are enacted by the influencers. Such racial and economic disparities should not be overlooked in studies of Brazil, which has historically been characterised by extreme inequalities along these lines.

The ethnomusicologist Shannon Garland (2021) has written about the 'love' practiced among musicians in São Paulo, which she has described as an affective, animating force for production that is deployed in response to a pervasive belief that São Paulo—whose spatial and material conditions are tied to racialised class divisions—is devoid of a sense of love. The networks of musicians with whom Garland has worked invoke love as a positive force, engage in passionate labour, and see developing meaningful work-lives as a way to subvert São Paulo's supposed lack of love. However, Garland argues persuasively that these 'love-based' activities and movements are largely spearheaded by artists from middle-class backgrounds, and do not substantively engage with any of the underlying factors that have contributed to structures of social conflict and alienation within the city, even though it is these very structures that have produced this putative lack of and desire for more love.

Outside the explicitly creative industries, there has been a preponderance of literature on the passionate labour ethos to be found among start-ups and entrepreneurship in Silicon Valley, but Hemangini Gupta (2019a) has traced how these 'discourses travel transnationally to disempower entry-level workers' on the opposite side of the globe who are the unseen labour force that sustains start-up capitalism (p. 297). Gupta (2019b) has further drawn out the

embodiment of new forms of affective labour among female start-up employees in Bangalore, represented by a desire to 'immerse oneself in work as a pleasurable experience' and function as a 'celebrated work-loving citizen' (p. 77). Workplace team-building and camaraderie exercises (e.g., group lunches, bowling excursions) that were new to these women workers led to affective bonds between workers and managers and cultivated a personal emotional investment in company performance, but as has been shown to be the case elsewhere, these also served to obfuscate internal hierarchies and highlight the precarious nature of start-up work.

Despite their different workplace and geographical contexts, these discourses and analyses of passionate labour—constituted through either paid or volunteer work and consumption—share a relationship between passion and aspiration. I draw on Solava Ibrahim's definition of aspiration as 'hopes or ambitions to achieve something' (2011, p. 3), with the understanding that the 'something' to which one aspires is necessarily culturally contingent and situated. This, taken together with Arjun Appadurai's (2004) theorising on the more holistic 'capacity to aspire'—i.e., the ability to develop both aspirations and the strategies needed to move towards the realisation of such aspirations—clearly reveals the temporal and cultural spread of aspirations, inasmuch as they have a future orientation (they are a potentiality to be realised in the future), yet are grounded in one's past history and context, which informs what one aspires to. Indeed, Appadurai sees an uneven distribution of this capacity to aspire, whereby 'the more privileged in any society simply have used the map of its norms to explore the future more frequently and more realistically,' while retaining this knowledge among themselves, disincentivised to share it across class divisions (2004, p. 69).

Anthropological approaches to aspiration are intimately tied to work on development and capacity-building, and thereby orientated towards an end goal of upwards social mobility. However, study after study has shown, in the words of development geographer Sonja Marzi,

that 'high aspirations alone are not sufficient drivers of upward social mobility as young people are embedded in their social and cultural context and enabled or constrained by their socioeconomic conditions' (2016, p. 112). To better understand the tensions between how aspirations are formed and acted upon, I turn to Edward Fischer's concept of 'opportunity structures,' which are 'the social norms, legal regulations, and market entry mechanisms that delimit, or facilitate, certain behaviors and aspirations' (2014, p. 6). In other words, while there is no innate or cognitive limit to individual human aspiration, what one aspires to and how one seeks to achieve the fulfilment of that aspiration are necessarily shaped—in ways both positive and negative—through cultural systems. In addition to opportunity structures, Fischer and his colleagues have developed the idea of 'frustrated freedoms' (Victor et al., 2013; Fischer, 2014)—what occurs when an individual possesses greater motivation and agency than opportunity structures allow to be realised. 'In such a condition,' writes Fischer, 'opportunity and resource deficits frustrate the perceived capacity to successfully make the decisions and choices that they believe would enhance their wellbeing' (2014, p. 156). Victor et al.'s (2013) work in Mozambique shows that increases in material resources raise wellbeing until a particular tipping point, which the team identified as when an individual begins to meet the boundaries of the relevant opportunity structures. After this point, continued increases in agency become merely theoretical, in that opportunity structures can stymie individuals' ability to realise aspirations, and they will become aware of these constraints, where they may not have been before.

In counterpoint to the ways in which coffee flows out of Brazil and has done for centuries, I look at the tensions between immaterial knowledge and material practices through the forms in which global specialty coffee culture manifests. *Apaixonados* have found themselves in a context in which information about global specialty coffee is easy to access over the Internet, and therefore form part of an idealised and imagined mode of consumption in which national

borders are porous for trends, styles, and indirect knowledge, but are almost completely blocked for the material of coffee itself. This aspect of my work contributes to recent research into consumers that indicates that rather than building a genuine global consumer community, digital and other connections can serve to generate feelings of frustration and isolation among those whose citizenship and location limits their access to certain consumer goods, and that the global reach of the Internet is not always experienced as providing boundless emancipatory possibility (Bardhi and Eckhart, 2017; Lingel, 2020; Spyer, 2017). In this sense, the *apaixonados*' location within their relevant opportunity structures—structures constituted through modernity/coloniality and Brazil's role in furnishing the world with the raw coffee product—leads to frustrated consumer freedom. *Apaixonados* are aware of coffee styles, expectations, and norms outside of Brazil, and are increasingly frustrated and angry that they do not have equal access to the orthodox specialty coffee community and their aspirational ways of being. I employ the term 'orthodox specialty community' in order to avoid the assumption that foreign ways of doing specialty coffee are 'dominant,' precisely because due to the specific limitations that characterise this opportunity structure, it is not the dominant mode of practice in the day-to-day lives of *apaixonados*, yet remains the mode of practice against which their local variant is compared.

This returns us to passion and passionate labour, which I consider to be a technology of aspiration. Passion is invoked as part of the capacity to aspire and as a means of driving one to realise such aspirations. This is the case with Wellington. When I arrived in São Paulo, he had only recently moved to the city from the northeast of Brazil, and used his passion for coffee to cultivate a new friendship network and thus become socially established in the city, simply through the act of spending time in coffee shops. The history of internal migration from the Brazilian northeast to São Paulo is complicated, and negative stereotypes abound of these migrants as poor, uneducated, and backwards (Serrão, 2020), but Wellington's regular

appearance as a customer in high-end coffee shops and demonstration of good coffee taste helped him to bypass certain elements of regional prejudice and settle into the city. Passion can even serve to give shape to aspiration in the first place, as was the case with Cauã, who had worked as a lawyer but was obsessed with coffee and spent all his free time taking coffee courses. When he realised that his passion for coffee was greater than his interest in remaining a lawyer, he quit his professional job and started a coffee shop—an aspiration that revealed his preference for a life in which he could fulfil his passions, rather than one of upward class mobility. As I will demonstrate throughout this thesis, passion was repeatedly invoked as a motivating force that had the potential to help individual *apaixonados* transcend limits in opportunity structures; this force acted, however, at the individual level, and was not seen to be applicable in any organised or systemic way to challenging societal limitations and frictions. This focus on the connection between passion and aspiration provides an avenue for greater engagement with aspirational outcomes. Such outcomes are not necessarily identical to upward social mobility as measured in economic terms—a perception that has dominated academic work on aspiration—but are rather more related to more subjective measures. This was certainly the case with Cauã, who elected to participate in a form of passionate labour, fully aware that it was far more unstable and low-paying than his job as a corporate lawyer, and that he was not participating in standard forms of social aspiration, when defined economically. By means of an ethnographic engagement with avid consumers of specialty coffee, this thesis contributes to broader debates about consumer cultures in the Global South and demonstrates how commodity-specific consumer cultures such as specialty coffee are entangled with larger political and economic issues, including mobility and aspiration, the geopolitics of production and consumption, and shifting divides between centre and periphery.

## 1.5 METHODOLOGY

### 1.5.1 POSITIONALITY: INDUSTRY-INSIDER ETHNOGRAPHY

During the summer of 2007, I took what I thought would be a temporary job as a barista at a specialty café that had recently opened in my hometown in the United States, and that was the first wholesale account of an esteemed Portland, Oregon-based specialty roaster. That summer job lasted into the autumn and then through to the next year, and before I knew it, I had been working professionally in some capacity with specialty coffee for over a decade. As a barista, but also as a barista trainer and café manager, before moving into marketing and eventually, coffee journalism.

I propose that my professional background within the coffee industry complicates my position as an 'insider' in the context of my fieldwork in the Brazilian specialty coffee industry, and contributes to the growing discussion on new conceptual avenues for thinking about methodologies and identities within the changing landscape of scholarship. I know the technical terms and the jargon used in the coffee industry; I know how to sample, assess, and grade coffee; and, if I might be so bold, I can brew with the best of them. Given that this ethnography considers specialty coffee as a transnational, global industry, I am almost as much of an 'insider' as it is possible to be.

In her 1987 essay 'The Limits of Auto-Anthropology,' Marilyn Strathern examined common assumptions about the benefits of anthropology that is carried out in a community shared between researcher and participants, and as she does so, she captures quite neatly some of the more common assumptions about who insiders are and how 'insider-ness' is determined. Strathern stated that one such common assumption is that 'as ethnographers, anthropologists on familiar terrain will achieve a greater understanding than elsewhere, because they do not have to surmount linguistic and cultural barriers…' (p. 17). I cannot claim in good faith that my ethnography reaches a 'greater understanding' than that of someone without my

professional experience; merely that my professional positionality has opened doors and brought to light certain things that would not necessarily have been seen by others. By the same token, my positionality necessarily made it harder to see other things. Furthermore, although I am on 'familiar terrain' with the specialty coffee culture I explore, there were still linguistic and cultural barriers that I, as a non-Brazilian who speaks Portuguese as a second language, was forced to surmount. In this way, industry-insider ethnography—conducted in my case in a nation that is not my own, but in a transnational consumer culture that is—generates the challenges and advantages of both traditionally conceived ethnographic work and 'insider' work.

Of course, a host of practical and analytical concerns emerge when a researcher conducts fieldwork in a culture with which she is familiar. My participants argued that they were part of the global specialty coffee culture, which clearly and explicitly rendered me part of that shared culture. The sociologist Paul Hodkinson, who studies youth culture and the 'goth' sub-culture, has written that an insider is someone who possesses at least some 'initial subjective proximity,' and according to this perspective, I would certainly qualify as an insider (2005, p. 131). These approaches, however, generally assume that such a proximity is based on a shared ethnic or geographic heritage and background, and not, as in my case—and that of a growing chorus of researchers—professional identity.

My professional background gave me some obvious practical advantages in the course of my fieldwork, primarily in terms of access. It has been extensively documented in the literature on insider ethnography that 'insiders' are more likely than 'outsiders' to have or be granted initial access to some spaces and populations. In his eloquent research into football hooligans in England, Gary Armstrong (1998) noted that despite being a university researcher, the fact that he had grown up in the same town and in the same socioeconomic bracket as the participants in his study afforded him greater access and trust, and that this acceptance came earlier in his

research, compared to that of other researchers investigating hooliganism who were tended to approach the question in terms of control—how to mitigate the phenomenon and how to restore public order. Armstrong's personal familiarity with the population in question and the anthropological approach he employed—that of understanding, rather than interventionism—created a milieu of trust. Armstrong wrote that 'the task of the researcher must always be to "fit in" and act as naturally as possible [because in] prolonged ethnography the subjects realise the researcher is different, recognise this distinction, and react accordingly' (ibid, p. 17). I found that it was precisely these moments of difference and distinction between me and those with whom I shared so much that proved most enlightening.

My observations of the research participants were frequently informed by my position as a staff writer for the specialty coffee magazine *Standart* because throughout the period of my fieldwork in Brazil, I was invited in my dual capacity as a coffee researcher and journalist to cover various coffee-related events that I would have struggled to access without a press pass. Similarly, the familiarity with barista competition judging formats that I have gained thanks to my academic work (Parrish, 2015, 2018, 2020), my former professional position on the staff body of World Coffee Events—the international organising body for most coffee competitions—and my coffee-specific sensory training meant that I received a rare invitation to judge at the 2017 Brazilian Barista Championship, as well as the opportunity to help the Brazilian team prepare for the 2019 World Barista Championship. To be sure, I could have attended these championships as a general member of the audience without having this level of professional expertise, and in fact, I attended other championships and competitions that took place during the period of research in the capacity of a spectator, given that the audience is also a useful vantage point for participant observation. But, however valuable these experiences were, they did not equal the experience of being there on the stage with the competitors, tasting their drinks as they made them, and accompanying them backstage to the cloistered debriefing

room; opportunities such as these, both sensory and observational, enabled significantly more *participation* observation than would be afforded to someone who did not possess the technological and sensory knowledge that I have cultivated throughout my years working with coffee. In noting these thoughts, I hope to convey that this project and this thesis would be profoundly different, had it been produced by someone without my professional background.

Of course, there are crucial differences between my experiences and those of the participants with whom I worked, even when we share similar professional identities. Intersectional feminist critiques of early feminist ethnography have made it clear that if one assumes an understanding of experience that is based on a single identity marker, there is a danger that many of the complexities of a given population's experiences will be erased (Naples, 2003; Schrock, 2013). Despite the fact that I shared a technical and sensory knowledge of coffee with my participants, many of our social experiences with coffee were radically different, and these divergences proved particularly illuminating. Identities are multifaceted and layered, and I fully recognise that my status as an American citizen and—what is even more relevant to this research project—as part of the 'orthodox' specialty coffee culture that will be explored throughout this thesis informed how the participants interacted with me. At times, it was more difficult for me to access information on unsavoury aspects of coffee life that are unfortunately still present in Brazil (labour exploitation on farms, for instance) because the participants would express the hope that I would return home and then use my media platforms to act as a sort of spokeswoman for Brazilian coffee, and help them to upend the persistent negative stereotypes about the Brazilian coffee industry.

My prior experience and comfort with the material, sensory, and technical practices of coffee can also be considered a disadvantage in that many of those with whom I worked were still at the beginning of their careers or journeys in coffee and would spend a great deal of time trying to enhance their knowledge and skills. It would undoubtedly have been illuminating and

rewarding to have been able to enter the field as an outsider, learning about coffee from (literally) the ground up, alongside the participants; such an approach would have opened windows and yielded insights which, as it happened, remained off limits and beyond my vision. I sought to address this shortcoming directly in two ways. Firstly, I assisted at barista training courses wherever possible to observe learning process and standards in order to understand what was taught and how; although I could not learn the material alongside the students, I could learn about *how* and *what* they learned. Secondly, although I was admittedly familiar with many aspects of coffee in theory, I had no previous hands-on experience with roasting or agricultural production, which meant that I was able to hand myself over to the experts at Wolff Coffee Roasters, who taught me the fundamentals of roasting (and kindly congratulated me every time I avoided burning anything), and to set myself the task of appreciating and imbibing the profound knowledge of the farmers I met, who taught me so much about the agriculture of coffee.

The analytic and methodological possibilities of industry-insider ethnography are immense; even if the insider can be too close to the matter at hand, this lack of distance is frequently balanced by a necessary critical distance. The literature on how to conduct industry-insider is still expanding, and extant studies tend to be organisational in focus, focusing on 'practitioner researchers' (Walsh, 2011, p. 38) who seek to perform applied outcomes and interventions, conducted within their own sites of work (Teusner, 2016). A number of volumes and methodological handbooks have been published on how to conduct such forms of workplace-insider research, in essence aimed at 'people doing research at their own sites of work' (Costley et al., 2010, xviii). The anthropologist David Mosse has written about and practiced extensively at the boundaries of anthropology, development, and public policy (2006, 2011a, 2011b), openly charting how his ethnographic work and outputs have caused friction and interpersonal drama among his colleagues. It is from this form of specific, organisational workplace

ethnography that my industry-insider ethnography differs: I have not conducted an ethnography of the *work practices* that subsume coffee. Instead, a great part of the background knowledge that I employed to frame and complete my study is practice-based and drawn from my own work history; perhaps it could be usefully compared to work on embodied and bodily practices written by practitioner-scholars of dance and sport (Brownell, 2006; Crawley, 2020; Potter, 2008). It would also be possible to draw parallels with the work of the anthropologist Marion Demossier, whose work on wine cultures is informed by her previous professional background in the wine industry, which has allowed her to rapidly move beyond 'the superficiality of everyday conversation' when asking technical questions about wine and conversing with its drinkers (2010, p. 10). In contrast to the strand of workplace ethnography that consists of applied interventions, my industry-insider ethnography is primarily concerned with that classical anthropological outcome, theoretical interpretation.

Although I conducted research in numerous workplaces, I did so with the intention of learning how certain production spaces influenced the wider coffee-consumption culture in São Paulo; I did not pursue an explicit agenda of observing areas such as internal power struggles or policy negotiations. In this vein, my industry-insider ethnographic work is similar to that of the design anthropology work of Ian Ewart (2011, 2013) who, having trained and practiced as an engineer, then turned his sights to traditional bridge-building practices in Borneo in order to query where and what 'production' is. The practice-based knowledge of bridges that Ewart gained due to his work identity and experience as engineer gave him access to forms of access and participation that would not have been available to researchers without such a background; it is in this way that my work as a barista has influenced this thesis, although my focus has been on the overlaps between production and consumption.

Given the current economic landscape, which is likely to limit student trajectories and funding in the near future, I believe that we will see a greater shift towards the intersection of pre-

existing professional and academic identities, and this shift makes it increasingly necessary to elaborate what it means in methodological and epistemological terms in order to robustly understand how researchers' subjectivities and life histories shape both ethnographic research and ethnography as output. That students are facing a new economic landscape is not exactly a new phenomenon, and it has been understood for some time to contribute to the development of insider ethnography; as Anthony Jackson noted in his introduction to the *Anthropology at Home*, the first comprehensive collection on insider ethnography (which, notably, considers 'home' in a geographic or ethnic sense, and in which professional identities are absent): 'Some of the other factors affecting anthropological research recently that pull one "home" are:

> 1.Decreased funding.
> 2. Increased student numbers
> [...]
> 6. The ease of access to one's own society and a reduction of the time and money needed to "enter" the field.
>
> (1987, p. 9)

I did not initially become a barista (or continue to work in coffee) for any reason other than economic necessity, even though I eventually came to feel passionately about coffee culture. As an undergraduate, I would leave class in the afternoon and head to a coffee shop, where I would work as a barista until 11 p.m., before returning home to complete my class work, repeating the cycle again the next day. Despite my initial lukewarm attitude, my coffee skills developed because I found the work tolerable and the hours suitable for combining with my studies (and because I could read behind the counter if there were no customers). Students who no longer have to work alongside their studies are becoming rare, and this is particularly true at the postgraduate level, due to changes in funding and scholarships that have affected the social sciences and humanities most of all (Richardson et al., 2009). Professional work and workplace identities are not necessarily a key component of every student's university experience, but given the changing social and economic landscape of student profiles and how this impacts

research opportunities and possibilities, I suggest that it is likely that work identities will influence courses of research more than ever, and researchers should be prepared to theorise accordingly. In light of the lived experiences of, constraints to, and pressures experienced by students and researchers, it is essential for anthropology to understand how the professional identities that exist alongside 'student' and 'anthropologist' shape research trajectories and output, if the field is to be sympathetic to and effective within and for the lives of both participants and practitioners. It is in this vein that I submit this thesis as a contribution to the small but growing discussion that revolves around industry-insider ethnographies that are not conducted within specific institutional or organisational settings, and it is to this end that I offer my reflections and engagement with my professional positionality throughout the text.

#### 1.5.1.1 RELATIONSHIP CONSIDERATIONS WITHIN POSITIONALITY DISCOURSE AND ETHNOGRAPHIC WRITING

I still keep the dog-earned and annotated copy of *Tristes Tropiques* that came into my possession as a young undergraduate anthropology student. I admit to experiencing the naïve thrill that captivates so many people when they read it for the first time, but I have come to feel very differently about it in the intervening years, and I reflect on it quite frequently due to the matter of Dina Lévi-Strauss (Dreyfus). When I accidentally stumbled one day across a note in a journal article alluding to a 1937 exhibition at the Musée de l'Homme that showcased artefacts gathered during the 'Mission Claude et Dina Lévi-Strauss' in Brazil, I was surprised. Who on Earth was this woman who had apparently co-led one of the most important anthropological expeditions of the early 20th century? I flipped back through my copy and found the only mention of this previously unknown wife in the book, when she is introduced as an aside, when the famous Claude informs the reader that she was leaving the expedition due to an eye infection. Even allowing for the remote possibility that Claude had written her out of *Tristes Tropiques* purely in order to heighten the literary effect the isolation and solitude suffered by our intrepid narrator, where was she in the rest of the Lévi-Strauss canon?

I raise my discomfort at the disappearance of Dina Dreyfus as part of a larger and important methodological consideration that concerns how we as ethnographers contend with accompanied fieldwork—fieldwork that we perform when our family is present. In the case of the research that informs this thesis, my partner was resident with me in São Paulo the entire time, simply due to the fact that we could not afford to maintain two households on two different continents. Fieldwork imprinted itself onto and changed the nature of our partnership, beyond the inevitable challenges and growth that naturally resulted from spending a year abroad together; in order to obtain a visa for my partner, it had been necessary for us to get married prior to our arrival in Brazil. Now, in writing, as I balance the many narrative threads and characters that wind their way through this work, and worry about whether I am perpetuating the anthropological problem of the disappearing companion, I can also see that this is an opportunity to reflect on how and when we chose to conceal and exclude—or make present and include—the family members, research participants, and countless others who intersect with our work.

The question of where my partner, Luke, fits into the narrative is particularly salient, in light of the arguments I have made to position this thesis as an example of industry-insider ethnography. Luke also works with specialty coffee, and as the editor of the widely distributed specialty magazine *Standart*, he is a relatively well-known person in the industry. His influence was instrumental in helping me to gain access to a number of spaces where I conducted participant observation to which I might not have otherwise have had recourse: As representatives of *Standart*, we were both able to attend a week-long tour of coffee farms with the 2017 World Coffee Championship winners and the 2017 Cup of Excellence Brazil competition as members of the international press, alongside representatives from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. Luke's own technical proficiency with coffee meant that he was even able to also serve alongside me as a judge at the Brazilian Barista Championship. While I

served as a sensory judge, sitting at the counter in front of the competitors and evaluating their customer service performance and the drinks they made, Luke was able to provide me with a literal difference in point of view; as a technical judge, he stood *behind* the competitors and saw what I could not in terms of how the competitors operated the machinery and prepared the drinks they served. Conversely, his presence and work identity often exerted a more ambivalent impact; on many occasions, people would agree to help me with my research, but wanted something (such as magazine coverage or a publication opportunity) from Luke in exchange.

It is well known that anthropologists must take into consideration the wishes of the participants in our research, such as whether they wish to be anonymised, and think deeply about how and to what extent the research process and written output will impact them, but it is less common to hear an acknowledgement of the importance of addressing the issues raised by the presence of partners and others who accompany us in the course of our field research. Luke has expressed his wish to be excluded from the thesis wherever possible, both to prompt me to maintain narrative clarity and because he is, to put it simply, a private person. Nevertheless, given all that I have written about the importance of the choices we make—both methodological and stylistic—that relate to inclusion and exclusion, I feel that it is necessary to acknowledge here not only his presence and contribution but also why he will be mentioned so infrequently in what follows. Luke accompanied me to a majority of the events described throughout this thesis, but so did many of the most active *apaixonados*, some of whom (for various reasons) are not mentioned in these pages, but rather form a part of my aggregate impression of the Brazilian coffee community. It is necessary to impose boundaries and limitations upon any written work, and one major consideration for this thesis has been to accept a reasonable limitation on the number of people who can be mentioned by name, and to balance depth and variety; ethnographic writing *always* demands of scholars concessions and shortcuts, and one I have made in this thesis is to consciously (and based on mutual agreement) follow the tradition of

narratively 'disappearing' one's spouse or any others who accompany us as fieldworkers. It is my hope that this acknowledgement constitutes a useful recognition of the need to challenge the institutionalised normality of this practice within ethnographic accounts of fieldwork.

'Besides,' Luke told me during one of our conversations about his role in the final text of this work, 'Maybe this will make up for that French lady from the '30s you always get so mad about.'

### 1.5.2 FIELD SITES IN SÃO PAULO

I conducted the primary fieldwork for this thesis over the course of the 12 months I lived in the city of São Paulo (June 2017–July 2018). Given São Paulo's historic connections to coffee—the city could never have developed into the economic powerhouse of Brazil without the coffee trade, nor would it be home to a lively specialty coffee scene today—it was the natural choice for my field site. In a way, I did not even choose São Paulo: The city's social, political, and economic histories, tied as they are to coffee, rendered it the only logical place in which a socially and temporally embedded study such as this could be carried out. São Paulo chose itself.

São Paulo, the capital of the Brazilian state of the same name, was founded by Jesuits in 1558, who chose a site situated at the edge of a plateau that runs inland after rising from a coastal plain (Vidal Luna and Klein, 2018). The city grew steadily in prominence, population, and wealth after the gold rush of the 17th century, due to its location as a waypoint between the shipping port of Santos and the interior mining regions. As coffee cultivation spread southward, the already wealthy and established elite of the region were able to invest heavily in large *fazendas* (plantations), and due to governmental investment in regional infrastructure and the good fortune that the area possesses near-perfect climactic growing conditions for coffee, the southeast region of Brazil in general and São Paulo state in particular quickly developed into Brazil's most prominent coffee zone. The early investment in the construction of a railway

network was particularly important because it enabled the region's coffee to be transported more efficiently to the port of Santos, and from there to consumers across the globe. The history of São Paulo's relationship with coffee is explored in more depth in Chapter 2, 'The Foundations of *Tipo Exportação*.'

The São Paulo of today hosts a population of nearly 13 million people within the city boundaries, with over 23 million living in the metropolitan area. The conurbation of multiple nearby metropolitan regions has created what is known as the *Macrometrópole Paulista*, or the São Paulo Macrometropolis, a megalopolis of over 30 million inhabitants. São Paulo is the largest city in Latin America and the largest in both the southern and western hemispheres. Within Brazil, São Paulo is the contemporary driver of the country's coffee scene—coffee is widely consumed throughout the nation and across all social classes and ethnic groups, but São Paulo has the largest and most developed speciality coffee scene, thereby encompassing domestic, commodity, and speciality coffee—and offers a wealth of deep historical contextualisation with regard to shifts in agricultural and consumptions trends. The literature has to some extent covered coffee-growing operations in the state (Holloway, 2012; Stolcke, 1988), but the linkages between rural production and urban consumption have received insufficient scholarly attention.

Upon my arrival in São Paulo in June 2017, I identified 32 coffee shops that met the criteria to be considered a specialty coffee establishment, according to the SCA guidelines: They serve coffees scored above the 80-point threshold, and are primarily coffee shops—rather than being, for instance, restaurants with high-end coffee programmes (Ward, 2016). Of course, given the scale and scope of the city of São Paulo, these coffee shops were too numerous and too dispersed for me to cover them all in any depth, and the number has increased since then. According to the survey I conducted in 2017, there were 32 specialty coffee shops, or one for every 386,625 inhabitants in São Paulo, and when I conducted a follow-up tally in May 2019, the number

had blossomed to 51 shops that met the criteria for specialty, or one shop per 238,823 inhabitants.[8] Although I eventually circulated through all but three of those initial 32 shops (and through several more that opened over the course of my time in the city), in the end, for practical reasons, I restricted my focus to three: Cupping Café (located in the Vila Madalena neighbourhood), Nano Cafés Especiais (in Bixiga), and Takkø (in Vila Buarque, with a short-lived outpost in Vila Madalena). All were owned by young professionals: Cupping Café by one man (whose girlfriend owned a different coffee shop elsewhere in the city), Nano by a married couple, and Takkø by a triad of friends.




FIGURE 1: MAIN RESEARCH SITES IN SÃO PAULO. WOLFF ROASTERY IN RED.
LEFT TO RIGHT IN PURPLE: CUPPING, TAKKØ, NANO

Cupping Café was a relative newcomer to the São Paulo specialty coffee scene when I arrived, having opened earlier in the year. The Vila Madalena neighbourhood where it is located is a

[8] For comparison, Berlin has 61 shops, as identified by the coffee news platform European Coffee Trip, or one per 58,606 residents.

hip, bohemian, and trendy area, renowned for its colourful street art and a popular destination for young tourists. Indeed, on my first visit to São Paulo in 2011, I opted to stay at a hostel in this neighbourhood, having heard that it was both safe and lively. I selected Cupping Café as suitable for two primary reasons. Firstly, it maintained an explicit focus on consumer education, hosting many open events and tastings. This commitment was even represented in the décor; maps of coffee-growing regions in Brazil adorn the wall by the espresso machine, while the back room—which contains most of the seating—is set up like a museum: artistically lit coffee brewing devices sit recessed into the walls, covered in glass, and accompanied by nearby informational plaques. Secondly, Cupping is located close to Coffee Lab, the longest-established and most well-regarded specialty coffee shop in Brazil, which has received significant international media attention. I thought that Cupping was an excellent representative of the new generation of shops inspired by the work of Coffee Lab's pioneering owner, Isabela Raposeiras, who is often credited with kick-starting São Paulo's specialty coffee scene. Over the course of the year, I attended many educational and social events at Cupping, and even worked intermittently as a barista there, whenever there was a staffing shortage.

Nano Cafés Especiais was my second coffee shop base, and a space that grew in prominence for me over the course of my fieldwork. When Michelle, with whom I worked at Wolff (discussed later in this section), and I discovered that we shared a love of needlework, we began to meet up regularly on Sundays at Nano to sew and chat. Most of the cafés in São Paulo close on Sundays, but Nano—which is located inside Casa Jardim Secreto, an old colonial house now being run as a boutique homeware and clothing shop that sells local, independent designers—stayed open. It is a hub for baristas from other shops on their days off, and accompanied by Michelle's daughter, who would draw and keep us company, and Luiza, an educator at Coffee Lab and avid knitter, I would witness a rotating cast of São Paulo's most caffeinated. Nano might have been small, but it still was common to see representatives from

many coffee shops sitting together, alongside members of the public. The owners of Nano, Robin and Lídia, welcomed their first child just two months after my arrival in São Paulo, and the baby, Amora, was passed around between groups of coffee-loving *paulistanos*[9] who cooed and pinched her cheeks, cheering as she took her first wobbling steps. It was the time I spent loitering and sewing in Nano that afforded me the greatest access into the friendship network of *paulistano* baristas; eventually, I was no longer referred to as 'Sabine *antropóloga*'—Sabine the anthropologist—and instead became 'Sabine *que borda*'—Sabine who embroiders.

Finally, Takkø, was the coffee shop where I spent the most time, coming to develop a particularly close relationship with two of its owners. In part, this was a matter of convenience: It was the closest shop to where I was living for the first six months of fieldwork. Originally named Beluga Café, the owners of Takkø had been sued for copyright infringement by a company that sold potatoes and was also called Beluga, and subsequently picked the name Takkø because, according to one of the owners, it 'sounded cool, and maybe Scandinavian. Also, it's not a word and nothing else is named Takkø. We really didn't want to get sued again.'

When I had just moved into my nearby flat and was beginning to learn my way around the city, Takkø became a reassuring source of comfort, somewhere I could feel secure and do things I know how to do—drink coffee, make small talk with other patrons, and read books. Under the spell of valuing Takkø as a comforting and safe place of respite, it took me months to work up the courage to pop the bubble and confess to the staff and owners why I was really there, having desperately wanted to save one space as free from work and research, somewhere I could be free to simply have a coffee. Takkø was the last of the three main cafés that I officially added into my research, but within days of my confession, one of the owners handed me an

[9] Demonym for residents of the city of São Paulo. Not to be mistaken with *paulistas*, which refers to residents of the Brazilian state of São Paulo.

apron and I donned a silk hair scarf (São Paulo city law stipulates that all foodservice workers must cover their hair with nets. Stylish cafés run the risk of fines by slightly circumventing these regulations and allowing workers to wear beanies, baseball caps, or scarves) and was soon making espresso. Just like in other countries, staff turnover in the hospitality industry is high in Brazil, and they were short a barista that week.

All three cafés shared one important feature: they used coffee from Wolff Coffee Roasters, São Paulo's largest specialty coffee roastery. Nano used exclusively Wolff; Cupping used Wolff, but often featured guest roasters as well; and Takkø's coffee was roasted for them at Wolff, but packaged in Takkø's own branding. Wolff served as a useful nexus in my fieldwork because I was able to visit a number of the farms from which they sourced their coffee, see that coffee at the roastery, and follow it out to where it was sold and consumed in cafés, and even to customers' homes. Wolff had formerly owned its own coffee farm, which had been handed down in the family of Hugo Wolff, the founder and owner of the roastery, but was in the process of selling it when I arrived.

When at Wolff, my main role was to assist the barista-training courses they ran, as well as performing sample roasting and project assessment for the roasting classes. I worked alongside Danilo Lodi (more about him shortly) and the roasters Lucci and Michelle, who graciously did not seem to mind me hovering over their shoulders—although they never hesitated to put me to work when they needed the help. In addition to teaching classes, I helped to seal coffee bags, dragged sacks of green coffee, labelled bags of retail coffee, and packed and stacked boxes, but soon found a niche as the *tiazinha do café*—the 'little coffee aunt.' Everyone was too busy turning green coffee into brown coffee to actually brew a cup of coffee to drink, and so I took this job upon myself and would run between the roasting floor and the administrative offices upstairs, delivering coffee to the staff, then collecting and washing cups, repeating this process several times throughout the day. This role I undertook was not entirely philanthropic; from my coffee-

making station on the mezzanine, I could observe the comings and goings of both the administrative office upstairs and the production floor below, and followed a coffee delivery route that was based on where the most interesting things seemed to be happening.

'Where were you last week, *tiazinha*?' Lucci asked me on one occasion, when I had returned from a lengthy trip to a *fazenda* and was sealing several hundred coffee packages for him. 'I thought we'd die. There wasn't any coffee.'

#### 1.5.2.1 DANILO LODI: THE GATEKEEPER

It is difficult to explain exactly *what* Danilo Lodi does because he does *so much*. Over the course of the year I spent in Brazil, he worked as a roaster, consultant (for baristas, roasting, general coffee knowledge and service, how to run a café, agronomy), teacher, coffee competition judge, coffee competition trainer, and brand ambassador and sales representative for the Milan-based espresso machine manufacturer Dalla Corte, and there were probably some other gigs that neither he nor I can remember. When I asked him to make a list of his employment in that year, he furnished the above list and signed it off with, 'And probably some other stuff.' His work that year took him across most of the Brazilian states, but also to Italy, Korea, Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Ecuador, Spain, Iran, Russia, the USA, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Born to a janitor mother and a taxi-driver father and raised in São Paulo, Danilo taught himself fluent English and Spanish and had a finger on the pulse of all the coffee trends in Brazil and abroad, and, seemingly, a finger in every coffee-flavoured pie.

I first met Danilo in 2015 in Milan, Italy at HOST, a biannual food and beverage tradeshow that is the largest such show in Europe. At the time I was working for an event staffing company that specialised in providing entertainment for coffee trade shows. Danilo was an affable chap who was sporting the black-and-yellow colours of the Dalla Corte brand and frequently emitted a warm laugh. As he was chatting with a colleague of mine, he was briefly introduced to me as

Danilo from São Paulo, and that was that. The interaction was over in less than two minutes, but I happened to recall it shortly after arriving in Brazil for fieldwork, so I found him on Facebook and shot him a message: 'Hey, remember me?' He did not—which was not surprising, given that one meets thousands of people on the trade show circuit—but he nonetheless agreed to go for a coffee on a rainy day in July 2017. We met up outside Isso É Café at Mirante Nove de Julho (I recognised him, but not vice versa) and walked in together, only for him to immediately see his most recent ex-girlfriend and drag me back out of the coffee shop by my arm: 'We've got to find somewhere else!' he pleaded. And so we embarked on a long walk across the neighbourhood to find another coffee shop, sharing an umbrella and fording the torrents of water flooding the streets. By the time we finally found a shop in which to dry ourselves off on the other side of Avenida Paulista, he had offered me a job as his assistant at the roastery and from that day on, I was his sidekick and near-constant companion. We are close friends to this day, but the development of our friendship was inadvertently a strategic coup on my part: It turns out that if you want *anything* done in coffee in São Paulo—and, arguably, anywhere in Brazil—Danilo is your man. As a delegate at another trade show told me, 'He *is* Brazilian coffee.'

It was thanks to my association with Danilo that I was able to integrate myself solidly into the professional arena of coffee in São Paulo. He facilitated my access to Wolff and allowed me to assist at the barista and roasting courses he taught; recommended me as a judge for the 2018 Brazilian Barista Championship; requested me as a translator for the 2018 World Cup Tasters Championship; and hired me to help the Brazilian training and preparation team for the 2019 World Barista Championship. My close association with Danilo and Wolff did entail a number of drawbacks, in that there is rivalry between some of the roasteries in the city; the staff from one roastery, for example, refused to participate in any way in my project on account of my closeness to Wolff and their fear that I would divulge business secrets. On the whole, however,

the professional access that my ties to Danilo provided was outstanding, and a positive addition to my research scope. Over the year, Danilo developed a romantic relationship with barista competitor Martha Grill, and as the three of us grew close, I was integrated into her coffee networks too.

### 1.5.3 FIELD SITES OUTSIDE SÃO PAULO

Although I conducted the majority of my fieldwork within the bounds of São Paulo, I also followed my participants' networks as and when they led outside the city (Figure 2). Likewise, I followed the networks of the material of coffee itself, working backwards from my hub of São Paulo to trace the point of origin of many of the coffees that flowed through Wolff and the participating cafés. I traversed many of the coffee-growing regions of the Brazilian southeast, visiting 20 farms. Some visits to individual farms were quick, but at others I spent several days, and even returned to some. Areas of particular interest were the Alta Mogiana region on the border of the states of São Paulo and Minas Gerais, the Cerrado Mineiro and Mantiqueira de Minas regions in Minas Gerais, and the Montanhas do Espírito Santo and Caparaó regions in Espírito Santo. While exploring the internal power struggles that have defined the competition between these growing regions through history, I visited the interior of the state of Pernambuco in the northeast of Brazil, where I found the overgrown remains of one farm that had been abandoned in the 1940s. Coffee trees were still growing there, hardy and re-wilded descendants of those that had been left so long ago; unpruned and uncultivated, they were memories of the desolation faced by the losers of these fights.

My fieldwork also took me to other locations across Brazil. In Paranapiacaba and Santos (both regions of the greater São Paulo metropolitan area), I followed historical trails of the coffee trade, tracing the route the cargo took from inland growing regions to the port, and then out far beyond to the rest of the world. In Recife (Pernambuco) and Curitiba (Paraná), I met with people who are closely involved in Brazilian-manufactured alternatives to coffee equipment

produced abroad; both of these brewing alternatives are profiled in Chapter 3. Coffee competitions and trade shows led me to Belo Horizonte (Minas Gerais), Venda Nova do Imigrante (Espírito Santo), and Rio de Janeiro (RJ), while the confluence of coffee and politics found me drinking gins and tonic at a radical left-wing hybrid café/bar/sock shop in Brasília (Distrito Federal).

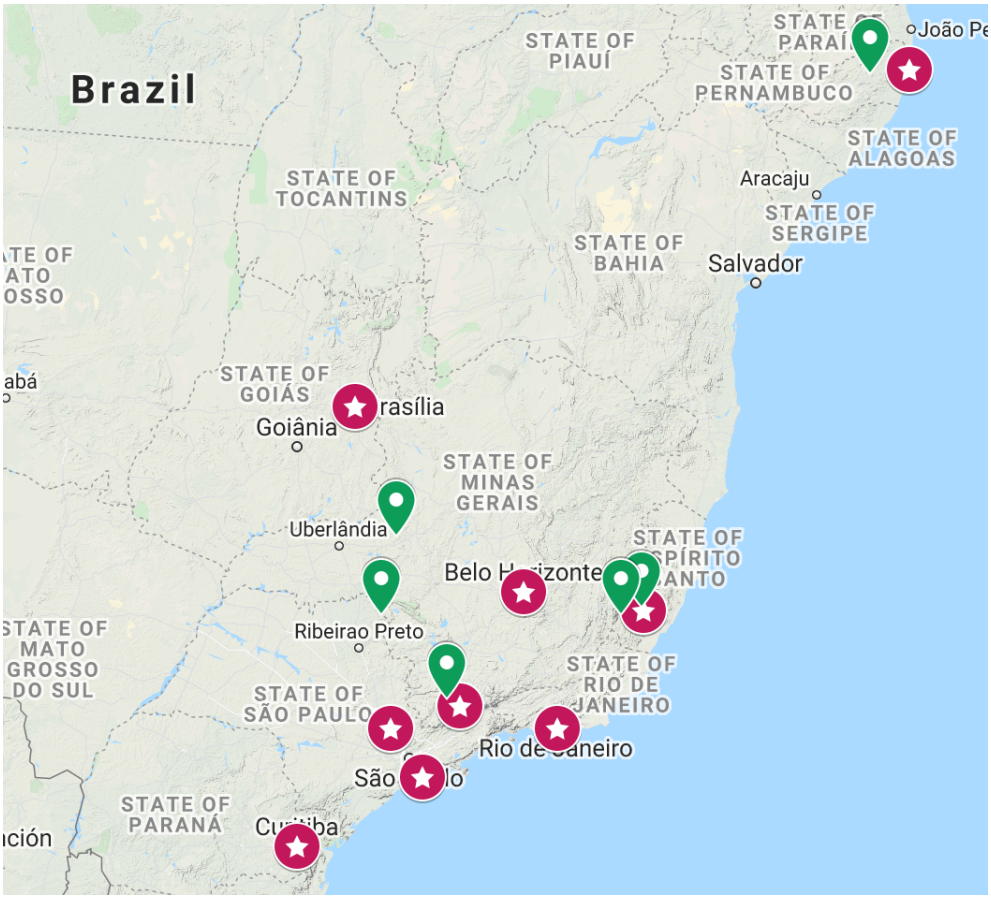


FIGURE 2: RESEARCH SITES ACROSS BRAZIL. CITIES AND TOWNS MARKED WITH PINK STARS, THE CENTRES OF GROWING REGIONS WITH GREEN PINS.

At the outset of my fieldwork, I had intended to remain within Brazil, restricting myself to the same national boundaries that restricted the coffee available to participants. It quickly became apparent, however, that these boundaries were more porous than I had accounted for when I conceived of this project. Materially, not only was there smuggling, I learnt that coffee was frequently brought legally into the country through networks of travellers and friends (see Chapter 3). There was also a porousness to the immaterial aspects of coffee culture: Ideas, trends, and styles filtered into Brazil through travel or contact with transnational coffee media, such that the international (and its imaginary) seemed constantly present. Several participants themselves travelled extensively, and over time I softened my

determination to limit my fieldwork to Brazil. I eventually extended the spatial bounds of my fieldwork (Figure 3) to include the international trade shows and competitions that some participants attended, including two editions of the Specialty Coffee Expo in the United States (Seattle 2018 and Boston 2019), and the World of Coffee event in Berlin, Germany (2019). This decision kept my research formally within the area of the coffee trade, but also allowed me to directly observe how the participants negotiated and interacted with specialty coffee outside the Brazilian national context.

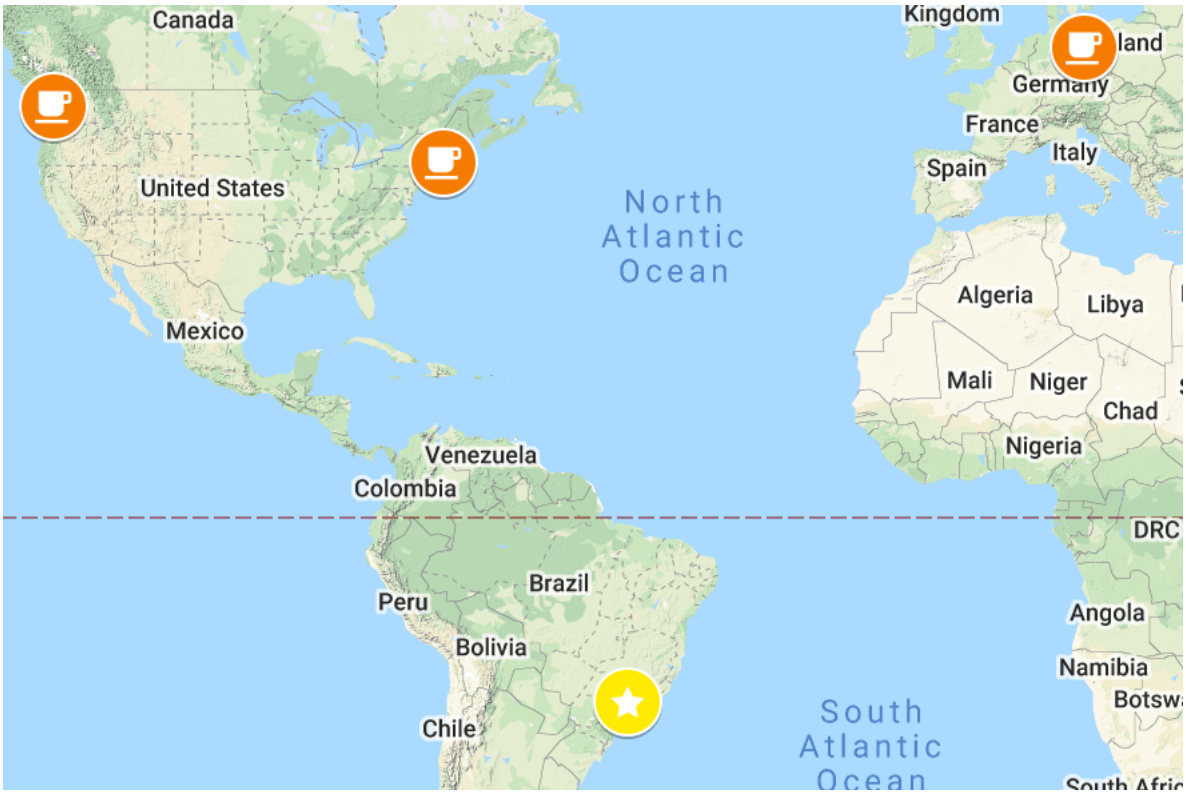


FIGURE 3: GLOBAL FIELDWORK SITES. COFFEE EXPOS AND TRADE FAIRS IN ORANGE; SÃO PAULO IN YELLOW FOR REFERENCE.

### 1.5.4 RESEARCH METHODS

In addition to the hours I spent working as an intermittent barista at several coffee shops and as a roasting and class assistant at Wolff, my fieldwork primarily took the form of participant observation conducted with a diverse group of participants who were a mix of coffee consumers and professionals resident within São Paulo. In the initial months after my arrival, I drifted between cafés located throughout the city, introducing myself and chatting informally with

patrons, employees, and owners until I was a known entity. I also attended many coffee education events that were open to the public. Through these two forms of participant observation within the local coffee scene, I gradually came to know a core set of people who also moved through these spaces and events, and from there, people began to introduce me to others interested in coffee, and my network expanded in this way. After three months, I had developed a feeling for the main topics of interest and discussion in the local coffee scene, and took the time to administer a 30-question survey (placed online and shared on social networks) for specialty-coffee drinkers resident in São Paulo to engage a wider group of coffee consumers. This survey and a summary of key findings is reproduced in Appendix B. I gathered responses to this survey from 74 members of the São Paulo specialty coffee scene who were not already part of my network, and this influx of data allowed me to narrow the focus of my research in the subsequent months by cementing into place a broad perspective of what was potentially important, interesting, and relevant to the experiences of *paulistano* coffee enthusiasts, and what was uninteresting or unimportant.

In February 2018, I ran a project I called 'Coffee Diaries,' for which 12 participants (six coffee professionals, and six non-professionals) were invited to share photos with me via WhatsApp and answer a series of questions about each coffee they consumed over a two-week period. Three of the 12 participants were also involved in the interviews I later conducted (described below), and I used their responses for photo-elicitation (Harper, 2002; Sharma and Chapman, 2011) in the interviews to learn more about each coffee consumption experience. Based on the photos they provided, along with their short, written descriptions of the coffees, we discussed each coffee and their associated feelings in greater depth. The idea behind the Coffee Diaries was to capture any differences between the coffees that people consume at home and those they drink elsewhere, but I also confirmed that access to foreign coffees was incredibly limited. I first ran a test version of the Coffee Diaries programme with five UK coffee drinkers (all Oxford-

and London-based non-professionals), and the first day of the UK version captured more origins than the entire project in São Paulo, despite the latter lasting for two weeks and having a larger sample size (seven coffees of foreign origin were found to be consumed on the first day from the UK sample, while only six foreign coffees in total were yielded from the Brazilian sample, and all six were consumed in only two households). The Coffee Diaries questions and two examples of one day's coffee consumption are included in Appendix C.

When interviewing, I began by taking participants' 'caffeinated biographies,' whereby I asked them to walk me through their memories of coffee in order to establish the role and importance of coffee in their lives. Based on the themes that emerged as important in these initial sessions and the participants' current relationship with coffee, I organised further sessions to explore these ideas in depth. The interviews were semi-structured and each session typically lasted an hour to an hour and half; I selected 15 participants for these series of interviews, and each series participant was interviewed a minimum of three times over the course of several months in the first half of 2018. These interviews were mostly conducted in public spaces (usually coffee shops—with the caveat that I would not interview anyone who worked professionally with coffee in a current or former place of employment), and with 12 of the 15 interviewees, I was able to arrange for at least one interview to be conducted at their homes. No home visit was exactly the same, but they all shared one thing in common: The interviewees would all prepare coffee for me and walk me through their domestic coffee-making routine. I also conducted one-off interviews with a variety of actors in the coffee industry such as agronomists, scientists, and co-operative representatives. In all cases—whether the interview was part of a series or a one-off—I allowed the participant to choose whether to be interviewed in English or Portuguese. For those with whom I shared a pre-existing relationship, the sessions invariably wound up being conducted in the primary language that we already used to communicate. For instance, several baristas who spoke a high level of English but did not often get the chance to exercise

this skill preferred our regular interactions to be in English, whereas Nicolas, who spoke proficient English but was a secondary school literature teacher, used the opportunity to speak to me in Portuguese, and then offered me feedback on my language skills. Whenever participants opted to do their interviews in English, I made it clear that they could switch to Portuguese at any point.

The trade shows and coffee community events I attended such as classes, lectures, café openings, and coffee tastings were also important research sites for observation and socialising. In addition to informal community events, the following were key events I attended that will feature throughout the thesis: the 2017 Cup of Excellence (Espírito Santo); the 2017 World Coffee Champions Tour; Semana Internacional do Café (Belo Horizonte 2017, 2018); the Specialty Coffee Association Expo (Seattle 2018; Boston 2019); and the 2018 Brazilian Barista Championship (Rio de Janeiro). Finally, I also conducted archival work to trace historical coffee trends at the University of São Paulo and at the Museum of Coffee (Santos).

One important issue to address in any fieldwork-based research is that of anonymisation. In this case of this thesis, many participants were keen to be recognised in this work. However, because some of the baristas are somewhat public figures and most are precariously employed—and, as they occasionally shared with me, workplace malpractice in Brazil is not uncommon, and they did not want to potentially jeopardise their employability—I have taken every effort to protect their identities and workplaces, except in the cases of some of the highly public competition baristas. To that end, Double R, Sentimento, CoffeeSpace, and Casinha Café are all made-up coffee shops that I have used in place of real shops. They do not map one-to-one onto existing shops, so the reader should be informed that it would not be possible to match them with real shops located in São Paulo.

## 1.6 CHAPTER OVERVIEWS

INTERSTITIAL VIGNETTES: A FRIDAY EVENING IN MAY | PATRICIA | GISELE | LUCAS AND MARCELO | MARTHA: BARISTA *TIPO EXPORTAÇÃO*: Although many *apaixonados* are woven throughout this text (a complete list with a description of every named participant can be found in Appendix A), I have also chosen to present detailed profiles of a number of actors in the local specialty coffee culture as short vignettes placed between each of the body chapters. This approach reflects the way in which certain individuals, their stories, and the role of coffee in their lives were constant companions that accompanied me throughout my fieldwork. In these vignettes, I aim to show that despite the magnitude of the theoretical concepts covered in this thesis, they play out among individual experience, real lives, and on a very human scale.

In these interstitial stories, I profile five *apaixonados*—Patricia, Gisele, Lucas, Marcelo, and Martha—and through their narratives show how individuals are able to both construct and act upon aspirations through their passionate consumption of specialty coffee. The first four participated in my formalised interviewing programme, though I also came to know them through various events, working alongside them in cafés, and social engagements. The fifth, Martha, became close to me in another capacity: She was the girlfriend of Danilo Lodi, my key entry point into São Paulo's specialty coffee scene. I met Martha the month before she competed in her first barista championship in 2017, and I then worked with her for the two following years of competition.

I open these stories by setting the scene in which these individuals operate, presenting an account of an informal AeroPress competition that occurred on a Saturday night in May 2018. All five of the profiled *apaixonados* were in attendance that evening, which prompted me to wonder: In a city as large, vibrant, and busily interesting as São Paulo, what moved each of these individuals to spend their Saturday night crammed inside a small coffee shop, instead of

partaking in any of the other available entertainment and socialisation opportunities throughout the city? How did coffee come to occupy such a central part of their lives?

I begin my analysis by presenting Patricia's story as an example of what is largely a straightforward case of economic and social advancement, the type that is held up as emblematic of the trajectories of Brazil's 'new middle class'—although coffee, in Patricia's case, has a potent symbolic role. Next, Gisele's narrative shows how the expected trajectories and aspirations of the 'new middle class' can be subverted and re-framed around subjective ideas of a good life, one that may be less tied to economic gain than traditional models account for, and that also resists the status quo of racial relations in Brazil. I then consider the twin cases of Marcelo and Lucas, two co-workers from different social backgrounds, as an example of how passion can be invoked to achieve different aspirational trajectories, yet result in each young man coming to work in the same café. Finally, I profile the barista competitor Martha Grill, whose initial aspiration to become an actress was thwarted by a broken leg, but who then went on to realise tremendous success and moderate celebrity as a barista. Her journey to the World Barista Championship also highlights the limitations faced by Brazilians and others from coffee-producing nations, when they attempt to integrate into the 'global' mode of doing specialty coffee, and has broad implications with regard to the ways in which transnational consumption cultures are not equally co-constituted by all participants. Taken together, these stories support the analysis presented in the body chapters, illustrating the power of consumer interests to shape life trajectories, and how consumption can offer a window onto wider societal transformations in Brazil.

CHAPTER 2: THE FOUNDATIONS OF *TIPO EXPORTAÇÃO*: This chapter introduces the idea of '*tipo exportação*,' a classificatory and experiential notion on which I will draw throughout my work and which is a local category used to describe goods that are produced domestically but perceived to be of exportation (i.e., high) quality, and typically destined for foreign

consumption. For Brazilians, these goods have a symbolic value derived from this association with potential consumption by foreigners, and such goods are considered an acceptable stand-in, when genuinely foreign goods are inaccessible. The salience of *tipo exportação* as a category requires both the valorisation of foreign goods (concurrent with the denigration of domestic counterparts) and limited access to them. Specialty coffee in Brazil is, therefore, by definition a *tipo exportação* good. I explore how echoes of Brazil's colonial past inform contemporary structural constraints and the ways in which late-stage capitalism is experienced and conspire to stifle *apaixonados*' access to foreign specialty and Brazil's own best coffee. This in turn impedes their participation as equal and mobile members in what is discursively constructed as the 'global coffee community' (SCA, 2020) Furthermore, I show how and the extent to which *apaixonados* evoke Brazil's colonial past when they construct narratives around their consumption experiences and in so doing, I provide a historical perspective that accounts for the deep temporality of the flows of global consumer cultures and the landscapes of possibility that shape their actualised consumption.

CHAPTER 3: 'A COUNTRY YOU SEND *FROM* NOT *TO*': INFRASTRUCTURES AND BUREAUCRACY OF SPECIALTY COFFEE CONSUMPTION: The journey to become a 'good' specialty coffee consumer and full participant in this specific transnational consumer culture is generally seen to require one to develop a familiarity with coffees from a diverse array of geographic origins. On account of factors that range from the domestic trade policies that impede the flow of green coffee into Brazil to the inefficiencies of the national postal service on which *apaixonados* depend, when ordering roasted coffee from abroad, *apaixonados* are obliged to consume almost exclusively Brazilian coffee. In this chapter, I look at how certain representative *apaixonados* navigate these infrastructures that complicate their desired consumption of specialty coffee, and the ways in which they cultivate alternate forms of access to the coffees they want. I also consider Brazilian-produced alternatives to foreign coffee-brewing equipment, and attempts to

procure some of the highest-quality Brazilian coffee destined for exportation as additional means of subverting of *tipo exportação* structures. The chapter begins with an overview of the Brazilian postal service and the problems that ensue when attempting to purchase coffee from abroad, before turning to ethnographic examples of three additional ways—personal networks, travel, and smuggling—whereby *apaixonados* obtain the coffees they want, placing these into dialogue with the literature on the Brazilian notion of *jeitinho*. I then look at two examples of Brazilian-produced coffee equipment—the Koar brewer and the Aram Espresso Maker—and trace how they are positioned in the market in response to specific concerns pertaining to access and cost. Finally, I consider the case of a single award-winning coffee and its circulation within and beyond the Brazilian border. Together, these examples illustrate the limits to available opportunity structures and how *apaixonados* invoke passion as a motivating force to surmount these obstacles and consume the coffee they want.

CHAPTER 4: ORIGINS OF VALUE: In this chapter, I look at the centrality of product origin in the specialty coffee consciousness, and examine how it is experienced and symbolically consumed as an essential part of field-dependent cultural capital. The concept of 'origin,' as it is understood in the specialty coffee industry, is a key term in product differentiation and part of the definition of specialty coffee itself. However, if it is considered as a symbolic imaginary that is central to the experience of 'doing' specialty coffee, differences emerge in the creation and maintenance of such imaginaries, with respect to particular local contexts. I show that this extends to variations of what and where origin actually is, demonstrating that origin imaginaries are not unified across the entire transnational specialty coffee consumer culture, yet still play a crucial role in the consumer experience of specialty coffee. In my analyses of origin imaginaries and the value markers that help to shape them, I show how the consumption reality of specialty coffee, informed by *tipo exportação* structures, keeps Brazilians on the periphery of the transnational, commodity-specific consumer culture of specialty coffee, and reinforces their

unequal participation in the 'orthodox' origin discourses negotiated and defined by coffee-importing nations. In particular, the relative lack of distance (both social and geographic) between coffee producers and consumers in Brazil and the practical difficulties that prevent Brazilians from easily and directly accessing coffee from other producing nations (rather than via importing nations, where it is roasted and returned to Brazil) transforms the ways in which moral geographic imaginations are invoked. This chapter thus contributes to the emerging literature on the shape of ethical consumption in the Global South.

