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RONAN TORRES QUINTÃO

**THE RITE OF PASSAGE FROM REGULAR TO CONNOISSEUR CONSUMER:
THE ROLE OF THE TASTE TRANSFORMATION RITUAL IN THE SPECIALTY
COFFEE CONTEXT**

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Campo de conhecimento:
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Orientadora: Profa. Dra. Eliane P. Zamith Brito

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To my wife and kids.

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ABSTRACT

Although the consumer culture field has addressed the role ritual plays in consumption, defining and describing this construct and explaining its dimensions, cultural meanings, elements, components, and practices, as well as revealing the differentiation in consumer practices, no research has yet identified how consumers, through ritual practices, establish and manipulate their own differentiation from other consumers during their rite of passage from one cultural category of person to another. Drawing on key concepts from ritual theory, my research addresses the role played by ritual in connoisseurship consumption. Conducting an ethnographic study on connoisseurship in specialty coffee consumption, I immersed myself in the field, visiting and observing consumers in high-end independent coffee shops in North America—Toronto, Montreal, Seattle, and New York—from August 2013 to July 2014. I also immersed myself in the Brazilian specialty coffee field, in Belo Horizonte and São Paulo, from August 2014 to January 2015, to compare and contrast the specialty coffee consumption cultures of Brazil, the United States, and Canada. I used long interviews, participant observation, netnography, introspection, and historical newspaper analysis to collect the data, which was then interpreted using a hermeneutic approach, comparing consumers' stages in their connoisseurship rites of passage. To extend my understanding of connoisseurship consumption, I also collected data from the wine consumption context.

In this dissertation, I introduce the idea of the taste transformation ritual, theorizing the process as a connoisseurship rite of passage, which converts regular consumers into connoisseur consumers. My research reveals that connoisseur consumers are amateurs in different stages of the connoisseurship rite of passage. They transform themselves by establishing and reinforcing the oppositions between mass and connoisseurship consumption. The taste transformation ritual involves the following elements: (1) variation in the choices of high-quality products, (2) the place to perform the tasting, (3) the moment of tasting, (4) the tasting act, (5) time and money investment, (6) increased subcultural and social capital, and (7) perseverance on the rite of passage. Connoisseur consumers participate in the connoisseurship consumption community. This heterogeneous community is composed of outstanding professionals, connoisseurs, and regular consumers. The forces that drive the community, as identified in this study, are the production of subcultural and social capital, emulation of professional and ritual consumption practices, enactment tensions between the

community members, commercial friendship, and status games. I develop a broader theoretical account that builds on and extends a number of concepts regarding ritual consumption, taste, heterogeneous community, and connoisseur consumers.

Key words: consumer culture, consumption ritual, connoisseur consumers, taste, and specialty coffee.

RESUMO

Apesar de o campo da cultura de consumo ter abordado o papel do ritual no consumo, definindo e descrevendo este constructo e explicando suas dimensões, significados culturais, elementos, componentes e práticas, assim como revelando a diferenciação nas práticas dos consumidores, nenhuma pesquisa ainda identificou como os consumidores, por meio de práticas de ritual, estabelecem e manipulam suas próprias diferenciações em relação a outros consumidores durante o rito de passagem deles de uma categoria cultural de pessoa para outra.

Tendo como base conceitos-chaves da teoria sobre ritual, minha pesquisa aborda o papel do ritual no consumo de apreciação. Conduzindo um estudo etnográfico sobre consumo de apreciação de cafés especiais, eu realizei uma imersão no campo, visitando e observando consumidores em cafeterias independentes de destaque na América do Norte – Toronto, Montreal, Seattle e Nova York – de agosto de 2013 a julho de 2014. Eu também realizei uma imersão no contexto de cafés especiais no Brasil em Belo Horizonte e São Paulo, de agosto de 2014 a janeiro de 2015, para comparar e contrastar as culturas de consumo de cafés especiais de Brasil, Estados Unidos e Canadá. Eu usei entrevistas longas, observação participante, netnografia, introspecção e análise histórica de artigos de jornais para coletar os dados, que foram interpretados utilizando a abordagem hermenêutica, comparando os consumidores em diferentes estágios durante o rito de passagem de apreciação. Para estender meu entendimento sobre o consumo de apreciação, eu também coletei dados sobre o contexto de consumo de vinho.

Nesta tese, eu introduzo a ideia de ritual de transformação do gosto, teorizando sobre o processo do rito de passagem de apreciação, que converte consumidores regulares em consumidores apreciadores. Minha pesquisa revela que consumidores apreciadores são amadores em diferentes estágios do rito de passagem de apreciação. Eles se transformam pelo estabelecimento e reforço de oposições entre o consumo de massa e de apreciação. O ritual de transformação do gosto envolve os seguintes elementos: (1) variação nas escolhas de produtos de alta qualidade, (2) o lugar para realizar a degustação, (3) o momento da degustação, (4) o ato de degustar, (5) investimento de tempo e dinheiro, (6) aumento do capital subcultural e

social, (7) perseverança no rito de passagem. Os consumidores apreciadores participam da comunidade de consumo de apreciação. Essa comunidade heterogênea é composta por profissionais excelentes, apreciadores e consumidores regulares. As forças que direcionam a comunidade, de acordo com o que foi identificado no estudo, são a produção de capital social e subcultural, emulação do profissional e das práticas de ritual de consumo, tensões de performance entre os membros da comunidade, amizade comercial e jogo de status. Eu desenvolvo uma ampla consideração teórica que desenvolve e estende um número de conceitos em relação a ritual e consumo, gosto, comunidade heterogênea e consumidores apreciadores.

Palavras-chave: cultura de consumo, ritual de consumo, consumidores apreciadores, gosto, café especial.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

CCT: Consumer Culture Theory

HEICS: High End Independent Coffee Shop

SCAA: Specialty Coffee Association of America

TNT: Thursday Night Throwdown Latte Art Competition

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1 INTRODUCTION

The consumer culture field has addressed the role played by ritual in consumption (Kozinets, 2002a; McCracken, 1986; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Nguyen & Belk, 2013; Rook, 1985; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995; Sherry, Jr., 1983), defining and describing this construct and explaining its dimensions, cultural meanings, elements, components, and practices, as well as revealing the differentiation in consumer practices. Rook's (1985) seminal paper influenced a variety of studies on ritual consumption. He focused on the structural elements to describe rituals: the artifact, script, roles, and audience. Recently, Arsel and Bean (2013) used Rook's perspective to describe the ritualization in taste regimes, and Karababa and Ger (2011) identified Ottoman coffeehouse consumption as a ritualistic pursuit of leisure using Rook's ritual elements as the basis of analysis. Turner's ritual process theory, which describes the transformation of the individual through the rite of passage explained by Van Gennep (1960), and explains the formation of *communitas*, has been also used by many consumer culture studies to understand the role played by consumption ritual (e.g., Belk, Sherry, & Wallendorf, 1988; Kozinets, 2001; Thomas, Price, & Schau, 2013). Using Turner theoretical lens, Belk and Costa (1998) introduced the ritual of transformation, Belk, Wallendorf & Sherry (1989) explained sacralization through ritual, and Kozinets (2002a) investigated the self-transformative ritual power provided by at the Burning Man festivals.

However, no research has yet identified how consumers, through ritual practices, establish and manipulate their own differentiation from other consumers during their rite of passage from one cultural category of person to another. Following the functional elements of the group rituals described by Driver (1991), my research addresses the role played by ritual in connoisseurship consumption and explain how regular consumers transform themselves into connoisseur consumers. In taking a sociocultural approach, I interpret my qualitative data on specialty coffee consumption by drawing on key concepts from ritual theory. I then introduce the idea of the taste transformation ritual, theorizing the process as a connoisseurship rite of passage, which converts a regular consumer into a connoisseur consumer. By performing a taste transformation ritual, a subset of coffee consumers engages in the connoisseurship rite of passage. They transform themselves establishing and reinforcing the oppositions between mass and connoisseurship consumption.

Connoisseurship consumption is a form of serious leisure pursuits (Stebbins, 2007). As affirmed by Karababa and Ger (2011), leisure and pleasure are important characteristics of today's consumer culture. Further, "recreational consumption has come to replace production as the major source of meaning in our lives" (Belk & Costa, 1998, p. 219). Serious leisure can become "a major focus for our thoughts, energies, hopes, desires, and expenditures of time and money" (Belk & Costa, 1998, p. 219). Sometimes people engaged in serious leisure pursuit spend more money and time than is permitted by their budget and daily routine (Stebbins, 1979, p. 43). According to Belk and Costa (1998), serious leisure pursuits tend to be ritualistic. They found that ritual in a contemporary consuming fantasy offered incentives and vehicles for transformative play, creating a more significant, noble, exciting, and confident self. Ritual in connoisseurship consumption also plays a transformative role as one's tastes change. Prior consumer research has studied serious leisure consumption pursuits among climbers of Mount Everest (Tumbat & Belk, 2011), collectors (Belk, 1988), the *Star Trek* aficionados (Kozinets, 2001), members of running clubs (Thomas, Price, & Schau, 2013), mountain man rendezvous re-enactors (Belk & Costa, 1998), and do-it-yourself home improvers (Moisio, Arnould, & Gentry, 2013). Less attention has been focused on the role of ritual in connoisseurship consumption and how consumption rituals can transform the connoisseur consumer's tastes. Taste "is not given or determined, and their objects are not either; one has to make them appear together, through repeated experiments, progressively adjusted" (Hennion, 2007, p. 101). Taste is continually achieved (Arsel & Bean, 2013). Taste is a productive activity (serious leisure) of connoisseur consumers (amateurs), and it is improved through the taste transformation ritual.

Recently, many different specialized types of consumers have been studied in the field of consumer culture theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005), such as craft consumers (Campbell, 2005), prosumers (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010), consumer activists (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004), and working consumers (Cova & Dalli, 2009), and connoisseur consumers (Ahuvia, 2005; Holbrook, 1999; Holt, 1998; Kozinets, 2002b). Although scholars have described many of the characteristics of the connoisseur consumers, differently from other type of consumers, no one has yet identified precisely who connoisseur consumers are, and how they emerge in the marketplace culture. My research reveals that connoisseur consumers are amateurs (Hennion, 2004; Stebbins, 1979) in different stages of the connoisseurship rite of passage, investing in their subcultural (Thornton, 1996) and social capital (Bourdieu, 1984). Although amateurs have received attention in different research fields (e.g., Guichard, 2012; Hennion,

2007; Stebbins, 1979), thus far, only limited research in the field of consumer culture (CCT: consumer culture theory) has addressed amateur consumer behavior, such as amateur racing (Martin & Schouten, 2014) and amateur poetry creation (Karababa & Ger, 2011). Martin and Schouten (2014) explained how amateurs together with regular consumers can play generative roles in the creation of new markets through their struggle against prevailing market logics. Karababa and Ger (2011), in their historical research, considered the presence of amateur poetry in coffeehouses as indicative of the burgeoning Ottoman consumer culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Belk (1995), in a study specifically addressing amateur consumer behavior and serious leisure among collectors, revealed the passionate involvement of them with their consumption practice, competition with others, search for status, and achievement orientation.

There are many kinds of connoisseur consumers in the consumption fields such as water connoisseurs (e.g., waterconnoisseur.tumblr.com), beer connoisseurs (e.g., www.beerconnoisseur.com), food connoisseurs (e.g., thefoodconnoisseur.co.uk), wine connoisseurs (e.g., www.connoisseurwines.net), and so on. Among them, the context of specialty coffee was chosen for this study because it has several important features. Preliminary research revealed that significant changes in the specialty coffee consumption and market practices occurred during the 1980s. Roseberry (1996) described the rise of Yuppie Coffees and the reimagination of class in the United States during that period. Kozinets (2002b), studying coffee consumption online in the late 1990s, revealed that Starbucks raised coffee consciousness and increased the number of coffee connoisseurship practices. However, in the 2000s, according to Simon (2009, p. 15), independent coffee shops offered less mass-produced, more genuine-seeming products compared to Starbucks, which lost its sense of authenticity by building stores everywhere and by rushing customers through the line. So, after the success of Starbucks (with 15,000 stores worldwide) and its influence in the marketplace culture in the 1990s and 2000s (Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006; Thompson & Arsel, 2004), a new wave of interest began to emerge in the specialty coffee market (Skeie, 2003). In the 2000s, some coffee retailers are positioning themselves to cater to growing more consumers concerned about quality, variety, artisanal foodstuff, and brewing methods, and the independent brands of coffees, such as Intelligentsia and Stumptown, are playing an increasingly important role in the market. In this context, coffee connoisseurship consumption practices, like those of earlier Ottoman coffeehouse consumption (Karababa and Ger, 2012), are ritualistic pursuits of leisure.

On the basis of an ethnographic study on connoisseurship in specialty coffee consumption, I develop a broader theoretical account that builds on and extends a number of concepts regarding ritual consumption, taste, heterogeneous community, and connoisseur consumers. To identify the role played by ritual in connoisseurship consumption, I argue that consumers transform themselves from regular to connoisseur consumers during the connoisseurship rite of passage, performing reflexive work through taste transformation rituals and establishing and reinforcing the oppositions between mass and connoisseurship consumption. These rituals involve using taste in a reflexive way for different “high-quality” products, choosing the right place and moment to appreciate the product, paying special attention during the act of tasting, persevering on the connoisseurship rite of passage, investing time and money, and increasing the connoisseur’s subcultural and social capital. In the general taste transformation ritual, connoisseur consumers put taste to the test and train themselves to develop abilities and sensibilities to perceive the properties of objects. Performing the taste transformation ritual, consumers participate in the connoisseurship consumption community, which is described using Stebbins’s P-A-P system (1979, p. 24): professional – amateur – public. This heterogeneous community (Thomas, Price, and Schau, 2013) is composed of outstanding baristas (professionals who prepare the coffee), connoisseurs (amateurs), and regular consumers (public). The forces that drive the community, as identified by the study, are the production of subcultural and social capital, emulation, and tensions between the members of the community regarding the subcultural and social capital acquired.

In section 2, I review theory about consumption rituals, identify the definition of the connoisseur consumer and concepts of serious leisure, explain taste as a reflexive activity, and describe the context of the research: specialty coffee. In section 3, I present the method used in my qualitative research, and in section 4, I describe my research findings: setting the ritual’s conditions, the connoisseurship rite of passage, the taste transformation ritual, and the connoisseurship consumption community. Finally, in section 5, I discuss the results and consider future research.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In pursuing the goal of understanding the role played by ritual in connoisseurship consumption, I first explain the key concepts of consumption ritual and also the rite of passage that is performed by individuals through rituals. Second, I present the research on connoisseur consumers who are engaged in connoisseurship consumption, and I identify them as amateurs who are involved in serious leisure pursuits to develop their knowledge and taste. Next, I explain the concept of taste as a reflexive activity to better understand the bodily- and self-transformations that take place in the consumer during the rite of passage. Finally, I present the context of my research: specialty coffee, which provides the necessary condition to understand the consumption phenomenon studied and to develop the theoretical contributions.

2.1 Consumption Ritual

Ritual has been a fertile research domain for researchers in the field of consumer culture theory and has been used to understand the meanings of consumption and consumer behavior more broadly. Rook (1985) introduced and elaborated on the ritual construct as a vehicle for interpreting consumer behavior. McCracken (1986) analyzed the movement of cultural meaning theoretically and suggested that advertising, the fashion system, and rituals (possession, exchange, grooming, divestment) are responsible for this movement. Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry (1989) describe sacralization rituals, and Sherry (1983) explains interaction rituals in the process of gift-giving. Ritual also plays an important role in understanding the consumption of American Thanksgiving Day (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991), activities within subcultures of consumption (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995), the creation of fantasy consumption enclaves (Belk & Costa, 1998), brand communities (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001), Burning Man consumption (Kozinets, 2002a), intracommunity gifts (Weinberger & Wallendorf, 2012), death and identity (Bonsu & Belk, 2003), and the process of wedding harmonization (Nguyen & Belk, 2013). The positive and meaningful aspects of ritual behavior have been studied in extraordinary human experiences, such as high-risk consumption through skydiving (Celsi, Rose, & Leigh, 1993) and river rafting trips (Arnould

& Price, 1993), and in transformations such as death rituals in Asante, Ghana (Bonsu & Belk, 2003) and Vietnamese wedding-rituals (Nguyen & Belk, 2013);

The notion of ritual has been integral to the construction of the object and method of analysis. Durkheim (1915, p. 41) analyses religion both as rites (with regard to their object) and beliefs (the special nature of this object). He affirms that at the foundation of “all systems of beliefs ... there ought necessarily to be a certain number of ... ritual attitudes which ... have the same objective significance and fulfill the same functions” (1915, p. 5). Through ritual, collective beliefs are generated, experienced, and affirmed as real by the community. Scholars including Victor Turner and Clifford Geertz played an important role in presenting ritual not only as a way to enact the symbolic system, but also as means for opposing sociocultural forces. Turner (1995) describes ritual as activity that mediates the necessary and opposing demands of both *communitas* (antistructure) and the formalized social order (structure). For Geertz (1973), the opposition of the world as imagined and the world as lived are fused under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms performed by ritual, which constitutes cultural life. Likewise, the taste transformation ritual is based on differences in consumer practices, establishing and reinforcing the opposition between regular and connoisseurship consumption.

In the consumer culture field, Rook’s (1985) definition of ritual, as well as McCracken’s (1986) analysis of the four consumption ritual processes (exchange, possession, grooming, and divestment) have been applied by many scholars (e.g., Arsel & Bean, 2013; Karababa & Ger, 2011; Russell & Levy, 2012). According to McCracken, “Ritual is an opportunity to affirm, evoke, assign, or revise the conventional symbols and meanings of the cultural order” (1986, p. 78). Ritual has been defined by Rook (1985, p. 252) as “a type of expressive, symbolic activity constructed of multiple behaviors that occur in a fixed, episodic sequence, and that tend to be repeated over time.” However, Bell argues that if ritual is interpreted in terms of practice, “it becomes clear that formality, fixity, and repetition are not intrinsic qualities of ritual so much as they are a frequent, but not universal strategy for producing ritualized acts” (1992, p. 92). Rook (1985) describes personal rituals and focuses on the structural elements of the ritual, listing four tangible components that are present in the coffee connoisseurship consumption practices: (1) the artifact (the specialty coffee), (2) the ritual script (visiting different coffee shops, greeting and conversing with the barista, the tasting act, and a farewell), (3) the roles performed by connoisseur consumers in different stages of their

rite of passage, and finally, (4) the audience (friends, family and so on). In contrast, Driver (1991) focuses on the needs that are satisfied through ritual behavior, identifying three social gifts, or functional elements, provided by rituals: order in society, a sense of community, and transformation. To Driver (1991, p. 6), “Rituals belong to us, and we to them, as surely as do our language and culture. The human choice is not whether to ritualize but when, how, where, and why.” Driver’s (1991) ritual approach is more group-oriented than Rook’s (1985) approach. Rituals “not only bring people together in physical assembly but also tend to unite them emotionally” (Driver, 1991, p. 152) by establishing communities.

Driver’s (1991) ritual functional model, which includes the three gifts that rituals “bestow upon society,” fits with the taste transformation ritual performed by connoisseur consumers. He affirms that rituals reflect the way the world is ordered and put that order in place: “Through ritualization we make routine a certain way of seeing, hearing, touching, and otherwise perceiving the environment” (Driver, 1991, p. 135). Ritual gives participants the security that their behavior is enacted correctly. Ritual transformation is part of the social dynamic of ceremonies and rites that effect change in the social life in general, defining people’s relationships. I study the strategies used by consumers to establish and manipulate their consumption differentiation based on the three interrelated sets of oppositions described by Bell that reveal the systematic dimensions of ritualization: 1) the vertical opposition of superior and inferior, “which generates hierarchical structures,” 2) the horizontal opposition of us and them, “which generates lateral relationships,” and 3) the opposition of central and local, “which frequently incorporates and dominates the preceding oppositions” (1992, p. 125). Regarding consumer taste transformation, Hennion affirms that “comparison is always fertile, for both common points and differences are enlightening” (2004, p. 141).

What is intrinsic to ritualization (the production of ritualized acts) are strategies for differentiating oneself, considering various degrees to which and various ways in which one can separate “itself off from other ways of acting by virtue of the way in which it does what it does” (Bell, 1992, p. 140). Ritualization can be described as the strategic production of expedient schemes (ritualization schemes) which invoke a series of “privileged oppositions that, when acted in space and time through a series of movements, gestures, and sounds, effectively structure and nuance an environment” (Bell, 1992, p. 140) where some oppositions quietly dominate others. As Bell observes,

“The goal of ritualization as a strategic way of acting is the ritualization of social agents. Ritualization endows these agents with some degree of ritual mastery. This mastery is an internalization of schemes with which they are capable of reinterpreting reality in such a way as to afford perceptions and experiences of a redemptive hegemonic order” (Bell, 1992, p. 141).

A welcome study on ritualization was conducted by Arsel and Bean (2013). They introduce the taste regime concept, integrating three dispersed practices: problematization, ritualization, and instrumentalization. Although they explained that “ritualization incites participants to perform doings on objects,” they did not consider the difference between ritual and ritualization or explore the oppositions provided by ritualization schemes. The oppositions between mass and connoisseurship consumption practices, which are highlighted during the performance of the taste transformation ritual, are fundamental in the consumer’s rite of passage to maintain and reinforce the differences between the connoisseur and regular consumers. This ritual is not performed individually but rather in-group: consumers (regular and connoisseurs) and professionals (baristas) within the connoisseurship consumption community. Despite the distinction of the mass and connoisseurship consumption practices, they are intertwined and coexist.

The performance of the taste transformation ritual leads to the consumer’s transformation from regular to connoisseur. During this transformation, consumers pass through the connoisseurship rite of passage, which moves the consumer from one cultural category (regular consumer) to another (connoisseur consumer), “where s/he gives up one set of symbolic properties” (McCracken, 1986, p. 78). Van Gennep (1960) views rites of passage as rituals that allow the entrance to a new status, affirming that life requires successive passages from a particular society to another, and from one social situation to another, so that an individual life consists of a succession of steps. Rites of passage accompany the place, state, age, and social position changes in the individual’s life. Turner refers to three phases of the passage as “the structural aspect of the passage” (1995, p. 166): (1) separation, (2) merging, and (3) aggregation. He also described the three phases of passage from one culturally defined state or status to another as (1) preliminal, (2) liminal, and (3) postliminal. This set indicates Van Gennep’s concerns with “units of space and time in which behavior and symbolism are momentarily enfranchised from the norms and values that govern the public lives of incumbents of structural positions” (1995, p. 166).

2.2 The Connoisseur Consumer and Serious Leisure Pursuits

Connoisseurship means applying a highly nuanced schema in order to understand, evaluate, and appreciate consumption objects (Holt, 1998). A connoisseur consumer is a person who has differentiated consumption knowledge compared to other consumers due to his or her expertise or taste in the marketplace (Bourdieu, 1984). Consumers produce subjectivity through connoisseurship (Holt, 1998). The connoisseur consumer is empowered by field-specific cultural competence, cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1984), genuineness (Kozinets, 2002b), and discernment (Ahuvia, 2005). Ahuvia (2005) describes examples of connoisseurship in which everyday items (cartoons and popcorn) are appreciated in terms of abstract aesthetic properties and high levels of expertise. Connoisseur style is expressed through consumption practices, even if the object itself is widely consumed, as in the case in the coffee context, or ignored by other consumers. Connoisseurs accentuate specific aspects of the consumption object and also develop “finely grained vocabularies to tease out ever more detailed nuances within a category, [...] and the ability to engage in passionate appreciation of consumption objects meeting one’s calculus of ‘quality’ within a category” (Holt, 1998). Connoisseur consumers have different values from mass consumption, achieving status by inverting the mainstream values. They distinguish themselves by adopting oppositional consumption practices comparing to the mass consumption, which is supported by popular culture. “Popular culture is mass-produced for mass consumption,” (Storey, 2009, p. 8) and its audience is a mass of non-discriminating consumers. Through distinction from mass consumption, connoisseur consumers, like the clubbers in the Thornton’s music context, “step in the right direction away from conformity and submission” (1996, Afterword, paragraph 9).

Coffee connoisseur consumers reconfigure the mass cultural object (regular coffee prepared at home or in coffee shops), accentuating aspects of the coffee (it turned out to be specialty) that was (and still is) ignored by regular consumers, thereby increasing their differentiation through the acquisition of subcultural capital (Thornton, 1996), which is embodied in the form of being in the know, using the current vocabulary, and engaging in consumption practice within the connoisseurship community. Although cultural capital has been used to explain connoisseur consumer behaviors in the consumer culture field, my research argues that subcultural capital better helps us understand these behaviors. Cultural capital is

constituted by the set of intellectual qualifications produced by the school system or transmitted by family members. According to Bourdieu (1984), cultural capital can exist in embodied form (practical knowledge and dispositions), be objectified in consumption objects, and take an institutionalized form (degrees and diplomas). There are some similarities and differences between subcultural capital and cultural capital. The former is revealed in the connoisseur consumption practices as the latter, such as, for instance, the preferred coffee beverage, the place chosen to drink the coffee, the ability and skill to perceive the coffee aromas and tastes. However, while books and paintings display cultural capital in the family home, subcultural capital could be objectified in the form of lists of coffee tasted in independent coffee shops. Another difference is that subcultural capital is usually learned out of school; it has long been defined as an extra-curricular knowledge. There is also a difference between the concepts with regard to class differentiation. According to Thornton, “Subcultural capital is not a class-bound as cultural capital.... Class is wilfully obfuscated by subcultural distinctions” (1996, Chapter 1, paragraph 30). Class distinction is not part of the connoisseurship coffee consumption culture; in countervailing, the distinction is present in the connoisseurship consumption practices. Practice is presently an important source of distinction. As affirmed by Holt, “No longer easily identified with the goods consumed, distinction is becoming more and more a matter of practice” (1998, p. 5). Coffee connoisseurs develop their practice by performing the taste transformation ritual.

