

BETTER COFFEE?
**The Intertwining of Ethics and Quality in
the Third-Wave Coffee Subculture**

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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract The coffee industry provides insights into the relationship between commodity trade and development, a topic that has been a part of developmental discussions for decades. This master's thesis is a case study on a niche inside global coffee business. Its topic is the Third Wave Coffee, a subculture formed around high quality coffee. In its essence the is creating a new kind of relationship with the coffee producers in the global South and the people selling and consuming coffee in the global North. The study's purpose is to portray the views that form the bases of ethics of trade in the subculture. The aim of the study is to understand the networks that tie the global North and South together in an age where consumers see the knowledge about the origin of a high-end product as a part of a quality experience but persistent inequality of power and resources still seem to be a permanent feature of commodity trade relations between the global South and North. The material consists of eight semi structured interviews from coffee professionals and from material of seven websites of organizations connected to the people interviewed. The material was analyzed with discourse analyses as a tool. Theoretical framework consists of cosmopolitanism, Bourdieusian Approach and commodity Fetishism and “double” commodity fetishism. The findings demonstrate that the coffee professionals in the North hold beliefs about how material quality of coffee and ethical trade are intertwined in a way that they secure one another. The professionals define the story about the coffee sold to the consumer and in the Third Wave this based greatly on this presumed link between quality and ethics, cosmopolitan values are often present in the discourses and “double” commodity fetishism is constructed when explaining the origin of coffee. Third Wave coffee professionals in the North are critical of certification schemes related to sustainability and trade ethics and offer personal relationships with the producers as an alternative for them. The effects of this model on the livelihoods and communities of the coffee producers in the global South are a subject of a further study.			
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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract Kahviteollisuus tarjoaa näkökulman hyödykekaupan ja kehityksen suhteeseen. Teema on ollut kehityskeskustelussa mukana vuosikymmeniä. Tämä pro gradu -tutkielma käsittelee pientä osaa maailman laajuisesta kahvikaupasta. Tutkielman aiheena on niin sanottu kolmannen aallon kahvi, eli korkean laadun kahvin ympärille muodostunut alakulttuuri. Alakulttuurin keskiössä on pyrkimys luoda globaalin Etelän viljelijöiden ja Pohjoisen kahvin myyjien ja kuluttajien välille uudenlainen suhde. Tutkielman tarkoitus on esitellä Pohjoisessa toimivien, tähän alakulttuuriin kuuluvien, kahvialan ammattilaisten näkemyksiä jotka muodostavat ammattilaisten käsityksen eettisestä kaupasta. Tutkielman tavoite on ymmärtää paremmin verkostoja jotka yhdistävät globaalin Pohjoisen ja Etelän aikana jolloin tieto tuotteen alkuperästä kuuluu osaksi laadun kokemusta, mutta epätasapaino sekä vallassa että resursseissa säilyy globaalin kaupan piirteinä. Tutkielman empiirinen materiaali koostuu kahdeksasta kahvialan ammattilaisten haastattelusta ja seitsemän kahvialan organisaation verkkosivujen materiaalista. Materiaalia on analysoitu käyttäen diskurssianalyysiä välineenä. Teoreettinen viitekehys koostuu kosmopolitismista, bourdieusialaisesta lähestymistavasta sekä tavarafetissin käsitteestä ja niin sanotusta kaksinkertaisesta tavarafetissistä. Tutkielman keskeinen tulos on, että kahviammattilaisten uskomus on, että materiaallinen laatu liittyy erottomattomasti kaupan eettisyyteen. Pohjoisen kahviammattilaiset määrittelevät kahvista kuluttajille kerrotun tarinan ja kolmannen aallon kahvissa se liittyy vahvasti laadun ja eettisyyden yhteyteen. He kuuluvat kosmopoliittiseen perinteeseen ja rakentavat kaksinkertaista tavarafetissia selittäessään kahvin alkuperää. Kolmannen aallon kahvin alakulttuuriin kuuluvat kahvialan ammattilaiset ovat kriittisiä kestävyteen ja eettisyyteen liittyviä sertifiikaatteja kohtaan ja tarjoavat niille vaihtoehtoksi henkilökohtaisia suhteita kahvin tuottajiin. Tällaisen mallin vaikutuksien kahvin tuottajien elinkeinoihin ja yhteisöihin selvittäminen vaatii jatkotutkimuksia.			
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Table of Contents

1 Introduction	1
2 Coffee as a Disputed Commodity	5
2.1 Coffee's Long History in Short	5
2.2 Coffee Today	9
2.3 Waves in Coffee: An Interpretation of the Modern History of Coffee	13
2.4 Concepts inside the Third Wave	17
3 Research Questions	20
4 Framework: Previous Studies and Theoretical Concepts	22
4.1 Coffee in Development Studies and Other Central Sources	22
4.2 Placing the Third Wave in the Context of Consumer Culture	23
4.3 Centrality of Quality and Ethics in the Third Wave	26
4.4 Theoretical Framework	28
4.4.1 Cosmopolitanism and the Bourdieusian Approach	28
4.4.2 Commodity Fetishism and 'Double' Commodity Fetishism	31
5 Methodology and Material	34
5.1 Case Study Approach	34
5.2 Discourse Analysis as a Tool	34
5.3 Ethical Considerations and the Researcher's Position	36
5.4 Data Collection: Material for Empirical Analyses	37
6 Analysis of the Empirical Material	43
6.1 Certificates versus Personal Relationships: The Discourse of Doubt and Trust	43
6.2 Different Market: The Discourse of Distinction	48
6.3 The Discourse of Co-working for Quality and Ethics	49
7 Conclusion	57
Bibliography	62

1 Introduction

'A commodity appears, at first sight, a very trivial thing, and easily understood. Its analysis shows that it is, in reality, a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties.'

Karl Marx (1887) [1867] *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy*

The coffee industry provides insights into the relationship between commodity trade and development, a topic that has been a part of developmental discussions for decades. None of the coffee consumed in the global North is produced there; therefore, there is no hidden protectionism towards farmers in the North. There has, however, been significant attempts to control coffee trade, and the producing countries have tried to use this strategically in their development efforts (Daviron & Ponte 2005: 50). This study tries to understand the networks that tie the global North and South together in an age where many consumers consider the knowledge about the origin of a high-end product as part of a quality experience while persistent inequality of power and resources still seem to be a permanent feature of trade relations between the global South and North. It is through these networks and coffee trends that business owners and consumers in the North have an effect on the lives of coffee producers in the South.

The purpose of this study is to portray the views that form the basis of the ethics of trade within a subculture that has formed around a high-quality segment of coffee. In the coffee industry, this subculture is loosely defined as 'third-wave coffee'. This is an insider's term that is closely related to other definitions in the coffee business, such as specialty coffee and direct trade (I will clarify the term further in subchapter 2.3). Third-wave coffee is a global phenomenon that originated in the United States, but it has a strong presence in markets such as South Africa and Japan (Borrella et al. 2015: 34). In this study, I will focus on the Nordic aspect of this culture, as my interviewees were from Finland, Norway and Denmark.

This study was conducted on a small niche of a huge business in an age where development by means of cooperation is contested and trade is offered as an answer to

poverty, development and inequality. The role of corporations in society as a whole is also changing, albeit slowly. In the Harvard Business Review article *Creating Shared Value*, Michael E. Porter and Mark R. Kramer (2011), called for capitalism that would solve the challenges in society, not create them.

Globally, coffee is not a minor commodity. In fact, it is one of the world's most valuable tropical agricultural commodities, with its total value estimated at around 100 billion dollars annually (Thurston 2013: 111). In Finland, coffee is a big part of daily life, and the industry employs a couple of thousand people in the country directly and tens of thousands indirectly if cafés and coffee shops are taken into account (Nieminen & Puustinen 2014: 28). As such, it is a substantial link between the global South and North.

I have chosen to study coffee as a commodity and a beverage. My rationale is based on that of previous studies on foodstuff, commodities and, to some extent, luxury goods. The theoretical framework is also, for many parts, borrowed from previous studies on food, particularly studies on 'exotic foods'. In retrospect, I could have adopted a completely different approach and chosen to examine coffee as a drug, because it does have pronounced physiological and psychological effects. However, the third-wave coffee subculture does not focus on the effects of coffee as a stimulant, but rather, the focus is on coffee as a source of sensory pleasure. In support of this, none of the interviewees in this study stressed on coffee's qualities as a stimulant but emphasized on its other properties: '*Coffee is no longer considered to be just something really strong you drink in the morning, but it is truly a pleasure,*' said Viivi, one of the interviewees from a third-wave coffee business.

The group studied is studied as forming a subculture. One of the key findings in subculture studies conducted in Britain is that a subculture is formed when a group has a specific relationship with certain objects or functions and the meaning they carry is socially constructed. It is through these objects and functions that the group expresses and implements its attitude towards life. Additionally, paying attention to marginalized phenomena can also shed light on society as a whole (Alasuutari 1994: 35–36).

In some contexts, third-wave coffee can be considered as a movement, but I find that it has a slightly more organized or political colour. In fact, I was more interested in the cultural aspects and the discourses around the topics relevant to development studies. It

is noteworthy to point out that some of the sources and some of the people interviewed did use this definition. Through this study, I hope to shed light on the world view of a group that tries to find ways of fulfilling their passion for a contested commodity and to conduct business in an age where the drawbacks of capitalism—environmental destruction and exploitation of vulnerable groups—are well known to most consumers in the global North. According to Richard Sennet, inequality has become the weak spot of the modern economy and of the global economic geography, where the centre is expected to control the periphery and seeks only results, not communication (Sennet 2006: 55). While this seems to be true in most areas of global trade, there are networks and groups involved in global trade that seek to do things differently, and in some ways, the third-wave coffee professionals in the North try to be a part of this change.

In this work, I have chosen to use commodity as a concept to explain coffee markets. Here, commodity is defined as a good that has a quality standard system in the world market that most actors in the trade are involved in (Daviron & Ponte 2005: xix). Commodity is a peculiar concept, but coffee is a good example of how deeply socialized commodities are. Further, I have used the concepts ‘ethics in trade’ or ‘ethical trade’ to cover the entire spectrum of topics that people in the third-wave coffee subculture considered as relevant with regard to development or sustainability. Although the terms ‘fair’ or ‘equal’ could also have been used in many cases, they have their limitations as Fair trade is a strong brand and equality represents only one aspect of trade relations, excluding sustainability all together.

In the next chapter, I will introduce coffee as a commodity, especially from the perspective of how it became such a significant product in the global North through colonial rule. I will follow this by presenting an overall picture of the coffee business in the world today. In the last subchapters, I will explain in detail what the waves, especially third-wave coffee, means within the coffee business.

The third chapter will present my research questions, along with a short background. In the fourth chapter, the framework of this thesis will be presented. First, I will provide a summary of a few key sources from development studies, discuss a few phenomena that are similar to third-wave coffee but are not directly related to coffee, and thereby, place the subculture within the wider trends in consumer behaviour and discuss the concept of

quality inside the subculture. I will follow this with subchapters about the theories used in the analysis of the empirical material, including cosmopolitanism, some concepts of Pierre Bourdieu and Karl Marx's theory of commodity fetishism and its recent descendant, 'double' commodity fetishism.

The fifth chapter will present the methodology (a case-study approach), an introduction to discourse analysis, some ethical considerations and thoughts on the researcher's positions. In the last subchapter, I will disclose how the data were collected and on what grounds.

In the sixth chapter, I will go into my findings, by presenting three discourses that emerged from the material. In the final chapter, I will focus on the conclusions I have drawn from the work, evaluate the developmental relevance of the third wave, reflect on this study and feature some ideas for future research.

2 Coffee as a Disputed Commodity

Coffee is a peculiar commodity in many ways. It is one of the most traded commodities in the world, although it is not an essential commodity. During its long history, it has become an important part of the culture and customs in many places that are far from its origin. New innovative ways to consume and sell coffee are invented almost every year. For example, a few years back, the trend was bulletproof coffee—coffee with butter—and a few years before that, there was cold brew coffee with nitrogen bubbles.

Coffee is mainly consumed far from where it is produced, and the only coffee-producing nations with notable domestic markets are Brazil and Ethiopia. What makes coffee especially relevant from the developmental point of view is the commodity trap: the countries in the global South are often trapped in the cycle of producing raw material and its symbolic value is created elsewhere, and the producers in the South are barely able to cover production costs (Daviron & Ponte 2005: 47, 74). This imbalance of power has its roots in the colonial history of coffee. When combined with the burden coffee production adds to the environment, coffee is, inherently, a problematic commodity.

2.1 Coffee's Long History in Short

It is not known where or even how coffee was consumed for the first time, but its origins are probably in Yemen or Ethiopia. Wild coffee grows in many parts of Africa, but it is not certain if it is indigenous everywhere or was planted in some parts. The most well-known legend about the discovery of coffee's effects is the one about a shepherd boy named Kaldi. Kaldi noticed that the goats eating the leaves and berries from a certain bush were rather frisky, so he tried out the berries himself. The first definite literary sources about coffee date back to the 9th century. The preparation of drinks made from coffee beans or berries started around the 11th century. (Voipio 1993: 39–42.)

During the 14th century, coffee was a popular but contested commodity in the Muslim world, and at times, it was even banned. At the same time, trade took it to new regions: from Egypt to Syria, and then from to Iran and Turkey. By the 15th century, it was clear that coffee was a lucrative business, and European traders' interest in it grew. In the 1690s, Dutch businessmen managed to steal coffee bushes from the Arab coffee growers and planted them in Java, Indonesia. Up until that time, all the coffee sold to Europeans

was roasted, so as to prevent them from growing any themselves. With the Dutch merchant marine, the Dutch were able to expand their coffee business fast. The French, Spanish and Portuguese followed suit, and brought coffee to their colonies in Latin America. The 16th century saw the start of a dark period in coffee history, when slaves were systematically used in coffee production. (Nieminen & Puustinen 2014: 52, 64–68.)

In the 18th and 19th centuries, coffee was a profitable commodity in Europe (Waridel 2002: 32), and colonial rulers searched all over the world for new locations to grow coffee, leading to the spread of the plant all over the tropical region (Talbot 2004). Thus, coffee's history is also the history of colonialism. However, old colonial relations have had an impact on coffee trade even after the end of colonial rule; for example, the Dutch coffee trade with Indonesia is still significant (Ponte 2002: 1103).

In many regions, dependency on the consumer countries is still a feature of coffee trade and production. In all the coffee-producing regions, native people and people brought from Africa were used as slaves in coffee production and as a legacy to this, poor labour conditions still remain a feature of coffee production and trade (Waridel 2002: 32). Latin American countries gained their independence before becoming the biggest coffee-producing countries in the world, but the pre-existing system of a planter class created by sugar plantations, slave trade and the extermination of the native population made the growth of production possible. (Talbot 2004.)