CHAPTER 5: MAKING SPECIALTY COFFEE SPECIAL: This chapter continues the discussion of the malleability of origin that was initiated in Chapter 4. The tensions that occur between different consumer contexts and variable access to the core good of the consumer culture (i.e., coffee) result in localised adaptations of the wider origin imaginary, where elements of the orthodox imaginary are either used, adapted, or rejected, based both on the practical constraints inherent to *tipo exportação* living and thinking, and specific local consumer desires. Such adaptations of the origin imaginary both respond to and maintain *apaixonados*' experience on the periphery of the wider specialty coffee consumer culture in particular and global trade flows in general. Beginning with an exploration of the ways in which *apaixonados* cite non-coffee-producing nations such as Canada and Sweden as 'origins,' I show how agricultural origin has been constructed as only one constituent part of the notion of 'origin'; these *apaixonados* took account of value-added sites of processing (e.g., roasting) as they came to their understanding of 'origin.' This perspective enabled them to 'travel' to more distant, desirable, and aspirational sites through taste. I also show the ways in which specialty coffee industries engage with authenticity discourses through technologies of roasting, and my ethnographic evidence informs a critique of recent work in food studies that equates authenticity with low-intervention, low-technology food practices. This chapter further contributes to thinking about ethical consumption in the Global South by illustrating local expressions and definitions of relevant values, principles, and

problems that embed consumption activities in both culture and place, even in relation to a globalised good or style such as specialty coffee.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION: This study begins with a focus on specialty coffee consumers in São Paulo and an appreciation of the need for a historically informed anthropological framework to understand passionate labour and aspirational consumption in Brazil, the world's largest coffee producer. However, the study goes on to extend beyond São Paulo, based on an understanding that in recent decades, there has been a surge in the number of communities of workers and consumers across the globe who are driven by narratives of passion. These communities draw upon popular discourses grounded in neoliberal thinking, which prioritise a sense of individual fulfilment at the expense of the functional and economic aspects of labour, yet are in turn frustrated by the ways in which neoliberal markets—as outgrowths of the colonial systems that came before them—stymie full consumer participation. Although Brazil continues to rise as a major consumer power with a population that is increasingly able to participate in this discourse, there remain tensions and points of friction with which Brazilian consumers must contend, with regard to access to the goods and transnational consumption communities about which they are passionate. The conclusion thus draws together the individual, interstitial narratives and consolidates the thesis findings, points to further applications of the *tipo exportação* framework, and explores directions for future research.

# A Saturday Evening in May

I hadn't wanted to participate in the AeroPress throwdown[10] that Cauã and Stark were organizing, but they wore me down. I knew that there was a waiting list of other competitors who actually wanted to participate in the event, but the organisers were insistent that the tables be turned. I had spent close to a year observing the *apaixonado* community, and had even judged both Cauã and Stark at the 2018 Brazilian Barista Championship, but now they wanted to watch me performing on stage. In that sense, I supposed they were right; it was only fair. Besides, in the spirit of participant observation, I realised that at this point in fieldwork, I had judged and watched competitions, but not yet participated as a competitor.

And so, I dug out my AeroPress from the back of my kitchen cabinet and began filtering several litres of water into my own bottles. Water, after all, has an enormous influence on coffee flavour (Wellinger et al., 2017), and São Paulo tap water simply wouldn't do: Firstly, one wouldn't drink it unfiltered anyway, lest one fall ill, but a second pass of filtration would have it tasting even cleaner and allow the coffee flavours to shine through, unmuddied. I wished that there was enough time to go to Wolff and fill up water from the state-of-the-art filtration system they had installed to guarantee the best quality water for cupping their coffees, but by the time that occurred to me, there wasn't enough time left to make it to the *zona norte* and back before the event started. There would be filtered water available at the event, but there was also the option to bring your own, and since I had been perfecting my double-filtration method over the last year simply for my home coffee brewing, I decided to stick with what I knew. Bottles filled, I took a taxi over to Soul Café, a coffee shop in an open-air arcade off Rua Augusta in the Baixo Augusta neighbourhood. The ride was slow-going for the last few blocks: Baixo Augusta is

[10] Informal competition.

known for its nightlife and bars, and even early on a Saturday night—it was not quite 7 p.m.—the streets were starting to fill up.

The competition was the standard bracket format: In each ten-minute round, two competitors would go head-to-head, brewing the same coffee beans with the same equipment, but following their own individual recipes. The coffees would be put into cups that looked identical, but had the competitor's names taped to the bottom. A trio of judges would dip spoons into the coffee and sip from there, and on the count of three, point to their preferred coffee. Whichever coffee received two or more votes would be the winner. The cup would be lifted, the name read out, and the winner would advance to the next round. Then, coffees from both competitors would be divided into small disposable cups, and passed around to members of the crowd so that they too would get a chance to try the drinks.

That was standard. What wasn't standard—to me, in any case—was visible immediately after I exited the taxi, turning off Rua Augusta and into the courtyard where the shop was located: Never, in my decade-plus in the specialty coffee industry, had I seen something pitched as a casual event like this draw such a crowd. The courtyard was packed—most attendees couldn't even come close to getting inside the event space—and although the café normally only seats eight people, it was standing room only, with at least 30 people crammed in. I even espied nine individuals perched precariously on the peculiar, narrow stairs (hardly more than a ladder) that run from the floor up to the small loft that serves as the shop's storage. A casual throwdown like this in the United States or United Kingdom might have 20 or 25 people attending, and they would almost all be baristas. Looking around, it was clear that a wide swath of *apaixonados* had gathered, with many non-professionals also in attendance; between those inside and those in the courtyard, I estimated that something like 80 people had come. One of the organizers pulled me into the café, shoving people aside and asking them to make space for competitors, and I squeezed myself next to the judges' table to wait my turn, awkwardly hugging my bottles

of filtered water and trying to balance the tote bag that contained my kettle and AeroPress. Among the judges that night was Gisele—who I knew from taking several of her consumer education classes—and she gave me a smile and thumbs-up from behind the table where she was seated, a spread of coffee cups in front of her.

As the two competitors just ahead of me began their allotted competition time, there was a break in the crush of bodies, a parting of the caffeinated: Martha Grill had arrived, and space was being made. Although she had not triumphed at that year's Brazilian Barista Championship in January—having been, as far as most *apaixonados* saw it, unfairly eliminated—she nevertheless remained the unofficial queen of the *paulistano* coffee scene, respected and adored by nearly everyone. She arrived in the company of her boyfriend, Danilo Lodi, which was unusual because his travel schedule as a brand ambassador for the Italian espresso machine company Dalla Corte and as an independent coffee consultant kept him out of the country and criss-crossing South America for well over half the days in any given month. Together—thanks to his international connections and status and her popularity—they were São Paulo's specialty power couple. Like thrones for royalty, space was cleared around them and café chairs procured so they could sit with prime viewing advantage. They were the only spectators provided with chairs; the judges were the only other *apaixonados* seated at the event. Once Martha and Danilo were settled in their seats, someone brought them beers from the cooler outside.

It was hectic, hot, and messy—and this was also true in the space behind the bar where competitors were to make their coffees. Despite my advance planning with the water I had brought, things did not turn out well for me. During my ten minutes of competition time, I managed to misplace the kettle among the jumble of equipment strewn about, so I nabbed one off the café's shelf. Not knowing what equipment would be available at the competition, I had taken one my own from home, a specific kettle model for brewing coffee manufactured by the

Hario company in Japan; fortunately, it was the same model of kettle available for use in the shop. I lost so much time searching for a new kettle that I was forced to brew my coffee with water that was not as hot as I would have liked, there being insufficient time to heat it all the way. The coffee produced was underwhelming, to say the least: without piping hot water, I was unable to extract a rich flavour from the coffee grounds.

In the end, I was displaced by my opponent, an affable young man named Marcelo who was a barista at Casinha Café and sported an Afro that easily added six inches to his already prodigious height. Everyone cheered for Marcelo, who pumped his fists and beamed, and I could hear cheers and hollers coming from the crowd outside, too. Marcelo and I shook hands after his victory, and he made his way over to his colleagues who were standing in the corner like happy sardines, and who wrapped him in hugs and whooped. (He would go on to lose in the next round to Túlio, the eventual winner of the evening).

Lucas, one of the other Casinha baristas gathered in the corner, and who had taken a barista skills class with Danilo and me at Wolff, reached out and gave me a high-five as I finally pushed my way out of the heaving café and into the courtyard. It was still packed outside, but at least there was fresh air—as fresh as the air can ever be said to be in São Paulo. I felt stunned, and it had nothing to do with the expediency with which Marcelo had dispatched me in the competition: I had simply never experienced that level of frantic energy and that many people at an informal event like this. After close to a year, the *apaixonados* continued to surprise me with their enthusiasm for all things coffee.

As I reclined against the courtyard wall, recovering from the crush of people inside and thinking about the impressive show of coffee passion on display, Patricia walked up to me, cigarette and beer in hand.

'How'd it go?' she asked, taking a long drag of her cigarette.

'I lost,' I shrugged, holding up my kettle, which I had finally found. Patricia walked over to the coolers on the other side of the courtyard, which were filled with free beer, rooting around among the selection until she found me an IPA—sweetly recalling from some weeks back when I accompanied her and a few of her friends on a night out that it was my preferred type of beer. We toasted each other and then turned back to the café's windows, standing on tippy-toes and trying to spy on the remainder of the competition, chatting and giggling between the cheers of the crowd.

Patricia. Gisele. Lucas. Marcelo. Martha. Each of these five had chosen to spend their Saturday night at this informal AeroPress championship: one judging, one competing, three spectating, and all socialising and mingling with peers and friends. The judges weren't paid for their time, the winner received nothing save a cheap, plastic medal given in jest, and the free beer soon ran out. We could hear the sounds from Rua Augusta just around the corner, where the other denizens of São Paulo were on their way out to bars of all sorts, restaurants, karaoke, and clubs, but we paid no heed. We cared only for the love of coffee.

# 2 THE FOUNDATIONS OF *TIPO EXPORTAÇÃO*

## 2.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

'Well, that's good!' the taxi driver told me as we careened past the Memorial da América Latina and towards the local headquarters of the Federal Police, where I would need to cajole my new Brazilian identification document out of the hands of officialdom and into my possession—a task the taxi driver thought would probably be futile because, as he warned me, these bureaucrats can't be trusted. I had to explain to him what I was doing; he was curious about what I, a *gringa*, could want with the Federal Police, and when I informed him about my research he was pleased to discover that the coffee he drinks is produced domestically.

'That's really good,' he said, nodding emphatically. 'Everything else we make gets sent away, you know? I'm glad we get to have Brazilian coffee.' Gesturing wildly, he narrated a potted history of São Paulo; how it was built up on the back of its manufacturing of products for the outside world, *lá fora*. 'Everything gets sent abroad, but it's nice to know we have good coffee here and that we made it.'

When he dropped me off in front of the Federal Police, he leant out of the window to make a confession:

> I don't even like coffee, you know? But if I'm at someone's house and they serve it, of course I drink it to be polite. I don't even like coffee, but there's something about a little espresso with milk at the *padaria*; when they serve it to you with the little chocolate on the side ... it's very decadent, isn't it?

My taxi driver's awareness of the fact that so many goods made in Brazil are destined for people living outside of the country demonstrates the far-reaching impacts of economic and trade policies, historical processes, and social practices on the daily lives of Brazilians, and that these impacts affect the coffee consumed by *paulistanos* of all socioeconomic levels. The taxi driver said that he takes his coffee at *padarias*—neighbourhood bakeries that serve coffee and often lunches as well, and are known for being cheap and down to earth. The *apaixonados* also experience the repercussions of Brazil's export-oriented economy, and consumption experiences at high-end cafés are shaped and moulded by the decisions taken at the international economic level. In this chapter, I explore the background of how this came to pass, the nature of the historic ties that link coffee and the Brazilian nation, and how an economic orientation that favours the exportation of high-quality coffee complicates the experience of being an *apaixonado* in Brazil.

Specialty coffee consumers in Brazil operate within a unique consumption context that is born out of the country's colonial past as a global producer of predominantly raw exports, and the legacies of this past inform the present in deep and manifold ways. In this chapter, I situate the participants of this thesis—the *apaixonados*—in this context of multiple and intersecting hegemonies, and demonstrate the need to frame the contemporary consumer context in which they operate in postcolonial terms. In the case of consumer goods and coffee, the legacies of colonialism in Brazil extend their temporal reach to the present and manifest in a social preference for foreign goods, in tandem with a belief in the inferiority of domestically produced goods. The participants repeatedly invoked the colonial past in this way, and thereby demonstrated an understanding of the fact that national histories are inexorably linked to the shapes that modern consumption assumes.

This chapter begins with a consideration of the values that foreign goods represent to Brazilian consumers, before proceeding to an overview of participants' perceptions of how Brazil's

colonial past comes to bear on their contemporary experiences and shapes their specialty coffee consumption. Following this historical and ethnographic contextualisation, I then introduce the concept of *tipo exportação* ('exportation grade') as a prism through which we can critically engage Brazilians' consumer experiences in a broad sense and with specialty coffee more specifically. Understood readily by Brazilian consumers, *tipo exportação* describes a category of good that does not fit within a foreign–domestic binary understanding of product origin, yet requires these categories as a reference point, thereby encompassing the reflexivity and complexity within trade flows, and the uncertainties that characterise the boundaries between foreign and national products. The term *tipo exportação* is colloquially understood and locally employed to refer to domestically produced goods that are deemed to be of 'exportation quality.' It allows us to marry the notion that 'foreignness' is an independently valuable characteristic of a good (regardless of quality or economic concerns) with the richness of ethnographic methods, thereby constituting a useful avenue through which to see how the *apaixonados* encounter the materials of their coffee consumption.

Drawing on an emic category used by participants, this chapter steps outside the foreign–national binary that is assumed in most studies of consumption, thereby capturing the complexities inherent in both understanding global trade and negotiating consumer desire. This approach also makes it possible to come closer to an understanding of how historical power differentials affect the contemporary cosmopolitan consumer experience in countries that have previously been subjected to extractive colonial practices. I propose that *tipo exportação* is a logical outcome of Brazil's colonial legacy and functions as a useful framework to investigate how specialty coffee is experienced in São Paulo, in light of coffee's historical connection with extractivism and the ways in which much of its value derives from its association with foreign consumption.

## 2.2 'THE ALLURE OF THE FOREIGN'

Brazilian consumers—including, as will be made evident, the *apaixonados*—demonstrate a preference for foreign goods that goes beyond immediate economic or quality concerns. It is especially visible in the case of specialty coffee because access to products of various agricultural origins from across the globe is considered necessary to be fully accepted in this commodity-specific consumer culture, but at the same time, protectionist trade policies complicate the importation of green (raw) coffee, making these foreign goods extremely difficult to access. The extant literature addresses these quality and economic issues, as well as more abstract, symbolic elements of the consumption of foreign goods, but I argue that it largely misses some of the material concerns that become readily apparent in an analysis of specialty coffee in São Paulo.

A preference for 'the foreign' is widespread throughout Brazil and Latin America. This particular predilection has been extensively documented throughout history, as depicted in this evocative excerpt taken from the memoirs of the Brazilian diplomat Gilberto Amado, in which he reflects on his childhood in northeastern Brazil in the late 1800s:

> At that time … Brazil did not manufacture a yard of silk, a shoe, a spool of thread; everything was imported. The names on the packing boxes were indecipherable to me … Men's clothing for a tropical climate was made of English cloth suitable for a life in the unheated homes of an English winter. I asked myself: how did they stand the heat? The ladies [in Brazil], when they took off their shoes at home, used slippers of heavy wool as if they were in Siberia. When I look at the photograph of José do Patrocínio, I note the collar of twill, and I ask myself how he could stand, during the abolitionist campaign, to give his speeches in the Recreio Dramático with that pressure on his body. Imagining the rivers of sweat pouring down, I sweat with him. In Pernambuco, we students at the Faculty wore morning coats and riding coats. How did we put up with that? Everything came from abroad. […] Except for the poor, I never saw in the Pernambuco of my time anyone dressed in light clothing.
>
> (Cited in Bradford-Burns, 1968, p. 39)

This 'allure of the foreign' in Brazil, however, is not confined to the pre-20th-century era; a number of scholars have explored the role of consumption in the recent creation and negotiation of Brazilian class identities and boundaries. Brian Owensby (1999), who has looked at the development of the Brazilian middle class between 1920 and 1950, and Maureen

O'Dougherty (2002), who has examined the role of the middle class during Brazil's 1981–1994 economic crisis, have both shown how members of the middle class engage in certain forms of consumption in order to make a statement about their cultural and moral superiority to the working class, as well as to form and perform social identities. Owensby's analysis details how the developing middle and professional classes in Brazil have shaped and participated in hierarchies via the consumption of activities and goods that are seen as culturally refined; this typically means that they are associated with Europe, in particular with European theatre, art, music, and literature. In her work, meanwhile, O'Dougherty investigates how the Brazilian middle class—now firmly established—responded to the threat presented by a shifting economic and political order; despite the difficulty inherent in maintaining a position within the middle and upper-middle classes during Brazil's economic downturn, the consumption of goods that conferred status on families (such as trips to Disneyland and enrolment in elite private schools) intensified. More recently, the sociologist Danielle Hedegard (2015) has demonstrated a continued preference for foreign goods among wealthy (and aspirational) Brazilians, and that the transnational consumption culture posited by O'Dougherty is substantiated and maintained in upper-class media platforms as 'the proper realm of elite taste' (p. 58). Hedegard's analysis asserts that elite tastes betray a 'singular concern for finding similarity between Brazilian lifestyles and non-Brazilian culture,' thereby placing the wealthy not only at the top of a Brazilian hierarchy, but in relation to and dialogue with the outside world (p. 61).

It is worth noting that although the chief focus of this thesis is the experiences of what we might broadly consider to be middle-class consumers, this preference for foreign goods is not restricted to the well-to-do in Brazil. Andy Baker, a researcher specialising in the politics of Latin American market liberalisation, has stated that in Brazil, just as elsewhere in Latin America, 'the fascination with foreign goods itself cuts across income groups,' and although 'foreign

goods and entertainment have [a hold] on middle- and upper-income Latin Americans, poor consumers are not far behind in their propensity to create a fetish of foreignness' (2009, p. 267). In the period 2013–2015, Brazil was captivated by the phenomenon of *rolezinhos* [lit: 'little walks,' but meaning 'hanging out with friends' (slang)]—whereby large numbers (up to thousands) of youths from urban *periferias*—the far-flung, low-income peripheries of large cities—would enter and spend time in high-end shopping malls. The phenomenon of the *rolezinhos* caused considerable uproar and speculation in Brazil because there was no obvious conclusion to be drawn; while some felt that these young people were simply loitering in a shopping area without the intention to buy anything, but rather to impress others with a threatening presence, others felt that the teenagers' movements were highlighting (and deliberately so) the fact that these spaces that were *de jure* open to all were *de facto* reserved for upscale white shoppers, and young people of colour were transgressing an unspoken social norm. The *rolezinhos* brought to the fore an aspect of Brazilian life that many would prefer to leave unaddressed. Several violent clashes ensued, and then-President Dilma Rousseff even convened a meeting with a number of politicians to decide on an appropriate reaction (Romero, 2014). Analyses of race, gender, class, media and social responses, and spatial and societal transgressions have made up the lion's share of recent work on consumer culture, identities, and politics in Brazil (see: Erber, 2016; Freitas Filho and Costa, 2018; Pinheiro-Machado and Scalco, 2014; Pinho, 2018). One notable issue related to the *rolezinhos* was the close association between the youngsters concerned and a specific genre of music known as *funk ostentação* (ostentation funk), whose lyrics dwell on extreme acts of conspicuous consumption as a means of self-betterment and social advancement, and frequently invoke the names of upscale foreign brands (Freitas, 2020; Pereira, 2014). One of the conversations the *rolezinhos* inspired concerned differentiation and imagination: What would come to pass if the youths' contact with these international luxury brands was no longer restricted to counterfeit or imagined

forms? The spatial divisions of consumption having already been breached by the presence of *rolezinhos* in high-end shopping malls, many public figures questioned whether consumption patterns in Brazil could be further destabilised in unpredictable ways.[11]

In the introduction to their 1997 volume on consumption in Latin America, *The Allure of the Foreign: Imported Goods in Post-Colonial Latin America*, the anthropologist Benjamin Orlove and historian Arnold Bauer challenge researchers in various disciplines to add nuance to the commonplace, export-centred models of consumption in Latin America, and instead to investigate how and why 'foreignness' is such a desirable characteristic for Latin American consumers. They contend that 'foreignness is an attribute of the imported goods that merits consideration, like their availability and cost' (p. 7), and that it is necessary to widen the scope of research to encompass this angle and thereby untangle some of the contradictions that define postcolonial Latin America. A key issue here is the tension between Latin American countries' desire to be fully independent from their former colonisers and *at the same time* to emulate the very same colonising nations, which are considered to be representative of modernity. Despite that fact that this call for research on foreignness was made 20 years ago, export-centred, economic-rationality models have continued to prevail in a great deal of research on Latin American patterns of consumption.[12] Orlove and Bauer encouraged work on consumption in contemporary Latin America in order to 'complement, rather than to displace, the hypothesis of the export-centred model that stress the importance of export economies in shaping the consumption of imports. If the export-centred model emphasizes the economic affordability of imports, we seek to understand their social cachet and cultural appeal' (p. 6). In Brazil, asserting

[11] Gisele once confessed how happy the *rolezinhos* made her. She told me how she had once gone to Shopping JK (one of São Paulo's most upscale shopping centres) and was followed the entire time by a security guard. She attributed this to the fact that she was black and, at the time, kept her hair in box braids. As far as she was concerned, the malls deserved the chaos of the *rolezinhos*.

[12] For such examples from the fields of anthropology, history, and economics, see: Bulmer-Thomas (2014), Topik and Samper (2006), and Topik and Wells (1998).

the *foreignness* of a good—which is more than just conveying that it is expensive or of high quality—is a meaningful way to create and communicate class divisions, such as that between the *rolezinhos* and the usual customers of high-end shopping malls. To be sure, there are powerful political and economic forces that dictate the extent to which Brazilians can access foreign goods such as coffee, but the preference for foreign goods *for the sake of their foreignness itself* can be seen in many fields of consumption. This is particularly visible among the *apaixonados*, among whom the consumption of foreign coffees partly functions as a status symbol within the community via the association with the world outside Brazil, and is partly motivated by the fact that there are often real sensory and taste differences between coffees of various national origins. In response to Orlove and Bauer's exhortation to consider 'foreign' as an independent value in studies of consumption habits in Latin America, I suggest that an examination of specialty coffee reveals that the specific material properties of foreign goods can impact consumption experiences; this question is not simply a symbolic one.

An examination of 'the allure of the foreign' as an element that complements and nuances economically situated analyses of consumer preferences illuminates contemporary Brazilian consumption within the framework of the nation's historical conditions; furthermore, it does so in a non-deterministic manner that encompasses the changes that occur over time and between different segments of the population in terms of interpretation, use, and value. This became particularly evident one night when I was speaking to Wellington at our favourite bar, just down the street from where we often had coffee during the day. A 31-year-old programmer for a major international tech company, I was somewhat surprised at how much he had to say on the subject of agricultural histories and injustices; I had rather assumed that he would have looked at the matter through the prism of industrialisation and technology. Wellington linked Brazilian agricultural history to the contemporary consumption and valuation of products. Brazil, Wellington told me:

> is a commodities-based country, and that [fact] has so much baggage to it. The way everything was sold to us for so long … without getting into the politics of it, this is a county without its own reference for good things. It's an export-based country. We don't know our own good things. Good things [are held to] come from outside.

In Wellington's perspective, due to their particular economic history as a provider of raw agricultural—and later, manufactured—products, Brazilians were not able to develop their own instinctive reference for what constitutes 'good things,' beyond a belief that they simply come from elsewhere, and therefore the evaluation that something is 'good' is also foreign. Wellington implies that Brazil does produce its own 'good things,' but because of their history, Brazilians are unable to judge or even know what these good things are. This is a point that I will address in greater depth later in this chapter. As Wellington indicates, structural conditions are of importance here; whole regimes of value and evaluation have been imported to Brazil because things 'from outside' possess their own inherent value.

It has frequently been observed that 'foreign' is a valued attribute in Latin America, even when foreign goods are not necessarily of better quality or cheaper than domestic products. Business and marketing scholars refer to this form of consumption as 'consumer xenocentrism,' or the tendency for consumers—and particularly those in emerging economies—to idealise the consumer goods produced in developed countries and to seek them out, chiefly as status symbols. This stream of research confirms the prevalent anthropological understanding that foreign goods can be preferred to their domestically made counterparts, even when they are more difficult to obtain, more expensive, or of lower quality. Neither is this preference limited to luxury objects or those typically associated with conspicuous consumption; it extends to items as banal as toothpaste and building materials (Cleveland and Laroche, 2012). This exactly follows the pattern set out by Orlove and Bauer, and is manifest in a way that contradicts most

mainstream economic thought on 'rational' decision-making.[13] Scholars have unearthed strikingly similar attitudes in the Caribbean; over several decades, Daniel Miller has shown that consumers in Trinidad see access to foreign goods as a 'right.' This attitude asserts that foreign goods should not be more difficult to access or expensive than equivalent domestic products, and that Trinidadians 'should be able to purchase "shiny" goods of the highest quality and without blemish, at the cheapest possible price' (1997, pp. 334–5). Many of the *apaixonados* featured in this chapter have travelled widely, and have been able to observe the nature of consumption outside Brazil. One young *apaixonada*, Patricia, who had recently returned from a trip to Amsterdam and Paris, told me that she wished that she 'had the freedom to consume like Europeans.' By framing consumption choices as a right that Brazilians should be able to enjoy just as much as Europeans, Patricia situates herself as anything but a passive consumer of imported goods; in this paradigm, consumption is an overtly political act.

Patricia's particular adulation of European consumption styles and European goods intimates that not all foreign-origin products are created equal. As anthropologist Rosana Pinheiro-Machado has found, the region of origin is of central importance for Brazilian consumers' evaluations of foreign goods:

> In Brazil, the relative value of an 'import' is entirely dependent on the hemisphere from which the product originated. European and North American brands are prestigious, whereas 'Made in China' or 'Made in Paraguay' labels are synonymous with material and symbolic inferiority … 'Made in Paraguay' had long been used to describe products that were of such poor quality that they would not work once you got them home.
>
> (2018, p. 32)

To draw out Pinheiro-Machado's interpretation, it can be said that the type of foreign good that is attractive to Brazilians is one that unites high quality, status enhancement, and innovation. Elsewhere in Latin America, however, local biases for all things foreign do not

[13] See Michael Chibnik (2011), *Anthropology, Economics, and Choice*, for an exploration of the debates around the utility of the category of 'rationality' as a human response to incentives.

necessarily translate into a predilection for goods from the Global North. For instance, Colombians appear to demonstrate a marked interest in goods from Ecuador; prior to the economic opening of 1990, contraband in Colombia typically came from Ecuador, and this predilection has subsequently persisted, despite the opening of official trade between Colombia and other nations (Antrosio, 2012).

In Brazil, the 'allure of the foreign' is strengthened by uneven access to such goods, which creates a veneer of exclusivity; this choice (or lack thereof) reveals the ways in which foreignness comes to be valued—and this does not strictly rest on objective economic or quality grounds. In the case of specialty coffee, the dual lack of choice and access points to the importance of material considerations. Firstly, a necessary part of the formation of the coffee 'connoisseur' identity is having tasted coffees of various international origins. The protectionist trade policies that have been put in place with the ostensible purpose of maintaining the safety and hygiene of the Brazilian coffee crop (but also as a form of economic protectionism so as to not damage one of the largest agricultural industries in the country and retain Brazil's dominance over the international coffee market) limit this choice for the *apaixonados*, making foreign coffee hard to access and complicating the formation of a connoisseur identity. Secondly, the *terroir* of and processing methods employed for Brazilian coffee lead to a relatively homogenous product in terms of flavour. This makes access to difference an end in itself, as *apaixonados* seek out material and sensory differentiation between coffees, in addition to simply obtaining quality goods.

Daniela, a barista and coffee roaster who began her working life as a waitress, once told me about the first time she tasted coffees from outside Brazil. Despite having worked in high-end food service for some time and in coffee for over two years, she had never tried a coffee that had an origin other than Brazil until she was aged 30. On the occasion in question, a friend of Daniela's who had been abroad had brought back some beans, which prompted them to hold an informal tasting session at his home.

'I tried a Kenyan coffee; I tried one from Panama,' she explained to me. 'I was totally enchanted by how different they were from Brazilian coffees, from what I was accustomed to drinking.' At no point in our wider conversation did Daniela characterise these coffees as 'better' in quality; simply that they were profoundly *different* in terms of the sensory experience, compared to her usual cup:

> I was able to taste just how different geographies lead to different flavours. Things you'd never taste in a Brazilian coffee. A Brazilian coffee knows Brazilian land and Brazilian flavours. It cannot imagine land in Kenya. I need a Kenyan coffee to tell me about that.

She went on to apologise to me for becoming so animated during this discussion, explaining that 'talking about these coffees can make [her] really emotional.'

The new research avenue that Orlove and Bauer advocated augments existing models and stresses the relevance of Brazil's orientation as an exportation-orientated economy to the development of its taste for imported goods. Brazil's focus on exportation is hugely important in this matter, both in objective economic terms and with regard to the structural conditions in which specialty coffee consumers operate, and that impact the type of goods to which they have access. However, there are aspects of materiality—the physical properties of goods, and how these impact their design, use, meaning, and interpretation—that ought to be included in any consideration of how foreign goods are desired, accessed, and consumed, and how the unique material properties of foreign goods can expand the discourse on imported goods beyond the quality and economic concerns that dominate the extant literature. As I interrogate why 'the foreign' appeals to Brazilian consumers, I again run up against what Orlove and Bauer identified as one of the central paradoxes of contemporary Latin America: The desire to both be separate from and emulate former colonisers, including in modes of consumption. It is to this matter of the ongoing impacts of colonialism that I now turn.

## 2.3 (POST)COLONIAL COFFEE

### 2.3.1 PERSISTENCE

Brazil's identity as a provider of raw exports for other nations was assigned to it at the beginning of its integration into the European global system, with the arrival of the Portuguese in 1500. Celso Furtado's celebrated economic history of Brazil, *The Economic Development of Brazil* (2012 [1959]), describes the colonisation of Brazil by Portugal as from the beginning 'an agricultural colonization venture' driven by economic interest; settlement was secondary, and promoted only in order to facilitate and expand agricultural production (p. 10). Indeed, this export identity is seared into the fabric of the Brazilian nation, eternally embedded in the very name of the country, which is derived from the first extractive enterprise that occurred in the colony: the harvest of *pau-brasil*, or brazilwood trees. And how prescient a designation it turned out to be; colonialism as a full-blown economic and social institution took off following the first systematic efforts to cultivate sugar, which began a handful of years later in 1530.

The production of sugar, based on vast, monocultural plantations, fuelled the first of Brazil's export cycles. These plantations employed slave labour and set the stage for Brazil's perennial issue of inequality in income distribution by concentrating wealth and land in the hands of a limited number of landowners. This led to stagnation in the formation of an internal consumer market because purchasing power was confined to so few. Furthermore, Portugal maintained strict control over which raw and manufactured goods were allowed to enter Brazil during the colonial era, and the laws governing both imports and what could be produced in-country were tightened over the years, culminating in a 1785 edict that explicitly restricted all forms of manufacture—including the refining of sugar—to Portugal (Pedreira, 2000). Unable to benefit from any of the forms of value-added processing that would render products of Brazilian origin ready to be sold and consumed, Brazil's identity was enshrined as a provider of raw exports, subservient to the greater technological skills and clout of Portugal. The effects of this were

profound: Banned from manufacturing, Brazil was relegated to the periphery of the nascent industrial revolution; the ongoing reliance on slavery and low-wage agricultural work tied the nation's fortunes to the natural cycles of the land, perpetuating notions of the 'primitive' and 'uncivilised,' and opportunities for self-determination were initially limited (Schwarz, 2001).

Today, Brazil's relationship with Portugal has changed considerably from that which characterised the 16th to 18th centuries, but the example of Lívia is testament to the continuing reverberations. A budding *apaixonada* from a very wealthy upper-class family, I spoke with her in the living room of her apartment in an upscale neighbourhood, and she expressed a surprisingly open anger with both the Brazilian 'masses' (among whom, despite being wealthy, she counts herself) for having fallen victim to colonisation and with the Portuguese for their particular approach to colonisation; she accused the latter of not having had 'the decency' to leave the country with anything in the way of European structures, culture, or standards. Despite her privilege, she manifested the multiple conflicting and potentially ambivalent strands of the persistent trans-generational impacts of colonialism whose threads can be traced through all strata of Brazilian life. In his exploration of lingering colonialism within the Brazilian psyche, De Sousa Santos (2002) concluded that Portugal's relegation to a state of semi-periphery in the contemporary global system has left its former colonies without even the cultural cachet of having been colonised by nations seen as sophisticated and desirable such as the United Kingdom, resulting in a form of double inferiority.[14] In addition, Angela Torresan's studies of Brazilian migrants in Europe (2007, 2012) provide compelling ethnographic evidence of this phenomenon: Brazilians in London often work in jobs for which they are over-qualified,

[14] The hardships experienced by Portugal following the 2008 global financial crisis has arguably increased this positioning of Portugal within the semi-periphery of Europe, adding even more confusion and layers to the double sense of colonial inferiority.

forming part of a generalised, low-skilled Latin American immigrant workforce, accepting such a career path because 'the sheer fact of being in London already constitute[s] a form of success' (2007, p. 108). This finding is echoed in Ana Cristina Martes' work on Brazilian migrants in the United States (2011). In Lisbon, however, middle-class Brazilian migrants tend to have jobs that are similar to those they had in Brazil, and must navigate a Portugal increasingly anxious about a foreign 'invasion' from its former colonies (Machado, 2012; Feldman-Bianco, 2001; Vargas et al., 2017). Moving to Lisbon is more aspirational than remaining in Brazil, but the higher-prestige option is to work in the United States or the United Kingdom, even if doing so entails a reduction in objective living standards because it provides, as Martes says, access to values associated with 'an increase of consumer power, but [which] are also related to a new lifestyle and [an idea of] citizenship (more equality)' (2011, p. 72). The legacies of Portuguese colonialism preclude life in Portugal from generating an ideal of citizenship that encompasses greater equality for Brazilians because inequality, subjugation, and exploitation are woven into the fabric of relations between the two countries.

The complexity that is inherent in any negotiation of the legacies, harms, and ambiguities around colonialism and perceived national inferiority mean that it is not enough to measure aspiration and mobility solely in terms of objective living standards—if that were the case, a middle-class occupation in Lisbon would be uniformly preferable to a Brazilian to dish-washing in London or Los Angeles; it must also account for psycho-social elements of relational identities, as well as valuations of material wealth and cultural cachet that may conflict with each other. *Apaixonados*' sense of this inferiority is palpable in the way they comment on experiences they have had outside their home country, particularly in Portugal. For instance, Nati spent one year in Lisbon studying history of art, and although she said that she loved the experience and would like to return, she visibly rankled when she remembered the way her classmates would make fun of her Brazilian Portuguese accent. 'It's their fault we're speaking

this language anyway, and then they go and make fun of you? It's stupid,' she huffed. 'I always felt that they thought I was stupid, just because of my accent.'

Other *apaixonados* who have travelled in Portugal echoed these sentiments and experiences—my own Brazilian-tinged Portuguese has been the subject of amusement in Portugal—and some expressed a deep sense of hurt that the former colonising nation still looked down on them as inferior. The fact that Portugal enjoys an inferior international reputation compared to that of other European nations—as reported both by a number of *apaixonados* and scholars such as Sousa Santos—reinforces multiple layers of inferiority. The majority of the *apaixonados* and other *paulistanos* with whom I spoke demonstrated a deep knowledge of their colonial history, along with an awareness of its effects on contemporary phenomena and how they shape the practices of daily life, including consumption.

At this juncture, it is worth pointing out that the postcolonial rhetoric employed by many *apaixonados*, Lívia among them, to explain the world around them approaches historical determinism. This being so, a subsequent anthropological analysis may risk tracing connections that are excessively straightforward or linear, rather than accepting a fluid spectrum that encompasses many kinds of interconnections and impacts. In order to resolve this quandary, it becomes necessary to ask: Why does *this group* of people engage with postcolonial discourse at *this moment* in time? Moreover, within the recent anthropological trend to explore the effects of neoliberal globalisation in depth, and in which the reverberations of the periods of dictatorship (1964–1985) and democratic transition (1985–1989) have closely informed work on Brazil, it becomes incumbent to contend with *apaixonados*' decision to actively think about and frame their experiences in postcolonial terms. When queried, *apaixonados* explained that they necessarily thought about history—domestic and otherwise—when engaging with their coffee lifestyle precisely because Brazil's national history and development was so intertwined with coffee. Questions on agricultural production and power throughout the supply chain lie at the

forefront of the ethical discourse of the global specialty coffee community (Cole, 2008; Ferreira and Ferreira, 2018[b]; Fischer, 2017; Lyon, 2017); when such questions are considered in relation to agricultural consumption choices in the Brazilian context, the link to colonial pasts becomes, as Patricia informed me, 'totally obvious.'

However, not every *apaixonado* engages with this discourse to the same extent; some seek to change these structures through direct resistance, others see them as immutable facts, and still others anticipate that market interventions will eventually change the status quo, yet nearly all interviewees alluded in some way to the historical linkages between land, power, money, and the colonial development of Brazil. Popular criticisms in Brazil of neoliberal globalisation that congealed under the rule of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (see: Power, 1998) have nevertheless proven to be an insufficient discourse to fully explain the problems *apaixonados* face as they strive to access the coffee they crave. This is because it is necessary to account for systemic injustices that have built up over the course of the centuries of the Brazilian coffee industry, rather than simplistically grounding explanations in 20th century political developments; even the 20th-century dictatorship was repeatedly described to me as a continuation of the oligarchic power concentrated among the coffee barons of the country's southeast.

The arrival of specialty coffee consumption in Brazil, as elsewhere in the developing world, was tied to economic expansion and the growth of both the population and purchasing power of the consumer classes.[15] Starbucks opened its first location in Brazil in 2006, and 2009 saw the opening of the first recognisably specialty coffee shop, Coffee Lab, in the Vila Madalena neighbourhood of São Paulo. This was a period of sustained economic growth in Brazil, which largely evaded the 2008 recession that hit the Global North, and did not enter a recession until

[15] See Doga (2019) on the challenges facing and potential of coffee consumption in Colombia, and Ferreira and Ferreira (2018[a]) on specialty coffee consumption in urban China.

2014. The economic expansion gave consumers more disposable income, free time, and education (Klein et al., 2018), yet for *apaixonados*, this advancement towards a perception of equal standing with importing countries in terms of purchasing power served to illuminate that they remained at a disadvantage; whatever the rhetoric of 'development,' they were still unable to access not only their own country's best coffees but also those grown elsewhere in the world with the ease of consumers in importing countries. This point stands in contrast to research that has prematurely concluded that globalisation has weakened sentiments of frustration concerning access to international consumer goods (Baker, 2009; Guedes and Oliveira, 2006). For *apaixonados*, new forms of trade liberalisation that have arisen under successive neoliberal domestic regimes have done little to improve access to quality coffee of foreign origin. Information flows from the international specialty coffee community have made it ever more clear how much coffee they are missing out on, while the perceived necessity of protecting Brazil's coffee crop and exports means that the government is unlikely to relax importation regulations in the foreseeable future.

### 2.3.2 'WE EXPECT TO BE EXPLOITED'

During my conversations with *apaixonados*, I was struck not only by the severity of these expressions of frustration but also how ingrained and widespread they are, especially given that Brazil is approaching its bicentennial celebration of independence from Portugal, which was recognised in 1822. The repeated deployment of colonial legacies as an explanatory mechanism for negative experiences and hardships entails that we need to lengthen our historical reach and go farther back in time to understand and situate contemporary consumption in Brazil.

Gabriel, the owner of Cupping Café, is another *apaixonado* who overtly traced a connection between Brazil's colonial past and troubled present. When I spoke to him, we were drinking espressos in iced tonic water out of tall glasses, sitting at a table next to the softly lit display of a Hario V60, a popular brewing device invented and manufactured in Japan. Gabriel stroked his

short beard slowly as he mused how Brazilians have accepted a perceived need to purchase goods of questionable quality, consume potentially unsafe food, and drink only coffees that are far from the highest quality available globally. Sighing, he concluded his soliloquy with the observation: 'Being a colony has had a profound effect on us. We've been exploited. We'll keep on being exploited. We expect to be exploited.' His statement reminds me of Peruvian decolonial theorist Aníbal Quijano's notion of the durable 'coloniality of power,' which asserts that power (or its absence) continues along the same trajectory, even after the end of formal colonisation (2000, p. 215). To understand Gabriel's assertion that Brazilians 'expect to be exploited' because of the country's former colonial identity, it is necessary to appreciate the methods by which raw materials in Brazil were extracted, and the inhumane levels of human and natural exploitation that characterised the colony, manifest most abhorrently in the presence of slavery.

If sugar was the initial economic driver in Brazil, it was upheaval in another colony—France's Saint-Domingue, the world's largest coffee producer at the time—that brought an unexpected boon to Brazil's nascent coffee production. After a decade of war against France, most of the coffee plantations in Haiti—as the newly independent Saint-Domingue was known—were destroyed. The newly formed nation, founded by rebel slaves, outlawed slavery, and promptly found itself blacklisted on the global market. Following its independence in 1804, slave-holding countries refused to trade with Haiti as a warning to other possible insurrectionist movements (Dubois, 2012; Dupuy, 2019). The result was that Haitian coffee effectively disappeared from the global market, and there was an overall global rise in the price of coffee (Morris, 2018). In that period, coffee production in Brazil had been largely moved from the north to the southeast of the country because the latter offered a better climate for growing conditions, and its broad cultivation potential became clear. Because so much of Brazil's land was more suitable for coffee production than sugarcane (which can only be cultivated in certain coastal regions), other

Caribbean colonies that were more climactically suited to sugar overtook Brazil in sugar production, leaving Brazil to become the world's biggest producer of coffee (Font, 2010; Mintz, 1985).

On the heels of this rise in global coffee prices, the Portuguese court arrived in Rio de Janeiro in 1808, fleeing the Napoleonic threat in Europe. Historian Boris Fausto has noted that one of the first acts of the Portuguese crown was to open Brazil's ports to trade and manufacture from foreign nations, ending three centuries of direct Portuguese control over exactly what goods and materials (officially) entered Brazil. This was, of course, 'triggered by circumstances at hand,' according to Fausto: 'Portugal had been taken over by French troops so no business could be done there. As far as the Portuguese crown was concerned, it was preferable to legalize the already existing contraband between Britain and Brazil so the government could collect tariffs' (1999, p. 64). An open and direct trading relationship with Britain was established, and British pressure would play a substantial role in the eventual abolition of slavery in Brazil, a gradual process only completed in 1888 (Schulz, 2008). As coffee yields increased due to the better growing conditions in the southeast, the already wealthy and established elite of this region was able to invest heavily in large *fazendas*; however, this infrastructure investment was made possible due to pre-existing capital accumulation tied to slavery and the mining industries in the region.

An examination of contemporary forms of coffee consumption in Brazil illuminates the way power has reverberated throughout the history of the country, into the present; coffee in Brazil is both economically and socially situated, and as a good, it has perpetuated Brazil's connection with the world along lines and power relations established under Portuguese colonial rule. The Latin American colonial experience did more than just fuel capital accumulation for the European elite and their attendant industrial development; it 'acted as a proving ground for the development of forms of control that accompanied capitalist development' itself (Bortoluci

and Jansen, 2013, p. 220). If we understand the extent to which the Portuguese colonial project in Brazil was explicitly extractivist and trade-based, and the fact that subsequent Brazilian industrialisation is intrinsically wrapped up with the coffee crop grown and exported during the colonial period, we are better placed to appreciate that Brazilian domestic consumption is fundamentally entangled with the politics of production, and can go some way to comprehend the complicated and shifting preference for foreign goods. In his modern classic *The Mystery of Samba*, Hermano Vianna wrote that 'the entire history of Brazilian national consciousness has been based on (and has derived energy from) our "backwardness" in relation to the world's "civilized" countries' (1999, p. 116). Given that the country's trade routes and partners were determined by the Portuguese, and that a robust system for the exportation of raw materials was already in place by the time Brazil declared independence, engaging with the outside world via the domestic consumption of manufactured goods of foreign origin was an effective way to combat this supposed 'backwardness,' even while it simultaneously reinforced Brazil's location on the international periphery.

Scholarship often invokes the cultural colonisation of Brazil by the United States throughout the 20th century as a central factor in contemporary modes of consumption. The flooding of the Brazilian airwaves with American music and cinema, the filling of magazines and print material with American styles and trends, and the generally outsized seepage of American culture across borders is by no means unique to Brazil, but the ways in which American culture manifested itself in and impacted on the country *are*. For instance, American cars were seen to promise that 'the development of a consumer-based democratic society would ease [the] racial and class tensions' that are characteristic of Brazil (Wolfe, 2010, p. 4); this invoked an early spectre of the developing ideology of neoliberalism, and once again, we find Brazil furnishing

the raw materials for these products of modern citizenship, this time through rubber.[16] The historian James Woodard (2011) has argued that 'market developmentalism'—an unofficial and organic form of developmentalism that championed the private consumption of American goods—was under way earlier than official US government development programmes in Brazil, and was ultimately more 'effective' in terms of encouraging positive views of the United States and building up Brazil as a consumer market for American goods. Woodard has shown that by the mid-20th century, Brazilian consumers displayed a strong interest in purchasing high-quality foreign goods, and that 'American' served as an effective shorthand for quality—even when elements of the raw materials needed for these American products actually came from Brazil.

Given that the *apaixonados* did not allude to the dictatorship period, neoliberalism, or American market intervention to explain their preference for foreign goods, but focused instead on colonial legacies, I argue for a need to situate analyses of the consumption of foreign (or counterfeit foreign) goods in Brazil within a longer timescale, in which the political events and trade flows of the 20th and 21st centuries are shown to be intertwined with reverberations from Brazil's postcolonial status. *Apaixonados'* use of these longer timeframes to think through structural issues showcases the persistence of elements of the colonial project, which have now been subsumed into and analytically reframed by neoliberal capitalism. This calls to mind the ideas of modernity/coloniality, which posits various forms and effects within the same modernity—a modernity that came about through and cannot be separated from the colonial division of the world. Reuben George Oliven (2000) has written about a Brazilian tendency to see 'modernity' as one import among many, but that modernity is not something that can be

[16] This applies to the case of the Ford Motor Company outpost in the Amazon, Fordlândia, described by Barkemeyer and Figge (2012) and Esch (2018); see also Garfield (2013) for a more general overview of the dependence of the United States on the Brazilian rubber supply.

adopted by a nation fully formed and pre-packaged; it is necessarily co-created, even if it is not co-produced equally by all participants. Lívia's generalised perception that Brazilians are inferior to people in 'developed' countries as a result of having been colonised (by Portugal, which yielded a particular outcome) is thrown into sharper relief through Gabriel's contemplation of what this background means in terms of access to the coffees he wants to consume and serve. The *apaixonados* intimated that Brazilians *expect* to be exploited, and that one part of this wider system of exploitation is a relegation to consuming what are perceived to be inferior goods. Both Gabriel and Lívia experience a modernity that is still tied intimately to the colonial experience.

### 2.3.3 MULTIPLE HEGEMONIES

Feelings of inferiority as a legacy of colonialism can manifest in many ways, but in Brazilian and Brazilianist scholarship, this has been primarily explored in terms of internal colonisation and racially based hierarchies (Vargas, 2005; Escallón, 2019). Race is a category created through the colonial project (Quijano, 2007), but by focusing on internal hierarchies, these theories miss the ongoing flux of other, coexisting hierarchies. Some of this is captured in the new emphasis on 'South–South' cooperation and collaboration manifested in, for example, Brazilian investments in Angola and the other lusophone African nations, as well as shifts in how former colonies relate both to each other and Portugal (Dos Santos et al., 2019). Given that modernity/coloniality and similar border-thinking initiatives are most commonly applied to and concerned with indigenous and/or subaltern communities (see: Dyrness and Sepúlveda, 2020; Mendoza, 2018), it is worth considering their relevance to *apaixonados*, most of whom are urban lower-middle or middle class, live in comfortable apartments, have completed some education, have disposable income, and are read as ethnically white in the Brazilian context. According to Walter Mignolo, modernity/coloniality 'points towards a different kind of hegemony, a multiple one' (2000, p. 310) and within the specialty coffee industry, we can

readily see such a multiple hegemony. In his study of the International Coffee Organization (1997), the political economist Robert H. Bates made the salient point that although Brazil—the world's largest supplier of coffee—could be called the supply-side hegemon, international political economy is such that while Brazil exerts power over other producing countries, it is still subservient to the desires and capital of coffee-importing nations. Likewise, while *apaixonados* mostly lead lives of relative privilege and advantage within São Paulo, they are also situated at the intersection of many disadvantages; the choices they would like to make as specialty coffee consumers are proscribed by the actions of coffee-importing nations, the responses of trade organisations like the SCA and the Brazilian Specialty Coffee Association (BSCA), and the actions of individual consumers in importing nations. *Apaixonados* were eager to explain the entrenched nature and ongoing repercussions of their colonial history, and to contextualise current problems in Brazil as part of a direct legacy of exploitation, even as they indirectly embodied these multiple hegemonies: They spoke from a position of comfort within the Brazilian context, yet are still disadvantaged from an international perspective—at least so far as their capacity as consumers of specialty coffee is concerned. Aspects of both of these strands of thought arose in a conversation I had one day with Cauã, the owner of the coffee shop Fora da Lei, who talked to me about the shifting lines of power, struggle, and global hierarchy in the coffee culture of São Paulo.

Cauã's customers who frequently travel bring him coffees from abroad, which he does not keep for his own consumption, but rather brews at his shop so his dedicated community of regulars can try them. This can sometimes backfire, as Cauã explained to me:

> …because then other people hear about this and come in specifically asking for the foreign stuff. And I won't necessarily have any, and then they don't want the Brazilian stuff because they think it's no good. I think this is some kind of built-in inferiority complex we have: people see something foreign and think, 'Oh this is good. It must be good because if it's American or German or something that's successful outside of Brazil, it must be better than our stuff.' But I wonder sometimes because I think it's a bit unconscious; they don't even taste the coffee—they just assume [it's better].

As he talked, we drank a Kenyan coffee roasted by Blue Bottle in San Francisco, USA, brought back to Brazil by a regular customer who works in an advertising agency in the neighbourhood and who had been in the USA on business. The coffee was, we agreed, delicious.

Coffee production strengthened in Brazil in the waning days of Portuguese rule, but only truly took off following independence and the declaration of the Empire of Brazil in 1822. Indeed, Steven Topik (1999) has argued that coffee should not be thought of as part of Brazil's colonial heritage because '[b]efore the last three decades of the colonial period very little coffee was exported from Brazil' (p. 88). He differentiates coffee from Brazil's other agricultural outputs because it led directly to industrialisation; it 'fueled the leap from rural society to urban industrial society. Its greatest success was negating the society and political structure that had nurtured it' (ibid, p.89). I take issue here with this stark separation of coffee from colonialism because coffee exportation from newly independent Brazil was conducted along existing structures of exchange and trade; this, in combination with the nature of Brazil's stepped progression to a democratic system, ensured that very little changed immediately in terms of economic power structures following Brazil's declaration of independence. The new government continued to support the production of coffee in order to maintain itself through taxes and tariffs; less than 100 years after coffee's introduction to Brazilian soil, coffee production for export was Brazil's single most important economic activity. By 1890, at the dawn of the Brazilian Republic, coffee was responsible for 65 per cent of Brazil's exports (Holloway, 2012; Watson and Achinelli, 2008). The continuation of the unequal wealth distribution that had begun during the early colonial period meant that in the same year, '80 percent of the population lived on the margin of subsistence, while 20 per cent controlled almost all wealth' (Topik, 2000, p. 19). As Brazil moved into the 20th century and embarked on an extensive process of industrialisation, the coffee economy became the 'primary centre of capital accumulation in Brazil,' according to Sérgio Silva (1976, p. 17). Silva, working within a Marxist

framework, situates coffee and industry as parts of capitalist development in Brazil that placed the country within an international economic system that institutionalised taxation and costly imports. As this 'coffee-industrial complex' grew, it prompted an expansion of 'other sectors which gained increased importance, such as trade, import firms, banks, services, the public sector, roads, electrification' (Fonseca and Salomão, 2017, n. p.). São Paulo lay at the centre of this development, and before they gave way to high-rises and corporate headquarters, Avenida Paulista—the most prestigious boulevard in the city—was home to the mansions of the wealthy coffee elite. Coffee helped to fuel Brazil's progression to an industrial, urban economy, but it did so in a social and political-economic context that was formed by an extractivist, colonial project.

Fora da Lei is not actually a café in the strict sense of the word; it is a refurbished military supply truck that has been turned into mobile coffee-cart, semi-permanently parked in the courtyard of a building one block away from Avenida Paulista. Operated by Cauã and his girlfriend Claudia, folding chairs are arranged around makeshift tables where men in suits and ties sit for a quick espresso, before they disappear back into the confines of their air-conditioned offices. After speaking to Cauã, I reconsidered his statement in light of his business's location and the fact that the majority of his customers belong to the professional classes who work in the upscale offices surrounding Avenida Paulista (he speculates that bankers, lawyers, and marketers make up the base of his regular clientele). The internalisation of a colonial mentality and the confusion surrounding Brazil's place within the global socio-political-economic hierarchy becomes all the more apparent in this location. When customers descend from their offices to go to Cauã's truck, frequently seeking out specifically foreign coffees, they are caught in a web of multiple hegemonies and hierarchies that are operating simultaneously and on different scales; when these customers reject the viable Brazilian alternatives that Cauã tries to sell them, they demonstrate a disregard for his expertise (which is enormous—I first met him when he

was a competitor at the 2018 Brazilian Barista Championship). Such an entrenched belief that foreign coffee is better (and the corollary, that Brazilian coffee is definitionally worse) is a manifestation of this entrenched perception of inferiority, which runs in tandem with the appeal of 'the foreign,' with foreignness being a central part of the assessment of what is 'good.' Not only is a foreign product good because it is foreign; it is good because *foreigners have deemed it good*.

The ways in which *apaixonados* invoke legacies of colonial power relations to explain contemporary phenomena is echoed in the work of political scientist Marcio Vieira (2018), which links the ontological (in)security of Brazil to its ambivalent postcolonial status. Trapped between emulation and repudiation of the West, neither modern nor entirely backward, larger temporal frameworks show how a sense of national 'self' and identity can be tied to postcolonial subjectivity. This, I argue, is also the case with the consumer's self and identity, with strong and enduring biases still being played out, acted upon, and influencing consumption preferences.

## 2.4 FOREIGN, DOMESTIC

Before proceeding to an in-depth discussion of the concept of *tipo exportação*, I will take a short, ethnographic look at the ways in which the desire for foreign goods mixes with access to local goods in Brazil; this will be explored further throughout this thesis, but its introduction here will help to contextualise the forthcoming discussion of *tipo exportação*. The contemporary Brazilian consumer experience cannot be understood fully in the context of an assumed separation between the categories of foreign and domestic goods, or between the spaces of production and consumption. In the case of Brazil, due to its colonial history and unique position as both a coffee-producing hegemon *and* a developed consumer economy, I show that these dichotomous understandings do not account for the actual experiences of consumers, who exist in the context of the more fluid and shifting definitions of and boundaries between dichotomies that pervade the social science literature related to consumption in Latin America: production and consumption, and foreign and domestic. Having established the pervasive

'allure of the foreign' in terms of consumer goods in Latin America, I will now interrogate what counts as foreign. This is relevant to studies of consumption in general and in Latin America in particular, where this binary understanding reflects a wider scholarly blindness concerning the region, whose countries have routinely functioned as producers of raw materials or as informal consumers. This emphasis on production as a discrete and bounded category has hindered studies into novel forms of consumption emerging in Latin America territories.

In Brazil, the categories of 'foreign' and 'domestic' are blurred and in constant negotiation, while the landscape of consumption is dynamic and contextual. In the case of the present research, *apaixonados* partake in modes of consumption that cannot be fully understood if one divides the goods involved into discrete 'foreign' and 'domestic' categories; when understood in both objective terms as well as socially and culturally, specialty coffee can be 'foreign' *even when grown in Brazil*.

The struggles the *apaixonados* face when they seek to obtain coffee from abroad (and, frequently, from elsewhere in Brazil) are such that it is necessary that they remain active participants in both domestic (and local) purchasing systems, if they wish to maintain a consistent stock of specialty coffee. Brazil's notoriously inconsistent postal service and opaque system of taxation on imports will be explored in greater ethnographic depth in the following chapter, but suffice to say that foreign observers might be surprised to learn just how difficult it is for Brazilian specialty coffee enthusiasts to pursue their passion for foreign coffees. Standards for the global specialty coffee community are set elsewhere and in a different infrastructural context that promotes the consumption of coffees that are both freshly roasted and diverse in geographic origin, and these standards—intended to differentiate specialty from non-specialty coffee—are nearly impossible to meet in the Brazilian reality. In order to engage with these standards in the context of material limitations, Brazilian consumers take an especial interest in domestically grown coffees that are deemed to be of exportation quality: *café tipo exportação*. Although

consumption styles and standards are imported and considered foreign, the product itself is domestic, and together, the two facets create a hybrid form of consumption experience.

In the 20th century, Brazil—like many other Latin American countries—established import substitution industrialisation programmes designed to reduce the country's dependence on imports, largely in response to the economic recession of the 1930s, which shrank the foreign markets on which Brazil relied to export its raw goods.[17] This recession impacted the ability of exporting nations to finance their imports, and so alongside its rapid industrialisation, Brazil imposed restrictions on imports that could rival domestic production in order to encourage a robust domestic consumer base. Having previously been prevented from manufacturing its own goods, Brazil was now forced to do so. Eventually, the economies of the Global North began to recover, as did demand for Brazilian coffee (and other) exports, but by this time, Brazil had established its own flourishing manufacturing sector and a more diversified economy. To this day, Brazil is still heavily reliant on its agricultural exports—nearly half of the country's exports in 2017 were agribusiness-related (CNA Brasil, 2017)—but not to the same extent as at the beginning of the 20th century. The emergence of a domestic manufacturing and production economic base has impacted the question of foreignness. Foreign goods are still desirable, but not just because they are scarce; rather, because they are inseparably associated with higher quality. The emergence of a diversified domestic economy has meant that Brazilians enjoy greater access to locally produced alternatives, but that alternative is almost always deemed inferior.