According to the netnographic research conducted by Kozinets (2002b), in the 1990s, coffee connoisseurship, taste refinement practices increased and were frequently taught on the online newsgroup that he followed. He notes that “Starbucks simultaneously raised the consciousness of coffee connoisseurship, the demand for coffee shops, the sales of coffee-flavored ice cream and cold drinks, and the market price of a cup of coffee” (2002, p. 66). Elliot (2006) reinforces Kozinets’s findings. According to Elliot, “Starbucks distributes a twenty-two-page pocket-sized guide that provides thirty-eight key terms necessary to order coffee” (2006, p. 233), distinguishing aromas and shades of taste and allowing connoisseurs to demonstrate their education. She also explains that coffee connoisseurs use “geography to illustrate both their knowledge and their taste preferences” and by ordering Sumatra, Kona, New Guinea Peaberry, Brazil Ipanema Bourbon, and the like, the coffee connoisseur “orders a place in a cup” (Elliott, 2006, p. 233). In addition to coffee connoisseurs, many different names were used by the media to identify specialty coffee consumers: coffee evangelists, coffee snobs, coffee lovers, coffee aficionados, coffee devotees, coffee klatches, coffee

enthusiasts, avid coffee drinkers, java aficionados, and coffee savants.

Elliot suggests that objects previously outside the realm of connoisseurship have been inscribed inside this realm (such as the rise of specialty coffees such as those at Starbucks). On the other hand, many objects previously located squarely within the realm of connoisseurship have been democratized (just as demystification of a wine makes it more popular). Elliott calls this movement the “democratization of taste and the construction of contemporary connoisseurship” (2006, p. 230). This movement is mass communicated to consumers by marketing campaigns, magazines, websites, radio, television, newspaper, and articles. As a result, connoisseurship practices have increased in the marketplace, due to the “bandwagon effect” (Leibenstein, 1950). This bandwagon effect represents the desire of consumers “to wear, buy, do, consume, and behave like their fellows; the desire to join the crowd, be ‘one of the boys’” (Leibenstein, 1950, p. 184). In this case, “the boys” are the connoisseur consumers. Subcultural ideologies are a means by which connoisseur consumers “assert their distinctive character and affirm that they are not anonymous members of an undifferentiated mass” (Thornton, 1996, Chapter 1, paragraph 23). The bandwagon effect is a problem for the connoisseurship consumption subculture of consumption. However, if there is a democratization of connoisseurship practices that is increasing the number of consumers who demand products labeled with a different status by the marketplace for a particular type of good, some consumers still search for exclusivity “through the purchase of distinctive clothing, foods, automobiles, houses, or anything else that individuals may believe will in some way set them off from the mass of mankind” (Leibenstein, 1950, p. 184). Called the “snob effect” (Leibenstein, 1950), connoisseur consumers keep developing distinct connoisseurship practices to differentiate themselves from other consumers.

To develop their consumption practices, connoisseur consumers engage in serious leisure pursuits. Leisure is “uncoerced, contextually framed activity engaged in during free time, which people want to and, using their abilities and resources, actually do in either a satisfying or a fulfilling way (or both)” (Stebbins, 2012, p. 4). Gelber (1999, p. 7) points out three fundamental assumptions about the nature of leisure activities: 1) they take place in time that is free from work, which includes personal, familial, and home care activities necessary for life maintenance; 2) they are voluntarily undertaken; and 3) they are pleasurable. Gelber emphasizes, “Activities that are understood as work, including nonremunerated labor such as family care or schoolwork, no matter how pleasurable, are not leisure” (1999, p. 7). For many

consumers, leisure is a way to find personal fulfillment, identity enhancement, self-expression, and the like, and leisure becomes an opportunity to improve their own work (Stebbins, 1982). Seeking to adopt those forms of leisure that will yield the greatest payoff, connoisseur consumers “reach this goal through engaging in serious rather than casual or unserious leisure” (Stebbins, 1982, p. 253). According to Press and Arnould (2011), productive consumption is similar to the serious leisure concept because it “also recognizes the blurring of work and leisure that emerges in relation to consumer identity and lifestyle-related goals” (2011, p. 652). Specialty coffee allows for a variety of serious leisure pursuits and connoisseurship consumption practices, like professional specialization (baristas or other professionals who brew coffee), training (public coffee cupping courses, coffee tastings, coffee seminars), equipment (espresso machines, grinders, brewing equipment), competitions (world and regional barista championships, brewers cup championships, cup tasters championships), and consumption with audiences (public, friends, family, coworkers).

Participants involved in serious leisure identify strongly with their chosen pursuits, and they invest significant personal effort based on special knowledge, training, or skills, and sometimes all three. Some of them tend to have careers in the areas of their serious leisure endeavors, becoming professionals (Stebbins, 2007). Serious leisure practitioners “are not dependent on whatever remuneration they derive from it” and “they are freer than breadwinners to renounce their leisure,” but they are usually “more obliged to engage in their pursuits than are their unserious counterparts” (Stebbins, 1982, p. 255). According to Stebbins (2007), amateurs, such as hobbyists and volunteers, participate in one type of serious leisure. They pursue an activity chosen “because of its strong appeal” (Stebbins, 1982, p. 258). They refuse to remain a “player, dabbler, or novice at this leisure, searching for durable benefits, transforming the activity into an avocation in which the participant is motivated by seriousness and commitment” (Stebbins, 1982, p. 258). Amateurs are productive, competent, and active; they constantly transform objects and works, performances and tastes; they attend precisely for a particular performance, with “new competency, slowly and painstakingly elaborated through devices, practices, objects, repertoires, and new social formats that produce new individual and collective sensibilities.” (Hennion, 2004, p. 142).

Connoisseurs are amateurs, and they are part of Stebbins’s professional-amateur-public (P-A-P) system (Stebbins, 1979, p. 24). This system is based on rituals (Rook, 1985) performed in a way that strengthens the connections between the system’s participants. Even for amateurs,

there is always a public that can be composed of friends, relatives, neighbors, or other amateurs engaged in the same activity. The public learns by “interacting with the work and, frequently, with other people in relation to the work” (Becker, 1982, p. 64). Amateurs are oriented “by standards of excellence set and communicated by those professionals” (Stebbins, 1982, p. 259). In the P-A-P system, the term “amateur” can be used only with activities that constitute, for some, a professional work role. There have always been professionals, however; what is new is the rise of the amateur (Hennion, 2004, p. 142). Professionals often enjoy a lot of respect not only because of their high volume of subcultural capital, but also from their role in defining and creating it (Thornton, 1996). Hennion (2004) explains that the number of amateurs is steadily increasing in part because hobbies, such as sports, arts, and entertainment, have evolved into professions in the last few decades. What used to be just a hobby decades ago now has become a profession. When professionalization occurs (see Larson, 1977), “those who retained their serious, albeit part-time, commitment to the activity were gradually transformed into amateurs” (Stebbins, 1982, 263). However, amateurs cannot perform the activities as outstanding professionals in their fields do (Stebbins, 1979). Becker (1982) confirms it in the art world, explaining that amateurs do not know all the things that well-skilled professionals know.

A monetary and organizational relationship is “frequently established when professionals educate, train, direct, coach, advise, organize, and even perform with amateurs and when amateurs come to comprise part of their public” (Stebbins, 2007, p. 25). Amateurs in the art world “provide the material support of money spent and the aesthetic support of understanding and response” (Becker, 1982, p. 54). Amateurs also develop a friendship with professionals and give advice (Guichard, 2012, p. 523). There is an “intellectual relationship among professionals, amateurs, and publics, which springs primarily from the amateurs” (Stebbins, 1979, p. 26). The modern amateur would like to “spend more time and sometimes more money as his avocation than time and income permit” (Stebbins, 1979, 43). Becker argues that amateurs “belong to the art world, more or less permanent parties to the cooperative activity that makes it up” (Becker, 1982, p. 48). Amateurs in the art world, as in the specialty coffee world, are the link between outstanding professionals and regular consumers. They are emulated by regular consumers, and they emulate outstanding baristas. The taste transformation ritual performed by connoisseur consumers strengthens the connoisseurship consumption community based on the relationship that they have with outstanding baristas (professionals) and regular consumers (public).

2.3 Taste as a Reflexive Activity

Taste has been theorized by many scholars as a system of classification and distinction structured through material culture (Bourdieu, 1984), such as differences in cultural capital resources structuring patterns of taste and consumption (Holt, 1998) and the status consumption in Less Industrialized Countries based on the consumer goods and services such as home, interior decor, clothing, vacations, and shopping (Üstüner & Holt, 2010). Bourdieu's (1984) concept of cultural capital and its class-bound resources such as occupation, profession, and education have been used by many scholars to understand the role played by taste on consumption (Berger & Ward, 2010; Coskuner-Balli & Thompson, 2013; Holt, 1998; McQuarrie, Miller, & Phillips, 2013; Üstüner & Holt, 2010). While Bourdieu's cultural capital concept presumes a static social taste arrangement, Gronow (1997) discusses taste in a dynamic, contingent, and transitory nature of the standards of the food fashion context. He proposes that people can be differentiated according to those who have good taste (good society) and who do not (bad society). Everyone is supposed to choose what feels good, however, "the ideal of good taste is meant to be beyond the individual, and to be socially binding. It offers a universal standard, potentially applicable to all members of a society" (Gronow, 1997, p. 91).

Good taste is something constructed by the society through recognized institutions, which means that consumers need to follow some rules to become connoisseurs. Gronow affirms that "food grammars are needed for those who do not possess a natural mastery of good taste" (Gonow, p. 10). In the art world context, Becker explains the importance of the rationales to identify what is the good taste in the field. Rationales "typically take the form of a kind of aesthetic argument, a philosophical justification which identifies what is being made as art, as good art, and explains how art does something that needs to be done for people and society" (Becker, 1982, p. 4). The rationales to define and explain what taste good in the coffee context are well-defined and spread by many institutions in the specialty coffee marketplace, such as the Specialty Coffee Association of America (www.scaa.org), Coffee Quality Institute (www.coffeeinstitute.org), United States Barista Competition (www.uscoffeechampionships.org), and the World Barista Championship (www.worldbaristachampionship.org). In the food context, Gronow affirms that "gastronomy

is the set of rules which govern the cultivation and education of taste. For those who do not have good taste, rules are needed” (Gronow, p. 172). The specialty coffee institutions listed above, together with independent coffee shops, provide the rules to professionals to educate the tastes of those who want to transform themselves from regular to connoisseur consumers.

My findings contrast those of Gronow, who defines a connoisseur as someone who “can always decide and choose what is tasteful and good without reflecting on it” and believes that someone is born as a connoisseur and “taste is the natural gift of recognizing and loving perfection (p. 172). Consumers are not born connoisseurs. They develop their taste reflexively (Hennion, 2001), increasing their subcultural capital (Thornton, 1996). Following Hennion (2004) and Arsel and Bean (2013), who question the idea of taste as a passive social game or a static state of affairs and consider taste a reflexive activity rather than an attribute or a property (of a thing or of a person), I ask how connoisseur consumers, through ritual activities, establish and manipulate their own taste differentiation by comparing them to the other consumers. Unlike practice theory, which Arsel and Bean (2013) employed, ritual practices will better address how connoisseur consumers establish the oppositions between their practices and regular consumption practices, thereby transforming themselves. The taste transformation ritual is based on novelty coffee consumption practices that are opposite of the traditional or regular practices. This opposition between novelty and tradition regarding to the taste described by Warde (1997) are reinforced during the performance of the taste transformation ritual.

Taste does not come from things themselves (natural interpretation), and the objects are not what we make them (cultural interpretation). Taste is not given or determined, and its objects are not either. Taste is from the result of a performance by the taster, based on corporeal training, comparison, and repeated experiments, progressively adjusted. Through ritual, which compresses the elements of reflexive taste and work as the medium between the object and culture, connoisseur consumers transform their taste in a reflexive way. Amateurs (or connoisseur consumers) are the “reflexive result of a physical and collective practice, one that entails the use of equipment of all kinds and is regulated by methods that are themselves constantly revised” (Hennion, 2004, p. 135). Amateurs develop their taste by performing reflexive work through a continuous elaboration of procedures and training that put taste to the test in order to develop abilities and sensibilities to perceive the properties of objects (Hennion, 2007). This reflexive conception of amateurs’ activities “leads to a view that is

respectful both of amateurs' own understandings of their tastes as well as of the practices they undertake to reveal these tastes to themselves" (Hennion, 2007, p. 98). Amateurs "follow the taste of others, searching for one's own preferences, focusing on the quality of things and the training to perceive what is considered to be the best" (Hennion, 2007, p. 111).

Taste is not given but produced, and therefore, reflexivity is a central modality of amateur's activities. Hennion (2004) describes a minimal framework of components used by amateurs to continually redefine and reconfigure their taste. The first part of the framework is the community of amateurs; this collective is the starting point that provides a frame and the relevance of the effort, and that guarantees results, accompanies, and guides. The reliance on others is essential, because "taste as an activity is accomplished through a collective" (Hennion, 2004, p. 137). A key feature in serious leisure pursuits "is the resultant community defined by shared experience, objects, and actions" (Belk & Costa, 1998, p. 219). The second part of the framework is the devices and conditions of tasting. Taste also depends on its situations and material devices. As Hennion explains, "It involves a meticulous temporal organization, collective arrangements, objects, and instruments of all kinds, and a wide range of techniques to manage all that" (2004, p. 138). The third part of the framework is the body that experiences. The body that tastes is not naturally given but rather is a product of the training. To Hennion, "The body exercises and gets used to the exercise. [...] Taste, amateurism and passion for an object or interest in a practice are corporated activities" (2004, p. 141). The final part of the framework is the object that is the focus of taste. Taste depends on the effect of the product, "from what it does and causes to do," and it involves other objects, moments, deployment, and circumstances (Hennion, 2004, p. 140). Uncertainty and product variation are key notions to amateurs who are developing their tastes.

Connoisseur consumers' bodies play a main role during their taste development. Hennion asserts, "It's a body that is unaware of itself, has to reveal itself, to appear to itself and to the subject gradually, as its expensive interaction with objects and its training through repeated practice make it more competent, skilled, and sensitive to what is happening" (2004, p. 142). According to Hennion, during this process, amateurs take possession of collectively elaborated corporeal competency. To perform this process, connoisseur consumers, as amateurs, engage in serious leisure pursuits and produce a ritualized body, which enables "the interaction of the body with a structured and structuring environment" (Bell, 1992, p. 98, 99). Bell (1992) explains how ritualization plays a major role in the construction of the social body

and manipulates the context in the very act of reproducing it:

Through a series of physical movements ritual practices spatially and temporally construct an environment organized according to schemes of privileged opposition. The construction of this environment and the activities within it simultaneously work to impress these schemes upon the bodies of participants.... Through the orchestration in time of loose but strategically organized oppositions, in which a few oppositions quietly come to dominate others, the social body internalizes the principles of the environment being delineated. Inscribed within the social body, these principles enable the ritualized person to generate in turn strategic schemes that can appropriate or dominate other sociocultural situations (Bell, 1992, pp. 98-99).

Performing the taste transformation ritual, coffee connoisseur consumers change their social bodies and palates. This transformation is achieved by regular and frequent consumption performance in connoisseurship bases, which rely on the opposition of regular coffee consumers practices. The nuances and quality of the coffee are highlighted in the connoisseurship consumption practices performed in places that have an environment organized to reinforce the privileged opposition of their own practices compared to the mass consumption practices. Through knowledge, practice, and objects, connoisseur consumers try to appropriate and dominate the context, or field, in which they are immersed.

2.4 The Specialty Coffee Context

Coffee consumption plays an important role in the consumer culture. According to Sherry, who interpreted the cultural meanings of coffee as depicted on prime-time network programming, coffee is “perhaps the primary key symbol in contemporary consumer culture” (1995, p. 357). Although coffee is considered the beverage of postmodernism (Roseberry, 1996), it has been playing an important role in the consumer culture fields since the mid-sixteenth century, when Karababa and Ger (2011) researched the formation of the consumer subject in Ottoman coffeehouse culture. In the last two decades, coffee consumption culture has evolved significantly, markedly because of the famous global brand, Starbucks. Most of the academic interest in specialty coffee consumption has focused on or has arisen as a result of Starbucks. Many marketing research studies have analyzed the influence of Starbucks in the marketplace, such as consumers’ (anticorporate) experiences of globalization (Thompson & Arsel, 2004), emotional branding and doppelgänger brand image (Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006), hegemonic brandscapes (Thompson & Arsel, 2004) boycotts and out-

sourcing of politics (Simon, 2011), coffee culture and consumption in Japan (Grinshpun, 2013), and global consumer culture in Scandinavia (Kjeldgaard & Ostberg, 2007).

Starbucks' brandscape increased the number of coffee consumers in the U.S. market and worldwide. The number of regular consumers grew considerably, and, as discussed by Kozinets (2002b) and Elliot (2006), the company increased the consciousness of coffee connoisseurship knowledge. However, this connoisseurship knowledge was much more based on the surface conceptual learning, which "consists of general knowledge about the product category as well as concrete sensory descriptions about product characteristics" (Latour & Latour, 2010, p. 689), than on perceptual learning, which means different product experiences (Latour, Latour, & Feinstein, 2011, Latour & Latour, 2010). The predictability (Ritzer, 2007) of the Starbucks coffee all over the world prevents consumers from improving their perceptual learning. As a consequence, they cannot advance in their connoisseurship knowledge or really engage in connoisseurship consumption. However, the emergence of the connoisseur consumer in the specialty coffee market was possible when the high-end independent coffee shops (hereafter abbreviated HEICSs) began to spread in the North America, offering the conditions for regular consumers to transform themselves into connoisseurs. Before explaining this third coffee wave (high-end independent coffee shops), I discuss the specialty coffee market definition as well as the first (coffee industries) and second (Starbucks) coffee waves.

The specialty coffee market segment, which emerged in 1980 (Roseberry, 1996) and has topped the retail sales of traditional products since the beginning of the 2000s (Cassia, Fattore, & Paleari, 2006), had Starbucks as a principal company in the 1990s and at the beginning of the 2000s (Hartmann, 2011). Companies as Peet's, created in 1966 (with 217 locations in the United States), and Starbucks (with fifteen thousand stores worldwide) in the specialty coffee market offer new opportunities for consumers to taste something different than regular coffee. The term "specialty coffee" was first coined by Erna Knutsen, of Knutsen Coffee Ltd., in a 1978 speech, to refer to beans with unique flavor profiles that were produced in special geographic microclimates. Presently, specialty coffee is "defined by the quality of the product, whether green bean, roasted bean, or prepared beverage, and by the quality of life that coffee can deliver to all of those involved in its cultivation, preparation and degustation" (Rhinehart, 2009, p. 3). As articulated by the Specialty Coffee Association of America (www.scaa.org), specialty coffee is of superior quality. The expression "superior quality" is

used in the marketplace to differentiate specialty coffee from regular coffee.

To assess the quality of the coffee, the Statistics & Standards Committee of the Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA, 2013) has created a set of guidelines (see Annex A) that uses 11 attributes to create the score: (1) fragrance/aroma: the smell of the ground coffee when still dry / when infused with hot water; (2) flavor: combined impression of all the gustatory sensations and retro-nasal aromas that go from the mouth to nose; (3) aftertaste: the length of positive flavor qualities emanating from the back of the palate and remaining after the coffee is expectorated or swallowed; (4) acidity: described as brightness when favorable or sour when unfavorable; (5) body: based upon the tactile feeling of the liquid in the mouth, especially as perceived between the tongue and roof of the mouth; (6) balance: how flavor, aftertaste, acidity, and body of the sample work together and complement or contrast each other; (7) sweetness: a pleasing fullness of flavor as well as any obvious sweetness; (8) clean up: lack of interfering negative impressions from first ingestion to final aftertaste; (9) uniformity: consistency of flavor of the different cups of the sample tasted; (10) overall: the holistically integrated rating of the sample as perceived by the individual panelist; (11) defects: negative or poor flavors that detract from the quality of the coffee. Table 1 presents the total score quality classification.

Table 1 - Coffee quality assessment

Total Score Quality Classification		
90-100	Outstanding	Specialty
85-89.99	Excellent	
80-84.99	Very Good	
< 80	Below Specialty Quality	Not Specialty

Source: SCAA (2013, p. 7)

Although the specialty coffee market was recognized as a new market segment opportunity in 1980, together with the establishment of the Specialty Coffee Association of America in 1982, “The specialty coffee business significantly appeared in the U.S. during the 1960s with sales amounting to about \$45 million in 1969. The segment grew enormously during the late 1980s rising \$2 billion in 1994 and \$9 billion in 2003” (Cassia, Fattore, & Paleari, 2006). Cassia, Fattore, and Paleari (2006) note that, despite its beginnings in a small niche, specialty coffee has topped the retail sales of traditional products since the beginning of the 2000s. The price of coffee beans rose in the early 1980s due to frost in Brazil (Roseberry, 1996), which

was (and still is) the biggest coffee producer in the world. In response, the big manufacturers began to sell lower-quality beans, which tended to produce less flavorful coffee. The coffee industry supplied the market with a poor-quality coffee during this period, which resulted in coffee being thought of as a drink of bad quality and flavor. This drop in quality paved the way for the growth of the specialty coffee market. According to Roseberry, throughout the 1980s, the “quality segment of the coffee market, highest in prices and profit margins, was booming while total coffee consumption declined” (1996, p. 130).

Analyzing the coffee market in the 2000s, Skeie (2003) and Kozinets (2002b) identified the growing number of coffee connoisseur consumers and coffee connoisseurship practices, respectively. Coffee connoisseur consumers are not Café Flâneurs or oppositional localists, nor do they adopt an anti-Starbucks discourse (Thompson & Arsel, 2004). They are not antibrand activists, and they are not involved in the Starbucks emotional branding or in the doppelgänger Starbucks branding (Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006). Coffee connoisseurs consumers aim to improve their taste and espresso, which is a “beverage that's made by forcing [from 25 to 35 seconds] a small amount of near-boiling water [200 °F / 94 °C] through finely ground coffee [from 13 to 22 grams] under pressure [9 bars of pressure about a 130 lbs/inch²]" (ChefSteps, 2014b), is the preferred beverage of advanced coffee connoisseur consumers. According to Kozinets “the subtle inculcation of coffee tastes (on a trajectory culminating in a taste for espresso) is often mapped out in coffeephile communications, tracing a gustatory route through, for example, Cappuccino, macchiato, and con pannas to espresso” (2002, p. 68). Coffee connoisseurs perform a long connoisseurship rite of passage which takes more than a year, during which they taste different espressos in HEICSs in a reflexive way, searching for coffee variation and quality. During these tasting rituals, they improve their knowledge and taste, get into the community, and increase their consumer knowledge in the coffee marketplace culture.

3 DATA COLLECTION AND METHODS

A qualitative study of connoisseur consumers' behavior and rituals was conducted in order to answer my research questions: What is the role of ritual in connoisseurship consumption? How do regular consumers transform themselves into connoisseur consumers through ritual? To answer these questions, I immersed myself in the field, visiting and observing consumers in HEICSs in North America: Toronto, Montreal, Seattle, and New York from August 2013 to July 2014. I also immersed myself in the Brazilian specialty coffee field, Belo Horizonte and São Paulo, from August 2014 to January 2015, to compare the differences and similarities of the specialty coffee consumption culture between Brazil and the United States and Canada. To extend my understanding of connoisseurship consumption, I collected data from the wine consumption context. I interviewed consumers and coffee professionals. Further, I attended the annual exposition of specialty coffee in Seattle (USA) and in Belo Horizonte (Brazil), a barista course, three coffee club meetings and 8 coffee cuppings (coffee tastings organized by coffee shops to educate consumers and public in general and by traders to allow potential buyers to verify the quality of the coffee offered). I followed many consumers on blogs and Twitter and Instagram feeds, and read books about this context. I tasted many types of coffee at Starbucks, such as Frappuccinos, Caramel Macchiatos, and Americanos in the beginning of my research, and then I moved to HEICSs, tasting a variety of single-origin coffee brewed using different methods and equipment such as Chemex, V60 Hario, Siphon, French Press, AeroPress (Appendix A: coffee equipment). Finally, I began tasting espresso, when I got deep inside the specialty coffee community (Annex B: the espresso field guide).