Even the taste preferences in many consumer countries were based on colonial relationships, as national roasters belonging to the consumer countries were the ones that mainly served the consumers until the 1980s. For the roasters, consistent taste of the blend was more important than the origin. The distinctive national blends of the consumer countries often comprised beans that were obtained from several producer old colonial countries. As it was not feasible for a producer country to acquire beans for processing from other producer countries, they effectively remained producers of the raw material who were far removed from the consumer and the processing was done in the consuming countries. The other factor has also been that that roasted coffee goes stale quite fast. (Talbot 2002: 2018.)

Until 1989, the world's coffee prices were controlled by quotas that were set by the International Coffee Agreement (ICA). The agreement was a product of coffee-producing

countries to establish collective action, and it was first made with the consumer countries in 1962. It was based on a quota system that regulated the flow of coffee into the global market. Its objective was to keep the coffee prices high and stable, and it was successful in ensuring that the position of coffee producers was better than that of the producers of other primary commodities. The agreement's fall in 1989 led to a drastic decline in coffee prices for the producers. Later, in the mid 1990s, there was a drought and frost in Brazil that led to a rise in the prices again, until it declined drastically to the lowest level of the century. The production in Brazil and in other South American countries had increased and new state-subsided coffee producers in South East Asia took over the market, as a result of which many farmers, especially in South America, left the business. (Kilian et al. 2004: 20–21, Talbot 2002: 219.)

From the 1980s, the power in coffee trade shifted from national roasters to transnational corporations. The four big transnational corporations that took control of over 60% of the global coffee trade were Nestlé, Phillip Morris, Sara Lee and Procter and Gamble. Interestingly, Finland is one of the countries where a local corporation, Paulig, has more power transnational corporations in coffee business. Unfortunately, the shift in power was not favourable to the producer countries. (Talbot 2002: 217–222.)

The old unequal system where consumer countries used peripheral or semi-peripheral producer countries as producers of unprocessed raw materials was based on exertion of control over the production process, whereas the new system driven by transnational corporations was based on exertion of control over capital and information about factors which could affect the coffee prices. Earlier, the producer countries had some form of system for controlling coffee trade inside their borders, but this did not always guarantee them their share of the proceeds as a result of the existing system. However, the weakening of states in the global South, as a result of, for example, the free market policies driven the United States, has given transnational corporations more power in the global coffee production industry and made it even harder for the corporations in producer countries to move up the ladder in the processing of coffee beans. (Talbot 2002: 217–222.)

It can be said that the fall of the ICA and other diminishes at state regulation transformed the coffee value chain into a more byer-driven one. This has given large corporate roasters

more power and a bigger percentage of the created value. Simultaneously, a more segregated coffee market has developed that addresses the consumer's wish to make healthier, environmentally friendly and socially sustainable choices. (Valkila & Nygren 2010: 323.)

Like most agricultural products, coffee production was also intensified during the Green Revolution in the 1970s. This development has come at a cost to the environment. The problems linked to coffee production include deforestation, loss of biodiversity, soil erosion and agrochemical pollution. Further, even though it has been guaranteed to generate livelihood for many, the promise of coffee becoming 'a miracle crop' that lifts developing countries from poverty has never been fulfilled. (Waridel 2002: 32–36.) Although, historically, there have been success stories in this regard, for example, in Brazil at the end of the 19th century, there are no recent testimonies to this promise (Daviron & Ponte 2005: xvii).

There is no single reason why coffee has become such a popular drink in Europe, but the demand for the beverage is obvious. It is notable that coffee did not have the same intoxicating effect as alcohol or opium. Therefore, stimulants such as coffee and tea have played a role in the rise of industrial capitalism, as they kept the working class sober and alert while operating machinery. Coffee was also accessible to all social classes and was therefore able to penetrate the whole society. Over the centuries, it has found its place in culture as a safe stimulant that is mainly consumed in situations involving social interaction. (Talbot 2002: 215, 2018, Huhtonen 2015: 19–20.)

The beginning of European coffee culture, of which the third wave in the Nordic countries is a part of, is sometimes placed in London, where the first coffee house opened in 1652. Coffee was introduced to Britain by travellers returning from trips to the Ottoman empire. The first coffee shop in Istanbul was opened in 1554. Later, coffee lost ground for tea, a drink for which Britain is known for these days. The opening of the first coffee shop in Vienna in 1683, during the Turkish siege, is another starting point of common coffee drinking in Europe. As with many new trends, coffee drinking first became popular among the upper class but trickled down to the lower ones during the 17th century. (Kjeldgaard & Ostberg 2007: 177, Nieminen & Puustinen 2014: 52.)

In the United States of America (then part of the British Empire), coffee became popular partly due to political reasons: the tea boycott in 1773 that started the chain of events that lead to independence made space for coffee in people's consumer habits and eventually made the United States the biggest coffee-consuming nation. (Nieminen & Puustinen 2014: 70, Talbot 2002: 217.)

The first known Finn to taste coffee was probably Axel Käg, a servant who was part of a company traveling to Persia in 1636. The first café was opened in Helsinki in 1830, and by the end of the century, coffee was consumed in almost every household in the country. (Nieminen & Puustinen 2014: 28, 58–62.)

The love for coffee has been one of the many links that has tied Finland and the Nordic countries to the web of global trade and colonialism for a long time. Soon after Austria's first coffee house, coffee was also introduced to Scandinavia, where it was first used as a drug with medical benefits and later became very popular as a beverage. By 1754, the Swedish state banned coffee drinking, because it deemed that too much money was flowing out of Sweden because of the habit. Cafés also played a role in the political life of the people. In Scandinavia, like in all of Europe, coffee houses served an important role as 'third spaces' where much of the political and economic progress of the time was discussed and planned. (Kjeldgaard & Ostberg 2007: 177–178.) Later, during the 20th century, the coffee culture in Scandinavia drew influences from Italy, France and the United States, and the rhythm of daily coffee drinking is now a big part of daily life (Kjeldgaard & Ostberg 2007: 178–179). Thus, like so many traditional dishes, coffee culture in the Nordics has its roots in globalization and is a cultural hybrid (Cook & Crang 1996: 140).

2.2 Coffee Today

Around the world, people drink over two billion cups of coffee every day, and the market is growing (see Table 1. for size of total production). Scandinavian countries are the biggest per capita consumers of coffee in the world. In the global South, there are many countries that rely on coffee financially. (Daviron & Ponte 2005: i, 51, 74.) For example, coffee made up 59% per cent of the exports of Burundi in 2015 (The Climate Institute 2016: 1, 4). This is understandable, because the agro-ecological features of the country

are ideal for coffee production: altitudes of around 2000 metres above sea level, moderate tropical conditions with enough rainfall, the predominance of the famous Red Bourbon varietal and a history of high-quality processing using the wet method. (Rosenberg et al. 2018: 200.)

Coffee is grown in over 60 countries on both sides of the equator, in American, African and Asian continents. Brazil is the world's biggest coffee producer, but the finest coffees in Latin America are produced in smaller countries such as Panama and Costa Rica. In Africa, Kenya and Ethiopia are especially known for their high-quality coffees. Vietnam has rapidly become the biggest coffee producer in Asia, mainly through production of average-quality Robusta beans. (Nieminen & Puustinen 2014: 137–142, 151, 159.)

A coffee tree bears fruit after three years of tending and produces coffee cherries for around 20 to 30 years. There are two main varieties of coffee: *Coffea arabica* and *Coffea robusta* (also known as *Coffea canephora*). Many of the highest quality varieties, including Geisha, Bourbon, Datterra and Caturra, are Arabica varieties. Arabica grows in higher altitudes than Robusta and produces less cherries. The Robusta varieties provides harvest all year, but the Arabica varieties yield only one annual harvest, which makes these varieties more expensive. Robusta is often used in bulk coffees and in coffee mixtures, and it is usually not very interesting for small roasteries like the ones involved in third wave coffee. (Huhtonen 2015: 10, Waridel 2002: 47, Daviron & Ponte 2005: 52.)

Roughly half of the world's coffee is grown on small farms, with under five hectares of coffee plantations. For many farmers, producing coffee is not lucrative business. In many areas, the cost of production is over the selling price, and this has driven farmers to poverty and debt. In many regions, the best farming lands belong to large property owners, who also collect the biggest part of the profit from their crops. As the berries and other parts of the plant are not edible, specializing in coffee production has also adversely affected food security and the nutrition level in many areas. The people who are most vulnerable in the coffee production network are farm workers, who move from farm to farm according to harvest season. The working conditions on the farms are often poor, and the legislation protecting the workers is weak. Child labour has also been an issue in coffee production. (Waridel 2002: 42.)

Growing and producing coffee is a very labour-intensive process. While harvesting machines do exist, most of the coffee is harvested by hand. This is because it is easier for a human to determine whether a coffee cherry is ripe or not, and this is essential in harvesting. The harvesting step—picking up enough cherries to make an average cup of coffee—takes over three minutes. After the cherries are harvested, they need to be pulped, fermented, dried, processed, shipped, roasted, packaged and sold to the consumer. Usually, the beans travel around the world during this process. Of course, the consumer sees only the end of a long process. In each location and phase of the process, the symbolic meaning and economic and social value changes. (West 2012: 2–3, 16.)

The way in which mainstream coffee sales are organized in the global market varies between countries. In a coffee-producing country, some large growers may handle the process from harvest to export, while some processors handle both coffee processing and export. Similarly, in the consumer countries, wholesalers might import and roast, and in the case of the bigger chains, they might also be in retail. As described in the previous chapter, at the moment, multinational corporations are the main actors in the global coffee market. (Martinez-Torres: 2006: 28.)

The situation in the coffee market has been described as a paradox: in the consumer countries, there has been a strong rise in the demand for ‘high quality’ coffee, while in the producer countries, there is an excess of ‘low quality’ coffee. The drop in coffee prices in the 1990s and 2000s has been described as a crisis for the producers, while at the same time, the consumer countries are witnessing a ‘coffee revival’. The absolute volume of coffee that is being consumed has not gone up much, but there is more money moves in the coffee business. This means that a smaller percentage of the price paid by the consumer reaches the coffee farmer, and proportionally, a larger percentage is paid towards the symbolic value added in the consuming countries such as packaging and branding. (Daviron & Ponte 2005: xvi, 204.)

The latte revolution, as this increase in demand for specialty coffee particularly in the United States is sometimes called, has been concurrent with the fall of coffee prices after the dissolution of the ICA in 1989. As a result of the low coffee prices in the last few decades, farmers are faced with two alternative strategies to gain access to global markets: compete as low-cost producers of a bulk commodity or try to differentiate their product

in order to access quality-conscious markets. Many have adopted the strategy of producing high-quality coffee and coffee that is labelled as sustainable, but for many, this has been a futile strategy. This trend is closely related to the waves in coffee business described in the next subchapter. (Neilson 2007: 188, Kilian et al. 2004, Ponte 2002: 1099.)

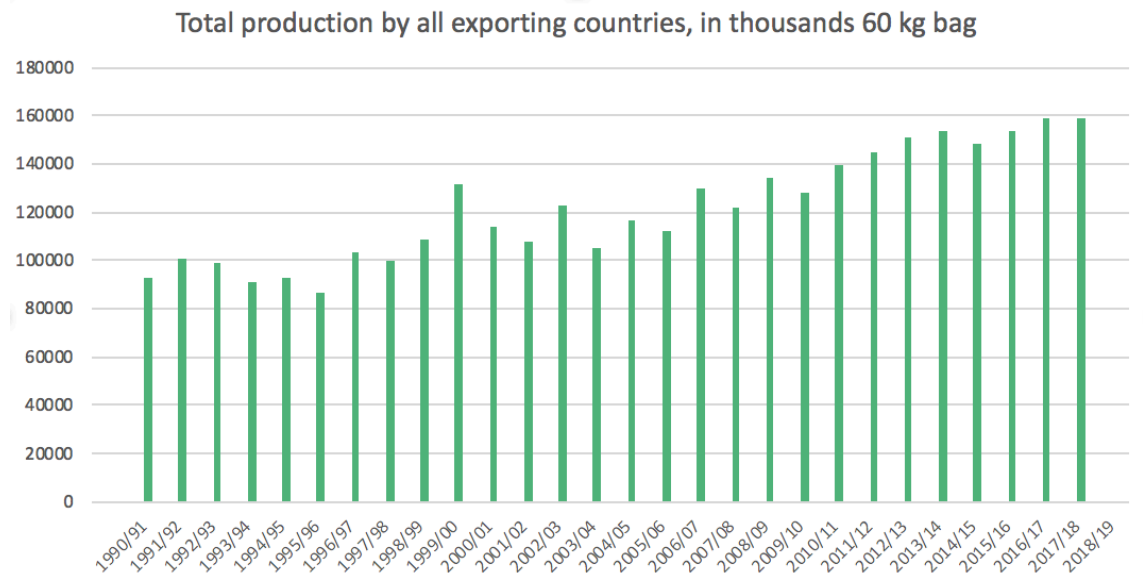


Table 1. International Coffee Organization (2018).

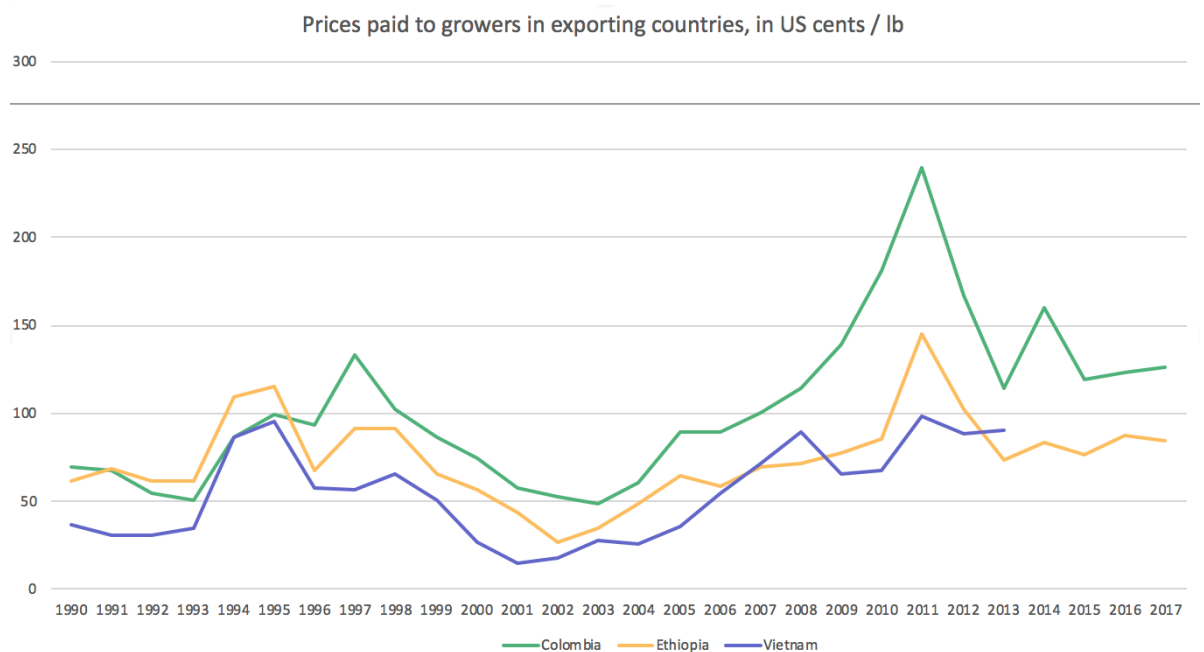


Table 2. Example countries from coffee producing continents. International Coffee Organization (2018).