[17] The 1930s were a difficult time for Brazilian coffee production. Most of the main export markets had been crippled by the Great Depression and were purchasing coffee at a substantially reduced rate, and this—combined with several years of bumper crops—meant that there was an extraordinary surplus of unsold coffee. Various governmental measures were put into place to control this crisis, including the burning of 78 million bags of coffee—roughly three years' worth of production.

João, an out of work actor currently employed as a waiter, and I agreed to meet at Takkø to conduct our interview. When I arrived, he was purchasing a set of V60 filter papers—the proprietary single-use papers used to brew coffee with these specific Japanese-made drip-coffee brewers. I was frequently shocked at the cost of these papers—the price in Brazil is nearly double that in the UK—but Rodolfo, who was working behind the counter, assured us that they were the best papers to use.[18] João concurred: 'Yeah sure, you can get other papers, ones from here, but they're not as good. These ones work better, the coffee is nicer. Japanese engineering, you know? The Brazilian-made papers are just kind of crappy. Besides, they don't fit the cone correctly.' I noted that even though all the coffee he had on hand when I visited his home was Brazilian, he interpreted the coffee as tasting better when it had been 'foreignised'—when 'Japanese engineering' had intervened.

I had observed that Takkø is often crowded in the late afternoon, and that was the case on the day of this visit, so we drank our coffees standing near the counter, before repairing to a craft beer bar that João recommended. It had only just opened when we arrived, so was far quieter than Takkø, and an ideal place to record an interview. We considered the menu studiously (there were five beers on tap, rotated daily), before João selected a coffee stout and I an IPA. As I waited to collect the beers at the bar while João occupied a table near the door, I perused the food menu: currywurst and sausages. For the first time, I noted that the establishment was called 'kraut bar.' Intriguingly, the décor reminded me of… Takkø, which we had left to come here hardly 15 minutes previously.

Craft beer shares many things with specialty coffee, not least its consumer base. Many *apaixonados* are also craft beer drinkers; João was not the only one who suggested that we hold our meetings in a craft beer bar, while one of the students in a course at Wolff was a professional

[18] See Chapter 3 for a discussion of *custo Brasil*, or the comparatively higher prices of goods in Brazil.

beer sommelier. Indeed, I count myself as a craft beer consumer; soon after I arrived in São Paulo, already despondent at the thought of a year stretching ahead of me alcoholically punctuated only with Skol, the most common Brazilian beer, I was overjoyed to find a small craft beer emporium and bar a few blocks from my flat. It was, to my taste buds and beer preference, a godsend. I struck up a friendship with the jovial owner, Gustavo, and often dropped in to visit, sometimes to drink a beer or two and to counteract the effects of the day's caffeine, and sometimes just to chat. I taught him a bit about coffee, and he taught me much more about beer.

Craft beer is the beer equivalent of specialty coffee. An artisanal, high-end product generally manufactured in small batches, it is often valued less for its ability to get one drunk than for its nature as 'an experience-based and symbolic product' (Koch and Sauerbronn, 2019, p. 3); it serves as an identity marker, much in the same way that specialty coffee aficionados deemphasise the caffeine content of coffee as a central part of its appeal. The craft beer sector in Brazil has grown rapidly, and has been estimated to now constitute 2 per cent of the nation's total beer market (Goia and Chaves, 2016). Just as is the case with specialty coffee, for diehard enthusiasts, craft beer makes up an important part of their lifestyle and community.

What surprised me most about the booming craft beer scene in São Paulo was the extent to which it complicated the ideas of producer/consumer and domestic/foreign with which I had previously been grappling regarding coffee. Craft beer in Brazil is consumed in a very similar way to the Global North. Brazil imports almost 100 per cent of the hops used in its domestically brewed beer, mostly from the US and Germany (Gregori et al., 2019), because the Brazilian climate and environment only allow for hops to be cultivated in a small region of the country. Barley grows more abundantly in the Brazilian climate, but Brazil still only produces 43 per cent of the barley required to supply its domestic brewing industry (EMBRAPA, 2021). Just as specialty coffee has spurred city-dwellers in Brazil to learn more about rural agricultural

production, there is also a growing interest in the cultivation of hops in Brazil, partly due to scientific curiosity and a desire to see what can be created, but also for immediate, practical reasons. Although there are fewer legal restrictions on the importation of hops than coffee (which can be attributed to the fact that there is effectively no domestic hops market to protect), taxes are still substantial—there is an 8 per cent importation charge before any transit or vice taxes (Flanders, 2020).[19] Some observers have attributed the frequent use of unexpected local ingredients in Brazilian craft beer in part to the expense of imported base materials; it is a creative way to both cut the supply chain and contribute to the craft beer community's enthusiasm for novelty and ingenuity.

The differences between craft beer and specialty coffee in Brazil chiefly lie in the derivation of the raw material and provide an avenue to explore the dichotomous understandings of production/consumption and domestic/foreign. In his work on craft beer and community in Las Vegas, the sociologist Michael Ian Borer has written that 'what is considered "local", however, doesn't necessarily have to consist of material goods or ideas from a single proximate location' (2019, p. 116). This can go some way to explain how a Czech-style beer with American hops made in the southern Brazilian state of Santa Catarina—home to a substantial population of German immigrants, their descendants, and breweries—can be considered a local beer.[20] Borer details how the craft beer industry conceptualises 'the local' as a form of 'translocalism,' which is not concerned with a specific locality, but rather with connections and connectivity formed across and between multiple localities. 'As such,' he writes, 'a beer from *your* city might by symbolically worth more than a beer from *my* city, at least for scene participants who want to expand their aesthetic knowledge of the scene's core significant object' (Borer, 2019, p. 117). Expanding this approach beyond the scope of cities within the same nation, it can be applied

[19] Hop extract, used for lighter beers, is subject to a higher rate of tax, as a processed product.
[20] To use the example suggested by Zucco et al. (2017).

equally to specialty coffee and the value placed on sampling coffees (both roasted and grown) from around the world. One shortfall in Borer's analysis, if extrapolated to Brazil, could be said to be the question of institutionalised issues of access: What happens if it is illegal or impossible for someone to obtain beer from outside his own city? Or coffee from outside his own country? The answer, it seems, lies in Borer's concept of how *ideas* themselves can be considered local, and by extension also non-local.

The hours I spent circulating in the craft beer bars of São Paulo and chatting with Gustavo at his establishment taught me that as long as there is a domestically produced analogue to a foreign-produced product, the domestic-foreign divide does not necessarily exist as a binary. Hops grown in Europe can be imported and used by 2Cabeças, a brewery in the south of Brazil, to make an IPA that is flavoured with passionfruit grown in the north of Brazil, resulting in a 'maracajuipa' (*maracujá* [passionfruit] + IPA) that is still experienced and marketed as a 'local' beer. Likewise, coffee is considered a domestic product because it is grown in Brazil, but specialty coffee grown in Brazil can be seen as a little foreign because it echoes a style of consumption from elsewhere; coffee brewed in a domestically manufactured drip cone is not considered to be the same as one made with foreign processes in the form of, for instance, the Japanese V60 brewing device used by João—even if the coffee beans themselves are identical. Although Brazilians are frequently obliged to brew Brazilian coffee with Brazilian-made equipment, if *apaixonados* can follow a 'specialty' recipe culled from an American coffee blog that differs from how their regular social circle makes coffee, the resulting cup is somehow blessed by having been touched by 'the foreign.' In the following chapter, I will return to this point in my exploration of how Brazilian-made brewing equipment that emulates a foreign design is seen to hybridise the coffee beverage it produces.

Not only are the spaces of production and consumption in Brazil not as clearly demarcated as the extant theory would have it, but the very notions of 'domestic' and 'foreign' would benefit

from further interrogation. Due to their history, Brazilians are coaxed into a broader conception of what can be placed into a foreign *type*, and to understand foreignness as neither a uniform nor an objective category. In the following section, I will continue this exploration and introduce the concept of *tipo exportação* as a framework for understanding consumption in situations where the spaces of production and consumption and the categories of foreign and domestic are not clear-cut.

## *2.5 TIPO EXPORTAÇÃO*

In Brazil, in addition to foreign and domestic goods, there is an additional category, *tipo exportação*, which operates beyond the foreign-domestic binary; it encompasses the shades of grey that define the boundary between foreign and national products. *Tipo exportação* represents a hybrid form of good; the hybridity has both material and symbolic aspects, being a domestic product valued for its foreign-consumption potential. An understandable response to Brazil's historical orientation to exportation and lingering sense of uncertainty with regard to its colonial legacies, it is more than just a way of describing a hybrid category of good; *tipo exportação* is a pervasive designation throughout Brazil, and is understood by Brazilians across many contexts. Central to this study is the ways in and extent to which *tipo exportação* informs emerging modes of consumption such as specialty coffee, and how participation in this mode is not only reactive to the legacy of *tipo exportação* but seeks to actively disrupt it. The strength and prevalence of the concept of *tipo exportação* mean that contemporary modes of globalised consumption in Brazil must coexist with and be understood in reference to it.

As this chapter has sought to make clear, 'foreign' goods from developed nations are considered the most desirable in the Brazilian consumption hierarchy, but are not always easy to obtain. Into this void enters *tipo exportação*: domestically produced but exportation-quality goods. *Tipo exportação* goods are not just thought to be of higher quality; they invoke the imaginative potential of foreign consumers using the same objects, consuming the same foods. *Tipo exportação*

means 'exportation grade,' but it is not an official trading category that cross-cuts all goods, so those that stay in-country and are marketed as *tipo exportação* are not necessarily of higher quality than regular domestic goods, nor are they necessarily exportation grade; they are simply being marketed as such, based on a belief in a quality hierarchy, and where local production sits within this hierarchy. Specific agricultural industries do have their own qualifications for what counts as *tipo exportação* quality in order to be brought to the international market (generally based on the number of defects permitted in a sample and defined by international trade organisations), and, as a melon seed producer explained, the reason for these standards for what constitutes *tipo exportação* quality is 'to meet international demand': 'For the exportation process, you will need to use cultivars that have higher quality, better flavour, and greater durability in the post-harvest period'—the implication being that, in this case, the melons that are not exported are inferior in quality, flavour, and durability (Sakata, 2019). All but the wealthiest Brazilians struggle to access genuinely high-quality or foreign goods, making the *tipo exportação* designation a way to obtain (or feel as if one is obtaining) products that would satisfy foreign consumers. A *tipo exportação* product 'is made and produced with a view to external markets,' whether or not those markets are reached (Penna, 2013). *Tipo exportação* goods rely on postcolonial legacies of inferiority to obtain and retain a certain cachet.

I first encountered the notion of *tipo exportação* and the perception that exported or exportation-quality Brazilian goods were superior to those that remain in-country in the north-eastern city of Recife, where I was living in 2012. At a party, the host offered me a drink of the popular Brazilian spirit *cachaça*, and informed me that it was a 'special' *cachaça* because it was *tipo exportação*. The shot of the aguardente liquor being offered was from a bottle of unaged, white *cachaça* made by Pitú, a brand that is headquartered close to Recife and with nationwide distribution. What distinguished this bottle from the brands available in the local supermarkets, however, was the label in English declaring it to be 'Original Brazilian RUM' and the sticker

on the back of the bottle that noted that it had been imported to the United States by Winebow Inc. of New York State. The host explained that his cousin had brought it back from his honeymoon in the United States, and while I myself could not taste a difference between this Pitú and the local Pitú variants that I had previously tried, I was touched that the host had shared such a 'special' drink with me.

After moving to São Paulo, I began to notice products labelled '*tipo exportação*' in supermarkets and shops. The first time this occurred was in an upscale supermarket a friend of mine had tipped me off about, squirreled away in the basement of a shopping mall just off Avenida Paulista. The term was blazoned on a package of *queijo coalho*, a Brazilian cheese that I have never once seen outside Brazil—not even when I desperately searched for it across all of London for a Brazilian-themed dinner I was hosting. The *tipo exportação* designation is not restricted to upscale supermarkets; in just about any corner shop one walks into, one can find even coffee and sugar labelled as such, with the implication that these goods have fewer defects than the conventional versions.

The garden of Isso É Café in the Vila Madalena neighbourhood of São Paulo is an oasis of relaxation located just steps from the bustling Beco de Batman, one of the city's major tourist spots, a whirl of neon graffiti and selfie-takers. On one occasion, I was sitting on stools under a tree heavy with lush, pink blossoms that conveniently hid the shards of glass that topped the wall surrounding the courtyard and sipping an *espresso tônica* (served with a slice of candied grapefruit) with Juli and Sara, who described what they thought of *tipo exportação* goods. Both were young professionals and relatively recent transplants from the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, where they'd known each other since their school days. While Sara was a born-and-bred southerner, Juli had moved from the north-eastern state of Ceará at the age of 12 after her father had been transferred to the same Petrobras refinery where Sara's father had worked before his retirement.

'They're better, definitely higher quality,' Juli said with confidence. Despite her small stature and fresh face, Juli—a junior doctor specialising in paediatric trauma—was a force to be reckoned with, permanently exuding confidence.

'When I see *tipo exportação* written on something, I know it's going to cost more. I just think it refers to expensive stuff,' Sara dissented. At that time finishing a master's degree in electrical engineering, she was the same age as Juli but less established, so I imagined that some of her concern with the expense of *tipo exportação* products had to do with the need to live on a student budget.

'Sure, it's more expensive. But it's *better*,' Juli admonished Sara, continuing:

> The region we're from produces a lot of meat of very high quality, but most of it is sent abroad. When I'm at home [in Rio Grande do Sul], I know how to find meat that is good. But here in São Paulo? There's no guarantee that it isn't dirty, or of very poor quality. What is usually here is the stuff they couldn't sell to foreigners so they make available for us. It's good to look out for *tipo exportação* because it's better.

'São Paulo is so expensive,' Sara sighed, swirling her straw in the *espresso tônica,* which fizzed back up for a brief moment, before falling still again.

Felipe, the owner of Isso É Café, overheard our conversation and offered his input, from the perspective of a business owner. Loquacious and fond of a good party, Felipe was born in Brazil but raised in the United States, but uninspired by the career prospects that stretched ahead of him, moved back to Brazil after university to work on his family's coffee farm, so has experienced both ends of the Brazilian export chain:

> If you go to the centre of São Paulo, such as to [Edíficio] Copan, there's a famous coffee shop, Café Floresta. If you had asked a *paulistano* as little as five years ago where the best coffee is, they'd say Café Floresta. Have you been? Have you had their coffee? There's a sign up front that says '*Tipo exportação*.' If you live in Brazil long enough, you'll get to know that there are products, and then there are *tipo exportação* products.
>
> I've even talked to suppliers and it's been like, 'No, man, this is crap. I want a better box' [for shipping his roasted coffee]. 'Oh, I get it, you want *tipo exportação*!' What does that even mean? It means there's what's sold to Brazilians, and then there's what's exported.

Felipe, having lived and worked in both Chicago and São Paulo, offered a useful perspective on the different consumption experiences in the two nations. He was able to articulate something most *paulistanos* I spoke with felt to be the case, but did not necessarily have the direct experience to confirm in a comparative manner. Felipe's statement calls to mind the work of Caroline Humphrey (2018) on consumerism in post-Soviet Russia. Humphrey has found that from at least the late 1960s onward, most Muscovites understood that there was a division between the goods they had access to and those available to people outside the Soviet Union. She frames this difference—even if it was not experientially verifiable for the average consumer—as being not only one of expected *quantity* of choice, but also of expected *quality*. In the case of Brazil, it can be observed that such structural inequalities of consumption are not restricted to socialist contexts, but can also be a feature of life and attitudes in capitalist nations.

Just as this (rarely voiced) belief in the superior quality of non-Soviet goods was shared by citizens across the Soviet Union, Juli, Sara, and Felipe—Brazilians with different family backgrounds and from different states—all understood and conversed with the idea of *tipo exportação*. Juli was better able to navigate the still-unfamiliar city of São Paulo by keeping her eyes open for either products that are explicitly labelled as *tipo exportação* or those that she felt were of that level of quality. Sara recognised the economic connotations of *tipo exportação*, but deemed such products to be too expensive to regularly purchase; a *tipo exportação* label is often associated with 'premium' products that command higher prices. Felipe was acutely aware of a double standard—'there's what's sold to Brazilians and then there's what's exported.'

To date, there has been little academic work on *tipo exportação*, and none within the field of anthropology or in the English language. The most robust definition has been proposed by Silvia Ramos Sollai (2011), whose research focuses on the acquisition of Portuguese as a second language, and who has looked at the ways in which Brazil is represented in language textbooks. She writes:

> Brazilian products destined for export such as coffee, shoes, and oranges have a superior quality to those destined for internal commerce in order to meet the requirements mandated by consuming countries. From packaging to passing a critical selection of the content itself, the final tipo exportação product is visibly superior to that destined for domestic consumption […] It is general knowledge [among Brazilians] that the best articles do not remain in Brazil; they are exported. (p. 163)

The market researchers Daniella Ramos Silva and Sérgio de Mello, who have looked at the perception of narratives and histories of *cachaça* as a typical Brazilian product, have proposed a short definition of *tipo exportação* that complements that of Ramos Sollai. They write that the 'cultural representation of *tipo exportação cachaça* is more favourable than for that meant for the internal market, even when the product is the same, but with modified packaging and seals. *Cachaça tipo exportação* doesn't just signify a product destined for abroad, but a better product' (Ramos Silva and de Mello, 2010, n. p.). We can thus derive a fairly robust definitional understanding of *tipo exportação* as goods destined for export that are perceived to be of superior quality and qualitatively different to products that stay inside the country.

Writing about the so-called 'supermarket revolution' in *The Market and the Masses in Latin America*, Andy Baker notes that this phenomenon is not confined to Brazil but is instead common across the region: 'Local agribusinesses [in Latin America] sell their goods in international markets if unable to find a high enough price at home. Similarly, many of the highest-quality products are exported to satisfy the more discriminating demands of developed-country consumers' (2009, p. 75). However, Baker misses in this analysis the growing number of consumers in Brazil (and elsewhere in Latin America) who are in a position to make such 'discriminating demands.' My experience with the bottle of Pitú *cachaça* in Recife calls to mind the importance of *signification* in these situations: Whether or not *tipo exportação cachaça* is actually higher quality does not entirely matter; merely the fact that is has been exported confers that idea of quality, and allows the consumer to enact discriminating demands and 'perform' good taste. Even if types of demand (and the ability to act upon or meet them) differ between consumers in Brazil

and what Baker conceives of as 'developed-country consumers,' the Brazilian public—including the *apaixonados*—is pushing back against the idea that their country's best goods should be reserved for exportation.

### 2.5.1 *TIPO EXPORTAÇÃO* THINKING

*Cachaça*, coffee, milk, chocolate, oranges, and cheese: I have encountered all of these comestible commodities and more bearing the label *tipo exportação* over the course of my time in Brazil. One day, in the run-up to the 2018 World Cup, an acquaintance posted a news article on Facebook about a FIFA referee—the only Brazilian referee selected to arbitrate at the Russia-hosted tournament—with the headline '*Tipo exportação* referee now works for Paraná football.'[21] This stopped my idle scrolling in its tracks. I knew that *cachaça*, cheese, and coffee could be *tipo exportação*, but a referee, one Sandro Meira Ricci, aged 43, originally from Minas Gerais? I was suddenly awakened to the rich metaphorical possibilities of *tipo exportação* and its varied uses beyond what are explicitly or obviously consumer goods.

I began to look into the idea of *tipo exportação* further, and found it popping up in a range of Brazilian academic works that spanned a variety of disciplines, but often—curiously—without explanation. The prevalence with which the term was employed but not interrogated confirms that: a) *tipo exportação* can be applied in many situations and is not restricted to physical consumer goods, although there is often a symbolic act of consumption performed, such as in the case of trade of the referee; and b) it is assumed that readers will be sufficiently familiar with the notion that an explanation is not warranted. One frequent advantage of being a cultural outsider is an inability to take some things for granted, and because the term and its usage did not seem as obvious or neutral to me as it might to a local, I thought it prudent to investigate

[21] *Arbitro 'tipo exportação' agora é do futebol paranaense* (Tribuna PR, 2018).

further and explore the ways in which *tipo exportação* can be applied to anything that has gone on to successfully represent Brazil, or some aspect of the country, abroad.

The major current within Brazilian academic literature where one finds the idea of *tipo exportação* deployed is feminist literature on gender and race, particularly works dealing with the persistent stereotype of the *mulata tipo exportação*—the idealised, racialised, sensual Brazilian woman who still dominates touristic marketing images of Brazil (Edmonds, 2010; Williams, 2014). There are many similarities between the Brazilian *mulata tipo exportação* and the Japanese geisha (Moeran, 1996; Moeran and Skov, 2013; Sheppard, 2019); the latter is notorious as an Orientalist representation, and the Brazilian *mulata* is similarly problematic, even though it has not been the subject of as expansive a global scholarly investigation. The way it has challenged the image of the *mulata tipo exportação* has placed Brazilian feminist thought at the forefront of intersectional feminism; Brazilian feminist scholars have readily engaged with the complex linkages between sexism, racism, and classism (Gilliam, 1998; Viana, 2010). This strain of feminist literature has contributed importantly to dismantling the ongoing systems of oppression faced by women, and particularly those of colour, in Brazil; however, to complete such analyses, it behoves scholars to explore the significances of *tipo exportação* beyond its application to Brazilian *mulata* women.

Deise Nunes, who was crowned Miss Brazil in 1986—the first visibly afrodescendent woman to win the title—had previously competed in a pageant called Miss Mulata. In her studies into the press coverage surrounding Nunes' historic victory, the historian Beatriz Quadrado (2016) directs our attention to an article entitled '*Tipo Exportação* Black Beauty,'[22] noting that this framing of Nunes foregrounds 'an unusual beauty that serves to please foreigners, an exotic beauty; besides, it obviously transforms black beauty into a product' (p. 356). Similarly,

[22] *Beleza Negra Tipo Exportação*

Leonardo Davino de Oliveira (2018) published a media content analysis that examined representations of *travesti*[23] protagonists and androgyny in music and literature and the idea of the '*tipo exportação travesti*,' which came to prominence in the 1970s when there was a surge in *travesti* migration to France. However successful the *travestis* were in their new lives in France—while by no means perfect, France was held to be generally more tolerant of and safe for *travestis*—de Oliveira contends that *tipo exportação travestis* were never able to be seen as anything other than exotic objects of consumption. This history of viewing Brazilians abroad as commodities and objects of consumption convinced me that a closer examination of the concept of *tipo exportação* would constitute a valuable contribution to feminist critiques of capitalism and the circulation of symbolic value.

The scholar Larissa Alves (2018) looked at the 25th-anniversary edition of fashion magazine *Elle Brasil* to document how fashion can express both individual and national identities, paying especial attention to the cover, which featured supermodel Giselle Bündchen draped in the Brazilian flag, accompanied by the headline '*tipo exportação*.' More than the other authors cited in this section, Alves breaks down the usage of the term *tipo exportação*—at least as she interprets it in the context of fashion—describing it as 'the culture that Brazil exports to the world,' and further suggesting that 'national culture itself is a [consumer] product' (n. p.). To Alves' argument I would like to add—I will presently make the case in more detail in the context of coffee—that not only can a national culture as a whole be thought of as *tipo exportação*, but specific consumer goods can carry symbolic elements of a national culture. Alves notes an instance of the term '*tipo exportação*' being used as the title given to an article on Brazilian models who have started to experience international success; becoming *tipo exportação* represents, in the

[23] A person assigned male sex at birth but who has a feminine gender identity is frequently called a 'travesti' in Brazil, particularly when they engage in sex work. Researcher Don Kulick has described this as based not on a division between men and women, but rather between '"men" and "not men"' (1998, p. 235).

modelling industry at least, the ideal career trajectory and success. The *Elle* edition then goes on to employ sporting metaphors in its descriptions of fashion careers—leading on to football, the other major field in which I have seen this expression employed frequently.

In another recent publication that deploys the term, the anthropologist Lucas Melo (2018) follows the experiences of football players from the African diaspora in Portugal and France, and posits that black *tipo exportação* players from Africa undergo a form of processing that sees them transformed from 'raw, African material' into final products that are European (p. 179). One possible criticism of Melo's work, however, is its unquestioning use of the term *tipo exportação* outside the Brazilian context; writing as a Brazilian and publishing in a Brazilian journal, Melo discusses both lusophone and francophone footballers, yet deploys *tipo exportação* without providing a definition. The reader is unable to conclude whether this is a relevant category for the players he mentions (particularly the francophone ones), but given the absence of a clear context, one can only assume that *tipo exportação* is a readily intelligible category for the (Brazilian) reader.

*Tipo exportação* can also be used in a more abstract and metaphorical sense. For instance, Ana Luiza Monteiro Alves (2018) has written about '*tipo exportação* racism' in Brazilian telenovelas—which are notorious for their limited positive representations of Afrobrazilians (Carter, 2018)—on Cuban television, where their popularity could serve to exacerbate existing racial inequalities by normalising new representations of Afrodescendents. Mila Burns (2016) has looked at the notion of a '*tipo exportação* dictatorship' to explore the alleged support provided by the Brazilian military government in the overthrow of the government of former President Salvador Allende in Chile. Karla Bronsztein (2012) deploys '*tipo exportação* religiosity' in her analysis of the discursive similarities between Brazilian evangelical churches and their overseas outposts. Despite their undoubted value, these studies simply serve to provoke renewed interest in fully parsing the connotations of *tipo exportação*. They make no attempt to critically probe the

term; in fact, all three abovementioned articles use *tipo exportação* in their titles, but nowhere in the body of the work. Even when scholarship reports that a certain form of dictatorship successfully trialled in Brazil is later emulated in Chile with Brazilian support, this does little to contribute to our understanding because it is an established fact that some things made in Brazil are exported elsewhere, and instead of offering nuance, instead inspires many questions: Is everything exported from Brazil necessarily *tipo exportação*? Must something first be successful in Brazil to be *tipo exportação*? What if something is exported from Brazil, but doesn't establish a successful market abroad? How does quality function in this equation? Contemporary work that touches on the idea of *tipo exportação* is replete with assumptions and lacking in critical assessment, but is nevertheless somewhat useful because it reveals the prevalence and endurance of the idea, and validates the assertion of this thesis: that it merits further interrogation.

Because it is possible to apply the *tipo exportação* designation to styles, modes of doing, and even people, a formal process of exportation is not necessarily a requirement for something to obtain the designation, given that borders may be crossed in less tangible and more metaphorical senses. The power possessed by foreign goods and foreigners as tastemakers in turn reaffirms certain domestic goods as worthy of consumption, whether they are exported officially, are exported in an abstract sense, or remain in-country. In the 2020 Netflix documentary series 'Anitta – Made in Honório,' the now-internationally chart-topping pop star Anitta recounts the difficulties she initially faced when seeking to break into the mainstream Brazilian music scene due to the fact that she sings *funk*, a genre associated with Rio de Janeiro's urban *favelas* and that has been generally disdained by Brazilian upper- and middle-class consumers.[24] She

[24] Funk is most closely associated with the economic and social classes who participated in the *rolezinhos* phenomenon.

began to strategically court international press and collaborations early on in her career because, in her words:

> I realised that Brazilians don't value what comes from our own country. We don't. There's a big tendency to think that anything foreign is automatically better. I started to realise that, since funk is a popular beat, people would never see it as something worthy of respect. Unless foreigners took a liking to it [*virasse um queridinho dos gringos*].

Anitta's strategy paid off and today she is one of the best-selling female pop artists in the world, regularly collaborating with major English-language stars, and, as the most-streamed artist in Brazil (Variety, 2020), she has achieved her goal of bringing *funk* into the mainstream through the strategy of foreign affiliation. She is frequently described as a singer of '*funk tipo exportação*,' but this scene in the documentary was not without irony. I was first alerted to it when a screenshot with Portuguese subtitles began circulating on my WhatsApp and social media networks (Figure 4). In it, Anitta is seen sitting on the sofa in her home with a bowl of *açaí* (a type of smoothie made from the *açaí* berry, native to the Amazon region but popularised in Rio de Janeiro) in front of her. As she speaks about this tendency to value the foreign, tacitly criticising it, the image zooms into the pillows on her sofa, both of which are decorated with the flag of the United Kingdom, and as online commentators pointed out, there is also a model of the Eiffel Tower on the coffee table. This image shows both the persistence of the notion that foreign goods are desirable (as one online commenter put it: 'Who's going to tell her that Louis Vuitton and Chanel aren't domestic brands???') and the ways in which foreign approval can be deployed to secure domestic approval. It was a revealing moment showing the classic structures of *tipo exportação* in action, as well as its complicated nature: Even as she described her self-conscious awareness of and resistance to the idea, she nevertheless herself exhibited an affinity for the foreign.

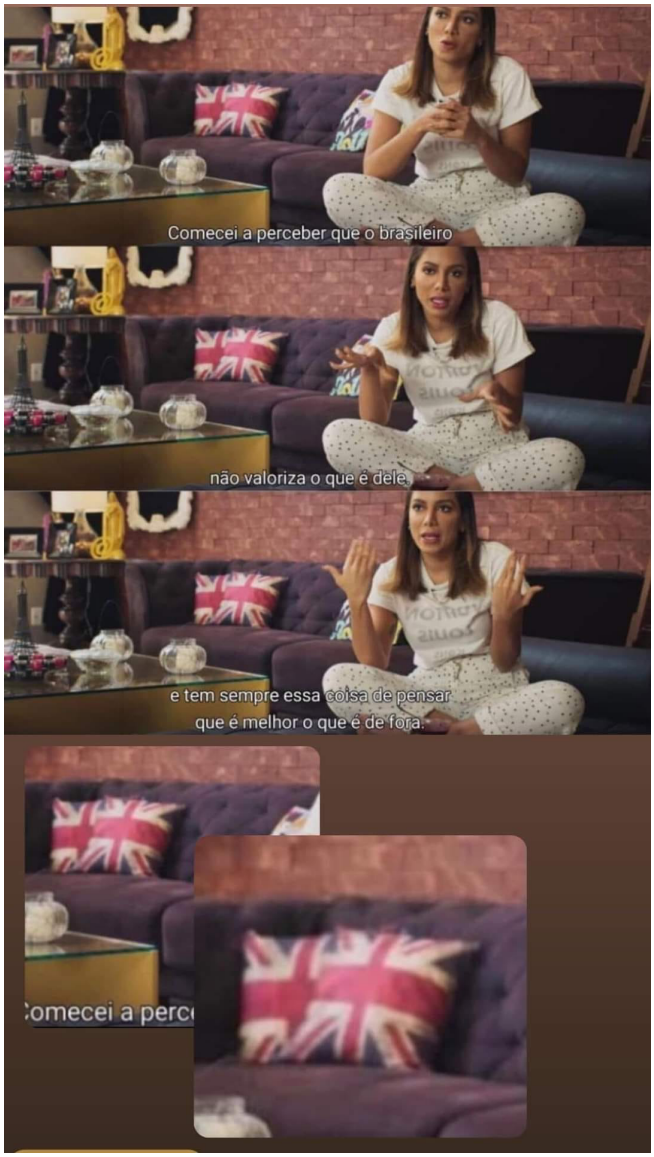


FIGURE 4: ANITTA MEME CIRCULATED ON WHATSAPP

I propose that *tipo exportação* represents a new phenomenon in studies of consumer preferences: It alludes to a domestically produced good that takes its symbolic value from the idea that it is deemed sufficiently good to be consumed by the foreigners to whom could be is exported. In their work on the value of imports in Latin America, Orlove and Bauer argue that domestic products are an 'almost infinitely plastic concept,' in that the definition of 'domestic' has the ability to expand, capture, and naturalise something invented or manufactured elsewhere (1997, p. 13). Building on this idea, the consumer historian Karl Gerth's evaluations of equivalent Chinese attitudes run parallel to my observations in Brazil. According to Gerth, in addition to 'domestic,' 'Chinese' and 'foreign' are also plastic ideas whose definitions shift over time 'in order to stigmatize specific commodities, companies, and consumers' (2003, p. 20). *Tipo exportação* is one variation on this general concept of plasticity that is not restricted to Brazil but can rather manifest in various ways across the world. However, the local form that it takes *is*

specific, predicated on the histories and relationships to trade and national identity outlined in this chapter.

There are two necessary aspects of the term that are absent from the definitions of *tipo exportação* articulated so far. Firstly, they have only considered goods that are actually exported, and not those that are deemed *tipo exportação* but remain in-country. The bottle of *cachaça* I encountered in Recife had been exported, only to make its way back into the country, but other goods labelled as *tipo exportação* are sold in Brazil to Brazilians and remain in-country; what's more, some of these goods are *only* aimed at the domestic market and not intended for exportation at all. This circumstance is an opportunity for an analysis of a mode of consumption that complements studies on how local foods—especially those associated with lower social classes or Indigenous populations—increase in status locally after they have become popular abroad. Furthermore, given that their background is in disciplines outside anthropology and the related social sciences, the authors who have suggested definitions of *tipo exportação* do not show how the category is experienced, what it means to people, or how individuals understand and interact with the term and the ideas it conveys; neither do they consider points of contestation or subversion. The work of anthropologist Sarah Bowen reveals a similar process of symbolic value increase in the surge in popularity of the Mexican agave-based spirit mescal; following a mezcal craze in New York City, the spirit became trendier in large Mexican cities such as Mexico City and Guadalajara. Bowen records the poignant change from the perspective of one mezcal bar owner from Mexico City:

> It scares us to talk about mezcal […] it scares us to talk about our own products […] Mexico has always been a little *malinchista* in this sense, always bringing things from the outside, rejecting the Mexican.[25] […] Mexican is corrupt, cheap, crappy. … [However, we have come to] see that Mexican [products] can reach the highest level.

[25] *Malinchista* is a pejorative Spanish term used to describe those who value 'the foreign' over 'the domestic.' Used widely in Central America, the term is derived from the name of the Indigenous interpreter and mistress of Hernán

(2016, p. 169)

A product does not need to actually be exported to increase in value and prestige, such as occurred in the case of the Pitú *cachaça*—all of the mezcal considered in Bowen's analysis was produced and consumed within Mexico—but an association with consumers outside the country of production adds symbolic value, whether or not that specific bottle has ever left the country.

The second fault line in the extant work on *tipo exportação* derives from the fact that the authors are working in disciplines outside anthropology and the related social sciences. Although they have suggested practical definitions of *tipo* exportação, and provided media and historical examples to draw on, the element of the lived experience is missing: These works do not show how the category is experienced, what it means to people, or how individuals understand and interact with the term and the ideas it conveys; neither do they consider points of contestation or subversion.

In the framework I propose, a *tipo exportação* product is a hybrid good, one that operates beyond the domestic–foreign binary. The phrase *tipo exportação* need not be explicitly marked on a package—although it frequently is—because, while there may be industry standards for specific exported food products, there is no unified formal designation with legal definitions. Rather, *tipo exportação* serves as cultural shorthand for high-quality goods, whose perception of quality derives from its affiliation with the possibility of a foreign consumer. A necessary condition for an object to be considered *tipo exportação* is that it is actually of higher quality or simply perceived as such. A *tipo exportação* object does not even have to be exported; goods that circulate within Brazil can be marked or spoken about as *tipo exportação* as long as they are deemed worthy of

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Cortés, who was said to have betrayed the Indigenous populations through her association with Cortés, thereby aiding the Conquest. See Cypress (1991) for further information.

exportation and held to be something that foreigners would consume, in which case the necessary value has been accrued.

I term this circumstance in which domestic goods are valued for their symbolic association with the foreign '*tipo exportação* thinking.' There are two necessary preconditions to arrive at *tipo exportação* thinking: A respect of or desire for the foreign, and a belief that one's own domestic products are of inferior quality than those consumed elsewhere. This belief that the best products one's country offers will almost certainly be exported (and therefore consumed by foreigners) makes it possible for locally produced and consumed *tipo exportação* goods to be deemed of higher quality; such locally produced goods become desirable because they straddle the boundary between the foreign and the domestic. *Tipo exportação* thinking can thus be understood as a logical consumer orientation in Brazil, given the nation's colonial history and continued exportation focus within the contemporary global economy. Furthermore, I consider '*tipo exportação* structures' to be the conditions of modernity/coloniality that engender the salience of the category in the first place, and that are reinforced by the ongoing valorisation of 'the foreign.'

And so we return to specialty coffee, which I argue is necessarily and by definition a *tipo exportação* good due to Brazil's longstanding tradition of exporting the best of its coffee for foreign consumption, leaving the remainder to be consumed internally, in addition to infrastructural problems that largely limit Brazilian specialty coffee consumers to domestic options, making them likely devotees of exportation-grade coffee.

We need only consider the change in signage at DaTerra coffee farm to understand the power of *tipo exportação* and the ways in which it can be symbolically conveyed, even when the term itself is not employed. The DaTerra farm, located in the Cerrado Mineiro region, was founded by the wealthy D'Paschoal family, who made their money selling tyres and running a

nationwide chain of auto repair stores, but wanted a way to offset the negative environmental impacts of their primary line of business. They started with cattle and then fruit, and in the 1970s hit on coffee, and today, with nearly 6,000 hectares of land, they are one of the largest coffee operations in the country, producing nearly 5,000,000 pounds of coffee per year.

One reaches DaTerra by turning off the main highway from Patrocínio (the nearest town) and heading down a local road to the main farm complex. When I visited for the first time in 2017, I was greeted on this smaller road by a sign reading 'DaTerra: Sustainable Coffees,' but before this new sign was put in place in 2015, when the company commissioned an updated, refreshed logo and moved to use more English-language promotional materials, it read 'DaTerra: *cafe tipo exportação*.'

Although some of what DaTerra produces does wind up as commodity coffee (between 15 and 20 per cent annually), the vast sums of money that they spend on research, development, experimental varieties, post-harvest processing techniques, marketing, and travel means that they produce a tremendous amount of absolutely outstanding coffees, which they then export.[26] DaTerra's coffees have been used in the only two times a world championship-level barista has won with a Brazilian coffee (Klaus Thomsen, 2007 World Barista Champion; Emi Fukahori, 2018 World Brewer's Cup Champion). Juliana Sorati, part of DaTerra's marketing team, explained to me during my visit that the family had chosen to put the sign in English because although they had hosted visitors for years, the number of foreign guests and buyers was increasing steadily. Due to their ever-more-solid foothold in the international market, DaTerra did not need to explicitly market themselves to Brazilians as *tipo exportação*; the presence of DaTerra's coffees in many of the world's most-renowned coffee shops and the constant stream

[26] This is a fairly standard amount of diversion to commodity for any specialty coffee operation because it is difficult to ensure that all the coffee produced will reach the 80-point threshold. Commercial-grade coffees are sold without DaTerra's name and used anonymously for domestic blends.

of high-powered foreign visitors (who would expect to be catered to in English, the lingua franca of specialty coffee) did that for them.

Given *tipo exportação*'s ubiquity and the fact that many *apaixonados* mentioned it of their own volition concerning their personal consumption practices and perceptions of the value of coffee, contemporary coffee consumption in Brazil cannot be understood without reference to the idea of *tipo exportação*. Time and time again I heard *apaixonados* describe specialty coffee to novitiates or others as *tipo exportação*, and it is consistently introduced in the Brazilian gastronomic press along the lines of 'beans of high quality, destined for the international market' (Revide, 2015). Furthermore, the idea itself cannot be divorced from the legacies of colonialism that reverberate in Brazil to this day within modern capitalism, thereby placing *tipo exportação* thinking squarely within a framework of modernity/coloniality. *Tipo exportação* has particular salience among the *apaixonados*, who are actively engaged in framing their critiques of Brazil and global trade in the context of both postcolonial discourse and neoliberal consumer citizenship, and who explicitly engage with questions of power—and its imbalances—in the course of their daily lives through their consumption choices and practices. If a specialty coffee in Brazil can be defined as 'beans of the highest quality, destined for the international market,' what conclusions should be drawn about the domestic consumers who desire these coffees? More broadly, how do consumers in countries that have historically supplied consumers from the Global North experience and interpret these flows? Where might points of contestation or subversion arise? It is the pursuit of answers to these questions that drives this work, answers that must necessarily be framed in relation to the *tipo exportação* histories and flows of coffee from Brazil and to the outside world.

## 2.6 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

I have shown in this chapter that it is necessary to explore postcolonial legacies in order to engage in a deep exploration of consumption in Brazil, and that the emic idea of *tipo exportação* provides a suitable theoretical framework to analyse consumption in situations in which the

spaces of production and consumption and the categories of foreign and domestic are not clear-cut. I have also shown that extant theories on consumer xenocentrism—the preference for foreign goods—are insufficient to account for the complexities of life as a present-day consumer in São Paulo, in which one needs to contend with the symbolic and material dimensions of foreignness as a desirable category. The participants readily invoked their nation's extractive colonial past to account for a number of drawbacks to and hardships in contemporary Brazil, as well as Brazilians' preference for foreign goods.

The evidence presented in this chapter indicates that the ideas of 'domestic' and 'foreign' do not exist as a binary, as much of the scholarly literature continues to assume. The idea of *tipo exportação* is a third way, a hybrid category that both exists between and encompasses 'domestic' and 'foreign.' Used colloquially to refer to any good produced in Brazil that is deemed to be good enough to export (and therefore of higher quality than goods that typically stay within Brazil), the idea cannot be divorced from the legacies of colonialism still felt in Brazil to this day: extractivism, dictated exports, and ongoing psychological effects. *Tipo exportação* can also be employed to describe people who have been or are likely to be successful abroad, reflecting a wider metaphorical understanding of what (or who) a consumer good is.

A *tipo exportação* product is: a) produced in Brazil but of exportation grade; b) something that draws much of its value from its association with the possibility of it being consumed by foreigners, were it to be exported; and c) relational, in that it should not be understood as either domestic or foreign, but derives meaning from the presence of both these categories, as well as the spaces and differences between them. '*Tipo exportação* thinking' is the term I have coined to describe the wider context that encapsulates both *tipo exportação* goods themselves and the ideas and preconditions necessary for it to function as a viable category.

In every supermarket I entered, I made a beeline to the coffee aisle to see what was on offer. One day, a brown-and-orange package caught my eye and stopped me in my tracks. 'Exported from Brazil to Brazilians,' proclaimed its curious slogan. Obviously, I bought a bag.

This, I discovered, was Café Leão, Coca-Cola's entry into the gourmet coffee market in Brazil through a brand under which they already sold tea. The packaging and marketing campaign of the coffee explicitly engaged with the idea of *tipo exportação*, playing with the idea and spinning it on its head to direct these coffees to Brazilian consumers, and acknowledging the typical outbound flow of Brazilian coffees. As Coca-Cola Brazil's Vice President of Business, Sandor Hagen, explained in an interview with *Revista Espresso*, 'Brazilian coffee is recognized as one of the best in the world. That said, arabica beans, our best and most valued species of coffee, are difficult to bring to the Brazilian home, because they are, in large part, directed to external markets. Leão wants to bring to the Brazilian the best coffee that is produced here' (Revista Espresso, 2016). Other marketing channels echoed this; a March 2017 Instagram post from @cafeleao stated, 'Nothing is better than a Brazilian coffee on the table of a Brazilian. It's this that Leão believes in.' A series of special pop-up stores and trucks bearing the slogan were launched alongside the coffee, as well as a slick six-episode web series showing how to use Café Leão for different types of coffee preparation; released on YouTube, some of the videos today have garnered over one million views. The marketing success of Café Leão draws on the general societal familiarity with the concept of *tipo exportação* in Brazil. This is acknowledged in the text on the back of the package: 'Since the 18th century, Brazilian coffee has been recognized as one of the best in the world and sold by quality brands. But these combinations of arabica beans have only arrived in our homes with difficulty. Leão is helping to rewrite this history and bring *tipo exportação* beans—100% arabica, cultivated in Brazil, our best and most valued coffee species—to the cups of Brazilians.' The campaign foregrounded a sense of injustice at the ways

in which the best products of Brazil have historically been inaccessible to—or at the very least, difficult to access for—Brazilians.

Café Leão, then, is selling not just coffee, but also a sense of access and of righting consumer injustice. However, Café Leão does not sell the very best coffee that Brazil has to offer; it is a gourmet coffee brand, and not specialty coffee. Bags of Café Leão bear the ABIC seal of purity[27], which is not an indicator of quality but rather a food safety certification that confirms that the coffee has not been adulterated; this most commonly happens when companies pad out their coffee with cheaper materials such as corn. For *apaixonados*, gourmet coffees like Leão are not quality enough—they fall short on flavour and freshness. But what of the customers who truly desire the best coffee that Brazil has to offer, and who believe that they have a right to consume it? Having presented the theoretical arguments that support a close examination of *tipo exportação*, I will now turn, in the following chapters, to its ethnographic presence and how enthusiastic specialty coffee consumers navigate a consumption landscape shaped by the outbound flow of coffee. In the next chapter, I will explore in more depth the contemporary shape and experience of the flows that continue to move high-quality coffee out of Brazil and impede the importation of non-Brazilian coffee. This elaboration of the material context in which the *apaixonados* operate is a necessary step to understand how '*tipo exportação* thinking' plays out in practice, both how it is understood and experienced by *apaixonados* and the sites and moments where it is contested.

[27] *Associação Brasileira da Indústria de Café.*

# PATRICIA

Patricia grew up in the *periferia*, the urban sprawl that spills out from São Paulo for miles. The architect and design critic Justin McGuirk has described São Paulo's *periferias* as showing that it is 'a city that is still very much in the making, still somehow raw. It is a place where the sacrifices that people make for access to the city are written into the landscapes, into the fabric of their homes. Cities that grow this fast grow in an unconsolidated way, and so while the periphery is full of pathos, it is also full of potential' (2014, pp. 7–8). *Periferia* translates literally as 'periphery,' but has no direct equivalent in English that refers to the same specific type of neighbourhood; some *periferias* include *favelas* (slums that constitute roughly one-third of all housing in São Paulo's *periferias*), but there are also more formal settlements and neighbourhoods, and it was in one of these far-flung, lower-class neighbourhoods where Patricia was raised. The *periferia*, according to Fernando Cotelo and Juciano Rodrigues (2013), stands in spatial opposition to the city centre; in Brazilian urban areas, spatial distribution contrasts with some cities in the Global North, with higher-income residents living closer to urban cores, instead of suburban spaces. The *favela* is in symbolic opposition to *asfalto* (lit: 'asphalt'), or those areas of cities that receive municipal utilities. Regardless, there is considerable overlap between the two types of neighbourhood that make up the *periferia paulistana*; they are both characterised by limited infrastructure, a long distance from sites of employment, and high degrees of irregularity or informality in housing. It has been estimated that close to 60% of São Paulo's population lives in the city's *periferia* (McCaul, 2014), whose residents have, on average, a lifespan that is 23 years shorter than their counterparts in *bairros nobres,* the upscale neighbourhoods (RNSP, 2020).

As a child, Patricia lived in what she described as 'a real apartment, just a shitty one' with her mother, grandmother, and younger brother. Studious, and determined from a young age not

to remain in the *periferia*, Patricia stayed in secondary school after many of her friends had dropped out. In 2006, her second year of secondary school, Starbucks opened their first store in Brazil in Shopping Morumbi, a high-end shopping mall in the upscale, relatively central district of Itaim Bibi.[28] Patricia told me:

> I had to go. I had to see it for myself and try these drinks that I always saw everyone in the American shows holding. I didn't really care that much about the drink—what I wanted was that green-and-white cup. I wanted to pretend I was an American star.

Patricia began to save up the money she earned doing odd jobs for relatives and around her neighbourhood, and one Saturday, she spent over two hours on a series of buses to finally go to Shopping Morumbi. She had never been anywhere as chic, and worried that either a security guard or patron would know where she was from and tell her that she did not belong, that she needed to leave. Nevertheless, she wound her way through the mall and to the Starbucks location, mustered up her courage, and ordered what she described to me as 'some kind of big vanilla latte thing with a lot of whipped cream. The biggest size they had.' Finally, she had her cup.

Careful not to crush it, Patricia held the cup throughout her long journey back to her flat in the north-western fringes of São Paulo's metropolitan region, where she tenderly washed out the coffee residue. The next day, she brought it with her to school, where she filled it with water and placed it prominently on her desk, the Starbucks green mermaid proudly facing forward. It was a bold assertion to the classroom that she, Patricia, refused to be stuck in the *periferia* forever. She began to repeat her trips to the Morumbi Starbucks nearly every month in order to replace her cup, which would degrade over the weeks between her visits. This persisted until the following year, when 'finally they opened [a Starbucks] on Avenida Paulista, thank god! It was still really far for [Patricia], but not like going all the way to [Shopping Morumbi]!'

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[28] This shopping mall would later become the site of some of the most infamous *rolezinhos* covered in Chapter 2.

Patricia did eventually leave the *periferia* when she secured a place at a public university.[29] Inspired by the power the image of the Starbucks siren logo had exercised over her, she earned a degree in marketing.

It was while she was at university that Patricia stopped drinking Frappuccinos from Starbucks. Having found a 'cool' group of friends with whom she 'smoked and watched lots of French films,' she began drinking espresso (which she drank with sugar, finding it too bitter on its own). Her newfound passion for espressos was formed in emulation of what she and her friendship group saw in the European cinema of the 1960s and 1970s they enjoyed, and the influence did not stop with espresso; also at this time she began to wear 'a lot of black' and 'embarrassingly, also turtlenecks.' That shots of espresso taken with sugar were the common way the majority of Brazilians would consume their average coffees in neighbourhood *padarias* was not, she reports, a problem: 'I didn't see myself drinking coffee like [other] Brazilians. I was smoking and had [French New Wave film director] Jean-Luc Godard in my head. I thought I was drinking coffee like Parisians.' And so, although her coffee style and habits had changed, they was still orientated outward: her Starbucks consumption had looked beyond the *periferia* to the centre of São Paulo, and once she had established herself in the centre, she fixed her gaze at Europe.

In her final year of university, she and her boyfriend started visiting different coffee shops at weekends to study, and it was on one of these weekend café crawls that her transition to specialty coffee drinker began:

[29] Entrance to public universities in Brazil (which are both free and of higher educational quality than their private equivalents) is by competitive examination or *vestibular*. Typically, only students who have been privileged to attend high-quality, private schools throughout secondary school are able to pass these exams. Students like Patricia, who have been schooled in the severely underfunded and troubled Brazilian public system, frequently face the choice of paying for a private university or simply stopping their education after secondary school.

> We went to one shop and they had a little sign that encouraged you to not put sugar in your coffee before you tried it. So I didn't put sugar in that time—it had never occurred to me to not put sugar—and it was completely different. Like, not even the same beverage, I thought.

From that day onwards, Patricia embarked on a personal transformation. She wanted to know what was so different about this coffee that could make it so flavoursome even without sugar, and she was soon plunging headlong into her specialty coffee journey.

Patricia graduated from university in 2012, just as specialty coffee was beginning its boom in Brazil and shops were popping up across São Paulo. She was an active specialty consumer from the first days of the boom and became well known among baristas and other coffee professionals because she was an early adopter and avid user of Instagram, chronicling her coffee drinking, and rating and reviewing cafés. After university she accepted a job at a large company, where she worked for several years as a junior marketer. This position gave her a salary that enabled her to move into a small studio in the hip Vila Madalena neighbourhood, before she transitioned into market research, running consumer focus groups and interviews, and moved to the up-and-coming Vila Buarque neighbourhood because, in part, she wanted to be closer to the coffee shops and bars she loved, which were clustered in the area. She was keen to offer advice to her friends, specialty coffee professionals who would frequently ask her for small consultations on such things as the optimal phrasing of Instagram captions. She never charges for this work that she does for her 'coffee friends,' even though she continues to use a good chunk of her wages to support her mother (who is intermittently employed) and grandmother (who is unemployed and partially disabled) in the *periferia*—although, as she freely admitted to me one Saturday as we sat trying on shoes in a vegan clothing boutique, she doesn't visit them nearly as often as she should. Her financial links to her family in the *periferia* mean that despite being upwardly mobile, she remains tied through social and familial obligations to a peripheral place and way of being.

The first day I met Patricia, she was on her laptop in the back corner of Takkø, where she was working remotely for her market research firm, writing up a report on how far women would travel to attend their preferred hairdressing salons. Each table in the café was equipped with a small box with sachets of sugar, but I noted that she had moved hers to the next table over, both clearing space for her laptop and the filter coffee she was sipping from, served black, and metaphorically putting distance between her and the idea of putting sugar in coffee. From that first aspirational Starbucks to the transformative espresso with no sugar, Patricia has framed her aspirations and desires for social mobility in the language of coffee. In a later conversation I had with her, she herself alluded to the importance of coffee in her life, declaring with a laugh that she 'owed everything to Starbucks.'

In his work on the São Paulo *periferias*, Charles Klein developed the idea of 'cosmopolitan periphery subjectivities'—aspirations that are characterised by both a cosmopolitan openness to difference and a deep-rooted sense of identity with peripheral space. Such subjectivities are an 'assertion that "the center" does not have a monopoly on access to—or participation in—knowledge exchange, personal development, and political engagement' (2019, p. 154). In the stories of the *apaixonados* in general and Patricia in particular, I find subjectivities that are similar to those described by Klein, but in relation to a consumer culture in which Brazil is the periphery and coffee-importing countries the centre. The missing element in Klein's analysis, however, is the practical, material world: The centre, we might more accurately say to reflect the current state of affairs, should *not* have this monopoly. But, as can be seen in the case of coffee, practical access to the material impedes participation and development among *apaixonados*. Patricia's move from the *periferia* to the centre of São Paulo, concurrent with the transitions that took place in her coffee drinking and the centrality of coffee to her lifestyle, reveals the intersecting peripheries in which she operates. She now faces new challenges and aspirational limits, as her opportunity structures shift. As a teenager, Patricia's dream was to

consume Starbucks, and at university, she graduated to espresso. Following a recent trip to Amsterdam and Paris, her peripheral consumer cosmopolitanism has changed yet again, and she now wishes to 'consume like Europeans.' Despite this goal and her individual socioeconomic ascendancy and greater purchasing power, it remains difficult for Patricia to freely access all the coffees she wants. Her awareness of new coffee styles is not enough to overcome issues such as the constant disappearance of parcels she orders from abroad via the Brazilian national post service—a subject that I explore in depth in the following chapter. Having left one periphery within Brazil, Patricia now finds herself in the periphery of the orthodox specialty coffee culture.

# 3 'A COUNTRY YOU SEND FROM, NOT TO': INFRASTRUCTURES AND ACCESS

## 3.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines how *apaixonados* navigate the infrastructures that complicate their intended consumption of specialty coffee by restricting their access to international coffees, coffee equipment, and the highest-quality Brazilian-grown coffees. *Apaixonados* disrupt *tipo exportação* structures by seeking out innovative ways to access such coffees and by making Brazilian-produced alternatives to foreign coffee brewing equipment, but such actions remain at the level of individual *apaixonados*, leaving larger structural systems and inequalities unchallenged. I show this by first examining the Brazilian postal service and some of the problems it can cause for Brazilians who wish to purchase coffee from abroad, after which I provide ethnographic examples of three necessarily unconventional ways—friendship networks, personal travel, and smuggling—whereby *apaixonados* obtain foreign coffees, placing them into dialogue with the literature on the Brazilian notion of *jeitinho*. I then look at two examples of Brazilian-produced coffee equipment—the Koar brewer and the Aram Espresso Maker—and trace how they are positioned in response to specific market difficulties in terms of access and of cost. Finally, I move on to a single Brazilian coffee—the 2018 Cup of Excellence-winning yellow bourbon grown by the Nunes family in Minas Gerais—and follow its path in and outside of Brazil to reveal wider tensions and frustrations generated by the outbound flow of the highest-quality Brazilian coffees.

## 3.2 'NOW WE WAIT AND SEE'

Despite the appeal of foreign goods, Brazil's poor-quality infrastructure and restrictive trade barriers mean that most *apaixonados* necessarily remain active participants in the domestic market, purchasing locally produced goods and thereby reinforcing one of the preconditions for *tipo exportação* goods to circulate as domestic alternatives to foreign products. This difficulty is most colourfully illustrated in the stories *apaixonados* told of their struggles with the Brazilian postal service when attempting to order coffee from abroad. As this thesis has previously established, *apaixonados* exist in a context in which it is almost universally understood that the best Brazilian coffees are exported. Another challenge they face is that in order to be accepted as well-rounded members of the global specialty community, it is necessary to possess a well-developed and geographically broad knowledge of flavour. To gain local status and the respect of their international counterparts, *apaixonados* not only intercept high-quality Brazilian coffees before they are exported, but also obtain coffees from abroad by whatever means possible.

Ordering anything from abroad into Brazil as an individual consumer (rather than as a licensed importation firm) entails a degree of uncertainty; the national postal service is notoriously inconsistent, particularly with foreign-origin letters and packages. Not one of the *apaixonados* with whom I spoke with knew if there was any rhyme or reason to the opaque system of importation taxes, or discernible patterns to the way things tend to 'disappear' from customs warehouses, never to be seen again. Brazilians who order from abroad must simply wait and hope for the best. 'It's a lottery. It depends on your luck and the season, I suppose,' said Vanessa, a barista who purchases coffee from abroad whenever she has extra money available.

Even before we first met in São Paulo, Kelly had been a subscriber to *Standart*, the coffee magazine for which I work, which entitled her to receive a copy of the latest edition after it has been published, four times per year. She explained that occasionally, the magazine would arrive in an expedient fashion, but normally she would be an issue behind: A copy dispatched in June

would arrive just as the September edition was being released in the rest of the world. One day in late February she phoned me up: The December edition had finally arrived, but there was one small problem. This issue was a Christmas special edition, and the magazine had been shipped to all subscribers in a package that also included a 30g sample bag of roasted coffee and a pair of jaunty coffee-print socks. After considerable time languishing in a postal import centre in Rio de Janeiro, the package finally arrived at Kelly's well-appointed apartment in the *zona norte* region of São Paulo, to the north of the Tietê River. 'I guess it wanted to spend Carnival in Rio,' she told me ironically. As she sat down at her dining table to open the package, she realised that it had already been opened and re-sealed. This was not a rare occurrence, but she nevertheless found it annoying, and after opening it, she understood the meaning of it. The magazine was there, and curiously, so was the coffee. But the socks were nowhere to be found.

'I… just… why would anyone take the socks? I don't understand! Someone stole my socks. Socks! This place is crazy!' she wailed at me over the telephone. Later that night, I received a series of WhatsApp messages:

[23:18] So angry!! I will call the post office tomorrow

[23:19] WTF?!!

[23:20] Official institutions are stealing too!!