I started my research as a regular coffee consumer in the beginning stages of the coffee connoisseurship rite of passage. Adopting a naturalistic inquiry approach (Belk, Sherry & Wallendorf, 1988), I got inside the specialty coffee community and increased my coffee knowledge and taste as a fully participating member of the culture of consumption (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). This presence in the coffee shops and in online social media helped me gain acceptance and trust inside the community. At the beginning of the research, to identify coffee connoisseur consumers, I used as a criterion sampling strategy (Miles & Huberman, 1994) consumers at HEICSs who drank coffee without milk and sugar, who interacted with the barista, asking questions about the coffee. After this initial phase, based on the first interview experiences with connoisseur consumers, I used the "purposive sampling design"

(Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry, 1988, p. 453) and also snowball sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994), helped by my initial informants.

This ethnographic research details the meanings and practices associated with the taste transformation ritual and the connoisseurship rite of passage by employing the empirical context of the North America specialty coffee consumption. The body of qualitative data was interpreted using a hermeneutic approach (Thompson, 1997), comparing consumers' stages in their coffee connoisseurship rite of passage and studying "differences between newcomers and those who have long been members" (Belk, Fischer & Kozinets, 2013, p. 148). In the next section, I present the methods that I used in my research and data collection: (3.1) long interview, (3.2) participant observation, (3.3) introspection, (3.4) netnography, and (3.5) newspaper historical analysis.

3.1 Long interview

To extract the meanings embedded in the coffee connoisseurs' ritual behaviors, I conducted intensive and open-ended interviews, as suggested by Rook (1985), based on the long interview method (McCracken, 1988). I looked for participants' personal experiences, backgrounds, histories, beliefs, and rituals regarding specialty coffee consumption. I also asked the informants to talk about "their ways of doing things" (Hennion, 2001, p. 5), such as their ways of choosing and drinking coffee at coffee shops and their interactions with other people. I also took photos and field notes during the observations and right after the interviews. The interviews, conducted as special conversations (Belk, Fischer & Kozinets, 2013), were unstructured with open-ended questions, and they were conducted on-site (HEICSs). I adopted a phenomenological interviewing approach (Thompson, Locander, & Pollio 1989). The interviews were recorded and transcribed. My data set includes 25 on-site, in-depth coffee consumer interviews (1.668 minutes), 15 in-depth coffee professional interviews (855 minutes), and five in-depth wine connoisseur interviews (540 minutes); 377 pages of field notes; and 551 photographs. Table 2 shows the coffee informants' profiles, and Table 3 shows the coffee professionals' profiles. Pseudonyms are used to guarantee the confidentiality of the informants.

Table 2 – Profile of key coffee consumer informants

N.	Inform.	Length of the connoisseurship rite of passage	Occupation	Age	City of residence	Country of residence	Natio- nality
1	Frank	15 years	Website designer	44	Seattle	USA	American
2	Suzy	13 years	Biochemist	28	Toronto	CAN	Canadian
3	Alan	7 years	Vendor Engineer	51	Seattle	USA	Brazilian
4	John	> 8 years	Marketing manager	32	Seattle	USA	American
5	Greg	> 15 years	Architect	37	Toronto	CAN	Polish
6	Laura	> 40 years	Executive searcher	61	Toronto	CAN	American
7	David	3,5 years	Phd Student	39	Toronto	CAN	American
8	Jane	3 years	Financial controller	30	Seattle	USA	American
9	Maria	2 years	Not working (classics)	31	Seattle	USA	Canadian
10	Paul	10 months	Undergraduate student	21	Toronto	CAN	Chinese
11	Kevin	10 months	Undergraduate student	21	Toronto	CAN	Chinese
12	Bob	1,5 years	Unemployed	29	Seattle	USA	American
13	Jacquie	Public	Pastry Chef	28	Toronto	CAN	
14	Hunt	Public	Media communication	+/- 25	Seattle	USA	American
15	Kate	Public	Undergraduate student	21	Toronto	CAN	Chinese
16	Joana	Public	Enterprenieur	+/-56	Toronto	CAN	Canadian
17	Vera	Public	Backery		Toronto	CAN	Canadian
18	Elizabet	Regular consumer	Manager	+/-40	Seattle	USA	American
19	Robson	Regular consumer	Aquitect	+/- 40	Seattle	USA	American
20	Jackie	Regular consumer	Undergraduate teacher	+/- 50	Toronto	CAN	Canadian
21	Mark		Designer and photopgrapher	+/- 40	Belo Horizonte	BR	Brazilian
22	Joseph		Enginner	+/- 52	Belo Horizonte	BR	German
23	Jones		Enterprenieur	47	Belo Horizonte	BR	Brazilian
24	Rosie		Business administrator	+/- 40	Belo Horizonte	BR	Brazilian
25	Alex		System analyst	22	São Paulo	BR	Brazilian

Table 3 – Profile of key coffee professional informants

N.	Name	Age	Occupation	City of residence	Country of residence
1	Albert	+/- 26	Barista	Seattle	USA
2	Claudia	+/- 25	Barista	New York	USA
3	Scott	+/- 26	Barista	Toronto	Canada
4	Richard	+/- 32	Barista	Toronto	Canada
5	Philip	+/-30	Barista	Toronto	Canada
6	Kent	+/- 32	Barista	Toronto	Canada
7	Amanda	+/- 21	Barista	Curitiba	Brazil
8	Nate	+/- 30	Barista	São Paulo	Brazil
9	Jack	32	Manager	New York	USA
10	Steve	+/- 32	Manager and barista	New York	USA
11	Harris	+/- 35	Franchising manager	Toronto	Canada
12	Andrew	+/- 32	Roaster	Seattle	USA
13	Adam	+/- 35	Coffee shop owner	Toronto	Canada
14	Tom	+/- 52	Coffee shop owner	Belo Horizonte	Brazil
15	Vera	+/- 40	Coffee shop owner	São Paulo	Brazil

To extend my understanding of coffee connoisseurship consumption, I also collected data on the wine connoisseurship context in Toronto and Belo Horizonte, comparing the similarities and differences of the coffee and wine connoisseurship consumption contexts. I conducted five in-depth interviews (540 minutes) with wine connoisseurs (see Table 4).

Table 4 - Wine connoisseur informants

N.	Name	Length of the wine connoisseurship rite of passage	Occupation	Age	City of residence	Country of residence
1	Anne	2 years	Fire protection	+/- 52	Toronto	CAN
2	Ellen	2 years	Unemployed	+/- 40	Toronto	CAN
3	Trevis	20 years	Financial manager	+/- 45	Toronto	CAN
4	Janete	1,5 year		+/-36	Toronto	CAN
5	Bruce	20 years	Bank manager	+/- 42	Toronto	CAN

3.2 Participant Observation

I visited and observed consumers in 59 independent coffee shops (most of them HEICS). The criteria to define if the independent coffee shops were high-end was based on the opinions of informants in the advanced stage of the connoisseurship rite of passage, the opinions of outstanding baristas, and the quality of the coffee served to me during my visit. Forty-nine of

the independent coffee shops were in North America: nine in Seattle, nine in New York, 28 in Toronto, two in Montreal, and one in Niagara. Ten of the independent coffee shops were in South America: six in Belo Horizonte and four in São Paulo (Table 5).

Table 5 – Coffee shops observed

(continues)				
N.	Coffee Shop	HEICS	City	Country
1	Abraço			
2	Bluebird	*		
3	Box Kite	*		
4	Café Grumpy	*		
5	EveryMan	*	New York	
6	Intelligentsia	*		
7	Joe Pro Shop	*		
8	Little Collins	*		
9	Ninth Espresso	*		
10	Bistro Fonté Bar			USA
11	Café Vita	*		
12	Espresso Vivace	*		
13	First Starbucks			
14	Seattle Coffee Workers	*	Seattle	
15	Slate	*		
16	Stumptown	*		
17	Toast	*		
18	Victrola	*		
19	Café Myriade	*		
20	Humble Lion	*	Montreal	
21	Balzacs Coffee Roasters		Niagara	
22	BoxCar Social	*		
23	Capital Espresso	*		
24	Coffee Tree	*		
25	Crema Coffee			
26	Dark Horse	*		
27	de Mello Palheta	*		
28	Early Bird Espresso	*		Canada
29	Fahrenheit Coffee	*	Toronto	
30	Good Neighbour	*		
31	Green Beanery	*		
32	Jef Fuel	*		
33	Lettiere			
34	Lit Espresso	*		
35	Manic Coffee	*		
36	Mercury Espresso	*		

Table 5 - Coffee shops observed

			(conclusion)
37	Pilot Tasting Bar	*	
38	R2	*	
39	Sam James	*	
40	Sam James Pocket	*	
41	Sense Apple Coffee Roasters	*	
42	Seven Grams		
43	Starbucks (North York Library)		
44	Starbucks (Bloor)		
45	Starbucks (Bayview Village)		
46	Starbucks (Dundas)		
47	Te Aro	*	
48	Thor Coffee Shop	*	
49	Tymotys		
50	Academia do Café	*	
51	Café Boudin		
52	Café Kahlua	*	
53	Mole Antonelliana		Belo Horizonte
54	Souless Coffee		
55	Will Coffee		Brazil
56	Café Supplicity	*	
57	Coffee Lab	*	
58	Otávio Café	*	São Paulo
59	Santo Grão Café		
Observation Total Time		81:45	

I attended three coffee club meetings (see Table 6): two in Seattle, one of which was with eighteen people (three hours and thirty minutes), and one of which was with four people (one hour and thirty minutes), and one in Toronto with three people (three hours), and I organized two coffee clubs meeting in Belo Horizonte (three hours each), and I attended eight coffee cuppings (see Table 7): five in Seattle and three in Toronto (seven hours and fifty minutes).

Table 6 – Coffee club meetings

N.	Name	Local	City	Country	Time
1	Coffee Walking Club of Toronto	Te Aro	Toronto	Canada	3:00
2	Coffee Club of Seattle	Stumptown	Seattle	USA	1:30
3	Coffee Club of Seattle	Slate			3:30
4	Coffee Epiphany	My home	Belo Horizonte	Brazil	3:00
5	Coffee Epiphany	Friend's home			3:00
Total Time					14:00

Table 7 – Coffee cuppings

N.	Local	City	Country	Time
1	Lit Espresso (first cupping)			1:05
2	Lit Espresso (second cupping)	Toronto	Canada	1:10
3	Starbucks (Bayview Village)			0:55
4	Victrola Coffee Shop			0:40
5	Stumptown Coffee Shop (first)			0:50
6	Stumptown Coffee Shop (second)	Seattle	USA	1:00
7	SCAA event: Colombian Coffee			1:30
8	SCAA event: Brazilian Coffee			0:40
Total Time				7:50

I attended the 27th annual exposition of the Specialty Coffee Association of America hosted in Seattle and the 9th annual Brazilian Specialty Coffee exposition (Espaço Café Brasil), hosted in Belo Horizonte. I watched six formal coffee competitions: 1) USA Brewers competition (three hours), 2) USA barista competition, together with a coffee connoisseur (three hours), 3) Canadian Brewers competition (three hours), 4) Brazilian Brewers competition (two hours), 5) Brazilian barista competition (four hours), and 6) Brazilian cup taster competition (one hour). Finally, I also attended an informal 7) Thursday Night Throwdown Latte Art Competition (TNT competition) in Seattle at Seattle Coffee Works, and 8) another one in Belo Horizonte, at Academia do Café. Both TNT events congregated the barista competitors and connoisseur consumers in a friendly and pleasurable atmosphere. Table 8 shows the coffee competitions that I watched personally.

Table 8 – Coffee competitions

Competition	Place/Event	City	Country	Time
Canadian brewer competition	Propeller Roastery	Toronto	Canada	3:00
Informal Latte Art TNT	Seattle Coffee Workers (HEICS)			3:30
Barista Competiton	SCAA event	Seattle	USA	3:00
Brewer Competition	SCAA event			3:00
Barista Competiton	International Coffee Fair			3:30
Brewer Competition	International Coffee Fair	Belo Horizonte	Brazil	2:00
Cup Taster Competition	International Coffee Fair			1:00
Informal Latte Art TNT	Academia do Café (HEICS)			2:00
Total Time				21:00

Regarding the wine consumption context, beyond the in-depth interviews, my data set includes wine tastings, wine store observations, and annual wine fair participation (Table 9).

Table 9 – Wine tasting, observation and anual fair

N.	Data	City of residence	Country of residence	Time
1	Wine store observation	Toronto	CAN	03:10
4	Wine blind tasting (first)	Toronto	CAN	02:50
5	Wine blind tasting (second)	Toronto	CAN	02:40
6	Annual wine fair	Belo Horizonte	BR	04:00
7	Wine lecture: "national wines"	Belo Horizonte	BR	01:20
Total Time				14:00

3.3 Introspection

I also used introspection (Gould, 1991) using a reflexivity within research approach described by Wallendorf and Brucks (2014, p. 342). Beyond the observational and interview material from coffee connoisseur consumers, I also used the reflexive material that emerged from being a participant studying coffee connoisseurs consumers. “Participant observation that incorporates reflexivity within the research does not take the researcher as the focus of the research” (Wallendorf & Brucks, 2014, p. 342).

3.4 Netnography

I conducted a netnography, following the recommendations of Kozinets (2014). In August 2013, I started to search for information about specialty coffee consumption in blogs and on Facebook pages. After a while, I realized that Twitter is the specialty coffee community’s preferred online social media outlet. Since that, I have started to follow the online interactions of connoisseur consumers and coffee professionals on Twitter and also Instagram and also participated by interacting with them online. Connoisseur consumers do not rely much on blogs. Some of them have blogs, but they prefer Twitter and Instagram. At the same time, some connoisseur consumer blogs and many related blogs run by professionals address the taste transformation ritual and connoisseurship consumption practices, and they provide much

useful information. I also extended the interviews with the informants by e-mail, Twitter, and Skype. They provided much information on specialty coffee, sharing blogs articles, tweets, pictures, and many other pieces of valuable information. I have created a Twitter account as @Coffee_Acad_Res (profile as a PhD student and a researcher of specialty coffee consumption) and interacted with many coffee consumers, baristas, and coffee professionals. I have gained much important information in this social media environment. Coffee professionals, such as Maxwell Mooney (@maxwellamooney), and connoisseur consumers that I met on Twitter helped me find new HEICSs in different cities and also introduced me to other connoisseur consumers.

3.5 Historical Newspaper Analysis

Another dimension of my research involved studying media coverage. To complement data from the specialty coffee context and gain a deeper understanding of the history of specialty coffee in the United States, I evaluated media coverage of the specialty coffee market and consumption by analyzing primary documents such as newspaper articles from between 1980 and 2013 following procedures set forth by Golder (2000). According to Humphreys (2010), newspaper articles are a kind of mass-media discourse that both reflect and influence public perceptions differently compared to blogs, magazines, or legal documents. I identified well-known newspapers that cover business news and trends in coffee consumption and the coffee market. These types of prestige media were the *New York Times*, which has frequently been used by scholars to understand marketplace changes (Arsel & Thompson, 2011), the *Wall Street Journal*, which covers news on a wide range of industries (Scaraboto & Fischer, 2012), and *USA Today*, in order to understand the cultural and cognitive shifts. These three newspapers have the largest circulations of all newspapers in the United States, and they have a readership in all 50 states (Humphreys, 2010). Using the search engine for the Factiva database, I searched all three newspapers for one or more of the terms “coffee connoisseur,” “independent coffee,” or “specialty coffee” in the text or headline of the article. These searches yielded 542 articles, 277 of which were not related to the specialty coffee context. Two hundred and fifty-six articles did offer some industry-level analysis between 1980 and 2013.

4 THE TASTE TRANSFORMATION RITUAL AND THE CONNOISSEURSHIP RITE OF PASSAGE

I mean, we're all on a different journey. It takes some people longer than others. Some people are slow, just gradual. Some people are just fast. I'm slow. It took me years for me to get to a certain level and years to another level and I just keep on ramping up... The coffee that I drank five years ago, I wouldn't drink today. That's how much my expectations have changed. (Frank)

The coffee connoisseurship rite of passage is based on the performance of the taste transformation ritual, which means tasting different kinds of high-quality coffee prepared by different well-trained professionals in different coffee shops, taking time to feel the coffee tasted during the sip and engaging in a conversation with the barista or friend about the coffee aroma, flavor, and taste notes. The taste transformation ritual usually occurs at certain moments during the day, in which the coffee, in the coffee connoisseur consumer's opinion, could be well prepared (at some cases, best prepared) in the high-end independent coffee shops, depending on the weather, the barista, and the coffee equipment conditions. Tasting ritual is performed frequently and continuously, and coffee connoisseurs persevere in their activity for years, varying the choices of high-quality coffees and also visiting other neighborhoods, cities, and even countries, where there are specialty coffee scenes. The tasting act is a reflexive moment. It is a pause and an act of attention to the coffee. During this moment, the object being tasted has a strong presence in the connoisseur consumer attention. Coffee connoisseurs invest time and money during the rite of passage to develop their knowledge and taste.

The taste of coffee, similar to wine or to musical objects, as described by Hennion (2007), is not a given, "but results from a performance by the taster, a performance that relies on techniques, corporeal training, repeated experiments, and which is accomplished in time" (p. 108). During their connoisseurship rites of passage, the informants get involved in public cupping courses offered by independent coffee shops as well as training, tastings, and other types of courses that help them to develop their amateur expertise. In addition, informants learn how to use coffee equipment to get a better coffee at home. Some of the equipment might include an Aeropress, Chemex, French Press, V60 Hario, and also a scale, and a grinder (Appendix A). Only Frank and Suzy had espresso machines at home, but they sold few years ago. Certainly, the espresso machine (Appendix A) is the most specialized type of equipment

and the most difficult for preparing a good coffee. The informants invest time, money, and effort to transform their taste, which, as noted by Hennion (2004, p. 137), “has nothing to do with the naked face-to-face between object and subject. It is a long-term process and construction based on mediations, bodies, objects, situations, and equipment.” Connoisseur consumers perform taste as a collective and reflexive activity, improving their skill during the connoisseurship rite of passage.

Drawing on Driver’s ritual model (1991), which focuses on the needs satisfied through ritual behavior and the functional elements, I describe in detail the elements of the taste transformation ritual and identify the strategies of ritualization that “generate a privileged opposition between ritualized and other activities and the production of ritualized agents through the generation of a structured environment experienced as molding the bodies acting within it” (Bell, 1992, p. 101). According to Driver (1991), rituals provide three social gifts: order, community, and transformation. The social gifts provide the basis for understanding the function of the taste transformation ritual.

The taste transformation ritual is established on the basis of the oppositions between regular and connoisseur consumers. As Bell explains, “Ritual is, above all, an assertion of difference” (1992, p. 102); however these differences need to be developed and well established in the marketplace to allow the growth of the connoisseurship consumption culture. The taste transformation is possible when its elements and community are present in the marketplace. In the next subsection (4.1), I present the necessary conditions in which the taste transformation ritual is performed as the ritual relates to the product (espresso), and I also present historical context for how the marketplace in North America facilitated the emergence of connoisseurship coffee consumption. Further, I present how the Brazilian coffee marketplace lacks the necessary conditions for consumers to experience the connoisseurship rite of passage by performing the taste transformation rituals. In subsection 4.2, I explain the connoisseurship rite of passage, from regular to connoisseur consumers, and in subsection 4.3, I present in detail the elements of the taste transformation ritual. Subsection 4.4 describes the connoisseurship consumption community. In these sections, I discuss how oppositions between regular consumers and connoisseur consumers, as well as between mass consumption and connoisseurship consumption, are established and maintained in the context of ritualization.

4.1 Setting the Ritual's Conditions

The taste transformation ritual has some basic conditions to be performed. The type of coffee drunk strongly influence the connoisseurship rite of passage. In the next subsection (4.1.1), I explain why espresso is the preferred coffee beverage of connoisseur consumers in the advanced stage of the connoisseurship rite of passage and why they drink it in HEICSs. Coffee connoisseurship consumption became possible after the necessary conditions provided by the marketplace, which are discussed in subsection 4.1.2. I present the taste transformation ritual performed based on the actual conditions available in the specialty coffee marketplace.

4.1.1 The Product Tasted in the Ritual

The range of coffee beverage types is extensive, and they have different consumption meanings. Levy (1999) provides a exhibition (Exhibition 1) which “illustrates that product perceptions are patterns of the meanings derived from consumption effects, preparation processes, colors, quantities and variety” (1999, p. 253). Comparing the exhibition developed by Levy (Exhibition 1) to the specialty coffee context, the coffee drinks with ice cream, caramel, sugar, crème (e.g. Frappuccino, Peppermint Mocha, Caramel Latte) can be considered young, colorful coffee beverages (bottom of the Exhibition 1). Then, there are coffee beverages with milk and hot water, such as Cappuccino and Americano (middle of the Exhibition 1), and finally, there is an espresso, which is adult, exclusive, and mature, with a complex preparation, small unit, and intense taste (top of the Exhibition 1).

Exhibition 1 - Beverage consumption meanings

Preparation	Color	Variety	Quantity	Impact	Meanings	
Complexity	Dark	Heterogeneity	Small units	Intense taste	Discriminating	Exclusive
Distillation		of Substance	Sips	Burning	Sophisticated	
Fermenting		of Choice	Jiggers	Dry, sour	Intoxicating	Mature
					Evil	
Brewing				Bloating	Experimental	Classy
Steeping	Deep hues			Addicting	Relaxing	
				Bitter	Thoughtful	Adult
Carbonation	Colorful			Burping	Social	
Squeezing				Tart	Autonomous	
					Conventional	
					Playful	
	Light			Sweet		Young
Heating					Nutritious	
Natural elements					Dependent	
Simplicity	Colorless	Homogeneity	Large units	Bland	Virtuous	
					Immature	Universal

Source: Levy (1999, p. 255)

Regarding the preparation of the beverage, informants during the connoisseurship rite of passage move from brew methods to shots (from pour-over or drip coffee to espresso) and from natural resources and simple processing up (pour-over or drip coffee) through more complex methods of preparation (espresso). The younger informants or those who are near the beginning of the rite of passage prefer pour-over coffee (Paul, Kevin, Kate) or Americano coffee (Bob, Maria, Jane, David), which is 2 oz. (60 ml) of espresso and 3 oz. (90 ml) of hot water. Pour-over and Americano are less concentrated than espresso, which is 1 oz. (30 ml). Annex B presents the ingredient ratios for different types of coffee beverages. Alan describes the changing of his coffee beverage choice during his connoisseurship rite of passage:

There are people that are in the beginning, and when you begin, you, I don't know, there are many reasons why people drink coffee... Many times it's to wake up or because it is a habit. So you are not concerned about the taste, you are not worried about the coffee's taste. Because the majority of coffee is, the quality is relatively bad, so you put sugar, put cream, and, after a while, you realize that you don't need it. The first thing that you do is reduce the amount of coffee that you drink. Here [USA], it is common to drink a 16 oz. vanilla latte. Then, you reduce to the mocha. Then I reduced to the Cappuccino, and from the Cappuccino, I then got the espresso. And then I just drink espresso nowadays. You reduce more and more, and you stop mixing in stuff that is not healthy and you don't need. Then you start to develop your palate to really appreciate the differences.

According to Levy (1999), the beverages that are dark, are served in small units of quantity, and have an intense taste are perceived as both more mature and higher in status. Adults or those who have been on the connoisseurship rite of passage for many years, such as Greg,

John, Frank, and Alan, prefer espresso. This preference was also confirmed by the baristas that I interviewed. Espresso is Smith's preferred coffee as well:

My coffee drink of choice for the past five years has been the espresso. Straight shots. No milk and no sugar. In my opinion, espresso represents the best potential for coffee. If it is done perfectly it can be an amazing experience that is remembered long after the beverage is consumed. But getting a perfect shot is a rare thing. (Smith, 2011, March 15).

Espresso is the sign of differentiation among consumers. Tom says that "a client who orders an espresso requires special attention. If you drink an espresso, you are probably a connoisseur." Alan points out the meaning of espresso in the specialty coffee market:

I used to go to one coffee shop, and I always ordered espresso. The guys have never talked to me, you frequent [the shop] as an anonymous person. And then, I met this same barista in another place, when he opened his own coffee shop. So, he told me that he remembered me. I said: "Really? Do you remember all of your clients? Hundreds of clients go to your coffee shop, how do you remember all of them?" He answered: "I remember the people who order espresso." It means that they [consumers who drink coffee] are people who appreciate coffee.

Undoubtedly, espresso is the preferred beverage of coffee connoisseurs who are in advanced stages of the connoisseurship rite of passage. Espresso is a finely-ground coffee brewed under pressure up to a minute. The Figure 1 shows an espresso, and its anatomy is as follows:

When we pull a shot of espresso, all of the components of the crushed coffee beans are extracted by the percolation of hot water through tightly packed and finely ground coffee. The pressurized water extracts soluble and insoluble solids and oils found in the coffee beans and deposits them in the cup.

There are two layers to a shot of espresso: the crema, and the liquid.