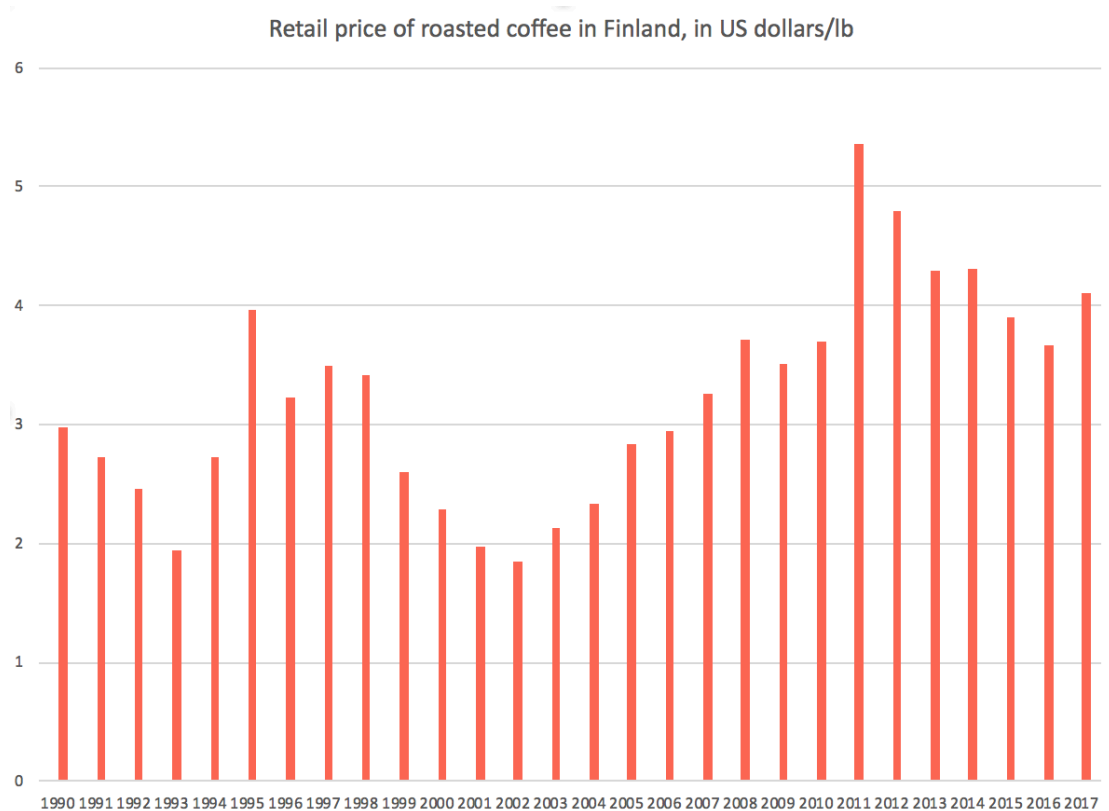


Table 3. International Coffee Organization (2018).

2.3 Waves in Coffee: An Interpretation of the Modern History of Coffee

‘Yes, this is coffee for coffee geeks, but the same could have been said about cheese and wine and meat 20 years ago.’

Time magazine, 9th of March 2010

‘So next time you order a specialty coffee, remember that you’re playing a role in the pursuit of higher-quality products and ethical business practices. Feels pretty good, doesn’t it?’

The Perfect Daily Grind, 14th of September 2015

According to coffee aficionados and those in the coffee business, the last 80 years of coffee business can be divided to three overlapping ‘waves’ that describe the shifts that have happened in coffee consumption (Rosenberg et al. 2018: 202). Again, the term ‘waves’ should be considered only as a insider’s term that reflects the understanding of

the subculture among those in the industry; it does not represent an actual picture of the history of coffee. It is also wise to note that the notion of the waves is highly focused to North America. (Manzo 2010: 142–143.)

In her book about the third-wave coffee culture *God in a Cup—The Obsessive Quest for the Perfect Coffee* (2008), journalist Michaela Weissman says ‘Coffee guys aren’t always the greatest historians’ (Weissman 2008: 4), so its explanatory power should be considered limited. Weissman credits coffee consultant Trish Skeie for popularizing the concept of the waves. In the media, third-wave coffee is described as a subculture of nerds or hipsters who are passionate about coffee. According to members of the subculture, third-wave coffee is a reference to burgeoning high-end coffee (Fischer 2017: iii) or just ‘coffee geeks’ (Manzo 2010: 142).

To understand the concept and its meaning in coffee trade, I will introduce the background of the term here and a few characteristics and concepts associated with it in literature and in practice. Given the fairly marginal status of this concept in the coffee business, there is very little research on it. Most of the existing research is in the North American context; this leaves Europe to some extent unstudied. Thus, the definition is based on that provided in relatively small number of articles and popular literature. However, there is plenty of literature about coffee culture in general, ethical issues concerning coffee and even specialty coffee, high-quality coffee and direct trade. As a phenomenon, the third-wave coffee subculture is akin to the development evidenced with many other commodities and products, such as beer. That is, the quest for quality and experiences that are thought to be *authentic* is a part of a much bigger cultural shift among the middle class in the global North. The different ‘waves’ are described in the following paragraphs.

The first wave is believed to have started around the Second World War. This was as a period when average or even bad coffee at a low price became commonplace in homes and the territorial nuances of coffee were blended away (Weissman 2008: 4–5). Bulk production and large corporations’ control over coffee sales are prominent features of this period (Borella et al. 2015: 31).

By the 1930s, coffee had become an affordable and common drink in American households and factories, but the standardization of the commodity only occurred in the

decades that followed. This was a result of the much broader process of industrialization of food, and the concept of supermarkets is a product of the same process. The standardization process was also driven further by the creation of international organizations, such as the International Coffee Organization (established in 1963), and the signing of the International Coffee Agreement (in 1962). (Roseberry 1996: 764, 772.) As a result, American coffee firms became a part of multinational companies, and therefore, stopped seeking quality and focused on consistency, price and marketing. The development trend in Europe was slightly different on account of the difference in the coffee culture prevalent there (Ponte 2002: 1110) and some national corporation stayed relevant.

The second wave started in the late 1960s. This was also when ‘specialty coffee’ entered the coffee vocabulary, and in 1982, the Specialty Coffee Association of America was formed. The term ‘specialty coffee’ refers to coffee grown in distinct microclimates that have a unique flavour profile (Weissman 2008: 4–5). In real life, it is difficult to clearly define specialty coffee, but it definitely excludes coffee that can be bought in bulk at a supermarket. The uniqueness of specialty coffee lies in the story behind the coffee (how and where it was grown, roasted, etc.) and the value that a consumer therefore assigns to it (Holland et al. 2015: 186).

At the centre of the second-wave coffee movement were many northern European immigrants who settled in California. Coming from more coffee-centric cultures, they had knowledge about coffee sourcing, roasting and tasting. The coffee shop chain Starbucks is probably the most prominent product of the second-wave coffee culture. The first Starbucks opened in 1971 in Seattle, United States. (Weissman 2008.) It could be said that Starbucks was the first company to *de-commoditize* coffee and offer its customers lifestyle experiences. In addition, the café’s ambience was as important as making choices about the origin and the style of coffee. Again, this can be seen as part of a wider shift that occurred simultaneously, with other products such micro-brewery beers entering the market at a time when consumers wanted an alternative to mass-produced and mass-marketed commodities (Ponte 2002: 1111). It was during the second wave that coffee was transformed from a ‘beverage of capitalism’ to a ‘beverage of modernity’: as such, it set apart users with a new identity and even reflected their political views. There was a demand for this kind of shift in the coffee business, because from the 1960s

onwards, coffee consumption in the United States had started to decline. The younger generation did not consider coffee to be as essential as the older one. The remedy that arose in the 1980s was to segregate the coffee market by class and age: now, not everyone was offered the same drink. This kind of marketing made coffee more appealing to the consumer who wanted to build his or her identity based on consumer choices or the illusion of choices. The network of small roasters that had survived the previous wave's standardization process was then re-discovered, and the 'quality sector' of coffee started to boom. (Roseberry 1996: 763–7, 773, Fischer 2017: 8, West 2012: 18.)

Interest in the ethical aspect of coffee has been a part of the second wave (Fischer 2017: 8). The growth in the specialty coffee industry was accompanied by an increase in consumers' interest in the origin of goods and knowledge about the source, and this has served the goals of both quality and transparency (Linton 2008: 242). Companies such as Starbucks have marketed themselves as coffee connoisseurs who educate customers about the taste and origin of the coffees offered by them (Bookman 2013: 61). Paradoxically, at the same time that coffee connoisseurship started to resemble that of wine, the competition between second-wave coffee chains resulted in automation and standardization of coffee drinks served in stores all over the world (Rosenberg et al. 2018: 204–205). It is important to note that geographic specificity does not mean producer empowerment, especially in the absence of institutional structures to guarantee it, and within the specialty coffee sector, the degree to which these references are based on traceable realities is variable (Neilson 2007: 189, 200). In 2001, after facing labour rights violation charges, Starbucks agreed to start buying Fair trade coffee, and by 2009, it was buying 10% of the total value of Fair trade coffee (Jaffee 2012: 94).

The third wave, which is the focus of this thesis, started in the 1990s and has been seen as a counter culture to the industrialization of coffee; its success has depended on its ability to outperform the actors in the second wave (Weissman 2008: 5). If the second wave coffee chains sell more ambience, snacks and a brand (Fitter & Kaplinsky 2001: 77) third wave places claim to focus on coffee strongly. Many of the phenomena and values of the third wave were already visible in the second one, except that they were amplified: knowledge of the origin has transformed into co-operation with the producers, and the quest for quality has intensified.

The actors in third-wave coffee are independent coffee houses, roasters and the people for whom coffee is a hobby. As a sub-culture, it values artisanship, expertise, community, sensual experience and communication between people. The culture, however, is not limited to the physical realm but is very active online, where a lot of social planning and exchange of information happens. It is a relative to other neo-traditional cultures such as crafting, knitting and wine tasting, to name a few. The unique features of third-wave coffee culture is that the role of businesses is substantial and the emphasis on expertise is paramount. (Manzo 2015: 749.)

In the early days of third-wave coffee, the marketing was more heavily focused on the provenance of coffee, and it often involved naming and introducing the farmers. Value was added to the product by giving the consumer a feeling that they were playing a role in making the remote farmers' lives better. This tactic of personalizing the product can be seen as a means of creating de-commodified value, but at least in the North American context, there has been a slight shift to emphasis on the taste properties, blending and roasting. The emphasis on the origin has diminished in recent years, and sensory qualities have begun to play a bigger role. (Fischer 2017: 8, 16, 18.)

Weissman describes the members of the third wave as passionate perfectionists and trendsetters. According to her, the beginning of the movement was driven by the 'coffee guys', the main figures in the new segment of coffee business who 'dress more like skateboarders than executives'. They reject the old model of the coffee business, where buying coffee as cheap as possible was the main way of making a profit. Their aim is to add value to the whole production chain, starting from the farmers. They have grown up in a globalized world, where technology and affordable travel has always been a part of their work. Weissman sees this is why they are the first ones in the coffee business to focus on communication and development, together with the farmers at the coffee's original location. Their goal is to attain the highest quality of coffee possible. (Weissmann 2008: xv-xvi, 1, 5-6, 9.)

2.4 Concepts inside the Third Wave

I decided to define the group that is the focus of this study as a representative of the third-wave coffee subculture, and I decided not to study the field of all establishments selling

specialty coffee. I was interested to see the connections to wider trends in consumer behaviour and I saw that differentiation from the big corporations in the coffee business such as Starbucks could reveal interesting perspectives of a phenomenon that is not that well studied. If the third wave is a descendant of the second, the businesses in it are also descendants of the culture that Starbucks and other big coffee shop chains have created.

One approach for this study would have been to form the work more heavily round the concept of direct trade, with a special emphasis on how it differs from Fair trade. However, when I examined the term ‘direct trade’ more closely, I found it too ambiguous for the purpose of this study. However, it is an important concept inside the business. Direct trade is based on the idea of building direct relationships between the coffee roasters and producers, and academic literature on it is not extensive (Borella et al. 2015: 30). For some, it is a brand, and for others, a vague guideline or a concept for trade practiced in many ways.

The short distance to the farm has brand value that is appealing to ethically conscious consumers, but for the producers, the most central part of direct trade has been the possibility of negotiating directly with a buyer and, therefore, of having more power to define the value of the commodity. The supply chains are shorter than those in traditional trade, but in practice, connective businesses are in most cases required between the farmer and the roasters. (Rosenberg et al. 2018: 207.)

The decision to not focus on direct trade as a way of trade influenced my choice of professionals and the organizations they represent for the interviews. Third-wave coffee is by itself not a clear concept, but as a subculture, and not a way of building business relationships, it has more room for porous borders and certain dynamics.

Most coffee bought and sold within the third-wave culture is specialty coffee, but it is important to notice that the establishments involved in the coffee business might have a heavy focus on specialty coffee and not identify in any way as part of the third-wave coffee culture. This is the definition provided by the Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA 2017):

The term ‘specialty coffee’ refers to the highest-quality green coffee beans roasted to their greatest flavor potential by true craftspeople and then properly brewed to well-

established SCAA developed standards. Specialty coffee in the green bean state can be defined as a coffee that has no defects and has a distinctive character in the cup, with a score of 80 or above when graded according to SCAA standards.

Since the establishment of the SCAA in 1982, it has been influential in sensorial analysis central to the coffee trade. The SCAA founded by coffee traders in the USA to discuss coffee issues and to set quality standards for the industry (Carvalho et al. 2016: 136). The SCAA has also standardized and specified different procedures for performing a more precise sensorial analysis of coffee, which is supposed to be conducted by accredited professionals (ibid.). The scoring system of the SCAA involves the measurement of something ‘intrinsic’ or a quality that is objective in the product; this usually encompasses the physical characteristics of a commodity.