Despite her repeated calls to the post office, no one was ever able to explain to her why her socks had been confiscated, or where they might have gone.[30]

[30] Kelly's saga with the postal service has not yet concluded, several years later. As I was writing up this section, she texted me a series of photos of a damaged package containing the most recent issue of the magazine, which had arrived nearly three months after being shipped. Alongside the photos, she sent a series of messages in which she demonstrated a telling assumption that any damage that had occurred to the package in transit could be attributed to the Brazilian authorities:
[15:29] Look at how my Standart arrived today. Open and all wet.
[15:33] How can I take my country seriously?
[15:33] This is just outrageous
[15:58] This is ridiculous

The vagaries of the Brazilian postal system were frequently cited to me as a major impediment to *apaixonados'* desire to obtain coffee from abroad. Those *apaixonados* who were nonetheless willing to order coffee from abroad did so in the knowledge that it was a risky investment; they were fully aware that the coffee could arrive stale or well past the peak period for its consumption, it might be taxed heavily upon its arrival into the country, or—worst case scenario—it might simply disappear. That, given all these complications, some *apaixonados* still continue to order coffees from abroad is a testament to their desire for these coffees. Indeed, the investments they are prepared to make in this process—both financially and emotionally, as they wait and worry about the fate of their packages—is much higher than it would be if they were to simply purchase coffee locally; the added costs of shipping and potential need to pay importation taxes makes foreign specialty coffee more expensive than their domestic equivalents, which are already costly when compared to the price of conventional coffees.

*Apaixonados* who opt to buy coffee from abroad remain active participants in local markets because they are unable to guarantee a consistent and unbroken supply of international coffee. This was driven home to me one afternoon at the now-shuttered Vila Madalena outpost of Takkø, where a post-lunch rush had filled the three tables inside, leaving a group of us (strangers, all) perched on the veranda. I struck up a conversation with a couple in their early thirties sitting next to me who had just purchased a bag of beans and were sipping iced coffees. The husband, Osvaldo, explained that he had recently ordered a variety of coffees from Europe, as he did every few months, but because they were still in transit, he was buying locally to tide him over. This was the normal rhythm of coffee provision in their household: Waiting for packages, and using coffee primarily from Takkø and Gisele's delivery service, Pura Caffeina, to meet any shortfalls. Estimating that one out of every six coffees he orders doesn't arrive, Osvaldo explained to me that importation taxes are levied on imported goods worth over $50, so he orders frequent, smaller shipments of coffee in order to avoid the taxes.

However, even this knowledge and approach is insufficient to negotiate the Brazilian bureaucracy; sometimes, larger purchases will not be taxed, while from time to time purchases under the threshold are still taxed for some inscrutable reason.

### 3.2.1 THE CORREIOS AND THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF POSTAL SYSTEMS

Postal systems have received little attention in the anthropological literature, which is a curious state of affairs, given that they have historically been state institutions with which citizens interact on a frequent and direct basis; they not only form connections between citizens and the state, but also between citizens in-country and across national borders. Scholars have shown that the imagery used by postal systems are 'products of the state,' designed to cultivate 'a link between the state's political identity project and its citizens,' and to this end, postal services construct and reflect the state through symbolic and material means such as commemorative stamps (Raento et al., 2004, p. 930); however, there has as of yet been no investigation into the socio-material aspects of sending and receiving post. There are questions that would benefit from further investigation, such as: What can be learned via the process of visiting one's local post office to pick up a parcel, or to inquire about its whereabouts? And, if state-run postal services are an emblem of a national identity and a state, should we assume this relationship to be a positive one?

*Apaixonados*' attempts to navigate and deal with the Brazilian postal service reveal that it can also represent inefficiency, the perennial problems that accompany bureaucracy, and frustrated aspirations. The anthropologist Darryl Stellmach, following David Graeber, has pointed out that despite bureaucracy's links to modernity, power, and state-making, sites of bureaucracy have largely been ignored as rich potential locations of participant observation, likely 'because of its association with petty officialdom, monotony, inscrutability and triviality (perhaps also because of its ubiquity)' (2016, p. 36). *Apaixonados*' interactions with the Brazilian postal service, understood as a bureaucracy and a state apparatus, extend beyond merely physical sites, and

are instead woven into the actions of daily life; the postal service (and its successes and failures in fulfilling its obligation to deliver packages) exerts an outsized mediating force on *apaixonados*' participation in specialty coffee culture.

The Brazilian national postal service, the Correios, is recognised as having been formally founded in 1663, with the appointment of Alferes João Cavaleiro Cardoso to the role of the first Postmaster of Rio de Janeiro. For nearly 150 years after its founding, the Correios retained a monopoly on intercontinental post and post between the captaincies of the Portuguese colony, although other internal postal systems continued to be function in a variety of forms, both Correios and informal means of circulation. It was only following Brazilian independence in 1822 that the Correios became an important structure of the new government, understood by politicians and government officials to be a vital institution to connect the growing and still-forming nation, and to that end, in 1829 the Correios became the only legal postal service of the Empire of Brazil, formalising the state's monopoly of the service (Oliveira, 2010). At present, and against a recent global trend to privatise national postal systems (Crew and Brennan, 2015) the Correios is still state-run and, with over 125,000 employees, is the single largest employer in Brazil (Ciccone Adams, 2014).

Many national postal systems do more than just send post, and this is also the case with the Correios. Postal banking services are a common a means to promote savings among poor populations underserved by traditional bank branches—indeed, the state-owned Japan Post Bank is the world's largest savings bank (Maclachlan, 2012)—and Brazil has operated a successful postal banking system since 2007, which offers simple banking accounts (called *Conta Fácil*) that do not require substantial deposits, accrue interest on smaller holdings than traditional banks, and entitle customers to microloans on favourable terms. One can also vote at Correios branches, pay bills, and perform various bureaucratic functions with the federal government. The Correios email system was phased out several years ago, but there are plans

afoot for a low-cost mobile telephone service. Nevertheless, despite the range of services offered, the Correios is experienced in daily life in Brazil as failing at its primary obligation: to deliver the post efficiently. Bureaucratic government-linked institutions might claim to embody the aspirational values of a nation, but citizen interactions with these institutions reveal the contextual realities that may curtail these aspirations; if one interrogates Brazilians' experiences with their postal service, anxieties emerge that pertain to inequality, development, and global positioning. On account of the frequency with which packages are lost and the opacity of the convoluted process through which imported purchases are brought into the country,[31] the Correios is a frequent target of popular discontent with the Brazilian state, as shown by the frequency with which it pops up as the subject of disparaging memes, and the great mirth that the slogan of Sedex—Correios' express shipping option—elicits: *Mandou, chegou* (Sent, arrived).

Brazilians are prolific creators of memes, which can perhaps be attributed in part to their form, which allows for expression and commentary in a population where full literacy rates are still relatively low and closely tied to economic status. In his contribution to UCL's 'Why We Post' project, Juliano Spyer stated that due to this widespread distribution of memes, 'not being able to read or write no longer prevents a person from participating in "small talk" with peers online; simply by sharing an image or video they can joke and show moral value' (2017, p. 61). Memes are a popular way for Brazilians to express dissent about the government, state services, and politicians, point out tensions and absurdities, and express frustration through humour (Chagas et al., 2019). The latter is the most common function for memes about the Correios: One can make fun of the postal service, but because there are no workarounds that are guaranteed to be more effective, the memes can feel like a futile expression of frustration. 'I'd just rather they

[31] I once attended a lecture in which LaTour's black box was explained via the metaphor of the infamous customs holding centre in Curitiba: your package arrives, your package leaves, and no one ever knows what happened in the intervening time. (Unless, I might add, your package is missing some socks.)

didn't lose my packages again, that's all,' sighed Patricia as we flipped through the folder of political memes on her phone which included the following meme (Figure 5) making fun of the lengthy wait times associated with the basic, domestic shipping option, PAC (standing for, in Portuguese, 'Practical, Accessible, Trustworthy'):

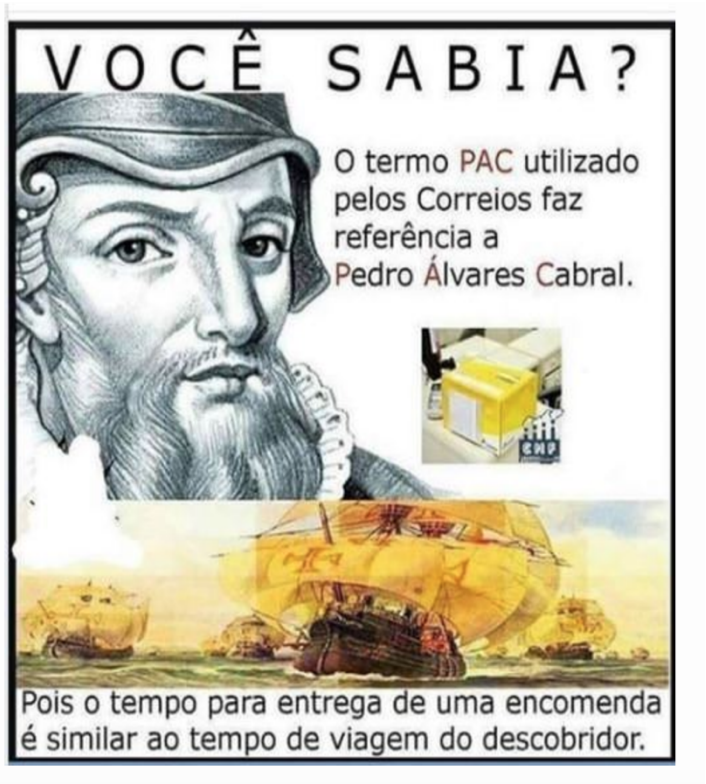


FIGURE 5: DID YOU KNOW? THE TERM PAC USED BY THE POSTAL SYSTEM IS A REFERENCE TO PEDRO ÁLVARES CABRAL [THE EUROPEAN DISCOVERER OF BRAZIL] BECAUSE THE TIME IT TAKES TO DELIVER AN ORDER IS SIMILAR TO THAT OF THE DISCOVERER'S VOYAGE.

The Correios retains a monopoly on standard postal services, although private courier services do exist in order to deliver packages and documents for people who would rather not entrust them to the Correios. Far from solving the situation, however, the presence of private international courier services has not eliminated delays, and therefore their existence merely proves that while the institution of the Correios bears the brunt of Brazilians' frustrations with transit delays, they are actually an outcome of the postal *and* customs systems; the use of a private courier service is no guarantee of a timely delivery. This was illustrated to me quite painfully when, early on in my fieldwork, I ordered a replacement coffee grinder from Berlin via DHL. DHL's tracking information informed me that it had arrived in Rio de Janeiro less than 24 hours after leaving the warehouse in Germany, but it then remained in a customs processing centre for nine weeks, before being released without charges being levied (despite it being well over the tax-free threshold) and then arriving at my home in São Paulo three days later. At one point during the

nine weeks of waiting, I explained my predicament to Gabriel Agrelli from DaTerra, who laughed, before informing me: 'Brazil is a country you send *from*, not *to*.'

### 3.2.2 THE IDEAL OF FRESHNESS

There are restrictions in place (measures justified on phytosanitary grounds for the protection of the Brazilian coffee crop from outside pests and disease) that make it difficult and expensive to import green—that is, raw, unroasted—coffee into Brazil, but it is in theory much easier to import roasted coffee which, as a processed good, is not subject to the same agricultural regulations.

The foreign coffee that one does (very occasionally) stumble across in Brazil has been roasted elsewhere, and then imported into the country. This is more frequently the case for low-quality blended coffees from Italian roasting firms, for which Brazilian beans are exported to Italy, mixed with other coffees (often from the more highly caffeinated *robusta* variety) and then imported back into Brazil; this is the general provenance of most foreign blends found in Brazilian supermarkets. Starbucks and Nespresso offer the widest variety of foreign coffees available on the market in Brazil. All of their coffees have been roasted and processed at one of many international plants, before being imported. This is a viable business model only for companies of such a gargantuan scale, and is not feasible for small and independent specialty coffee companies.

A further complication is the fact that one of the chief ways in which specialty coffee is materially and sensorially differentiated from mass-market coffee is its freshness. Conventional or gourmet coffee that is purchased at a supermarket may have an expiry date that is far in the future—if any date is listed at all. Conversely, specialty coffee packaging typically foregrounds in a prominent location the date on which the coffee was roasted and by when it is best consumed. The idea of 'best before' is a point of differentiation through which specialty coffee

companies position themselves as more refined than mass-market coffee because speciality's 'best-before' date is based purely on sensory and consumption preference; there is no health danger to the consumption of the coffee after that date. Coffee that has gone off does not even sprout mould because there is insufficient moisture left in the beans after the roasting process to support its growth. Old coffee simply dulls in intensity of flavour, leading to a less satisfying sensory experience for the person drinking it.[32]

The peak time to consume specialty coffees is typically considered to be within several weeks of the date on which the coffee was roasted. Counter Culture Coffee, the major US-based specialty coffee purveyor and education centre, writes: 'just as you would want to use fresh produce soon after it's picked or fresh bread soon after it's baked, coffee is best soon after it's roasted. The best-case scenario is that coffee is used within two-to-four weeks from roasting for peak flavor' (CCC, 2017). Similarly, when interviewed for the SCA newsletter, Rob Hoos, the Director of Coffee for the Brazilian-owned specialty coffee shop Nossa Família located in Portland, Oregon, states simply: 'there is no substitute for offering freshly roasted coffee' (Watson, 2018). This emphasis on the freshness of a roasted coffee puts *apaixonados* in a difficult situation. If fresh is best—and fresh is the standard of international standards, norms, and expectations—then Brazilian consumers are at a tremendous disadvantage and may *never* have the opportunity to try non-Brazilian coffees at their peak.

#### 3.2.2.1 'A RACE AGAINST TIME'

I was frequently told that this uncertainty as to whether a package ordered from abroad would arrive before the best-before date or even at all was a reason why Brazilian coffee shops did not use foreign coffees, and it was only seldom that *apaixonados* had a variety of international coffees at their disposal. Another important reason, however, is the taxation rate of 10 per cent

[32] See Chapter 5 for a complementary discussion of green coffee freshness.

imposed on imported beans costing over $50. The amount of coffee that would have to be ordered to sustain a small coffee shop (which can easily go through 20 kilos of coffee in a week) means that the risk is too great: Even a single lost package could prove financially damaging for a small business operating at a low profit margin. For individual *apaixonados*, the possibility that one will never receive the goods for which one has paid is a formidable deterrent to the purchase of foreign coffees. This was especially common among baristas or other younger and less financially secure *apaixonados*. Vanessa said that she only orders coffee from abroad when she has extra money (usually earned from working extra shifts), but noted that if she had a higher salary, foreign coffee would be one of the first things she would buy. The decision to purchase locally produced coffees provides *apaixonados* with a necessary degree of certainty, but also reinforces *tipo exportação* thinking: That high-quality Brazilian coffee is simply a product to be used as something *good enough*, when access to goods ranked more highly in this consumer hierarchy is compromised.

The SCA newsletter article mentioned previously was entitled 'Preserving freshness: A race against time' and characterised freshness as an important quality of a coffee, one that diminishes over time, but a problem to which science is increasingly being applied to overcome it. 'The clock on freshness never stops,' the author writes—but no one seems to have informed the Brazilian postal service. Indeed, online coffee forums in Brazil are filled with threads about which international roasters sell the cheapest and highest-quality coffee, as well as information about the usual timeliness of arrival. Some threads are dedicated to experiences ordering from certain international roasters to help consumers to decide whether it is worth placing an order, and others to where *apaixonados* from across the nation come together to vent their frustration at slow shipping and lost packages. The thread 'Purchasing coffee from abroad – Where, how,

quality?'[33] was started by a user on the Clube do Café forum who had just made his first international coffee purchase and discovered that he had been taxed. The responses reveal the complexities that are part of the normal territory of the life of an *apaixonado*:

> I've just received the notice that it's being taxed. The issuance of a taxation notice is showing up in the tracking. I paid 54 Canadian dollars [for the coffees], which is less than the 50USD needed for the exemption, so I don't understand. It's my first purchase and such bad luck! At least getting here was quick; it left Canada on the 4th. Now we wait and see. —Allexlimaa2 (August 16, 2017)
>
> In my case, 100% of the coffees I've bought from abroad have not been taxed. This includes HasBean, Square Mile, Workshop, Coffee Collective—though I must note that the last two took over two months to arrive, so I didn't order from them again. —BrunoMarinho (August 23, 2017)
>
> North America means an almost certain chance of being taxed, but Europe is another story. —rbcassani (August 23, 2017)
>
> Wishing you luck [with buying from La Cabra]. But here in Porto Alegre, me and a tonne of other people are having problems; our orders all seem to be stuck in Denmark? Mine's been over 40 days. I don't know if it's the integration of the post office with the Department of Federal Revenue, or the strike by the fiscal auditors, but it's something systematic. Before this, the coffees would come between 8 and 15 days after being roasted. After, please tell us about your experience. I just can't see when the situation will normalise enough for me to return to buying from them. —viniciusfm (December 11, 2017)
>
> The postal system already sent back two orders of mine from La Cabra. And mine from Tim Wendelboe I've just given up as lost. I've lost all six of my most recent orders. —pedrokok (February 22, 2018)

The *apaixonados* frequently lose the 'race against time' of coffee freshness. It is worth noting here that all of the roasteries mentioned by name in this thread are well-regarded and award-winning specialty coffee companies from Canada, the United Kingdom, Denmark, and Norway, and are generally seen as among the best in the world (four of the named companies are run by former World Barista Champions). Among specialty circles in Europe, the consumption of these coffees would be seen to demonstrate a high level of dedication to and passion for coffee, so it is little wonder that they attract Brazilian enthusiasts, regardless of the

[33] *Compras de cafe do exterior - Onde, como, qualidade*?

possible cache conveyed by their foreign status. Another thread on the same forum, entitled '*Correio! #%@&!!!!*' (Post! #%@&!!!!), has been running since 2013 and is an on-going catalogue of lost packages and complaints against the postal system, updated whenever a user has a particularly bad experience.

Delays and inconsistencies are par for the course, when one deals with the Brazilian postal system, but specific events can exacerbate difficulties and lead to even greater delays. The *greve dos caminhoneiros*—strike by Brazilian lorry drivers—that took place in late May 2018 disrupted deliveries across the country, with many knock-on effects. Osvaldo, the Takkø customer who also orders coffees from abroad, told me when I checked in with him about how the strike had affected him: 'It's messed with my deliveries like nothing before!' During the course of the strike, which ran from May 21 to June 1,[34] the Correios were only able to deliver 50 per cent of scheduled deliveries (Globo News, 2018). At the height of the strike, they were also forced to suspend Sedex services due to what the company claimed to be an inability to guarantee that packages would arrive on the appointed date (Veja, 2018). However, the memes that circulated in my WhatsApp groups at the time (Figure 6) indicated that few *apaixonados* had sympathy for the Correios:

[34] The official strike concluded on June 1, but sporadic, unregulated strike action continued throughout the first week of June 2018.




FIGURE 5: NOTICE: THE LORRY DRIVERS' STRIKE WILL NOT AFFECT THE POSTAL SERVICE. WE WILL CONTINUE TO NOT DELIVER YOUR PACKAGES, AS USUAL.

The *apaixonados'* difficulties with the Correios and the infrastructural logistics around accessing coffee present an interesting paradox, given the historic centrality of coffee's role in the development of infrastructures and services both nationally and in the state of São Paulo more specifically. One need only to look at the village of Paranapiacaba on the outskirts of São Paulo to see the role of coffee, transnational connection, and infrastructural advancements made manifest: sitting at the edge of the plateau before the precipitous drop to the Port of Santos below, Paranapiacaba was the site of massive engineering works by the British-owned São Paulo Railway in the 1860s, who built a four-level funicular railway system from the village down the 796 heavily-forested meters to the port, in order to transport coffee. Merely one part of the wider São Paulo Railway which linked the growing city also to Jundiaí in the interior of the state, facilitating not only the movement of coffee, but also people, media, and other infrastructural elements such as electricity, shaping São Paulo and the Brazilian southeast into

the economic hub it is today (Holloway, 2012; Mattoon, 1977). And though the railway was British-owned, the coffee-trade wealth which stayed in the country and the region of São Paulo is widely regarded as having driven the industrialisation and 'modernisation' of the nation (Font, 2010; Vidal Luna & Klein, 2018). Nevertheless, the focus of the *apaixonados'* own narrations of their experience of coffee-based infrastructure was almost always couched in negative terms, emphasising current failures and frustrations over past triumphs or the simple ticking over of functional, backgrounded infrastructure which facilitate daily life. As Casper Bruun Jensen and Atsuro Morita write, 'slowly, often imperceptibly, infrastructures change, and change subjects and objects along with them' (2016, p. 619); to this idea the *apaixonados* help us add that as subjects change their priorities and desires, given infrastructures may find their meanings changed as well.

## 3.3 ALTERNATIVE PATHS OF ACCESS

The *apaixonados*—and middle-class Brazilian consumers more broadly—are caught in a bind: The material conditions informed by *tipo exportação* structures dictate that increases in both financial and information wealth, following the country's economic growth and a widening middle class, do not necessarily correspond to increased access to desired goods. This is especially pronounced with respect to coffee, where despite a willingness and ability to purchase high-quality coffee, *apaixonados* struggle to disrupt the entrenched flows that send the best coffee out of the country and constrain the inbound flow of foreign coffees, and in response, they turn to alternative paths to access coffee that range from the clever and shrewd to the outright illegal. The lengths to which *apaixonados* will go to realise their passion for specialty coffee illustrate the tensions between the immaterial knowledge and material practices accessible to Brazilian participants in the 'global' specialty coffee culture. In this section, I will outline three of these procurement strategies—personal networks, travel, and smuggling—and consider them in relation to the local idea of *jeitinho*, or pulling strings to avoid or reduce bureaucratic nuisances.

### 3.3.1 NETWORKS

Ricardo was the oldest of the *apaixonados* with whom I regularly spoke. A third-generation Japanese-Brazilian who grew up speaking both Portuguese and Japanese, he split his professional life between Tokyo and São Paulo, working as an engineer at a major multinational corporation. Several years ago, however, at the age of 57, he suffered a minor heart attack, which spurred him to reconsider his priorities and reorganise his life. He retired, learned how to make bread, and dedicated much of his time to learning to make and taste coffee—a passion that he had nursed for some years, but which he previously did not feel he had time for. Although his own ability to travel has been curtailed because of health concerns, his network of friends, family, and associates includes many well-off professionals—people with the means to travel internationally at more regular intervals than many of the irregularly- or under-employed twenty-somethings with whom I worked—and he is able to receive a significant amount of coffee from abroad from his contacts. On one occasion, we met for an interview session at one of Casinha Café's three locations, perched at a table by the window, outside of which rushed many busy *paulistanos* in the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Inside, it was cool and quiet: the air conditioning was on and the light colour scheme provided a sense of calm. We liked to hold our interviews in this café precisely because it was so quiet, and on this day he began to narrate how he came to access foreign coffees:

> Everyone knows, everyone knows now. It used to be that I'd ask them to bring me coffee, but now they just do it on their own: 'Oh, what should we get Ricardo [as a gift]? Coffee!' Of course, if I hear someone, a friend, is going to, I don't know, say London, then I'll ask them specifically for something. I'll say, 'Please can you go to the coffee shop called Prufrock and bring me something?' But normally, I am happy with anything. They know what I like, and I value that they think of me when they're away and they bring me these coffees.
>
> Many of my friends still don't know good coffee from bad coffee, so sometimes they bring me stuff that's low quality. But it's still different and it's still new, so of course it's good to try. Any coffee is good coffee, in a sense. But I still try to educate them, you know?

Ricardo has a somewhat sheepish smile, but it's a kind one, and I always enjoyed our meetings. A friend had recommended him a coupon app that, in addition to other offers, provides two-

for-one coffees at a variety of locations around the city, and over the course of several months, I accompanied him as his plus-one to explore the cafés covered on his discount list. The father of three university-age children who were too busy themselves to go out for coffee with him (and who were somewhat bemused that his coffee habit made him 'more of a hipster' than their own peers), he approached his interview sessions as if he was helping me with my homework, and was always gentle when he corrected my grammar, such as if I had mixed up my subjunctive conjugations. Although given its demographic probability it should not come as a surprise, I was saddened and perturbed to discover later that he is a fervent supporter of the controversial right-wing Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro—a political stance that has effectively resulted in his being blacklisted from specialty coffee community events, which are staunchly left-leaning in political orientation.

Another *apaixonada* who has benefitted from her friendship networks is Nati, a master's student in the field of museum curation. Over the course of my year in São Paulo, I accompanied her to a bevy of museums, a few gallery openings, and an artists' takeover of a squalid and derelict building in the city centre. On that night we wound our way up a dimly lit stairwell, sticking our heads into the pop-up studios on each floor until we had ascended to the 14th and found the performance-art piece we'd been looking for, where a young man in a sailor outfit danced erratically in front of a flashing montage of high-end architecture and real-estate photographs. The following month, a similarly derelict building down the street, the Edifício Wilton Paes de Almeida, caught fire and collapsed, killing seven—though this building was not home to bohemian artists, but rather hundreds of the urban poor, who had taken the building over as a squat.

We began talking about her experience of foreign coffees on the day before our trip to the artists' squat, sitting in the café at the Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, having just visited the museum's exhibition of the works of Jean-Michel Basquiat. Having assessed the available coffee

choices—all Brazilian—and settling on one from Minas Gerias, Nati informed me that the first time she had ever tried a non-Brazilian coffee was when on a family holiday in Colombia, and that ever since she has been seeking out coffees of different origins. Nati—a young, full-time student—frequently accepted short-term administrative jobs to support herself, and although she has travelled abroad before (including a year spent studying art history in Lisbon), currently does not have the means to do so. Fortunately, she has many friends—largely drawn from her artistic circles—who do travel, as well as a sister who works in Los Angeles and comes to visit several times each year, and from this network she has intermittent access to foreign coffees. Her friends, she told me:

> …*love* to go to supermarkets whenever they travel to see what they have. I love it too. It's a thing. It's like, of course you go to see museums, but then you take half a day to check out the supermarkets. Go and look at the spices, the types of food they have, or what things are different that we don't have here. Before I loved coffee, I'd ask my friends to bring me chocolates. Now, I ask for coffee. Always coffee.

Nati's sister Nanda—who also likes coffee, but not with the same fervour as her younger sister—knows which types of coffee Nati likes, and when she returns periodically from Los Angeles, invariably brings coffees from a wide selection of roasters based in the United States. When I met with the sisters on one of Nanda's return trips, Nanda told me that she usually spends the week before a trip to collecting all the other goods that family and friends request of her, before 'running around trying to buy coffees in [Nati's] style,' or ordering them online from roasters outside Los Angeles to be shipped to her flat, so she can pack them in her suitcase and bring them to São Paulo. 'I try to get the fruity ones she likes that are different from the typical Brazilian profile,' she explained, 'and also sometimes something really weird and crazy. Like this one I brought this time and the package said it tasted like cotton candy.'

'It didn't really, though,' Nati interjected. 'But it *was* sweet!'

Other friends, however, are less attuned to Nati's particular coffee tastes, and from time to time bring her coffees that fall short of her standards. This is especially common if her friends buy her coffee from foreign supermarkets, rather than specialty coffee shops, 'because then it's just coffee that anyone in Costa Rica or wherever would drink. Which is cool, but it doesn't mean it's good.' In much the same way that Nati does not want to drink just any Brazilian coffee but rather the *highest-quality* Brazilian coffee, foreign coffees are not of interest exclusively because they are foreign, but rather when they are foreign *and* high-quality; when they are not those that are consumed by 'anyone in Costa Rica or wherever' but have moved into the circuits of international, North-bound trade.

### 3.3.2 TRAVEL

The stories of Ricardo and Nati reveal that *apaixonados* who know people who travel frequently are well positioned to maintain access to foreign coffees. Those who are able to travel themselves are even less reliant on friends to select coffee (and, if they are not an *apaixonado*, may not choose the coffees an *apaixonado* would), and also have the opportunity to sample more coffee varieties. Tereza is a bubbly woman in her early thirties who gave up a life in corporate PR to start an artisanal peanut butter company. We were sitting together at the back table in Takkø one afternoon while she recounted to me a trip to New York she had taken the previous year. In the doldrums after a break-up with the man she thought was 'The One,' she booked herself a holiday to New York—alone—and set off for some retail therapy and to try all the coffee she could. When she booked her hotel, she mapped her ideal location against nearby coffee shops, settling on a hotel that boasted a Stumptown Coffee in the lobby and was only minutes away from one of Blue Bottle's NYC outposts. In New York, she structured her days around visits to coffee shops in various neighbourhoods, drinking coffee until she felt she couldn't face another drop—'Honestly, I don't think I slept for a week!'—and picking up bags of beans to take back to Brazil.

This passion for foreign coffees and visiting local cafés is not unique to the Brazilian *apaixonados*; it is a common feature of specialty coffee enthusiasts the world over, just as art aficionados prioritise museums when they travel, and 'foodies' seek out specific restaurants or markets.[35] I myself make maps like Tereza did when I travel and organise my exploration of new cities around finding new coffee shops or visiting ones I've heard of before. 'Coffee shop tourism' is so commonplace among coffee enthusiasts that major specialty coffee publications like *Standart*, *Barista Magazine*, and *Revista Espresso*, as well as online platforms such as Sprudge, European Coffee Trip, and Perfect Daily Grind, all regularly run city profiles and publish lists of must-visit coffee shops for the discerning caffeinated traveller. However, what distinguishes the coffee shop tourism of *apaixonados* from, for instance, a potential visit I might make to Coffee Collective on my next trip to Copenhagen is that it provides *apaixonados* with a chance to purchase and consume coffees they might otherwise never try, while I, on the other hand, could conceivably purchase the same coffee bean from a different roaster upon my return to the UK.

'*Querida* [darling],' Tereza says, 'How you would have laughed to see me on my last day [in New York]! Shoving and stomping and doing everything to get my stuff in my suitcase! It was the best work-out I'd had in ages!' Despite all the coffee and clothing she had purchased over the course of her trip, Tereza felt certain that she would be able to fit everything in the bags she had brought with her—until her final visit to a coffee shop on her last night in the city, that is. Having finally decided that she was done with her shopping, Tereza went out for one last coffee, but discovered that the shop was having a sale on coffee-brewing equipment—including the AeroPress coffee maker, which was being sold for the price of $20 (reduced from $29.99). In Brazil, the AeroPress retails for between the equivalent of $50–60. She bought four—one for herself, and three to give to friends.

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[35] See *Coffee Culture, Destinations, and Tourism* (2010) for more on coffee shops as tourist destinations.

Unfortunately for Tereza's luggage, the AeroPress is retailed in a large and distinctive pentagonal box. She shoved. She pushed. She pulled her jumpers out, deciding she could wear them all on the plane, and started again. But in the end, she was forced to discard the boxes and take only the AeroPresses themselves. 'Ah, what a mess!' she tutted to herself, before conceding that 'it was actually better that way. You always should take the tags off and ditch boxes so you don't get in trouble if they look at your bag in customs.'

Tereza's travel has given her access to international coffees and coffee equipment that are popular among the global specialty community, but also to Brazilian coffees that are exported. Tereza started every morning of her trip by going to the Blue Bottle nearest her hotel to try a different coffee; despite the convenience of the Stumptown in the lobby, she decided she preferred Blue Bottle's coffees. The coffee there that Tereza liked the most was a Kenyan coffee that she found to be 'light and fruity, like juice,' but the one she was most *amazed by* was a Brazilian coffee she described as 'unlike anything I have ever tried here.' She bought several bags of it to distribute to her friends, bringing this *tipo exportação* coffee full circle and back to Brazil.

### 3.3.3 SMUGGLING

One day in the mid-afternoon of a Sunday in February, as I was recovering from the previous day's *bloquinho* (a street party held in the run-up to Carnival) and attempting to remove the persistent remnants of glitter from my face, I received the following text message (Figure 7):

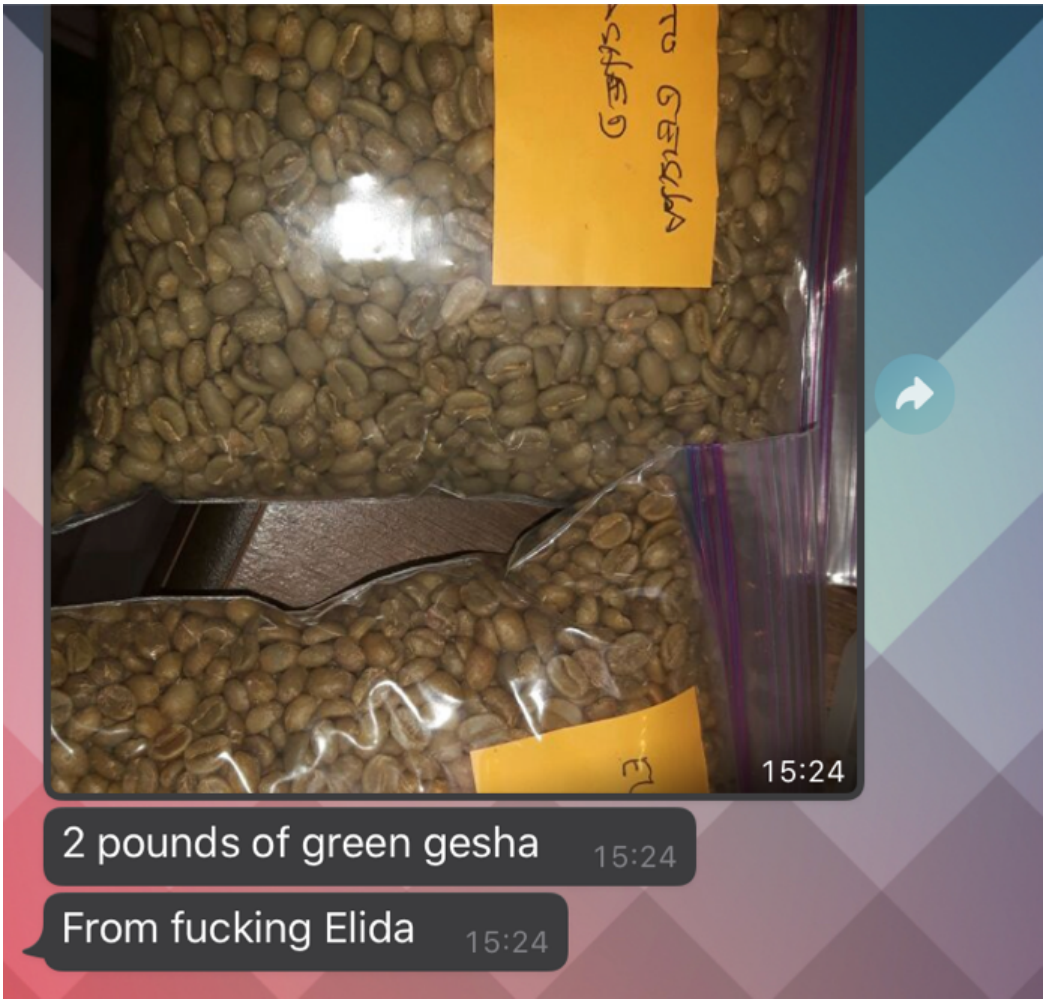


FIGURE 6: '2 POUNDS OF GREEN GESHA // FROM FUCKING ELIDA'

The photo was the sort of low-quality shot of goods in bags one might expect to accompany a shipment of narcotics, but in fact displays two pounds of some of the most valuable coffee in the world: a gesha variety grown on Panama's Elida Estate.[36] Elida is one of the most celebrated and awarded coffee farms in the world: In 2019, a gesha from Elida would sell at an auction for $1,029/lb, making it one of the most expensive coffees in history. Several days after I received the text message, I joined a group of other coffee professionals gathered around a small roaster, squabbling about how best to roast this rare and exquisite coffee. Soon, however, we

[36] The gesha variety is storied and highly vaunted within global specialty coffee culture. It first burst on to the scene after the 2004 edition of the Panamanian Cup of Excellence competition and routinely fetches record-breaking prices on the market. The journalist Michaele Weissman's 2008 book *God in a Cup: The Obsessive Quest for the Perfect Coffee* provides an excellent introduction to the variety and its mythos. Geshas and high auction prices will be covered later in this chapter.

had forgotten all our arguments about the best initial roasting temperature and were tasting the fruits of our labours, before toasting with beers to our roasting endeavour and our friend's smuggling success. The person who brought the coffee into Brazil asked not to be named, but confirmed that it had come in their suitcase from Buenos Aires, where they had obtained it from a coffee shop run by a Brazilian expat who was friendly with an employee at a Panamanian farm, the two having studied for the Q-Grader certification together some years previously. Argentina, which does not produce coffee, does not have the same importation restrictions as Brazil, and it is common for Brazilians returning from both there and Uruguay to bring green coffee with them. This case was notable due to the extremely high quality and global reputation of the coffee in question; although this was not one of the record-holding coffees from this farm, it was still a prestigious coffee. Because of the personal connections involved in its transit from Panama to Brazil, at several stages deals on the price had been struck and it was purchased at a heavy discount.

The importation of green coffee into Brazil is highly regulated and restricted, but it is possible to bring in small samples of unroasted foreign coffees: If the coffee is 2 kilograms or less in weight (more than enough for immediate personal use ahead of coffee staling, but a small quantity in industrial terms), one has obtained the appropriate documentation from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Supply (MAPA), and one has declared the coffee for inspection at customs, it is *technically* allowed,[37] but in practice, *apaixonados* face all manner of

[37] Under rules administered by MAPA (Instrução Normativa n39, de 27 de novembro de 2017), the following six documents must be obtained, if one is to bring *any* amount of green coffee into the country:

1. Application for inspection of agricultural products;
2. Import authorization;
3. Original phytosanitary certificate [issued by country of origin];
4. Customs documentation of the goods;
5. Copy of the invoice;
6. Copy of bill of landing or cargo manifest.

restrictions, according to one coffee professional who has seen multiple legal and appropriately documented samples confiscated over the years:

> Often, the young guys who work in customs don't actually know that [the coffee] is legal. They just see green coffee and think that it's not allowed—they don't know it is allowed in some circumstances. They've told me before that I've forged the forms or that they must be fake, just because they've never seen them before.

Several *apaixonados* informed me that not only is it extremely complicated to procure the relevant paperwork to import coffee (it is almost obligatory to be a coffee professional who is already working in the import/export business in order to make head or tails of where to start), it is very difficult and confusing to navigate the Brazilian customs—few officers are familiar with the relevant rules—and that it is much easier and much less hassle to avoid the issue of declaring the coffee altogether. Given that declared coffee is frequently confiscated even with the appropriate documentation, more than a few *apaixonados* with whom I spoke opt to risk bringing it in illegally.[38]

One method of smuggling coffee into Brazil is to simply pack a bag of green coffee openly in one's suitcase so that, if searched, one can plausibly plead that one either forgot it was there or is unaware of the regulations, and hope to be let off without a fine. However, by far the most common method of slipping green coffee into the country is to place it in the packaging produced for roasted coffee. Here, green coffee is put in a package that has either previously held roasted coffee for retail purposes or was made for that purpose, and then sealed or re-sealed. If packaging that previously contained roasted coffee is used, the green beans are not directly placed into the retail bag but rather first sealed in another bag in order to insulate them from contamination from the roasted coffee due to any oils, odours, and chemical compounds that may be left over. This was how the coffee from Elida Estate in Panama was brought into

[38] Excepting a handful of business expansion plans I was informed about, this topic was the only one about which all participants requested anonymity.

Brazil, sealed in the retail bags of the Buenos Aires-based roastery. Whoever chooses to employ this method of bringing coffee into Brazil either needs to purchase and use (or discard) the roasted coffee in order to free up a bag, or to somehow get hold of an empty bag *and* a vacuum or heat sealer to close the bags. I did not meet anyone who moves large volumes of green coffee (or who would admit to it) who travels with a professional bag-sealing device; most 'smugglers' travelled with under 1 kilogram of green coffee for personal use. Some *apaixonados* confirmed that coffee businesses outside Brazil assist in this illegal trade by helping with the packaging efforts, but this form of external 'support' requires a degree of trust and robust personal networks: One would not simply walk into an unknown coffee roastery and ask for help sealing bags to assist in the illegal transit of coffee. Green coffees smuggled into Brazil are obtained directly from farms in other countries, at international trade shows, or through coffee roasteries visited while abroad. A novice consumer without a network of coffee professionals might find it difficult to bring such coffee into Brazil *and also* to subsequently do anything with it, given that it still needs to be roasted. All *apaixonados* who admitted to bringing unregistered green coffee into Brazil had formerly or currently worked in some professional capacity with coffee, and had ready access to roasting facilities through their professional or friendship networks.

Another relevant factor is that oversight of packages arriving into Brazil is inconsistent. Some *apaixonados* are brazen enough to order green coffee to be shipped directly to them, willing to risk that either the sender will not label it obviously as a raw agricultural product or that no one at customs will pay attention to this particular package. This strategy appears to work with only moderate success—there are anecdotal reports that green coffee ordered in this way arrives at its final destination less frequently than roasted coffee—but the fact that *apaixonados* are still willing to try this route, despite the high chance that they will waste their money, demonstrates both a strong desire for these coffees and few genuine fears that they will face fines or other repercussions for breaking importation restrictions. And the issue of smuggling does not weigh

very heavily on their consciences; as one *apaixonado* who occasionally smuggles coffee once reminded me nonchalantly, 'Coffee first came to Brazil illegally.' He was referencing Francisco de Melo Palheta, who under orders from colonial governors stole coffee from French Guiana in 1727 and successfully brought it back to Brazil, thereby kick-starting what would become centuries of Brazilian dominance over the coffee trade. 'It's basically a tradition, you know?'

#### 3.3.3.1 JEITINHO: NAVIGATING THE SEAS OF BUREAUCRACY

Having looked at *apaixonados*' justifications and motivations for working outside the official systems of coffee provisioning, I will now place these actions in dialogue with literature on *jeitinho* ('little knack' or 'way of doing'), said to be a distinct national characteristic that empowers Brazilians to break or circumnavigate rules deemed to be absurd or inconvenient in order to achieve their desired ends. *Jeitinho* has become a popular object of study in the last decade in analyses of business practices, but in my focus I show that a) the general pattern of *jeitinho* also extends to consumer activity, and that b) current authors, particularly those in the fields of business and management, which have constituted the bulk of recent work on the subject, have been insufficiently critical and too quick to ascribe the label of *jeitinho* to any form of rule-breaking, rather than rule-breaking of rules seen as institutionally unjust or absurd.

None of the *apaixonados* with whom I spoke were what we might consider 'criminals' in a strict sense—they were certainly not career criminals—but they were willing to go to great lengths, including breaking the law, to access the coffees they wanted. *Apaixonados* were quick to invoke the Brazilian concept of *jeitinho* to explain their actions. *Jeitinho*, the diminutive form of *jeito* ('a way of doing'), is generally translated as a 'knack' or 'little way' and refers to problem-solving strategies of deliberate rule-breaking to deal with the inefficiencies and absurdities of bureaucracy in Brazil. From the wealthiest Brazilian to the most impoverished, *jeitinho* is pervasive; it is widely accepted as a practice that is characteristic of the nation at large, and one that everyone—out of necessity—practices (Barbosa, 1992; Porto and Pilati, 2021; Wink,

2020). The Brazilian anthropologist Roberto DaMatta, who was one of the first people to turn a scholarly eye to the phenomenon, has written that *jeitinho* is 'an instrument which helps us navigate the turbulent ocean of Brazilian quotidian life, a day-to-day marked by an inferno of incoherencies' (1992, p. 12). Acts of *jeitinho* are generally self-serving and in a given individual's short-term interest, rather than something that seeks long-term, structural change. *Jeitinho* is a morally ambiguous practice that exists on an ethical continuum ranging from innocuous personal favours to far-reaching corruption. Its more benign forms, which are often viewed positively, are thought to express resourcefulness and creativity and to not harm others; on the other end of the spectrum, however, there has been a growing critical conversation about the practice and acceptance of rule-breaking in light of major political corruption scandals in recent years, such as that which precipitated the impeachment of former President Dilma Rousseff in 2016 (Ansell, 2018; Burges, 2020). Samantha Pearson (2015) gives the example of queue-jumping as a mildly negative form of *jeitinho*, and parents bribing driving instructors to ensure their children pass driving exams as a *jeitinho* that represents a more serious ethical breach because of the higher potential for downstream harm (if, for instance, a young person who should not have been licensed was a dangerous driver and caused a road accident). Relevant to the case of the *apaixonados*, a recent study of Brazilian university students found that the majority classified removing packaging from goods purchased abroad in order to evade customs duties to be a neutral *jeitinho*, and not on the corruption side of the spectrum (Freire et al., 2018). Tereza explained to me that having to discard the AeroPress boxes due to space restrictions in her suitcase was a blessing in disguise because it meant that she stood a greater chance of bypassing customs. Ultimately, no studies have demonstrated a consensus on the moral dimensions of any given use of the practice, and despite it being framed as part of the Brazilian national character, it is incumbent upon the individual to evaluate the country's rules, laws, and institutions and to choose to enact (or not) *jeitinho*.

The coffee smuggler interviewed in the previous section said that smuggling coffee 'is basically a tradition' in Brazil, and the same can be said about *jeitinho*. The *apaixonados* recognise the longstanding nature of the practice. Lucas told me in one interview that 'as long as there have been Brazilians, we've been using *jeitinho*.' Earlier anthropological works on *jeitinho* (DaMatta, 1991, Barbosa, 1992) have tried to prove the centrality of *jeitinho* to the national character, but these studies suffer—DaMatta's in particular—from a lack of empirical and grounded ethnographic evidence. The *apaixonados* freely invoked *jeitinho* in reference to a central problem of daily life that is shared by all Brazilians: A perceived excessive bureaucracy and the general inefficiency of all things mediated by the state. These inefficiencies are felt to be particularly severe in the state-run postal service and customs bodies, which are seen to be a point of friction and impediment, rather than a conduit of access to the outside world. For *apaixonados* as for other Brazilians, *jeitinho* provides a way to navigate the country's byzantine bureaucracy and opaque legal and state institutions. Fernanda Duarte, whose work on *jeitinho* in business settings (2006a, 2006b 2011) has precipitated a number of more recent empirically based investigations on the theme, rightly links the *jeitinho* to bureaucratic problem-solving and strategies for achieving influence in other cultures (such as China's *guangxi* or Russia's *svyazi*), but notes that its specific form in Brazil is tied to the nation's distinctive history. The historical features that Duarte and others deem to be core to *jeitinho*'s shape were the importation of archaic Iberian legal systems while Brazil was a colony, and the systems of paternalism and favours that arose alongside slavery and the concentration of land and wealth, and that continued to persist long past independence and the abolition of slavery. These systems are also profoundly implicated in the ways in which the coffee trade as we know it today was formed and continues to function.

The use of *jeitinho* by *apaixonados* seeking foreign coffees illuminates asymmetries of power, and points to Brazil's continued position on the periphery of consumer culture in general and global specialty coffee culture in particular. A coffee enthusiast in São Paulo may have the same level

of abstract passion as one in Berlin, but material constraints are such that access remains unequal, and the former might decide to break rules in a way that would be unnecessary to the latter. The *jeitinhos* practiced by the *apaixonados*, then, differ in some sense from the more commonly studied examples of dealing with local bureaucracy or conducting immediate and interpersonal negotiations, which are a staple of previous studies on *jeitinho* as a type of favour-swapping. *Apaixonados* who seek coffee from abroad are contending with the labyrinthine morass of Brazilian bureaucracy that is directly associated with transnational trade and Brazil's traditional role as a provider of raw goods. Bringing coffee illicitly into Brazil, either personally or asking one's contacts to do so, is admittedly at the softer end of the moral spectrum of *jeitinho*; many Brazilians frequently ignore the formal regulations about how many of which type of good can be brought into the country, but it is hard to point to concrete examples of what harm has been done; these could be said to be diffuse actions, and close to victimless crimes.

If *jeitinho* is born of a desire to circumnavigate bureaucratic and legal inefficiencies and perceived injustices, it becomes necessary to tease out which rules are evaluated (and by whom) as 'good' and 'bad,' and which can be broken without the individual actor experiencing a moral dilemma or legal implications. When *apaixonados* actively choose to smuggle green coffee into Brazil, they can be said to have revealed their evaluation that their personal passion for and desire to have this coffee outweighs in importance the legal requirement to protect the domestic coffee crop—the ostensible reason for the restrictions on importing green coffee. When I asked certain *apaixonados* about the potential negative impacts of their coffee smuggling, they were quick to point out that they understood the possible dangers, but would not be taking the coffee to farms where it could infect live crops; the coffee would stay in a consumption space in São Paulo, which, as one *apaixonado* concluded, meant that they were 'not threatening anyone.'

Both the *apaixonados* who smuggle coffee and those who seek to obtain foreign coffees in other ways framed it not only as something they had the 'right' to do—embodying discourses of

neoliberal consumer-citizenship—but also something that would ultimately better help them to appreciate and valorise Brazilian coffees. Lucci explained to me:

> We need a point of reference. There are so many flavours and so much to know. If we only have one coffee, Brazilian coffee, we can't compare it [to others]. [If] we can't compare it, we can't move forward. How am I supposed to get better at roasting coffee if I'm roasting the same coffee all the time? How will I learn to taste better if I taste the same things all the time? […] The *gringos* are way ahead of us because they're familiar with so many more coffees and styles. Their technical knowledge of roasting and brewing will always be better unless we can experiment too. […] I don't not want Brazilian coffees. I want Brazilian coffee *and* other coffees. I don't want to be limited. How can I make my own coffee better if I have no point of reference?

Similarly, the barista Lucas explained another practical disadvantage of only having access to Brazilian coffees, a disadvantage that led him to actively seek out non-Brazilian coffees through whatever means possible:

> I had a colleague who went to work in Australia. He was a really good barista here, but when he got there, he couldn't be head barista or anything other than just a trainee because he actually didn't know anything about coffee. He knew everything about *Brazilian coffee*, but he didn't know anything about *all the other coffees*. He couldn't talk to the customers about them; he did not know what flavours they might have. He had to start all over, or almost. And I'm not sure I want to stay here in Brazil forever. I want to try life abroad, especially given the political situation here… who wants to stay here? But even though I'm a professional here, I will be nobody there, unless I know more. To know more, I need more coffee. It's simple.

*Apaixonados* perform *jeitinho* in various ways that give rise to various degrees of moral implications, but always with the ultimate aim of stepping closer to a full realisation of their passion for specialty coffee. Georg Wink's critical review of the contemporary management and business *jeitinho* literature describes *jeitinho* as an 'idiosyncratic characteristic of Brazilian culture and [a] central component of natural identity,' and calls for further research to understand how it functions with regard to power inequalities (2020, p. 52). Against this background, the presence of *jeitinho* in the responses of the *apaixonados* ethnographically indicates an additional need to understand it as a practice, what forms that practice takes, and in what circumstances and in reaction to what inconveniences or difficulties it is applied.

The language and actions of *jeitinho* are invoked by *apaixonados* as a way to access coffees from abroad. In the remainder of this chapter, I show other ways in which *apaixonados* subvert trade structures in Brazil that are perceived to be prejudicial. I first look at the issue of Brazilian-made alternatives to international coffee-brewing equipment, before considering the circulation—both domestically and internationally—of a specific Brazilian-grown coffee. Taken together, these examples show both the tensions and frustrations that occur due to the outbound flow of the highest-quality Brazilian goods and the practical difficulties that even the consumption of domestic goods can entail.

## 3.4 BREWING BRAZILIAN

To contend with the material constraints that limit their consumption of specialty coffee and the *styles* of preparation they can practice, Brazilians have invented various types of coffee-brewing equipment to supplement or replace the methods to which they have limited access. I will look at two examples here: the Koar brewer, originally developed in Recife, Pernambuco, and the Aram Coffee Maker, developed in Curitiba, Paraná. The production of both is made possible by local craftspeople and materials—ceramics for Koar and wood for Aram—and this artisanal aspect features heavily in the marketing. The Koar is modelled on Japanese brewing devices and at present is only sold in Brazil, bringing global coffee brewing styles to local consumers. The Aram Coffee Maker is available for sale internally but marketed externally, aimed primarily at international consumers, thereby revealing a different kind of interaction with the global specialty coffee community; here, Brazil supplies more than just the raw agricultural product. Both these forms of local brewing equipment are examples of *tipo exportação* products, and promote increased Brazilian participation in the global specialty coffee culture, but they ultimately do not trouble the existing power structures in place that relegate *apaixonados*

to the global consumer periphery.[39] As can be seen in the case of Aram, its flow out of the country seems to reinforce the very structures that the *apaixonados* are attempting to disrupt.

### 3.4.1 KOAR

When Kelly and I were glittering ourselves up to head out to a Carnival party, she pulled me into her kitchen to show off her new acquisition: Painted in an array of greens, blues, and pinks—nearly as colourful as we were—was a conical drip coffee maker. Called a Koar (a play on the Brazilian Portuguese verb *coar*, meaning 'to brew'), it had just arrived from its manufacturer in the northeastern city of Recife, the capital of the state of Pernambuco. I lived in Recife when I first moved to Brazil in 2012, a time when there was not a single specialty coffee shop in the city. Some months after the 2018 Carnival, I flew up to Recife for a weekend to attend a friend's baby shower. I found that the food and drink landscape in Recife had entirely changed, and that there were many specialty coffee shops. After a day spent touring the new shops, I dropped into the café run by the Koar manufacturer to learn a little more about the curious cone that Kelly had shown me. Luckily for me (not having announced my visit ahead of time), two of the three business partners behind the Koar—Lidiane and Fernando—were in the shop at the time, and spent the evening plying me with coffee and walking me through the design process.

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[39] There is one notable exception to desired coffee equipment being foreign, although this does not impact the *apaixonados* or other coffee consumers directly: coffee harvesting and processing equipment is the 'one distinctly South-South aspect to the industry' (Riddle, 2011, p. 34). The Brazilian manufacturing company Pinhalense, which has been making coffee processing equipment for over 70 years, is by far the dominant brand in coffee farming equipment and supplies worldwide, now present in 70 coffee-producing countries (Conversation with Pinhalense representative, November 2019). Today they manufacture equipment for a wide array of agricultural products, though coffee remains their focus and primary area of business. Tariffs for the importation of coffee equipment from foreign firms mean most coffee farms source locally, and this means usually from Pinhalense (although Colombian-based Pengano now has a Brazilian subsidiary, Monte Alegre, and represents an increasing segment of the market share). This said, *apaixonados* I spoke with thought positively of Pinhalense and considered them a world leader in equipment manufacture for the agricultural side of coffee—many even credit Pinhalense engineers with inventing *cereja descascado* (honey process) coffee, a type of processing wherein the coffee cherries are de-pulped and allowed to dry without being washed, resulting in a complex flavour profile highly sought after on the world specialty market (PRF, 2021).

The development of the Koar was a direct response to the problem of *custo Brasil*—'the Brazilian cost,' or the high cost of many foreign-made goods in Brazil. All of the Koar partners enjoyed coffee made with the popular V60 and Kalita brewers (both developed in Japan), but found both the equipment itself and the paper filters expensive. The Koar was explicitly conceived of as 'an alternative to imports.' This was not framed as a nationalist decision, but rather as a more banal and practical choice; according to Lidiane, 'the idea was to have a line of products with accessible prices for coffee enthusiasts and coffee shops [in Brazil] because we'd seen first-hand how expensive imported equipment was due to the high importation duties.'

*Custo Brasil* refers to the high costs of doing business in Brazil that ultimately renders end products much more expensive than their counterparts in coffee-importing nations; high taxes, bureaucratic and infrastructural inefficiency, high interest, unstable inflation rates, and corruption all work together to drive costs up. As one newspaper headline from the United States put it, 'Everything is Insanely Expensive in Brazil' (Kelley, 2013). Charlotte, an Oxford anthropology doctoral student who found herself unexpectedly stranded in Brazil due to Covid-19 travel restrictions, texted me in a panic in April 2020 as she attempted to sort out her accommodation and wait out the pandemic:

[23:17] Why does a Moka Pot cost $60 here?

[23:18] Really.

[23:19] I almost fainted when they told me the price of the Moka Pot.[40]

I've been familiar with the *custo Brasil* since my first trip to visit Brazil a decade ago. The friend I was going to see at that time did not ask me to bring her products that she was unable to buy

[40] Depending on the size, the classic Bialetti-brand Moka Pot retails for between the equivalent of $15–30 in the UK. Charlotte was attempting to buy the Moka Pot from the Curitiba-based coffee shop Lucca Cafés Especiais profiled later in this chapter.

in Brazil, but rather things to which she had access in Brazil, but only at what she thought were unfair prices. Even today, I routinely ferry consumer electronics like iPhones into the country for friends: in Brazil, the iPhone XS costs $2,050—a 164 per cent increase on the price in the US of $1,250—and yes, like Tereza, I too engage in my own little *jeitinho*, removing packaging and tags in order to evade customs duties. An examination of the complex system of Brazilian import taxation that underlies *custo Brasil* and intersects with the importation of coffee would require a thesis in its own right, and, it must be said, has caused me more grief than any other aspect of this research. There are three main taxes that imports are subject to: Import Duty (II),[41] Industrial Product Tax (IPI),[42] and Merchandise and Service Circulation Tax (ICMS).[43] II typically ranges between 10–35 per cent, but one can apply for a waiver in the event that there are no locally produced alternatives to a product (which is decidedly not the case for coffee); IPI ranges between 0–15 per cent; while ICMS rates vary between states. In São Paulo, this range is 7–18 per cent. *Custo Brasil*, however, is not exclusive to imported goods; even products manufactured in Brazil are more expensive than an outsider might expect. The academic study of supply chain management flourishes in Brazil precisely due to the need to combat the inefficiencies that contribute to the *custo Brasil*. Even though imported goods are not always of high quality, there has been a surge in demand for consumer products, such that domestic Brazilian production has not been able to keep up, thereby raising prices. A report by *The Economist* has explained that even in the sphere of domestic production, there are:

> rigid labour laws that make it hard to use workers efficiently. Poor roads and a limited rail network push up freight costs. High interest rates mean firms must spend a packet on financing; high crime adds heavy security costs to their overheads. A terrible education system makes Brazil the world's second-hardest place for firms to find the skills they need, according to Manpower Group, behind only ageing Japan. Soaring labour costs, which have doubled in a decade as big hikes to the minimum wage set the tone for pay negotiations across the board, have added a new ingredient to the old recipe.

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[41] *Imposto de Importação*
[42] *Impostos sobre Produtos Industrializados*
[43] *Imposto sobre Operações Relativas à Circulação de Mercadorias e Sobre Prestações de Serviços de Transporte Interestadual, Intermunicipal e de Comunicação*

(2013, n. p.)