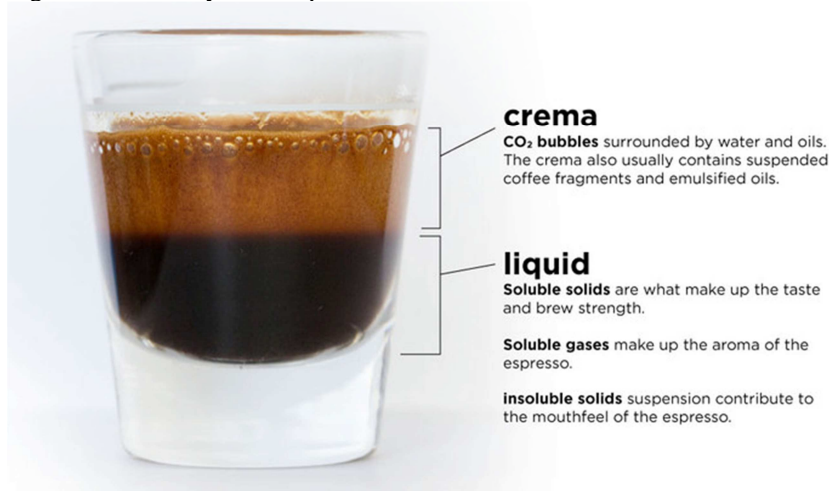
The crema layer is made up of CO₂ bubbles surrounded by water and oils. The crema also usually contains suspended coffee fragments and emulsified oils. This layer can be very bitter and makes a great argument to stir your espresso before drinking in order to combine the different layers.

The major part of the espresso is the liquid phase that is made up of soluble solids, gases, and insoluble solids. This is the part that contains most of the delicious, rich flavors and aromas that we love in a great cup of espresso. (ChefSteps, 2014b).

ChefSteps (2014d) explains that espresso can be prepared using a brew ratio (weight of grounds to liquid) from 1:1 to 1:3 (depending on the country), a brew time (duration of water through portafilter) of 25-35 seconds, and a brew temperature (usually set by the machine) of 195° F-203° F. According to ChefStep, in North America, espresso is a 36 ml beverage made with 18 grams of ground coffee (brew ratio of 1:2). This brew ratio was approximately what I

found during my observations in HEICSS. La Marzocco's website states that the ristretto espresso uses 1:1 or 1:15 brew ratio, and the current brew ratio across the American, European, and Australian specialty coffee shops is between 1:1.5 or 1:2. The traditional Italian method of making espresso uses a 1:3 brew ratio: "While many specialty shops in the US and Europe use between 16-19 grams of coffee for espresso (yielding 24-38 grams of liquid), Italian cafes use about 7 grams of coffee that result in a 21 gram single shot of espresso" (Blake, 2014, October 24).

Figure 1 - Anatomy of an espresso shot



Source: ChefSteps (2014b)

Espresso is difficult to make at home, because of the investment necessary in the equipment (grinder and espresso machine), in training (formal and at home), and in the time required to develop the ability to make a great shot. A good shot of espresso requires professional skills that are difficult to develop at home. Amateurs "are often frustrated in their efforts to meet the high standards of performance set by the top professionals in their fields" (Stebbins, 1979, p. 264). Although some coffee connoisseur consumers have more knowledge and skills than many baristas, they cannot accomplish the work of outstanding or champion baristas. Beyond the skill developed by professionals during their daily work practices (brain activities), they also have more cognitive responses during the tasting compared to nonprofessionals (Latour, Latour, & Feinstein, 2011). Professionals can therefore improve their knowledge and taste faster than consumers. Nevertheless, the skills necessary to extract a great shot of espresso are difficult to develop, even for the barista who has worked in coffee shops for a long time. Alan describes how unpredictable the espresso shot is, even for barista:

One [barista] explained to me that, making the coffee, he imagines a target with four strings. The target is release on the space: two points above and two points below. If you pull one [string], the target budes, and you need to pull other [string] to compensate. And the parameter is the four strings. They are the grinder, the size of the coffee particles, the time that you let the coffee flow on the machine, the dose, how many grams of coffee you put in the porta-filter, and how many grams of liquid you will have in your final beverage. The thinner the grinding, the more difficult it is for water to pass through the coffee [in the espresso machine porta-filter]. So theoretically, it will take more time to get the same volume (in the final coffee beverage). This is what serves as a parameter, and you see how [all four parameters] are interlinked and how they influence each other. Sometimes, the barista uses the same parameters and says: “What a downer, it is not good as the previous one!”

In the Espresso Google+ community, Mark P. (group owner) posted a message (2014, 3, November) explaining that, for him, the most important aspects of espresso are the 4 “M”s, and specifically, the “mano” element of the 4 “M”s. The 4 “M”s are also the most important thing for the informant Harris, who is a franchising manager. “What's the 4 Ms? Miscela (the coffee blend), Macchina (the espresso machine), Macinadose (the grinder), and Mano (the person). These are seen as the four pillars of good espresso. And for the most part, that's religion to me” (Mark P., Espresso Google+, 2014, 3, November). Smith listed things that could go wrong with the preparation of an espresso at home:

1. Not sourcing the right green coffee beans.
2. Roasting old beans.
3. Not constructing a good blend or picking the ideal Single Origin offering.
4. Roasting profile fails to bring out the flavors desired.
5. Grinder is too tight or too loose. Seconds are critical to ideal shots.
6. Espresso machine is not maintained.
7. Water temperature is too hot or cold. Some blends require 1/2 degree calibration.
8. Espresso is too fresh or too stale. Different blends will peak on different days from roast.
9. Espresso shot is pulled too fast or too slow. Could be a grinder or tamping issue.
10. Espresso cup is not warmed prior to pull. (Smith, 2011, March 15)

He noted that even more factors need to be considered in coffee shops. A perfect espresso shot is really difficult. There are many variables that can influence the result. Kozinets (2002b) affirmed that:

Making good espresso is a complicated affair. It involves careful attendance to the water, the grind, the timing of the shot, knowledge of the machine, a clean portafilter (portable filter) and screen, the tamper, the blend, the ambient temperature, the age of the coffee, the degree of the roast, the air humidity, incoming water temperature, internal boiler temperature, and even such mystical elements as the mood of the barista [coffee server] and ‘good old-fashioned luck’ (Kozinets, 2002b, pp. 67–68).

Smith explains that a few seconds or degrees could move an espresso shot from perfection to defective: “Other coffee brewing methods are more forgiving of time and temperature, but there is very little room for error with espresso” (2011, March 15). David Schomer, who owns the Vivace coffee shop in Seattle, describes the influence of two seconds of variation in the shot in the coffee notes of flavor:

For example, our Espresso Dolce has caramel, dark chocolate, leather/salt, honey, blueberry and toast notes present in a balanced shot. But when the flow rate varies (as it almost always does), within that 2 second window of 25 to 27 seconds to pull the shot, different notes compete for dominance. If it is a little slow and short, more caramel comes out. Some shots feature more blueberry or dark chocolate. Toast is the most elusive flavor and only comes out in the most balanced shots. It is so cool hunting for the toast....The resulting experience is quite complex and beautiful day after day as espresso reveals it is even more sensitive than I ever imagined. (Maybe “single origin Fridays” or something like that would work for us...) (Espresso Vivace, n.d.).

Considering all variables described above, Smith calls an espresso shot a “lottery ticket,” affirming that with risks come rewards: “There are so many things that can go wrong when espresso is prepared. When you combine that with rising expectations, what you have is a situation much like a lottery ticket” (2011, March 15). He explains that consumers pay to play, and sometimes they win and sometimes they lose. “Most of the time the experience is somewhere in the middle, good but nothing memorable” (2011, March 15). Connoisseur consumers like to play this game, too.

4.1.2 The Emergence of the Ritual’s Conditions in the Marketplace

The rise of the taste transformation ritual was possible after many changes occurred in the specialty coffee consumption culture and marketplace. Both consumers and the specialty coffee marketplace have been changing for more than three decades, and, as a consequence, the coffee consumption practices have been changing as well. In her article in the FlameKeeper Newsletter about specialty coffees, Skeie (2003) divided coffee consumption history in three coffee waves, each of which is described in Exhibition 2. Only in the third wave could the structural elements (Rook, 1985) of the taste transformation ritual be provided by the specialty coffee culture, and also the Driver’s (1991) social gift: ordering the society, developing a community, and transforming the consumer. However, it is worth mentioning

that the performance of the taste transformation ritual and the spread of the connoisseurship consumption practices in the specialty coffee context only became possible with the development of coffee consumers' and professionals' skills, the growth of barista professionalism, the increasing number of high-end independent coffee shops in the marketplace, the launch of cutting-edge equipment, the development of high technology, and the growth of social media. Next, I explain each coffee wave that has occurred in North America and compare them with the Brazilian specialty coffee context, which does not have the structural elements necessary for the taste transformation ritual to be performed.

Exhibition 2 - Coffee waves

Characteristics	Waves		
	First	Second	Third
	After the Second World War	1980s and 1990s	2000s
Beginning	Industrialization of coffee roasting and production	Birth of specialty coffee	Aesthetical and ethical vision Fairtrade and Direct Trade
Coffee bean	Robusta Coffee ¹	Arabica Coffee ¹	Single-origin coffee: region, characteristics and year
Coffee as	Commodity	Mass consumption	Artisanal brewing
Slogan	Caffeine	Real coffee	Better cup of coffee
Meaning	Energy	Sophisticated consumption	Coffee properties and nuances
Coffee Preparation	Instant soluble (filter coffee)	Espresso machine in coffee shops	Pour over coffee: single dose (flavor enhancement). Hario V60, Chemex, French press
Predominant Companies	Industries · Procter & Gamble (Folgers Coffee) · Kraft Foods (Maxwell House) · Nestle	Global coffee shop (landscape brand): · Starbucks	Independent coffee shop (local brands): · Intelligentsia · Stumptown

Adapted from Skeie (2003, pp. 2-5) and my data collection

¹ Arabica vs. Robusta beans: Arabica beans contain half the caffeine of Robusta, are less bitter and more flavorful, and are generally preferred for premium brands (Clark, 2005, October 14).

Specialty coffee is related to the second and third waves, but many ideas were borrowed from the first wave. The first wave's mission was to increase coffee consumption exponentially (Skeie, 2003). During this period, coffee grew in popularity. Brands and corporations such as Procter & Gamble (Folgers Coffee), Kraft Foods (Maxwell House), and Nestlé, known as the Big Three, were the main players in the coffee market. They were (and still are) the mass marketers, providing mass production and mass consumption. As a commodity, coffee during the first wave was characterized by low price and low quality. The second wave saw the birth of the specialty coffee market. According to Skeie (2003), the American market was influenced by the Italian coffee market, and the espresso machine made it possible to increase

the assortment and variety, increase the speed of serving customers, and improve the coffee's flavor. During this period, the role of coffee shops increased in importance, with Starbucks leading the marketplace.

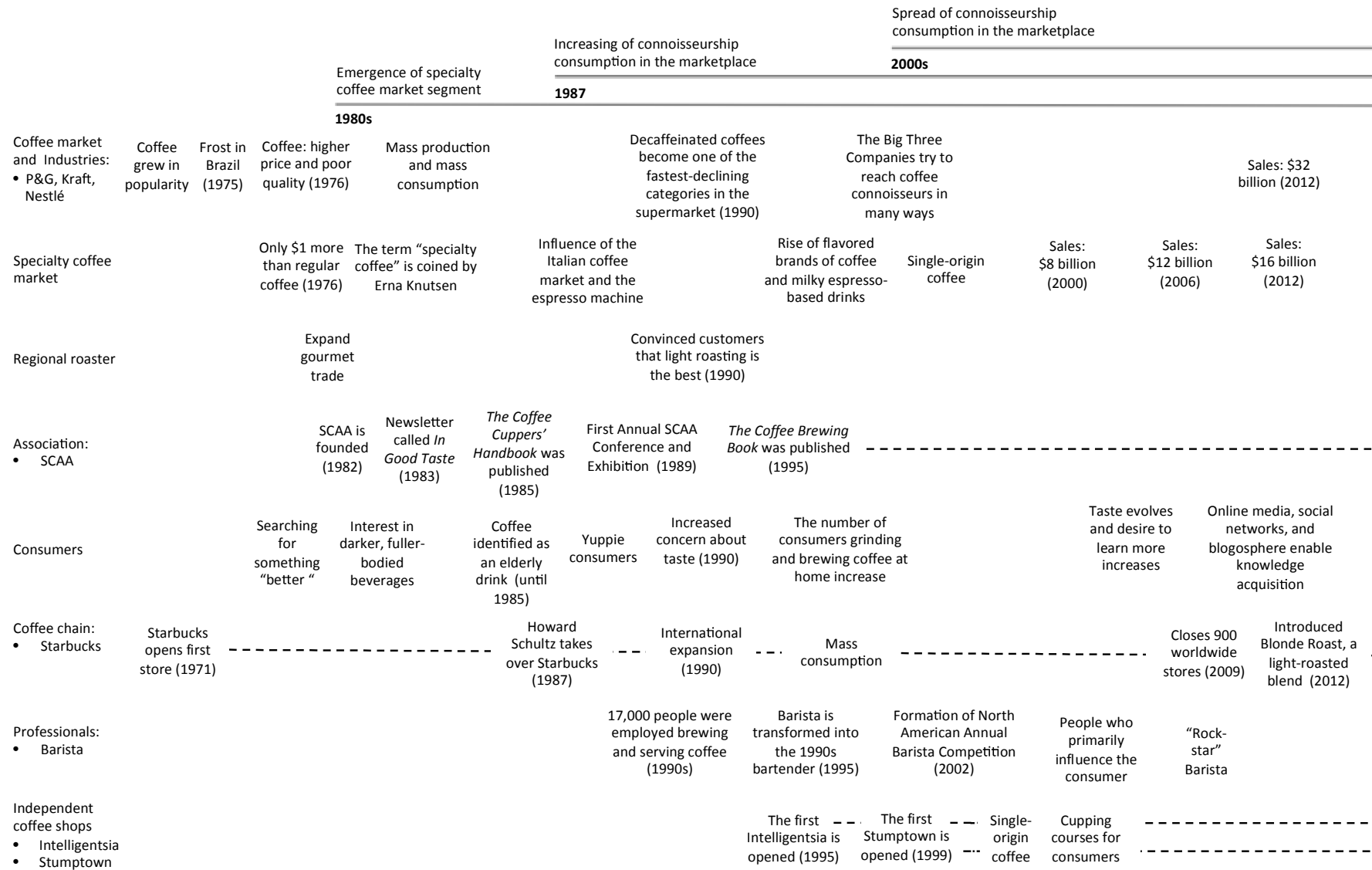
However by the end of 2000s, the numbers of coffee shops increased as never before. According to Simon, in the 2000s, Starbucks "was losing its hold on cultural leaders, the kinds of people others emulate. Now that Starbucks and its style are everywhere, its customers can no longer distinguish themselves from others by drinking venti lattes" (2011). In 2009, for the first time in its history, Starbucks had to close 900 stores worldwide (Horovitz, 2011, March 7). Simon notes, "Starbucks customers liked Starbucks because, they thought, it did in fact draw distinctions between themselves and the vast American consumer sea of middlebrow tastes and sensibilities - that is, until it became rather middlebrow itself" (2011). In addition, the company's emotional-brand strategies (aggressive growth, highly publicized market domination, and omnipresence) "no longer mesh with its appeal to a countercultural, bohemian sensibility" (Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006, p. 60) and compromise the perceived authenticity of its emotional-branding story, and conduct the emergence of a doppelgänger brand image which is "a family of disparaging images and meanings about a brand that circulate throughout popular culture" (Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006, p. 50). Schultz, the company's owner, recognized that Starbucks had to deal with a dramatic change in consumer behavior, new competitors (from multinational corporations and independent coffee shops), the digital revolution, and the financial crisis and subsequent economic recession (Schultz & Gordon, 2012) in the late 2000s and early 2010s.

The third wave, according to Hartman (2011), would not have been possible had Starbucks not cleared the way. In the third wave, the roast master is recognized as an artisan, and the barista, the professional who prepares the coffee drinks, has also increased in importance and is now recognized as the person who can provide the customer with a better cup of coffee (Skeie, 2003). Independent brands of coffee shops, such as Intelligentsia and Stumptown, have played an increasingly important role in the marketplace. They serve what is called single-origin coffee, in which each batch of coffee beans has its own characteristics based on region, year, and the way it was cultivated. Artisanal foodstuff and brewing, fair trade, and direct trade grew in importance in the marketplace as a response to ethical vision in the marketplace. The third wave is characterized by the independent coffee shops in opposition to the coffee shop chains (e.g., Starbucks, Tim Horton's, Timothy's Café, and even McDonalds).

As explained by Arsel & Thompson, ““indie”” (short for independent) refers to artistic creations produced outside the auspices of media conglomerates and distributed through small-scale and often localized channels” (2011, p. 792). They confirm that consumers’ indie tastes and practices find expression in cafés (third-place servicescapes). To differentiate the independent coffee shops that are preferred and frequented by coffee connoisseurs in intermediate and advanced levels of the rite of passage, we will call them high-end independent coffee shops (HEICSSs). Coffee connoisseur consumers frequent HEICSSs, build social connections, and internalize the cultural logic of connoisseurship aesthetic tastes and standards. The new specialty coffee (third wave) is considered more “genuine” than the concentrated and mass-market standardized products of the trade.

Figure 2 presents the relevant events that happened during the three waves. Based on historical analysis of newspapers, it was possible to identify the actions and the roles of many actors during the actual connoisseurship coffee consumption culture in North America. Industries, regional roaster, the Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA), Starbucks, baristas (who prepare and serve the coffee), and independent coffee shops, together with the consumer behavior changes, make the performance of the taste transformation ritual possible. Each actor made decisions that opened new possibilities for consumers to advance their coffee knowledge. SCAA boosted the development of the best practices in the specialty marketplace by launching books, organizing competitions, and training coffee professionals using high standards to score the quality of coffee. Further, coffee shop chains spread the coffee culture (mass coffee consumption) and paved the way for connoisseurship consumption practices; independent coffee shops took advantage of that spread and provided a more distinctive and knowledgeable coffee experience for consumers.

Figure 2 - Historical analysis of specialty coffee consumption



North America has the necessary conditions for the performance of the taste transformation ritual, but Brazil does not. Even though it is the leading country in coffee production (International Coffee Organization, 2014), Brazil does not have a specialty coffee culture that is developed enough to allow coffee connoisseurs to transform themselves from regular to connoisseur coffee consumers (rite of passage). There are few HEICSs in Brazil, most of which are situated in the big capitals (two in Belo Horizonte, three in São Paulo, and three in Curitiba), and the barista profession is not well recognized yet. It is not a desired profession to develop a career. There are some few exceptions, but after many conversations and interviews with coffee professionals and consumers, I realized that the majority of people in Brazil do not know and do not perceive the differences between regular and specialty coffee. Those Brazilian HEICSs are breaking into the market and initially educating the consumer. Brazil does not have specialty coffee chains that bridge the gap between regular and specialty coffee, as Starbucks has done in North America. Brazil has a long way to go to develop the specialty coffee consumption culture and market. The few HEICSs and the low consumer engagement places Brazil far from North American coffee connoisseurship practices. In general, Brazil is presently in what is equivalent to the first North American coffee wave. Huge companies such as Três Corações, which does not work with specialty coffee, dominate the home consumption market and also the coffee shop market. There are some Brazilian HEICSs influenced by the North American third coffee wave, but there are not enough to impact the coffee consumption culture. The comparison between North America's and Brazil's specialty coffee contexts and the explanation for the absence of the proper conditions to perform the taste transformation ritual in Brazil will help me reinforce and strengthen my theoretical contribution. The reasons will be explored in each subsection.

4.2 The Connoisseurship Rite of Passage: From Regular to Connoisseur Consumer

When regular consumers begin the connoisseurship rite of passage, after a while they transform themselves and their bodies. Tasting coffee in a reflexive way, giving attention to what they are drinking, and discussing it with friends and professionals allows them to change their palates and their bodies. It is a taste training process. During this process the regular consumers become connoisseur consumers transforming themselves. Their taste practices and palates are different, they are more exigent and knowledgeable about the context, they are

recognized by their friends as experts and connoisseur consumers, and they come to be a reference for specialty coffee consumption. The connoisseurship rite of passage involves a ritual of transformation (Belk & Costa, 1998), transforming the body and self of the consumer.

4.2.1 Self-Transformation

During the connoisseurship rite of passage, regular consumers experiment with a gradual transformation of the self, becoming a coffee connoisseur consumer, in a process similar to that of aspirants to the Harley-Davidson-oriented subculture of consumption (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995) or to skydivers (Celsi, Rose, & Leigh, 1993). Consumers approach the specialty coffee community for many reasons. Some of them approach the community because of socialization, the efficiency of the customer service, cleanliness, good attendance and treatment, speed and efficiency in the service, or “indie” consumer values (local and HEICSs). Their values are quite similar to those of the community, or they were influenced by someone else, or they have many friends in the community, or they are attracted to the style of the specialty consumers. Once initiated into the specialty coffee culture consumption, the beginner coffee connoisseur consumers are influenced by friends, advanced or intermediate connoisseur consumers, and social media to taste specialty coffees in HEICSs. The connoisseurship rite of passage starts when the consumer begins to identify the differences between the coffees they drink and explore other HEICSs, coffees, and coffee places. Visiting different HEICSs, meeting people inside the community, and taking part in community events all help them increase their taste knowledge, change their bodies, modify their coffee language, discover coffee nuances, and get inside the coffee specialty community. During the rite of passage, they become more passionate and involved.

According to an SCAA Report on the specialty coffee consumer (SCAA, 2012a), specialty coffee drinkers (as the SCAA Report calls them) have two rites of passage. The first is related to older consumers, who started to drink regular coffee in college or when they began to work, and, after a while, they went to Starbucks to drink specialty coffee. The second rite of passage is related to younger consumers, who usually started to drink specialty coffee in high school or college; they were born in the specialty coffee market, and their friends played a

huge influence. Their coffee consumption typically begins at Starbucks. The rites of passage described by the SCAA (2012a) end at Starbucks, which is where the coffee connoisseurs' rite of passage usually begins. The majority of the informants started to drink specialty coffee at Starbucks and then moved to HEICS, initiating their rite of passage (Turner, 1995; Van Gennep, 1960) from regular consumers into connoisseur consumers, transforming themselves. In a sense, Starbucks offered consumers an undergraduate education, and independent coffee shops became the consumers' graduate schools (Wallace, 2008, May 29). The informants did not drink coffee at home or in coffee shops until they became college undergraduates, then, when they began to go to coffee chains nearby or on the college campus or school with their friends, primarily for socialization.

The separation phase is the first step on the connoisseurship rite of passage. This phase "comprises symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure, from a set of cultural conditions" (Turner, 1995, p. 94). The informants revealed their loneliness in this rite of passage. They no longer go to coffee shop chains with their friends. They share the same values of the specialty coffee community. They detached from their friends who prefer to go to coffee shop chains, but they are still drinking mixed coffee (with milk, water, and flavors) in HEICSs. In the second phase, merging, or the liminal period, "the characteristics of the ritual subject (the 'passenger') are ambiguous; he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state" (Turner, 1995, p. 94). In this moment, the informants try to understand and learn the customs and conventions of the connoisseur consumption community. The baristas help them build their paths into the community; however, this is not sufficient. They need to develop their taste, palate, social body, and understanding of the nuances and meanings of the community.

Usually, in the second phase, connoisseur consumers are in the beginner and intermediate phases of their rite of passage. They are giving up drinking Cappuccinos and Lattes and moving their preferences to Americano and Macchiatos, for example. They frequent HEICSs, know the baristas and coffee connoisseurs in an advanced stage, search online for information about specialty coffee, and so on; they are on the border of the specialty coffee community. They chose a marginal form of leisure (Stebbins, 1979). Jane revealed that she is having difficulty talking about coffee and sharing her own experience because her friends and coworkers prefer to drink coffee in coffee chains or at home. David lives in a city that does

not have a developed coffee culture. They rely on the professionals and coffee connoisseurs to improve their knowledge. “Their behavior is normally passive or humble; they must obey their instructors implicitly” (Turner, 1995, p. 95). During the coffee club meetings, the members, who are genuinely interested in the coffee culture listened to all information from the leader, asking for help and advice about which coffee was better to drink in that specific HEICS. They followed the leader’s suggestions. The same thing happened during the cuppings. The participants relied on the barista’s opinion, took notes, and asked if how they brewed coffee at home was correct or not. Although their practices and rituals are different from those of regular consumers, they have not yet embodied the coffee connoisseurship consumption practices. During the first two phases of the enactment, tensions between initial/intermediate and advanced coffee connoisseurs and between connoisseurs and baristas, take place.

In this phase, a *communitas* emerges at the specialty coffee community. In this liminal phase, a *communitas* is likely to occur (Belk, Wallendorf & Sherry, 1989). Based on Turner; Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry (1989) define *communitas* as “a social antistructure that frees participants from their normal social roles and statuses and instead engages them in a transcending camaraderie of status equality” (p. 7). Turner explains that there are two models for human interrelatedness:

The first is of society as a structured, differentiated, and often hierarchical system of politico-legal-economic positions with many types of evaluation, separating men in terms of “more” or “less.” The second, which emerges recognizably in the liminal period, is of society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders (1995, p. 96).