However, the ability to assess quality is dependent on the resources, in terms of skills and devices, of the measurer. It is also important to note that symbolic quality attributes cannot be measured by human senses or devices. ‘Consumption of places, ethics or trademarks’ all have an effect on the experience of quality. (Daviron & Ponte 2005: 34.) This division is explained in more detail in the 4.3 *Centrality of Quality and Ethics in the Third Wave*.

Single-origin coffee, often sold inside the third-wave coffee business, has been used to emphasise on the provenance of coffee, but a simple shift towards marketing coffee blends instead of focusing on single-origin coffees might change the way the origin is a part of the marketing or the story of the coffee. It can be said that the quest for quality has, at least to some extent, overshadowed appeals for social justice: instead of demanding third-party involvement, like in the context of Fair trade, the consumer is led to believe that the expensive price and affiliation to artisanship and authenticity encompasses ethical production conditions. New technological gimmicks related to the ways of preparing coffee, such as nitrous infusions, might also diminish the importance of the bean and its origin. (Fischer 2017).

3 Research Questions

As discussed, the coffee business has deep colonial roots and affects masses of people in both the global North and South. The focus and material of this study is the global North, but ultimately, the point of interest is knowledge about conditions in the global South. In this work, I have decided to focus on a small niche in the market, referred to here as the third-wave coffee subculture. Even though the group is marginal, I believe that the opinions of this group provide a view of a larger phenomenon based on the ideas that drive the development of trade relations globally. These relations define the present and future state of livelihoods in the global South and further on contribute to wider societal development.

Over twenty years ago, the anthropologist William Roseberry wrote an article about coffee called *The Rise of Yuppie Coffees and the Reimagination of Class in the United States*. In this article, he posed a question: ‘Can the study of changing marketing and consumption patterns of a single commodity at a particular moment—even a mundane commodity produced for everyday and routine consumption—shed some light on a wider range of social and cultural shifts?’ (Roseberry 1996: 763). Of course, my quest is much more modest. I do, however, believe that my thesis resonates with this question, which is the inspiration for the research questions of this thesis. A cultural shift in consumption has indeed happened in the global North, as I will explain in subchapter 4.2 (*Placing the Phenomenon of the Third Wave in Context*).

Many consumers are demanding more of their purchases: they want to hear stories about the origins of the commodities; they want to make sure that they are not exploiting the producers; and they want quality. But how do these expectations intersect and override each other? I think that it is the need of the moment to study the theoretical basis of the changes in the coffee industry and the things that have remained unchanged or are a repetition of the past. To this end, I have applied the theories of cosmopolitanism and commodity fetishism to understand the material gathered and to answer the following research questions:

1. Are the representatives of the third-wave coffee subculture in the global North cosmopolitans in their thinking about ethics of coffee trade? Do the coffee professionals in the subculture epitomize cosmopolitan values in the discourses?
2. Is there an element of commodity fetishism when the coffee professionals of third-wave talk about the union of quality and ethics? Do the coffee third wave coffee professionals offer a new story to fill the void in the commodity? Is there still a veil of ignorance hiding the labour from the consumers?

The term 'personal relationship' has been chosen by the author as a label for a range of words derived from the interview material. This umbrella term has been juxtaposed against formal certification systems, as described in section 6.2 (*Certificates versus Personal Relationships: The Discourse of Doubt and Trust*), and the value it holds for the coffee professionals is also examined in subchapter 6.3 (*Different Market: The Discourse of Distinction*).

4 Framework: Previous Studies and Theoretical Concepts

The categorization of coffee production into three waves of consumption is not widely present in the literature to date (Rosenberg et al. 2018: 209). For this work, I had to reach outside of development studies to find sources that were relevant to the study, but as development studies is a multidisciplinary field, I found this to be only enriching. In this chapter, I will briefly list the main sources from the development studies, as they are most relevant to this thesis and mention few other ones. Then, I will explain the position of the third-wave coffee subculture in a wider societal context, outside of the coffee business. In the final subchapter, I will describe my theoretical framework.

4.1 Coffee in Development Studies and Other Central Sources

As expected, previous development studies on coffee and the ethics of its trade have often focused on the origin countries, and not so much on the coffee culture or business in the global North. One of the main sources for this study is a book referred to in many of the articles cited called *The Coffee Paradox* (2005) by Benoit Daviron and Stefano Ponte. The book deals with the question of commodity trade and its relation to development in a very comprehensive way, also including the consumer in the North. As a source, its only disadvantage was that it was published over a decade ago, during which period the developments in coffee culture and business were substantial. Another important reference for this thesis was the work done by Christopher Bacon, Anja Nygren and Joni Valkila on Fair-trade coffee, which was very useful although it focussed on fair-trade coffee.

Coffee has been one of the first and the biggest products in Fair trade. The Fair trade model rejects the neoliberal idea that increase in trade provides beneficial results for everybody, and the belief is that the imbalances in power lead to the exploitation of North–South trade relations. If Fair trade focuses on trade relations, organic certification focuses on the production process. Both ideas can be seen as ways of building alternative production and consumption networks. They offer the (affluent) consumer a technology with which social justice values can be aligned with taste, and a way of harmonizing 21st century capitalism with social and ecological justice. (Bacon 2005: 500, 506–8.)

In the article *Impacts of Fair Trade Certification on Coffee Farmers, Cooperatives, and Laborers in Nicaragua*, Valkila and Nygren (2009) present the idea that Fair trade promotes alternative ideas of quality, and examine this based on the notion of ‘quality conventions’, the central idea of which is that a universal understanding of quality does not exist but quality is assessed differently depending on the convention used. With the rise in certification schemes including Fair trade, conventions have started to include general societal values and civic conventions, making the quality conventions more ethics-based. In other words, the production and trade of a commodity are emphasised when examining the quality of the product. (Valkila & Nygren 2010: 323.) I find this to be an interesting lead to my analysis, which entails questions about quality as something that is presented objectively and is also constructed.

Other than from the field of development studies important sources for this study were works from John Manzo, Edward Fischer and John Talbot.

4.2 Placing the Third Wave in the Context of Consumer Culture

As described in the previous chapters, both the quest for quality and ethical trade are essential components of the third-wave subculture. The phenomenon of combining these quests is not new or related to only coffee. The birth of the group or the subculture of third-wave coffee has its roots in several big trends and overlapping processes—the demand for authenticity, bigger consumer appreciation for quality and segregation of distribution networks—phenomena of consumer behaviour that I will examine in this chapter. In a third-wave coffee shop, the price paid for coffee is usually higher than average, and in many ways, it can be described as a luxury. Of course, what we consider to be luxuries are constantly changing. Many mundane commodities of today were yesterday’s luxuries. In the age of cheap imported products of dubious origins, the ability to make choices that are in line with one’s values and beliefs seems to be a new kind of luxury.

Free trade has given many people all over the world new opportunities to better their lives, but many argue that this has been at a high cost to the workers and the environment. This is partly why corporations are often placed at the centre of new frameworks for responsibility taking and activism. For building identity or a better world, every day, people in the global North have to make a multitude of consumer choices between the

products of corporations. This requires evaluation of different aspects of the products at hand: price, quality, brand and so on. This multitude and volume of choices form the bases of the term or the concept 'consumer-citizen'. It refers to people who make choices between producers and product while keeping in mind their values concerning issues such as justice and fairness. The choices incorporate their understanding of material products as a part of the social and normative context. The term has divided scholars: some associate it with the demise of politics and citizenship and the rise of commodity-based and self-oriented identity, and they see it as something that will lead to the decline of social solidarity and the displacement of politics with capitalism and competition among individuals. Others see individual consumer choice as an interesting and creative force that could have similar effects as voting decisions in politics. Further, some see this kind of consumer behaviour as almost activism, and not just making consumer choices that one considers harm free. (Stolle & Micheletti 2013: 18–21, Micheletti 2010: 2–3.)

It is apparent that a new, less materialistic and status-related form of luxury consumption is indeed developing in the global North. This new form of consumption is less focused on price and visibility than traditional luxury consumption. A segment of consumers are willing to pay more for ecological and ethically produced products and the experience of perceived authenticity. Products that are interpreted as authentic and responsibly produced products are being considered as valuable or luxurious, and they have an image of quality and personal choice. Responsible consumerism is no longer just anti-consumerism, and luxury is no longer limited to valued brands and monetary value. Uniqueness and time spent on manufacturing of the product are highly valued. (Nyrhinen & Wilska 2012: 37–40.)

The quest for authentic experiences, or experiences that are perceived to be authentic, is one of the prominent features of the third-wave phenomenon. Authenticity is an individual estimate of what the subject holds to be real, true or genuine, and by acting in an authentic manner, a consumer builds distinction and emphasizes on individuality (Emontspool & Georgi 2016: 14). Consumption is now considered as a way of acquiring cultural capital and a form of socialization, and telling a story about the origin of the goods is a way to create an aura of authenticity around the product and let the consumer find a place for their authentic selves (Zukin 2008: 728, 735–6). Consumption has become a form of building identity, and our consumer habits have diversified in the last decades

and this demand has chance for new systems inside the business to develop. The third-wave coffee culture is an alternative for the consumer.

A few separate but overlapping processes have led to the birth of distribution channels that are often referred to as ‘alternative food networks’. The products of these networks, which are often local, fair, organic and so on, can be set apart from the products of mainstream food manufacturing and distribution networks. In the beginning, the distribution of these alternative food network products relied only on their own distribution channels such as charity shops. However, since the demand for alternative food network products has increased rapidly, particularly among middleclass consumers, more conventional distributors, such as super markets, have started to provide them. (Goodman 2003: 1–3.)

Quality—however it may be defined—has become a notable competitive advantage, and this shift has been called the ‘quality turn’. The quality turn has changed what food is considered ‘good’, social distinction and taste. The new construction of quality has had support from the rise of ethical consumption and the ‘moral imaginary’ of food, which are close relatives. These ideas encompass the concepts of ecological sustainability and social justice. ‘Moral geographies’ tie together the places of production in the South and the places of consumption in the North. Purchase can be seen as a way of participating in the development of the global South. It has been seen as something that can potentially change the producer–consumer relationship and the spaces where they are performed. Its driving force has been suspicion towards anonymous food production, particularly among well-off consumers. (Goodman 2003: 1–4.)

As with many other products, the situation is not equal in all parts of the production network that the corporations operate. The farmers in the global South and the third-wave coffee professionals in the global North control different parts of the production network. On the farmer’s side, production of the high-quality coffees that the third-wave coffee subculture idolizes requires specific farming conditions and skills. Soil, rainfall, altitude and processing techniques all have an impact on the taste and quality of the coffee. In principle, the farmer has control over the land. However, the means of producing *meaning* or ‘imaginative value’ belong to the coffee geeks in the North. This part of the production network is also where the monetary surplus value is added to the

coffee. The coffee professionals in the North define what is quality to them and taste, and their taste might be fickle. The possibly substantial investments the farmers make to please this taste might be in vain as the trends in consumer behaviour and preferences change. (Fischer 2017: 2).

4.3 Centrality of Quality and Ethics in the Third Wave

Daviron and Ponte (2005: 46–47) summarize the vast literature about quality definitions of, for example, a Starbucks coffee, which is considered to have three attributes: (1) material attributes such as taste, colour and so on; (2) symbolic attributes such as the whole concept of coffee shops and their ambience (some of which might be trademarked); (3) in-person service that takes place at the point of consumption. According to the writers, the heart of the problem is that coffee-producing countries cannot reach the symbolic and in-person quality, and it is in the interest of countries producing these attributes to keep the price of the commodity, which only has material quality attributes, as low as possible. Based on the same attributes of quality, in the article *Practices of Third Wave Coffee: A Burundian Producer's Perspective* (2018), Lauren Rosenberg, Mark Swilling and Walter J.V. Vermeulen have created a table to summarize the shifts in the meaning of quality between the waves, including the third. I have further simplified and modified the table for this work (Table 4).

According to coffee experts of the third wave, quality is ‘what is in the cup’. The quality is assessed using coffee cupping, which is a protocol¹ that was created to taste coffee based on the quality norms of the industry (Fischer 2017: 3, Holland et al. 2015). Through this custom, everyone in the coffee production network has a common language for communicating and discussing their subjective experiences (Rosenberg 2018: 206). The metric indicators for assessing the quality of coffee are meritocratic, as they include tasting certificates and multi-judge panels. The vocabulary for these reviews is promoted by coffee professionals in the third-wave coffee business. However, it can also be argued that this is just an apparatus to obscure the social construct that is a shared aesthetic

¹ SCAA has published guidelines for cupping protocols that are freely available. (<http://www.scaa.org/PDF/resources/cupping-protocols.pdf>)

evaluation regime intertwined with power relations and economic interests. (Fischer 2017.)

Quality is affected by not only taste and other physical qualities but also environmental concerns and knowledge about the related social, environmental and other ethical attributes. In the specialty coffee sector, quality is often presented as a function of the production characteristics, but the ability of corporate actors to author, appropriate and negotiate quality attributes through internally controlled structures gives quality a very political nature. Different grades, standards, certification regimes and trademarks have been developed as instruments through which quality is constructed and entry barriers are imposed by lead actors in global commodity chains to protect economic rents. (Neilson 2007: 192, 200–201.)

Quality attribute	First Wave	Second Wave (1966 to present)	Third Wave (2003 to present)
Material quality (formed in producing countries)	Unimportant, given that coffee was sold as instant soluble blends	Increased attention to material quality; introduction of ‘single origin’ (unblended) and ‘gourmet’ coffees	High-level fundamental to business models ‘Relationship coffee’ focused on enhancing material quality
Symbolic quality (formed in consumer countries)	Little/no information about origin or bean quality	Fundamental to business model Certified coffee (FairTrade, Organic, Rain Forest Alliance, UTZ) ‘Relationship coffee’ for philanthropic reasons	Generated by drawing attention to material quality Micro-lots enable high levels of traceability More transparency with farm gate prices
In-person service quality (formed in consumer countries)	In-home consumption Coffee was easily accessible and relatively cheap at supermarkets	Trained baristas to enhance cafe ambience The beginning of consumer education about coffee quality and espresso-based drinks and paying more for ‘quality’ coffee	Increased professionalism of the barista Consumer education about terroir

Table 4. Obtained from Rosenberg et al. 2018.

4.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study combines cosmopolitanism, Pierre Bourdieu's theory, Karl Marx's theory of commodity fetishism and the more recent 'double' commodity fetishism theory. In this chapter, I will explain briefly the main concepts behind the theories and provide some examples of their use in previous scholarly work on coffee. In few instances throughout the analyses, also Edwards W. Said's work *Orientalism* (1978) is applied and it works as a background for my thinking. The book is one of the key works of critical post-colonial thinking.