As a result, *custo Brasil* is considered to be a major factor in boosting the extent to which Brazilians choose to purchase consumer goods overseas. The Brazilian businessman Henri Chazan is credited with uttering in 2009 the infamous phrase '*Como sou pobre, só compro nos Estados Unidos*' ('Because I am poor, I only shop in the United States'), but he is far from alone in espousing this sentiment; Tereza, for example, purchased four AeroPress coffee makers during her holiday in New York on the grounds that they were less expensive in New York than in São Paulo. Brazilian travellers are such prolific shoppers while abroad that airlines are known to put more fuel in their planes on the journey from the USA and Europe to Brazil than those flying the opposite route due to the increase in baggage weight, while all airlines that fly into Brazil are required to allow passengers two free pieces of checked luggage. Top tips for a Brazilian heading on a shopping holiday?

> Go with your luggage totally empty. Get a digital scale so you don't exceed weight limitations on your luggage. Try to buy things you know you want online, so you don't waste time in stores. If you're staying at a hotel, be sure to confirm the hotel receives the packages.
>
> (Garcia-Navarro, 2013)

The savings made on purchases in the United States can be so great compared to their equivalents in Brazil that they can cover the cost of both flights and accommodation (Lyons and Trevisani, 2011; Riker and Vila-Goulding, 2013).

The Koar takes its inspiration from Japanese coffee-brewing equipment. Its use of local materials has made it more accessible to Brazilian consumers, while also challenging the perceived inferiority inherent in the *tipo exportação* discourse by valorising and promoting Brazilian-made goods as high-quality objects. Inspired by the conical structures of both the V60 and the Kalita, the Koar features 16 ripples, which permit the flow of water, while allowing for ideal heat retention. The ceramic Koar, the flagship product, is produced by local *Recifense* potters using clay and pigments from the region, and the designers drew inspiration for their

colour palate from the work of the famed *Recifense* sculptor Francisco Brennand. Borer's work on the 'translocalism' of the American craft beer scene makes it clear that 'what is considered "local" … doesn't necessarily have to consist of material goods or ideas from a single proximate location' (2019, p. 116).

The Koar can be thought of as an assemblage of local materials and the intangible Japanese brewing 'style,' a hybrid product that retains some of the cachet that foreign goods enjoy, while remaining locally accessible in terms of price point. The Koar also creates a space for the valorisation of Brazilian products by *apaixonados* who are starting to resist narratives of local inferiority. As Gisele explained to me, the preference for Japanese and other foreign brewing equipment is a 'new form of colonisation' that is present within the specialty coffee industry:

> …we have some local traditions [in Brazil] such as brewing with cloth filters [*coador de pano*], but this has been nearly stamped out by the use of Japanese brewing equipment like the V60 and Kalita Wave, while Melitta—of German origin—is the most popular brewing system in the average Brazilian home. I'm as guilty as anyone—I think all of us baristas love technology—but we should acknowledge the need to respect and preserve Brazilian culture, and let people know, hey, it's acceptable to brew specialty coffee using a traditional *coador de pano*.

Gisele keeps the Koar in her regular rotation of brewers for personal use at home, and teaches students in her brewing courses how to use it, viewing this decision as both a form of resistance to what in a later discussion she termed 'brewing colonisation' and because she likes the coffee it makes. And while she also teaches students how to use foreign brewing equipment like the V60 and Kalita, she makes sure to provide instructions on how to do a 'bit of origami *jeitinho*'—folding the cheap filter papers available in supermarkets so that they can be used with these brewers.

### 3.4.2 ARAM COFFEE MAKER

In April 2018, I ran into Maycon Aram at the Specialty Coffee Association's trade show, held that year in Seattle.[44] He and his business partner Juca were there to promote their brewer, the Aram Coffee Maker, an exquisite and ingenious piece of equipment: It is a portable, non-electric espresso machine that is hand-operated and with a body made of woods local to the city in which they are manufactured. The Aram Coffee Maker was developed not so much to address an immediate practical problem around equipment access—as was the case with the Koar—but because Maycon identified a gap in the (global) market for a quality portable espresso machine. This is a problem that has vexed the coffee industry for years; it is 'a bit of a Holy Grail in the coffee world' (Cadwalader, 2017, n. p.), and one to which Maycon was introduced during a camping trip he went on as an undergraduate studying industrial design. One of his companions on that trip had brought a portable espresso machine, but it was cumbersome and the group determined that the end coffee drink was not good enough to warrant the trouble of using the machine. Maycon returned from the trip determined to come up with a solution. Brazilian infrastructural inefficiencies, however, played a major part in the end design—he had not intended to make a non-electric espresso machine, but rather envisioned one with both levers and a heating element—but the morass of barriers and bureaucracy that must be overcome before one can obtain product certification saw him quickly abandon hope of including any electronic components. 'What looked like a problem ended up being a great asset,' he explained, because it ultimately prompted simplicity in design and use, and sets it apart from other portable espresso machines on the global market.

Maycon frames his use of local artisans and materials as part of the broader ethical orientation of specialty coffee to ensure fair labour practices and community employment. The wood for

[44] Although his friends and associates all refer to him by his surname, Aram, because this is also the name of his espresso machine, I will call him as Maycon for clarity's sake.

each unit is shaped and polished by Antônio, a woodworker who Maycon met by chance in 2011 and whom he now considers a close friend, and who fortuitously lives in the same outskirts of Curitiba in which the company's headquarters can be found. The metal components are made at a factory on the other side of the city, tucked among a sprawl of warehouses near the airport; I was given a whirlwind tour of the plant, and did not manage to catch a single name of the more than 20 employees working there, even though Maycon introduced them all by name. Maycon explained that when he began his company, his 'desire was for the full production to be Brazilian with local producers and all well paid. The same way of work that many specialty coffee farms do—in search of a fairer world [sic].' However, just as specialty coffee commands higher prices than commodity, the level of craftsmanship and technical labour needed to produce the Aram Coffee Maker comes at a cost, and its retail price—$495 before shipping—is out of the reach of most *apaixonados*, being well over the average monthly salary of Brazilian baristas. Indeed, the only Brazilians I knew who owned one had received it as part of their pledge of support in the initial round of crowdfunding that Aram launched in 2017 to bring his idea to life. Those who came up to the Aram booth at the 2017 and 2018 Semana Internacional do Café trade shows in Belo Horizonte enjoyed testing the equipment, but I heard many bemoan the price.

In contrast to the Koar, the Aram Coffee Maker is primarily intended for export, due in large part to its high cost. Maycon's command of English has helped him to reach out to international partners, and starting with the trade show at which I found him in Seattle in April 2018, he has travelled extensively internationally to promote the machine, and believes that one of the major achievements of the company is to have brought a 'coffee product, created in the country of coffee' to the outside world. While wandering the halls of the expo centre in Seattle that hosted the 2018 trade show, I came upon him happily chatting with Nolan Hirte, the owner of Proud Mary Coffee in Portland, Oregon and Melbourne, Australia. We grabbed a bag of Nolan's

coffee (grown in Ethiopia and roasted in Portland), ground it using a Comandante grinder from Berlin, and ran it through the Brazilian-made Aram. The espresso worked beautifully, and when I left the two of them to find Danilo (who I had been originally looking for in the vast trade show hall when I stumbled upon Nolan and Maycon), they were working out a sales deal.

Thanks to Maycon's concerted efforts and travel promoting his machine, the Aram now has distribution partners across the world, including in major coffee-consuming markets such as the United States, Germany, and Japan. In January 2020, the former World Barista Champion and major specialty coffee influencer James Hoffmann reviewed the Aram on his popular YouTube channel. To date, the review video has received nearly half a million views, with an active thread of over 800 comments—a major publicity success for the company, with Aram posting on their Instagram page:

> Once we had the crazy dream of making coffee products in Brazil. Not even in our wildest dreams could we imagine our product making its way into the curious hands of James Hoffmann, the British co-founder of Square Mile Coffee, World Barista Champion, and top-level writer and blogger who meticulously reviewed our coffee maker on his channel. It's a day of great joy here because the reviews were awesome!

However, in the four years since its launch, the price of the Aram has not yet come down enough to make it readily accessible to the *apaixonados*. One Brazilian commenter on Hoffmann's video review noted:

> FROM BRAZIL??? Finally something I can buy without being scare [sic] of any additional taxes
> EDIT: Forget what I just said. Almost R$2000[45]

Both the Aram and the Koar disrupt certain structural aspects of *tipo exportação* thinking, but reinforce others. The Koar was specifically designed to help Brazilians to circumvent the need to use imported equipment. It was motivated in part by practical financial concerns, but also

[45] The Aram Espresso Maker is, of course, also prohibitively expensive for many non-Brazilians, and as such remains a relatively niche item of specialty coffee equipment. I know of several shops that use them, but I am the only individual I know who owns one personally—and this was a gift from Maycon himself, who had hoped I would write a review of it for *Standart*. After I explained that we do not run product reviews, he sent me one anyway.

by movements toward the valuation of local and domestic products and craftspeople. The designers wondered: If Brazilian coffee was starting to be appreciated, perhaps the time is right for other Brazilian products to see a similar rise in reputation? Designed with obvious reference to popular foreign brewing equipment, the Koar was thus born of *tipo exportação* structures that have made foreign brewing equipment like the V60 and Kalita difficult and expensive to access, but is itself highly valued and desirable. The Koar is a clear example of the types of *tipo exportação* goods that exist in response to the 'allure of the foreign' and fall outside the rigid binary of foreign and domestic. The Aram Coffee Maker likewise places value on local craftsmanship and materials, but follows the same trajectory of much of what is manufactured in Brazil: It is, by virtue of its price point, too expensive to be readily consumed internally, but it subverts some aspects of *tipo exportação* structures in its active promotion of Brazilian-manufactured goods as quality items, instead of cheap alternatives to more desirable products.

## 3.5 THE MOST EXPENSIVE COFFEE IN THE WORLD

In this final section, I consider the case of a single award-winning Brazilian coffee, and how it was both celebrated and sought-after, but came to represent some of the most potent frustrations with regard to *apaixonados*' desire to maintain access to high-quality domestic coffees. This story begins in late November of 2017, when I was assisting Danilo with a barista skills course at Wolff—or, rather, I was supposed to be assisting, but on that day I was monumentally distracted, glued to my phone and following the live results of the Cup of Excellence auction.

The Cup of Excellence is an annual competition held in Bolivia, Brazil, Burundi, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Rwanda, and Peru. Organised by the US-based non-profit Alliance for Coffee Excellence, the Cup of Excellence puts coffees through multiple, rigorous rounds of tasting, sampling, and grading to determine the highest-quality coffees in a given country, before auctioning them off. A

favourable review during the Cup of Excellence is a guarantor of quality for any coffee, and means that it can command a much higher price than it would otherwise. I had attended the competition as an observer in the previous month, and the coffees were being auctioned off on the day I was assisting at Wolff. Danilo and I were watching the numbers tick upwards and whispering between ourselves what we thought the highs might be. The winning coffees in this category last year had received a high price of $40.30/pound, but we had just surpassed that. How high would it go? The highest-ever price paid for a Brazilian coffee was $58/pound. When the bidding blew through that, we were stunned. The best we could do was hold on to our phones and anxiously await what would happen next.

When the auction closed, the top coffee had sold for $130.20/pound.

On that day, 28 November 2017, the C-market price for coffee was $1.27/pound.

Danilo and I went out for beers after work and toasted to *café brasileiro*. The Nunes family, the owners of the winning farm, had just sold 793 pounds of coffee for nearly $100,000. We did not know them personally, but toasted to their success, too. When I spoke with other *apaixonados* over the following months, all agreed that the sale was something to be proud of, a historic moment that boded well for the global reputation of Brazilian specialty coffee. Several *apaixonados* were even able to recount to me exactly where they were and what they were doing when they first heard the news of the auction, a moment that they spoke of with intense emotion. This was the case with the barista Jéssica:

> *Jéssica*: I read about it when I was on a break at work. At first I thought it was an error in the system… it was so much higher than the previous record, which was $30 per pound, I think.[46]
>
> *Sabine*: But it wasn't an error. It was real.
>
> *Jéssica*: I know. It was the most amazing thing! Imagine: a Brazilian coffee, breaking all the records ever. [laughs] But really, who could imagine such a thing? I know our history has

[46] Jéssica was slightly off; the previous record set in a Brazilian Cup of Excellence auction (in 2016) was $40.30/lb.

> always shown an emphasis on quantity, volume, over quality production, but that's changing. Now this is the proof—people outside Brazil are starting to understand this. We're starting to break the stereotypes… we've had the quality for some years now… maybe, though, it takes the money, that record, for foreigners to become aware of this.

In the jubilation that followed the closure of the auction and during my subsequent conversations with *apaixonados*, I was struck by how excited everyone was at the sale of this coffee, even though it was being sold to a group of foreigners and they did not anticipate ever having a chance to taste it. It drove home for me how normal it is and how everyone expects the literal best of all Brazilian products—in this case, the best coffee—to be exported. All *apaixonados* with whom I spoke were immensely proud of this sale.

Immediately after the coffee was sold for a record-shattering price, there was a flurry of Brazilian media coverage. I began to see a slew of headlines and stories being shared on WhatsApp and Facebook, but also in mainstream news outlets such as *Paladar*, the gastronomy arm of the major newspaper *Estado de São Paulo*. No matter where the reporting was from, the stories all shared one characteristic: In headline after headline, it was consistently called 'the most expensive coffee in the world':

> Coffee produced in Minas Gerais breaks auction record for most expensive coffee in the world; one kilo was bought for more than R$915[47]
>
> Production of the most expensive specialty coffee in the world launches in Brazil[48]
>
> The most expensive coffee of all time[49]

The statement caught my eye and caused me a great deal of vexation because it was not factually true. I assumed that perhaps someone had made an error in reporting along the way, and it had just been repeated and copied *ad infinitum*. To be sure, this coffee was the most expensive *Brazilian* coffee ever sold, and it was, for a short while at least, the most expensive

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[47] *Café produzido em MG bate recorde de mais caro do mundo em leilão; quilo foi comprado por mais de R$915* (Almeida, 2017).
[48] *Produção de café especial mais caro do mundo deslancha no Brasil* (Gomes, 2017).
[49] *O café mais caro de todos os tempos* (Neto, 2017).

coffee ever sold in any Cup of Excellence auction across their participating countries, but it was *not* the most expensive ever sold in any competition auction format.[50]

The most expensive coffee overall? The coffee from the Nunes family farms did not even come close to reaching that price. The world record at the time had been set in July of that same year, when a Panamanian coffee was sold in a different auction for $601/pound. The following year, a different Panamanian coffee—one from the same farm from which we had obtained the green coffee beans referenced earlier in the chapter—would go on to sell for $1,029/lb.

The August 2018 edition of the Brazilian agriculture industry magazine *Globo Rural* featured Gabriel Nunes on the front cover, alongside the headline 'The most expensive coffee in the world.' I asked many *apaixonados* about it and received surprisingly similar responses that amounted to 'Even if it was not true, it might as well be true.' Danilo informed me that 'since normal people here can really only get hold of Brazilian coffee, it's basically the same as the most expensive coffee in the world.' For her part, Tereza—who we met earlier in this chapter after her shopping trip to New York—shared her pride in the record price, while also expressing belief that calling it 'the most expensive coffee in the world' was not exactly an untruth:

> You know, I didn't even realise until very recently that we don't get other coffees here. It was only when I was on my trip [to New York] that I started wondering why we didn't have these other coffees from different places. And then I come back and I find out it's illegal! … so who is going to know it [the *Globo Rural* headline] isn't right? No one except people like me who are crazy about coffee. In our country, where we don't get the other coffees, the headline isn't wrong. Not really.

I note that *Revista Espresso*, the specialty coffee trade magazine in Brazil, never printed the blanket statement that this coffee was the most expensive in the world. Each time it mentioned the coffee, it adds a careful qualifier: the coffee was 'the most expensive pulped natural coffee' (Cechinel, 2017), or 'the most expensive ever sold in a Cup of Excellence auction' (Campoli,

[50] The Cup of Excellence Brazil auction record was broken again in the following year (2018) when a coffee from Fazenda Primavera sold to Ally Coffee for $140/lb.

2018). This different approach taken by a magazine focused on specialty coffee shows that as different knowledge is acquired, the conception of what might be true and untrue also shifts; as Walter Mignolo has written, this is intrinsically tied to local histories and conditions, and in the case of Brazil, they are shaped by coloniality and maintained by global capitalism. In the words of one roaster, 'It's not the most expensive coffee in the world, but it's *the most expensive coffee in the world in Brazil*.'[51]

### 3.5.1 'THE MOST EXPENSIVE COFFEE IN THE WORLD IN BRAZIL'

In this section, I trace the circulation of 'the most expensive coffee in the world' within Brazil, where headlines continued to promote the same pleasant myth, and where in a deliberate inversion of the *custo Brasil*, it was sold at a considerably lower price than it was available for in foreign coffee shops. In this way, the coffee was in practice simultaneously the most expensive and *not* the most expensive coffee in the world. The story of this coffee goes beyond the single lot from the Nunes farm and speaks to the ongoing frustrations of *apaixonados* as they attempt to access the highest-quality green coffee before it leaves the country, and the ways they are preventing from doing so due to the higher purchasing power of foreign firms.

> A coffee shop in Curitiba is selling the most expensive coffee in the world:
> With aromas of yellow fruits and papaya, this coffee from Cerrado Mineiro sold at an auction for the price of R$55,000 per bag[52]

In 2017, prior to the Cup of Excellence competition, Lucca Cafés Especiais in Curitiba, Paraná—one of the longest-established and most recognised Brazilian specialty coffee shops

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[51] Another similar example of Brazil's coffee isolation has to do with World Coffee Day (*Dia Mundial do Café*) which is celebrated in Brazil on April 14; the International Coffee Organization-headed World Coffee Day—which is celebrated across the world—is on October 1. Brazil *also* has a national coffee day (*Dia Nacional do Café*, May 24) and Brazilians also actively participate in the World Coffee Day initiatives in October. Nevertheless, not a single person has been able to explain to me why there is a separate, additional 'World' Coffee Day celebrated exclusively in Brazil.

[52] *Cafeteria curitibana vende o café mais caro do mundo: com aroma de frutas amaralas e papaya, café do Cerrado Mineiro foi arremetado em leilão por R$55mil a saca* (Schiochet, 2017).

and roasteries—purchased six bags of coffee from the same lot of Nunes' coffee that went on to break records at the auction. Having purchased the coffee before the auction and before its astronomic sales potential was realised, the team at Lucca had paid a much lower price than that it eventually fetched on the international market, which would have been far beyond its means. This was also the only internally sold batch of this coffee, so Lucca became the only place in Brazil from which *apaixonados* could purchase and try 'the most expensive coffee in the world.'

'It's a very exotic coffee, and reminds you of a beverage that's creamier [than coffee]. It's rare to find this characteristic in coffee from any country. When we tried it, we knew it had potential,' Geórgia Franco, Lucca's head roaster, explained. In 2017, a regional growers' association, Federação do Cerrado Mineiro (Cerrado Coffee Growers Federation), launched a programme called Cafés Autorais with the intention of linking producers in their region with roasters and baristas across Brazil to facilitate among all actors a robust and holistic understanding of the coffee cycle. Geórgia was one of the roasters selected to participate in the project, and she spent July of that year traversing various participating farms to find a partner to work with. In the end, she settled on the Nunes farm, explaining that 'the variety of coffees they had and that we tried during our visits was fundamental in the decision,' and that she knew they would hit on something exceptional. For this programme, Geórgia selected a natural-processed gesha variety, of which a total of 250 cans of 100g each were released with the Café Autorais seal.

It was during the selection process for Cafés Autorais that Geórgia came across the Nunes' history-making yellow bourbon. After cupping it at the farm, along with hundreds of other coffees, she made a small star next to it in her notes: this was something even better than the gesha; she wouldn't use it for the Café Autorais programme, but still wanted it. Geórgia asked the Nunes family if she would be able to buy some bags from the lot. Most of it, they informed

her, was already reserved for entry into the upcoming Cup of Excellence, but there were a few bags from the same lot that they were not entering because the beans were of a smaller size, and therefore inconsistent with the rest of the lot.[53] A homogenous sample in terms of quality and size makes a Cup of Excellence entry more competitive, so even though these beans were not defective or of low quality, they were nevertheless removed from the entry. Geórgia bought all six of the remaining bags that July, four months ahead of the auction.

Despite going on to become 'the most expensive coffee in the world,' Lucca opted to sell this coffee at a price point based on what they had originally paid for it, rather than on the later auction price. This was, according to Geórgia, deliberate: Lucca's coffees are already expensive compared to conventional Brazilian coffees, and out of the price range of many consumers and *apaixonados*. Lucca sold the coffee in 250g packages for R$60; in comparison, the same coffee was sold by Proud Mary in Portland, USA (one of the Cup of Excellence consortium buyers and the same company that Maycon had convinced to buy the Aram Espresso Maker) for $50 for 100g—or, at the exchange rate of July 2018 when they released the coffee for sale, R$187. That is nearly triple the price for less than half the coffee.[54] As a point of reference, a 500g bag of Pilão—the most popular brand of conventional coffee in Brazil—retails for R$15.

Lucca's successful acquisition of the coffee before the farm had gained international recognition echoes a pattern I heard from other roasters and coffee shops, including those in São Paulo. *Apaixonados* were often painfully aware that the best coffees from their country are exported for consumption elsewhere, and that those that remain in-country are the leftovers that have not been sold abroad. *Apaixonados* as a group are single-mindedly focused on obtaining the best

[53] These were *peneira moca* or peaberry coffees, which are a natural mutation that occurs in around 5 per cent of all coffee beans. Instead of a cherry growing, as would be normal, with two oblong halves, only one part is fertilised. The result is a single smaller, rounder bean. Because of their different shapes, they must be sorted out from regular coffees, if one wants an even roast.
[54] 3.75BRL = $1 (July 2018 average).

coffees possible, and this coffee paradigm is an understandable source of tension and frustration. To combat this pattern and compete with international buyers, Brazilian coffee roasters attempt to stay one step (and one harvest year) ahead of foreign firms. If they can get to coffees and up-and-coming farms before the international buyers can, they will at least have one season of exceptional quality coffee, before the farmers—realising the potential of their coffees, due to the interest from high-end cafés in Brazilian urban centres—begin to more actively seek higher prices abroad. In some circumstances, farms retain favourable partnerships with domestic roasteries, at the same time as selling abroad. For example, Lucca and the farms owned by the Nunes family still frequently work together, following their first successful joint venture in 2017. However, as Rodolfo from Takkø told me, this is not always possible:

> For the last couple of years, we have tried to buy coffee from [farm redacted] in Minas Gerais. Every time, we try to go there by June or July, but they will never show us the best coffees because they are holding them for the international buyers, you know? If they have some coffee in abundance, they do let us taste it; but if it's a coffee of which they only have, like, I don't know, 10 bags or something, they will totally hold that for the international buyer. And when we get to work with producers like [name redacted], who won the Coffee of the Year[55] ... well, we got to work with his coffee only one time because the next year he got the prize, and it was impossible to buy any coffee from him again.

Rodolfo went on to explain his position to me as having something of a 'dual nature': He needs to buy green coffee at what is a reasonable price within the local economy, but also understands and values that selling to foreigners can lead to improvements in farmers' livelihoods:

> I think somehow, we are opening up new relationships. You know, if more and more producers are showing up [with specialty coffee], that's great. But we are going to reach a scenario in a few years where it's going to be really complicated—we won't be finding new producers to work with because everyone who can produce specialty coffee already will be. Then, we will be stuck always competing directly with the big buyers.

It is difficult for farms to keep channels open to ensure that quality coffee reaches domestic consumers, and many *apaixonados* said that market realities and the constant outward flow of coffee from Brazil to the rest of the world reduce internal consumer access to truly high-quality

[55] A contest organised by Semana Internacional do Café.

coffee to a fleeting, occasional opportunity. Rodolfo's decision to purchase his own small plot on João Pedro's farm was a direct result of this fact that the best coffees in Brazil tend to follow this outbound trajectory.

When I asked Mari to describe the best coffee she'd ever tasted, she replied: 'The best coffee I've ever had? Well, it was last year and it was beautiful; beautiful. Of course, no one here could get it this year because the producers realised what they had and that they could sell it for more if they sold it abroad.' Mari, a photographer, was not even a specialty coffee professional, yet here clearly reveals an understanding of how global trade influences her coffee consumption. Once producers realise they have in their possession a very high-quality coffee, it becomes much more difficult for Brazilians to access it because it will start to be channelled into international exportation and distribution networks.

'What can we do?' Rodolfo asked me one afternoon as we sat down to have after-work beers at a neighbourhood *boteco* (casual bar) down the street from Takkø. He continued:

> [Foreigners] are always going to pay [Brazilian farmers] better than we can. We can't change that. For now, the coffee that we get is okay. But in the future, when our market and customer base are more developed? When our customers know that what they regularly get isn't actually that good? What will we do then?

In the aftermath of the 2017 Cup of Excellence auction, however, the *apaixonados* of São Paulo were in a frenzy, placing orders for the Nunes coffee to be shipped from Lucca in Curitiba in order to try the historic beans—never mind the fact that they were the off-cuts of the lot that had been deemed not the right size to send to the Cup of Excellence, and therefore not *technically* part of the coffee that had been judged 'the most expensive coffee in the world.' This is a common pattern one observes in Brazil: It is the leftovers or specialty production that is deemed to be not of sufficiently high quality for international buyers that remains for internal consumption.

When they heard that I was planning to make a trip to Curitiba, two *paulistano apaixonados* separately asked me to bring back a bag of the Nunes coffee from Lucca for them. Their enthusiasm to try this award-winning coffee represents a disruption to the idea that the best products will inevitably be exported from Brazil; the *apaixonados* jumped at the chance to access the best domestic coffee, and were proud of what their country had produced. At the same time, however, we must consider how the designation of 'best' came to be, and the role of Northern brokers and consumers in ascribing this valuation to the coffee. The Brazilian enthusiasm for trying the Lucca coffee in particular was directly associated with its historic sale on the global market and its outbound trajectory. This coffee, then, was not simply *tipo exportação* in grade or abstract quality, but had quite literally come from the same lot as that which was being exported to buyers in the Global North. Nicolas, a secondary school teacher who I first met at a tasting event at Cupping Café, was able to obtain some of the Nunes coffee that had been roasted by Proud Mary in Portland, Oregon thanks to a friend who travelled there for work and agreed to bring some of it back for him. He also purchased a bag of Lucca's version of the coffee. Based on his knowledge that the roasting approaches needed to be different for each coffee and that it was Lucca's coffee that had been excluded from the lot entered for the Cup of Excellence, he was emphatic in his assessment after brewing that the Proud Mary version was the superior product.

The story of 'the most expensive coffee in the world' sheds light on *tipo exportação* thinking and living: *Apaixonados* take pride in the fact that the world's most expensive coffee is from Brazil, but accept that it will be difficult (if not impossible) for Brazilian consumers to drink it—an attitude that is very revealing about their beliefs about Brazil's relative position in the world. To what extent will it be necessary for the mainstream specialty coffee industry conception of coffee—as something exotic and coming from a spread of tropical countries around the globe—to change before Brazil, where access to non-Brazilian coffee and the highest-quality Brazilian

coffee is highly truncated, can be admitted as a full member of the global specialty community and subculture? Until such conceptions change, merge, or communicate in a more translational and compassionate way, a commodity-specific consumer culture like specialty coffee is, at best, unevenly accessible to enthusiasts and general consumers, based on their location in global hierarchies of trade and consumption. At worst, access is impossible.

## 3.6 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

When I completed my year of initial fieldwork, I hopped on a series of flights, eventually arriving in Portland, Oregon. My family lives several hours north of Portland in Seattle, Washington, but flights to Portland were cheaper, so my plan was to spend several days there to adjust to the time zone, before taking a train up the coast. The morning after my arrival in Portland, in need of both food and caffeine, I strolled over to Proud Mary Coffee. I had first met the owner Nolan at the Cup of Excellence competition in Brazil and had seen him again at the Specialty Coffee Expo, and he happened to be in when I entered the shop. He gave me a tour of the kitchen, roastery, and dining area (in the far corner of which was a well-known Hollywood celebrity in town to shoot a film), before I settled into a seat at the bar and placed my breakfast and coffee order. I asked for an espresso, but the barista appeared with something else that I hadn't asked for, an extra treat on the house: A V60 of a Brazilian coffee… yes, *that* Brazilian coffee. A cup of the infamous 'most expensive coffee in the world,' which had occupied my thoughts for so many months at this point, was set down in front of me.

As I sat with my coffees, the aforementioned Hollywood star walked past, donned his sunglasses, and stepped out into the street and the gentle summer sun of the American Pacific Northwest, and I simply had to laugh: The irony of the ease with which I had managed to drink this Brazilian coffee *as soon as I had left* Brazil was not lost on me. Testifying to both the seemingly predetermined outbound path for quality Brazilian coffees and the ease with which the highest-quality coffee can be obtained in importing countries, the story of this Cup of Excellence-

winning coffee speaks to the underlying conditions for *tipo exportação* thinking: namely, the naturalisation of the idea that the best Brazilian products are destined to be exported. *Apaixonados*' determination to access and drink (a version of) this coffee when it was available domestically shows the ongoing pushbacks to that attitude, and perhaps the start of its gradual decline as an inevitable course of action.

To conclude this chapter, I turn to Rudi Colloredo-Mansfeld, a scholar of consumption in the Andes whose work has drawn attention to the extent to which anthropological work on contemporary consumption 'has sought to show the cultural diversity produced in capitalism's midst, and the role consuming plays in defending alternative social and cultural orders' (2013, p. 330). In contrast, *tipo exportação* demonstrates the ways in which novel and diverse forms of consumption need not *necessarily* be seen as acts of resistance or the foundation of an alternative social order, but may actually serve as a practical means of best achieving orthodox forms of consumption—even when the path to achieve this consumption is itself not orthodox, which is certainly the case in *apaixonados'* use of *jeitinho* and other alternative provisioning strategies to circumvent the complications inherent in the Brazilian postal service. In effect, the notions of *tipo exportação* and *tipo exportação* thinking depart from our theoretical constructs of the nature of foreign and domestic consumption, but not from the typical social and cultural orders according to which Brazil lies in the global periphery. In the following chapter, I further explore the ways in which Brazilian specialty coffee consumption diverges from the orthodox mode of consumption, which reinforce the *apaixonados*' unequal participation in the global coffee community, yet reveal the creative solutions that they employ to reduce this experiential gap.

# GISELE

Today, Gisele describes herself as a coffee entrepreneur and educator, but her previous professional career was in journalism and politics. Raised in the *periferia* of Campinas (part of the São Paulo macrometropolis), Gisele was the first person in her family to complete secondary school and the first to attend university, where she studied journalism, with an emphasis on scientific communication. After university, she moved to São Paulo and worked as a reporter for several major newspapers and as a media and content producer for a number of political campaigns, including that of former President Dilma Rousseff.

In 2013, Gisele began taking on more freelance assignments to supplement her work at the newspaper, and was contracted to write an article for *Revista Espresso*, Brazil's only specialty coffee trade publication. In the course of her assignment, for which she sampled coffees from across São Paulo, her personal interest in the subject was piqued, and after she had submitted the article, she began to frequent a specialty coffee shop near her home where she became fast friends with one of the baristas, Rogério Itokasu. She began writing more regularly for *Revista Espresso*, later becoming an assistant editor, and found the community of *apaixonados* to be a welcome respite from the high-pressure environments of politics and newspaper journalism. In late 2015, Rogério was diagnosed with cancer, passing away in August 2016, and his death—combined with the devastation she felt after what she described as the 'horrible fascist coup' in 2016, which removed Rousseff from power and marked a watershed moment in Brazil's recent turn to right-wing populism—was the impetus for her re-evaluation of her professional orientation. In the aftermath of these two events, she decided that she needed to 'give value to [her] life by doing what [she loves] and fighting every day.'

By this point, already enmeshed in São Paulo's specialty coffee networks through her work and friendships, Gisele was motivated to carry Rogério's torch by working more directly with coffee. It was his total dedication to coffee, which had continued to motivate him even in the difficult final months of his life—Gisele recalled that even when he could no longer speak, he would still show up at the coffee shop to make drinks for his friends—that taught her what a powerful and animating object coffee could be. She began to study more about coffee science and techniques in her free time, while she continued to work as an editor at *Revista Espresso* until she was let go in a restructuring, after which she began to work as a full-time barista. From this entry point of personal and social upheaval, combined with individual passion and a drive for change, Gisele founded a successful coffee subscription service called Pura Caffeina, which today numbers clients across the country, as well as a consumer education platform and a coffee podcast.

Although her current position, in which she educates consumers about coffee, is clearly connected to her previous work in communications and journalism, Gisele's story of passionate work and specialty coffee is particularly interesting in the Brazilian context: Not only was she the first person in her family to complete secondary school or to obtain a university degree, she is also a Black woman. Her choice to move into a form of passionate work that intersects with service work must be read in reference to a particular social, historic, and economic landscape within Brazil. Black women in Brazil, compared to all other demographic groups, are most likely to be employed in low-wage, informal service work (Kopkin and Mitchell-Walthour, 2020; Rezende and Lima, 2004) and least likely to have finished many years of formal education or graduated from university, despite recent affirmative action policies and the near-doubling of the number of Brazilians enrolling in university since 2010 (Anderson, 2019; Artes and Ricoldi, 2015). Black women from lower-class backgrounds like Gisele also suffer worse long-term physical and mental health outcomes than other population segments (Caldwell, 2017; Hogan et al., 2018). Against this background, Gisele's choice to leave a recognizably

professional career that was understood and validated as 'good work' by wider Brazilian society to what was—at least at the beginning of her transition—unstable food service work represents a challenge to ideals of success and mobility in contemporary Brazil.

Gisele is aware of this dynamic, and that many other Brazilians would view her choice to work in the service industry as 'a step backwards from everything I, and my family, worked for.' But, as she once told me: 'Look: I'm a woman, I'm Black, I was born in a poor neighbourhood, and I've been working since I was 12 years old. I didn't want to work ten hours a day anymore.' By working passionately with coffee, Gisele has taken an opportunity to cultivate a desirable quality of life; she has accepted that she will never get rich, given the small profit margins of most specialty coffee businesses, but her new lifestyle has afforded her enough time to enjoy her garden, play with her dog, and practice jiu-jitsu—things that make her happy and, she considers, increase her overall contentment, despite the financial insecurity that arises from the decision to run a small start-up. In this way, despite the historically grounded and racialized connotations of her choice to work in food service, Gisele directly engages with a central tenant of the passionate labour or 'do what you love' discourse: a search for authenticity and being true to oneself.

Due to her background in politics, Gisele is attuned to issues of justice and labour rights in Brazil, but she did not have this awareness about her radical positionality as a Black, female business owner in the food service industry from the outset. It was shortly after she launched Pura Caffeina that a chance question from her colleague and friend, the journalist Kelly Stein,[56] made her re-evaluate forms of injustice in her own life, and how she might approach life as an entrepreneur:

> Kelly asked me one day how I felt being the only Black woman business owner that we knew in specialty coffee. And I was so shocked: It had never occurred to me. And after she said that,

[56] They attended journalism school together, with Gisele being two years ahead of Kelly.

> I looked around and all I saw was the absence of people like me. It suddenly became a very visible lack in my life. I am Black and I am proud of that, and I've never shied away from it; I even put it down on the census. But somehow, I hadn't *seen* this before.

Until Kelly asked her about her life as a Black, female business owner, Gisele hadn't thought specifically about the racial divide among business owners and managers in Brazil either generally or within specialty coffee, nor had she considered how radical her position as a business owner and entrepreneur is. Today, one of her main goals with her business is to increase the visibility of Black business owners and women, as well as to encourage and provide mentorship for other Black women who might be thinking of branching out into entrepreneurial activities, particularly within the world of food service.

Gisele once related to me one of the more difficult moments of her coffee career, an event that revealed ongoing racial prejudice in Brazil in relation to coffee and food service. On this occasion, she had been hired to lead a coffee tasting by the events manager of Caruso Lounge, a members-only cigar club whose website describes it as 'a new idea for premium spaces in São Paulo... the place for those who are interested in the universe of tobacco and the lifestyle around it.'[57] It sounded like an ideal fit—introducing people who care about the sensory qualities and lifestyle of high-end tobacco to high-end coffee. However, Gisele struggled to attract and keep the attention of the attendees, who at first failed to recognize her as the teacher, with one man assuming she was part of the cleaning staff. She described the attendees as: 'Businessmen types, you know. I guess the kind of people you'd probably imagine would be members of a cigar club. White, obviously.'

Even though this was one of Caruso Lounge's 'exclusive members-only' events to which all participants had pre-registered for voluntarily, Gisele reported they very quickly stopped

[57] http://carusolounge.com.br

paying attention to her and drifted off to other areas of the venue. One man challenged her knowledge of coffee, asking her how long she had been working in the industry for, and upon hearing the answer, declaring that it was too little time for her to have been brought in as an 'expert,' and that she shouldn't have been invited as such. Another man said that he didn't see what all the fuss was about because his Nespresso capsule machine made coffee that he thought was just as good, and one didn't have to waste so much time preparing it. 'The implication,' according to Gisele's interpretation of the evening, 'Was that coffee wasn't really worth anything.' She continued:

> And in part, that's probably because they've always had Black girls like me making coffee in the background. It's not something special to them. It isn't luxury. How can it be luxury when it's 'the help' or your grandmother who's making it? At first, I was confused and surprised at their unwillingness to even consider it as something that could be special, given that they were people who supposedly cared a lot about cigars and who could differentiate between different types of tobacco, and have preferences and specialized knowledge in that sector. But I think coffee was only different to them because it's something your domestic worker makes for you.

Differences in experience, status, and social inequalities can make visible what types of consumption are seen as aspirational among different populations, and by looking at tensions around coffee styles in Brazil, poignant themes of labour, value, future aspirations, and current anxieties emerge, each interrelated and mutually informed. As Gisele's experience illustrates, certain groups in Brazil are less likely to consider specialty coffee to represent something positive or aspirational; for this subset of men at the Caruso Lounge event, the idea of taking time to prepare one's own coffee was anathema because it held strong associations with persons (women, Black) they deemed to occupy a status that was below their own. The rapidity and standardisation of coffee from the capsule machines for which the attendees expressed a preference fits more easily into the white-collar business norms and expectations of productivity I first discussed in the Introduction.

Despite the challenges she has faced as an entrepreneur, Gisele still thinks that the trade-off was worth it. She's told me that she's 'really happy doing [coffee work], in charge of my small

but valiant business and what this represents for the small community of Black coffee professionals here in Brazil.' Through the passionate discourse of 'giv[ing] value to [her] life by doing what [she loves]', Gisele positions her engagement with coffee work not as a regression to the types of low-wage service work that might be expected of someone from her background, but rather views it as something that provides her with access to a particular form of international, cosmopolitan social capital, and allows her to step off the treadmill of mainstream professional life in São Paulo. The sociologist Sonia Bookman (2012, 2013) has written about the cosmopolitan aspects of specialty coffee, which harbours aesthetic associations with 'hip-ness' and enjoys a global reach, in relation to the feelings of consumers in the Global North when they drink coffee from specific brands, notably mentioning a sense that they are 'transported elsewhere' (2012, p.62). According to Bookman, because they are 'invited to explore the "world of coffee" and literally taste the differences in origin, consumers are afforded the possibility of expressing cosmopolitan openness by engaging with cultural diversity' (ibid.), and some customers interpret this as a form of 'global experience.' Gisele, however, did not experience a sense of coffee cosmopolitanism from a feeling of connection with 'exotic' coffee origins but rather from her participation in both in a form of consumption and types of work that are associated with developed countries of the Global North, considered to differ so markedly from the political, economic, and racial instability that Gisele and other *apaixonados* see as characteristic of Brazil.

# 4 THE ORIGINS OF VALUE

## 4.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks at the centrality of product origin in the specialty coffee consciousness, and how it is experienced and symbolically consumed as an essential part of in-group prestige. 'Origin'—as it is understood within the specialty coffee industry—is a key term in product differentiation, and part of the very definition of specialty coffee, but when considered as a symbolic imaginary that is central to the experience of 'doing' specialty coffee, differences start to emerge in the creation and maintenance of such imaginaries with respect to particular local contextual structures, extending to variations of what and where origin actually is. This demonstrates that origin imaginaries cannot be considered to be constant across the entire consumer culture, yet they nevertheless play a crucial role in the consumer experience of specialty coffee. I analyse origin imaginaries and the value markers that help to shape them and thereby show how the consumption reality of specialty coffee, as informed by *tipo exportação* structures, keeps Brazilians on the periphery of the transnational, commodity-specific specialty coffee consumer culture, and reinforces their unequal participation in the orthodox origin discourses that are negotiated and defined by coffee-importing nations. In this way, this chapter reveals the tensions between the experiences of the imagined community of global specialty coffee consumers, those of the specific and situated consumption space in which *apaixonados* live, and the ways in which *apaixonados* strive to bridge these differences. It also contributes to a nascent movement to include the perspectives of consumers in the Global South in dialogues about the moral geographies of goods that challenge preconceptions about who consumes what and where such consumption occurs.

The notion of 'origin,' as it is employed within the dominant specialty coffee narratives asserted from and within importing countries, refers to where a given coffee is grown. It is a commonly used method of demarcating between and classing coffees to inform consumers, and one with which many consumers are familiar, even those who are not necessarily specialty coffee aficionados: Walking through a supermarket, one will observe the country of origin labelled on many packages of coffee—at least, those that are not blends. Origin is also used to refer to coffee-producing areas more generally, not merely as a geographically specific location but as an idea that encompasses the entirety of the coffee-production agricultural landscape. It is a central concept within specialty coffee, and one that possesses both material and metaphorical components that help to shape and define specialty coffee and how consumers engage with it. Ultimately, origin is the provenance of a given coffee, but it is also the conceptual and symbolic location of all coffee in its raw, agricultural form.

The potential ambiguity of origin as a concept first began to occupy my thoughts one evening as I sat on the balcony of my flat in the middle of São Paulo, as dusk fell and lights were turned on to illuminate the lives of millions of people. As I looked down my street to the cathedral of Santa Cecília, I noticed for the first time a scraggly coffee tree in its garden. At that moment, in the centre of one of the largest cities in the world, I did not consider myself to be 'at origin'—as that term is understood in the industry—but the presence of the tree got me wondering: There, on my balcony, why was I *not* at 'coffee origin'? Where does that location start? And where might it end?

The next day, I laid my quandary before Yara, a barista at the Double R coffee shop, as we sat in the dome of Octávio Café's monumental Faria Lima location. One of the main business avenues in the city, Faria Lima traverses several upscale neighbourhoods and today rivals Avenida Paulista in importance, having gained the nickname 'the Brazilian Wall Street' on account of the many banks and financial institutions headquartered there. As such, the café

was filled with businesspeople having meetings or downing a quick espresso after lunch, or the well-heeled and well-to-do who simply wanted to see and be seen in the largest coffee shop in Latin America. On the other side of the room Octávio's head trainer Martha was overseeing a training session for new barista recruits, yet still found time to send a Chemex over to our table, blowing us a kiss from the bar. Yara was only aged twenty when we met and so fresh-faced that she could easily pass as a few years younger, but she is self-possessed and thoughtful, and exudes a gravitas one might otherwise expect from someone several decades older.

'So,' she said ponderously after listening to my narration, 'Do you mean to say we're at origin right now?' I shrugged, and looked over at the businesspeople sitting near us who were making deals, adjusting ties, and scrolling on iPhones. It was not exactly a scene that green buyers—the coffee company representatives from importing nations tasked with sourcing coffee to purchase—share when they swap swashbuckling adventure stories of trekking through jungles to locate the next big coffee in remote highlands, yet there were coffee trees planted all around the building, fruit trying desperately to grow in the moments of sunlight afforded to them, trapped as they were in the shade of Faria Lima's innumerable high-rises. 'I don't know,' I said. 'You tell me.' She thought in silence for a moment, and then said:

> Well, here's what I think: I think *you're* at origin, but *I'm* not. I'm always here in the city, but I have the *vontade* [will, volition] to go to more farms. You're here in the city, but you have the *vontade* to be here and *also* the farms. You're here in the city for coffee [because of the research project], and you're on the farms for coffee, too. I'm not here in the city for coffee. I'm just here.
>
> I get to go out to the farms with the owners of Double R and that, for me, is origin. Here is just the endpoint. For you, though—well, maybe not *you*, because I guess you live here, but for other foreigners and people who don't live here, and for you after you go back to England—this is still a place that coffee passes through, before it gets to you. It's done for us by the time it gets here, but it's still not even close to getting to you.

Pedant that I am, I point out to Yara that most coffee doesn't pass directly through São Paulo anymore, as it did up until the mid-20th century; it usually circumvents the city as it is transported to the Port of Santos, the country's principal site of coffee exportation. Santos is

home to Latin America's largest port and is only 80 kilometres away from where we were sitting in Octávio; it is not part of the city proper, but does form part of the sprawling conurbation that includes São Paulo.

'Sabine,' she said, a note of severity in her arched brow. 'It's an *abstraction*.'

Yara's conclusion—that even though we were both sitting at the same table in the same café, one of us was at origin and the other not—points to the context dependence of origin as a category; origin can be thought of not as a fixed site, but rather as relational and tied to individual perspectives. In suggesting that ideas of coffee origin are not as straightforward and clear-cut as has generally been assumed, both in the coffee media and in the academic literature, I demonstrate that Brazilian origin narratives also speak to the ways in which the structures of *tipo exportação*—and in particular the ready movement of goods away from Brazilian consumers and into the hands (and cups) of consumers in the Global North—influence the ways in which 'origin' is negotiated and experienced.

## 4.2 IMAGINATION/IMAGINARY

Much of what I discuss in this chapter is best understood against the background of the anthropological literature on imagination and imaginaries. Not only does my work with *apaixonados* reinforce Maurice Bloch's (2016) assertion that the capacity for imagining and participating in imaginaries is essential to being part of and participating in a culture, if we can come to an awareness of the constituent components of imaginaries—especially in the context of globalisation—that have been theorized over the past two decades, we are better placed to understand how ideas about elsewhere and other people form, how contexts change imaginaries, and how imaginaries themselves change in relation to local and global flows and frictions. Specifically, I am concerned with the frictions and overlaps between local and global (or translocal) consumer cultures and the impact of material constraints on social practices, and

how *apaixonados* imagine the broader consumer culture of which they are part, their role therein, and the product around which the culture coalesces.

Anthropological studies of imagination and corresponding imaginaries first took shape as studies on globalisation proliferated, and it was generally accepted that the world potentially accessible to any given individual or group was expanding; as countries like Brazil that had historically not been considered consumers were increasingly able to access global flows of goods, they also began to be able to access other imaginations and ways of doing related to these goods. As it turned out, however, the potentially accessible world expanded in uneven and unpredictable ways; if there had always been an imagined, distant 'other' (and, as per Benedict Anderson, an imagined 'us'), including other places, there were now more of these populations and places, also cast into greater relief. In *Modernity at Large* (1996), Arjun Appadurai characterises 'imagination' as a 'social force' that is distinguished from fantasy in that it is shared collectively, while the 'imaginary' is the corresponding 'social force' (p. 31). The work of David Sneath, Martin Holbraad, and Morten Axel Pedersen (2009) represented a move away from the instrumentalist approach to imagination and towards a belief that imagination should be understood in conjunction with its indeterminacy—as an indeterminate yet interlinked space and practice, with frequently indeterminate and uncontrollable outcomes.[58]

In contemporary anthropology, the notion of 'imagination' contains two parts: An individual mental capacity (i.e. to imagine), and the act or practice of imagining by individuals or groups. Imaginaries are not merely the term *du jour* used to describe cultural beliefs but are rather both the context-producing imaginative acts *and* that which is produced *by* these acts. I apply this understanding of imaginaries to the imaginings of the *apaixonados* in order to explore how their

[58] This indeterminacy is also called to mind in Tim Ingold's writings on imagination, which considers it as an act of becoming and possibility (2013).

position in a hybrid (read: indeterminate) consumer–producer context affects local consumer imaginaries and their relationship to global consumer imaginaries. Further to this, I consider how *apaixonados'* position at the periphery of the shared global consumer imaginary must also be understood in relation to its indeterminacy; are they in or out, and where does that distinction lie? Finally, by taking account of the ways in which imagining—a mental act—exists in relation and response to the material and lived worlds (Rapport and Harris, 2015), I consider how the context that gives rise to local imaginaries is informed by both local material frictions that stymie consumption possibilities and by the shared and free-flowing global imaginary.

Imaginaries—being the context and outcome of imagination—mediate and relate the symbolic dimension of life to the (locally defined) real. They bring together both what is known and accessible, and what in relation to the known is desired or possible; they build upon facts about how a population understands their existence and their ideals about how things should be—or, in the words of Joel Robbins (2010, p. 306), a setting-aside of the 'the world as it really is.' Within specifically consumer imaginaries, questions concerning how things should be or what people desire and aspire to are related to goods and consumption habits. The deep connectivity that has been engendered by globalisation and technological changes over the past thirty years has meant that it has become ever easier to see and partake in other imaginaries, and to experience ideas beyond those that circulate in one's own local area; imaginative contexts, in other words, are not necessarily wholly separate from each other.[59] Consider the example put forward by the Czech anthropologist Marie Hermanová in relation to the ideal of a broad 'Imaginary West' that is held by many Indigenous youths in Chiapas, Mexico. Hermanová describes this imaginary as 'a collective space constituted by many particular, concrete and

[59] It is unlikely that they ever were, given the various forms of human connection that have existed for thousands of years, particularly so in the last five hundred years, but I am making the case that this trend has become even more pronounced in the contemporary phase of globalization.

personal situations, encounters and experiences that create concrete imageries … but these imageries are placed in a space that is external to personal and unique experiences and transcends them' (2016, p. 69). To each individual who participates in this imaginary, the Imaginary West has a slightly different feel. Hermanová gives the example of Jeanette, an avid cinephile, and Cristina, who is passionate about clothes. Both young women flavour their knowledge and images of the West (which they understand specifically as Europe and the United States) with their own preferences, yet the end meaning drawn from their imagination is, broadly, overlapping, and also overlaps with ideals of those living in the West.

This pattern can also be identified in the history of the adoption of specialty coffee as a consumable good in Brazil: Specialty coffee consumer culture as we presently understand it emerged in the Global North throughout the course of the 1990s and early 2000s, so when the first specialty coffee shop was opened in Brazil (Coffee Lab in São Paulo) in 2009, there was already a wealth of established imagery, ideals, and conventions to draw on, a shared imaginary of specialty coffee to tap into. The existence of this imaginary has shaped the Brazilian specialty coffee consumer context from the start, but accepting that does not entail that it constricted it or predetermined its shape: The imaginary of how and what specialty coffee should be, as it was constructed and imagined in importing nations, rather quickly ran up against the material context of Brazil, which constrained and constricted coffee access in ways that made it impossible to participate fully in the same imaginary. Instead, Brazilian specialty coffee consumers have created their own imaginary, which exists in relation to and partially overlaps with the global or 'orthodox' imaginary. There are, naturally, many localized coffee consumption imaginaries that exist in relation to this orthodox one, but not all diverge to the same extent.

Let me illustrate the point with reference to another anthropological topic, that of religious belief. In the course of the Christianisation of Polynesia, missionaries found that religious

objects (e.g. rosaries, robes, medals, bread and wine, and so forth) were both necessary and difficult to obtain, given that they could only be imported from faraway countries (Nolet, 2020). This led several Polynesian churches to move away from bread and wine and to instead use breadfruit and coconut water in the Eucharist; this was both part of a larger ideal of the cultural revival of traditional Tahitian practices *and* a practical, material response to the cost of the imported goods (Malogne-Fer, 2016). Although formally in violation of canon law, the individuals and churches concerned nevertheless materially maintained their participation in a practice that united them with a wider, global community and shared Christian imaginary—even if it looked (and tasted) a little different. Here, even if imaginative effects are often uncontrollable or amorphous, their outcomes can be observed in what Michaela Schäuble calls the 'resonance of imagination on the material world' (2016, p. 2): Ideas made manifest in tangible ways. If we read this not so much as a case of syncretism but rather as an example of the ways in which people can make reasonable material adaptations in order to participate to the fullest extent possible in an imaginary shared across a wide scale and variety of contexts, it can be deduced that no 'global' imaginary remains untouched or unmoved by local considerations; it instead becomes essential to consider which imaginary will become the 'global' or 'orthodox' variety, and why.

This returns us neatly to the case of *apaixonados* in Brazil, whose adaptations of and deviations from the 'global', normative, orthodox specialty coffee imaginary might not be taken on the surface to be of the same magnitude as a shift in Eucharistic practices, but which—as I explore throughout the remainder of this chapter—similarly reveal where centres of power are located, and how local practices exist in relation to global ones.

## 4.3 DEFINITION AND USE OF THE ORTHODOX IMAGINARY

To achieve the ultimate aim of understanding the *apaixonado* variants of the orthodox specialty coffee imaginary, it is first necessary to establish the contours and norms of the orthodox

version, with regard to the notion of 'origin'. Origin—the place where coffee is grown, both literally and in a more broad, conceptual sense—is a key shared imaginary for specialty coffee, one that the product and industry is defined around. These ideas of origin differentiate specialty coffee from mass-market coffee, while it is the extent of their engagement with origin that differentiates specialty coffee enthusiasts within the subculture from mere consumers. As I will show in this section, this engagement with the origin imaginary, necessary in order to negotiate prestige, occurs on two related lines: Firstly, there is the idea of 'travel through taste', which is displayed by the possession of a developed sensory lexicon and palate, which requires the consumption of coffees with different flavour profiles and geographic origins; and secondly, there is the factor of 'knowing' origin through closeness, which is expressed by engaging in moralised consumption discourse, learning about coffee origins, and travel. I will first show how origin developed as an imaginary that has differentiated specialty coffee from its standard counterpart, before going on to examine its uses.

This origin-centric approach was first employed as a differentiation strategy with the advent of Starbucks and other coffee chains such as Peet's in the 1970s. Starbucks was instrumental in cultivating a mode of coffee consumption tied to an idea of place as a means of differentiation from mass-market, commodity coffee. It also promoted Italian-style coffee drinking (espresso-based, instead of brewed) in the United States and introduced a focus on coffee origin as an experiential element that contributed to the product (Morris, 2013; 2018). Coffee was no longer a generic, black liquid that was consumed in large quantities, regardless of its (unknown and exotic) origins; these new coffee chains positioned it as a product from *somewhere*, with the implication that the somewhere in question somehow influenced the coffee consumption experience. Even if the place in question was not known to the consumer, the very fact that the coffee was being positioned as from a specific place allowed for the symbolic consumption of that place. Starbucks did not expect consumers to know precisely where places such as

Guatemala or Papua New Guinea were, but only to understand that Starbucks enabled them to 'consume them symbolically' (Elliott, 2001, p. 374). 'In short,' according to Elliott, 'they [would] order a place in a cup' (ibid., p. 376). This origin-based approach represented a marked difference compared to how coffee had previously been sold and experienced, particularly in the United States, where it was undifferentiated by product origin and instead unified under familiar brand packaging (e.g. Folgers, Maxwell House)—packaging that revealed nothing about the provenance of the contents. This transition from undifferentiated coffee to reliably labelled origins and a consumption mode informed by Italian coffee culture served as an important point of departure from the previous modes of coffee consumption, and allowed for the subsequent and more specific differentiation based on origin that would characterise the development of the specialty coffee industry.

High-end specialty coffee significantly increased in popularity from 2000 onwards, and specialty built upon this groundwork by moving from general notions of 'origin' and 'faraway place' towards the more specific 'single-origin coffee', which was placed at the centre of the consumption experience. 'Single-origin' refers to any coffee that is not a blend of coffees from different countries or farms.[60] The new emphasis on single-origin that informed the offerings of the early pioneers of specialty coffee were borne of a reaction to the then-dominant approach of blending coffees. Blending coffee—whereby different coffees of varying origins are mixed together and then sold as a blend—is primarily done either as a cost-saving measure, to disguise defects, or for consistency; a conscious blending of a variety of green coffees can, when combined with darker roasting (to mask defects or otherwise undesirable flavour

[60] There is no formalized industry standard for this designation, which essentially refers to a coffee from one farm in one country (i.e., not a blend). However, coffees that originate from a number of farms in a single region and are pooled and sold through the same cooperative may also be referred to as single-origin; this is most commonly the case with coffees produced in East African or Central American nations where individual farm sizes are small, and the pooling of resources through cooperatives is the most efficient way to bring the coffees to the market.

characteristics), yield consistent end results.[61] Not only did the use of higher-grade coffee preclude the roasting of lower-quality, defect-ridden coffee, but the concurrent rejection of blends foregrounded notions of purity and traceability, and linked them to the increase in objective sensory quality. In so doing, specialty coffee drew on a long gastronomic tradition of associating purity with quality (Douglas, 1966).

The sociologist Karl Spracklen, who has explored whisky culture, has written that the idea that single malt (i.e. whisky from a single distillery) is the most prestigious form of whisky arose in the 1990s, following the creation of a globalised whisky market that primarily featured blended whiskies. Single malts could be sold at higher prices, were considered a more rarefied product, and created levels of distinction among whisky drinkers because faults were more difficult to hide (2011, 2013). Similarly, Sarah Besky's (2020) research into tea has revealed that techno-scientific interventions, agricultural origin, and sensory experience merge with ideas of purity to delineate quality tea. Today, the use of single-origin coffee based on country alone is no longer the hallmark of specialty that it once was—corporate chains such as Starbucks and Costa also advertise single-origin coffees; just as whisky connoisseurs differentiate between whiskeys based on region, distillery, year, and even down to the barrel, coffee enthusiasts now engage in similar levels of differentiation to remain at the forefront of origin specificity and maintain elite status. Nevertheless, the jump from origin-non-specific coffee to single-origin is still recognised as having ushered in the start of the specialty coffee revolution. Although single-origin remains the industry ideal for specialty coffee (in that they allow the consumer to experience a single, very specific coffee), blends are still used to some extent, even in specialty (largely for consistency), albeit not in the anonymized fashion of before; a specialty coffee blend will still

[61] Blended coffee can be used to produce consistent flavour across a long period of time, compared to using single-origin coffees, which may each taste different and only be in stock for a short while. Thus while a blend may be made up of different coffees at different times, they are matched and roasted in a way to make the flavour profile consistent and stable across each time the coffee is purchased.

foreground origin, and typically lists all the places the constituent coffees were grown, or the cooperatives by which they were produced. In addition to lending themselves more readily to traceability than a blend, single-origin coffees provide a ready model for differentiation from second-wave brands such as Starbucks, and offer a streamlined platform for enthusiasts to appreciate unadulterated coffee and the work that goes into producing it.