He affirms that liminality is a time and place of withdrawal from normal modes of social action and a period of scrutinizing the central values and axioms of the culture in which it occurs (p. 202). In the connoisseurship rite of passage, the liminality characterizes the ritual of status reversal in which a regular consumer, or an initial connoisseur consumer, is converted irreversibly from a lower to a higher position (into an advanced connoisseur consumer) in an institutionalized system of such positions. The liminality of those going up usually involves putting down or humbling the novices by enacting tension between themselves and initial connoisseur consumers, or regular consumers.

Last, in the aggregation phase, the passage is completed. The individual is in a “relatively stable state once more and, by virtue of this, has rights and obligations vis-a-vis others of a clearly defined and ‘structural’ type” (Turner, 1995, p. 95). Turner explains that the individual is expected “to behave in accordance with certain customary norms and ethical standards binding on incumbents of social position in a system of such positions” (1995, p. 95). The consumer’s behavior is in accordance with the conventions of the specialty coffee community. They drink espresso, visit as many HEICSs as they can, know and/or are friends with the baristas, HEICS owners, championships baristas, and always keep in touch with the community members personally or by social media. They value the high standard performance of the coffee professionals and also the high quality of the coffee beans. They recognize the skills of the community members and always look for something new to taste. Frank, Alan, Suzy, and John are of the advanced coffee connoisseurs who have reached this phase of the rite of passage. In this phase, a status game takes place between the baristas and connoisseur consumers. Frank reveals his skills in the specialty coffee context compared to other consumers and coffee professionals:

I'm in this weird little spot of this coffee consumer where I know a tremendous amount of coffee. Almost as much as people that get paid for their job at it. Almost. Not as much. Almost. More than most of the consumers. Even the consumers [that] especially love it. I know more about it, but it's just a hobby. I can appreciate the difference between all three of those espresso blends. If they made it and they handed me those three, I would tell you which are the three blends. Even the blend on the left and the blend on the right are actually the same two beans at different concentrations. From two different roasters. I'll tell you. I'll taste the difference and tell you which is which.

Regular coffee consumers are immersed in the mass consumption in the specialty coffee shop chains, usually when they are young adults, and they start their rite of passage by detaching from this structure and getting into *communitas* in the HEICSs. During this liminal period, beginner connoisseur consumers absorb the specialty community values and ethos. Finally, they transform themselves into advanced connoisseur consumers and became members of the connoisseurship consumption community. As Thornton (1996) noted in the study of subcultural capital in the music club cultures context, mass consumption becomes the entity against which the majority of connoisseur consumers define themselves. According to Turner (1995), “There is a dialectic here, for the immediacy of *communitas* gives way to the mediacy of structure, while, in *rites de passage*, men are released from structure into *communitas* only to return to structure revitalized by their experience of *communitas*” (p. 129). The spontaneous *communitas* emerges in the independent specialty coffee community. It is a

phase, a moment, it is not a permanent condition: “spontaneous communitas is richly charged with affects, mainly pleasurable ones. . . . It has something ‘magical’ about it. Subjectively there is in it a feeling of endless power” (Turner, 1995, p. 139). Alan describes how communitas emerges in the independent specialty coffee community and how it ends. It is momentous, something that happens with almost every connoisseur consumer on the rite of passage before becoming an advanced connoisseur consumer:

When I took part [in the coffee club], the objective either to the group and me was to explore the coffee world here in Seattle. Discover new coffee shops, and discover how each one was. Each one has a different personality, each one has, uses different roasters, each one has different baristas. So we really used to go to discover, to explore what is different, what was unique over there.

The good ones and the bad places, which one was worth going to, because in the beginning, I didn’t know anything.

Another thing that we did a lot in the beginning was the educational events. We used to come here [coffee shop]. The owner, he is an excellent trader. And he is a good guy, he is a coffee enthusiast. He wanted to share, he wanted to storytell. He used to invite us, he used to do a roasting demonstration, explaining how the roasting worked. He used to invite us to demonstrate a range of coffee brew methods. We used to come here. He used to do demonstration to us. He used to do a special cupping session for us. But later, it happens with almost everybody. Even with the baristas, when they come to Seattle. They start to explore, and then, after you have explored everything, there is a moment that you don’t have many things to explore anymore. You have already, you know everything, understand? So you start to just repeat, and you will not repeat one thing that you don’t really like. So this came to be the Coffee Club exploration phase and my phase. My phase. And then, another phase began in the Coffee Club, which is the social phase. Many people like coffee, or go to coffee clubs because of the social reason. They are not interested in coffee. They go there to chat with each other.

During the connoisseurship rite of passage, consumers form their extended selves. However, objects do not form a part of the extended self, as they do to other consumers (e.g., Ahuvia, 2005; Belk, 1988). Alan, for example, does not have any coffee equipment at home. Most of the informants do not brew coffee at home. On the other hand, all of informants who are connoisseur consumers have coffee tasting experiences in HEICs regularly. In terms of the major categories of extended self summarized by Belk (1998), that is, body, internal process, experiences, persons, places, and things, informants primarily use persons, places, and things to build their extended selves as connoisseur consumers. Actually, the performance of taste transformation rituals during their connoisseurship rite of passage is an accumulation of taste experiences that allow them to transform themselves and become connoisseurs. Belk defines collecting as “the process of actively, selectively, and passionately acquiring and possessing things removed from ordinary use and perceived as part of a set of non-identical objects or

experiences.” (1995, p.67). However, instead of objects, connoisseur consumers collect taste experiences that transform themselves and their bodies. Experience is one major category of extended self to which one feels attached (Belk, 1988, p. 141). The experiences accumulated by performing the taste transformation ritual are incorporated into connoisseur consumers’ extended selves, and they share their espresso taste experience orally, in a spreadsheet, or on the Internet. Maria told me the names of all of the HEICSs she had visited in Seattle, where she lives, and in San Francisco, where she had visited a few weeks prior to our interview. Frank saves his spreadsheet on Google Docs to easily share it by e-mail. @esproadventures lists her experience on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook by taking pictures and posting them.

As Belk explains, “The ability to publish our playlists online can say a great deal more about us than opening the windows and cranking up our stereo” (2013, p. 479). Social media allows connoisseur consumers to access, expand, and share their memory about the taste transformation rituals they perform during the connoisseurship rite of passage. According to Belk, “We are increasingly documenting and annotating our lives thanks to the ubiquity of digital photography, social media updating, photo- and video-sharing sites, blog archives, electronic calendars, and other digital crumbs that we leave behind in a digital age” (2013, p. 488). Virtual self and online memory are frequently used by members of the specialty coffee connoisseurship consumption community. Connoisseur consumers form selves in a more shared nature, which is now co-constructed instantaneously with virtual feedback through social media that helps to affirm or modify their senses of self. The connoisseur consumer’s self is built together with the coffee connoisseurship consumption community values, as Belk affirms, “The aggregate self can no longer be conceived from only a personal perspective and is not only jointly constructed but shared, that is, a joint possession with others” (Belk, 2013, p. 490).

4.2.2 Body Transformation

The taste transformation ritual allows consumers to transform their palates. During their connoisseurship rite of passage, they become more taste knowledgeable. Frank said, “People start using less sugar, less milk, less chocolate, less syrup, and they start getting back to the essence of coffee. They just start trying new places. They become more of an explorer.”

Hennion (2004) explains that taste is not perceiving or feeling on the basis of what one knows. He affirms that preparation, obstinacy, and training are required to condition oneself and transform the body (Hennion, 2007, p. 100). The consumer needs a lot of perseverance during the connoisseurship rite of passage. As a reward, the palate changes, and the coffee beverage options change, as well. During the connoisseurship rite of passage, coffee connoisseurs “move from relatively bland taste to increasing emphasis on intensity of taste. They move from being light in color through colorfulness to darkness. They go from being consumed in large quantities to smaller units” (Levy, 1999, p. 253). Jane explains what happened with her taste:

I started drinking coffee eight years ago, seven years ago. Before that I hated it. I really couldn't stand the smell of it. I thought it was just too bitter and didn't taste good. Then, as I became an adult, I was like, “Okay, I should see what this is all about.” So I just tried it, and at first I didn't like it, but I'd just drink it because I was working really long hours. I was like, “I need this.” But over time I developed a taste and then started having better coffee, and I realized the reason why I didn't like it is because I was having bad coffee.

During the rite of passage, coffee connoisseurs move their beverage preference from an emphasis on nutrition (e.g., Latte, Cappuccino) to one of stimulation or “mind-altering” qualities (Levy, 1999, p. 253) provided by the caffeine. However, on the other hand, the informants control the frequency with which they drink coffee because of the level of caffeine in their bodies. This is a trade-off that connoisseur consumers deal with daily. They are concerned about the amount of caffeine that they can ingest in a day. After drinking coffee for many years, Laura developed a caffeine allergy. She still goes to different coffee shops every week, but now she drinks decaffeinated coffee. Kevin used to drink coffee to help him study because he does not sleep when he drinks coffee. His eyelids started to tremble during the day, and his doctor asked him to reduce the amount of coffee that he drank. Frank allows himself to drink four espressos per day, Suzy has one espresso, Greg has one macchiato (espresso with little milk foam), and Alan averages one espresso every two days. This concern about caffeine elevates the level of expected quality of the coffee. Although Alan likes coffee very much, he does not want to become addicted to it. They do not want to waste their caffeine allotment on bad coffee. According to Alan, “There is certain amount of caffeine that you can ingest, and you have to spend this limited caffeine level with coffee that is really worthy.” There is also another issue that some informants deal with; it is the influence of the caffeine on their sleep. If Suzy drinks her espresso after 2 PM, she stays awake until the middle of the night. Smith wrote a post about “the quantified coffee drinker.” (2014, October

11). Drinking coffee at night was disturbing his sleep, so he came up with a self-experiment, tracking data for his sleeping using a gadget (sleep-tracking app). He verified that the best last time for him to drink coffee and not affect his sleep at night was between 2 PM and 4 PM: “it yielded me the best quality of sleep” (2014, October 11).

Before 1980, there was a major concern about caffeine consumption. By the early 1980s, people consumed four times as much decaffeinated coffee as they had in 1962, even though total coffee consumption in the United States had fallen from an average of 3.12 cups per person per day to 1.82 cups per person per day; in fact, during this period, decaffeinated coffee was the only part of the coffee market that was actually increasing (Sampling, 1984, August 1). The increased consumption of decaffeinated coffee was a “result of public concern about caffeine, which is a stimulant and which has been linked, though not conclusively, to a variety of physical disorders” (Sampling, 1984, August 1). The decaffeination process extracts 97 to 98 percent of the caffeine from the coffee. The major manufacturers of regular and instant decaffeinated coffees were General Foods, Procter & Gamble, and Nestlé. Pendergrast notes that in the 1980s, the pendulum of caffeine consumption had swung to the negative side, but by the 1990s, it was on the positive side; nowadays, “caffeine is the most widely taken psychoactive drug on the earth, and coffee is its foremost delivery system” (2011, p. 19).

Coffee is a drug, and it creates a chemical effect in the consumer’s body. Coffee “offers its users more forms of transformation than most ritual artifacts,” and the transformation provided by caffeine “allows people to release inhibitions, induce relaxation, and assume a different identity” as much as alcohol (Wolburg & Treise, 2004, p. 13). According to Levy, “accompanying the evils seen in intoxication, addiction, and other hazards of caffeine and alcohol are ideas of sophistication, richness of experience, and depth of thought that surround drinking coffee and wine connoisseurship” (1999, p. 253). While coffee is the “mythic antithesis of alcohol, it also promotes a liminal ‘time-out’ kind of meditative state that is clearly an out-of-body experience” (Sherry, 1995 p. 359). Sherry (1995) drawing on the ten top-rated prime-time American network television shows of the 1992-1993 season, identified that coffee was considered a “culturally acceptable drug,” meaning that the kind of altered consciousness coffee produces is socially sanctioned. On the other hand, coffee and all the culture around it provide a social effect on the coffee connoisseur consumers. Some informants such as John “don’t usually like to talk too much” or are introverted and not social

(Bob, Alan), but when they drink coffee or have the opportunity to talk about coffee, they transform. As John explains, “I’m not a super social person, but when it comes to coffee, it’s really fun to just talk about it, and I really love hearing other people’s stories too and what they have to say and what they like. It feels great to share that kind of stuff.”

Beyond the decisions about when and how much coffee the informants can drink during the day, taste transformation ritual produces ritualized body. Informants don’t drink anymore the coffee that they drank years ago. They drink better coffees. They change their tastes and palates during the connoisseurship rite of passage, reflecting the strategies of ritualization, which are “particularly rooted in the body, specifically, the interaction of the social body within a symbolically constituted spatial and temporal environment” (Bell, 1992, p. 93). As written on the washroom door of an HEICS: “path of no return.” Once on the connoisseurship rite of passage, according to the informants, it is impossible to drink Starbucks coffee. They avoid it, but if they need to drink Starbucks coffee (because of a meeting, or if it is the only coffee shop option in the region, or even in a caffeine emergency), they choose an option with milk, crème, sugar, syrup, and so on to disguise the bad taste of the coffee. Bell (1992) affirms that ritualized practices result from the circular production of a ritualized body. The ritualized body of a connoisseur consumer “reproduces itself in the image of the symbolically schematized environment that has been simultaneously established” (Bell, 1992, p. 110). This is the distinctive strategy of ritual. Bell (1992) argues that “ritual does what it does through the privileged differentiations and deferred resolutions by which the ritualized body structures an environment, an environment that in turn impresses it highly nuances structure on the bodies of those involved in the rite” (p. 116). Performing the taste transformation ritual during the rite of passage, the informants develop highly nuanced structures in their palates, olfaction, and eyes.

Before even tasting the coffee, connoisseur consumers’ bodies can perceive the smell of the coffee and evaluate if it is good or not and if it has a high quality or not. Being in the same environment, advanced connoisseur consumers can smell the coffee far from the beans when it is ground, brewed, or when someone opens the coffee package. They can perceive the differences between fragrances (dry coffee) and aromas (coffee infused with hot water). Their eyes are also able to see the details, which are clues for determining the quality of the coffee based on the color of the beans, the color of the espresso, and the condition of the equipment. Last but not least, the palate is developed to detect the taste of the coffee and its nuances:

flavor, acidity, the tactile feeling of the liquid in the mouth, sweetness, finish, and aftertaste. This differentiation between the bodies' abilities to notice the coffee nuances were highlighted during the cuppings I attended in HEICs. Participants in the advanced level of the rite of passage pick up much information about the coffee by smelling and sipping it. Those early in the rite of passage or the regular consumers were astonished and asked, "How can you figure out all those of things?" or "How do you know?" I held many blind coffee tastings in Canada and Brazil for my friends and relatives, comparing regular and specialty coffee. Most of them could not pick up the specialty coffee's nuances. In fact, the majority could not even tell the difference between the regular and specialty coffee that they tasted. Many times, after they tasted the coffees, they asked, "Which one is the regular coffee? And the specialty coffee?" Their bodies were not developed enough to detect the coffee's nuances.

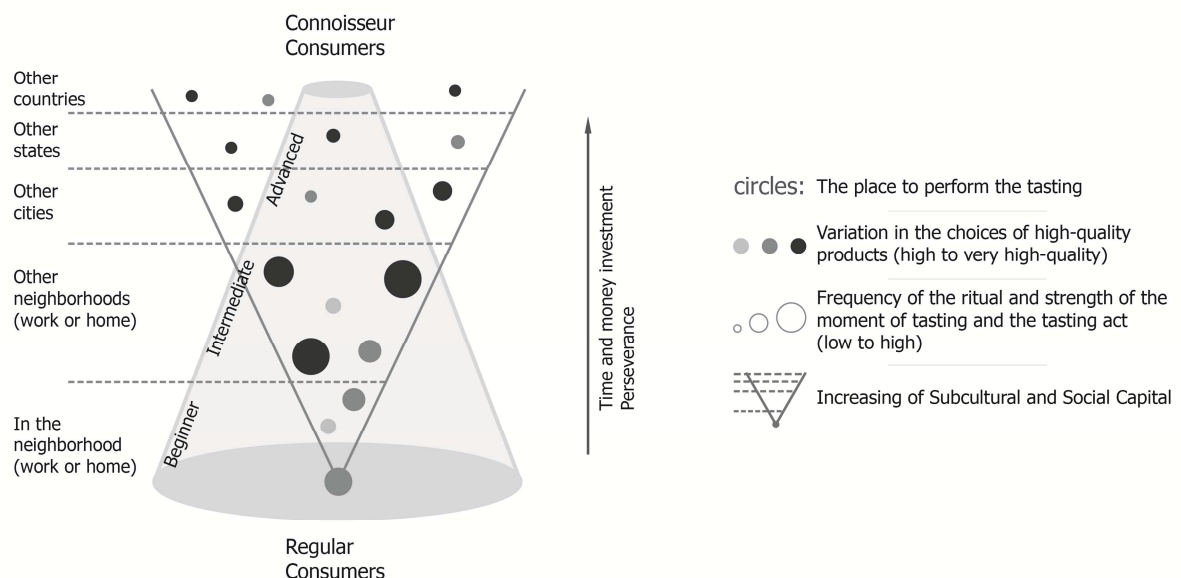
4.3 The Elements of Taste Transformation Ritual

The practices performed in the taste transformation ritual reinforce the differences between mass and connoisseurship consumption practices and distinguish connoisseur consumers from other consumers. The taste transformation ritual creates and preserves a social order based on oppositions to the mass consumption practices. Trying out different high-quality coffees, coffee connoisseurs develop their palates, get inside the specialty coffee community, and transform themselves. Through the connoisseurship rite of passage, coffee connoisseurs explore the specialty coffee scene. The informants admit that they want to explore and learn everything about coffee. The word "explore" is used in many connoisseur consumers' social media profiles. @esproadventure uses the word "explore" in her Twitter and Instagram profile: "experiencing espresso culture through the eyes of a "local". Exploring spaces to discover the unimaginable. Coffee Toronto native." The mission statement of one Seattle coffee group notes, "The Coffee Club of Seattle explores every neighborhood in Seattle." Coffee connoisseurs have explorer-like behavior that is organized through ritual that brings social order into their lives. Frank reveals the importance of the social order in the connoisseurship taste ritual when he provides explanations to people who want to follow him and his friends on their connoisseurship rite of passage by exploring the coffee marketplace: "We're not going to overwhelm you, we're going to have new events. We're going to try to keep moving to different neighborhoods. We're going to do them at different times in

different places (HEICSs).” Frank introduces two types of order that coffee connoisseurs establish in their taste transformation ritual: (1) variation in the choices of high-quality products, and (2) the place to perform the tasting. Basing on the analysis of the data collection, I have added additional types of order involving: (3) the moment of tasting, (4) the tasting act, (5) time and money investment, (6) increased subcultural and social capital, and (7) perseverance on the rite of passage (Figure 3).

Figure 3 describes the intertwined relationships between the ritual elements and the connoisseurship rite of passage that transform regular consumers into connoisseur consumers. To perform a connoisseurship rite of passage, regular consumers visit HEICSs (the place to perform the tasting) to taste different high-quality coffee (variation in the choices of high-quality products), choosing the best moment (the moment of tasting) to drink the espresso, paying attention to the beverage’s flavor and nuance, and also, chatting with the barista about the coffee just drunk and/or coffee in general (tasting act). Consumers invest time and money during the rite of passage and persevere on it; as a consequence, consumers increase their knowledge and tasting experience of coffee, meeting new baristas and other consumers who might potentially be their friends (increasing of subcultural and social capital). After some years, regular consumers who perform the taste transformation ritual become connoisseur consumers. There are many more regular consumers than connoisseurs, which is illustrated by the inverted cone figure below. They can be found in coffee shop chains and even in HEICSs.

Figure 3 - Connoisseurship rite of passage (from regular to connoisseur consumers) and the elements of taste transformation ritual



To start the connoisseurship rite of passage, the consumer needs to identify HEICSs near their home or work and taste their espresso. It is the beginning of the rite of passage (beginner connoisseur consumer). Engaging in the coffee connoisseurship community, improving their taste, and understanding more about the specialty coffee consumption culture, they move ahead by exploring new HEICSs in their city, other cities, other states, and other countries. The increased subcultural and social capital and also the number of HEICSs visited by coffee connoisseur consumers during their rites of passage are represented by the “V” figure. The connoisseur consumers’ particular stage in the rite of passage is influenced by their level of engagement in the coffee connoisseurship community and also the access that they have to HEICFs to perform the taste transformation ritual. Although Laura and Greg have spent a long time in the rite of passage (> 40 years and > 15 years, respectively), performing the taste transformation ritual and accessing many HEICS (both live in Toronto), they are not as deeply engaged in the coffee connoisseurship community as the informants in the advanced level. On the other hand, David and Jane, who really want to engage in the coffee connoisseurship community, cannot go deeper because they live in a city where there is only one HEICS (David) or where there are no HEICSs (Jane has not found one in her city so far). Connoisseur consumers pick some HEICSs to visit more frequently than others, which is represented in the figure by the size of the circle. Among all HEICSs, some are considered the best and are represented by the darker color of the circle. All seven types of social order provided by tasting ritual will be discussed in the following sections.

4.3.1 Variation in the Choices of High-Quality Products

A high-quality product is essential for the connoisseur consumers to develop their taste. The high-quality products allow consumers to perceive and feel the nuances of the product. They are made or processed in a way to reveal their peculiarity and uniqueness, stressing their potential and differences by comparing them to the other products on the market. The taste transformation ritual is based on the high quality of the product served by the HEICSs. Connoisseur consumers search for high-quality products to identify their nuances and to challenge their own palates and tastes. Lower-quality coffees do not have different aromas and tastes because the beans are not good, they were poorly farmed/processed, or because

they were roasted incorrectly (over- or under-roasted). Consumers achieve a reflexive taste when they consume a high-quality product. The informants care more about high-quality coffee than other things. Suzy explains how she deals with a trade-off between fair trade/direct trade and high-quality coffee. She always buys coffee considering the quality:

So if I want to know where my money is going to, why this cup of coffee costs \$4, I want to know that the farmer got 80 cents as opposed to 30 cents. I think it used to be more the roasters just knowing more, and then it created a market. But also, I think consumers are more conscious about it now. For me, personally, will I select something that's direct trade over not direct trade? No, I think I will collect it based on the origin more than direct trade versus... Will I buy from a roaster that's fair trade more than not fair trade I think? No, because I want to know that somebody's producing an exceptional product. There are many roasters that say there's fair trade, or free trade, or direct trade. Great. But if you don't have a product that's good, I'm not going to buy it. But maybe my friend who's also very passionate about always buying fair trade or free trade, they may buy their coffee... Or organic, right? Instead of buying a better product. Maybe if I know the place, I'll weigh the options. I'll say, "Is this coffee roaster good?" and is it a bonus that it's direct trade? Awesome. As opposed to this one who maybe just buys direct trade or fair trade but has an inferior product. I'm not going to buy it.

However, drinking the same high-quality coffee provided by HEICSs does not allow connoisseur consumers to develop their taste. The informants vary the high-quality coffee that they drink as much as they can. They do not drink the same coffee every day. They try different coffees at home and in coffee shops roasted by different companies. If they have just one type of coffee at home, they brew it using different methods to extract different characteristics of the coffee. Similar behavior in food consumption is described by Warde as “the spirit of restlessness, the cultivation of novelty, and the associated pursuit of fashion” (1997, p. 57) and is regarded as a result of being a part of contemporary consumer society. Baudrillard (1988, p. 48) calls it “a universal curiosity.” Furthermore, Oldenburg (1999, p. 44) reveals that “as technological gains give us more residual time, the low-skill standbys such as recreational driving, shopping, or watching TV become increasingly inadequate in supplying the measure of novelty we require.” The variation in the choices of high-quality coffees reflects the consumer’s taste transformation during their connoisseurship rite of passage, when connoisseur consumers “go from homogeneity to heterogeneity in the substances themselves and/or in the variety available for choice” (Levy, 1999, p. 253). One example of this is the new trend of single-origin coffee in the HEICSs that has taken place in the last few years. Single-origin coffee means that each lot of beans has its own specific profile and flavor: single-origin coffee is “one coffee farm’s product, no matter how large or small the farm is, processed any one way, roasted with one roast profile” (Dal Anderson, 2010). Variables like date (year), altitude, soil, weather conditions, and so on influence the

flavor of each microlot of coffee beans. Single-origin coffee opened a new universe of coffee experimentation for Alan:

Here, [HEICS]'s guys started to brew a lot of single-origin in 2009. So, they sent on Twitter: "This week we have coffee from," I don't know, "from Guatemala, rare coffee." I then stopped everything that I was doing. I came to here to taste. Each time they announce stuff like that, like a good barista who won a championship, or one coffee that is very rare, I come to taste.

In the specialty coffee context, the informants seek novelty in coffee shops in their cities or in other cities as much as they can. Alan said that he likes variety, and he does not like to drink the same coffee. Steve informed me that usually during the week coffee connoisseurs have their preferred HEICSs, but on the weekend they visit others, and they explore the city and other cities.