4.4.1 Cosmopolitanism and the Bourdieusian Approach

From Ancient Greece and Enlightenment onwards, cosmopolitanism was the concept used to define individuals whose approach to life includes more than just the local context and lifestyle, both from the moral and aesthetic perspective (Emontspool & Georgi 2016: 3–5). In many studies, the concept of cosmopolitanism has been used to describe how the consumption of exotic food is a way of absorbing them into one's own identity, but there is one study that pertains to coffee, too: in 2013, Sonia Bookman published the article *Branded Cosmopolitanisms: 'Global' Coffee Brands and the Co-creation of 'Cosmopolitan Cool'* on second-wave specialty coffee consumers. According to Bookman, coffee shop chains such as Starbucks and Second Cup, which are products of the second wave of coffee, have appealed to consumers' cosmopolitan streak by telling stories about the origin of the coffee and by communicating about their involvement in social responsibility programs. However, consumers have also been sceptical and seen these acts as merely token gestures: at the end of the day, consumers seem to be of the opinion that profit is the only target of big companies. (Bookman 2013: 64–65.)

I chose the cosmopolitan approach to specially study the connection between the moral and aesthetic perspectives: Can one exist without the other? I also wanted to explicate how consumption can be a way of absorbing ideals into oneself.

Cosmopolitans are defined as people who move and interact between cultures as agents. For them, the world is a net of social relationships across regions where people, commerce and meanings travel. Cosmopolitanism is openness to cultural diversity and a sense of

belonging to a global humanity. It is an orientation towards the Other, a willingness to engage with it and the competence to do so. In this competence lies the narcissistic streak of cosmopolitanism: it is constructed for oneself and to have a sense of control over the world. The chosen pieces of cultures became a part of the individual's identity. This can be described as an interplay between submission and mastery, where the cosmopolitan surrenders to the foreign culture but remains autonomous at the same time. The cosmopolitan, as well as 'the local', are interested in preserving cultural diversity—the local as a home and the cosmopolitan as something to indulge in. (Hannerz 1990: 237–240.)

In the article *A cosmopolitan return to nature: how combining anesthetization and moralization processes expresses distinction in food consumption*, Julie Emontspool and Carina Georgi (2016) examine whether the ideals of cosmopolitanism existed in the foodies' adoption of New Nordic Food. In this work, I will use a similar approach to the interview material included in the analysis, by trying to differentiate between moral and aesthetic cosmopolitanism.

From the perspective of aesthetics, there is a constant quest for new exotic dishes. People build their identities and 'culinary capital' by collecting experiences from a diverse cultural range. From the moral perspective, cosmopolitanism is rooted in the ideas of global human rights and citizenship. Consumer behaviour can reflect moral cosmopolitanism through a more individualized and less engaged form of consumption than ethical consumption. The underlying idea is that our responsibilities transcend the borders of nation states and all humans are part of one ecosystem. Such understanding can be gained by increasing our knowledge on the kind of effect that humans actually have on the planet. Moral cosmopolitanism can lead to political action, but it also has an effect on consumer behaviour. The linking of moral cosmopolitanism to aesthetic cosmopolitanism has been seen as a way to explore how the gap between ideal consumer behaviour and actual consumer behaviour might be bridged, especially among wealthy consumers: conscious choices can be seen as awarding the individual with 'eco-habitus' and therefore helping them build distinction (Emontspool & Georgi, 2016: 3–5).

As a concept, cosmopolitanism has also had criticism. It is important to note that at least among social scientists, cosmopolitanism can easily turn into a vague concept that

encompasses everything good and is opposed to closure, xenophobia, localism or nationalism. As such, it can be easy to re-enforce current power structures without dismantling them. (Spasić 2011.)

The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's notion of habitus and his wider work is closely related to cosmopolitanism. Habitus can be described as a learned 'system of dispositions', that is, classificatory schemes, preferences and tendencies that manifest in the body and practices, including taste, that are shaped through various types of capital an individual has or acquires. Cosmopolitan habitus refers to global awareness that affects practices in day-to-day life and makes it possible to navigate cultural differences. In the global context, it can be seen as a privileged position. As an idea, cosmopolitanism has its root in Kant's political theory and the philosophy of world citizenship, and can be seen as a political project. In this work, I focus on the concept of 'soft cosmopolitanism', which is built more on the idea that consumption is an essential part of forming identity and much less on the idea that cosmopolitanism is a political stance. (Bookman 2013: 57, 59.)

In the theory of class distinction, Pierre Bourdieu argues that the hobbies of an individual or their taste in the arts can be seen as an asset of cultural capital, and this capital can be, through various strategies, transformed into economic capital and status. The development of expertise and taste regimes is typical in all societies and subcultures: it is a normative system that dictates the aesthetic preferences in that culture. Knowledge of this system indicates good taste and makes the knower a part of a privileged consumer class and builds distinction (Emontspool & Georgi 2016: 3, Alasuutari 1994: 45). In the context of coffee, it can be said that coffee is never just 'coffee'. The beans always have an origin and the method to process them has always been chosen by someone. There are many ways to prepare coffee drinks, and it can be served with or without additives, such as sugar and milk, and in different kinds of cups. Thus, coffee is a symbol of other things, and by making coffee choices an individual indicates their cultural capital (Morris 2013: 883).

The Bourdieusian take on coffee can be found in the article *Coffee, Connoisseurship, and Ethnomethodologically-Informed Sociology of Taste* by John Manzo (2010). In his article, Manzo has examined North American 'home baristas', who are a prominent part of the third-wave coffee culture. By analysing the web forum discussions among the

group, he argues that a defining part of the culture is the taste, which is the result of a lot of effort and work. It involves the investment of both time and money by its members (Manzo 2010: 144, 147). Manzo claimed that most of the participants on the forums are male and probably from the middle or upper class, but the relevance of this was beyond the scope of the article. He describes how being ‘a coffee geek’ is a subculture, and how place and respect cannot be earned based on ethnicity, wealth or gender. This subculture cannot be examined through traditional models of distinction, that is, through the ‘social aspects of coffee consumption, based on the question of the relationship between persons’ social statuses and their coffee-related preferences’. According to Manzo, such an examination would most probably lead us to customers of Starbucks and the like—exactly the group that the subculture is trying to differentiate itself from (Manzo 2010: 153–155).

Another relevant concept from Pierre Bourdieu’s work that is relevant to this study is that of social capital. Social capital is something an individual gains by belonging to a group, be it an official institution or an unofficial one. The group has common ‘credentials’ that the person is able to use. The volume of social capital, however, depends on the amount of connections the person has within the group and the amount of different kinds of capital—social, cultural and economic. According to Bourdieu, these ties must be constantly strengthened in order for them to stay valuable. (Bourdieu 1983: 249–251.)

4.4.2 Commodity Fetishism and ‘Double’ Commodity Fetishism

Another theory I see beneficial for my analysis, which was also previously used for analysis of the consumption of ‘exotic food’, is Karl Marx’s idea of commodity fetishism. Research on the psychology of consumer capitalism has indicated that commodity fetishism is essential for a consumer to be able to enjoy the bounty of it. We, the consumers, need collective amnesia about the origins of the products in order for us to be able to consume them (Billig 1999: 313).

It should be noted that even though coffee is considered to have become decommodified or to be ‘moving away from commodity status’ (Daviron & Ponte 2005: xvii), the term ‘commodity’ in the Marxian sense focuses more on the role of the commodity in the exchange that forms the labour of a society, and not as a good that has a quality standard system in the market shared by most involved in the trade.

According to Marx (1887), the origin of commodity fetishism can be found in the peculiar social character of the labour that produces them. For Marx, the labour of society is formed by the labour of individuals. The individual producers come in contact with each other only through exchange, and even then, indirectly through their products of labour. The relationship is not between people but ‘material relations between persons and social relations between things’. All individual labour merges into societal labour through exchange, and an exchange is how a utility becomes a commodity and derives its peculiar nature. In order to participate in the exchange that creates the labour of society, the labour of an individual must acquire two characteristics: it must meet a social want in the system of division of labour and it must hold meaning for individuals other than the producer. This value is not that of a utility but social value, and it can only be valued inside the capitalist system (Marx 1887: 47–54).

The theory of commodity fetishism tries to explain that as observed in barter, the people involved come to understand their relationship through the products of their labour: that is, it is a relationship between things and not people. In commodity capitalism, all the social, environmental, and historical relations of production are hidden, behind a proverbial veil. According to Marx, a commodity has a dual nature comprised of use value and exchange value. A commodity has a life of its own: it bears the value, not the labour. For Marx, the phenomenon of commodity fetishism is a character of capitalism. Other economic systems organize labour socially, but in capitalist system, the exploitative class relationships are hidden behind a veil. Not only is a portion of the surplus value created from work collected by the capitalist, but also, work is turned into a commodity and therefore loses its creative force for the worker. Without any interaction with the consumer, the work is not meaningful for the producer and becomes just a means of consumption. (Hudson & Hudson 2003: 413–417.)

In the article *The World on a Plate—Culinary Culture, Displacement and Geographical Knowledges*, Ian Cook and Philip Crang (1996) write about how ‘double’ commodity fetishism entails the rationing of knowledge about the source of the commodity, when it is communicated to the consumer. First, information about the origin and the people behind the manufacturing process are hidden from the eyes of and by the consumer. The product arrives from the world of production to the world of consumption, and after this, the product is in some sense mute, hollow of meaning. In the second phase of double

commodity fetishism, this hollow is filled in. This is achieved by assigning commodities qualities other than their functions in order to differentiate them from their standardized counterparts. According to Cook and Crang, this happens on a journey through ‘circuits of culinary cultures’, where knowledge about the food and the food itself is consumed. Construction and reconstruction are all actors involved in the production, circulation and consumption of those meanings attached to the food. Through the circuits, knowledge about settings, biographies and origins is being produced. There are several strategies for doing this, and some might become more dominant in some industries than others. The strategies include emphasizing or downsizing existing voices in the process, translating knowledge, representing or claiming to represent other’s interest in the process, and surplus extractions, through which economic and cultural capitals are increased. (Cook & Crang 1996: 132, 140–142.)

5 Methodology and Material

In this chapter, I will explain the methodology adopted in this work, reflect briefly on my own position as a researcher, and then continue by describing the material used in the empirical section of this study.

5.1 Case Study Approach

The research strategy is a case study approach. The aim is to shed light on a phenomenon that there is too little knowledge of, in this case, the thinking within the third-wave coffee subculture. In a case study, the process is inductive: that is, information from singular sources is collected to form common knowledge (Laine et al. 2007: 29). A case is a construct made to organize knowledge: it can be defined as ‘an edited chunk of empirical reality where certain features are marked out, emphasized, and privileged while others recede into the background’ (Lund 2014: 224).

With the case study approach, it is important to separate the case and the research object (Laine et al. 2007: 10–11). The case of this study is the subculture of third-wave coffee, but the aim of the research is wider. I hope that the material gathered in this case adds to the knowledge that thinking coffee professionals within this phenomenon have about the relationships they build with the origin of the product they sell to the consumer.

5.2 Discourse Analysis as a Tool

As a definition, discourses represent a certain version of reality (Keller 2013: 268). They are practices that systematically transform and shape the objects they speak of (Taylor et al. 2001: 268). As the aim of this work was to shed light on the views and ideas the group interviewed held, I chose discourse analysis to reveal the ‘version of reality’ from the perspective of the coffee professionals. I was curious about what they saw as facts and what they had doubts about, and how this was expressed. It is my belief that the language used is significant for the material reality, too, and has an effect on the lives of the less powerful in the chain or network of production.

Language is a practice that not only describes how things are, but also builds meanings in the social world we live in. When we use language, we construct the object we speak of and write about. Even in the most seemingly neutral descriptions, there are hidden

assumptions of what we see as natural. One of the qualities of discourse analysis is to reveal these types of constructs and their varieties. (Jokinen et al. 2016: 26–27.)

A constructive look at language entails the idea of socially shared systems of meanings, often called discourses, that are built as part of social conduct. The systems are formed through words and sentences, and also through gestures and other non-verbal acts of communication. These meanings are in relation to one another and some form dichotomies, such as industrialized countries and developing countries. Social reality does not hold only one system of meaning but a variety of them. These systems can be competitive or exist simultaneously. These systems of meaning do not construct the social reality on their own but are defined in relation to each other. This is called interdiscursiveness or intertextuality. In the smallest form, context can refer to how to a word can be understood as a part of a sentence. Many words have various meaning potentials, and what is meant by the speaker is revealed through the context. This analysis expands circularly so that a sentence can be reviewed as part of a whole formed by the sentences and so on. (Jokinen et al. 2016: 27–32, 34–35, 37.)

Since discourses are produced and converted in different kinds of social practices, the context that is analysed is not seen as a distraction but as a feature of the discursive world that enriches the material. In practice and in this study, this could mean that the interactive nature of the material gathered is not seen as a defect but as a characteristic that must be given its due consideration. This is especially important when analysing interview material, as it is an interaction context on its own. (Jokinen et al. 2016: 37–38.)

As I used semi-structured interviews for gathering the material, the proximity, variation and relationships of concepts and discourses was, to some extent, provided by the researcher. Moreover, it is important to note that the analysis was conducted on transcribed recording material, so non-verbal communication was not part of the analysis. My approach to studying ethical issues in trade might have had an influence on how these topics were emphasized in the material. One factor that affected the material might have been that the interviewees had in-depth knowledge about coffee and were all familiar with the basic ethical and sustainability issues related to it, so they might have been ‘speaking to an invisible audience’ (Jokinen et al. 2016: 40) and responding to criticisms they already had knowledge of.

The aim of discourse analysis is not to go beyond the material studied, but to use knowledge about the cultural context outside of it (Jokinen et al 2016: 39). Other methods of analysis, such as quantitative analysis of the content, would not have provided sufficient results and the material gathered would not have been representative of any group. Each of the interviewees used slightly different vocabulary when speaking about these issues. When talking about quality, some prefer to talk about taste, for example. As a researcher, I used the knowledge I have gained from following the coffee scene for a few years and tried to read the cultural context at hand to recognize the pattern from the choice of words.

5.3 Ethical Considerations and the Researcher's Position

As my research was conducted in the global North, it was easy to bypass the very common ethical dilemmas that many development researchers have to face in relation to vulnerable communities or persons. I shared a common language (Finnish or English) with all the people interviewed, and there was no significant power imbalance between us, from a global perspective, as we are all very privileged.