As the industry has matured, origin has become *the* way to differentiate between coffees and is foregrounded as *the* specialty coffee experience; in some sense, origin can be considered to be the main product that is being sold. Origin—information about which details various levels of specificity (such as the producing nation, region, farm, specific plot on a given farm, the name of a growing cooperative, and even the name of an individual farmer)—informs the way coffee is marketed and packaged, and even how café spaces are designed and presented. Other information such as the botanical variety of coffee, roasting style, or even flavour may also be highlighted, but such information is always supplemental to the key facts about a coffee's origin. Over the years, information about origin has become ever more detailed. Starbucks' early profiling of origin took the form of interior design; photos of unspecified coffee farms, forests, or the hands of farmers were framed, hung once, and rarely changed, but in today's high-end specialty shops, it is more common to see named images of the farmers with whom shops have relationships, or images of shop staff visiting origin. It is also common to see shops decorated in ways that in some way draw attention to origins, as is the case with renowned Melbourne-based Market Lane Coffee, which, as their CEO explains, rotates its artwork to reflect new farms or producers each time its seasonal espresso changes to a new origin. They will even 'do something like put Bolivian hats all over our wall. … People will walk in and notice something's different—like, we put cushions in all the shops with Rwandan fabric. [Customers will] see something's changed and say, "What's going on?" and I'll let them know we've got a Rwandan' (Standart, 2018, p. 62).

In specialty coffee and its imaginaries, knowledge of where and in what conditions one's coffee is grown is seen as not only a form of ethical consumer citizenship but also a core way to obtain and demonstrate subcultural prestige. A significant portion of the academic literature on coffee concerns alternative trade models that involve formal certification such as Fair Trade, but specialty coffee is defined exclusively by the quality of the coffee, irrespective of the way in which it is traded. Very little of the coffee sold as specialty has any sort of formal certification attesting to its ethical production, but origin discourse's creation of moral geographies nevertheless invites consumers to ponder how the movement of coffee connects them spatially and socially (in both real and imagined ways) with coffee producers. Despite the lack of formal certification programmes, because consumers and shops are willing to pay higher prices for higher-quality coffees, specialty coffees are purchased from producers at prices that are typically much higher than the Fair Trade minimum, thereby guaranteeing financial benefit for producers who can cultivate coffees of quality. As the anthropologist Edward Fischer has written, it is this 'lexicon of quality for coffee' tied to 'narratives of provenance and exclusivity that creates much of the value added in the high-end coffee trade' (2019, p. 2). Marketing claims construct specialty coffee as a form of a defetishized commodity; one that successfully evades Marx's problem of commodity fetishism,[62] partly by naming the producers, showcasing photographs of producers at work,[63] and advocating a model of 'direct trade,' whereby coffee shops and roasteries purchase coffee directly from farms and co-ops in producing countries (Hindsley et al., 2020; Holland et al., 2016). These factors together contribute to retailers' ability to sell coffee for higher prices, even though there is no one definition or set of rules for payments, and no formalized third-party regulation, as is the case with Fair Trade (Guimarães

[62] Or, the way that capitalism reconfigures social relations between individuals and populations to appear as relationships between things and objects, in effect obfuscating the labour involved in the creation of a commodity.
[63] A discussion has recently emerged within some sectors of the specialty coffee industry about the use of photographs of farmers in marketing materials. The controversy here concerns the fact that the photographed farmers have rarely consented to participate in marketing, and even more rarely to they receive remuneration.

et al., 2020). Here, imagination comes into play again, given that it is frequently impossible for the end consumer to be sure that the coffee was sourced in an ethical manner, but it is constructed by retailers as part of the imaginary of specialty coffee, which frames consumption as an act whereby the consumer supports the producer. Nonetheless, specialty coffee companies in importing countries discursively emphasise their celebration and recognition of the labour that goes into coffee production at origin, and their marketing and differentiation strategies tend to link sites of production with the agricultural labourers who have worked on the coffee.

An imaginary of origin has clearly been central to definitions and the evolution of the specialty coffee industry, but to fully understand this process, it is nevertheless necessary to consider: How does engagement with 'origin' affect the development of an individual specialty coffee consumer's prestige and place within the culture? It is always possible to engage more with 'origin,' and the more one does, the more status one acquires in the specialty coffee orthodoxy. For passionate coffee consumers, one of the first steps along the path to specialty coffee connoisseurship—and necessary if one is to establish prestige and garner respect—is to learn to distinguish between countries of origin. In order to signal to others their knowledge of coffee, the novice specialty coffee enthusiast must learn to differentiate, and order coffee not based purely on the *type of beverage* they want (e.g. an espresso) but rather the *origin of the coffee bean* (e.g. 'a Kenyan espresso'). Ethical consumerism is thereby performed, and subcultural knowledge is signalled: If a customer orders a coffee by origin, this order indicates that the customer is consuming the origin, and that fact necessarily implies that they have learned enough about it to develop a preference based on broad taste characteristics or moral sentiment, and therefore they care about the coffee and are an engaged member of the specialty community.

When I worked as a barista, it was easy to tell which customers were connoisseurs and genuinely interested in coffee, depending on whether they would order more than one coffee from more than one origin on offer; it signalled that they were interested in comparing and sampling a

diverse array of coffees. Likewise, those who did not specify or care to choose between different origins were revealed to be less invested in the specialty community and, by extension, less interested in the conscious consumption of coffee. One could also discern customers' levels of seriousness about coffee by noting those who would drink their coffee unadulterated, and those who sullied the inherent and natural flavours of the coffee by adding milk or sugar. It was a common practice in my places of employment as a barista in both the United States and United Kingdom to use older, lower-quality, or blended espresso options to make milk-based or sweetened drinks (the implication being that anyone who ordered such a drink did not care about the coffee itself), and the higher-quality or single-origin for those customers who ordered plain espressos, americanos, or anything else without adulterants or additives other than water so that they would experience the coffee uninterrupted. This experience echoes Brian Ott's recent work on coffee connoisseurship in which he noted that he was taught to use lower-quality coffees to make drinks for customers who were judged as not possessing the 'appropriate palate potential' (2020, p. 481). Baristas will perform on-the-spot judgements of customers, which serves as a form of self-policing between community members, based on hierarchies of what beverages are deemed to sufficiently foreground the coffee, rather than to produce its stimulant or other physiological effects. However, customers who might first be judged for failing to care about origin tend to immediately be welcomed into a community of enthusiasts, once they display the first signs of interest in becoming a connoisseur.

One of the main selling points of origin as it is marketed to the enthusiastic consumer is that it offers a way to travel through taste, and thereby not only to expand one's flavour palate, sensory skill, and knowledge of coffee but also one's knowledge of the world more broadly, both of which are vital components of prestige accumulation in the specialty subculture. Enthusiasts are encouraged and expected to try as many origins as possible in order to develop a geographically expansive flavour lexicon and to display an ability to differentiate between

coffees; this is an ingested form of Russell Belk's idea of collecting as a form of luxury consumption (2009), wherein the collected goods are not displayed but rather come to be embodied through the individual's sensory and flavour knowledge. The more coffee origins they have tasted, the more connoisseur consumers acquire a sense of fulfilment and social status; the rarest origins (such as Nepal, which is home to a limited and nascent coffee-growing industry) offer the most prestige. Of course, almost all specialty coffee shops welcome regular patrons who might not be passionate consumers in that coffee is not a key part of their lifestyle, but who nevertheless choose to buy what they perceive to be better or more ethical coffee—meaning that producers receive a higher proportion of the sale price than is the case for conventional and even Fair Trade coffee.[64] Such customers may purchase coffees from various origins or stick to a regular order, but it is the passionate consumer who will deliberately go to a certain shop to try whatever new origin is available, or who purposefully orders coffees based on both flavour preference and interest in origin differentiation. This emphasis on the specific location where the product was grown allows 'consumers to bring the experience of travel to their own domestic culinary regimes'; or, in other words, to travel the world through taste (Cook and Crang, 1996, p. 131). One may never visit, for instance, Kenya, but in the specialty subculture, one is deemed to be metaphorically familiar with the country by experiencing its *terroir* and unique coffees; one is connected—albeit through one's imagination, as provoked by the taste of the dark liquid in your cup—to others around the globe, particularly those involved in coffee production. This esoteric knowledge connects passionate consumption with connoisseurship and in-group prestige; it is also a way to position oneself as a member of a global community, based on an ideal of linking actors all along the supply chain. Origin

[64] Coffee consumers' ideas of the nature and identity of coffee producers have been shown to shown to be simplified and biased, while they are frequently ignorant of types of production labour and who might be performing it (Raynolds, 2002). There are often bottlenecks that restrict the spread of financial benefits, many of which do not filter down to hourly wage workers (Naegele, 2020).

knowledge is primarily centred on the geography of origin's influence on taste. As anthropologist Kaori O'Connor has pointed out in her work on seaweed as a heritage food, such knowledge is often expressed as an understanding of *terroir*, whereby 'certain foods are believed to take on the unique physical qualities of the locality where they were grown, gathered, or made, as well as the metaphysical essence of events, values, practices and forbears grounded in the ancestral soil' (2011, p. 128). To achieve the status of a true connoisseur requires one to possess origin knowledge that is extraneous to the inherent flavour characteristics of the food product itself, knowledge that also takes into consideration this 'metaphysical essence' and the practices that surround it.

As specialty coffee enthusiasts delve deeper into the specialty subculture, their interest in coffee tends to shift towards aspects of origin that influence production but are extraneous to the coffee itself, and the budding enthusiast in this way displays and accrues (sub)cultural capital. Such knowledge might include areas of interest such as harvest conditions and seasons, plagues, pests, and diseases common to coffee, the commodity market (C-market) price of coffee, and even major political developments within origin countries that might impact farmer livelihoods or coffee harvesting. At the time of writing, the C-market price of coffee is the subject of a broad and fervent conversation among specialty coffee professionals and enthusiasts alike; podcasts, blogs, magazine articles, and forum discussions all analyse how the recent collapse in the market price might affect the long-term future of the coffee industry (both specialty and conventional) and how enthusiasts might change their purchasing habits to combat this development. These conversations trade on the importance of moral geographies and origin to specialty coffee, but also acknowledge the need to grapple with economics and trade policy. Although expertise in conventional fields related to specialty is encouraged in the subculture and it bestows in-group prestige, it is considered even more prestigious to acquire knowledge of origin beyond that which one can learn via coffee tastings, reading, or educational or virtual networks. To *actually*

*visit* origin is the apogee of a coffee connoisseur's specialty coffee experience, and signals that one has reached the highest level of prestige.

Direct experience of visiting origin is celebrated as the best possible specialty coffee experience and the end point of an enthusiast's trajectory. Such visits are broadly divided into two types: Business-oriented travel, such as that performed by a green coffee buyer, and the 'origin trip,' which is an organised tourism experience whereby coffee professionals and enthusiasts travel to coffee-producing areas in order to 'experience' origin and learn more about coffee production. Both types are described in specialty media platforms via a similar language of pilgrimage and imagery that exalts the exoticism and adventurous discovery of a distant other; the process of visiting origin tends to imply long voyages, terrible roads, the threat of malaria or other tropical diseases, and communication difficulties. Enthusiasts who recount their trips often unconsciously exoticise the experiences and the local people with whom they interacted; although I have rarely heard anyone talk about their trip to origin as a negative experience, such travel narratives are nevertheless replete with essentialized stereotypes. A typical example of this is a blog post written by two green buyers from the company Nordic Approach in which they discuss why Burundi is their favourite origin to visit. Jamie praises 'the culture, the insanely nice people, the incredible nature and driving up and down the hills everywhere ... And it's a little edgy and rough,' while his co-worker Alex agrees: 'I love Burundi. It's so raw. It puts life into perspective and makes me appreciate it more.' Jamie and Alex's interpretations of their visits to Burundi, while overtly respectful of their hosts, lack specific details; for instance, no individuals are mentioned (nor any traits of individuals, beyond their being 'nice'), nor do they specify where in the country they have visited. The descriptors 'edgy', 'rough', and 'raw' set off and differentiate Burundi from their company's home base in Oslo, yet fail to engage with any depth with the socio-political, historic, and economic circumstances that might contribute to a full discussion of the complex history and sociology of Burundi.

The job of green buyer is seen among specialty coffee professionals as the pinnacle of aspiration, and comments such as those by Jamie and Alex—two well-meaning individuals in positions of relative power in the industry—serve to embed simplistic accounts and narratives of the 'other' in specialty coffee. Furthermore, the job of green buyer invariably conveys romantic, adventurous overtones: One only need watch an episode of the Discovery Channel reality television show *Dangerous Grounds*, which follows the green buyer of a prestigious American firm on his coffee-buying travels across the globe (replete with amped-up moments of peril), to understand the mythos that surrounds green buyers. As Ashley Rodriguez, a coffee industry writer, has stated, 'your knowledge and experience surrounding coffee can sometimes be judged by whether or not you've traveled to origin, and many coffee roasters use their experiences at origin to validate their space in the coffee sector' (2019, n. p.). However, not all origin travel is born equal; the more 'different' from the source country an origin is perceived to be, the more valued it becomes. Because of its large farms, advanced mechanization, and generally 'tame' reputation, along with the perception that its coffees do not vary substantially in flavour profile, Brazil rarely tops the list of anyone hoping to visit origin. When I accompanied Rhys, a junior buyer from a small but well-regarded UK roastery to DaTerra—Brazil's largest and most internationally recognized specialty coffee farm—he confessed to me that he was having a good time, *despite* Brazil being the coffee country he was least excited about visiting. A close friend of his had recently returned from a sourcing trip to Colombia, and Rhys spoke to me at length about his friend's trip: How he had traversed mountainous terrain in the rusting bed of a pickup truck, of the consistent but low-level anxiety about potential paramilitary action, and the non-profits that worked to reward farmers who grow specialty coffee instead of the more lucrative cocaine crop. 'This is really nice,' Rhys said, when surveying the plantation. 'It's just, like, a little flat, you know?' Brazil was his first solo buying trip, and he was clearly hoping to 'graduate' to 'somewhere more exciting' in time. Perhaps the rolling hills of 'edgy' Burundi.

Origin discourse is also notable for the variance in specificity: There are certain highly specific, place-based aspects of the idea of origin such as the way *terroir* informs flavour, and literal visits to particular places. In other ways, however, it can be abstract and untethered to a specific place, and exist as an imagined and conceptual site of where coffee might grow; origin can be thought of as the ideal that informs a connoisseur's trajectory, something that motivates their consumption journey, serves as a path to the accrual of prestige, and is merely a vague goal in terms of exactly where one might travel to. Despite the ever-increasing levels of geographic specificity one observes on coffee packaging and in discussion forums (for example, at the time of writing, I can see a coffee in my kitchen whose packaging informs the consumer that it is 'from the region of Antioquia in Colombia. Juan Saldariaga's farm is elevated at 1400-1800masl'), it is universally acceptable in specialty to declare 'I would love to go to origin,' without mentioning by name any single specific country or farm of origin. The symbolic imaginary of specialty coffee origin is formed of two distinct components: A highly geographically localized and specific version, as well as a broad and conceptual counterpart. Origin's symbolic centrality to specialty coffee might be best demonstrated by the fact that winners of the World Coffee Championships do not receive monetary prizes; instead, the top reward is something that specialty enthusiasts value most highly: the experiential prize of an all-expenses-paid trip to origin.

The importance of the idea of origin to specialty coffee is not restricted to the specific geographies that influence coffee flavour, serve to distinguish and differentiate between coffees, and about which connoisseurs are encouraged to learn; the symbolic and narrative function of origin also gives shape to individual coffee connoisseur journeys and the product itself. A passionate coffee consumer does not only employ the imaginary of 'origin' as something to consume in her cup; it is something to *move closer and closer to*, both in terms of knowledge *and* proximity to the taste experience. It is a distant place to visit and a guiding light that structures

one's overall journey to increased connoisseurship and peer-group approval. Origin is not solely a place, nor is it something that is consumed in a manner that is entirely based on its geographic reality; it is both an imaginary and a fixed place, and although these two components are linked, they also move and shift independently from each other. This is a vital distinction to recognise because when the context changes, it becomes possible to discern how far the links between these two expressions of origin can be stretched, to what extent their overlaps remain, and how the geographically specific informs the imaginary and vice versa.

Of the two main elements of the origin imaginary, 'travel through taste'—and thereby to 'collect' the tastes of as many origins as possible—was the more important in the earlier days of specialty coffee in the Global North, given that the modes of differentiation between specialty coffee and mass-market or conventional coffee were still being established. Today, however, deep knowledge of origin is prioritized more and brings greater prestige; this can be thought of as a shift to quality over quantity. One trend I have observed in recent years is for high-end specialty coffee shops in the Global North to offer coffees from fewer origins, limiting their offering to the origins with which they enjoy longstanding or close connections.

Now is the time to acknowledge that this discussion is mostly relevant to the dominant or orthodox imaginary of origin, and the ways this imaginary shapes specialty coffee consumption, cultural practices, and prestige cultivation in importing nations. What it does not address is the origin imaginary and its relation to consumption practices and prestige in the context of a consumer market such as that which pertains to *apaixonados*, who exist much more closely to producers. As my conversation with Yara suggests, the orthodox origin imaginary may not necessarily be relevant to *apaixonados* if, when we are both at the same café, one of us can be at origin and the other not. How does this theoretical background change when the coffee producer is not a distant and abstract 'other' but an aunt or a childhood friend, and where the

space of agricultural production is perhaps only a few hours' drive away, rather than separated from the consumer by a series of flights taken over 24-hours?

Origin imaginaries consist of real, geographically based knowledge, combined with collective and individualized imaginings of faraway places. The imaginings that fill these knowledge gaps to create the origin imaginary draw on consumer desires, interests, and the moral positioning of specialty coffee; the ideals of learning about other people, places, and flavours, and improving the lives of coffee producers through conscious consumption, contribute immensely to the shaping of the orthodox origin imaginary. In her monograph on the representation of highland Papua New Guinean coffee farmers in coffee-importing countries, the anthropologist Paige West described the orientation of the specialty coffee industry, whereby:

> [w]ell-meaning consumers are connected to well-meaning producers by well-meaning coffee businesses. A veritable love fest of learning about each other, supporting each other, and contributing to environmental sustainability while still taking part in the global market seems to have emerged (2012, p. 56).

However, as West makes clear, the desire to '[learn] about each other' is more frequently an ideal than an achievement, and is almost invariably unidirectional: Papua New Guinean coffee farmers usually remain ignorant of where and to whom their coffee is sold, even when their imagery is used for its sale and promotion, while Western consumers are presented with simplistic, neo-colonial narratives about Indigenous peasantry that normalize developmental capitalism. In her work on Fair Trade flower production (2007), Catherine Dolan asserted that when consumers care from a distance, that distance is essential to their self-perception of their actions as moral consumption. Even if, in mainstream specialty coffee origin discourse, coffee producers and sites of production are exotic, unknown, and understood to be very far away from the consumer, this is not the case for *apaixonados*.

Although this discussion has necessarily been limited and incomplete, it is important to establish the nature of the orthodox origin imaginary to be able to trace the divergences and adaptations

of the *apaixonado* imaginary, which is reflexively constructed with reference to *apaixonados'* own material conditions and aspirations, as well as their knowledge of the orthodox imaginary. The remainder of this chapter examines the ways in which origin imaginaries in the local consumer culture of *apaixonados* are constructed differently to the orthodox model.

## *4.4* DEFINITION AND USE OF 'ORIGIN' AMONG *APAIXONADOS*

Almost all Brazilian *apaixonados* engage with the orthodox origin imaginary and its two main strands of travel through taste and the ideal of closeness, but as I argue, by virtue of the fact that they live in a producing country—and thereby are potentially *always* at origin—closeness to *any origin* is not necessary for them to build prestige. In fact, the mechanism at work is in some ways the opposite: Because of the bounty of Brazilian coffees to which they have access and their limited access to coffees from other origins, travel through taste to far-off locations is the *only* mode of prestige accumulation by which individual *apaixonados* can advance on their coffee journeys.

The ways in and extent to which *apaixonados* can partake in the orthodox specialty coffee origin imaginary is limited by the trade structure that has dictated the flows of coffee: green coffee moves from the Global South to the Global North. This outbound flow of specialty coffee, concurrent with the 'general knowledge… that the best articles do not remain in Brazil; they are exported' (Ramos Sollai, 2011, p. 163), is, as I have argued throughout this thesis, a hallmark of *tipo exportação*. If an *apaixonado* wishes to try a coffee from, for instance, Bolivia, it is far easier for them to source that coffee indirectly from a roastery in the United States than directly from Bolivia, despite the fact that Bolivia and Brazil are contiguous. This state of affairs occurs because the flow of green coffees is outbound; they do not circulate within or between the producing nations of the South. The analyses of coffee smuggling detailed in Chapter 3 showed that even documented green coffees imported in quantities below the legal maximum are frequently confiscated at the border, and although it is time-consuming, expensive, and

unreliable, the easiest way for *apaixonados* to obtain foreign coffees is via roasteries in the Global North, either ordering them directly or asking friends and family to bring them as souvenirs from their travels abroad. Although it is in theory possible for coffee to be sent between producing nations, including in South and Central America, several *apaixonados* reported that this service often took longer and was of lower quality than when the same coffees were ordered from the United States or Europe. Inter-state transportation taxes (ICMS) within Brazil are higher than export duties on coffee (coffee that is in transit but destined for export is exempt from the ICMS), further incentivising this outbound trajectory.[65] These ingrained trade flows, which no individual *apaixonados* are in a position to change, structure the movement of coffee in ways that are disadvantageous to their full participation in the orthodox origin discourse.

One of the main ways in which the origin discourse of *apaixonados* deviates from the orthodox version lies in the lack of emphasis on the consumption of specialty coffee as a means of bettering the lives of those in producing countries, or as an act of moralized consumption held to bring a sense of (purchased) closeness to the producer. For *apaixonados*, the purchase of green coffee from foreign producers is so difficult that the direct producer–roaster ethical trade relationships idealized within specialty coffee become impossible; when considered in terms of purchasing power and global trade imbalances, many *apaixonados* are economically closer to the farmers that such charitable consumption measures are intended to help. The sociologist Nicki Lisa Cole (2008) has explored the question of whom ethical purchasing initiatives in specialty coffee are meant to help by tracing the racialized, gendered, and classed consumer

[65] An InterAmerican Development bank report stated that the barriers to domestic trade erected by the ICMS system actually serve to 'encourage states in the more distant parts of Brazil to trade with other countries [rather than each other]. These barriers sever links in domestic production chains, cause the loss of important segments of the country's industrial complex, and discourage the aggregation of value to exports of products obtained from exploitation of Brazil's natural resources' (Rezende, 2013).

understandings of who grows coffee. This knowledge is both staged and leveraged by coffee companies situated in the global capitalist system, revealing a distinct split between 'us' (the consumers) and 'them' (the farmers), as well as between 'here' (the site of consumption) and 'there' (the site of production).

I understood more about the social and economic proximity of those who work with coffee in the Brazilian countryside and city-dwelling *apaixonados* when sitting with Kelly, Michelle, and Susana at the long table in the back of Takkø one afternoon. At one point, Kelly—ever the outspoken champion of Brazilian coffee—began to criticise the baristas of São Paulo for never going to visit coffee farms in the countryside. She admonished her two barista friends and Brazilians in general, lamenting the fact that they did not fully exploit 'all of that knowledge, right here. Think of what a strong community we could be, if the fields and coffee shops were connected even more than they are now!' Susana and Michelle, who have both worked extensively as baristas and been employed at one time or another at Takkø, shook their heads and rolled their eyes a little. Susana looks physically intimidating, often wearing combat boots and men's cargo shorts, with one side of her head shaved and covered in tattoos, but in fact she is tremendously shy and one always has to strain to hear her. 'It's expensive,' she whispered into her lap. Michelle agreed, throwing up her hands up in exasperation:

> Girl, it's so expensive! Yeah, sure, the countryside is close, but I can't go to coffee farms just like that. I'm working at the roastery; I'm freelancing here; I have to pay for this flat, and for my daughter. I go when I can, but, well, I'm waiting for work to pay.

Since this occasion, Susana has moved on to work in quality control for a broker, tasting and tasting coffees each day as they pass through the office. Coffees now come to her, eliminating any need for her to go to coffee farms, and she has no idea when she will next be able to make the trip outside the city to a farm. Besides, despite her current salaried position, she still barely

makes ends meet, and therefore has no money for unnecessary luxuries like trips to the countryside.

In a consumption landscape in which coffee producers, roasters, and retailers are not only geographically close but also have similar living conditions and socio-political contexts, there is no far-off other to financially support. In the dominant origin imaginary, the 'other' is someone far away, worse off, and whose lot can be improved by the consumer's preparedness to purchase their coffee at a higher price, but this equilibrium is not the case and cannot be the case with *apaixonados*, who are themselves disadvantaged, compared to Northern consumers. This is not to say that rural farmers are better off than urban baristas or other *apaixonados*; merely that the economic superiority of the urban Brazilian barista cannot be assumed, as it is otherwise constructed and understood with regard to for instance, the balance of privilege between an American coffee consumer and a coffee producer in El Salvador.

Whereas dominant specialty coffee consumption norms foreground the ways in which a consumer can better the lives of 'others'—a discourse steeped in colonial notions of superiority—the *apaixonados*' approach to origin stands in contrast in that their 'others' live at what is for *apaixonados* origin (i.e. a site in the Global North such as Berlin, London, or Athens; these unconventional non-coffee-producing 'origins' will be covered in depth in the following chapter) and have lives to which to aspire—not to condescend. This is compounded by the fact that Brazilian coffee producers are relatively better off than their counterparts in other producing nations (Reichman, 2018), and so are considered to occupy the bottom of the list of farmers perceived as needing international consumer aid—which has a knock-on effect in that it makes Brazil one of the least desirable origins to visit.

'My money does more good somewhere like Colombia', the green buyer for a prestigious American coffee company that rarely purchases Brazilian coffees told me as we were touring a

number of Brazilian farms on the 2017 World Coffee Champions Origin Trip. He preferred to spend money 'where the farmers really need it.' This echoes the linkages between the aid industry's good intentions and the creation of long-term economic dependency. Whereas consumers in the Global North feel empowered and morally rewarded based on their purchasing decisions, and make these decisions based on the perceived good they can do, coffee consumers in Brazil do not have such a spectrum of moral consumption options available to them, and are subsequently obliged to remain on a moral periphery. This phenomenon complicates the affective 'politics of proximity,' a spatial and geographic form of class differentiation described by the sociologists Matthew Adams and Jayne Raisborough, whereby middle-class consumers in the Global North view local poor people as undeserving of their immediate advocacy and aid, while the distant poor are 'more easily rendered as deserving, benign, hard-working' (2008, p. 1178) through the campaigns of organisations such as Fair Trade. The American coffee buyer's insistence that his 'money does more good somewhere like Colombia' demonstrates the nuance to the politics of proximity, in that not all producers in all places are considered to be equally deserving of the aid bestowed through ethical consumption and purchasing initiatives; moreover, as I will continue to elaborate, the perspective of middle-class consumers in the Global South also complicate our understanding of who is proximate to producers.

It is not only geographic closeness that *apaixonados* share with coffee producers in the Brazilian countryside; the two groups are also socially and economically close, which troubles the role of the 'other' within the *apaixonado* origin imaginary. In the orthodox origin imaginary, which takes a broad-brush approach to the populations in 'the coffee belt,' Brazilians *are* the 'other,' be they working on coffee farms or in an office job in a city-centre high rise. The assumed socioeconomic separation between coffee producers and consumers that pervades the orthodox imaginary (and in turn propels orthodox enthusiasts to use their relative wealth and purchasing

power to improve the lives of others) does not hold true with regard to Brazil. For instance, the average salary of a specialty coffee barista in Brazil is estimated to be $350–400 per month (Grão Especial, 2018; Stein, 2016). Brazil has comparatively stringent minimum wage and worker protection laws for farmworkers compared to other coffee-producing nations, so a farmhand employed on a normal contract might reasonably expect to earn around $400 per month (Freitas Barbosa et al., 2017),[66] but farm *owners* in the country, who are in control of the means of production and own the land itself, are likely to be far more wealthy than, say, a café owner in São Paulo, such that many *apaixonados* occupy a horizontal position of power with agricultural labourers—a possibility that is not commonly acknowledged in most scholarly works on ethical consumerism and global goods. These particularities of socioeconomic and geographic closeness between *apaixonados* and coffee producers build upon each other, trouble the place of the 'other' within origin imaginaries, and shape the behaviour of Brazilian specialty coffee enthusiasts.

Due to this geographic and social closeness, the relationships between *apaixonados* in Brazilian cities and rural producers in the country are different to consumer–producer relationships mediated by a vast separation across hemispheres, and which can generate actions and outcomes that differ markedly to those that define traditional coffee supply chains for both farmers and consumers alike. The collapse of the geographic distance between coffee producers and consumers in Brazil and the relative ease with which the two groups can move between each other's spaces—after all, it is much easier for a producer from the Alta Mogiana region of

[66] Thanks to our dear friend Brazilian bureaucracy, calculating minimum wages is not as straightforward a process as one might like. There is a federal minimum wage in Brazil that stipulates the absolute minimum legal payment for any work, but different regions and sectors also stipulate different minimum wages, such that the *agricultural* minimum wage in one state is not necessarily equivalent to that in a neighbouring state. There is also the question of irregular contracts and labour exploitation (it is estimated that up to half of Brazil's coffee fieldhands work without formal, legal contracts). However, these practices predominantly occur within larger, industrial commodity coffee farms; the specialty coffee industry's emphasis on fair labour and farmer livelihoods makes it advantageous for specialty producers to treat employees (reasonably) well.

São Paulo state to visit the state capital than, for example, Seattle—allows both sides to get to know the other in very tangible ways. Accustomed as I was to seeing bakers, artists, and coffee roasters drop into cafés in Europe to show their wares and talk about the possibility of selling them to the café, I was nonetheless surprised the first time I saw a coffee farmer walk into Takkø with samples of green coffee. I witnessed such an occurrence at different times throughout the year and at a number of different shops; producers in Brazil have a reasonably direct line of access to the purveyors of the end good, and use that connection to efficiently get coffee physically into the hands of baristas and café owners in the hope of sparking an economic relationship.

'Unfortunately,' Flávio, the co-owner of Takkø, explained to me:

> [these producers] are usually not specialty. And, because we are not a roaster, the best we can do if we do happen to like one of these surprise samples and they are quality coffee is to pass it on to Hugo [Wolff] and ask him to check it out. I mean, we do source our own coffee sometimes and Hugo roasts it, but normally he finds it for us. We've never had a sample walk in off the street that we ended up selling in the store.

This ready access to cafés generates conversations between producers (or their direct representatives) and baristas and café owners, and these can also include whichever customers happen to be in the space at the time. The geographic closeness of farmers and customer-facing retail sites encourages and sustains direct knowledge of and familiarity between consumer and farmer. The vast knowledge gaps that lead Northern consumers to fill their mental picture of the 'other' with fanciful imaginings and simplistic renderings of exotic lives disappear. This is not to say that a São Paulo barista will understand or relate to every aspect of the life of a farmer, but that their cultural and geographic closeness makes them less 'other' than might be the case for a consumer in London and a farmer in Rwanda. Further research on this topic could consider the fine-grained nuances of the urban–rural divide in the context of a producer–consumer hybrid country such as Brazil, but if we examine this matter based on current models

and thinking derived from the flow of goods across national borders, the relative geographic and social closeness of *apaixonados* to producers is remarkable.

This collapse of the distance between farmers and coffee consumers creates space for familiarity, and leads to fewer knowledge gaps in the imaginary of the coffee-producing 'other' and a reduction in the romanticism that expands fills those gaps; it is hard to see a coffee farmer as a purely exotic, far-off actor when he is, for instance, standing in your coffee shop, or sharing a table with you. The increased contact between coffee farmers and consumers in Brazil also indicates that there are fewer barricades and less social distance between farmers and consumers than might be the case in producing countries with very different political economies such as Ethiopia or Kenya, two countries whose coffee is predominantly grown by small-holder peasant farmers who sell to cooperatives and are unlikely to have the social and economic means to travel cross-country to major economic centres to visit specialty coffee shops in the hope that an economic relationship might emerge. In Brazil, however, not only is it feasible for countryside-dwelling coffee farmers to visit urban specialty coffee shops, there is a fluidity between the roles of 'consumer' and 'producer' that further complicates the imagining of the 'other'; not only can *apaixonados* turn to farming (as in the case of Rodolfo), but farmers themselves can become active specialty consumers. The following testimony from Débora shows the impacts of this ready access to and movement between sites of coffee production and consumption, of a closeness that goes beyond the conceptual sense in which it is deployed in the orthodox origin imaginary.

### 4.4.1 PROXIMITY AND POSITIONAL FLOWS

Débora, as she explained to me on one of our café excursions in the Pinheiros neighbourhood, used to know nothing about coffee—not even after eight years of marriage to David, a fifth-generation coffee farmer. David and his family, however, are landlord farmers—a common class in Brazil, most of whom have not done a day of farm work in their lives, and haven't done

so for generations; they own the land, hire managers, and their family members go off to the cities to become doctors and lawyers and judges, drawing a passive income from the coffee harvest. David's family home rested on a gentle hill in the countryside, overlooking the spread of coffee fields below, but it was chiefly used for family get-togethers on long weekends and school holidays. Débora and David lived in São Paulo, where Débora had formerly worked as an architect, before leaving the workforce to care full time for their two young children.

In late 2016, she and David had entered Takkø on a whim because they were in the neighbourhood killing time (having dropped their eldest son off at a testing centre in the hopes of securing for him a place at a good primary school) and, as she put it, they the shop 'looked pleasant enough.' While David was ordering their drinks, Débora looked at the retail shelf—featuring handmade ceramic mugs, coffee-brewing equipment, and bags of roasted coffee—and was stunned by one item for sale:

> I grabbed my husband and said, 'Why on earth is this little bag of coffee R$35? That's practically what we sell one [60kg] sack for!' I hadn't even heard of specialty coffee before this moment walking into Takkø, so I went to the counter and started asking them why. I wanted to know: Why not us? Why not our coffee? I didn't know anything about our coffee, but I knew we didn't sell it for prices like that!

After her conversation with the barista on duty, Débora went home and delved into the topic of specialty coffee, researching everything she could about the subculture. The conversation had the effect of changing Débora's outlook on coffee, and she developed an intense passion not only for improving the coffee produced at her farm but even for integrating specialty coffee consumption into her daily life. In fact, I first met Débora early on in her journey, when she was attending a course with Gisele to learn how to brew better coffee at home. She later went on to take a series of further courses in order to develop her sensory skills and cupping abilities, and thereby be in a position to get actively involved in the on-going project of improving the quality at her farm. At the time when Débora first serendipitously walked into Takkø, she was applying for a master's programme in architecture with a view to transferring back to the

working world, now that her children were of primary school age, but after becoming obsessed with specialty coffee, she withdrew her application to focus her energies solely on coffee. Débora now spends every other weekend and all school holidays at the farm (roughly a four-hour drive from her family home in São Paulo) and the rest of the time in the city, carrying out farm administration duties but also circulating through São Paulo's specialty coffee shops, indulging her newfound passion for quality coffee. Over the course of several years, Débora transformed both her family farm from conventional to specialty production and her own identity. Previously only nominally a coffee producer (married to the owner of a farm, but without a connection to anyone who themselves did any farm work), Débora is now active in production and simultaneously an *apaixonada*. She is emblematic of the hybrid coffee identities that are possible in Brazil due to the closeness between production and consumption spaces, and that are not possible in importing countries, unless one is willing to uproot and move across the world to work on a coffee farm.

Débora's story stands in marked contrast to the theories put forward by other coffee researchers who have written about the information barriers present between producers and consumers. Such research is based on the standard trajectory of coffee, taken from its sites of production and delivered to far-away destinations. It was her chance visit to Takkø that changed the trajectory of Débora and David's farm and ignited Débora's passion, thereby turning her into both an agricultural producer and an urban consumer; without this ease of movement between sites of production and consumption that characterises the Brazilian coffee industry, this could not have happened. Consider again West's work with coffee farmers of the Papua New Guinean highlands and the consumers in the United States, Australia, and Germany who drink their coffee: Despite the 'veritable love fest of learning about each other' that specialty coffee roasteries and shops promise, West argues convincingly that this relationship is unidirectional. A consumer can strive to learn about producers, yet that information—usually idealised and

carefully curated—does not necessarily flow back to the producers, who often do not even know where their coffee is exported to, and what types of people in what places drink the literal fruits of their labours. Similarly, in her analysis of how digital platforms that enable producer-consumer connectivity link (or otherwise) actors within the specialty coffee industry, Sarah Lyon (2018) shows that despite the steps that have been taken to foster connections between producing regions (her study focused on Mexico), such projects are less successful when conducted transnationally or across hemispheres. Lyon concludes with the assertion that 'it is unlikely that digital tools will enable [producers] to permanently and thoroughly shift these power imbalances in the near future' (p. 86). This raises a question that that would benefit from future research: Is it only possible to redress trade-based power imbalances such as we see within the specialty coffee industry at the local or national level? Could such a project ever be successfully extended transnationally?

The *apaixonados'* use of origin imaginaries fulfils many of the same prestige functions as the orthodox version, but the differences between the two—which result from *tipo exportação* structures outside the control of individual *apaixonados* that move green coffee outward and prevent its circulation between Globally Southern coffee-producing nations—reinforce the presence of this group at the periphery of the specialty coffee consumer culture and, more broadly, of global consumerist trade networks. *Apaixonados* are obliged to remain at the periphery of the commodity-specific specialty coffee consumer culture because structural constraints conspire to force them to consume specialty coffee in a different manner to their counterparts in importing nations. The peripheral nature of their membership in the global imaginary also diminishes *apaixonados'* ability to influence the dominant culture, being as it is a peripheral experience. Local cultural adaptations in the South—parallel origin imaginaries, for instance—do not inform the dominant culture, nor do they influence the knowledge of specialty coffee in the North. The raw material of coffee flows from South to North, but the subcultural

norms, styles, and ways of doing flow from North to South. The case of specialty coffee reveals how *tipo exportação* thinking ensures that Brazil remains on the periphery of global trade, wherein the best-quality products are exported to the North, and the ubiquity of this pattern greatly constricts the possibility of within-South consumption of such goods. It is this dual peripheral experience that shapes the consumption experiences and origin imaginaries of *apaixonados*.

### 4.4.2 PRESTIGE, KNOWLEDGE, AND MATERIAL FLOWS

Knowledge about specialty coffee flows freely into Brazil and is readily accessible to *apaixonados*, but specialty coffee from elsewhere barely enters the country at all. The structural frictions that retard the free flow of most global coffees into Brazil ties the *apaixonado* consumer experience to the periphery of global consumption. In this way, the experience of *apaixonados* trouble existing theories of cosmopolitan consumerism and prestige, in which knowledge(s) about goods and how to consume them—i.e. consumer culture(s)—is necessarily linked to the free flow of these goods. The case of specialty coffee consumption in Brazil yields novel insights into how consumer cultures are shaped, adapted, practiced, and maintained in contexts in which knowledge and ways of doing flow freely, but material goods do not.

The power, privilege, and status of social elites—in the case of specialty coffee, elite consumers—is, as Bourdieu (1984) wrote, defined to a large extent by their ability to control, define, understand, and act appropriately upon and within the elements of cultural capital in both its symbolic and objectified forms. In the subculture of specialty coffee, it is relatively easy for *apaixonados* to access symbolic cultural capital, which largely consists of knowledge about specialty coffee. Brazil boasts some of the highest rates of mobile phone Internet usage in the world (Spyer, 2017), giving *apaixonados* ample opportunities to access coffee-related information, which is literally at their fingertips. Educational events, courses, and certification programmes are all available in Brazil, helping *apaixonados* along their amateur and professional coffee journeys and to learn to perform the ways of being and doing within specialty coffee. *Apaixonados*

read blogs, watch YouTube videos, and follow Instagram accounts dedicated to coffee, but as I have shown throughout this thesis, they find it extremely difficult to access both quality foreign coffee and foreign specialty coffee equipment. It does not matter how much they develop their understanding and knowledge of the specialty coffee consumer culture and its attendant imaginary; there is no prospect of the *apaixonados* ever gaining free access to or control over the flow of the good that forms the basis of their passion.

In her work on recent enthusiasm for yoga and Kabbalah practices among the middle class in France, Britain, Israel, and Brazil, Véronique Altglas (2014) implies, in line with Bourdieu, that it is both access to exotic and desirable goods *and* the control of their circulation that allows affluent or cosmopolitan segments of populations to expand and reinforce their status and prestige. *Apaixonados* are constrained by the outbound flows of coffee from Brazil, so within the speciality coffee subculture in Brazil, there cannot be said to be an equivalent link between knowledge, understanding, and appropriate ways of acting—constituent parts of the dominant specialty consumer imaginary—and control of (and access to) the circulation of coffee. For *apaixonados*, access to specialty coffee—both Brazilian and varieties from other producing nations—necessarily entails *disrupting* its common flows. Such access is won by interception, intervention, and circumvention—both legal and illegal—of domestic rules and laws, and demands a considerable investment of time, planning, and effort. Extreme passion and exertion is required if *apaixonados* are to experience the world of specialty and foreign coffee to an extent that remotely resembles that enjoyed by their Northern counterparts, and this passion cannot be considered to be a form of control.

And yet, this peripheral experience does not prevent *apaixonados* from navigating and negotiating local consumer hierarchies. In a consumer context that is informed by *tipo exportação* thinking—which subjects everyone to the frictions of an outward-orientated flow of goods—power, prestige, and status are defined only by some of the terms outlined by Bourdieu, and

cannot be dependent on control over the flow of goods that is inherent to Altglas's position. Given this context, *apaixonados* adapt the Northern, orthodox ways of doing to their local context because they cannot control the flow of goods to expand or reinforce their status and prestige. For instance, in São Paulo-based *apaixonado* networks, subcultural capital and prestige is accrued by accessing ever more coffees from abroad through personal or professional connections, while those with the financial means (and *jeitinho* knowhow) to do so will order coffee and equipment from abroad. However, this is fundamentally not *control over* the flow and circulation of goods; it is a way of working *within and around* systems of trade, in a context in which importing nations and consumers still direct the global trajectories of specialty coffee.

Because of the hard work that is required to access to a single bag of coffee from The Barn (a roaster in Germany) or a small sample of green coffee from Panama (enough for a few cups, if roasted appropriately) and thereby gain local prestige, many *apaixonados* are aware of the fact that they are not able to equally participate in the global specialty coffee consumer culture, and ascribe this inability to the fact that they do not have the same ability to access material goods as their counterparts in the Global North. For example, Ricardo—the retired engineer profiled in Chapter 3—attributed Brazil's isolation from the global coffee culture to Brazilians' inability to access a diverse array of coffee origins, and the power of consuming nations to influence the global coffee culture:

> In Europe, it's outside the tropics, it doesn't grow coffee, but even in normal supermarkets […] you have coffee from Ethiopia, from Colombia. I think that the common person abroad has more access than us, at a fair price, to good coffee, and they have a stronger coffee culture because of this. For example, Australia, which isn't even that big of a country [in terms of population] but is, I think, the most 'developed' coffee-drinking culture, doesn't even grow coffee, but it's a touchstone for how the whole world should drink coffee. So seeing other countries that don't grow coffee but have such strong and influential coffee cultures, it's a little strange, but I guess they just have more coffee.

Ricardo's interpretation reveals that not all coffee is born equal; after all, as Frank Sinatra sang, there is 'an awful lot of coffee in Brazil.' Ricardo did not mean that countries such as Australia

have more quantities of coffee overall, but rather that Australian consumers have access to coffees from diverse geographic origins—and such coffee is considered more valuable, within the specialty coffee community. Vanessa, a barista at CoffeeSpace, came to a similar conclusion as she confided in me her frustrations over this split between access to the material and immaterial elements of specialty coffee culture:

> I was watching lots of videos of James Hoffmann [an English coffee roaster, former World Barista Champion, and coffee influencer], who I really love, but I had to stop for a while because it was making me sad: He does all these product reviews of cool machines and new grinders or whatever, and I'll never get to use them. He also tells you what coffee he's testing them with, and I know I probably won't get to drink that, either.

Both Vanessa and Ricardo enjoyed relatively high levels of prestige and social standing within the *apaixonado* community (Vanessa because she was a respected and talented barista and Ricardo because his networks consistently furnished him with some of the world's best coffee), yet they expressed a similar sadness about the fact that they are unable to partake fully in the community, or to accrue prestige on a global scale. Without easy access to the coffee and equipment that is commonplace in Australia or in the London home of James Hoffmann, their participation is necessarily constricted in ways that are beyond their control. Knowledge of specialty coffee culture can be accessed by anyone with an Internet connection (at least, by anyone with a reasonable command of English or the willingness to use the services of Google Translate), but the flows that take coffee out of and not into the country restrict *apaixonados* to a partial and peripheral experience of specialty coffee consumer culture. This relationship means that elements of the orthodox consumer culture will be used, adapted, or rejected, depending on the *tipo exportação* constraints that *apaixonados* face.

This is particularly evident with regard to the ideas and practices surrounding 'origin,' which can differ markedly, depending on the coffee consumer in question. This notion is a novel one and would certainly benefit from further research, but its centrality to the specialty coffee consumer culture makes it eminently suitable for analysis in this context. The collapse of the

geographical distance between producer and consumer experienced by specialty coffee consumers in Brazil—a distance that is essential to any framing of the orthodox imaginary—obviates any discourse that foregrounds the sense that by consuming specialty, one is helping a distant, 'exotic,' 'other.' A key issue here is the ambiguity within the orthodox origin imaginary as to whether 'origin' is a specific place or an abstraction (why is one at origin on a coffee farm, but not when seated in a café next to coffee trees in the centre of São Paulo? And can one person be at origin and another not, even when they are physically together, depending on their relative identity and status?). *Apaixonados* are caught in a nebulous trap due to this ambiguity within the orthodox imaginary regarding to what extent origin is spatially situated, and their location in an indeterminate place (i.e., an urban centre in a producing nation) precludes them from fully entering the orthodox imaginary, above and beyond their inability to materially access coffees. These musings have implications that go far beyond the world of specialty coffee; they pertain to wider imbalances of politics and power in a globally connected world, a world in which consumption patterns and preferences have the power to influence styles, trade, and even regulatory standards, but have nevertheless received little attention in the literature or in the specialty coffee community, despite the latter's professed devotion to moral actions, which indeed form much of the self-conception of the purpose and meaning of the specialty subculture in the Global North.

## 4.5 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

Imaginaries connect the symbolic dimension of life to the (locally defined) real, and mediate between the two. They bring together both what is known and accessible and what is desired or possible in relation to the known, as well as building upon facts about how a population understands their existence, and their ideals about how their existence should be. Within consumer imaginaries, notions of how life should be and what consumers desire and aspire to are intimately connected to goods and consumption habits. As I have shown in this chapter,

the specialty coffee imaginary represents a more 'sophisticated' or 'conscious' imaginary than those of previous or mass-market coffee consumption imaginaries; in other words, diverging from consumption of a non-specific, inaccessible, and unknown far-away good or product, the specialty coffee imaginary has sought to make information about specific origins 'known and accessible.'

This chapter has looked at the origin imaginary within the subculture of specialty coffee, understanding it as a key point of definition and differentiation for both the industry and the individuals of which it is made up. This orthodox origin imaginary—which is central to the experience of 'doing' specialty coffee—is imagined in relation to the material reality (of consumers in the Global North) that assumes unlimited access to coffees from geographic locations across the globe; in contrast, the imaginary of *apaixonados* weights its components differently, in response to the material reality of their limited access to these coffees and to the best coffees from their own country. Despite the dominance of this orthodox model, it cannot or should not be totalizing because the material conditions of enthusiasts in different contexts are so different; prestige is negotiated differently in different local contexts, and different aspects of the origin imaginary are assigned different values. The ingredients may be the same, but they are used in different proportions. My analysis of origin imaginaries and the value markers that help to shape them shows how the consumption reality of specialty coffee informed by *tipo exportação* structures keeps Brazilians on the periphery of the transnational, commodity-specific consumer culture of specialty coffee, and reinforces their unequal participation in the orthodox origin discourses and practices negotiated and defined as they are by coffee-importing nations. In doing so, I contribute to the overall argument of this thesis by revealing the tensions that divide the idealised global consumption community and the lived strategies that *apaixonados* employ to negotiate these tensions from the differently situated consumption space in which they are located. In the next chapter, I look at roasting as a site of economic and symbolic value

accumulation within specialty coffee, and the ways in which Brazilian consumers deploy it as a type of 'origin' in order to add to the tally of the foreign coffees they have consumed.

# Lucas and Marcelo

## Lucas

Lucas was a charming and successful young legal superstar, rapidly climbing the ranks of the law firm at which he worked. But he had a secret: For over a year, a deep sense of dissatisfaction and discontent had been brewing inside him. He could not find a purpose to the extremely long hours he and the other junior lawyers put in and began to find it harder and harder to focus, and each time his colleagues showed off their new and increasingly ostentatious watches, he felt the chasm widen. Each day, he could detect that he was growing both sadder and angrier, and the thought of the lifetime in law spreading out ahead of him filled him with dread, he explained to me as we sat together at a table in Por Um Punhado de Dolares—a coffee shop in the city centre somewhat mysteriously named after the 1964 Clint Eastwood 'spaghetti western' film *A Fistful of Dollars*.

> I gave the feeling some time to go away. More than a year. But I saw eventually that it was not going to go away: I was not at my intellectual best, I was not eating like I should or exercising like I should. […] I started going and not really working, just existing, going home without making deadlines. I was starting to see the impact of not making a decision about how I felt. I was very sad.
>
> I had to come up with a plan, something that wasn't law and something that wouldn't make me sad. So I went to my favourite coffee shop and said, 'I like you and I like your structure and that you have farms, you have a roastery, you have a shop.' I liked them and I could see a future with them. I didn't really want to be a barista exactly, but I knew I didn't want to be a lawyer anymore. Their company was growing and I thought maybe in ten or fifteen years, I could be something else [in the company] or have my own place. They said, 'Yeah, fine. We have a position opening up in two months.' So I was like, 'Great.' Because, you see, I also needed some time: I needed to talk to my family, my girlfriend: prepare everyone for what I was about to do.

Lucas easily talked his way into a job at Casinha Café, one of the hippest specialty coffee shops in São Paulo. He later mused whether his ease interacting with the shop's upper-class and

professional clientele had something to do with it. For the first time in a long while, moved by the prospect of no longer being alienated by his work, he felt excited: He began to tear through all the educational and training programmes Casinha offered their staff, even before he was formally employed by them. After all, what's studying the coffee taster's flavour wheel in the evening, when one is used to staying up all night pouring over tedious legal documents and evidence? The flavour wheel, at least, is fun!

Although he knew it would be difficult to make his family and loved ones understand his decision, Lucas knew he needed to go through with it. 'My girlfriend cried. A lot. She'd been thinking we'd probably get married in a couple years, but when I told her, one of the first things she said was: "How are we going to pay for the wedding?"' Given that Lucas was going to be taking an extraordinary pay cut—he said that he went from earning several thousand dollars per month to less than $500—it was not an inconsequential question.

Lucas's girlfriend took a few days to think things through, before returning to his side. She was still unsure about his future as a barista—it seemed so far removed from what he had trained for, and she thought it beneath him—but she trusted his assessment of the potential for advancement in the growing specialty coffee market, and recognized that remaining in the legal profession would be unsustainable for his emotional and mental health. She accompanied him when he informed his parents of his new career direction, and he attributes the fact that he won them over to her support:

> Of course, they asked me to think very, *very* carefully about what I was doing. What sacrifices I was going to have to make. But in the end, I think they could see how unhappy I was doing law. At the end of the day, mothers in particular, just want their sons to be happy.

Lucas is a caffeinated example of how a reduction in economic security and what, in traditional economic rationales, would be considered a desirable living standard can nevertheless improve one's quality of life. Lucas's career move resembled that of Gisele, but he came from a white, upper-class, professional background, so it entailed very different social implications. Although

it represented a radical departure from the work he had been doing, and the social status expected of him by others in his immediate social orbit, some elements of Lucas' transition to specialty coffee work tie in with highly conventional ideas about employment trajectories: He recognised that he would need to begin at the bottom of the specialty ladder (i.e. as a barista), but envisioned a linear career advancement, once he had entered the specialty coffee system.

## MARCELO

When he started work at Casinha Café, Lucas became a colleague of Marcelo, who represents something of an inverse trajectory to that of Lucas. For upwardly mobile Brazilians emerging from the lower classes, the cultural capital that can be gained from working as a barista is an advantage that balances the low wages of barista work. In this way, Marcelo explained to me, he saw the opportunity to become a specialty coffee barista to be a career option that offered greater potential than working at a *padaria,* or neighbourhood bakery—despite the fact that in many ways, they are functionally similar jobs that hinge upon the serving of coffee and pastries. For this reason, and because he thought if he spent time with (the usually upper- and middle-class) *apaixonados*, he would 'meet better people than if [he] stayed in [his] neighbourhood,' Marcelo commuted over an hour each way from the flat that he shared with his mother, stepfather, grandmother, and three younger siblings to his full-time job at Casinha Café, despite the fact that he would have earned a similar salary at the *padaria* nearest to his home. Marcelo is not from the *periferia*, but he did grow up in a low-income neighbourhood that does not have direct access to a Metro line; the multiple buses he needs to take to work, in conjunction with São Paulo's notoriously congested traffic, guarantees him a lengthy commute. '[The neighbourhood *padaria*] is always looking for staff and my mother is always trying to tell me to apply there, and not waste all my time on the bus,' he told me, with an exaggerated shrug and a shake of his head.

Marcelo's coffee career began with a job at a Starbucks kiosk in a mid-level shopping mall near to his neighbourhood. This was not one of the early Starbucks locations frequented by Patricia and housed in the grandest malls, but one of the many that sprang up in the intervening years; at the time of my fieldwork, there were over 50 Starbucks locations in the city of São Paulo. After completing secondary school, Marcelo began working as a clerk in a supermarket in the same mall, when he saw the posting for the Starbucks job, and in addition to finding the green apron more appealing than the mauve uniform he was required to wear in the supermarket, he noted that Starbucks paid slightly more. He applied, and to his delight was accepted. He reported that at the time, his relationship with coffee was simply that of a beverage he drank with breakfast in the morning, and from the carafe in the staff room in the supermarket.

'When I started at Starbucks, they made us read all this information about coffee, and I had no idea how complicated the coffee and the job were going to be!' At first, he was intimidated by the amount of information he was asked to absorb, but as he learned more about coffee through the Starbucks training programme and on the job, his interest grew:

> It was a bit of a trip, you know? [Coffee] was just this thing that I never thought anything about, and then once I found out how complicated coffee was, it made me wonder what other things I didn't know about: If coffee—this thing I'd just thought was whatever—could be this complex, what else in the world had I overlooked? Nothing seemed simple from that point, but I mean that in a good way.

Seeking to learn even more about coffee than what he read in the Starbucks training manuals, Marcelo began seeking out specialty coffee shops on his days off. Thrilled to find out that he was not alone in his growing obsession with coffee, he began to find friends among *apaixonados*.

> No one cared that I didn't go to university or that I worked at Starbucks, and not even somewhere cool. Everyone was still friendly. Like, at a cupping, it'd be me, just this gangly kid, tasting coffee with other baristas, but also just people that were cool or rich or like, there was a surgeon at one coffee tasting. I wouldn't ever expect to meet a surgeon, except on the surgery table! But on the cupping table? It's possible there.

A young Black man, Marcelo had not envisioned a situation in which he would rub shoulders with a surgeon, unless he had been a victim of violence. And he certainly had not imagined

interacting with such an individual on a relatively level playing field: The surgeon in question was attending his first cupping, and Marcelo had already attended several at this point, and helped the surgeon to get to grips with the cupping protocols. The two even shared a laugh about the awkwardness of the slurping and spitting that cupping requires.

After performing well in the internal barista competition for Starbucks employees in São Paulo, Marcelo decided that this was a sign that he had progressed enough in his skills to move into working with specialty coffee. His first position was in a small (and short-lived) shop in the lobby of a hostel in Vila Madalena, before he landed a job at Casinha Café several months before Lucas was hired.

Marcelo's family had also initially struggled to understand his decision to work in specialty coffee, albeit for very different reasons than was the case with Lucas. According to Marcelo, his family suggested that working in a *padaria* would be preferable because it was 'the same job,' and came with the benefit of not having to commute nearly as far. There were, after all, several *padarias* in the area surrounding the family's flat, but no specialty coffee shops. Marcelo reported that it was only after his family came to visit him at Casinha Café and experienced the difference in environment and patrons—Casinha's three locations are characterised by light wood panelling in geometric configurations on all the walls, unique ceiling light fixtures, soft music, and restaurant-style table service to well-heeled customers—that they understood what had drawn Marcelo. Or near enough, in any case; his stepfather still finds it easier to explain to curious relations and neighbours that Marcelo works as a waiter in a high-end restaurant.

Specialty coffee shops or roasteries are not necessarily democratic places of employment, but the two stories of Marcelo and Lucas show that they nevertheless serve a *democratizing* function: For upwardly mobile Brazilians, the cultural capital to be gained from working in a 'hip' industry like specialty coffee balances out the low wages, and while for Lucas, the decision to

become a barista meant that, in the eyes of mainstream society, he is downwardly mobile, he had been deeply miserable in his corporate life, and his move to become a barista (although shocking to his family) had been taken in order to pursue a life in which he actually enjoys his work. That said, as Marcelo astutely pointed out to me, when we sat one afternoon sharing a piece of carrot cake outside King of the Fork—a coffee and bicycle shop in the Pinheiros neighbourhood—someone like Lucas would never have sought to enrich his life and find workplace satisfaction by going to work in a *padaria*. That is, in order to not be rejected entirely by his family following his departure from the law office, Lucas needed to work somewhere seen as *not too far* beneath his social status, and therefore the cultural capital associated with specialty coffee as a high-end foodstuff with foreign associations was useful to him as well. Nevertheless, that both young men from radically different backgrounds (Lucas has a professional degree and is white, while Marcelo has received a secondary-school education only and is Black) came be co-workers is testament to the ways in which specialty coffee and its attendant spaces and practices of labour mediate multiple and simultaneous forms and actions of aspiration.

The limitations of specialty coffee as a democratic space, however, are revealed by examining the subsequent trajectories of Lucas and Marcelo. I first met Lucas in a barista skills class taught by Danilo at Wolff, where he was a polite and high-achieving student. Lucas and Marcelo both attended all the internal training opportunities offered at Casinha Café, but only Lucas had the financial reserves to pay for additional, out-of-house training opportunities such as that at Wolff; even though he had taken a sizeable pay cut to become a barista, he had substantial savings from his time as a lawyer, partially due to the fact that like many unmarried Brazilian men, he continued to live at home, rent-free, during this high-earning period. Despite the fact that he had been hired after Marcelo and had less formal experience with coffee, the extensive outside training he attended (at several other roasteries and coffee shops in addition to Wolff)

eventually gave him a professional edge, and towards the end of my time in São Paulo, he was promoted to head barista over Marcelo. When I spoke to Marcelo after that development, he attributed Lucas' promotion in large part to their class and racial differences, noting that Lucas more closely reflected the high-end clientele the owners of Casinha Café were actively trying to attract. Stung by this series of events and unhappy with the management, Marcelo left Casinha shortly after, and has worked as a barista at a series of coffee shops across the city in the intervening years, including a period as an irregularly employed freelance barista, when he supplemented his wages by working retail in a large chain clothing store. Conversely, after less than a year as head barista at Casinha, Lucas was promoted into the management team.