Coffee connoisseurs confirmed this practice. "The first one that's around the corner from my house is [HEICS name]. So I went there and I would keep going every couple of weeks, and then about every week, I'd try their different coffee that they were brewing" (Suzy). The HEICS's strategy was to change the high-quality coffee served and also the roaster periodically, allowing consumers to improve their taste knowledge: "At the time they [HEICS] were brewing [roaster company]. Then they changed to a more American roaster, and I thought, 'Wow, this is really, really good'." (Suzy). She used to go her preferred HEICSs during the week and explore others on the weekends. Nowadays, she only goes to HEICSs on the weekends because of her work. She regrets that her long hours and distant work does not allow her to explore the HEICSs as she did a few years ago:

But with my job now, now that I'm all the way up at the other end of the city, it's very tough for me to explore just even in Toronto, explore different cafes. Actually, this is the first time I've been here [HEICS where I interviewed her], but because I haven't had the chance to come here... Before, my job was more flexible...

Alan combines his work travels or family travels with his interest in trying new coffee shops. John takes advantage of the possibilities to work out of the office whenever possible, and sometimes, he goes to another city to taste coffee. Paul always buys specialty coffees when he travels. In 2014, he travelled to Seattle to visit the city and get to know the specialty coffee scene. Actually, this strategy of visiting coffee shops during travel is practiced by all the informants. Sometimes they change their travel itineraries (vacation or business travel) to visit a specific coffee shop. Connoisseur consumers employ many strategies to create opportunities

to drink different high-quality coffees, just as music lovers strategize to create “opportunities for personal listening” (Hennion, 2001, p. 6). In the same way, the very crux of being a music lover is the practice of listening to discs, and that of being coffee connoisseur is the practice of tasting different high-quality coffees. The mission statement below is from a well-known and consistent formal coffee club based in Seattle and created in 2006. The statement describes the importance of trying different quality coffees to develop the taste in the neighborhood, in the city, and other cities. It also reinforces the opposition to the coffee shops that they don’t think serve high-quality products:

The Coffee Club of Seattle is a social group that celebrates the independent quality coffee scene of Seattle and neighboring areas. Occasionally we might go to a coffee cupping or brewing demonstration, but most of the time we just get together for great coffee and conversation. The Coffee Club of Seattle explores every neighborhood in Seattle and we have even been on road trips as far away as Bellingham, Vancouver BC, Victoria BC, Portland, and Sequim. If you are interested in exploring more of your city and the Pacific Northwest all while drinking a tasty coffee beverage, join our group. We do not patronize Starbucks, Tully's, SBC or McDonalds. Some of the places we do go are on this list [hyperlink]. (<http://www.meetup.com/seattle-coffee-club/>).

Each coffee connoisseur consumer and barista I interviewed gave me a list of HEICSs to visit to try the coffee. Coffee connoisseurs visit different coffee shops, as do baristas. Some of the baristas are also on the connoisseurship rite of passage. Some of them are more advanced than others, which influences the way they pull an espresso shot. Greg gave me advice to improve my taste: “Definitely go visit as many of these guys [HEICSs] as possible, and keep visiting them because the flavors are very different from place to place.” Espresso Adventures also helped me find new spots in Toronto. The baristas that I interviewed and met during my research did the same; they suggested I go to their competitor and taste their coffee. Steve suggested,

I would say just drink as many different coffees as you can, drink coffee from as many places, both from different origins and different roasters as you can. You know, drink coffee prepared by as many different people, as many different places, as many different ways as you can.

Connoisseur consumers also vary the coffee roasteries. The blog Coffee Adventure listed what happened in 2014. The first topic mentioned was, “Tried coffee from over 40 different roasteries” (Cindy, 2015, January 2). This variation consumption practice is also encouraged by the HEICS owners. In New York, ten HEICSs offered a special promotion for their consumers. If the consumer drank a coffee from each one of the coffee shops, he/she would

receive a free coffee. In Toronto, as Suzy explained, a coffee passport was created some years ago for people visit different independent coffee shops: “You pay \$20 for this card, and on this card there's maybe like twenty different shops, and in each shop you can, because I buy this passport, you can get a coffee. One [coffee] per time. That makes people want to go to different shops.” For instance, Frank, who has been guiding many consumers in the connoisseurship rite of passage, adopts a tasting variation strategy to advise consumers:

I usually ask him where they're from, where do they live? It doesn't really matter where I think the best place is if they can't get to it. I like to find out what's their neighborhood? I want to know where they're at. “Oh you live there? Try that.” “Have you tried that?” “Oh, I tried that, it was wonderful.” “I tried that and that one but I liked this one better.” “Oh, you like that one better than that one.” “Okay, then you might want to try this one over here, where coffee is better.” You just guide them.

Although Starbucks runs a business in the specialty coffee market segment, most informants did not consider it a place to taste high-quality coffee. For them, Starbucks works with overroasted coffee that has a bitter taste. They do not like the quality or the taste of Starbucks coffee. Moreover, the Starbucks brandscape (Thompson & Arsel, 2004) lost its “mystique and started to compete with McDonalds, Dunkin Donuts for the same always-in-a-hurry, caffeine-dependent, frothy-drink-seeking customers” (Simon, 2009, p. 17). As Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry note, “When something loses this mystery, it loses its sacredness and becomes ordinary and profane” 1989, p. 7). So, coffee connoisseurs remove coffee from the commodity system of Starbucks and place it into a sacred realm. Coffee sacralization (Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry, 1989) through ritual is evident at HEICSSs. Informants sacralized the high-quality coffee in many ways. Kozinets (2002b) identified a coffee religious devotion in his research. He explained that:

The utopian world of beauty and passion is evident in the wonderfully detailed accounts of coffee preparation and consumption provided in the newsgroups (alt.coffee), which serve as sources of espresso education, expressionism, and exhibitionism. Members draw one another in with dramatic flair and literary devices that playfully hint at the joyful mindset of the coffee connoisseur and, tongue-in-cheek, employ sacred metaphors. (Kozinets, 2002b, p. 69).

In his netnography research, Kozinets found that coffee consumers claimed online to be “willing to throw out four shots of expensive brew in search of the all-elusive but sublimely satisfying god shot” (2002, p. 70). John read a book called *God in Cup*, and Alan referred to the blog Sprudge as a “bible of the coffee world.” The “GodShot” blog (<http://godshot.com>)

was created by Christopher Tacy in 2004, when he was a barista, and it is famous in the specialty coffee marketplace. In the alt.coffee newsgroup, there were many discussions about who have coined the expression “The God Shot.” User Michel posted a message with the headline, “The God Shot... not a cup to fall in love with anyway” (2003, September 10). Ed Needham replied, “I ‘thought’ Mark Prince coined the term ‘God Shot,’ but first entry in an alt.coffee Google search was Ted Simpson in November of 1999. Go Ted. (Probably inspired by the term ‘god complex’ or something like that)” (2003, September 11). Mark Prince (coffeegeek.com) participated as well: “IIRC [If I Recall Correctly] the term came about in a sort of committee consensus :) I think someone used the term ‘shot good enough for god’ or something similar and it developed from that point. Ted could very well be the first person to use the specific phrase” (2003, September 11). Finally, Andy S. finished the discussion: “Schomer used the term ‘God’s Coffee’ in his 1996 book” (2003, September 11). Later, Mark Prince posted in his blog forum (coffeegeek.com, October 11, 2006):

Subject: A clarification on word origins in coffee: god shot, "coffee as culinary" etc.
...

God Shot - I always thought I was an early user of this phrase, though it's been claimed by others in alt.coffee, first occurring sometime around 1999 or 2000. But I was wrong (as were alties). In David Schomer's first edition of Espresso Coffee:

Professional techniques, on page 13, he writes:

“Sometimes we get amazing shots of espresso, we refer to as ‘God Coffee’ - espresso coffee that tastes so rich and earthy, so much like it smells, that a fellow might drop the cup and burst out laughing. The parameter that is most likely to create this ‘visiting deity in a cup’, when all other factors are controlled, is brewing temperature”.

This from the 1996 first edition.

Frank and Alan each use a scale borrowed from the blog “I Need Coffee” to evaluate the quality of the espresso shot, from 1 (awful shot, undrinkable) to 5 (“God shot”). Smith, who is the blog owner, wrote a post explaining, “The distribution is like a bell curve” (2011, March 15). The majority of espressos falling in the 2-4 zone, with 3 getting the most representation”. Follow is the INeedCoffee blog’s scale:

- 5 – God shot. The kind of espresso you remember for months, maybe years. The rest of your day is spent in a blissful daze. Extremely rare.
- 4 – Excellent shot. Since the God Shot is so rare, I am usually hoping to get an excellent shot. An excellent shot is still a wonderful thing. A lottery winner for sure.
- 3 – Good shot. Pleasant, drinkable, but lacking any greatness. Could probably be improved to an excellent shot by fixing a defect.
- 2 – Fair shot. Drinkable, but disappointing. Since my heart can only handle a few

espressos a day, I'm always let down when I get a fair espresso. I have to wait hours or until the next day before I can play again.

1 – Awful shot. Undrinkable. One sip and you put it down. A losing ticket. A nasty espresso can put you into a nasty mood. (Smith, 2011, March 15)

Through the variety of consumption practices and rituals, coffee has the ability to alter the mind, give energy, provides new knowledge, get people together, help people socialize, change the consumer's body, and inspire love and passion in people. Belk affirms that one way in which objects become a part of extended self is by knowing them passionately, "Only when the object is known passionately does it become subject rather than object" (Belk, 1988, p. 152). The sacralization of the high-quality coffee is intimately linked with the possibility that consumers have to experience many different aromas and tastes that they never have experienced before. High quality is essential for the informants. Paul looks for quality: "It's really a good coffee (coffee shop),... I needed to go for that type of coffee again, and it's getting and getting better and better." Greg has searched for better things since he was a child.

I've just wanted to find what next thing was, I've just wanted to find what was better than what I was having. I knew it could be better than this... I always want to keep going... Things can be better than what I have, or new flavor, new experience, or new something else, just very interesting. Kind of exploring what that would be... And I just as always like quality. For me, quality is important, doesn't matter what it is.

The specialty coffee market can be split in many segments. One of them is coffee shop chains which serve regular-quality coffee, and the other could be called HEICSs which serve high-quality coffee. The specialty coffee market is dominated by chains such as Starbucks and Tim Horton's, as well as McDonald's, which started to sell specialty coffee in 2001, thereby intensifying the competition in the segment. These coffee shop chains are driven by mass consumption (see Ritzer, 2007), which is the opposite of what the informants look in the coffee shops and the opposite of what HEICSs offer to the marketplace. Many informants related that after they had started to drink high-quality coffee, they could not drink regular coffee from grocery stores or coffee chains any more, or even specialty coffee from coffee shop chains. Their tastes, palates, and bodies changed (Hennion, 2004) after performing the taste transformation ritual for a while. Some of the informants refer to the coffee served in coffee shop chains as "crap coffee" or "dish-washed coffee."

Although Brazil does not have many HEICSs in its cities, a few big cities in the country do have one to three HEICSs, and this same happens in terms of roasteries. Brazilian coffee

connoisseurs try to vary the choices of high-quality products. They buy high-quality coffee when they or their friends travel abroad, they buy coffee when they travel to other big cities, and they use website to purchase coffee packages. Alex, who lives in a city that does not have any HEICSs, purchases coffee online using the Clube Café website (www.clubecafe.net.br). He receives two different coffee packages (250 grams) at home per month. Unfortunately, these strategies to vary the choices of high-quality products are not effective and do not allow them to improve their taste at an advanced level. There is another challenge to obtaining high-quality coffee in Brazil because the importation of green coffee is prohibited. This is to protect the internal market, or the internal production. This ban limits the range of coffee that consumers are able to taste. As a consequence, in Brazil, besides few choices of HEICSs and roasteries, consumers have also few options for coffee. They can consume only national coffee. It is really difficult to taste Colombian, Indonesian, African, or any other international coffees. The option provided by the Brazilian government is to import roasted coffee, but due to the long shipment time, difficult transportation and logistics, customs issues, and the long distances to travel in order to test the quality of the coffee and the roaster, the importation of the roasted coffee is too risky for HEICSs. It is very rare for Brazilian HEICSs to have coffee from Indonesia, Africa, or Colombia.

4.3.2 The Place to Perform the Tasting

Driver (1991) reveals that ritual places are meaningful because they help individuals construct alternative worlds, called “the real world,” which are different from ordinary life. Many CCT scholars have mentioned the influence of the place in consumer behavior (Belk & Costa, 1998; Karababa & Ger, 2011; Kozinets, 2002a; Visconti et al., 2010; Sherry, 1998; Tuan 1977). Gieryn (2000) defines place as a geographic location with material form and investment with meaning and value: “Places bring people together in bodily co-presence” (2000, p. 476). Places help to develop consumption communities. Specialty coffee shops, such as the Ottoman coffeehouse (Karababa & Ger, 2011), enable people to interact with others and enjoy time away from their responsibilities. These specialty coffee shops follow the characteristics of third places (Oldenburg, 1997), which are neutral places of socialization, pleasure, playful mood, social flatness, conversation, low profile and home away from home. Coffee is about sociality, conviviality, and intimacy (Sherry, 1995).

As Thompson and Arsel argue, “Starbucks’s staggering success is due in large part to its skill at creating, standardizing, and implementing an upscale third-place ambiance on a global scale” (2004, p. 633). In the 1990s, the coffee shop became a third place (Oldenburg, 1997), a site of socialization and various pleasures, as well as a neutral meeting ground, in contrast to work and home (Oldenburg, 1997); in fact, the coffee shop “has replaced the local bar as a place of socialization” (Johnson, 1995, August 13). Weinberg reinforces this change in consumption, affirming that “alcohol consumption, which peaked around 1980, has demonstrated more than a 15 percent decline” (2002, p. 199), and that caffeine use, driven by specialty coffee consumption, has exploded in the last few decades. Although, as Weinberg notes, “Industry data indicate that there was a progressive decrease in coffee as a source of caffeine between 1962 and 1982, more recently, especially in specialty coffee consumption, usage is once again increasing, while the decline in alcohol consumption continues” (2002, p. 199).

In the second coffee wave (Skeie, 2003), Starbucks led (and is still leading) the specialty coffee marketplace and increase the number of regular and connoisseur coffee consumers. In the 2000s, the specialty coffee market grew rapidly, achieving impressive results. In 2000, the specialty coffee industry hit the \$8 billion mark, and by 2006, it had reached \$12 billion (SCAA, n.d.a). Starbucks played an important role helping specialty coffee market achieve this result (Hartmann, 2011). However, in the third wave, HEICSs played an increasingly important role in the marketplace providing better and high-quality coffee than Starbucks and increasing the knowledge and developing the consumer taste. With the emergence of the independent coffee shops the taste transformation ritual was possible to be performed. This new players (HEICSs) in the specialty coffee marketplace allow consumers to perform the rite of passage from regular to connoisseur. Kozinets predicted that the characteristics of the new HEICSs (third wave) would be preferable to this new type of coffee connoisseur consumer:

Experimental and innovative online coffee consumers offer a range of discoveries that, like a lead user analysis, inform the understanding of coffee marketing trends.... If the Starbucks brand is becoming passé, a mere symbol (*\$) of overroasting, a good place to read and hang out but not to drink coffee, then the next generation of coffee brands to tap into the discriminating coffee ethos will likely thrive by positioning on the opposite end of these dimensions: human, passionate, roasted right, free, alive, locally involved, existentially complete. These cultural meanings will draw on rich associations to art and artisanship, craftsmanship and connoisseurship-perhaps even religion and spirituality-and do it in a manner that is authentic and genuine.... New brands and blends of beans, new means of delivering

the freshest of fresh beans (online and offline), new means of roasting, new bean roasting services, new espresso and Cappuccino machines, new forms of education and instruction, new coffee tasting clubs, and new types of cafes are premium opportunities that await further evaluation and exploration by opportunistic new product developers and market educators (Kozinets, 2002b, p. 70).

The informants expressed different reasons for choosing HEICSs compared to the findings of Thompson, Rindfleisch and Arsel (2012). The coffee shop preferences of their research informants are based on (1) cosmopolitan motif: “local coffee shops are constructed as sites for acquiring authentically distinctive social and aesthetic experiences that are not readily available in corporate- run servicescapes and commercial setting” (2012, p. 56), and (2) the artisan/owner motif: “local coffee shops as atavistic throwbacks to a bygone era that existed before the marketplace dominance of national chains, when dedicated proprietors put their personal stamps on all facets of the business” (2012, p. 56). The informants in the present study consider these motifs as well; however, they are not the most important. The informants choose the spot based on the quality of the coffee they will drink, and it involves the owner involvement with specialty coffee, barista skills, cutting-edge equipment, high-quality coffee beans, and so on.

HEICSs are the places where connoisseur consumers perform their taste transformation rituals. Informants do not try coffee in coffee shop chains (e.g., Starbucks, Tim Horton’s, Timothy’s Cafe) because of the uniformity and predictability (Ritzer, 2007) of the coffee taste, their perception of low coffee quality, and the coffee shop chains’ “commodity logic” (Thompson & Arsel, 2004, p. 639). Coffee shop chains represent mass consumption and the real world. In the HEICS craft tradition, consumers and professionals can retain some control over every stage, or almost every stage, of manufacture, “and thereby gain a far more satisfactory relationship with the product” (Miller, 1997, p. 140). HEICSs promote a “conspicuous handmade image, explicitly separate from the products of mass consumption, and immediately recognized as a quality product” (Miller, 1997, p. 140). In HEICSs, consumers can taste different high-quality coffees prepared by well-trained baristas who can help and guide them during their connoisseurship rite of passage, using cutting-edge equipment. The HEICS is the connoisseur consumer’s liminal space. Sherry emphasizes that “when the steam and aroma of coffee have pervaded a space, and communicants have drunk together in that space, the space becomes a place, humanized through the agency of the product” (1995, p. 361). However, some of the HEICSs serve better specialty coffee than

others, and the connoisseur consumers know how to identify and classify the coffee shops based on specific clues, even before tasting the coffee:

I could probably do an entire article on this topic (increasing your lottery odds at the café), but instead I'll just hit some main points. The first thing you want to see before ordering is who roasts the coffee. A good cafe will be proud of their roaster. You'll also want to track which roasters you like and which you don't, so you aren't wasting your time trying new cafes that use the same espresso blend. Look for signs that they care about espresso. Not coffee or bagels or waffles, but espresso. Do they have little demitasse cups being warmed on top of the espresso machine? Do they offer a single origin espresso? Do you see other people drinking espresso or is everyone drinking whipped cream covered monster lattes? (Smith, 2011, March 15)

Even in the HEICSs preferred by coffee connoisseurs, there are a lot of consumers—actually the majority of them—who just grab their coffee and go, or sit to drink their coffee with friends to socialize in the third place (Oldenburg, 1999). They drink Americano, Cappuccinos, Lattes, and other drinks that mix the espresso with hot water, milk, and so on. Most of these consumers are engaged in “popular or unserious leisure” pursuits of coffee consumption (Stebbins, 1979, p. 257).

In HEICSs almost all consumers are young adults or adults. There are really few young people. I haven't seen any teenagers during my data collection in the HEICSs. The majority of teenage coffee consumers prefer to go to coffee chains, where they could order coffee drinks, such as Frappuccino, caramel, mocha, café vanilla, strawberries and crème, and other drinks. In HEICSs, connoisseur consumers can find specialty coffee from different single origins (e.g., coffee microlots from different farmers in countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Rwanda, and Ethiopia) with different points of roasting that extract different flavors from the same green coffee beans. The informants like to explore these places, tasting as many as coffees as possible and verifying what places are better than others. As Jane explains, “What I discovered was, as I was getting it out of necessity, you could say, if I got it from one place or another, I noticed I liked one place better than another, and so forth.”

According to the informants, coffee shop chains mainly use dark roast to standardize the flavor of coffees purchased worldwide, homogenizing the taste, hiding the defects of the coffee, ruining the coffee's taste with bitterness, smoke, and a lack of acidity. In contrast, high-end HEICSs use light roast, which relaxes the acidity and produces a smooth beverage with no bitterness, and medium roast, which provides a beverage with intensity and body with

low acidity. Light roast and medium roast enhance the flavor and the aroma of the coffee. Andrew (roaster of a HEICS) explained:

When you roast dark, you tend to lose the origin of the bean. If you haven't noticed, a lot of dark roasted coffee would be very similar [in taste]. That is because what happens is, you start to decay all of the natural apparent sugars in beans, and then once a caramelization process starts to occur, what happens is the syrup that has presented on the bean starts to break down. That syrup is what is going to give you those darker notes like caramels, chocolates, that sort of thing. When you go darker and darker and darker, you minimize all those unique sugars at the very front that we try to preserve and you get the generics: caramel, dark cocoa.

The Figure 4 shows the differences between the dark and light roast coffee.

Figure 4 - Dark and light roast coffee



ChefSteps' (2014a) gives some tips for buying better coffee to get the best possible shot of espresso at home. It is not the focus of this research, but it helps us to understand the connoisseurship consumption practices related to the coffee beans.

Always buy whole bean coffee: Pre-ground coffee tends to lose its aroma and character, and can often dry out and become stale on the grocery store shelf.

Look for a printed roast date within 2-3 weeks: If your favorite roaster doesn't do airtight bags, just make sure the coffee was roasted within the last two weeks—the more recent, the better.

No visual oils on the surface of the beans: notable oil on the surface of coffee beans signifies over-roasting. When coffee is roasted, carbon dioxide naturally pushes oil outwards through the cell pores. Extremely hot or long roasts will disrupt the cell walls and decrease the viscosity of the oils contained within the beans, meaning more oil will leak out onto the surface of the beans. When coffee is roasted at cooler temperatures, the cell walls more readily stay intact, and the oil is too viscous to escape. Over-roasted coffee will taste bland and burned, whereas coffee that's been properly roasted will have retained the oils that contribute to the taste and texture of great espresso. Oily beans will also make your grounds sticky, causing irregular brewing. But, remember: A coffee can be darkly roasted without being over-roasted, so if you like dark roasts, simply look for beans from a good roaster that are dry on the surface. Of course, if you're buying coffee in an airtight bag, just stick with a

roaster you trust and you're not very likely to end up with oily beans. (ChefSteps, 2014a)

The coffee consumer roast preference has changed during the last decades. According to Davis (2011), most American coffee in the 1950s was roasted lightly. However, in the 1980s, according to Fisher (1987, September 6), Americans showed renewed interest in darker, fuller-bodied beverages, such as red wine, amber and dark beers, and dark-roasted coffees. It was a broad trend from light to dark drinks that “has been visible for some time in the coffee industry, where sales of specialty coffees, including dark roasts and espressos, have grown by 4 to 8 percent annually, while overall sales have declined by about 2 percent each year” (Fisher, 1987, September 6). Consumers who prefer the intense taste and “mind-altering” stimulation of dark roasted coffee are perceived as more mature and higher in status than consumers who prefer the bland taste of lightly roasted coffee (Levy, 1999). Arsel and Bean affirm that, for consumer researchers, taste is a fundamental mechanism for perpetuating particular social hierarchies (2013). In 1989, there were more dark-roast coffees than ever in the market (Fabricant, 1989, October 25).

Since the 2000s, however, many high-end roasters have been working to convince customers that light roasting is the best way to coax the delicate, nuanced flavors out of high-quality beans. A number of new high-end cafés and coffee roasters, including Intelligentsia Coffee in Chicago and Los Angeles, only sell light-roasted coffee, claiming that dark roasting is tantamount to ruining good coffee (McLaughlin, 2012, February 1). Intelligentsia Coffee’s slogan is, “By illuminating what is possible with coffee, we hope to change forever how you think about it” (<http://www.intelligentsiacoffee.com/content/history>). Light roasted coffee, brewed strong, is the norm in northern Europe, including Germany and Scandinavia (McLaughlin, 2012, February 1). Starbucks conducted a study in 2011 “using an online questionnaire as well as taste tests in which people sampled coffee roasted to different degrees of darkness. The company says 42% prefer a lighter roast” (McLaughlin, 2012, February 1). In response to the changes in the coffee consumer tastes, in 2012, Starbucks introduced Blonde Roast (called “blonde” because “light” can imply that something has been removed or might confuse consumers who think of “light coffee” as having milk added), a light-roasted blend. Peet’s Coffee & Tea rolled out two “medium roast” blends, introducing the lighter-roasted beans, in its stores (McLaughlin, 2012, February 1). This result reflects the shift in the tastes of the market that have occurred since the 1990s. As McLaughlin notes, “After years of convincing the nation's coffee drinkers that dark-roasted brews are the classiest thing to fill a

mug or takeout cup, Starbucks, Peet's, and a new wave of high-end chains are rolling out the exact opposite: light-roasted coffee" (2012, February 1).

Beyond the roast preference, logistics also directly influence the coffee taste. The longer coffee takes to be drunk after roasted and ground, the less flavor, aroma, and taste it will have because it loses its properties and characteristics over time. After being roasted, coffee has a "short life." After being ground, its life is even shorter. Coffee shop chains store huge batches of roasted coffee, transport them to the coffee shops, and finally, grind them to serve to consumers. HEICs, adopting independent modes of coffee production and distribution, reduce the time of this process and the size of the batch to guarantee the freshness of the coffee. Many of them have the roaster inside the coffee shop, integrating the logistics system and providing a daily fresh coffee roast. All of these influence the consumer's choice of coffee shop.