In my interviews, I was very open about my topic, research methods, aims and other interviewees. As the coffee circles are small, most the Finnish participants knew each other. Permission to record the interviews was always obtained, and I made it clear when the tape recorder was turned on and when it was turned off. When analysing the material, I pondered about the issue of whether I would be unnecessarily critical of the statements the coffee professionals made. At times, I wondered if I was distant enough to stay neutral and to not make any favourable or unfavourable interpretations based on previous encounters or other knowledge I had. I have been following the topic of third-wave coffee for five years or so, but I would not say that I have ever entirely immersed myself in the culture. On the other hand, I wondered whether my years of studying development put me in a position that made it difficult to fairly assess the statements of the interviewees about certain topics such as Fair trade, since they are not and do not claim to be development professionals. This taught me to understand the societal value of my education better and made me see new ways to apply it in the future. Given this circumstance, one of my priorities during the interview process was to stay respectful of the interviews, their thoughts and their work.

The focus of this study was the case of the global North. This was convenient to the researcher, but the choice was also a conscious one. The developing countries and the rest of the world are bound together by a countless number of connections, and these connections are as much as the study object of development studies as the internal conditions and structures of developing countries are (Koponen et al. 2007: 15). I have always felt that my strength as a researcher lay in the observation of the familiar and not the foreign, and I feel that there is much work to be done before Finnish society understands its position in questions that trace back to colonial conditions.

I do believe that my research could be beneficial to the discussion within the business about ethical issues in the trade. I think that there is a need for much more discussion in the coffee business about the bases of ethics, claims that are made about ethics and quality, and the actual effects this segment has on coffee trade. I hope to be able to give back in some way to the third-wave coffee community and to continue the discussion about these themes in the future, especially in terms of shifting focus on the factors that affect the producers in the South.

5.4 Data Collection: Material for Empirical Analyses

In this chapter I will briefly provide my own background in coffee and the group in general, then I will describe the process used to choose the people I interviewed and provide some background information about them. Based on the group interviewed, I also gathered online material to enrich the study material further and this will be presented. I will then move on to the analysis of the material, by introducing the three discourses I identified through the interviews and website material.

Many informal encounters and discussions around coffee in coffee shops in cities like Copenhagen, Berlin and Stockholm were essential for this study, as they provided the researcher with a more thorough understanding of the context, as well as further refined the research interests. I have been following the topic of third-wave coffee for about five years. Observing everyday social interactions, reading magazines and following the online presences of the people and businesses in third-wave coffee proved to be valuable in understanding the interplay norms, roles, identities and power.

This thesis would not have been possible had I not taken part in a Coffee Academy course in 2014 organized by Kalle Freese, a prominent figure in the coffee scene and in the third-wave coffee community in Finland at that time. The course provided me with good basic knowledge about coffee as a product and a glimpse into the lives of professionals in the third-wave coffee subculture. Another valuable experience was a visit to the Helsinki Coffee Festival in April 2017, where I listened to various talks, tried different coffees and observed the coffee ‘nerds’, as they call themselves.

The individuals interviewed for this work were all professionals in the coffee business. From a Bourdieusian view, one could say that they have all spent years *acquiring knowledge* (Calhoun 2006: 1411) on coffee. Further, it could be said that by working in the coffee business, they have succeeded in converting their cultural and social capital, through engagement in activities, into economic capital. Many of them stated that coffee was more than just a commodity to them: through this consumer good, they had gained friends, networks, pleasure and meaning.

How can one identify a person or an establishment that is part of the third-wave coffee culture? The simplest way is to ask them directly, but the definition of this term is fleeting and constantly evolving. In my opinion, after a while of immersing oneself in coffee culture, one develops an eye. In many cities, third-wave coffee shops also entail part gentrification of an area, as is commonly thought of about coffee shops (Papachristos et al. 2011: 215). Big companies tend to appropriate the aesthetics of trendy smaller coffee shops, but there are subtle cues that distinguish smaller businesses: the filter coffee is not kept on a hotplate (you are supposed to pour it in a thermos after dripping), the staff might encourage you to try the coffee black and sometimes sell beautiful Japanese coffee merchandise for preparing good coffee at home too. The cafés are shrines for good coffee. The main idea is to prioritise the coffee first and to be able to tell stories about it. Further, in most third-wave coffee shops, the emphasis on quality usually extends beyond coffee. Many of these shops also carry quality tea. When I asked for something other than coffee (as I had reached my caffeine intake limit for the day) from Jani Mikkonen, the owner of Café Artist, he proudly recommended a coke drink that had been chosen as the best in the world. Even the glass bottle was lovely.

With the knowledge from these observations, I started the quest of finding my informants, mainly by asking the people I had met personally. I started with Julia, who I had met at the coffee course in 2014, and who had since landed a job at one of the most prominent third-wave cafés in Helsinki and had started to compete as a barista. I also asked all the people interviewed to recommend others who I should talk to, and many of them referred others, especially Lauri, Lari and Svante. This is called a snowball sampling method, which is usually used when groups are hard to reach, such as in the case of groups associated with unlawful activities (Saunders et al. 2007: 232). This was not the case here, but it was difficult to find members in this niche community and I therefore had to rely on informal recommendations from other interviewees. It is important to note that this method carries a risk of bias, as people are likely to direct the researcher to others who are similar to themselves (ibid. 233). However, this was useful in the case of this study, as it was essential to find a fairly homogenous group of coffee professionals that shared the ideas of the third-wave coffee subculture.

With only eight interviewees, the sample size is very small, but so is the group that they represent. In Finland, there are only around 20 small (Finnwatch 2016: 20) roasteries, and not all of them are part of the third-wave subculture. I wanted to interview people from organizations that had connections to either green coffee buyers or to coffee farmers, and not cafés that only sell their products. The target group was passionate and busy coffee professionals, especially entrepreneurs. A few politely declined my request for an interview, on account of their busy schedule, and a few did not reply despite many attempts to contact them.

When presenting the people interviewed, I have decided to use the real first names of the informants in the analysis, without naming the organizations they represent. The topic of study is not sensitive enough to require complete anonymization of the informants at the expense of openness or readability. Further, it would be relatively easy to recognize the interviewees, especially for their colleagues, as the industry is very small. Yet, I decided not to use their full names as I did not want to place too much emphasis on who said what. This is because the informants were primarily participants in the discourses I analysed. I also did not want to affect their digital foot print too much by directing searches with their name to my thesis, if it were, or parts of it were published online.

None of them held any prominent public positions, so it was not important to particularly emphasize on the source of the quotation.

A brief description of the interviewed individuals is presented below.

1. Talor, who started her own business after working for 15 years in a prominent third-wave coffee organization
2. Svante, CEO of a Finnish coffee company
3. Manuel, founder of a Finnish coffee distribution company
4. Peter, managing director and green bean buyer for a Danish coffee company
5. Julia, who has worked as a manager in a third-wave coffee shop and roastery and competed in barista championships
6. Viivi, who works in a Finnish roastery and is the leader of a specialty coffee organization
7. Lauri, founder of a Finnish roastery and coffee shop
8. Lari, managing director of the Finnish branch of a Swedish coffee company

All eight interviews were conducted in the spring of 2017. All interviews included in the analyses were semi-structured thematic interviews: that is, pre-selected questions were used, but the semi-structured format also allowed for new topics and themes to emerge as the conversation flowed freely (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 43, 47). Six interviews in Finland were conducted at the informants' work place—an office, roastery or a coffee shop. Two interviews were conducted via Skype. Three women and four men were interviewed. The interviews were recorded with interviewees verbal permission and transcribed later on.

I also conducted a semi-structured interview with café owner Jani Mikkonen and listened to his talk at the Fast Food and Coffee Festival on 9th March 2017. The recording for the interview was unfortunately lost. However, the interview was very important for me because it broadened my understanding of the third-wave coffee subculture and its

distinction from the specialty coffee culture in general and the broad use of the concept ‘direct trade’. This interview is not part of the main discourse analysis in the thesis.

I also interviewed Mia Nikander-Oren from Cafetoria Roastery, a Helsinki-based café and roastery. Even though the interview provided valuable insight into the coffee business, it is not part of the discourse analysis because the company she represents is not part of the third-wave coffee subculture. This is mainly because she stated herself that she does not feel like she is a part of the subculture, and because the company has a different approach to certifications than the organizations I included in the material of the study. The latter characteristic proves relevant later on in this work.

All of the interviewees emphasized on how important the topic was to them; many of them even thanked me for researching the topic and were eager to hear about the results. I honestly felt that the topic was close to their hearts.

In retrospect, I could have also considered group interviews as a time-efficient way of gathering information from the group studied. However, as all of them were very busy professionals and entrepreneurs, it would have been almost impossible to schedule a group discussion. Another option in terms of methodology could have been ethnographic observations of a few workplaces to understand how the themes I am interested in were discussed in a more natural setting than in an interview. However, this would have required too much time, and the semi-structured individual interviews were the best option within the time frame I had.

Alternatively, instead of focusing on people in the coffee business, I could have focused on the consumers and their beliefs, especially because of the extensive body of work in the field of consumer studies. I did struggle with whether this was a viable option. However, I felt that focusing on these passionate coffee professionals and their beliefs was an interesting and relevant area of study. The professionals were also coffee consumers themselves, but through their work, they had a direct influence on the livelihoods in the countries of origin, which I found to be essential for the developmental relevance of this work. They operate in a marginal albeit growing section of the coffee business, but it is in the margins that the wider trends are often born. Through what they called customer education and communication, they also operated as gatekeepers to the

general public. Few of the have also appeared in the media since in many coffee related pieces.

In addition to the interviews, I also collected the website material from the seven businesses that were connected to the eight people that were interviewed. At the time of the interview, two of them were affiliated with the same company. All the websites were visited in November 2018. Five of the websites were in Finnish and two were in English. For the discourse analysis, the most relevant material from the websites was found under headlines such as 'Our coffee' or 'About us', where many themes present in the interviews were also identified. Some of the websites only included a few chapters of text in total. Possible blog post on the website were left out of the study, but these could provide material for further studies on the topic. I find it important to note that none of the websites had separate corporate responsibility or sustainability subpages, but the themes of ethical trade and production were discussed in most. The names of the companies are not included, to preserve the anonymity of the interviewees.

A brief description of the businesses included is presented below.

- A) Finnish roastery with few coffee shops
- B) Finnish branch of a Swedish coffee company
- C) Finnish coffee distribution company focusing on coffee from small roaster
- D) Norwegian roaster with one coffee shop
- D) Danish coffee company with a roaster and a few coffee shops
- F) Finnish roastery with one coffee shop
- G) Finnish roastery with one coffee shop

To support my work, I used the Atlas.ti program to code the material examined to discover similar patterns between topics and choice of words. Three discourses were identified from the material: Certificates versus Personal Relationships: The Discourse of Doubt and Trust, Different Market: The Discourse of Distinction, Tearing the Veil by Cooperation: The Discourse of Co-working for Quality and Ethics.

6 Analysis of the Empirical Material

This chapter will describe the empirical analyses of the material described in the previous chapter. The analysis is divided into three separate discourses, the background for which can be found in the theoretical framework presented in the fourth chapter of this study.

6.1 Certificates versus Personal Relationships: The Discourse of Doubt and Trust

When analysing the material, my quest was to determine if the professionals expressed ideas that could be interpreted as cosmopolitan in the theoretical sense (as discussed in detail in the subchapter *Cosmopolitanism and the Bourdieusian Approach*). I wanted to examine if the coffee professionals of the third wave could be connected to the tradition of cosmopolitan actors who are willing and able to navigate foreign realms and add chosen fractions from it to their identities.

To add to the knowledge about the value base of forming trade relations in this context, I decided to focus my analyses mainly on two themes in the material: (1) the views and beliefs the coffee professional held regarding certification schemes and personal relationships to the coffee producers and (2) how these were evaluated as a means to guarantee ethical premises for coffee production. My aim was to determine whether a cosmopolitan discourse could be identified in the material and whether such a discourse could be identified in the rationalization of the trade relations as being ethical. I identified two discourses that I recognized as being related to different characteristics in cosmopolitan thinking: the first was distinction and the second was doubt and trust.

In forming the discourse around doubt and trust, I have drawn heavily from the theory of cosmopolitanism by Ulf Hannerz, who describes cosmopolitanism as an ‘interplay of submission and mastery’ (Hannerz 1990: 237–240). Trust and doubt in institutions and individuals is at the core of this discourse: the individual positions herself in the cross bet of being a competent agent in a web of production where reliance on others is needed in order to operate. She must try to find a strategy to cope with the limitations of knowledge in a business that is heavily based on information about the actual conditions of farming. She must choose the voices that are relevant for her in order to build trust with someone.

In this discourse, this strategy was above all—to aim to form personal relationships with the coffee farmers. Building trust between the producers and the consumer has also been central in certification systems (Daviron & Vagneron 2011: 98), but the instrument is different.

In most cases, with the exception of perhaps marriage, personal relationships are built on trust, and not formal contracts that seal them. Therein lies their strength, but also their weakness. These relationships might feel authentic to us, but they are not legally binding. When money is involved, individuals are usually instructed to make formal agreements. Of course, like everybody else in business, third-wave coffee professionals use formal contracts with farmers or the green coffee buyers they use when agreeing on price and quantity. However, ethical considerations do not fall in the same realm as physical transactions: they largely remain in the realm of personal relationships where trust is needed but some doubt is present. This does not mean that formal agreements about these issues are extinct in this segment of the coffee business. There is just no jointly agreed upon or widely accepted system of ensuring ethical premises for the production. It seems that scepticism about certification is inherent in the subculture, as is the importance of personal ties to the coffee production chain.

In the material, I found that direct *vis-a-vis* personal relationships and seeing the origin of the coffee with one's own eyes were built as an ideal for the business and a fair amount of trust was placed on these elements. You really needed to have been there, or at least you should think about going. The people interviewed who had not been to 'the source', that is, the coffee farms, had a stand on it: Viivi jokingly described the source as El Dorado, Svante said that other people in the organization had travelled to the farms, Manuel emphasized on how important it was that their partner organizations had direct relationships and so on. Interestingly, Talor had a different approach. Even though she valued the relationship she had been able to form with a producer via information technology, she explained, *'Go to a farm and take a picture with a producer and post it to Instagram. It makes my skin crawl, actually. For me, it feels--it actually feels kind of like, as I said before, like colonial. And yeah, it makes me enormously uncomfortable. I actually have never--like, in the 15 years I've been working in specialty, I've actually never travelled to origin, and part of that is because I feel really uncomfortable being a*

middle-class white woman going to a farm'. Based on all of the material, she was very familiar with the discourse, but she positioned herself differently.