These stories show two sides to passion: something that is invoked as a means of driving one to reach one's aspirations, and something that might serve to give shape to an aspiration in the first place. Marcelo reveals how passion can be used to realize one's pre-existing aspirations; he aspired to transcend his immediate social and material conditions, and was able to effectively use his growing passion for coffee to do so. From Lucas, we see how passion can provide shape to an aspiration; a pre-existing passion for coffee helped him to figure out a career transition and future trajectory, and understand what it was that he sought in life. Despite their different backgrounds, interests, and trajectories, Lucas and Marcelo remain active *apaixonados* who continue to use their participation in the specialty coffee community and their consumption of specialty coffee to fulfil personal and social aspirations.

# 5 MAKING SPECIALTY COFFEE SPECIAL

## 5.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

It was late on the final day of the 2018 edition of Semana Internacional do Café (SIC), the Brazilian specialty coffee industry's annual trade show and the largest such event in South America. The three-day show take places annually in Belo Horizonte, the capital of Minas Gerais State,[67] but this year was special: For the very first time, Brazil had been selected to host several of the Specialty Coffee Association's (SCA) World Coffee Championship events—a state of affairs that several *apaixonados* described as the caffeinated equivalent of Brazil's recent hosting of the Olympics and World Cup. Indeed, I ran into many of my *paulistano* friends during the events: Rodolfo and most of the Takkø staff (they left a skeleton crew to run the shop back home), Kelly, Gisele, Yara, Lucas, Cauã, Vanessa, Martha, Danilo, Michelle, Lucci, Patricia, Susana, and many more—professional and enthusiast alike, all *apaixonados* who could had followed their passion to Belo Horizonte for the week.

One notable feature of specialty coffee trade shows around the world is what is called the 'brew bar,' which is staffed by volunteer baristas and serves coffees supplied by partner roasteries invited by the event organizers to showcase their best coffees. Brew bars are an excellent way to get to know coffee brands the budding coffee aficionado might not have heard of or to get a free sample of a highly sought after batch, while they are also a convenient meeting point when

[67] Minas Gerais, which borders São Paulo to the north, today accounts for over half of all coffee grown in Brazil.

trying to track down other attendees in the vast halls where trade shows are held. Circle the brew bar at any coffee trade show and you'll see the pleasing spectacle of renewed acquaintances among friends and colleagues who haven't seen each other since the last trade show (perhaps in Milan, or maybe it was Shanghai or Seoul), business cards being exchanged, and deals being struck. The SIC's brew bar this year was even more of a draw than normal: Due to the influx of international barista competitors, there was a huge range of coffees from around the world on offer, in contrast to previous years, when the brew bars primarily showcased coffees produced in Brazil.

I was elbowing my way through the buzzing crowd that had gathered in front of the brew bar when the *paulistana* barista and coffee blogger Ana Luiza waved to me from her station and presented me with a product that exemplified the definition of *tipo exportação*. 'You *have* to try this one,' she told me, holding up a bag from Taf, a renowned roastery in Athens, Greece—a city that many elite baristas and world coffee champions call home.[68] She handed me the package so I could read the information provided, as she finished brewing a large V60. As Ana Luiza poured the water in concentric circles, she told me a bit about the Taf. 'It's a really well-travelled coffee. It was raised in Brazil, travelled to Greece to be roasted, and then came all the way back here! It has a lot of stamps in its passport!' Then, watching the coffee drip through into the serving pot, she laughed. 'Actually, maybe it has two passports, two citizenships: it's *brasigrego*,' she added, making a playful portmanteau of the Portuguese adjectives for 'Brazilian' and 'Greek'. She quickly poured me a cup of Taf and rushed off to serve the dozens of other people gathered around the bar who were clamouring for a beverage. As I sipped my *brasigrego* coffee and tried to exit the throng without spilling any (it really was a lovely coffee), I realised

[68] 2018 World Brewers Cup 3rd Place, Stathis Koremtas; 2017 World Brewers Cup 3rd Place, Stathis Koremtas; 2015 World Brewers Cup 2nd Place, Konstantinos Iatridis; 2014 World Brewers Cup Champion, Stefanos Domatiotis; 2014 World Barista Championship 3rd Place, Christos Loukakis.

that it had set my mind racing, and not because of the caffeine: I could not (and still cannot) imagine a consumer in the Global North referring to a coffee's origin as being anywhere other than where it was grown, but instinctively, I knew that Ana Luiza had touched on something important regarding origin and how Brazilians experienced it—something that hinted at the limited applicability of the issue of *agricultural* origin for determining coffee origin, even in importing countries.

Ana Luiza was not alone in experiencing and expressing coffee origins as a malleable and contingent phenomenon; Yara in Chapter 4 stated her view that I was at origin but she was not, even when we were seated together. Tensions between the differential flows of consumer goods result in localized adaptations of the wider origin imaginary, whereby elements of the orthodox coffee imaginary are used, adapted, or rejected, based on both the practical constraints inherent to *tipo exportacão* living and thinking, and specific local consumer desires. Such adaptations of the origin imaginary both respond to and maintain the *apaixonados*' experiences of life on the periphery of both global trade flows in general and the global specialty coffee consumer culture in particular. Building on the previous chapter, which addressed the question of proximity to and the negotiation of one's relationship with an 'other,' I will now focus on the ways in which *apaixonados*—restricted as they are from playing a full part in the orthodox coffee imaginary—maximise their capacity to 'travel' by tasting and trying foreign coffees. This issue will be explored through a careful consideration of roasting as a site of symbolic and economic value accumulation.

## 5.2 DESTINATIONS OF TRAVEL

One's ability to cultivate prestige by engaging with a particular type of distant 'other' becomes difficult when one is—from the vantage point of the orthodox consumer culture—*part of* that distant 'other'; in this case of *apaixonados*, this is compounded because they do not have ready access to the coffee produced in other coffee-producing countries in the Global South.

However, although these trade flows shape and constrain the extent to which *apaixonados* can feasibly participate in the dominant consumer culture and oblige them to accommodate themselves to a more peripheral experience of specialty coffee, the local perspective towards the concept of 'origin' possesses a functional equivalence, in that it satisfies many of the same symbolic aspects of the origin imaginary and allows practitioners to accumulate subcultural prestige. *Apaixonados* are able to expand their global knowledge of coffee by learning about different origins and acknowledging the ideal of travel through taste, while their imaginary is distinguished by their notion of *where* the far-away is—what locations count as 'exotic,' and thereby yield prestige. The possibility that 'origin' could include sites where coffee was not grown came to light early on in my fieldwork, when I began to ask participants which non-Brazilian coffee origins they had tried. Immediately, I began receiving answers that surprised me, accustomed as I was to an idea of origin that only considered where coffee was grown:

> 'I've had coffees from Colombia, Peru, Italy, and Ethiopia.'
>
> 'Yeah, I've tried coffees from the USA, Italy, and Uruguay. I didn't think any stood out as different from our Brazilian coffees.'
>
> 'I've been so lucky; I've tried coffee from many different origins: Ethiopia, Guatemala, United States, Mexico, France, Canada, Honduras… all different, all wonderful!'

The more people I spoke to, the more non-producing countries would pop up in the lists they recited of the coffee origins they had sampled. I recorded the following countries as having been mentioned as 'origins,' despite the fact that they produce little or no coffee: Australia, Austria, Argentina, Canada, Denmark, Italy, France, Germany, Greece, Japan, Norway, Sweden, the United States, the United Kingdom, South Korea, and Uruguay.[69]

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[69] The United States and Australia do grow limited amounts of coffee, but are not considered classic producing nations because they do not export a substantial amount, and rely almost exclusively on coffee imports. Further questioning revealed that my interlocutors were alluding to coffees they had tried that were roasted, purchased, or consumed (rather than grown) in these countries, except for the few individuals who had tried Kona (Hawaiian) coffee. No participant had tried coffee grown in Australia.

In the grand tradition of the bewildered ethnographer, I assumed at first that I was the problem, that something had been lost in translation or that I had somehow misunderstood, but subsequent conversations revealed that I was not the problem (not this time, anyway). The definition and structure of the understanding of origin as used in the coffee-importing nations of the Global North has limited relevance for Brazilian consumers, and I could see no contradiction or cognitive dissonance inherent in considering non-growing countries to constitute origins. *Apaixonados* did engage with the mainstream definition and understood perfectly well the notion of agricultural sites as origin, but crucially, they considered them to make up only *one part of* the notion of origin. By adding value-added sites of processing to their definition, they enabled themselves to 'travel' to, what were for them, more distant, desirable, and aspirational sites through taste, while still acknowledging the formal parameters of the orthodox imaginary.

An important assertion made in the previous chapter is that to *apaixonados*, the idea of saving (or even financially supporting) a distant agricultural producer through one's individual consumption of specialty coffee makes little sense, but they still need to adhere to certain elements of the orthodox origin imaginary in order to gain recognition as members of this global culture. *Apaixonados* might not consume speciality in order to forge a relationship with a far-off producer (given that, in the Brazilian case, often-wealthy producers run farms that are frequently a few hours' drive away), but they do desire to participate in the transnational specialty coffee culture about which they learn and with which they engage, and they use it as a metric to measure their own experiences, accumulating local prestige by 'traveling through taste.'

Structural constraints mean that *apaixonados* differ markedly from their counterparts in the Global North in the destinations they favour for their global 'travel.' Local aspirations and the

longstanding 'allure of the foreign' mean that for *apaixonados*, prestigious, 'exotic' destinations are mainly those connected to European and North American culture; for example, the coffee-growing regions of El Salvador are a much less compelling place to 'travel to' through one's consumption than, say, Berlin. Origin imaginaries, as both social beliefs and products, are entangled in webs of relationships, but with whom and where these relationships lie can vary, depending on the contexts and desires of the actors involved.

In a context in which collecting and experiencing a diverse range of coffees is desirable in part because they are hard to obtain, it becomes necessary to consider the ongoing question of colonial inferiority, and Southern consumers' interest in consuming like those in the Global North. In Chapter 2, the marketing professional Patricia lamented that she did not have the 'freedom to consume like Europeans,' and in Chapter 4, Yara—the barista to whom I put my origin quandary—exhibited a surprisingly keen jealousy of Rachel, a regular customer at the café where Yara worked. Rachel was a die-hard coffee nerd and American ex-pat who frequently travelled between New York and São Paulo, and who always brought back coffees to share with her Brazilian friends. Yara first reported with fond recollection that it was:

> …on June 3, 2017 that I tried the best coffee of my life. Rachel brought it. It was a Bolivian gesha, roasted by Steven Leighton from [UK roastery] Has Bean. It was the most floral, sweetest coffee I've ever tried. Very strong notes of lemon zest. The package said marmalade and I don't know much about marmalade, but I had to take a photo to mark the occasion.

As Yara narrated her experience, feelings of jealousy and a sense of injustice bubbled to the surface:

> I'm grateful to the friends I have who bring me coffees from abroad, but why, why must it be like this? I'm lucky I have friends like this, and I do understand the need to protect our crop, but Rachel—and also you, once you go back—can have any coffee she wants whenever she wants it. I deserve the same. I love coffee just as much as she does.[70]

[70] In a later conversation I had with Rachel, she said that although she loved living in São Paulo, she was growing increasingly sick of only having routine access to Brazilian coffees. She was particularly tired of the similar flavour profile possessed by that the majority of Brazilian naturally processed coffee and yearned for a wider variety of coffees—especially for washed coffees, the taste of which she prefers to the more fermented flavours of natural

Aspiration, consumer passions, and the realities of daily life work together to give shape to imaginaries; for consumers like Yara and Patricia, the consumption spaces and choices of coffee that are available in importing countries provoke desire for more options in their own consumption. These factors also account for the differences, deviations, and local adaptations to be found within a transnationally shared imaginary such as that of specialty coffee. The *apaixonado* origin imaginary is informed by and exists in relation to the orthodox imaginary; it does not exclude other producing nations as origins, but rather adds importing countries where value-added production occurs as additional sites of origin. My fieldwork has indicated a distinct split in the origin imaginary, based on this material condition of closeness to production, which drastically reduces the importance of or entirely removes the 'other' who is linked with agricultural origin, and changes the desired destinations of 'travel through taste,' given the allure of Northern goods and consumption modes, and the difficulty inherent in accessing coffee from elsewhere in the South.

For consumers in São Paulo, travelling through taste involves trying coffees from places that are distant to them. While this could, in theory, include other producing countries, the absence of networks of coffee circulation between the countries of the Global South means that almost all foreign coffees to which *apaixonados* have access need to come via importing nations, where they are roasted. This has led to a situation whereby the place where a coffee has been grown is only one of several considerations for *apaixonados*, who also exhibit an interest in where it was consumed or roasted. Henrique, a legal clerk, voiced a common narrative among *apaixonados*:

> American coffee was terrible, just common stuff. In England, I tried some English coffees when I was visiting, but they were nothing special. Now that I think about it, I'm not sure if they were grown there or not… While in Argentina I also sampled some Colombian specialty

coffees. Yara was jealous that Rachel was able to access a wide spectrum of coffees whenever she was home in New York, but had she known what her friend thought about the coffee she did have access to in Brazil, I suspect that that frustration would have been further compounded. In fact, although Rachel gave me permission to use my notes and impressions of our conversations, she requested me to stop recording when I asked her thoughts on Brazilian coffees.

> coffee, and I liked it a lot. The best one I've had was a Kenyan coffee, a marvellous Gikimira, which a friend brought back for me from abroad.

Note that Henrique briefly stopped to question whether or not the coffee he tried in England had been grown there, but he did not amend its designation as 'English'; whether or not the coffee had been grown there was not necessarily relevant to its classification as English coffee, having been roasted and consumed there was sufficient to warrant the label. Note also that Henrique tried a Colombian coffee while in Argentina (one of the only Latin American nations that does *not* grow coffee[71]), revealing again the pattern whereby coffees travel from producing to importing countries, but not between producing nations. This seeming lack of division between where a coffee is grown and its 'origin' was echoed in Alice's response, when asked which origins she had sampled:

> I've tried loads of coffees from origins that aren't Brazil! Kenya, Ethiopia, Colombia, Nicaragua, Vietnam, India… I'm not actually sure if the Indian coffee was planted there or only roasted there. But anyway, it's difficult to say exactly what I thought of each one, given that I'm from a producing country that doesn't know very much about roasting, and I'm still a bit of a novice. But in general, I really liked the African coffees on account of their acidity and fruity flavour.

Brazilian consumers' desires are informed by the orthodox global imaginary but differ from it in several notable ways, based on the material realities of life on the periphery of the global consumer culture. In the next section, I show the ways in which *apaixonados* incorporate the site of roasting and the labour that occurs there into their operational idea of origin.

## 5.3 TASTING LABOUR

The ways in which *apaixonados* modify their understanding of origin serve important status-enhancement functions in the context of the constraints of the local consumption environment.

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[71] Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and Paraguay are the four countries in Latin America that are not considered to be coffee producers. Paraguay grows a small amount, mostly for internal consumption; its exportation of arabica coffee is so miniscule the International Coffee Organization does not maintain statistics on Paraguayan coffee. As its climate has changed, Chile has become increasingly hospitable for growing coffee, but production there is in its infancy and primarily for domestic consumption.

This understanding includes not only where a coffee was grown but also the sites of value-added production through which a coffee passes, and this is particularly illustrative in the case of Brazilian-grown coffee that has been roasted abroad. By expanding their understanding of origin to encompass other sites such as that of roasting, *apaixonados* cultivate a stronger association with foreign coffees and the status that is associated with access to non-Brazilian goods. The coffee that Ana Luiza was proud to make for me at the brew bar at the SIC had been grown in Brazil and roasted in Greece before it returned to Brazil, and this journey complicated its classification as a Brazilian coffee (note that Ana Luiza described the coffee as hybridized and as possessing an additional citizenship, *not* as having surrendered its original citizenship). Nonetheless, this coffee's Hellenistic sojourn had some kind of profound influence that interfered with its Brazilian identity to a sufficient degree to warrant comment. Furthermore, Ana Luiza was not alone; other *apaixonados* independently intimated, either directly or indirectly, that Brazilian coffee that had gone abroad to be roasted and consumed could not be considered quite the same as a Brazilian coffee that had spent its entire life within the domestic borders. Such coffees were often referred to with double-barrelled epithets that emphasized their hybridity: João sampled a '*café brasileiro-dinamarquês*' in Copenhagen; a '*café brasileiro-alemão*' was pointed out to me at a trade show in Berlin; and Tereza brought a '*café brasileiro-americano*' back from her trip to New York to share with her friends. The original geographic and agricultural provenance of a coffee remains an important element in its classification, given its importance in the transnational, orthodox imaginary, but *apaixonados* add other sites to this definition to serve their own ends.

An interesting parallel case is that of cacao. Cacao, which is the base ingredient in chocolate, is also grown in similar tropical climates around the world to coffee, and also often by smallholding, peasant farmers. Like coffee, cacao has a longstanding association with Fair Trade practices (Krauss and Barrientos, 2021), and it is becoming increasingly common for

producers to make artisanal and craft chocolates that emphasise the sustainable sourcing of their cacao (Leissle, 2017). Nevertheless, once cacao has been processed in an importing nation, the location where this transformation into chocolate took place becomes the most important geographical component; 'Swiss' chocolate, for example, is famous the world over, despite being made with cacao from any number of other nations. This is because European chocolates that dominate the luxury chocolate marketplace blend cacao grown in a range of tropical countries with local milks and, crucially, employ specific manufacturing processes that impart a distinct national flavour.[72] The geographers Julie Cidell and Heike Alberts have described chocolate as 'an industry where definitions of quality are closely connected to the places where chocolate is manufactured, rather than where the raw materials are sourced […] chocolate quality is based on variations in processing and manufacturing' (2006, p. 999). By adding the sites of roasting to descriptions of a coffee's origin, *apaixonados* are diverging from the common understanding of origin, but the case of chocolate proves that this is not uncharted territory. *Apaixonados* understand the site of manufacture or roasting of a given coffee to impact its quality, just as Ghanaian cacao can be transmuted into Swiss chocolate through the manufacturing process. That the act of roasting coffee—unlike the manufacture of chocolate—does not require the addition of other ingredients can be said to explain why the site of agricultural origin does not disappear entirely in this construction, but rather comes to be hybridized.

This hybridized concept of origin expands *apaixonados'* relatively restricted ability to 'travel through taste,' and helps them to add the tally of foreign coffees that they have tried and to metaphorically travel to origin. Given that dedicated coffee consumers are expected to be

[72] According to Cidell and Alberts there is a link between the location where the steps of chocolate processing were invented, and supposed national flavours or essences of chocolate: 'the Dutch are known for their cocoa power and non-sugary chocolates since they invented cocoa powder; the Belgians, who first developed candies consisting of soft centers enrobed in harder chocolate, are known for these pralines' and so on, through each of the primary chocolate-producing centres. However, these different styles of production have, of course, spread beyond these initial national borders, but 'regional differences in the definition of "quality" chocolate are closely tied to where particular innovations were *first* introduced' (2006, p. 1000).

familiar with a flavour lexicon that covers a wide range of global origins, coffees of foreign origin are of intense interest to *apaixonados*. The use of hybrid epithets to describe coffees grown in one place and roasted in another (e.g. coffees that have undergone the typical trajectory of coffees consumed in the North) was most common in relation to Brazilian-grown coffees that go on to be roasted abroad, although *apaixonados* occasionally used such language when describing coffee grown elsewhere, as in the case of the *café indonésio-australiano* that a customer brought to Cauã after returning from abroad. The fact that *apaixonados* tend to include the site of roasting in their concept of origin—some even did not even mention the site of growing, and instead referred to the coffees as *exclusively* being from the countries where they were roasted, such as Henrique's 'English coffee'—clearly shows that goods from Northern countries are valued and foregrounded in line with the underlying allure of the foreign in Brazil, which shapes *tipo exportação* structures.

The site of roasting is the location and action that is most typically incorporated into the *apaixonados'* origin imaginary. This approach is made possible by the fact that roasting occurs at sites that can be pinpointed geographically and that its impact on coffee flavour is such that the site of roasting is invariably printed prominently on the end packaging. This is in contrast with other sites along the supply chain such as the shipping yard from which it was dispatched, which does not feature in either the orthodox origin discourse or that of *apaixonados*. Because *apaixonados* are in some sense already at origin—and if not, are certainly close by, as well as socially proximate—all sites of value-added production that contribute to the specialty coffees to which they have access are normatively experienced as also occurring at origin. This mirrors the assertion made previously in this chapter—that spaces of production and consumption are more clearly bifurcated for the Northern consumer. In her detailed analysis of the economic implications of geographical indications of origin in the single-origin coffee industry, the agricultural economist Ramona Teuber (2010) found that consumers have preconceived ideas

about which countries of origin they prefer, even though 'coffee farmers sell a semifinished product' that still requires roasting and preparation at sites off the farm which will also impact the end flavour. In the orthodox specialty coffee industry, this work is understood to be done in the importing country, while for the specialty consumer in São Paulo, this is done in Brazil—at origin.

Many of the roasteries that supply the *paulistano* specialty coffee shops are located either in São Paulo or in other major cities, but others—like Tocaya, Juliana's roastery on the outskirts of Itajubá, Minas Gerais—are located in more rural communities, close to farms. Juliana ships her roasted coffees across the country, but also personally delivers roasted coffee to her clients in São Paulo each fortnight, often bringing green coffee samples directly from farmers with her. This finished product is wholly Brazilian. Although the origin imaginary of Northern customers assigns supreme importance to the country of agricultural origin, it nevertheless remains the case that specialty coffee is finished through the roasting process in the importing country. As elaborated throughout this thesis, Brazilians tend to consume coffee that has been both grown and roasted in Brazil; this becomes the baseline and framework from which all subsequent coffee experiences are understood, and therefore for Brazilians, origin can include all the stages of production, up to where the coffee is consumed by the end drinker. In this way, they hybridize country-of-origin designations; to *apaixonados*, coffee grown in Brazil but roasted in Sweden is *from* both of these countries, as is a coffee grown in El Salvador and roasted in the United States. And although coffee roasted in Brazil or Berlin might have been grown in the same place, given Brazilians' general interest in goods from or connected with the world outside Brazil, they are not equivalent in value for *apaixonados*; the travel this coffee has undertaken—its movement through different spaces of global capitalism—adds value, along with the roasting.

For the Brazilian specialty coffee consumer, coffee origin is not tied to the specific site of agricultural production, but rather encompasses wider processes of production: Any stage from seed to cup can conceivably contribute to *apaixonados'* understanding of a coffee's origin, though they emphasise the prestige locations, or where roasting occurs abroad. Value that is added in high-status foreign countries weighs more than value that has been added locally; a *tipo exportação* product is even better when it has successfully been sent abroad to be sold or even for some final processing. This is nowhere shown more vividly than in the example of the award-winning coffee from the Nunes family farm that featured in Chapter 3. It was sold pre-auction to Lucca Coffee Roasters in Curitiba, and after the Cup of Excellence auction, a near-identical lot was sold to an international consortium of buyers including Proud Mary Coffee in Portland, Oregon. Despite the fact that this coffee could be purchased for a substantially lower price from the celebrated *curitibano* roaster Lucca than it could be from Proud Mary, some of my participants actively sought out the much more expensive coffee—grown on the same plot on the same farm—that had been roasted by Proud Mary. Nicolas, who had managed to secure one tin of the coffee from a friend who had been to the US, informed me that 'the Proud Mary version was better than what [he] could get here'; after all, the company had been founded 'in Australia, which is a leader in coffee culture. Now they have this outpost in the US, and they're very successful.' It emerged in our conversation that Nicolas was unwilling to even entertain the possibility that the coffee from Lucca could taste better than that from Proud Mary, but not because they were slightly different coffee beans (Lucca's offering were the peaberries from the same lot used by Proud Mary); Nicolas believed that because the staff at Proud Mary hailed from a developed and respected specialty coffee culture (Australia), they possessed superior roasting skills compared to Brazilian roasting professionals.

Nicolas also reported that his friend whom he had tasked with bringing the coffee back and who was not an *apaixonado* had made immense fun of him for having requested, in addition to

a list of other coffees from a variety of agricultural origins, the reimportation of this particular Brazilian coffee: 'Yeah, he was like, "*Mano*! [Bro!] Just call my grandma! She's got coffee sprouting in her yard; you don't need this shit from America. Save the suitcase space for something else, not what you have already."' For *apaixonados* like Nicolas, however, the acquisition of coffee beans from the same lot or farm as coffee that is easily available in Brazil but has been roasted abroad did not count as buying 'what you have already.' Due to the profound changes the coffee undergoes, roasting is a materially and symbolically wealthy stage in the production process of coffee, and occupies a fundamental role in *apaixonados'* view of origin.

Roasting is a focused point of value accumulation in specialty coffee because it is the moment in the supply chain at which the coffee undergoes its biggest physical and chemical transition, which has a substantial impact on the end flavour. For *apaixonados*, who favour coffees roasted abroad, this makes roasting symbolically rich because it is the process whereby the ideals of foreign consumption can become embodied into the coffee itself. It has been estimated that least 60% of the organoleptic qualities of a coffee are determined *after* the harvest, when the work of the coffee picker is complete (Hameed et al., 2020). Coffee roasting involves the application of dry heat to the pits of coffee cherries, and this process creates a complex chemical reaction that leads to the characteristic aromas and flavours of coffee. Although it is the pre-existing green coffee quality and what are known as 'flavour precursors' (Buffo and Cardelli-Freire, 2004)—the flavour potential as derived from *terroir*, agricultural conditions, and post-harvest processing—that determine the trajectory and possibilities of the final product, the process and action of roasting is necessary to transform coffee from a raw agricultural product

into a drink loved the world over. Roasting is a symbolically important stage for coffee because without it, coffee is effectively undrinkable, an object without a social life for the consumer.[73] *Apaixonados* who considered Brazilian-grown coffees roasted abroad to possess a type of hybrid origin deemed roasting to be a key factor that distinguished it from regular Brazilian coffee. The importance of roasting is attributed to the chemical transformation it effects on the coffee, as well as the perceived superior equipment and skills of foreign roasters, as we saw with Nicolas and his coffee from Proud Mary and Lucca. Francisco, a regular customer at Double R—which was on the ground floor of the building in which he lived—offered a typical opinion:

> I've had the chance to try the same coffee roasted by two roasters—one here and one foreign—and the *gringos* are way ahead of the roasters here. [Coffee roasted abroad] is not the same thing that it is here.

Pedro, a former barista at Sentimento, once explained to me that 'as incredible as it seems, people in Europe know how to roast Brazilian beans better than we do.' When I asked why he thought that was the case, he replied:

> They understand the roasting equipment better and they have better equipment to begin with. The places are all climatised, so [the environment] doesn't vary and impact the roasting. And they always do lots of tests, four or five different profiles and test them to see how they are. Here, it's expensive [to do so many tests], and people have to be dedicated and learn. I went to [coffee shop in São Paulo, redacted] and they made one profile and applied it to everything without considering the variation of anything. It's not specialty.

It can be discerned that some of the same infrastructural problems detailed in Chapter 2 prevent the continued advancement of specialty coffee quality in Brazil. If supplies and power were less expensive in Brazil, if climate control was possible, and if education and training for roasters was better, then maybe, in Pedro's estimation, there would be less of a difference between Brazilian coffee roasted in Brazil and the same coffee roasted abroad.

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[73] One could, technically speaking, make raw coffee into a beverage, but it would taste unpleasant, and because unroasted beans are incredibly hard, they are difficult to work with in their raw state. In addition to releasing flavour, roasting softens the beans so that they can be more easily ground, but today, it is possible to find green coffee extract in beauty products and supplements.

This goes some way to show why, from the Brazilian perspective, it makes sense to give a Brazilian-grown coffee roasted in Athens the designation *brasigrego*. The roastery workers in Greece, who had worked on and transformed the coffee from a raw agricultural product into a consumable coffee, had used their technological knowledge and skill to make it into something that it could not have been in Brazil. The physical and chemical transitions that occur during roasting are the result of human intervention and skilled labour, as Mari, a photographer, told me when I asked her how she was able to think of a Brazilian coffee roasted abroad as being of hybrid origin:

> I mean, [the coffee is] from Brazil, but it's not very Brazilian, is it? Everyone knows our coffee here is not so good, but then we can have a Brazilian coffee that's good if we drink it in some other country. So something's changed, and that is the work later on, after harvesting. Maybe [a Brazilian-grown coffee roasted abroad] wouldn't be *gringo* coffee if we could also make it like that here, but we can't. Not yet. So right now, they're very different things.

Mari emphasises 'the work later on' and the role of labour in the *apaixonado* origin imaginary; roasters are, after all, highly trained and skilled professionals. The hybrid concept of origin proposed by *apaixonados* thus serves to increase their cultural capital by increasing the number of origins they can claim to have drunk, and also make space for deeper understandings of labour throughout the coffee supply chain.

In his structural analysis of the Fair Trade and ethical coffee industry, the political scientist Gavin Fridell states that whether nor not they are formally embedded in certified programmes such as Fair Trade, 'alternative' models of consumption such as specialty coffee and its direct trade model seek 'to "include" the sectors that have thus far been "excluded" from the benefits of international trade' (2007, p. 5). It is my argument, however, that the orthodox specialty coffee imaginary *and* academic theorizing only include certain forms of labour and sectors; or, to draw on Karl Polyani's accounts of capitalist development, only certain forms are re-embedded in social relations (2001[1944]). Only very specific imaginaries of certain types of coffee producers—smallholders, peasant farmers, and itinerant labourers—are widely

publicised, and they constitute almost the entire representation of the nature of labour within the production of coffee. Through their use of hybrid origin designations that draw on the relationship between other stages of processing and sites of labour, and the flavour and end product, the *apaixonados* show us that there is space for wider representations, understanding, and appreciation of labour.

To be able to say that a coffee is Brazilian-Greek necessitates an awareness of the labour and production efforts that exist in relation to that coffee, even the labour of figures such as baristas and roasters, who mainstream coffee discourse does not consider 'producers' of coffee, simply because they are not the *agricultural* producers who populate the Fair Trade-influenced ethical consumerist imaginings of an impoverished coffee 'other.' Although the *apaixonados* understandably emphasise the site of roasting (given that it most directly ties to their means of prestige cultivation), by expanding the imaginary beyond the site of growing, this view troubles the orthodox emphasis on the exotic farmworker. Primary production continues to take place at the agricultural site, but the labour of mill workers, dock workers, ship hands, brokers, and others like roasters and baristas is more visible within the product biography when one views it from the perspective of an *apaixonado*, for whom any intervention into the coffee prior to its point of being drunk by the end consumer can conceivably contribute to the definition of 'origin' and influence flavour. Moreover, agricultural sites feature a multiplicity of roles and specializations, all of which are needed to bring the coffee to the consumer's cup, roles that are rarely made visible in the orthodox, Fair Trade-influenced origin discourse. The nuances of what constitutes agricultural coffee labour are more visible to Brazilian consumers, who often have deep social and historical familiarity with the roots of coffee production, and, as detailed in the previous chapter, frequently have personal connections to coffee plantations. In their creation of a profile of Brazilian specialty coffee consumers, Guimarães et al. (2016) recognize the wide range of roles performed in production in Brazil as a hybrid producer-consumer

nation. They even deviate from the standard sociological approach of equivocating between 'specialty coffee professionals' and 'barista' (Bookman, 2013; Knox, 2019; Ott, 2020; Piercy, 2018), noting that 'due to the Brazilian specificities as the world's largest producer and second largest coffee consumer, there are many professionals involved in production, processing, tasting, roasting, extraction, and even exporting' (2016, p. 17). The *apaixonados*' social and geographic proximity to agricultural production results in a finer-grained view of what production entails at the agricultural side of the commodity chain, while also opening the door to other sites and impacts of labour, as coffee makes its way to the consumer.

When I accompanied Rhys, the junior green buyer from a UK roastery, on a trip to a large farm in Minas Gerais, I was deeply struck by the surprise he felt at discovering that not only are there nurseries for coffee seedlings, there are also dedicated specialists who cultivate the seedlings, broker their sales, and deliver them to farms around the nation. As we stood in the nursery, I asked him where he thought the coffee trees came from, and he replied that he hadn't considered it, but had assumed that they grew 'naturally,' and were *then* cultivated and tended to by the farm workers. The position of green buyer is generally held to be the highest and most prestigious position in a specialty coffee company, and they are widely assumed to be among the most knowledgeable coffee professionals. Yet here was a green buyer who not only lacked practical knowledge about the various stages of the coffee commodity chain prior to the farm (the site at which his active involvement with coffee began), but also awareness of the workers who made these earlier stages possible. This contrasts with the deep knowledge about the agricultural coffee production process that was common among *apaixonados*; due to the location of São Paulo close to many coffee farms and the flow of people between the two sites, I once met two separate nursery managers at my regular *paulistano* coffee shop haunts within the space of a week. One was pointed out to me by the baristas on duty, while the other was introduced by a regular customer with whom I had become friendly, and who happened to know the

manager through his wife's family. I see in this intermixing between sites of consumption and production a promising expansion to more complete commodity biographies; in this way, more aspects of the production of coffee become known to its consumers, and the various producers who contribute to the cultivation of coffee are able to see where their work ends up. The fact that *apaixonados* are aware of the nuances and realities of agricultural production and incorporate them into origin imaginaries is a result of the relations they have with farms, which can be geographic, familial, social, and economic in nature. Furthermore, the incorporation of sites further along the commodity chain such as those of roasting and brewing comes about due to their location on the periphery of the wider specialty coffee consumption culture; *apaixonados* are disadvantaged by the trade structures that force the best local coffees out of their reach. Both of these modifications represent an expansion of the limited vision of by whom and where coffee is produced that constitutes the orthodox origin imaginary.

Gavin Fridell was right to note that the producers foregrounded by alternative trade movements are those who have historically gained the least and suffered the most under conventional trade regimes (2007), yet this narrow focus on labour at coffee farms presents two problems for an industry that purports to take both flavour and trade ethics seriously. Firstly, one of the dangers of a limited view of where and by whom labour within specialty coffee is conducted is that it can serve to mask exploitation and labour abuses at other sites along the supply chain. Coffee farmers rarely have control over the use of their images and stories, but according to media scholar Eleftheria Lekakis, the visibility of coffee workers within consumer-side marketing and promotional materials 'has arguably brought to the mainstream the congealed relations behind the commodity cycle' (2013, p. 25). However, the emphasis on the individual farmer above all else only reveals a limited set of these behind-the-scenes relationships and labour: Little research has been done on the working conditions of those who work at coffee farms but who do not perform harvest labour such as agronomists, or other

workers who do not easily fit into the category of 'peasant labourer.' The limited extant academic research on coffee retail workers (Brickner and Dalton, 2019; Parrish, 2020; Talbot, 2004) and, more generally, dock workers (Nielson, 2018), those who work on container ships (Dua, 2019), and even agricultural commodity brokers (Besky, 2020) suggests that those who work further up the commodity supply chain and ostensibly closer to those who receive the full 'benefits of international trade' (Fridell, loc. cit.) are not necessarily immune to exploitation and dangerous or harmful working conditions, nor does such a position guarantee a living wage (see also Tsing's 2017 work with mushroom pickers in the American Pacific Northwest). This is not to say that if we increase our understanding of the different forms of labour that combine to bring coffee to one's cup, and work to include these forms of labour within ethical consumption and responsibility discourses, all inequalities will be resolved; rather, this approach will do more to do so, and will lay the groundwork for future such endeavours, than would be the case if these labourers are wholly excluded from the commodity biography of coffee, as understood in the orthodox imaginary.

The cruel paradox here is that the Brazilian expansion of origin and the associated incorporation of labour arises precisely because Brazilians are obliged to remain on the margins of the consumer culture; their expansion of 'origin' is a reaction to Brazilians' position on the periphery of the commodity-specific consumer culture, but the fact that it necessitates a divergence from the orthodox imaginary necessarily removes them from it. Unable to easily access the goods they want, *apaixonados* accept more flexible definitions of orthodox terms in order to differentiate themselves from the local commodity coffee culture. If they could easily access the full range of foreign coffees that they desire, it would not be necessary for *apaixonados* to employ hybrid epithets to accrue this cultural capital.

Although *apaixonados* are more likely than consumers in importing nations to class non-producing countries as coffee origins, Globally Northern consumers still do so in certain

situations when it enables the accumulation of prestige. In her book *Coffee Life in Japan*, the anthropologist Merry White explores the notion that Japan can be considered to be a particular type of coffee 'origin' within specialty coffee culture, despite the fact Japan grows no coffee. Due to its long history of consumption starting in the 1700s, Japan has developed distinct styles of making and brewing coffee, as well as many attendant materials and technologies. White writes that:

> Japanese cafés and coffee have begun to travel and to influence coffee-drinking elsewhere. Coffee from Japan has become an international object of desire. It is not the beans themselves, their provenance and varieties; they are already global commodities. It is the care with which they are selected, roasted, and ground, as well as the attention they are given in brewing that makes them 'Japanese' in the world's specialty coffee market. Already there are Japanese-made coffee-roasting machines, siphon systems, and hand-pouring methods on view in American cafés, and a rabid intensity of discussion of Japanese coffee rivalling that of fashionistas anticipating the next season's runway styles. […] The particular performance of taste and society the café offers is what makes it 'Japanese,' but the idea of quality and a special place where this is assured transcend any cultural setting.
>
> (2013, pp. 125–126)

The material of coffee may itself be associated with foreignness in Japan, but coffee consumption and coffee shops have long since been integrated into normal, everyday life (Grinshpun, 2013). The 'intense localism' and technical excellence of the Japanese specialty coffee industry 'may well have elevated Japanese coffee-making to a status that is aspired to by many coffee professionals around the world' (Felton, 2019, p. 92). The unique social and material practices around and perception of Japanese coffee preparation, technologies, and consumption—themselves contextualized by Japan's post-World War Two shift to high-end technological manufacturing—make it especially appealing for many foreign consumers, and also render the coffee beverage sufficiently sensorially distinct from others for Japan to function as a type of origin, even though it does not produce its own coffee beans.

It is precisely in this way that *apaixonados* were able to talk about coffee as being from the origins of Italy, Canada, Argentina, and even the UK. The provenance of the raw material does not

necessarily outweigh the value-added input that is accrued as a given coffee moves along the supply chain and into the world. Each stage of value-adding involves and requires new forms of labour, technology, and knowledge, all of which cause material changes to the coffee and thereby shape the end flavour outcome. In the orthodox specialty culture, the concept of 'origin' is restricted to geographic agricultural origin due to *terroir*-centric understandings of coffee flavour and Fair Trade-influenced thinking about who and where coffee producers are, but this is not necessarily relevant to the unique histories and economic contexts of Brazil and Japan. *Apaixonados* in Brazil face specific circumstances and situations, such as a direct connectivity and physical proximity to domestic farm origins in combination with a near-impossibility of access to foreign coffee origins, both in terms of physical travel and their ability to procure even small bags, and as a result, the place where coffee is grown has become merely *one site among many* that contributes to a coffee's origin, rather than entirely defining it. The value of an artisanal food product is not, as is so often represented in *terroir*-focused thinking, restricted to its place of agricultural origin; work and manufacturing processes and expertise offer significant input, and these processes and inputs may occur at an immense distance from the farm. In the next section, I show how *apaixonados* negotiate the question of authenticity in specialty coffee, not in relation to light and dark roasting, but in terms of a coffee beverage's purity and lack of adulterants.

## 5.4 AUTHENTICITY AND LIGHT ROASTING

Authenticity is topic of importance in both the academic field of food studies and in the discussions that captivate the specialty coffee industry of the Global North, but throughout the time I spent in Brazil working with *apaixonados*, I noticed that they rarely if ever spoke about this topic. For *apaixonados*, the notion of authenticity and where it is negotiated in the value chain also diverges from the orthodox imaginary. A close look at the ideas of authenticity, value, and purity, particularly in relation to the proclivity for light roasting in the global specialty

coffee culture, further illustrates the effects of material contexts on local imaginings and shows how *tipo exportacão* structures give rise to imaginings of authenticity that diverge from the orthodox; or, to put it differently, render the orthodox imaginings of authenticity impractical for local use.

In the context of the global edible-good capitalist marketplace, pleas for authenticity are moments of symbolic value accumulation that can be said to serve as 'attempts to add economic value to goods destined for a marketplace crowded with materially similar foods'; authenticity is a differentiation strategy in saturated and crowded markets (Cavanagh and Shankar, 2014, p. 54). This was depicted vividly in the examination of differentiation based on bean origin in Chapter 4. Edward Fischer (2017) has also described this invocation of authenticity discourse as another manifestation of the desire to connect with a distant 'other,' which is one of the central tenets of origin imaginaries and plays an important role in differentiating specialty coffee from commodity or mass-market coffee. Given the limited utility and relevance for Brazilian consumers of a discourse that emphasises connecting with a distant and exotic agricultural 'other,' it is useful to look at another pervasive differentiation practice in the orthodox specialty coffee culture: light roasting.

According to Nick Mabey, the co-founder and head roaster of the influential London-based roastery Assembly, 'in order to appreciate the unique flavour characteristics of a coffee, it is necessary to roast it lightly so as not to obscure its essence, but light roasting precludes the ability to "roast out" undesirable flavour defects, so it is crucial to buy high-quality green beans' (Mabey, 2020, p. 21). Mabey claims that it is a near certainty 'that the majority [of specialty coffee roasteries] will claim light-roasted in some generic form as their core ethos' (ibid). Light roasting needs to be understood in conjunction with the wider narrative of non-intervention that is present in the specialty coffee industry; the choice to lightly roast coffee is understood as

'bringing out rather than incinerating the unique characteristics of each bean'[74] and is framed as a way to 'let the coffee speak for itself,'[75]—to take as little as possible away from the 'intrinsic'[76] characteristics of the coffee, and to facilitate a direct bridge between producer and consumer by deemphasizing the impact of the intervention of roasting and of the roaster as intermediary.

The narrative of non-intervention bestows an *a priori* authenticity on lightly roasted coffee. The celebrated Norwegian coffee roaster and former World Barista Champion Tim Wendelboe is on record as saying: 'A very dark coffee has almost lost its identity. You could take a Kenyan coffee or an Indonesian coffee and roast them very dark and they would taste the same' (Soque, 2020). Similarly, James Hoffmann, another former World Barista Champion and high-profile roaster, believes in the importance of preserving the existing character of coffee, and has said that when specialty connoisseurs roast, 'we are trying to preserve what is great about the coffee' (Goode, 2010). In her discussion of the concept of authenticity in the natural wine industry and the recent turn to a trend called, revealingly, 'low intervention', Jennifer Smith Maguire has stated that authenticity is not a pre-existing quality or natural property; it is 'a negotiated, accomplished quality that emerges through judgements, made in relation to taste regimes' (2018, p. 61). Authenticity as practiced and discussed in the orthodox specialty coffee culture is negotiated at the point of roasting by following light roasting practices, which are a means of carefully curating symbolic value by limiting the intervention of the roaster; the quality, purity, and authenticity of the coffee is communicated by light roasting, here considered a symbolic means of amplifying the presence of origin and the 'other' in the final cup, thereby further differentiating specialty coffee from its industrial and commercial counterparts. In this

[74] Allen, 2013, p. 334.
[75] Liberman, 2017, p. 20
[76] Kingston, 2015, p. 62

discourse, the role of the roaster as *curating* coffee is emphasized, while her role in roasting—and therefore obscuring the pure essence of the bean—is played down. This obfuscation is helped, as linguist William Cotter notes, by the fact that roasting is 'done being the scenes, out of public view to at least some degree' (2021, p. 50); though closer to the end customer, roasting still often occurs hidden in warehouses and rarely in cafés for customers to view. In the orthodox coffee imaginary, roasting is implicitly and sometimes explicitly considered to be a necessary evil. Light roasting becomes a lesser evil—better than dark roasting, but an action that nevertheless entails a reduction in authenticity as it transforms the product further away from that which the farmer produced.

In the case of *apaixonados*, the inverse attitude can be observed: When the site of roasting is conceptualized as a part of a given coffee's origin, roasting becomes a way to add value by means of expertise, technical skill, and symbolic associations with the roasting location. For example, *apaixonados* value Brazilian-grown, foreign-roasted coffee *more than they do the same coffee when roasted locally*, and the consumption of the former fulfils their consumer desires and accrues them prestige in the local culture. If one accepts this perspective, it follows that the process of roasting is not deemphasized or diminished but rather elevated, in accordance with the local context and associated imaginaries. This elevation of the importance of the roasting process is not the only way in which Brazilian imaginaries around roasting practices and authenticity diverge from those in the Global North: Brazilian specialty coffee is also generally roasted darker. This remarkable fact requires further consideration, given the lengths to which *apaixonados* go to assimilate other elements of the global coffee imaginary into their local equivalent.

I argue that this difference in approach to authenticity can be attributed to three related factors informed by *tipo exportacão* structures: First, specialty coffee in Brazil is an immature consumer culture operating within a less-saturated specialty coffee market than in the Global North,

which reduces the need for authenticity differentiation (this is an observable feature of other immature specialty coffee consumer markets); second, the specialty coffee grown *and* consumed in Brazil is rarely of sufficiently high quality to be lightly roasted in the same fashion as in the Global North; and third, the 'essence' or 'identity' of different Brazilian-grown coffees do not differ from one another as much as, for instance, a Kenyan differs from an Indonesian, and therefore it is less important to perform light roasting to allow these diverse flavours to come through in a context where Brazilian roasters are operating with almost exclusively Brazilian coffees.

Jillian Cavanagh and Shalini Shankar (2014) have stated that it is a desire for differentiation as a result of market saturation that gives rise to the development and deployment of authenticity in capitalism; I contend that this can be said to account for the different approaches to authenticity within the Brazilian and the orthodox specialty coffee experience. Brazil's specialty coffee consumer market is still developing: at the time of my fieldwork in 2017 and 2018, it was estimated to be 7% of total Brazilian coffee consumption (De Ribeiro Costa, 2020), and while this has grown to 12% in the intervening years (Haddad and Proença, 2019), it is still a long way from the nearly 50% of market share that specialty coffee enjoys in the United States (SCA, 2015). Furthermore, being a developing specialty coffee consumer market, the normative ways of drinking coffee are still very much informed by the material outcomes of a history that restricted local consumers to low-quality coffees, given the persistent outbound flow of higher-quality coffees. Ronan Torres Quintão and Eliane Brito (2016) have pointed out that light roasts could only come to such prominence within the global specialty coffee imaginary once a steady supply of the highest quality coffees had been consistently guaranteed; it took until 2012 for enough coffee farmers in enough growing zones of the world to be able to furnish a critical

mass of roasters with the necessary quantity of specialty beans to enable the roasting community to converge on a universal preference of roasting style.[77]

The country's limited access to the highest-quality beans means that coffee in Brazil is historically dark-roasted, precisely in order to 'roast out' defects and tame unpredictable flavours. This persistent preference for dark-roasted coffee is evident in the derisive term that some non-specialty coffee drinkers and even specialty novitiates use to refer to specialty coffee beverage: *chafé* (from *chá* [tea] + *café* [coffee]), given on account of the fact that specialty coffee beverages are not as dark in colour as conventional coffee and, visually, more closely resemble tea. Specialty coffee roasteries and coffee shops in Brazil do offer coffees that score 80+ points on the international grading scale used to determine a coffee's cup quality, but the reality is that most of the coffees on offer in Brazilian specialty coffee shops are on the low end of what counts as specialty-grade (80–83 points), and thus may still contain bitter and less desirable flavours, or lack the more subtle nuances of flavour one finds in the highest-scoring coffees that extremely light roasting favours. Specialty coffees in Brazil are roasted more lightly than conventional Brazilian coffees, but not as lightly as the coffees found in specialty cafés in importing nations. The higher-scoring coffees that would allow for even lighter roasting still follow the standard outbound trajectory to the Global North.

Although *apaixonados* do not discuss authenticity in exactly the same way as consumers in the Global North, they do engage in a discourse that concerns the authenticity and purity of coffee with regard to whether milk and sugar should be added. The traditional poor quality of conventional coffee available in Brazil offers a clue as to why Brazilian coffee consumers prefer

[77] The quality question cuts both ways. Later in the same interview cited earlier in this section, Tim Wendelboe went on to note that 'high-quality material will still taste a little bit better than the lower, even if it is roasted dark.' Nevertheless, as the popular Leeds-based roastery North Star stated in a blog post, '[d]rawbacks to lighter roasting are few, unless the green (raw) coffee beans that were roasted were of low quality to begin with' (Kragiopoulos, 2017).

to add copious amounts of milk and sugar: Milk and sugar are similar to dark roasting in function as they help to cover up the bitterness and unpalatable taste of much of conventional coffee. This context has led the discourse around authenticity for *apaixonados* to emphasise the purity of the end beverage, rather than to clearly link to and show respect for the place of origin. In an analysis of data collected by the Brazilian government's National Dietary Survey, a research team at the University of Brasília found that only 1% of its participants did not add sugar or a sweetener of any form to their coffee (Sousa and Da Costa, 2015).[78] Working with the same data, a second research team from the State University of Rio de Janeiro determined coffee beverages to be the second largest source of sugar in the Brazilian diet, surpassed only by juices; soft drinks trail in third place, but are rapidly catching up, particularly among the young (Pereira et al., 2015). The second team also found that calorie-added coffee beverages (e.g. sweetened brewed coffee, or sweetened coffee with milk) was the beverage group that contributed most to daily caloric intake.

Throughout the course of my fieldwork, I asked *apaixonados* to define what they understood specialty coffee to be, and to tell me what is special about specialty coffee. Sugar (or rather, a lack thereof) was mentioned time and again. Responses would commonly resemble the following from João: 'A specialty coffee is a coffee of very high quality, and that is above 80 points. It's rich in aroma and flavours, and it's sweet enough already, so you don't need to add sugar.'

Tereza put the case even more starkly; according to her, specialty 'is coffee one doesn't put sugar in.'

[78] It is so normal in Brazil to put sugar in conventional coffee that only two people to whom I spoke over the year reported that they didn't drink their coffee without sugar when they were growing up. Both also added milk.

It is not uncommon to find high-end specialty coffee shops in the Global North that refuse to make sugar or milk available for customers, all but enforcing the appreciation of coffee's undiluted natural flavours and characteristics upon customers. I have yet to encounter a single café in Brazil in which this is the case. When I asked Rodolfo why he still made sugar and artificial sweeteners available to customers on all the tables at Takkø, he informed me that there would be something close to a riot if he removed the sugar:

> Maybe in ten years we could do that. But right now, because not everyone who comes in here is a dedicated consumer, we can't scare away the people who are transitioning. People expect sugar with their coffee. We have to offer it, but maybe we can gently suggest they don't use it.

Different shops employ different strategies to gently encourage customers to at least give the coffee a try first before adding sugar, hoping to spur a transition to drinking specialty, once the customer realises that it is even more enjoyable in its unadulterated state. At one shop in São Paulo, I saw a sign perched on the counter that pointedly asked customers: 'Have you ever tried it without sugar? Our coffee was naturally sweetened' [*adoçado no pé*; lit: sweetened on the tree] (Figure 8). This desire to convert sugar-loving Brazilians to specialty is not entirely hopeless; as Patricia once informed me about her transition to specialty coffee, which began at a café which had a similar sign encouraging customers to try the coffee before adding sugar, 'as soon as I had a specialty coffee, I discovered the natural complexity of this beverage and I didn't want to ruin it anymore with sugar.' Douglas Holt has described the idea of authenticity as 'avoiding contact with mass culture,' which is precisely the process undertaken by *apaixonados* when they deviate from the cultural and culinary norms of adding milk and sugar to one's coffee (2011, p. 241). Refusing to add any adulterants to one's coffee is the hallmark of a specialty coffee drinker, authenticating and differentiating both the drinker and the beverage in relation to conventional coffee.




FIGURE 8: HAVE YOU TRIED OUR COFFEE WITHOUT SUGAR? OUR COFFEE WAS NATURALLY SWEETENED.

None of my participants used the same language of origin-based authenticity as that employed in the Global North when they spoke of their coffees, but the authentic Brazilian specialty coffee experience can be interpreted as requiring purity of end form in one respect: it must be a black coffee beverage. Cavanaugh and Shankar note that 'value is rooted in regionally relevant notions of authenticity' (2014, p. 53). Using light roasting techniques to add symbolic value through the invocation of a direct, unbroken line between producer and consumer is a viable approach to authenticity in the saturated and mature specialty coffee markets of the Global North, but because of Brazil's status as a developing specialty coffee consumer market, lack of corresponding saturation, and the material considerations associated with coffee quality and roasting, this is not how *apaixonados* negotiate authenticity. This raises the question of how local conceptions of authenticity will change as the Brazilian coffee market matures and how roasters will differentiate themselves, when there is greater saturation. As long as the coffee available for roasting remains almost exclusively Brazilian, there may be little impetus to negotiate authenticity at the point of roasting because there will still be little need to cultivate a link with

a distant producing 'other,' and *tipo exportação* flows may still mean that the available raw material is of insufficient quality to enable extreme light-roasting practices. The absence of sugar and milk is a positive absence, in that it does not represent loss, but rather presents the possibility of 'a future-driven strategy to reimagine oneself, one's community, and its practices' (Meskell, 2010, p. 212). In a cultural context where sugar and milk are added to nearly every coffee, the absence of these adulterants makes a powerful statement identifying *apaixonados* and what is considered authentic within their consumption culture.

The main conclusions to be drawn from this section are that Brazilian specialty coffee enthusiasts negotiate authenticity in the context of the purity of the end beverage as a way to differentiate themselves from conventional coffee consumers; in the still-developing Brazilian specialty coffee market, the responsibility to curate authenticity lies with the individual consumer as they progress along their connoisseurship journey, and not the with roaster as a strategy for competing for consumer attention and loyalty in a saturated market. This ties in with the overall argument of this chapter—that *apaixonados* readily incorporate other sites of production into their understanding and categorization of 'origin', and believe that considering a site such as a roastery in Berlin or Athens to be an origin does not invalidate the authenticity of their approach to coffee, so long as one consumes it in the 'correct' unadulterated form.

### 5.4.1 THE IDEAL OF FRESHNESS, PART TWO

A further point to be noted regarding authenticity is that one of the major differences between specialty coffee and other artisanal agricultural products is the lack of emphasis on green coffees that are seasonal or 'farm fresh'—a frequent invocation of authenticity in both academic literature and popular media on food. As covered in Chapter 3, the conversation around freshness in specialty coffee merely concerns the freshness of roasted coffee. The conventional specialty coffee wisdom is that green coffee should be 'rested' prior to roasting to allow the flavours to settle and mature. This resting period (known as *reposa* in Brazil) typically means that

green coffee is kept for between two and four months in warehouse storage while still in its parchment form[79] in the exporting country, after which further time elapses during the shipping process once the coffee has been milled (i.e. the parchment has been removed). This mode of practice is in many ways less motivated by a lack of interest in consuming farm-fresh coffee than it is simply a result of the logistical realities faced by importing nations: Not only do they rarely possess milling facilities—meaning that the milling must be done in the producing country—it tends to take coffee many months to arrive at its destinations. This creates a unique double-bind for consumers in Brazil and other producing nations, who do not face these same shipping logistics and delays, dealing as they are with internally circulating coffee, and therefore roast much their coffee much fresher. *Apaixonados* do not value this *reposa* to the same extent as their counterparts in the Global North, and do not emphasise a need to allow flavours to settle before roasting. This means that *apaixonados* again are forced to deviate from the orthodox coffee practices because in this sense, the lack of emphasis on 'farm freshness' by roasters and consumers in the Global North is a simple adaptation to the (few) frictions of global trade that limit consumption practices in importing countries.

During the time I spent working at Wolff, we routinely roasted very fresh coffees, coffees that had been harvested perhaps two months prior and that had rested for only one month. The only time Wolff would roast coffees that had rested for approximately the same length of time as would typically occur in the Global North was if a specific client such as Takkø had purchased a large lot for use as a staple coffee throughout the year. The oldest coffee I was ever

[79] The parchment is a thin, papery skin that remains on the coffee bean even after the fruit has been removed. The parchment can be removed (this is done through a process called milling) once the coffee has dried to an appropriately low moisture content. Milling is often done immediately prior to shipping the coffee from the producing country, but in some cases in Brazil, it may be done when the coffee leaves an inland producing region, before it is warehoused closer to a port.

privy to roasting was 11 months post-harvest.[80] This attitude stands in marked contrast to the timeline of coffee roasting in the Global North; as no comprehensive data set on shipping timelines for coffee exist, I conducted an informal poll of green buyers and roasters that I know in the United Kingdom and United States, which revealed that coffees typically arrive at warehouses in importing countries between four and seven months following the harvest. This is extended to eight to ten months in the case of Ethiopia, where coffees often need to be transported overground from remote regions of the country to Djibouti, from where they are shipped by sea, often taking over a month to arrive in Antwerp, the primary coffee-receiving port in Europe. Similar timelines can also be expected of coffees from Burundi and Rwanda, which ship from Kenya.

One way in which *tipo exportação* structures in Brazil benefit *apaixonados* is that they restrict this need to wait for coffee to be imported, and the corresponding delay in time from farm to cup; because almost no green coffee is imported, it becomes a non-issue. However, because the normative, orthodox way to roast specialty coffee in the Global North is to use coffee that is not fresh, Brazilian coffee roasters who use fresh coffees are often seen by their counterparts in the Global North as using a lesser product, one that has not been 'rested' appropriately. In this way, the frictions of others create and compound those affecting the *apaixonado* population by applying standards that are irrelevant to local geographies, authenticities, and market experiences, thereby creating another way in which the *apaixonado* experience is peripheral to and a deviation from the orthodox.

[80] And even this had been milled only shortly before. The particular coffee was shipped from the farm's mill and warehouse to Wolff twice per year: once after resting for one month in parchment and then being milled, and the second batch six months later, having been milled only a matter of days before arriving at Wolff.