Besides money, which will be discussed later, the choice of the coffee shop is influenced by the person's age and their stage in the connoisseurship rite of passage. Stebbins (2007) explains that amateurs are normally adults, although some fields may include people in their late teens. When they were younger (Paul, Kevin, Kate, Jane) or not yet (Alan) on the beginning of the connoisseurship rite of passage, some informants preferred coffee shop chains like Starbucks, Second Cup, and Tim Horton's. These coffee shops follow the same format and pattern driven by mass consumption (Ritzer, 2007). On their menus, these coffee shops have many coffee drinks mixed with milk, sugar, caramel, and other ingredients, and they also sell many kinds of foods (muffins, sandwiches, salads, cakes, cereal bars, and so on). Levy (1999) notes that adding milk to coffee makes them less potent, younger, and more feminine, much like adding milk to alcohol. During many hours of observation in these coffee chains, I did not see any consumers drinking only an espresso. These observations were confirmed by the informants and also by the experiences that I have had when ordering an espresso at Starbucks and Tim Horton's. I will describe this experience as an example to reinforce what I have found in my data collection.

At Starbucks, the cashier asked if I really wanted an espresso. I confirmed my order, and he told me twice that the beverage was very strong. He also asked me if I want to put some hot water in the espresso. I said, "No, thanks" (putting water in an espresso transforms it into an Americano). Then, he asked what kind of cup I would like to drink the espresso in. At first, I

did not understand the question. I thought, “What kind of cup? They don’t have cups to serve the espresso?” Then, the cashier pointed to the size of the cups on the table: 8 oz., 12 oz., 16 oz., or 20 oz. However, espresso is a 1 oz. beverage. Fortunately, the barista found the Micra cup inside the cupboard, which is 2 oz. The barista also had difficulty understanding my order. The cashier had to repeat my order to the barista. The resulting espresso was bitter, as my informants said it would be, and the taste was really different compared to espresso that I have had in specialty coffee shops. I repeated the experience at Tim Horton’s. It was quite similar. I also asked the barista where the coffee beans were from. He did not know. He asked for help from another Tim Horton’s employee, who also did not know. He looked for the coffee package and brought it to me to help him find the information. At that point, he was embarrassed by the situation. I stopped asking questions and waited for him to serve the espresso to me. After I had drunk the espresso, he asked me if I liked it. I said, “It was okay,” as I have learned from Frank and @esproadventures. They always say okay to the baristas after drinking an espresso, regardless of how it actually tastes.

Informants who have started the coffee connoisseurship rite of passage prefer HEICSSs, which focus on coffee as the most important product of their businesses. Smith (2014, November 26) wrote four simple signals that the coffee shop is a real espresso bar: (1) although the porta-filter has two sides, only one size of espresso is served; (2) the drink menu is small and simple, based on coffee; (3) the food offerings are very limited, because “espresso quality in a café is inversely proportional to the amount of food offerings” (Smith, 2014, November 26); (4) the baristas use tampers and their hands to pack and smooth the ground espresso beans on the porta-filter. Coffee shops like Victrola and Stumptown in Seattle, which have the roasters in their coffee shops to guarantee the coffee’s freshness and quality, and BoxCar Social, Lit Espresso, and Sam James in Toronto, sell a few food options: paninis (grilled cheese, pesto, and sundried tomato), cookies, and croissants. To emphasize the coffee flavor, some of these coffee shops indicate the amount of milk in each coffee drink. Lit Espresso, for example, draws “the lactometer” in the menu (Appendix B), indicating the quantity of milk in their coffee drinks. Handsome Coffee, in Los Angeles, draws on the menu a picture of espresso and brewed coffee on one side, and on the other side, three options for the amount of milk that can be added to the beverage (if the consumer wants), emphasizing the differences in the coffee beverage with and without milk. Michael Phillips, co-founder of the Handsome Coffee, said that they develop the menu trying to inform and maybe eventually educate the consumer about the specialty coffee culture.

An HEICS is the place where coffee connoisseurs can meet other consumers who have the same coffee passion as well as skilled baristas. The informants reveal that there is a community of specialty coffee that you get inside after regularly frequenting HEICSs and appreciating coffee. Coffee appreciation is the key to access this community, and it is perceived by the community according to the way the consumers drink, talk about coffee, and become involved in specialty coffee consumption and culture. Many HEICS baristas are more skilled and well-prepared professionals than baristas from coffee shop chains, and it is easier for them to get into and develop a conversation on coffee with consumers. In the HEICS craft tradition, barista who provides manual labor “has a respect and desire for the sensual, physical and immediate” (Miller, 1997, p.150). Connoisseur consumers try to find baristas who love and also are as involved with coffee as they are. Many baristas in HEICSs are the owners of the company (e.g., Slate coffee, BoxCar Social), or they have even worked for many years in the coffee marketplace (e.g., Richard: over 6 years). Unlike coffee shop chains, the owners usually work in the HEICS as manager, cashier, or even a barista (e.g., Seven Grams, Seattle Coffee Workers). They develop relationships with connoisseur consumers. As identified by Thompson, Rindfleisch and Arsel (2006) in their study on local coffee shops patron, there is a connection between the owner and coffee connoisseurs in HEICSs. Coffee consumers tend “to foster more individualized experiences of a common connection to the owner, who is viewed as the embodiment of the establishment's values and its quirky, endearing qualities” (p. 58).

The informants have special interests in different types of high-quality equipment that can improve their coffee's taste. As noted by Hennion (2007) and Stebbins (1979), amateurs (connoisseur consumers) use equipment to produce and reinforce the differences between their taste and the other consumers' taste. Sherry notes that “as a site magnet, the coffee machine and the beverage it produces help emplace and embed consumers in existentially profound quality space” (1995, p. 359). HEICSs are the places where coffee connoisseurs can see and learn with the barista how to use a variety of coffee equipment, ranging from expensive, such the espresso machine, average, such as brew methods equipment, to cheap, like paper filters. Consumers can also buy equipment in HEICSs to brew coffee at home. The number of consumers grinding and brewing coffee at home and at work increased a lot in the last decade (Reilly, 1993, November 4). Suzy has coffee equipment at home and in her place of work. Every day, during her 15-minute break in the morning, she goes to the company's

kitchen, grinds the coffee, boils the water, and brews her coffee. It is her morning coffee ritual. Jamie proudly posted a picture on Twitter her three-shelf steel coffee cart with many types of equipment: “cleaned my coffee cart this week... Looks pretty until the next time I mess it up” (@CoffeeAdventure, May 26, 2014). There are many types of equipment to brew coffee, such as scales, manual and automatic grinders, range servers, kettles, filters, drip stations, pour-over scales/timers, Chemexes, acrylic and ceramic drippers, AeroPresses, French Presses, Clever coffee drippers, and Syphons.

In Brazil, there are not many HEICSs in which one can perform the taste transformation ritual. Also, the HEICSs are quite new in the marketplace. Mark, who has been a coffee connoisseur for six years, told me that when the HEICS opened in his city, “everything changed.” He used to buy specialty coffee when he or a friend traveled to the United States and from local roasters in his city and others. By far, he is the type of Brazilian coffee connoisseur consumer who has a huge variety of coffee equipment: an espresso machine, two grinders, all brew methods, mugs, cups, scale, and so on (see Appendix C). He is planning to buy another professional espresso machine, and I asked him if he planned sell the one that he has. He answered, “No... I can’t sell my Musica [espresso machine]. I am emotionally involved with it.” The espresso machine has a special meaning for Mark, as he decommodified and singularized it (Kopytoff, 1986). He likes to taste coffee, but more than that, he likes to prepare coffee for his friends and clients. All of his coffee equipment and utensils are in his photography studio. He works in the fashion marketplace, and the majority of his clients are women. He also receives coffee as a gift from some clients’ husbands who are coffee farmers. He decided to brew high-quality coffee at his studio because many people complained about the poor quality of coffee his studio used to serve. As he did with the photography equipment that he uses to work in his studio, he bought cutting-edge coffee equipment. During our conversation, he pointed to his espresso machines and said, “Who can pay two thousand dollars for this machine?” Mark distinguishes himself from other people through the connoisseur coffee consumer identity, which Leibenstein (1950) calls the “snob effect.”

Mark is an exception in Brazil, but he is influencing his friends, who are now buying coffee equipment as well. Every Saturday, he goes to the HEICS of his city and has fun talking about coffee with the HEICS owner and employees. He is also planning to open a specialty coffee shop in the city. He follows some baristas and coffee blogs on the Internet. Although he is a

skillful amateur barista (he is better than many Brazilian baristas), he is in the beginning stage of the connoisseurship rite of passage. In the United States, coffee connoisseur consumers are not too involved in coffee equipment because they prefer to go to HEICSs to have an espresso and get in contact personally with the specialty coffee community, but in Brazil, due to the lack of HEICSs, coffee consumers who want to engage in connoisseurship coffee consumption need to buy equipment to develop themselves. Most specialty coffee consumers I met have a professional espresso machine at home. It is worth mentioning that this kind of machine is different from a Nespresso Machine or a Dolce Gusto machine, which are home automatic machines that do not require consumers to develop a barista's ability to prepare the espresso. Thus, while the United States has a strong consumption culture to drink coffee in coffee shops, Brazil has a strong consumption culture to drink coffee at home or at work.

Although there are many websites and videos on YouTube and Vimeo that explain different coffee brew methods (e.g., www.howtobrewcoffee.com, www.clivecoffee.com, ineedcoffee.com, brewmethods.com), HEICSs are the safest places for the informants to get information from the barista and to develop their knowledge. Once, Paul took his Chemex, scale, and grinder to BoxCar Social to brew coffee with the barista. He wanted to make sure he was using the equipment in the correct way. Paul prefers learn to brew coffee at HEICSs than online: "When I'm at home, I feel like I might not make the best coffee that I can. When I go to some place like this, something like I understand more about café. It's more practical." Many HEICSs (e.g., BoxCar Social, Stumptown, Victrola) brew coffee using these equipment in front of the consumers, teaching each step of the brew methods and engaging in a conversation (see Kozinets et al., 2008, p. 20). These brew methods are called "slow coffee," and the majority of the HEICSs do not serve them during the rush time in the morning. The slow coffee is served after 10 or 11 AM, because it takes more than five minutes. The most expensive coffee equipment in the coffee shop is the espresso coffee machine (unless the shop roasts its own coffee, in which case it also needs a roaster). It is expensive and difficult to use. A home espresso machine (ranging from USD \$685 up to \$ 7,200: www.clivecoffee.com), the grinder (ranging from USD \$129 up to \$2,086), quality courses, and the time required to develop the skill and ability to extract a good espresso are all necessary. Those numerous investments are one of the reason why most of the informants prefer to drink espresso in HEICSs.

In HEICSs, the espresso machine is put on the main stage, and the barista is the star actor who

realizes the performance of extracting the best coffee through the machine. The consumers are the audience who can watch and appreciate the performance. HEICSs put the espresso machine in the middle of the counter or in the side of the counter close to the front door (Appendix D). The counter is the altar (Sherry & Kozinets, 2003) to the espresso machine. It receives special attention in the HEICSs. The baristas stay around it, cleaning and adjusting it; although they are not the owners of the machine, they perform the possession ritual described by McCracken (1986). In coffee shop chains, in contrast, the espresso machines are usually hidden by merchandising or promotion signs, or they are put in the lower part or at the end of the counter, or even on a table behind the counter (Appendix D). Espresso machines in coffee chains are important but not highlighted as in HEICSs. Further, it is difficult to watch the barista working at the machine.

Equipment is important in the independent specialty coffee marketplace; however, it is not overemphasized by HEICSs. During the cuppings that I attended, the baristas put different coffees on the tasting table, side by side, brewed in the same method. To prepare the coffee, the baristas poured hot water over ground coffee that was in the porcelain mug. They used a scale, kettle, and timer. The central point was the discussion about coffee flavors and aromas. However, in Starbucks, the cupping that I attended (which they call a coffee seminar), in addition to the food that they served to harmonize with coffee, they also brewed coffee using five different types of equipment. They explained each one to the participants, heavily emphasizing the results that could be achieved with them. In the middle and at the end of the coffee seminar, the instructor told everybody to visit another Starbucks location, which was close to where we were, because it had a Clover Machine. In the 2000s, this espresso machine was mainly used by HEICSs to pull a better espresso shot compared to the coffee shop chains, when Starbucks took over Clover. This purchase had a big impact on the specialty coffee market, according to Schwaner-Albright (2008, March 26):

Howard D. Schultz, the chief executive of Starbucks, dropped a bombshell last week [March, 2008] at the annual shareholders meeting when he announced that as part of an effort to concentrate on making better coffee, the corporation had bought the Coffee Equipment Company of Seattle, maker of the Clover coffee brewer. Coffee drinkers were buzzing. Clovers are \$11,000 machines that brew one cup at a time and have become essential equipment at some of the country's top independent cafes. How could the company now be the exclusive property of a giant corporation? In protest, Stumptown Coffee in Portland, Ore., one of Clover's earliest champions, said it had decided to stop using Clover machines. Mr. Schultz told stockholders that the acquisition and other changes had nothing to do with competition in the specialty coffee market, from McDonald's and Dunkin' Donuts as well as corner cafes. But he said in a telephone interview, "We've allowed our

position as the leader in the coffee industry to become somewhat blurred.” Perhaps the Clover will snap things into focus. Mr. Schultz would not say how many of the nearly 16,000 Starbucks locations worldwide will get the machines. But when Clovers go into new stores, he said, they would be the centerpieces of what he called a shrine.

Some of coffee connoisseurs who are in the advanced stage of the rite of passage brew coffee at home or at work as manner to improve their coffee knowledge (e.g., Frank and Suzy); however they prefer to drink espresso at coffee shops (Frank drinks four espressos per day). In addition to the HEICSs available in the connoisseur consumers’ own cities, they also visit HEICSs in other cities and countries to taste different high-quality espressos, and they have their preferred ones. @luizmarq, who lives in Seattle, Tweeted January 3 2015 that his “favorite coffee shops in 2014 @vifseattle [Vif Wine and Coffee Shop: Seattle/Washington] @mmmhmmcoffee [Mmmhmm Coffee Shop: Seattle/Washington] @TNTCoffeeCo [Tried & True Coffee Co.: Corvallis/Oregon] @BarNineLA [Bar Nine: Los Angeles/California].” The preferred HEICSs are visited more frequently by coffee connoisseurs; however they also keep visiting and exploring other HEICSs in and out of their own cities. An HEICS is the place where coffee connoisseurs can find high-quality coffee from different countries, prepared by well-trained baristas, using appropriate devices and equipment.

4.3.3 Moment of Tasting

The moment during the day and also during the week to perform the connoisseurship consumption ritual is something important to the informants. Hennion (2007) affirms that the pleasures of the amateur depend on place and moments, and the informants consider many factors when determining the best situation in which to taste their coffee in HEICSs. Laura goes every weekend, Greg goes every morning, and David goes weekly when the coffee shop in his home city offers a public coffee cupping. On Saturdays, Alan drops off his kids at school, and for two hours, takes a tour of the city with his wife and visits different coffee shops. This is the time that they have together without the kids. This is the moment that they have their own time. He is a shy person and does not like to talk, but the espresso makes him talk more than usual, and he takes advantage of this situation to catch up with his wife. Jane, Kevin, and Paul go every Saturday afternoon to different coffee shops. They get together, study, chat, and have fun. They have their own special moments at HEICSs. Hennion argues,

“Far from being trivial, the process of creating the right mood for passion, through all the practices and rituals surrounding the act of listening, must be taken seriously” (2001, p. 12). Based on her own experience on the taste transformation ritual, Suzy describes in detail the best moment to have an espresso in a coffee shop:

What I found was, it is actually better to not come in the morning rush at 7 to 9. Not very good to taste coffee. It is better to taste coffee between 10 [AM] and 12 [PM], because the machine has warmed up in the coffee shop. So then I realized, I consistently go to coffee shops in that time from 10 to 12, and I just basically go from one place to another place and just have a coffee or I would specifically say ok, I know there is a new spot, because a friend told me that I will check it out but around that, always around between 10 and 12, because for me I can't drink coffee, I shouldn't drink coffee after 2 or 3 PM because I would stay of, because I would be awake until 2 AM, and I will need to go to work at 5 or 6. These are things that I've learned about. 'Oh, why does a coffee taste so much better at this time?' Because the machine has run so many shots by that time. That is... almost like... It is prime. This is like the best time to come to a coffee shop. It is also quieter from 10 to 12. There is no morning rush. I can sit, I can enjoy the coffee, I can talk to the barista after.

Author: What do you mean when you say warm up the machine?

The barista extracted many espressos. They maybe adjusted it, adjusted the grinder, adjusted the machine, adjusted the temperature of the place, maybe they close the door now, they really... the best optimum espresso. I say, like, 'Wow, this is amazing. I should come at this time.'

When coffee connoisseur travel and explore other HEICSs, however, they also consider other activities in the city and schedule the HEICS visits using flexible times. Suzy explains that when she travels, the most optimal time is relaxed: “When I go for my own personal travel, I have more time to go to the [coffee] shop and have that time to sit at the café. I'll either go really early or really late. It's not the most optimal time”.

Regarding the body, Alex explained that he has two best moments to drink coffee: from 10 AM to 12 PM, and from 3 PM to 5 PM. He explained that during these two moments, the cortisol level drops, and the caffeine's stimulating action is more effective on the body. Cortisol is known as the stress hormone that “helps to regulate the body's own internal clock and promotes alertness”. (Gray, 2013). Gray (2013) confirms that “the best time to drink a cup of coffee to get your daily hit of caffeine is between 9:30 AM and 11:30 AM, according to neuroscientists” because “cortisol levels are naturally high shortly after waking up and can remain high for up to an hour afterwards – with the average peak being between 8 AM and 9 AM.” Alex does not drink coffee with breakfast. After finishing breakfast, he goes to work, which is across the street from his house. Every day at 11 AM, he goes back home and

prepares an espresso: “The day doesn’t begin if I don’t drink coffee.” Another informant, Tom (HEICS owner), after having prepared an espresso for me and him when we met at 8:30 AM, told me that it was not a good moment to drink an espresso. He does not usually drink espresso at that time of day, without food in his stomach (he did not have breakfast). After an hour, he told me that he was not feeling good because of the espresso. The informants and also coffee professionals (barista and coffee shop owners) revealed that to taste a great espresso, the moment should be considered: the weather, temperature, humidity, sun, barista’s mood, noise level, and condition of the machine and devices. The espresso effects “do not depend only on the product but also on its moments, its deployment and circumstances” (Hennion, 2004, p. 134). The moment depends on many variables. Alan says that the barista needs to adjust the grinder, machine, and amount of coffee during the day (especially in the morning), depending on the climate conditions. If there is a big line with many customers waiting for service, it influences the way coffee is served, as Alan explains: “The guy early morning, the guy wakes up early morning, the guy wants to go to work, the guy doesn’t want to know if the barista needs to adjust the grinder. So, the barista doesn’t worry about that, he just keep doing his job anyway. This consumer doesn’t care about it.”

The informants take into account the HEICS’s customer service. One word that informants frequently used during the Seattle coffee group meeting to describe the customer service of the HEICSs was “consistency.” Consistency of customer service is an important issue in the informants’ coffee shop evaluations. They refer to consistency of consumer service as the ability of the HEICS to address the quality of coffee prepared, attention to the client, and regularity of work flow conditions. However, the informants know that the HEICSs cannot provide consistent customer service all the time, so they figure out when the most well-trained and skilled baristas are working in the coffee shop. Informants know who the best baristas in the HEICSs are. They define the moment to drink their espresso in HEICSs based on the presence and the availability of the barista that they trust. They want to control as much as they can the variables that influence the coffee taste and the physical reaction to have the best possible experience. Beyond the quality of the espresso shot, they expect to talk about coffee, discuss new discoveries about coffee, and so on. The chat on Instagram between @omnins_secundo (coffee consumer) and @sambrandvein (barista) serves as an example. @sambrandvein posted a picture with other baristas, and @omnis_secundo asked specifically about one of them:

Omnis_secundo: Sam, what is the name of the guy standing to your left? I met him at Slate last week and he was awesome, but I can not [sic] seem to remember his name. I keep thinking it was Brandon but I don't think that's right.

Sambrandvein: @omnis_secundo That's Brandon Paul Weaver, he's a super dope dude!

Omnis_secundo: Seriously, he was awesome. He makes me want to rearrange my Slate visitation schedule so I always go when he is there.

Advanced coffee connoisseur informants do not drink espresso when the barista that they like is not available to pull the espresso shot. They avoid being served by trainees or poorly-trained baristas, because they expect a high-quality product and a worthwhile experience. Alan says, "I reach a level that I only drink coffee from baristas that I trust. Sometimes I look at the little window, and if there is someone over there that I don't trust, or don't know, I don't get inside, because I will not have the guarantee that the coffee will be the best possible." Paul regretted that the barista was not at the coffee shop when he ordered his coffee. The owner prepared it, and she was not as careful and did not pay as much attention as the barista had a few minutes earlier, when he prepared the same coffee for another consumer. Frank usually goes every day to a coffee shop which the owner is the barista and his wife is the cashier. No matter what time he goes, he will be served by the owner. HEICSs that the informants highly recommended in Toronto and Seattle also have the owner as the barista; these arrangements, as described by Thompson, Rindfleisch and Arsel (2006) regarding the social milieu of the contemporary coffee shop, "tend to foster more individualized experiences of a common connection to the owner/proprietor, who is viewed as the embodiment of the establishment's values and its quirky, endearing qualities" (2006, p. 58). The unpredictability of the presence of the well-trained barista in the coffee shop is something that upsets the informants who are in the advanced level of the rite of passage. Hennion (2004) observes that taste is discovered precisely through variation and uncertainty of the product being tasted. Informants look for this uncertainty as if they were playing the lottery (e.g., Smith, 2011, March 15).

In Brazil, the informants do not go to HEICSs to perform the moment of the tasting ritual element. They actually go to drink better coffee and meet the baristas, the HEICS's owner, and friends. Rosie only goes to the Academia do Café in Belo Horizonte. She used to go to others, but after it opened, this HEICS is her preference because of the high-quality coffee served. She has drunk specialty coffee at other HEICSs in São Paulo (Coffee Lab) and New York. She only drinks espresso in coffee shops and brews coffee at home. She has attended

the Academia do Café's barista course to improve her coffee knowledge; however she is more interested in the energy and socialization provided by coffee. She lives relatively far from Academia do Café (around 6 km), and she usually goes to the HEICS on Saturday, when she has more free time. She doesn't have a preferred barista: "I ask for the espresso from whomever is available at the counter." Saturday is also the day Mark and his friends choose to go to Academia do Café. They meet every Saturday around 11 o'clock at Academia do Café. Saturday is usually not a workday for Mark and Rosie and also, from noon to 3 o'clock, most of the baristas, coffee professionals, and owners of the HEICSs are more available. Saturday is the informal community meeting day at Academia do Café. For my informants, the moment to drink coffee is more related to the moment to socialize than to the "most optimal time" to taste high-quality coffee.

4.3.4 The Tasting Act

After evaluating the choices of high-quality products, choosing the right place, controlling all variables as much as possible, and defining the best moment, the coffee connoisseurs are ready to taste their coffee. All of these preliminary steps are necessary for the informants to launch themselves into the unknown act of tasting the coffee. In the HEICS, coffee connoisseurs want the coffee to be mind-altering, as Hennion explains in the music context. Music lovers don't go to a concert to "consume a commodity or have one's membership card checked, but to bring about an altered state" (Hennion, 2001, p. 14). In general, the informants drink espresso in three sips, and in each of them, the coffee will taste different. They do not know how the coffee tastes, even when they are tasting the same coffee at the same spot. Hennion affirms that "taste is discovered precisely from uncertainty, from variation, from a deepening of the effects of the product" (2004, p. 137), and the informants prepare themselves for it. On her Twitter feed, @esproadventures expresses her willingness to explore the uncertain in her profile on Twitter: "travelling the world to experience local espresso culture while maintaining an objective stance on quality of life. Here's to discovering the unimaginable." Steve gave me advice to improve my taste knowledge, reinforcing the necessity of looking for uncertainty and the unimaginable: "Try new things, because it is against what you know, what you've been doing so often... get a thing that 'it isn't what I thought.' 'It is an espresso made from a coffee that I've never thought, that would be.'"

Hennion identifies the importance of the tasting act in the gestures that allow it, in the know-how that accompanies it, in the supports sought (in other people, or in guides and reviews), in the tiny ongoing adjustments that lay it out and favor its felicity and reproducibility; it is on the basis of all these responses that objects return to those who take an interest in them (2007, p. 101). Alan explains the nuances and the attention necessary to taste coffee. He uses chocolate as an example to help him to clarify the process. He says that we need to use all of our body's senses to appreciate chocolate: look to chocolate's color, chocolate's noise when you break it, chocolate's smell, and chocolate taste in your mouth, the palate. All of this taste-test procedure indicates if the chocolate is good or not.