Five of the people interviewed expressed some degree of abstract or vague worry about the extent to which having a personal relationship with the producers guaranteed ethical performance at the farm. The professionals had to trust because they could never know for sure. None of the coffee professionals referred to any actual instances where trust had been broken, even when the question was posed. Julia even used dark humour to combat this doubt: *'But from what I've seen, from what I've heard from pickers that are working on these projects and from—it's video, so who knows. Maybe they beat them with a stick or something [laughter]. No idea, but talking with coffee farmers--'*.

The coffee professionals expressed slight worry about the green buyer label too, but this was more in principle: *'Can anyone really be trusted?'* Trust was something the coffee professionals valued and was seen as vital for cooperation and the business. *'I don't know, somehow I just don't want to believe that, that I need to be so sceptical, that I couldn't have trust in this kind of matter'*, said Viivi, when referring to their green buyer way of operating without certificates. The limitations of friendships or personal relationships were acknowledged, but it was also pointed out that without trust, no relationship could be formed or trade could be made. *'Or I would like, or I kind of believe, that the coffees we buy are sort of from the ethical end. But I am also aware of that at this moment it is based on mainly that, we know, or what our friends are saying, I dare to call them mates, who we buy coffee from, since we have known each other since years. But because we don't go each year ourselves, to the farm, where the coffee comes from, I don't know, I think it is a complex trade they do. That that you could be one hundred percent sure, it is still a bit difficult'*, Lauri said, when talking about their green buyer. In the end, *a posteriori* knowledge was considered as trustworthy knowledge.

The other way around, trust as an issue that the producers could be worried about does not show up too much in the material, except in the case of Talor, who wanted to buy the entire crop but found that they also had to make compromises in material quality in order to build an actual relationship with the producers. Similarly, Svante said, *'The farmer is a partner, who wants us to buy and pay a price that is a bit better. Then we buy that too,*

we can't really hesitate and be like, come on, this score is 89 this year, when last year it was 90'.

In the discourse, personal relationship was found to play a dual role, being central in both symbolic and material quality. In addition to being a guarantee for ethics, it was seen as an essential way of getting the best result, which is good coffee. *'It starts from a good connection to the coffee and to those people involved in it, so that you kind of form these tight personal relationships, know the farmers, farmers know the roasters, roasters know the clients'*, said Manuel, when talking about why the coffee professionals in the subculture refuse certificates. This is dealt with in more detail in the third discourse (*Co-working for Quality and Ethics*).

Interestingly, similar friction between trust and doubt can be found in the discussion about certificates. The moral side of cosmopolitanism is to be aware of one's place in the global ecosystem and all the coffee professionals told that ethics are important for them and this was central in most of the websites. One might assume that an organization trying to make positive changes in the system would be celebrated in the subculture. However, all of the people interviewed expressed doubt about the current certification systems, mainly with regard to Fair trade and certificated organic coffee, and some named this doubt to be a part of the Third Wave culture. In the case of six of the interviewees, their concern was money, particularly in the origin countries. The coffee professionals held the belief that the certificates were too expensive and problematic, especially for small-scale farmers. In a few instances, for example, Julia here, this was stated as a fact (something that the interviewer should have been aware of already): *'...and the problem is as you know, a lot of those certificates costs money that smallholders might not have'*. Further, the monetary rewards for the farmers for belonging to certification systems were assumed as not being sufficient, and the certification was even seen as somehow obstructing trade that could be more beneficial for the farmer than the certification. *'The commodity price, it's usually a dollar or so more than the commodity price, and I think that we have a market that's willing to pay more. It's just we need to be able to get access to that coffee and then be able to try and connect it with consumers'*, said Talor.

Some also found that the division between the certificates related to environmental issues and labour issues was problematic and even harmful and required them to make choices

that they did not wish to make. *‘Brazilian farmers say that if you buy something that is just organic, you are most likely buying something with slave labour in the background’*, Lari noted. Here again, the depiction was in complete contrast to the one in which he described his own visit to the farm. According to him, there, the people and the environment both prospered without certificates. However, on the website of the organization for which Lari worked.

The criticism about the certification system was not all encompassing in the subculture and some organizations did have coffees labelled as organic on their websites. Five of the people interviewed did see the market as segregated so that certificated coffees had a place in the supermarket segment or in ‘bulk’ coffee. Inside that context, they felt the responsible choice would be to buy coffee with a certificate. One interviewee mentioned that the impact of the mainstream component of the coffee business on the lives of the large number of producers was huge as compared to its impact on the small number of roasters. This segregation is something I will discuss further in my analysis of the discourse of distinction.

A few interviewees admitted that they did not know much about how the Fair trade system actually worked, but made assumptions about it. They also tended to soften their choice of words by using disclaimers such as *‘according to my understanding’*, as if to say that they were not sure if their beliefs were based more on an idea than on a fact: *‘I’m not sure how the Fair trade thing works, but I assuming that it’s a set price’*, said Lauri. Interestingly, Talor referred to her personal relationships also when she spoke in favour of Fair trade as an organization: *‘But I do know some people who work in that organization that I respect an enormous amount’*.

If cosmopolitanism is seen as a moral obligation and a universal value (Spasić 2011), the discourse built around ethical sourcing was very cosmopolitan, especially morally cosmopolitan. All of the people interviewed said that building a fair network for everyone involved in the production of coffee was important, and the means of doing that was primarily by building personal relationships along the coffee chain. Further, the professionals had typically formed an idea about who the farmers were, what their lives were like and what was good for them. According to two of the interviewees, taking pride in one’s work was a universal need that applied to the farmers, too, and they could meet

this need if they could work on producing quality coffee. On the other hand, there were no references to culture; it seemed that they did not view the exotic cultures of the farmers as ‘a home or as something to indulge’ (Hannerz 1990: 237–240).

6.2 Different Market: The Discourse of Distinction

The second discourse I recognized in the interview material is one of distinction. If cosmopolitanism has an individualistic streak, especially aesthetic cosmopolitanism, this was very evident in this discourse in the form of building distinction. To analyse this distinction, I have relied on Pierre Bourdieu’s work.

Emontspool & Georgi (2016) write that cosmopolitans collect ‘culinary capital’ through ‘exotic dishes’, but I feel that acquiring this kind of taste also involves building up towards it. All of the people interviewed shared the idea that coffee from different regions and circumstances was distinctive and tasted different. They also believed that they, as individuals, were capable, at least to some degree, of differentiating between the tastes. From the viewpoint of cosmopolitanism, the third wave as a subculture has built a taste regime for its members that the members have embraced. This regime involves the ability to consciously consume different kinds of regions and evaluate their products and this is knowledge and skill that can be transferred.

Six out of the eight people interviewed talked about how it was important to educate their customers about the concept of quality and ethical considerations. They hoped that the consumers would start buying less, but good quality, coffee. Three of the websites talked about changing coffee culture and providing knowledge to customers. This knowledge seems to entail both knowledge about material quality and about ethics. A few interviewees mentioned that certification was a topic that people did not have good knowledge of. Peter even seemed frustrated with the issue, and he was not the only one. *‘But we do communicate to them that over the years, we have tried to communicate that to the consumers all the nuances of what they do, but we can just see that the demand no matter how much we do, the demand for organic certified coffee is just increasing’*. For the professionals, certified products were something for the masses, and they were selling a different, transformative product.

With the knowledge they have about coffee, sustainability and fairness, the professionals gain an ‘eco-habitus’ and build distinction from the masses. This distinction is at the core of their business, whether or not it is lucrative. The third wave is not selling what Paulig or Starbucks have to offer, and this distinction also extends to the choices offered to consumers. This can also be viewed as a strategy for converting cultural capital into an economic one because they have knowledge that can use to differentiate their product from competition.

6.3 The Discourse of Co-working for Quality and Ethics

The relationship between the quest for quality and claims for social justice has been in motion within the third-wave coffee subculture (Fischer 2017: 8). Therefore, in this part of the analysis, I focused on the quotations that I had labelled under the codes ‘ethical trade’ and ‘high quality’. Quotations with both labels were extracted from all of the interviews and in all but website included in the material. To refine the analyses, I also examined quotations labelled as ‘meaning in work in producer countries’ and ‘business model’. It was based on these labels that I formed the discourse ‘co-working for quality and ethics’.

I found that the concept of commodity fetishism (discussed in more detail in the subchapter 4.2.2 *Commodity Fetishism and ‘Double’ Commodity Fetishism*) was very useful for examining the discussion the interviewees built around the connection between high material quality of coffee and its ethicalness. The ‘collective amnesia’ or veil that, according to theory, disguises the labour from the consumer, was something the coffee professionals were very aware of, although not in the same terms. I found that they strived to make up for the hollowness through both material quality and ethics. This might be linked to the concept of double commodity fetishism, according to which a new story is offered to the consumer to fill the void that the veil of ignorance has left. I find that in the modern consumption era, it is difficult for consumers to stay completely unaware of the origins of products; therefore, it would be relevant to examine the strategies that coffee professionals in the global North use to explain the origin of the coffee.

As discussed earlier, despite the tendency to refuse certificates, the third-wave coffee culture still considers ethics as an ideal to pursue and is seriously committed to the cause.

In fact, in their subculture, an image of ethical considerations is closely intertwined with the quest for material quality. One of the people interviewed encapsulated this by saying ‘*because ethical issues and transparency go hand in hand, you don’t need to make that choice*’, when I asked if he would choose quality over ethics. In the website material, this was a persistent idea, and it was evident on five websites in some form or the other.

It should be noted that in the interview material, ‘high quality’ often referred to not only good-tasting coffee for but also what is considered by the coffee industry to be specialty coffee. In the material, I coded these two definitions together under ‘high quality’. Within the industry, there are metrics for numeral quality scoring, as explained in more detail in the chapter subchapter 2.4 *Concepts inside the Third Wave*. For the interviewees, these metrics seemed credible but not so central, as explained by Lauri here:

‘For the average Joe, talking about specialty coffees it means like espresso, latte or cappuccino. But for our business, it is if you get over 87 points in some cupping, where some gentlemen have tasted the coffee. We don’t check those I’m not sure if Nordic Approach² has that many, I mean we taste all the coffees ourselves, if it is good coffee. But it might be so that, I think you need a certain certificate to give the points. I can see it that way, that these things correlate, that if you get the highest score, that usually they know what they are doing at the farm and you can somehow combine that, that if you really want top coffee you get paid better, you have the possibility to do it well, it is seldom luck. It is pretty much so, if the coffee you buy is well graded, it is ethical too.’

According to Cook and Crang (1996), one of the strategies to provide new knowledge and meaning about the origin of the product in different phases of its journey is to represent the other’s interest in the process. I believe that this is the strategy used in the ‘quality means ethics’ discourse present in the material. The coffee professionals in the North tie the interest of the producers in the South to their common goal of material high quality, which is set and deemed meaningful by mainly the North. This is double commodity fetishism in action, where the hollowness of a commodity is filled with new

² A sourcing company that is well known in the third-wave subculture

meaning. They tell a story of working together with the coffee producers and the whole production network in order to provide the customers with the best results.

Seven of the people interviewed mentioned that the conditions at the farm actually had sensory effects on the coffee. Many of them compared coffee to wine, where you can presumably taste the origin: how the soil and the care put into production affect the end product. This comparison was used on one of the websites too. Three people repeated the idea that well-paid coffee cherry pickers are a key to high quality: if the person receives good wages, she will take the time to choose and be meticulous enough to pick the ripe cherries that are essential for producing flawless coffee. This was also seen as more rewarding work. One website even called the pickers or the farmers (in the sentence used, it is not completely clear which) passionate. Passionate was a definition used on four websites to describe the coffee professionals in the North relationship to coffee.

The underlying logic is that good treatment of people at the very beginning of the coffee production chain is an eminent and technically binding part of quality production. Viivi summed up the idea like this: *‘Yeah, in principle, if you want quality coffee, then you want ripe berries, not raw or overly ripe berries. Then it is slower to pick them, you really have to think about it. In principle, this what they have done, so that they are paying more per kilo, but it means they have to slow down the picking, but they still get the same amount of money.’*

In this quote, Julia combines the farmers and the pickers in a chain of cooperation that ties everyone around coffee together: *‘But I still think that we don’t pay enough. But I would say reliably sustainably-sourced, better working practices, better payment incentives to pick ripe cherries is really important, and good sorting, good processing facilities, something clean, something modern, and a company that, a green buying company that invests in the farmers that they work with, to try and help them produce the best quality coffee that they can.’*

Six people brought up how paying the farmer a fair share of the money made from the coffee gives them the means and the motivation to develop their methods of producing coffee further, hence tying ethical trade to high material quality production. This idea was also presented on two websites. Coffee quality competitions, like the Cup of Excellence, were seen as a great opportunity for the farmers to showcase their work. It was also their

belief that the farmers wanted to produce quality beans. This would not only increase their payment but give meaning to their work. This could be interpreted from a point of view of orientalism as ‘a ready thought’ (Said 2001: 240) that the European culture imposes on the other. In this discourse, producing quality coffee for the consumers in the North was seen as a means or a possibility, and even a longing, to break the ‘veil of ignorance’ that lies between the consumer and the producer: the labour. Communicating where the coffee is actually being consumed and working together for quality was seen as something that could give meaning to the producers and, therefore, reconnect the labour and the consumer.

From among the people interviewed, only Talor did not adhere directly to either of these beliefs—that the production of quality coffee entailed either fair treatment of the pickers or the farmers, and that unethical trade would not produce quality (Although Peter also expressed some doubt in this regard.). Her fairly new coffee business in Norway was established after a long career with Tim Wendelboe, who is considered the most prominent figure in the third-wave coffee culture. After spending a long time at the core of the third-wave subculture, she clearly had doubts about whether just chasing the best tasting coffee was a way of guaranteeing its ethicalness. According to my understanding, Talor was more than familiar with the discourse around the link between quality and ethics in the subculture, but had set out to do things differently. This is also evident on her company website, where the choice of words differs from those used on the other websites, even though the message is quite similar: You need to work hard for quality but do it in an earnest way. From the interview material, it seems that she relied more on her own talent and knowledge as a roaster to work with lower quality green beans and to find a consumer market for coffees of different material qualities. This is how she pondered on the cultural beliefs:

‘We’ve been putting quality on this pedestal, because we think that quality in the taste that is going to equate the customer’s understanding of what it is that we’re trying to do. They will be able to see the difference between us and a chais on the corner because of the difference in the quality of our coffee. And I honestly, in the experience that I have, I don’t think that that is a metric which could be understood by a consumer, to be honest. Because coffee is so subjective. You have this nostalgia that kind of shapes the way that people enjoy what they enjoy to drink. And we shouldn’t be out there on these quests to

influence our customers' taste preferences solely because we want to build a bigger market share, so we need to change the way that you enjoy drinking your coffee. I don't think that's sustainable, personally. And, I mean, I've certainly been part of that crew because when you get into this industry, you get so excited about these weird, and rare, and exotic compounds that are very expensive and you feel like, "Oh, everyone's going to understand this. I get it. So everyone else is going to get it." And I feel like I've kind of come full circle with it.'