## 5.5 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

In his paper 'Ingesting Places: The Embodied Geographies of Coffee,' the geographer Benjamin Coles explores the material and imaginative properties of coffee, asking: 'For something like coffee, whose geographies are only partially revealed yet openly deployed, this raises a question about the "commodity" itself: Is it the bean? Is it the place?' (2013, p. 259). When we consider the ways in which *apaixonados* incorporate spaces of roasting into product origin, it is clear that there is a thorough entanglement of place and product; likewise, neither place nor product can be extricated from the question of labour. Ultimately, the binary choices presented by Coles as options for the commodity of coffee are too prescriptive and limited to account for the Brazilian experience of coffee origin, in which the bean is imprinted with the many sites of production through which it travels, its final sensory characteristics intimately tied to labour across these diverse geographies. Coles' question 'Is it the place?' reflects the dominant *terroir*-centric understanding of origin, which represents origin as a single site at which agricultural work occurs. The *tipo exportação* context in Brazil, the country's history as a coffee-producing nation, and the associated structural and material constraints on the internal consumption of high-quality coffee has resulted in, when compared with importing nations, a different—albeit complementary—set of priorities for what is valued in a coffee. The *apaixonado* approach draws on an understanding of flavour and value that is imparted through and at different points of coffee production, but that exists in a manner that also intersects with transnational specialty discourse on the importance of agricultural origin. Brazilian consumer experiences and imaginations are particularly coloured by indeterminacy: it is both a coffee-producing *and* -consuming nation, and therefore the ways *apaixonados* imagine origin creates new intertwined geographies of origin and opens the doors to seeing the wider scope of production in its many forms and locations.

As the world's largest producer of coffee, Brazil is known as 'the coffee nation', and production has understandably been centred in the Brazilian national experience of coffee. However, as this chapter's exploration of coffee origin and authenticity shows, in Brazil coffee production is not understood to be an exclusively agricultural endeavour that only takes place on the farm, as it is frequently represented in importing nations. *Apaixonados* understand, aspire to, and flirt with the dominant origin discourse, which emphasises global experience, travel through taste, and direct connections with far-away places and producers, but adapt it to their lived experience in which agricultural origin is geographically and socially proximate by including other sites of production in their origin imaginaries, thereby giving themselves a path to accumulate prestige. By accepting sites of roasting as a constitutive part of a coffee's origin, *apaixonados* give rise to a more complete product biography that acknowledges and valorises the labour of more actors in the supply chain, and the entire speciality coffee discourse and industry would benefit from the insight of those relegated to the global periphery into ethical consumption, production, and fairness.

A key matter here is how *apaixonados* have challenged discourses of authenticity within specialty coffee, whereby the Global North can in some ways be said to impose its view that light roasting is the most correct and respectful way to treat coffee on the Global South. *Apaixonados* also aspire to authenticity and want to 'let the coffee speak for itself,' but to this end, it is considered sufficient to reject common additives such as milk and sweeteners. These different approaches to negotiating what constitutes an authentic coffee that is consumed in a way that respects labour and land are the result of different histories with and relationships to coffee, and the economic and sensory reality that *apaixonados* are mostly obliged to consume lower-quality domestic coffees.

I hope to make clear that the orthodox specialty coffee approach, which seeks primarily to valorize, recognize, and more fairly renumerate farm labour is not itself problematic; although

these ideals often remain just that and not necessarily achieved, they nevertheless reflect group virtues and ethics which resist and speak back to some of the more troubling and exploitative aspects of contemporary capitalism. This said, the particular dynamic which underpins this orthodox approach (i.e., caring for a distant and necessarily unequal other), makes it difficult for care and lessons to flow the other way, from the South to North. The experiences and views of *apaixonados* as regards 'origin' as a compound of many sites of labour which come to influence on the flavour of a coffee, were they to gain traction in the Global North, would hold enormous promise for transforming labour standards across the value chain and in ways which are relevant to the diversity of producers and consumers who are touched by specialty coffee. In highlighting the ways the *apaixonados* think of roasting as contributing to product origin I do not suggest that the specialty coffee industry reduce its emphasis on farmer and farmworker welfare, but rather, seek to draw attention to and critical engagement with the ways the deep care specialty coffee enthusiasts show to farmers might also be radically extended to others. In this instance, the 'view from the South' is one of possibility and potential.

# MARTHA

BARISTA *TIPO EXPORTAÇÃO*

Martha, originally from the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, is a trained actress who ran a theatre company in the city of Pelotas, before eventually moving to São Paulo to try and make a bigger name for herself. A handful of small parts in low-budget films followed, along with regular theatre work, until she broke her leg, which forced her to drop a part in play. In need of income while she healed, she applied for a job at Octávio Café, where a friend and fellow actor from Pelotas had also recently taken up a job. 'I didn't even drink coffee that much back then,' she told me, 'But I needed the money, so I took the job.' At Octávio, she learned the ropes as a barista, while clomping around in a medical boot as her leg healed. She fell head-over-heels for coffee, however, and has not graced the theatrical stage since—although as soon as she discovered the existence of barista competitions, she was determined to make it to a new stage: that of the World Barista Championship.

At Martha's first time at the Brazilian Barista Championship in August of 2017, she came second, despite having only worked in coffee for six months at the time. This earned the respect of the *apaixonado* community—not to mention the attention of Danilo. The two began dating in late 2017, and immediately teamed up to practice for the following year's competition, with Danilo as coach, Martha as competitor, and a firm and shared expectation of success. They entered the 2018 BBC expecting victory, but were met with a shock defeat. Regardless, she bounced back in 2019, sweeping the national competition and advancing to the WBC, due to be held that year in Boston.

When I arrived backstage at the WBC venue for that year—a Boston convention centre—Martha grabbed my hand and pulled me over to her prep station, whispering in my ear, '*Gatona*

[Babe], look at this! My table is a total *favela* compared to this girl's!' while pointing to the neighbouring table, which belonged to the South Korean Barista Champion, Jooyeon Jeon. I laughed because it was true: Martha's table was covered in an explosion of equipment, cups and parts of shattered cups (several had broken in transit, but that's why one always travels with several spares to coffee competitions), splashes of steamed milk, a handful of coffee beans, and a fine dusting of ground coffee. In contrast, Jeon's table was forensically tidy, and even covered in a plastic sheet to keep it clean. Despite the backstage chaos of Martha's table, her performance looked smooth and flawless, but we would have to wait until all the competitors had performed their routines to learn the results.

The winner of the Brazilian Barista Championship, the most established national championship in Brazil, is entitled to enter the World Barista Championship, the oldest, largest (over 50 nations compete each year), and most prestigious barista competition in the world.[81] Although the WBC and the other competitions run by the SCA do not offer an immediate financial motive to compete, winning nonetheless confers a plethora of indirect benefits: National-level competition winners in both Brazil and abroad frequently go on to start their own coffee shops and roasteries, their champion status helping them to obtain business loans and attract potential business partners. Winning a competition at the national or world level helps baristas to 'gain celebrity status that bring[s] high-paying contracts for consultancy and endorsements' of specialized coffee products such as grinders or cleaning solutions (Morris, 2018, p. 161). For the transnational consumer culture of specialty coffee, which is normally constituted across and enacted within many simultaneous spaces, barista competitions and the

[81] Other coffee championships are the World AeroPress Championship, CoffeeMasters, and The Barista League. Of these, only the AeroPress competition has a domestic version in Brazil. All SCA-sanctioned competitions (Barista, Brewer's, Roasters, Cup Tasters, and Coffee in Good Spirits) are also run as domestic events in Brazil.

trade shows at which they are held are unique spaces that bring together many participants in this otherwise diffuse culture.

In 2016, the WBC introduced a Teams competition as a means of promoting partnership and solidarity among groups of competitors: Instead of exclusively competing as individual representatives from their respective countries, competitors are now also placed into teams that feature a mixture of members from traditionally high-ranking countries and countries that have not performed well in recent years. The initiative is pitched by the organizers as a 'as a way to build coffee community' (WCE, 2019). Competitors are still scored as individuals in their performances, but must also all work a shift together at the Team Bar, where they collaborate on designing a menu and service experience, which will be graded as a team. The first year, the winning team won prizes that included a trip to a coffee trade show in Seoul, but in the second year, the Teams competition expanded in an attempt to address the imbalance in who advances past the first round—competitors from producing countries, for instance, rarely make the grade. Fifteen semi-finalists are determined as done previously by their individual first-round scores, while the sixteenth is a Wild Card: the highest-ranked but not already-qualified member from the winning team. In 2017, it was Martin Shabaya of Kenya who won the Wild Card spot in the semi-finals, while in 2018, it was Zenn Soon of Singapore.[82]

After two full days of back-to-back competitors, Martha's team—which also included the champions of Germany, Greece, South Korea, Thailand, and Zambia—was declared the winner, and as the team was brought up to the stage amid a surge of applause, the second announcement was made:

[82] Shabaya was on a team with representatives from Canada, China, Italy, and Romania. In the semi-finals, Shabaya did not improve his ranking and placed 16th; Soon was on a team with representatives of Australia, Nicaragua, Sweden, Switzerland, and Ukraine and in the semi-finals also placed 16th.

'And the wild card going to the semi-finals is… Martha Grill from Brazil!'

The champions from Germany, Greece, and South Korea had all qualified within the top 15, thereby advancing automatically. The competitor from Thailand came 30th, and the Zambian competitor was last, in 54th place. Martha, although ranked by score in 24th place, was the highest-scoring member of her team who had not yet qualified, thereby giving her the 16th and final space in the semi-finals. It was the first time in ten years that Brazil, the world's supply-side coffee hegemon, had advanced past the first round. Although it was a momentous occasion, there was no time to party for Martha: She had to prepare her routine to do it all over again the following day.

*

> It was all true. Our barista Martha Grill is in the semi-final. This is how we woke up this morning here in Boston, USA. The dream long dreamed and fought for by the Brazilian team was conquered yesterday [*O sonho tão sonhado e batalhado pelo time brasileiro, foi conquistado ontem*]. And today, here in the World Barista Championship arena there is nothing but joy. […] Whoever was here in the arena at the Specialty Coffee Expo or watching online yesterday was thrilled to see her soar high with the announcement that she had advanced to the semi-finals, one of the 16 best baristas in the world.
>
> (Proença, 2019)

After the conclusion of her routine in the semi-finals, Martha was interviewed in English by a former United States barista champion who was serving as the event emcee.[83] Over the loudspeakers, she implored the audience: 'Taste Brazilian coffees! They are amazing!' She then thanked her team for helping her to become 'the wildest wildcard ever' and waved to the crowd, before telling the interviewer: 'I'm not the Brazilian champion. Brazil is the Brazilian

[83] Martha's full semi-finals presentation can be viewed online at the following link (beginning at 21m30s): https://youtu.be/MAYIURpue2I

champion.' Turning to blow her supporters a kiss, she concluded by saying in Portuguese: '*Vai arrasar, Brasil! Está só começando!*' [It's going to rock, Brazil! It's just getting started!]

Comments of support poured in on the livestreams of her performances that were broadcast over Instagram and YouTube to followers and friends back in Brazil, and I was fielding a deluge of well-wishes sent via WhatsApp for me to pass on. Martha had surrendered her phone to Danilo on the first day of the competition because so many people were calling to wish her good luck that it was proving to be an immense distraction. The phone went on to annoy Danilo so much that on the second day of the competition, he had passed it off to me to deal with. No matter what the final result was, it was clear that the *apaixonados* were already proud of her.

At the conclusion of the semi-finals, Martha placed 14th—the first wildcard entry since the introduction of the Teams competition to improve her positioning in the ranks, but still not enough to qualify for the finals. After the finalists were announced, with Martha not among them, Kelly hugged me tightly, smiling broadly, and whispered in my ear, 'We did it.'

'Did what?' I asked.

'Look,' she said, and gestured over to the competition stage. There was Martha, shaking hands with representatives of some of the most historic and important Italian coffee equipment manufacturers, receiving a high five from a former US barista champion, giving a kiss on the cheek to the Canadian champion who had advanced to the finals, and bestowing huge hugs on her other two teammates who had also qualified. 'We've been seen,' Kelly beamed.

That night, we went back to Martha's hotel room deeply satisfied, ordered pizza, drank some beers, and watched the series premiere of *Game of Thrones*. When Martha began to fall asleep, I left to head back to my own nearby hotel, but somehow found myself at a karaoke party hosted by my friends from DaTerra: We belted out some feel-good hits and triumphal ballads until

the wee hours of the morning; at some point, as far as I remember, the company head stood on a table to elegise Martha's historic accomplishment.

*

If we place Martha's story in the wider context of a supposedly global specialty coffee culture, we can see that even though successful competition baristas tend to have high levels of social capital and prestige within their local consumption cultures, few are actually able to obtain success on the international stage, making Martha's 14th-place finish all the more astonishing. The effects of the structural disadvantage faced by competitors from producing nations are borne out in the statistics: Of the 120 people who have been named finalists (defined as the top six) in each of the twenty editions of the World Barista Championship (2010–2019), only ten have been from coffee-producing nations, and none from producing countries in Africa.[84] Of the ten years in which the WBC's sister competition, the World Brewer's Cup, has run, only the Brazilian barista Carolina Franco de Souza (the daughter of Geórgia Franco, profiled in Chapter 3), who finished in 6th place in 2013, has represented a producing nation in the final. Even Claude Lévi-Strauss noted in his discussion of the importance of classification and ranking to games and contests, although such acts of competition are premised on equal rules, asymmetries ultimately result from 'the contingent nature of events, themselves due to intention, chance, or talent' (1966, p. 32). If we move beyond this politically neutral framing of 'chance,' we could, in the case of *apaixonados*, add systemic barriers and structural impediments, which exert a profound influence. By tracing the 'country of origin' of successful barista competitors in the supposedly global culture of specialty coffee, it can be seen that this notion

[84] 2019: Mikael Jasin, Indonesia, 4th place. 2014: William Hernandez, El Salvador, 6th place. 2013: William Hernandez, El Salvador, 3rd place. 2012: Raul Rodas, Guatemala, 1st place & Fabrizio Sención Ramírez, Mexico. 2011: Alejandra Mendez, El Salvador, 1st place. 2010: Raul Rodas, Guatemala, 2nd place. 2007: Silvia Magalhães, Brazil, 6th place. 2003: Vikram Khurana, India, 5th place. 2002: Vikram Khurana, India, 3rd place.

of 'global' is made up of many locales taken together in their relatedness, and that not every local culture is weighted equally in this construction, nor does each local have genuine equality of opportunity. [85] Each local culture that together contributes to the formation of the global expression of specialty coffee occupies a different position with regard to power relations and flows, due to the uneven nature of resource distribution. Competitors from producing countries do not have the same access to equipment, training expertise, or, paradoxically—as I have sought to illustrate throughout this thesis through my examination of *tipo exportação* and the outbound flows of goods—the highest-quality coffees one might expect to see served at the WBC, and therefore struggle to perform as well as those from more resourced importing countries.

Even though she did not win the overall championship, the *apaixonados* were thrilled by Martha's performance at the WBC because she increased the visibility of aspects of the Brazilian coffee industry that went beyond agricultural production, and as a successful representative of Brazil's growing specialty coffee consumer culture, Martha's success supported an image of Brazil as a modern, globally integrated consumer economy, bringing *apaixonados* closer into the fold of the orthodox specialty coffee culture. Following the competition, multiple people told me with pride that Martha was an exemplary ambassador for the Brazilian specialty coffee industry as a whole, including both the agricultural and customer-facing sides, and two people described her as a 'barista *tipo exportação*.'

[85] For instance, William Cotter's (2021) analysis of how competitors at the WBC represent and speak about coffee farmers as a means to 'semiotically de-commodify coffee' (p. 39) might look very different had he included barista competitors from coffee-producing nations; Cotter's work includes only speeches from only the United States and Australia, two of the most dominant coffee importing nations in terms of influence on the 'global specialty coffee culture', though he fails to note this as a potential limitation to his findings.

'It doesn't matter that she didn't *win*,' Mari told me via WhatsApp after the conclusion of the event. 'It was never about a trophy. We just wanted to be taken seriously.' Mari had watched both of Martha's rounds from her living room in São Paulo via *Revista Espresso*'s livestream.

It was a lucky year for Martha to do so well at the WBC because, due to an increase in competitor numbers, it had been forced to extend beyond the usual three-day limit for the Specialty Coffee Expo that was hosting the event. The first day (of two) of the first round took place on the day before the trade show had officially opened to the public, meaning that Martha's routine was presented to a nearly empty arena. Gathered there for this first-round performance were her immediate supporters, members of the Brazilian media, and representatives of Brazilian companies who were taking a break from setting up their booths in the main hall to come and watch—about twenty-five people in all.[86] Two days later, when she performed again in the semi-finals, held on the second full day of the trade show, there were several hundred people in direct attendance, and an audio track of both her performance and the post-routine interview was broadcast across the hall to over a thousand people. Media profiles of competitors usually begin in the semi-finals, but thanks to her wildcard advancement, Martha's routine was covered by the two largest coffee media platforms, Sprudge and *Barista Magazine*.[87]

A cyclical feedback loop could also be observed: The more Martha was recognized as a coffee professional outside Brazil, the more desirable she became within the country. Since her appearance at the WBC, Martha has traversed Brazil giving master-classes and lectures, has consulted businesses on how best to train their baristas, and has been showered with samples

[86] The first-round order is done by a random draw, and Martha and 27 other competitors were selected to compete on the first day.

[87] Sprudge and *Barista Magazine* covered Martha's success on their social media platforms, while it was also featured on the Sprudge website (Sprudge, 2019).

of the best coffee from throughout the country. At the time of writing, she no longer works as the head barista trainer for Octávio Café, but has moved up to become the head of quality control for Minamihara Coffee, an award-winning specialty coffee plantation in São Paulo state.

Martha doggedly pursued her earlier aspiration in life—to become a successful actress—for years, until the fateful bicycle accident in which she broke her leg. Ironically, it is thanks to her transition to specialty coffee that she has become a minor celebrity, and has she points out, more successful than she is likely ever to have been as an actress. She has been featured on television segments about coffee and in culinary magazines, and her hometown honoured her with a trophy in a ceremony for inspirational young people. This success, she later told me, is quantifiable: 'I had maybe 1,500 followers on Instagram before the WBC, and now I have like 10,000.' Martha's acting background played an important part in her success as a barista competitor, which itself contributed to her advancement in the industry: She feels at home performing in front of crowds, and is able to efficiently communicate her passion for coffee and inspire her supporters.

At the conclusion of the WBC, we returned Martha's phone to her, which continued to explode with messages of support, confiscated her cigarettes (a ball of nerves, she had smoked two packs a day throughout the event, but promised Danilo she would quit at the conclusion), and gathered all the coffee we could find in order to pack it into her suitcases. She even ditched a few items of clothing to fit more coffee in. While I helped to pack up her station backstage, she ran around and wheedled as much coffee as possible off the other competitors, but particularly the big-name ones who were competing with expensive geshas and other varieties and national origins to which she had especially limited access in Brazil. I had been gifted a small bag of coffee from Wilford Lamastus, the owner of one of the most renowned Panamanian coffee

farms,[88] but at the last moment, I slipped it in with the rest of Martha's coffee haul. After all, I could always buy some more, but Martha—heading back to Brazil in the morning—would not be able to do so as easily.

[88] This is the coffee farm that holds the record for the highest price ever paid per pound for a given coffee, and is the farm from which the smuggled coffee covered in Chapter 3 was from.

# 6 Conclusion

Contemporary emerging economies exist in an era of unprecedented levels of global trade and consumption, coupled with the similarly unequalled connectivity engendered by modern communication technologies. This thesis has explored the tensions that have come to bear on one sector, specialty coffee, in one such emerging economy, Brazil. One the one hand, Brazilians embrace the promise that through participation in the global market and consumer cultures, they can obtain the same levels of consumerism as their counterparts in the Global North, but given the ubiquity of the Internet and social media, many come to realise that they do not have the same opportunities as others elsewhere in the world. This work thus reveals the unequal power dynamics created by globalisation and global trade; a universal connection to global markets does not make all consumers equal. For *apaixonados*, a São Paulo-based community who are passionate about specialty coffee, this contradiction is especially poignant; they feel part of a cosmopolitan global community and would like to be considered equal members, but they also know that they are denied full participation in its practices. By exploring their experiences and frustrations, this thesis offers unique insight into the limits of neoliberal consumer citizenship, not only in the Global South but also worldwide.

In recent years, the 'developed' liberal democracies of the Global North have increasingly been grappling with questions concerning inequality. One only need look at the headlines that have dominated public discourse over the past decade—covering the Euro crisis, Brexit, the rise of the far right in Europe and North America, the 'migrant crisis', the divisive elections in the US

and subsequent isolationist policies pursued by the Trump administration, to name but a few—to see that at the heart of these issues are themes of division, disconnect, mistrust, and inequality. For example, since the result of the Brexit referendum in the UK, it has emerged both major UK political parties (both of whose leaders supported and campaigned to remain in the EU) had failed to understand how the policies of globalisation had affected people's everyday lives, particularly those of working-class and rural background. The fact that many of the latter felt that globalisation was not benefitting them, or that not enough investment had been made to integrate them at a local or national level, led to a majority of the UK electorate to vote to leave the EU. Anti-globalist discourse and policy has gained popularity and, in several cases, created a mandate for further isolationism, leading to further division at both the national and global levels.

In a world that is facing global challenges such as climate change, food insecurity, and mass migration, global responses and cohesion are necessary to address them. To ensure that these processes are better understood and thereby curtail isolationist reactions, we can but benefit from deeper understandings of how globalisation affects people's everyday lives. Having explored this phenomenon in relation to Brazil, I argue that an examination of *tipo exportação* (the label given to domestically produced goods deemed of sufficiently high quality to be exported or consumed by foreigners) reveals longstanding structures and barriers that prevent Brazilians' equal participation in the global flow of goods, people, and ideas. Understood in this context, specialty coffee is a fruitful avenue of research in and of itself, but also constitutes a useful prism through which to approach the realities of globalisation on a micro level. Coffee is a globalised good with a long history of global exploitation that still resonates to this day. Access to coffee is still affected by trade flows and structures established during the colonial era, but it has nevertheless spawned a cosmopolitan subculture through which enthusiasts navigate

their passions and aspirations, resentments and challenges, and their place in a globalised world.

## 6.1 PASSION AND ASPIRATION

For the residents of São Paulo with whom I worked, their passionate engagement with a lifestyle consumer culture that has a global reach and popularity served as a means to carve out new aspirational pathways and futures for themselves. This includes a straightforward and understandable desire for economic gain, but also encompassed alternative constructions of what a good and ideal life might be. Nevertheless, the opportunity structures in which *apaixonados* operate present practical limits to their passion and aspiration; in particular, the normative flows of global trade impede the fully realized fulfilment of the local and global aspirations tied to this consumer subculture such as the consumption of high-quality Brazilian coffees and coffees produced outside Brazil.

This tension between the standards of a global community based around specialty coffee, a lifestyle good, and the local realities in which consumers operate leads to adaptations to and deviations from the orthodox consumer culture. *Apaixonados'* access to specialty coffees grown outside of Brazil is complicated by measures in place to protect the national crop and Brazil's status as a supply-side hegemon of that crop, as well as by infrastructural inefficiencies regarding the importation of roasted coffee. Due to their limited access to the primary means of differentiation and distinction-making within the orthodox specialty coffee consumer culture (such as tasting coffees from many different origins and brewing it using sanctioned equipment), *apaixonados* cultivate alternate (but related) forms of distinction. This is particularly visible in the ways in which *apaixonados* emphasize the technologies employed in the processing of coffee in general and roasting in particular as a way to cultivate sophistication and connoisseurship.

Coffee is just one example of how inequalities relating to the production and consumption of certain goods continue to exist in global trade networks. It is based on this understanding that my work sheds light on the neglected issues faced by consumers in emerging economies as they seek to become more equal participants in transnational consumption cultures, while forced to accept structural and infrastructural setbacks that limit their access to desired consumer goods. Such adaptations extend far beyond the world of food and foodstuffs, as Thomas Apperley (2010, 2019) found in his exploration of the contexts of video game enthusiasts in the Global South who participate in the 'global' world of gaming. The need to contend with the material realities of their situated localities—including high costs of electricity, frequent power cuts, and heavy importation duties on gaming systems and consoles—has resulted in a thriving community of self-taught programmers and engineers, many of whom develop vastly superior practical knowledge of gaming technology than their counterparts in the Global North.

## 6.2 ETHICAL CONSUMPTION

One of the alternative forms of distinction that *apaixonados* practise in order to accumulate prestige in their local subculture was born of the challenges they face as they seek to import green coffee into Brazil, and this deviation potentially complicates our conceptions of the scope of ethical consumption. In conjunction with the social, economic, and geographic proximity between *apaixonados* and local coffee farmers, the former adapt their understandings of the idea of product 'origin' (the primary means of forming a discursive distinction between specialty and commodity coffee), expanding it beyond merely sites of agricultural production to include the additional site and labour of roasting. As a result of this expansion of 'origin,' *apaixonados* can taste coffee roasted in Germany, for instance, and claim (and thereby accrue subcultural prestige) that they have tasted coffee from a different 'origin'—even if that coffee was grown in Brazil. The ethical consumption discourse that valorises above all else the work of the farmer at the site where the coffee is grown obscures many of the other sites of work that contribute to

a product and turn it into a consumable good. The inclusion of a product's whole journey—encompassing the many sites through which it travels and networks of people who may touch or add value to it—within the primary distinction category of 'origin' allows for further appreciation of other spaces along supply chains that may suffer from inequality, and enable a more holistically informed consumer choice. When we thus think more consciously about the wider supply chain, rather than focus single-mindedly at its starting point at a far-away farm, we bring into view other labour issues that occur closer to where we ourselves are located, such as wage theft and the harassment of service workers such as baristas. It is in this way that I suggest that far from side-lining *apaixonados* due to their limited ability to partake in the orthodox specialty imaginary and attendant practices, we should acknowledge their unique and promising contribution to the ethical discourses with which specialty coffee is rightly concerned.

Furthermore, the relative paucity of literature on consumption in the Global South reveals preconceptions about who consumes and who cares, and where these actions occur, which necessarily results in what can at best be a partial view of the politics and realities of global consumption. This limited and biased view has real-world consequences and can be said to exacerbate global social and economic inequality, which is an increasing concern even for the countries of the Global North that have historically dictated ethical consumption standards and discourses. In both academic research and the popular media, ethical consumption has largely been framed as the purview of the well-to-do in the Global North, but it is increasingly restricted to a subset of the wealthiest populations, as the middle classes in the North become economically precluded from such purchasing possibilities. We may see greater similarities emerge between Brazilians and the lower-middle classes of the Global North, in terms of how they engage in ethical consumerism, as both groups find that they have more in common, compared to socioeconomic elites in their own countries. Although the North–South divide currently dictates which products are available for purchase, particularly in the case of coffee

and other tropical agricultural commodities, there is a distinct possibility that solidarity and consumption practices and ethical orientations will arise that are shared *across* the hemispheres, with economic class and privilege becoming greater mediating factors than geography. Finally, specialty coffee presents us with an example of the entanglement of high-end goods with artisan craft, part of a wider process of redefining luxury in ways which open the door to the integration of more effective sustainability and well-being initiatives (Hashmi, 2017); we would do well to look at how this shift to high-end artisan comestibles is experienced differently in terms of sustainability in different locations and among different populations.

## 6.3 TIPO EXPORTAÇÃO

I have used the idea of *tipo exportação* as a framework that recognises and accounts for the existence of barriers to globalised consumer participation that are entrenched along colonial lines, and revealed the importance of *tipo exportação* as both a context and a mode of both consumption and life in postcolonial nations. *Tipo exportação* goods have a symbolic value derived from their association with potential consumption by foreigners, and while such goods are considered inferior in the value hierarchy to genuinely foreign goods, they are preferred when the latter are unavailable due to trade flows that do not privilege the conveyance of goods to countries in the Global South. *Tipo exportação* reveals how globalised products are not new for Brazil, but rather, Brazil's experience of these products, until recently, has been focused and framed as production for others, 'turned away from the country itself', aware what the finished goods might be but still restricted to the production of the raw materials and not the consumption of the end goods of quality (Prado Jr, 1967). Felipe, the café owner profiled in Chapter 2, explained *tipo exportação* as: 'there's what's sold to Brazilians, and then there's what's exported.' Given this background, using *tipo exportação* as a means to understand Brazil's place within global power relations also presents the opportunity to challenge apolitical approaches

to networks, and highlight how these relations affect micro-level lived experiences such as lifestyle and consumption choices.

This *tipo exportação* approach takes as its foundational basis the modernity/coloniality framework in order to look at questions of development and trade in terms of historically situated power structures. My adoption of modernity/coloniality was itself informed by my participants, who readily invoked their nation's extractive colonial past to account for their present consumer realities. Furthermore, it allows for an understanding of the push and pull of local and global tensions and competing interests; for instance, the fact that the large-scale Brazilian coffee plantations that benefit from the status-quo ban on the importation of coffee continue to constitute an important and powerful part of the national agribusiness lobby (Ioris, 2018) suggests that there is little chance of the restrictions that limit *apaixonados'* ability to access foreign coffees they want being eased, nor will they be better able to access the highest-quality Brazilian coffees, which will continue to be sent abroad.

The *apaixonados*' concurrent desires both for the highest-quality Brazilian-grown coffee and in specialty coffee from abroad nuances academic discussion around the desirability of imported goods; both imported and national products can simultaneously engender consumer desire, so long as both retain a veneer of exclusivity. The *apaixonados* show us that consumer xenophobia and consumer xenocentrism, under the right circumstance, are not necessarily mutually exclusive, although structural constraints such as *tipo exportação* may shape the weight of these relationships.

Despite this project's focus on coffee drinkers, it is my contention that the *tipo exportação* approach can be applied to anthropological studies of other nations in which the effects of colonial agricultural histories are felt in everyday life. For instance, this would be a useful prism through which to study the consumption of artisanal mezcal in Mexico (Bowen, 2016),

transformations in the quinoa economy in Bolivia (Soper, 2016; Walsh-Dilley, 2013), or the 'qualification' push within Indian tea production (Besky, 2021). Moreover, further studies of the notion of *tipo exportação* might offer a fresh perspective by considering it in relation to products that are *not* intimately linked to tropical agriculture or with histories of colonialism but are nevertheless similarly global lifestyle products, such as film and music. A possible fruitful avenue of future research might be to tie *tipo exportação* to the extensive literature on counterfeiting in Brazil, which charts the ways in which people gain access to the goods (or facsimiles thereof) they desire, and the subsequent social meanings and uses of counterfeited goods (Dent, 2016; Pinheiro-Machado and Leitão, 2006; Pinheiro-Machado, 2018) or local adaptations to goods available elsewhere. It would also prove beneficial to consider comparative contexts and the ways in which similar structures operate in other Latin American nations or countries in the Global South with similar extractive colonial histories; doing so would provide an opportunity to expand the avenue of research begun here beyond Brazil, and enable the formation of a relevant framework for understanding consumption as it relates to wider regional or historical experiences. In this way, it would constitute an even more rigorous challenge to the Northern-centric consumption models that continue to dominate academic work, political discourse, and media representations.

## 6.4 LESSONS

What have we learned from this small and passionate consumer subculture in São Paulo? Far more than just new ways to brew coffee; we have learned how they make sense of themselves locally and globally through coffee, and that it is through coffee that they measure their success and aspirations, but also their frustrations and resentments. When they scroll the Instagram accounts of coffee influencers in New York, watch videos from coffee YouTubers based in London, or subscribe to a coffee magazine published in Prague, *apaixonados* are closer than ever before to other specialty coffee aficionados spread around the world, and yet this closeness

makes them all the more aware of their unequal position. Global trade and exchange has not resulted in a level playing field for the *apaixonados*, and this includes the ways in which the orthodox consumer culture influences them, but they struggle to influence in return. The adaptations the *apaixonados* have made to the orthodox imaginary of the global coffee culture are unlikely to prove globally influential. Amid the joy and delight the *apaixonados* took in coffee there were discernible notes of resentment, frustration, and anger; there was an understanding that passion would never be sufficient on its own, and that the full benefits promised by a globally connected world had still not come to pass.

We are beginning to see the global impacts of the resentment that has been building up among people across a range of systems and cultures who see or believe that they have been left out of and even disadvantaged by global systems, and when these resentments manifest, the result is often greater divisiveness and destabilisation, anger that undermines the cohesion needed to address global issues that do affect everyone equally in our connected world. In light of the present coronavirus pandemic, it is more relevant than ever to consider the uneven global access to consumable goods that arises as a result of unequal manufacture and production technologies and infrastructure; restricted access to some of these goods, such as those relating to vaccine manufacture and distribution, can have potentially grave consequences. The case of specialty coffee in Brazil may seem insignificant in comparison to life-and-death matters, but it represents one piece of a larger puzzle and reflects the urgent need for cohesion across many local ways of being and doing, if we are to tackle large-scale, global issues.

# EPILOGUE

## LIFE IS MADE OF COURAGE AND COFFEE

As is the case in any ethnography, this work has captured only a snapshot of the *apaixonados'* lives at a specific moment in time. Since I left the field, there have been enormous upheavals in Brazil that have affected the coffee industry in Brazil and the *apaixonado* community. First and foremost among these changes was the election of the right-wing politician Jair Bolsonaro to the presidency in October 2018. The environmental impacts of his policies and changes to farming subsidies (Stewart et al., 2020; Watts, 2018) will have a lasting impact on the industry, with potential global ramifications in terms of coffee supply and sustainability. Bolsonaro's election also shook *apaixonados* on both a group and individual level.

I arrived back in Brazil in November 2018, for the first time since finishing my primary fieldwork—and only two weeks after the election. The purpose of this visit was to attend the 2018 edition of Semana Internacional do Café, and compared to the previous year's version, I found the Brazilian audience more subdued, even somewhat on edge; the party atmosphere I had come to expect at such a gathering had vanished. On the first day of the trade show, as I was making my way through the crowd and trying to find the site of the Cup Taster's Championship, where I was supposed to be working as a translator, Lucci spotted me from his perch on the raised platform of Wolff's booth and waved me over. Extending his large, tattooed hand, he pulled me up next to him so we could survey the vast hall spreading out below us. Skipping the pleasantries and catching-up I would have normally expected, given that we had not seen each other in nearly five months, he instead gestured broadly in front of him and

straightforwardly announced: 'Look at this, Sabine. Fifty-five per cent of *these* assholes voted for *that* asshole. We're fucked.'

Lucci was referring to the tremendous amount of support Bolsonaro had received from rural populations and regions with strong agricultural interests (Davies and Straubhaar, 2019). There was now an emergent sense of distrust and apprehension between urban *apaixonados* and rural producers, whereas a sense of solidarity in the name of cultivating a developed coffee community was what I formerly saw as characterising the interactions between the two. The social proximity between producers and consumers that had formed such a unique cornerstone, shaping the Brazilian specialty coffee scene and influencing how *apaixonados* engaged with origin and moral consumption discourse (as explored in Chapters 4 and 5), had been profoundly destabilised by the election. The urban *apaixonados* felt hurt, betrayed, and scared, as if they no longer knew—or, perhaps more troublingly, had always fundamentally misunderstood—those they had considered their rural peers. Although the long-term effects of the election of Bolsonaro are yet to be understood, what I saw at Semana Internacional do Café was a moment of rupture between these two ends of the domestic supply chain.

Of course, among coffee professionals and enthusiasts, it was not only rural producers who voted for Bolsonaro. The community of *apaixonados* leans staunchly left, but there were a handful of members—predominantly men aged thirty-five and above—who voted proudly for Bolsonaro. One of these individuals was Ricardo, who I introduced in Chapter 3, and who was outspoken on social media in his support for Bolsonaro. Slowly, he began to be invited to fewer and fewer events in the community, and felt unwelcome when he did attend anything. Although still a keen consumer of specialty coffee, he is today far less active in the wider community, preferring instead to brew coffees for himself and his non-*apaixonado* friends—other newly retired professional men of a similar political bent. He remains a staunch supporter of Bolsonaro.

'Ricardo? No, we don't miss him. I don't want any *bolsominions*[89] here,' one *apaixonado* who wished to remain anonymous told me when I queried about Ricardo.

Not all was division, however: In the run-up to the election, a collective of coffee shops across Brazil including Takkø had opened their doors to host a series of events called *Café pela Democracia* [Coffee for Democracy], taking as their inspiration the social and political gathering space of the 18th-century English coffeehouse (Cowan, 2005). The purpose of the events was to gather together voters from different sides of the political spectrum in a non-threatening location to learn about the other side's perspective. No attendees with whom I spoke ultimately thought that views had been swayed on either side, but it had brought many *apaixonados* closer together by providing them with a platform to directly engage with the world outside coffee, together.

Following the vote count, when Workers' Party candidate Fernando Haddad made his concession speech, his oration included the following words:

> Looking at the streets of this country, I see anguish and fear in the expressions of many people, some whom are sobbing. To these people I would like to say: do not be afraid. We will be here. We are together. We will be hand in hand with you. We will embrace your cause. Courage! Life is made of courage! [*A vida é feita de coragem*]

Gisele lightly edited his speech and, by the time of Semana Internacional do Café only two weeks later, had launched a line of shirts under her brand Pura Caffeina that declared '*A vida é feita de coragem & café*'—'life is made of courage & coffee.' They remain to this day her number-one selling item, aside from coffee, and nearly every single *apaixonado* I have profiled owns one (as indeed do I). In fact, the problem which Rogério raised in the introduction to this thesis when he pointed out how difficult it is to identify someone who likes specialty coffee ('[It's] not like a grunge thing. You can't see someone and be like, "Oh yeah, that guy with the jean

[89] An amalgamation of 'Bolsonaro' and 'minion', and a term used to refer to die-hard Bolsonaro supporters.

jacket—that's definitely a coffee scene guy."') has, to some extent, been solved by Gisele's shirts which mark clearly both one's enthusiasm for coffee and one's political stance.




FIGURE 7: A VIDA É FEITA DE CORAGEM & CAFÉ

For a period, through initiatives like Café pela Democracia and Gisele's shirts, the *apaixonados* of São Paulo began to come together following the shockwaves of Bolsonaro's election. Now, the ongoing coronavirus pandemic has complicated the situation. Without centralized government guidance on what to do, each coffee shop and *apaixonado* needs to decide for themselves on the best course of action, and at the time of writing, all the main specialty coffee shops in São Paulo have either fully closed or are operating on a takeaway-only basis. As such, they are no longer able to serve as physical anchors for the community of *apaixonados*, who cannot gather at the usual litany of events. Sales of home brewing equipment, have, naturally

soared, but the coffee shop owners with whom I remain in contact are uncertain about the future.

It is not only café owners and baristas who face an uncertain future; the urban-rural divide in Brazil is being renegotiated further, as several of the *apaixonados* profiled in this thesis have, in response to pandemic restrictions, left São Paulo to take up residence in the countryside. 'I couldn't stand the thought of another day in my little flat, staring at walls,' one said. Of course, the only *apaixonados* who have left in this way are those who have the financial and familial flexibility to do so; many of the younger and more financially insecure baristas remain in lockdown in cramped flats they share with many flatmates, while others have moved back in with their families. Martha, who moved to the countryside and now works on a coffee farm (following her split from Danilo, which was precipitated by the cessation of his usual travel schedule, which frequently required him to be out of the country for three weeks or more in each month—and the realization it provoked for both of them that they didn't actually like spending *that much* time together), reported an unexpected side-effect of coronavirus restrictions: The requirement to wear masks while at work make roasting coffee—an already hot job; ambient temperature around the roaster at Wolff, for instance, routinely surpasses 40C—even more uncomfortable. Furthermore, as alluded to in Chapter 3, the worldwide postal service disruptions caused by the pandemic have further compromised *apaixonados*' ability to access foreign coffees.

Given the natural movement of cultural change, any ethnography is out of date the moment it is written. Nevertheless, these two major upheavals in Brazil—the election of Bolsonaro and the coronavirus pandemic, which has been particularly devastating (both economically and in terms of human life)—that occurred in the immediate period following the conclusion of my field research mean that the situation on the ground is changing rapidly in ways that will have implications for the interpretation of my results. In the fallout from the exodus of even life-long

*paulistanos* from the city, new forms of aspiration and ways of orienting one's life are beginning to emerge in response to the new social orderings, both in Brazil and abroad. The economic outlook in Brazil is particularly uncertain, such that the recent availability of passionate labour as a viable economic path may become compromised, or take on a different shape in the future.

*

During the final weeks of writing up this thesis, my postman delivered a package shipped from São Paulo. It was a surprise gift from Rodolfo: A small bag of coffee from João Pedro's farm and roasted by Juliana—bringing me back full-circle to the trip with which I opened this thesis. It will come as no surprise to the reader that, even in the post-Brexit context, I was not charged any importation duties when the coffee entered the United Kingdom. Moreover, despite the generalized disruptions to world postal services that have occurred during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the posting date showed that it had left Brazil just ten days prior to arriving at my home in Wales. As I stood in my kitchen and brewed the coffee, the words of Gabriel from DaTerra came back to me: 'Brazil is a country you send *from*, not *to*.'

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANTS

Named participants in the thesis, organized in the following groupings: non-barista coffee professionals; baristas; non-professional *apaixonados*; agricultural producers; and *gringos*.

Pseudonyms and invented café names have been given in some cases, while the real names of public figures have been used. Names of individuals are provided in **bold** while business names are underlined for quick reference.

### NON-BARISTA COFFEE PROFESSIONALS

*Those participants who work with coffee but not as baristas.*

**Danilo Lodi**: one of Brazil's longest-serving and most-renowned specialty coffee professionals, at the time working for both Wolff and the Italian espresso machine manufacturer DallaCorte.

**Felipe**: owner of Isso é Café, a coffee shop and roastery; his family also owns an award-winning coffee farm and exporter, FAF Coffees.

**Gabriel G.**: owner of Cupping Café.

**Géorgia Franco**: owner of Lucca Cafés Especiais, a coffee shop in Curitiba; judge at 2018 Brazilian Barista Championship and mother of **Camila Franco de Souza**, three-time Brazilian Brewers Cup Champion.

**Juliana**: owner of Tocaya, a roastery based in Itajubá, Minas Gerais, which supplies Takkø.

**Kelly**: coffee journalist and podcaster. Attended university with **Gisele**, founder of Pura Caffeina, a coffee subscription service and educational platform. The two are frequent collaborators.

**Lidiane** and **Fernando**: owners of Kaffee, a coffee shop in Recife, Pernambuco; helped to develop the Koar manual brewer.

**Maycon Aram**: developed the Aram Coffee Maker, a portable espresso machine.

**Michelle**: formerly a barista at Takkø, now a roaster at Wolff (owned by **Hugo Wolff**) where she works under head roaster, **Lucci**.

**Rodolfo**, the co-owner of Takkø with **Flávio. Rogério**, the third co-owner, left the company midway through my fieldwork.

**Susana**: formerly a barista at Takkø, now works in quality control for an exporting house.

## BARISTAS

*Current and former specialty coffee baristas.*

**Ana Luiza** barista at Sentimento and coffee blogger.

**Cauã:** competitor in the 2017 and 2018 Brazilian Barista Championships; owns coffee truck Fora da Lei, where he employs his girlfriend **Claudia**.

**Daniela:** former barista at several locations throughout São Paulo, now works in a roastery.

**Fabiana**: Barista at Double R; in training for the Brazilian Barista Championship.

**Jéssica**: barista at CoffeeSpace.

**Lucas**: barista at Casinha Café; formerly an up-and-coming corporate lawyer but left the profession because it made him 'too depressed'. Took a barista skills course with Danilo at Wolff.

**Marcelo**: barista at Casinha Café; his start working in specialty coffee came via a job at Starbucks.

**Martha Grill**, head trainer at Octávio Café and 2019 Brazilian Barista Champion; girlfriend of Danilo.

**Pedro:** Formerly barista at Sentimento; currently a waiter at an upmarket pizza restaurant.

**Stark**: barista at Carolina Café, competitor in 2018 Brazilian Barista Championship.

**Thiago Sabino:** Formerly of Octávio Café, employed at Il Barista over the course of my research; two-time winner of the Brazilian Barista Championship (2015, 2018) and 2014 Brazilian Coffee in Good Spirits champion.

**Vanessa**: Barista at CoffeeSpace; frequent barista competitor.

**Yara**: Barista at Double R; in training for the Brazilian Brewer's Cup.

## NON-COFFEE PROFESSIONAL *APAIXONADOS*

*The specialty coffee enthusiasts who do not work in any professional capacity with coffee.*

**Alice**: waitress; friend of Ana Luiza and Pedro.

**Francisco**: lives in the same building as Double R, which is on the ground floor.

**Henrique**: clerk in a law office near to CasinhaCafé.

**João**: an out of work actor, currently working as a waiter at a ramen restaurant. Coldbrew enthusiast with a dedicated small fridge in the family apartment used to store his brewing experiments.

**Lívia**: budding *apaixonada* from the extreme upper class; desires to learn more about coffee but is too busy attending to her children's education and her own professional masters' degree to participate in events with frequency.

**Mari**: photographer; frequents Takkø.

**Nati**: master's student in museum curation who studies in coffee shops; her sister **Nanda**, a fashion designer, brings coffee whenever she visits from her home in Los Angeles.

**Nicolas**: secondary school literature teacher; fan of modernist poet Mario de Andrade, he first came to specialty coffee after revisiting Andrade's unfinished novel *Café*, which spurred Nicolas to a tour of São Paulo's coffee shops.

**Osvaldo**: keen *apaixonado*; orders coffee from abroad but supplements his purchases with local coffees.

**Patricia**: grew up in the *periferia* of São Paulo and inspired by her experiences at Starbucks to study marketing. Presently runs independent market research firm and frequently works remotely in Takkø.

**Ricardo**: Retired engineer; aged 61, the oldest of all study participants.

**Sara**: master's student in data science who frequently studies at Octávio Café's location in Shopping El Dorado; meets with childhood friend **Juli**, now a paediatrician, in coffee shops when their schedules allow.

**Tereza**: Owns artisanal peanut butter company; introduced to specialty coffee by her long-time friend, Gisele.

**Wellington**: programmer for a major multinational firm; his interest in coffee began after a bout of gastritis he attributed to excessive consumption of artificial energy drinks and he was forced to seek an alternative drink for energy.

### AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS

*Participants working on coffee farms or in the coffee agriculture sector.*

**Débora**: formerly an architect, now overseeing the conversion of her husband **David**'s family farm from commodity-grade to specialty production.

**Gabriel Nunes**: winner of the 2017 Cup of Excellence competition in the Pulped Naturals category, fetching the highest price ever for a Brazilian coffee at auction.

**Gabriel Agrelli**: International sales manager at DaTerra; based at company headquarters in the city of Campinas, but spends most of his time during harvest season at the farms and travels extensively to international trade shows. Works with **Juliana Sorati**.

**João Pedro**: Former architect and current owner of a small, syntropic coffee farm which supplies Juliana's roastery and is sold at Takkø.

*GRINGOS*

*No man is an island, and neither is Brazil: here are the foreigners.*

**Charlotte**: Oxford anthropology DPhil student stuck in Brazil as a result of Covid-19 travel restrictions.

**Nolan Hirte**: owner of Proud Mary Coffee, with locations in Portland, USA, and Melbourne, Australia. Judge at 2017 Cup of Excellence Brazil and member of the consortium which purchased Gabriel Nunes' coffee.

**Rachel**: American ex-pat and 'digital nomad' living in São Paulo; frequently returns to visit her family in New York.

**Rhys**: junior green buyer for a UK-based roastery.

## APPENDIX B: SPECIALTY COFFEE CONSUMER SURVEY

Survey administered November-December 2017; 74 valid responses (specialty coffee drinkers aged 18+ and presently resident in the city of São Paulo).

| **Survey questions** | **Translation** |
|---|---|
| 1. Gênero | Gender |
| 2. Quantos anos você tem? | How old are you? |
| 3. Você nasceu onde? | Where were you born? |
| 4. Em qual bairro você mora agora? | In which neighbourhood do you live? |
| 5. Se você não é nativo da cidade de São Paulo, faz quanto tempo que você mora aqui? | If you are not a native of São Paulo, for how long have you lived here? |
| 6. Qual é sua profissão? | What is your occupation? |
| 7. Quantos anos você tinha quando começou a beber café? | How old were you when you began to drink coffee? |
| 8. Quando você era criança, quem em sua casa fazia o café e em qual estilo? Quais marcas de café foram consumidas em sua casa? | When you were a child, who in your household was responsible for making coffee? How was it made? Which coffee brands did your family drink? |
| 9. Você tem algum parente ou antepassado que trabalhou com café em qualquer capacidade? | Do you have any relatives or ancestors who worked in any capacity with coffee? |
| 10. Sem pesquisar no Google, quantos estados brasileiros Produtores de café você pode listar? | Without consulting Google, how many coffee producing Brazilian states can you list? |
| 11. Sem pesquisar no Google, quantos outros países produtores de café você pode listar? | Without consulting Google, how many other coffee producing nations can you list? |
| 12. Você já provou cafés de outros países além do Brasil? Quais países? O que você achou desses cafés? | Have you tried coffees from countries other than Brazil? Which countries? What did you think of these coffees? |

| | |
|---|---|
| 13. O que é 'café especial'? | What is 'specialty coffee'? |
| 14. Por que você toma café especial? | Why do you drink specialty coffee? |
| 15. Como você faz café em casa? Que equipamento de café você tem? | How do you make coffee at home? What coffee equipment do you have? |
| 16. Você compra café em grãos ou já moído? | Do you purchase coffee in whole beans or pre-ground? |
| 17. Com qual frequência você toma café em casa? | How frequently do you drink coffee at home? |
| 18. Com qual frequência você toma café fora de casa? | How frequently do you drink coffee outside your home? |
| 19. Onde você gosta de tomar café fora da casa? Por favor, liste suas cafeterias preferidas em São Paulo. | Where you like to have coffee out? Please, list your favourite coffee shops in São Paulo. |
| 20. O que influencia sua decisão de comprar numa determinada cafeteria? Como você seleciona onde tomar café fora da casa? | What influences your decision to patronize a given coffee shop? How do you decide where to go have a coffee? |
| 21. Quando você toma café fora da casa, quais são suas bebidas preferidas? | What are your favourite drinks to order in a coffee shop? |
| 22. Com quem você toma café fora da casa? Normalmente você toma café sozinho ou com amigos ou colegas? | With whom do you go for coffee? Do you normally visit coffee shops alone, with friends, or with colleagues? |
| 23. Você já fez aulas ou cursos sobre café? Se sim, em qual cafeteria o curso ocorreu? Quem era o professor? E por que você decidiu fazer o curso? | Have you participated in any courses or classes about coffee? If yes, where did you do the course? Who was the teacher? And what motivated you to do the course? |
| 24. O que seus amigos e familiares pensam sobre seus hábitos de café? | What do you think your friends and relatives think about your coffee habits? |
| 25. Onde você descobre informações sobre café? Quais revistas, blogs, sites, ou Instagrams de café você gosta? | Where do you get your information about coffee? What coffee magazines, websites, blogs, or Instagrams do you like? |
| 26. O preço de café especial é um problema ou uma consideração para você? Você | Is the price of specialty coffee a consideration for you? Would you participate more in |

| | |
|---|---|
| participaria mais da cultura de café especial se tivesse mais dinheiro? | specialty coffee culture if you had more money? |
| 27. Estou particularmente interessado nas modificações materiais que os brasileiros fazem aos equipamentos existentes para torná-los mais adequados para o uso com 'café especial' quando não é possível ou é caro demais para obter as versões oficiais. Se você fez algo legal com seu equipamento em casa (como modificado o bico de um chaleira para despejar melhor) e gostaria de compartilhar comigo, envie-me uma foto para WhatsApp. | I am particularly interested in the material modifications I have seen some people make to their coffee equipment in order to make them more compatible with specialty coffee when it is not possible or too expensive to obtain the 'official' equipment. If you've done anything cool with your equipment that you'd like to share (for instance, modify the spout of a tea kettle in order to pour better), WhatsApp me a photo. |
| 28. Algo mais você gostaria de dizer sobre café? | Anything else you want to say about coffee? |

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

Gender breakdown

Women: N=48
Men: N=26
Although my sample size was smaller, this is a much higher percentage of women captured compared with other recent specialty coffee consumer surveys conducted in Brazil (see: Guimarães et al. 2019; Quintão 2015); this may be attributable to the fact that I am known as a researcher of gender issues in specialty coffee, an interview with me on the subject of gender in coffee aired around the time of the survey release, and the survey was shared on a women's coffee WhatsApp group.

Age

Average: 35
Youngest: 22
Oldest: 55

Other demographic characteristics of interest

- 26 of 74 reporting family members or other relatives who are/were coffee producers.
- Though all now living in the city of São Paulo, respondents were natives of:
    - City of São Paulo: 36
    - Greater São Paulo: 7
    - State of São Paulo: 12
    - Other Brazilian states: 18
    - Chile: 1
- Aside from a single hairdresser, no 'blue collar' occupations were represented; respondents included such professions as: economist, financial analyst, infrastructure analyst, systems analyst, journalist, interior designer, content producer, engineer, publicist, psychoanalyst, lawyer, banker, educational consultant, art director, architect, and UX researcher. The sample also included four students and one retired person.

**COFFEE HABITS**

All 74 respondents reported drinking coffee in some form **every day**.

Of the 63 respondents who offered numerical ages at which they began to regularly drink coffee, the average was **14.5 years**. The remaining 11 respondents offered text-based responses referring to their childhoods, such as:

> I don't remember, since I was little [*Não me lembro, desde pequeno*]
>
> Since I was a child [*Desde criança*]
>
> I don't know, since I've been self-aware I've drank coffee [*não sei, desde que me conheço eu bebo café*]
>
> Since I was a little girl, on account of our family habit of coffee and milk in the morning and due to our economic condition since the food of the working class is restricted. [*Desde pequena, por habito familiar do café com leite pela manha e por uma condição econômica, uma vez que alimentação da classe trabalhadora é restrita*]

**66** of the respondents had tried a non-Brazilian coffee at least once (either specialty or conventional). **3** of this group noted they had not had any foreign specialty coffee, and several mentioned that though they had tried foreign coffees it was a rare occurrence.

The remaining **8** had never tried a foreign coffee, and **6** of these responses specifically mentioned wanting to or feeling disappointed they had not had the chance.

Whole bean or ground? Exactly half the sample, **37** people, reported always purchasing whole beans. **22** people always bought their coffee pre-ground, while **15** bought a mix of ground and whole bean coffee.

The following brewing methods were used:

- Hario V60: 41 respondents
- French Press: 31
- Melitta/'common brewer' [*coador comum*]: 25
- Moka pot: 25
- AeroPress: 21
- Home espresso machine, any brand: 13
- Clever Dripper: 10
- Capsule machine, any brand: 9
- Traditional cloth filter: 6
- Pressca: 6
- Chemex: 5
- Kalitta: 3
- Cold brew, any brand equipment: 2
- Syphon: 1
- Kafflano: 1
- American-style drip coffee machine: 1
- Turkish-style coffee: 1

Of interest here is the paucity of the traditional coffee filters [*coador de pano*], with one person who listed it in her inventory even specifically noting she had it 'as backup.' Note also that this survey was conducted prior to the release of the Koar brewer and when the Aram Coffee Maker was in the production process after its crowdfunding campaign.

## APPENDIX C: COFFEE DIARIES

Coffee diaries participants were asked to send a photograph of and answer the following questions about each coffee they consumed during the duration of the project: what coffee? Where? With whom? What did you think about the coffee? What were you feeling while you drank it?

Here are the full responses from one day (Tuesday, February 6, 2018) from one barista and one participant who does not work professionally with coffee, but who each reported on three coffees.

### PARTICIPANT 1: BARISTA




COFFEE: A yellow catuaí in a big V60 and a giant mug. My special recipe for when I'm really sleepy and starting work.

WHERE: Work.

WITH WHOM: My friend and colleague who I often work with in the mornings.

WHAT I THOUGHT: Intense with a really clear note of malt; big body and a medium sweetness.

WHAT I FELT: Really, really, really tired. And a little bit worried about a few work things. So I need this giant cup of coffee and maybe also a hug.



COFFEE: A cappuccino. Also I'm really sorry—this is my second cappuccino today but I drank the first one so quickly that there was no time to take a photo. Told you I was sleepy!

WHERE: Work.

WITH WHOM: Technically alone, but there's another coworker here just in the back.

WHAT I THOUGHT: I'm addicted to pour-overs, I admit it. But to have such a nice cappuccino in the middle of my day really left me with the desire to have another one! Extremely sweet and flavoursome; the coffee was really balanced and like a warm hug.

WHAT I FELT: Happy, in general. A bit strange because I managed to drink two whole cappuccinos in one day without feeling ill…I wonder if I'll be sick later?



COFFEE: Yellow catuaí—the same one as this morning but I'm making it in a Kalitta this time (20g coffee, 240g water).

WHERE: Still at work.

WITH WHOM: Co-worker. There's a little break now after we had a bunch of customers in here before and the shop is empty except for us two.

WHAT I THOUGHT: I really think this coffee is getting nicer and nicer the longer we have it in the shop. That malty note is great and the citric acid is so clear yet everything is balanced.

WHAT I FELT: Tired now but not sleepy—it's been a pretty hectic day in the shop and I'm ready to go home. I hate my commute though, so that's why this last coffee before I go.

**PARTICIPANT 2: ACTOR (UNEMPLOYED)**




COFFEE: Medium roast from Tequila Café, made in my dear Pressca with experimental proportions [of coffee to water].

WHERE: Made at home in the kitchen which acts as my laboratory for the first good coffee of the day.

WITH WHOM: Me just me.

WHAT I THOUGHT: I noted some different flavours from when I made this in the V60; I found lighter notes of chocolate and it was a little bit floral, a light acidity and a licour body.

WHAT I FELT: Curiosity about my future tests with this coffee and satisfaction about having a coffee as tasty as this in my stock at the moment.




COFFEE: Ristretto from Santa Monica.

WHERE: Its Coffee, a simple but nice coffee shop near to my house. It has a lot of potential, but as it stands it's still a bit meh.

WITH WHOM: My whole family, just a little *cafezinho* after lunch.

WHAT I THOUGHT: The same thing I think every time I drink Santa Monica's stuff: a lot of bitterness, a sort of unnecessary chocolatey-ness, and it was prepared without a lot of attention or care from the baristas. I'm not one to tell off whoever made it since I know the pressure of working in customer service, but I do think making coffee this poorly definitely slows the spread of a culture of good coffee. Who knows, maybe someday I'll have a Santa Monica made by a really caring barista and I'll change my opinion.

WHAT I FELT: Well, I felt frustrated because once again I've had to see coffee maltreated in the grinder and the person who served me didn't even flush the machine [a basic barista skill in which the espresso machine is quickly cleaned and warmed prior to serving a coffee]. But this is how it goes.



COFFEE: Coldbrew made with a Yellow Bourbon from Campo Místico.

WHERE: Directly from my loyal fridge at home.

WITH WHOM: Alone.

WHAT I THOUGHT: I decided to do a little experiment and drink this coffee from two different cups, including this one made from bamboo. It's retained its flavour well (it's only a week off roast), it's refreshing and sweet as hell 😍

WHAT I FELT: Just excited. I love coldbrew, it's life! Without ice, without additives, it's just a pure shot of the nectar of happiness.