Talor admitted that knowledge about the source of the coffee was essential for the quality *experience* for the customer, but she did not see the metrical or material quality of the coffee as being important for the general public. The importance of the story or knowledge about the background of the coffee for the experience of drinking was something six of the other interviewees expressed too. The only exception was Peter, who was also familiar with the claim but found that this was emphasized too heavily in the subculture and at the expense of ethical concerns: *'I think that there's too many third wave [inaudible] are just buying the story to create the illusion for the consumer that they are doing a lot of good stuff, but not paying enough attention to whether is it really making a change what they're doing for the producer? So I think that's a conflict I see right now within the third wave, is that everyone's very good at making stories that's [general for?] the coffee business.'*

In some interviews, it was challenging to differentiate the knowledge about the source from the knowledge about the ethical conditions of the source. This distinction is very important because as stated earlier, geographic specificity does not mean producer empowerment (Neilson 2007: 189, 200). The two interpretations from this ambiguity are contradictory: either knowledge about the provenance is more important than ethicalness or the importance is so self-evident that it is not verbalized.

I also paid attention to quotations coded under 'business model', to determine whether cooperation with the farmers was something that they saw as having instrumental value, and whether this could provide them with the means to differentiate themselves from the competitors or provide them with another competitive advantage. Six of the people interviewed explicitly perceived the pursuit for fairer and ethical trade to be somehow at the core of their brand and business. For one of the interviewees, this was expressed as

an expectation the customer placed on them, while for another, it was expressed as eagerness to buy the whole crop from a farm so that the impact on livelihood would be significant. This was also prominently present on the most websites.

Peter was of the interviewees who was also critical of whether third-wave coffee professionals were, in general, doing enough to develop positive and equal trade relations with the farmers, even though it was very important for him personally.

‘Also, think that there’s a conflict in the way that in the third wave coffee movement. And I think that you can still work a lot and create a lot of high-quality experiences that’s not necessarily built on making sure that the producer is getting a decent payment for his or her work. And I think that’s the conflict I see that stays within the third wave coffee movement, there is a competition between. I mean, everybody in the third wave coffee movement are very good at selling the stories of the flavour of the coffee, of how they’ve traded the coffee, of the production of the coffee, but I don’t think that everyone is performing as good in terms of their way of is the.... I think that there’s too many third wave [inaudible] are just buying the story to create the illusion for the consumer that they are doing a lot of good stuff, but not paying enough attention to is it really making a change what they’re doing for the producer.’

Svante emphasised more on the instrumental value of cooperation for coffee quality:

‘We realized quickly that the coffee that tastes good, also costs more, so the ethical side, kind of, I’m not saying that by half accident but got included, but it has always been the taste first and quality and we have noticed that achieve certain quality and taste, we have to buy ethically and pay more.’

Four coffee professionals seemed to make claims about the coffee producers to justify their own beliefs: *‘mostly young producers, I think that they are more mobile’* and *‘the people don’t necessarily know how to read and you are trying to make deals’*. This is an orientalist way of making culturally acceptable generalizations about the other (Said 2001: 216). A common element in the two quotes was how their belief supported their chosen path of business. One of the features of the ‘co-working for quality’ discourse was reflection on one’s own position in the production. For Talor, it was about the positioning of one self as *‘a middle-class white woman’*, and for Svante and a few others, it was a

question about the percentage of the profit from coffee that was reaching the producing countries. From an critical orientalist view point this could be interpreted as pondering on being a white (man) that entails certain behaviour, 'prestige', politics and so on (Said 2001: 215).

At the start of the study, I had expected to find many more images and stories about the farmers on the websites. However, only Peter's business website contained actual images of farmers, although some others had named the farms that the coffee was from. This can be interpreted in many ways: even though their relationships with the farmers are actually personal, coffee professionals in the North are not very willing to commercialize these relationships for the sake of their marketing strategy. Another possibility is that these types of images and stories have started to feel outdated hypocrite. I also found it interesting that a few websites marketed their coffees as 'Finnish alternatives' or emphasized the city or part of town that they were located. The images on webpages presented primarily the coffee professionals in the global North, coffee machinery used in end production and some coffee plants and beans. Visual depictions of the coffee origins were absent in all but one webpage. The images were from where most of the symbolic quality was created. This could be viewed as a way of diluting the actual story of the labour behind the commodity and constructing new meanings around it. This kind of development has been described by Edward F. Fischer (2017) in article *Quality and inequality: Taste, value, and power in the third wave coffee market* where he noted a slight shift to emphasis on the taste properties, blending and roasting in marketing instead of origin.

Nonetheless, all the coffee professionals admitted to the inherent problems in the power balance in international trade and stated that they wanted to work in an ethical manner to correct them. Based on this, I think that there is a lot of potential to actually breach the gap between the labour in the South and the link closest to the consumer in the North. To me, one of the most interesting quotations from the material was by Viivi:

'Well, in principle for me like or that kind of that this guy and he has a wife and two kids and that dog, that kind of thing has become that sort of, that I don't get much out of them. I'm more interested maybe in the prices. How much he has been paid and how much he has paid the pickers and so on. Like info. It is nice to think about the like the journey that

coffee has made, that is in front of me, that these people were really there, but it is so that for everyone who hasn't visited the farm, they are kind of like characters from a book.'

Thus, correct information about the division of money along the coffee's production chain might in the end be more important than the friendship holding it together and more satisfying to all parties involved.

7 Conclusion

In this analysis, the researcher's aim was to paint a picture of the discourses that individuals in the third-wave coffee culture produce and take part in. The aim of this analysis was to understand the subculture better, and it was the tie-up of quality to ethics that fascinated me the most. I also wanted to examine the subculture as part of a phenomenon that is related to bigger trends in consumer behaviour, such as the emergence of a new kind of luxury and quality. It seems that in the 2010s, less is more, or at least, it is a form of distinction. In an age where cheap consumer goods of dubious origin are abundantly available, a clear conscience, preferably delivered with a story, is the ultimate extravagance. Instead of seeing as corporations as forming problems, they are put in role of problem solver in developmental issues.

After this work, I see the third-wave coffee subculture as a way of forming identity, consuming luxury and finding meaning through work and activism. There seems to be a promise that if you strive to be the best and do everything with passion, all other good things will follow. From a developmental perspective, I found the promise offered to be interesting. In this particular subculture, there seems to be a belief that focus on quality will provide the consumer with better experiences, guarantee ethical conditions at the farm and fair terms of trade, and give meaning to everyone participating in the production chain.

With regard to coffee as a commodity, its mundanity is both fascinating and baffling. Taking part in the collective amnesia of forgetting where the product comes from is linked to the commodity trap that producing countries are in. The relationship between commodity trade and development has been in discussion for decades, as has the unfairness of trade (Daviron & Ponte 2005: 11–12). The ethos of the third-wave coffee business is based on building a different kind of relationship with the origin.

The central question is whether the third wave has a positive impact on the livelihood and communities and so to wider societal development in the producing countries. Could the trend actually be harmful, especially when it comes to certification criticism? As Linton (2008) points out, 'within the specialty coffee industry there are solid opportunities to link good coffee and good practices', which means that you can have good tasting coffee

that is also ethically produced. The third wave takes this one step further and argues that ethical issues are *linked* with good coffee. In an article cited in this work, *Smallholder Farmers in the Speciality Coffee Industry: Opportunities, Constraints and the Businesses that are Making it Possible* (2015) by Inma Borrella, Carlos Mataix and Ruth Carrasco-Gallego, three different supply chains in the specialty coffee sector were studied that use the direct trade principle of buying coffee from farmers, and two of them belong to the third wave. With only three cases, the findings were very limited. However, they did see the sector as a beneficial or, at the least, promising opportunity for the farmers, as the prices paid were higher and the long-term relationships provided the farmers with consistency. None of the corporations studied resembled the businesses studied in this work completely, for example, they also used certificates.

Rosenberg, Swilling and Vermeulen (2018) studied the third wave in the Burundian context and found that differentiation with high material quality was a way of breaking into the global market and a way out from difficult circumstances; further, they found that with enough knowledge and investment, opportunities can be provided to farmers.

It is clear that more research on the topic is needed to verify the claims that coffee professionals in the global North are making. Moreover, the size of the impact the movement is making in this segment of the coffee industry must be considered: Will the third wave ever change anything, if it stays as a marginal luxury good? Today, it is almost invisible to the vast majority of coffee drinkers and does not affect the livelihoods of most coffee producers. However, Daviron and Ponte (2005: 258) make a valid argument in their discussion of sustainability initiatives: condemning some solutions only good for the niche markets reflects a lack of imagination.

As an alternative to certification schemes, the third wave relies on personal relationships with producers for ensuring ethicalness. It is true that the impact of certification systems is not completely clear. Some earlier studies suggest that the participation of various networks of barter, such as in Fair trade, can reduce vulnerability in unexpected situations, such as a crisis in the coffee markets (Bacon 2005: 508), but holds little power in terms of transforming the living conditions and has no significant social impact (Valkila & Nygren 2010: 331). However, NGO actors such as Finnwatch, an organization that focuses on corporate responsibility, which published a report, *Vain muruja kahvipöydältä*

(Only crumbs from the coffee table), on the social responsibility of coffee in 2016, are clear about their stand. The model that small roasteries and their green buyers use is not sufficient to guarantee proper working conditions on the farms (Finnwatch 2016: 21).

From a scientific point of view, it is always relevant to think about whether there is something that is actually new in the phenomenon. The coffee professionals within the subculture seem to be kin to cosmopolitans, who are open to the world but also exploit its diversity for their own use. Having knowledge of the taste regimes gives the individual privilege by building distinction and providing access to a group. When interviewing the coffee professionals, I found that I had encountered a dedicated group that was truly curious about the origin of the product. For them, it was natural to act in the capitalist setting, and none of them questioned the economic system completely. However, alternative networks and new ways of setting up business on values were appealing to them. The power that third-wave coffee professionals hold in terms of influencing power relations within the coffee business remains to be examined in further studies.

As a group, the third-wave coffee professionals are in many ways privileged, especially compared to the producers in the global South. In his work, Manzo saw the part of the culture he was researching as meritocratic, but I was often left to ponder on questions about ethnicity, gender and class. How did culture built around a commodity from the global South turn into something so white? Why are so many of the prominent figures in the culture male? William Roseberry noted in 1996 that the marketing segments in coffee were white (Roseberry 1996: 773), so it seems that the phenomenon is not new. These were also the questions that some of the people interviewed pondered about but gave few answers to. Thus, the role of women in the subculture could also be a study topic in some more relevant field of social sciences.

One topic which emerged was the role of information technology in the traceability of coffee; this would be interesting as a topic of future research. If geographical distance also creates a distance between the product and the process (Hudson & Hudson 2003: 417), some developments in information technology can be seen as a way to bring these elements closer. Social media brings the farmers closer to the consumers and provides them with a medium to build real personal relationships. Blockchain technology-based solutions that guarantee good farming conditions are popping up, and news on

exploitation travels fast in the media. If I were to continue with the topic, I would most probably choose this as an approach. I also agree with some of the people interviewed that this development might also have effects on the future of certificates.

After studying the third wave, an appropriate question to ask is what could fourth-wave coffee be? What is the future of coffee like? What comes next in coffee trends might seem trivial from the development perspective. However, as coffee is one of the major ties connecting the global South and North, it is indeed not a trivial question. A sudden interest in a certain coffee could mean that the economic situation of a fairly small number of farmers or a small geographical region could suddenly improve drastically. The kind of capabilities that farmers require in order to gather these profits could be an important topic of study and this was touched upon in a study this year upon a case study from Burundi by Rosenberg, Swilling and Vermeulen. Many of the interviewees found the demand for traceability to be an intensifying trend, but I find that there is no reason to be too optimistic on this front. It is possible that in the next wave, new technological advances in coffee brewing could increase focus on the coffee server, and not the origin, and this might have an effect on what customers care about. Further, new products, such as see-through coffee called Clear Coffee or Sudden Coffee, or a high-quality instant coffee, could also shift focus. When the product is not traditional coffee, it might be even easier to forget the knowledge that we have about coffee production. There is also the possibility that at some point of time in the future, coffee may not be coffee as we know it today. Coffee might not fit in with other big lifestyle trends such as wellbeing. Further, we also have to consider products that have a similar use as coffee in people's daily lives.

The most pressing question about coffee is not derived from consumer trends. Research on coffee has been one of the topics that has brought social scientists and environmentalists together (West 2012: 21). In this work, the environmental standpoint could have been researched by using the actor network theory approach, and more work on quality could have been done using the convention theory. Everyone in the coffee business must already be aware of the threats it poses to the environment around it and how planetary boundaries set limits to coffee production. These issues call for multidisciplinary work, since both livelihoods and environmental issues need to be taken into account.

If drastic measures are not taken, by 2050, climate change might make half of the land currently in use in coffee production, unsuitable for it. Wild coffee might become extinct by 2080, and this might make the coffee varieties grown on farms more vulnerable. Even the big players in the coffee business, including Starbucks and Lavazza, acknowledge the threat climate change poses to the world's coffee supply. It is becoming apparent that the rising temperatures and changes in rainfall patterns due to climate change are already affecting coffee farming, coffee quality, pests and diseases. Many of the big coffee production countries, such as Honduras, Nicaragua and Vietnam, are among those that are also most vulnerable to climate change. For consumers, this means supply shortages, higher prices and changes in flavour and aroma. Coffee will have to be grown in higher altitudes than before. This is a problem because in most cases, the land in question has other uses. The strategies for coping with the altered circumstances would include diversifying the crops farmed and developing more resilient production systems. However, most of the coffee producers in the world are small farmers, and they do not have the means required for adapting to the changes. Therefore, it is predicted that, eventually, climate change will probably push many coffee producers out of the coffee business. (The Climate Institute 2016: 1).

To conclude I find the third wave coffee professionals as having an interesting perspective on international trade. It is based on ideas of working together for quality in spite of distances and differences. One of main characteristics in the subculture is linkage between material, symbolic and in-service quality. Is this cosmopolitan? I would answer yes. It is a way of mastering the complex world inside international commodity trade.

Do the coffee professionals in the third wave offer their own story to fill hollow commodity? Again, I would an answer yes. The coffee professionals strive for communication and future quest for quality with the producers but in this process certain voices are chosen, others muted. The symbolic quality added in the end of the process where that choice is made.

As discussed before, more research is needed about the effects of such model. After the direct effect in the producers and their communities, the focus should be also be on the wider societal context. If thinking like this becomes more common place with other commodities or products, how are fairness and sustainability guaranteed?

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