However, beyond the condition and the quality of the object tasted, the barista plays also an important role during the tasting act. Hennion reveals that "there is no taste as long as one is alone, facing objects; no amateur knows from the outset how to appreciate good thing, or simply what he likes. Taste starts with the comparison with others' tastes" (2004, p. 137). Coffee connoisseurs compare the coffee aroma and flavors that they have tasted before, and also their own taste with the barista's taste. The barista is the coffee connoisseur "gatekeeper" (Üstüner & Thompson, 2012, p. 803) and an agent of coffee connoisseur's taste reconfiguration. The barista helps to improve coffee connoisseur's taste, guiding them during the tasting act, and telling them what they should notice and perceive in the coffee. According to Hennion (2004, p. 137), "Taste is formed as it is expressed and is expressed as it is formed." Informants rely on the barista to improve their taste. During the tasting act, coffee connoisseurs calibrate their palates, comparing their taste perceptions with the barista's. Taste transformation ritual allows consumers develop and train their palate. Michael Philips, who won the U.S. Barista Championship in 2009 and 2010, and the World Barista Championship in 2010 and who is ex-director of coffee education at Intelligentsia and the owner of Handsome Coffee Roasters in Los Angeles, describes the importance of the barista training regarding palate. It is pretty much the same as what happens in the taste transformation ritual:

If we talk about education and training staff, I guess the first question is what do you want to teach people? No matter how highbrow or lowbrow the coffee bar is, you can argue that everybody wants staff have mastery over three areas in particular. We are looking for staff to be technically proficient, have a well-developed palate, and also be very good at service. . . . And then we have palate. Palate gets a little bit more ambiguous, when we talk about palate, we are dealing with all the baggage people bring with this, so, you know, when I taste this, I think of this, so on and so forth. There is some natural range of abilities, you have some super taster, you have

some people that couldn't taste their way out of a paper bag, but in general, people can usually universally identify around a few things, we can always get some sense of sweet, some sense of body, some sense of the finish. The main test with palate is calibration, tasting coffee together is working on a common language. (Leighton, Producer, 2013, June 12)

The language used by this well-skilled barista to describe the coffee tastes and aromas is based on the coffee taster's flavor wheel developed by the Specialty Coffee Association of America (Annex C). This flavor wheel has 36 different aromas and 32 different tastes. Coffee is a sensory hedonic product, or "an ambiguous product experience because the experience itself is not completely revealing and can be potentially interpreted in multiple ways" (Latour & Latour, 2010, p. 690). The SCAA's wheel is used to standardize coffee taste and aroma interpretation. The ability and knowledge to be able to describe different coffee aromas and tastes are essential to the development of the consumer and professional taste: "Language is central to how consumers interpret, categorize, and remember their experiences" (Latour, Latour, & Feinstein, 2011, p. 3). Nevertheless, no informants, even those who are advanced, were able to identify all the tastes and aromas described by the SCAA flavor wheel in the coffee. Suzy told me that she can not feel all the coffee taste notes: "They have so many (taste) notes on it (coffee) I'll read the notes (on the coffee package)." Knowing the coffee taste notes ahead of time helps her to taste the coffee. Comparing the connoisseur consumers' and outstanding professionals' tastes, the first is more likely "to use heuristic processing, which results in 'halo effects' due to advertising and other information received [e.g., flavor information printed in the coffee package]," and the second is more able "to differentiate relevant and irrelevant information and rely more on their own data-driven experiences" (Latour, Latour, & Feinstein, 2011, p. 2).

Alan emphasized that the more tasting experience you have, more flavors you can identify. He explains the importance of "perceptual learning" (Latour, Latour, & Feinstein, 2011, p. 2), which is the information acquired directly by product experiences. Alan also carries with him the SCAA's coffee taster's flavor wheel to help him identify the coffee flavors and improve his taste. He is trying to learn the consumption vocabulary and product category knowledge for discriminating his coffee experiences by using the SCAA's flavor wheel, or a process of "conceptual learning" (Latour, Latour, & Feinstein, 2011, p. 2), to improve his taste knowledge. Latour and Latour, studying how wine aficionados learn from experience, affirm that they "may go on for years drinking wine without learning from their experiences unless they activate and use conceptual knowledge to help them encode and retain their experiences

in memory” (Latour & Latour, 2010, p. 688). In fact, connoisseur consumers lack of conceptual knowledge because they are not trained as outstanding baristas. In this situation, consumer language for describing the coffee’s taste “can be a source of misinformation, which impairs their memory” (Latour & Latour, 2010, p. 689).

According Alan, “After five years drinking coffee, I haven’t developed my palate as I would like. People feel the flavor, I don’t know, tangerine, sugar cane, you know? I am a liar. I pretend to feel the taste, but in fact I do not.” Driver (1991) explains that when human beings perform something, it means “to do” as well as “to pretend.” According to Driver, “This ambiguity tells us much about the kind of actors human beings are. Performance, then, is a particular kind of doing [...] in which the observation of the deed is an essential part of its doing” (1991, p. 81). The communicative function (of ritual) is “deepened by the human capacity to pretend – that is, to create and project imaginary structures” (Driver, 1991, p. 81). The informants know if the coffee is good or not, or if it is “ok” or not. They also can identify the acidity, bitterness, body, density, and sweetness of the coffee; however they are not able to describe the coffee tastes and aromas as outstanding baristas do. As an aim or a specific purpose, the informants revealed that they want to improve their taste knowledge to be able to identify other coffee flavors. As Hennion explained, the ability to taste and perceive the coffee nuances and flavor is the end result of “having reflexively made the necessary time and space after a long historical and collective apprenticeship which itself produced a world of coordinated objects” (2001, p. 4).

Before ordering the espresso, the informants usually ask for information about the coffee beans: “What coffee do you have today?” “How is the coffee blend?” “Do you have single-origin coffee?” “Where is it from?” “What flavor does the coffee have?” These are questions that the informants normally ask to engage in a conversation with the barista and show their preferences according to the coffee choices they made (e.g., blend or single-origin, ristretto, or espresso). Coffee connoisseurs receive the mug from the barista’s hand and look at the espresso’ crema, trying to figure out if the espresso was pulled correctly or not. In the post “Crema! A Sign of Good Espresso, or a Symptom of Bad Espresso,” the Sweet Marias’ blog explains, “Crema is part of the visual lure of espresso, the aromatics, the mouthfeel, the flavor and long-lasting aftertaste or espresso. In its technical definition, crema is gas bubbles suspended in a liquid film, that has high ‘surface tension’ between the water molecules” (the consumer diagnosis of espresso based on the crema is explained in the consumer status game

section that appears later). After each sip, coffee connoisseur consumers have their own silent instant. For a few seconds, some of them look forward, others look to the coffee in a thoughtful way, others chew the coffee. Hennion explains that “the reflexive nature of taste is a founding act of attention, suspension, a pause on what is happening – and symmetrically, a stronger presence of the tasted object that also unfolds” (2004, p. 136). This reflexive act allows coffee connoisseurs to compare the coffee with what they have tasted previously. Comparison is essential during this process. Stopping to pay attention to what is happening is fundamental during the tasting act, because “if one stops even for a fraction of a second, to observe oneself tasting, the gesture is installed. . . . The instant becomes an occasion among others in a course that leans up against past occasions” (Hennion, 2007, p. 108). In the end, the tasting act is a matter of losing control in a condition chosen by coffee connoisseurs that will allow the experience be the best possible. An espresso shot is a unpredictable event, which is another factor that, as a music concert is to music lovers (Hennion, 2001, p. 2), makes espresso the preferred beverage for the coffee connoisseur. As described by Hennion, regarding to music lovers, the act of tasting coffee:

Isn't aim to control something or to achieve a specific goal: on the contrary, its objective is to bring about a loss of control, an act of surrender. It is not a matter of doing something, but of making something happen. What should happen is not planned or intentional: we must allow ourselves to be carried away, moved, so that something can take place. I have done everything necessary to make something happen, but it is imperative that I do not try to control what does happen (Hennion, 2001, p. 12).

The tasting act is an uncontrolled and uncertain moment to the coffee connoisseurs. Hennion affirmed, for music lovers, concerts “are performances, in the sense that they make something happen” (2001, p. 13). Espresso is also a performance, and the result is unpredictable, even if the consumer chooses the best barista, place and moment. The consumers can plan everything, but they cannot control the result. It is a “moment of challenge, where what counts is that the unexpected can happen” (Hennion, 2001, p. 13). The espresso performance starts before the sip, when the coffee connoisseur sniffs the aroma, and from this moment until the end, many things happen. As the coffee travels from the connoisseur's mouth to his or her stomach, a variety of sensations take place, produced by the flavor, acidity, body, balance, sweetness, clean up, uniformity, aftertaste, and possible defects of the espresso. Although the coffee connoisseur tries to control the ritual order, getting inside the community and being transformed during the rite of passage (Driver, 1991), he or she cannot control the

physiological result of the espresso that is drunk. It is unexpected. These unexpected moments build the informants' taste and improve their coffee knowledge.

Finally, after having drunk the espresso, coffee connoisseur consumers have additional contact with the barista. Normally, coffee connoisseurs hand back the mug to the barista, or look to the barista to thank them for the espresso. The last contact to perform is the farewell ritual. At this moment, the barista usually asks the coffee connoisseur consumers how the coffee was and if they liked it. Normally, baristas do not ask regular consumers in the HEICS these questions. They usually say goodbye, wave, nod their head, or just look to the consumer. If they ask regular coffee consumers, who, for example, ordered a Latte, Cappuccino, or Americano, about the coffee, they do so in a friendly, small-talk way. However, when baristas address this question to connoisseur consumers who have drunk an espresso, it is usually in a more concerned way. They really want to listen to the coffee connoisseur consumer's opinion and hopefully their approval. The barista's physical reaction to the connoisseur consumer's feedback is much more significant than to a regular consumer's feedback. Baristas look to the connoisseur consumer desiring positive feedback. When they get it, they have big smiles and are very grateful.

In New York, I tasted the best espresso that I have ever had. After tasting, I said to the barista that it was wonderful. He really enjoyed my reaction. I left the coffee shop, and two hours later, I met the barista on the street. He was in a line on the street outside a restaurant, waiting for a free table. I stopped, greeted him, and said: "I can't stop thinking about your espresso... It was the best espresso that I've ever had!" He transformed, and he held my hand and said: "I knew! Thanks a lot!" He enjoyed my feedback and really took it into consideration. His espresso led me to my coffee epiphany moment (which I will explain in detail later). Also in New York City, I met another barista in a different coffee shop. In the morning, she works in one coffee shop, and in the afternoon, she works in another one. It was the second time that I met her. I asked for an espresso. She was immersed in Lattes, Cappuccinos, Americanos, and so on. There were many customers. It was a rush hour, and she was pulling many espressos and mixing them with water, milk, and so on. She asked me if I could wait. I said yes. She prepared some coffees and then stopped to clean and prepare the machine. Finally, she pulled my espresso shot carefully and gave it to me. I drank it, and before left, I said, "It was really great!" She gave me a big smile and said, "You made my day! Thank you." I was the only one that ordered just an espresso, and she stopped everything to prepare it.

During my connoisseurship rite of passage, the baristas started to treat me differently. In the beginning of my rite of passage, when I used to order Americano or Chemex in HEICSs, they did not ask me if I liked it or not. I was an anonymous person, or a regular customer. They greeted me, they were kind, but just that. However, when I started to ask questions about the coffee and order espresso, the baristas started to consider my opinion. They started to ask me about the espresso that they had served me and how it was. In some places, they started to recognize me. The third time that I went to the same HEICS in Toronto, the barista who was preparing the coffee for the customers told me to wait a minute because the another barista, who was not behind the counter, would prepare the espresso for me. The other barista was more experienced and well-trained. During the farewell ritual, the baristas and coffee connoisseur consumers recognize themselves as special professionals and consumers who have different knowledge and appreciation compared to other people. They recognize themselves as people who are involved in the specialty coffee culture and have high-quality orientation.

When the coffee is not that good or is not as was expected by the coffee connoisseur, the feedback during the farewell ritual becomes something that some of the informants were concerned about. They try to take care and be polite, but sometimes it does not work as expected. Alan, for example, tries to give some taste descriptions for the baristas. One time, he told the barista that it was not the type of coffee that he liked, and the barista was shocked because his boss was beside him. Alan was ashamed. Once, I bought coffee beans from a roaster in another city. I used Facebook to order the beans. Everything worked well. I had good customer service provided by the roaster, who was the roasting owner. However, when he asked me for feedback, and I told him what I thought about the coffee, he did not like my response. The coffee beans were a little bit overroasted, and I told him so (it was the first time that I gave this kind of feedback to a coffee professional). He replied, “I’ve worked 4 years to reach this point of roasting. All my clients like my coffee beans. Each one has a different taste.” Coffee connoisseurs usually say that the coffee was good. They say that it is what the baristas expect to hear. A bad evaluation is not welcome in this ritual. Espresso Adventures (@esproadventures) informed me that: “if they (the baristas) ask me how was it... I just say it was good (regardless) especially if it's my first time.” Alan came to adopt the same strategy. Frank always says, “It is ok.”

4.3.5 Time and Money Investment

Taste is a collective, reflexive, instrumented activity that requires investment of time and money by consumers to develop their corporeal competency and built their social body through exercise guided by ritualization. Reflexive taste opens a space full of “objects and tools, devices, frames, confrontations and references, of all kinds of supports, collectives and material equipment” (Hennion, 2007, p. 109) that amateurs need to acquire or study to understand and produce differences compared to others consumers. Engagement in serious leisure pursuits demands time and money (Belk & Costa, 1998; Stebbins, 1979), and all of the informants try to balance their passion with their life responsibilities. Alan does not drink coffee at home because “when you get inside of this, it has no end. You will start to invest money, you will start to invest time, and I don’t have time and money to spend in this.” @criticalMAS, who is a coffee connoisseur and drinks more than one espresso per day in HEICSs, posted on Twitter to get the money issue off his chest: “I expect to visit coffee shops a LOT LESS in 2015. I’d rather save the \$\$ for my own equipment” (January 9, 2014). Although in the past Suzy used to buy coffee every day in HEICS, now, her income allows her to better explore high-quality coffee. She explains, “Now I am working more, before I wasn’t as much, now I am working a full... time job. I can afford to pay for coffee. I definitely see the rise in price from a cup of espresso to a coffee bean bag, it has definitely gone up.” However, John does not seem too worried about those particular issues. He invests his own time in specialty coffee, volunteering for SCAA events:

I don’t mind spending a whole bunch of money on it. It’s what I like to talk about when I’m just relaxing. It’s something I like to spend a lot of time on and have a lot of fun with... I got really into espresso and it's a very expensive habit.... I was probably spending 10 or 20 dollars a day just on espresso. I am volunteering [at an SCAA event] in the mornings.... I get there pretty early, like 7 or 8, get in a couple of hours to volunteer. Then I come “up here” [to an HEICS] and get my real work done.

High-quality products are more expensive than regular products, and they are necessary to develop the consumer’s palate. If consumers drink regular products, they are not engaged in the connoisseurship rite of passage. Bruce was already a wine connoisseur consumer, and he used to drink wine up to CAD \$100 per bottle. However, one day, a friend, who was in more advanced level of the wine connoisseurship rite of passage, told him that he should increase

his wine price limit if he wanted to really engage in the “wine world.” Bruce disagreed and continued to drink CAD \$100 wines. His friend invited him to his house and served a CAD \$400 wine. According to Brune, it changed everything. In the first sip, he felt the difference. Since then, he has started to drink expensive wines (up to CAD \$ 2000). Now, he has a CAD \$40,000 cellar at home. For Trevis, the remarkable experience with wine came when he decided to drink a CAD \$105 bottle instead of around the CAD \$30 he used to pay for it. In the coffee context, Starbucks opened the gate of the specialty coffee consumption, raising the price of the coffee and increasing the number of coffee consumers. In the 2000s, many Starbucks espresso-and-milk drinks sold for more than \$3, while McDonald’s sold most espresso-based drinks for between \$2 and \$3 (Adamy, 2007, March 1). Starbucks played an enormous role in adding value and bridging the gap between regular and specialty coffee by making it more accessible to consumers. Starbucks “turned millions from Alaska to Alabama on to whole bean coffee and espresso-based drinks, mainstreamed the coffeehouse, and taught legions of people to pay three and four dollars for what they once got for only a dollar” (Hartmann, 2011, p. 4). Hartmann argues that Starbucks draws distinctions between its own consumers and “the vast American consumer sea of middlebrow tastes and sensibilities—that is, until it became rather middlebrow itself” (2011, p. 9). Starbucks also boosted the HEICS market:

Many coffeehouses have found proximity to Starbucks to be a blessing. A small Seattle chain called Tully’s Coffee Corp. has even developed the strategy of placing its stores near a Starbucks shop. Starbucks increases the overall market, attracting new customers to the product who then patronize the independent provider next door. ‘We have created the umbrella under which they are thriving,’ says Mr. Smith (Starbucks Chief Executive). ‘They can do well right next-door to us’ (Heilliker, Leung, 2002, September 24).

Moreover, HEICSs that focus on high-quality coffee further increased the price of coffee. In the 2000s, “unlike most cafés (coffee shop chains), Intelligentsia has [...] Lattes, topped with finely wrought milk foam designs, that start at \$3.25” (Dicum, 2008, March 9). According to my data, considering the espresso, Latte, Cappuccino, and Americano coffee beverages (the most popular products), the prices in HEICSs are, on average, 10 to 15% more expensive than at Starbucks. Comparing the price of the coffee beverages per 1 oz. (around 30 ml), espresso is the most expensive beverage. I used the prices of a Seattle HEICS to compare the prices (Table 10):

Table 10 - Coffee beverage prices per 1 oz

Coffee beverage	Price	Amount (oz)	Price / 1 oz
Espresso	2.50	1	2.50
Americano	2.75	5	0.55
Cappuccino	3.50	6	0.58
Latte	3.45	12	0.29

Regarding the time, Frank said, “I don’t have kids. I don’t have a wife. I don’t even have a cat. This isn’t much time at all. I don’t have to be in a commute.” The informants admit that they also invest time studying and searching for coffee. Laura revealed that she used to spend almost two hours a week searching for new HEICSs to be visited in the next coffee group meeting. She likes to search for coffee information on Google and take her time with it. On the other hand, Joana, who is her friend and a member of the coffee group, said that she does not have time to do it during the week because she is very busy. Joana takes advantage of Laura’s commitment and interest in coffee consumption; however, she devalues it.

Although consumers who want to engage in a coffee connoisseurship consumption need to have money, specialty coffee is an opportunity for the consumer who wants to become a connoisseur but does not have money to invest in wine consumption. Coffee beverages are cheaper than wine. Paul, who is a young undergraduate student, told me that he likes wine, and he used to “buy bottles and bottles of wine all the time to taste.” However he stopped doing that because of the money: “I am a student and drink every night. Yeah, a lot more expensive than coffee.” As a result, he realized that he could become a connoisseur by tasting different coffees regularly, because he would have a budget to afford it. Consumers invest less money in connoisseur consumption rituals in the coffee context than in wine, and it allows them to be more involved in a connoisseurship consumption culture, improving their taste, increasing their knowledge, and differentiating themselves from other consumers. Unlike wine, brewing coffee at home is a possibility for everyone who invests some time and money, and it helps them to be more knowledgeable and become connoisseur consumers faster. Wine equipment is more expensive than coffee equipment, and the production is more complex than coffee. Another significant difference is the fact that places (coffee shops) to meet coffee professionals and products (coffee) are more readily available than in the wine context. Although it is necessary to have time and money to become a coffee connoisseur, it is less expensive and time-consuming than becoming a wine connoisseur. These factors help the connoisseurship coffee consumption culture spread in the marketplace.

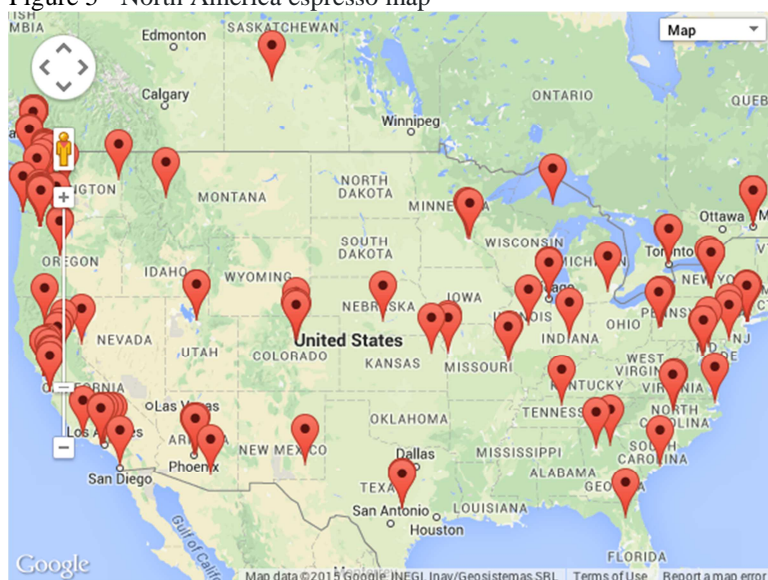
Perhaps the utmost example of time and money investment on the specialty coffee could be the travels that consumers make to explore different coffee scenes. Suzy travels to New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and other countries to have fun and taste coffee. The city that she prefers to go regularly, “I would say like every four months,” is New York, which is 790 km from Toronto, where Suzy lives. “I think New York is so different than Toronto because there are more options and there are more roasters and roasteries within the U.S. that can go to New York,” she said. “In New York I may try a roaster from Kansas, a roaster from California, but all within the same city.” Espresso Adventures (@esproadventures) traveled on vacation in October to London and visited many coffee shops. She called the travel her journey of coffee discovery. In each HEICS, she tasted the espresso, took pictures, and posted them on the internet. She went to Pompeii (Italy) and London (England).

Seattle Coffee Club does many short trips to visit coffee shops. Scheduling one hour for each spot, they usually do the coffee exploration in one day. The group went to Olympia, which is 60.9 miles from Seattle, in June 2011 and in September 2013. This is the schedule of the last trip to Olympia city: They left Seattle at 8:30 AM: (1) Batdorf & Bronson Tasting Room: 10 A.M.ish; (2) Dancing Goats® Espresso Bar: 11 A.M.ish; (3) Olympia Farmers Market: Noonish; (4) Bar Francis: optional and time permitting at around 1 P.M.; (5) Olympia Coffee Roasting Company: 2 P.M.ish; (6) Mud Bay Coffee Co : optional at around 3 P.M.ish and time permitting; (7) Yashiro Japanese Garden: 4 P.M.sh; (8) Burial Grounds: 5 P.M.ish; (9) head back to Seattle with dinner on the way back. Coffee professionals do the same thing. They travel to other cities to taste coffee. Michael Ryan Tweeted: “I traveled 396 miles to try @SlateCoffee [Stale Coffee Bar: Seattle/Washington] @Revel77 [Revel 77 Coffee Shop: Spokane/Washington]. Worth it!” (@michaelcmryan, August, 23 2014). David was on vacation in Toronto, and he planned to visit many HEICSs while he was there. He searched on internet made a list of eight spots. He organized the information on a printed sheet containing the name of the shop, contact details, remarks (such as roaster and brew methods used), and cuppings. During the visits, he made a list of more spots that were recommended by the baristas and other consumers.

There are blogs such as www.espressomap.com and www.purecoffeeblog.com that present in a map the HEICSs that the blogger’s owners visited in their coffee exploration. The Figure 5 points to the HEICSs that the EspressoMap owner visited: “I made this map so that when

traveling in North America I can find truly excellent espresso on the way. I add locations based on my own experience, insider consensus, or validation from [a] competition-level barista.” Advanced coffee connoisseur consumers taste different high-quality coffee in other cities and other countries.

Figure 5 - North America espresso map



Bill, the Pure Coffee Blog owner, describes why the blog was created, namely, his passion for the coffee culture, and the aim of the blog, which is intimately linked with indie culture (Arsel & Thompson, 2011):

Over the past 8 years of its life, the Pure Coffee Blog has existed to mine out and celebrate great coffee establishments all over the globe. In the beginning, much of my content was local, basically the Philadelphia area. Then I moved out west, and from there I used every opportunity no matter where I roamed to go out of my way and find as many great coffeehouses as possible. Today, I can claim to have visited tons of superb coffeehouses ([check out the map](#)), performing all of these expeditions as the efforts of fanatical passion and zeal, to not only experience it myself, but also to give some media attention, no matter how small, to coffee places doing things right (Bill, 2014).

Coffee connoisseurs also travel to different HEICSs and attend coffee competitions. @luizmarq went to Corvallis to attend a grand opening party of Thursday Night Throwdown (TNT) Latte art competition, when contestants draw pictures (flowers, birds, and so on) on the surface of the Cappuccino during the process of preparing it. On October 28 2014, he wrote on Twitter, “Planning a coffee trip to Corvallis @BespokenCoffee [Bespoken Coffee Shop: Corvallis/Oregon]”. Corvallis is 256 miles from Seattle, where he lives. Some informants travel to visit coffee farms. Suzy is interesting in visiting coffee farms. Whenever possible,

she visits coffee farms to taste different coffees. Her first coffee farm visit was in 2004.

Then in 2004, it was my first trip to Hawaii and I went to Kona. It's a big island where they have their ... well I guess that's their coffee growing region. They had their coffee there and I thought, "Wow, this is so flavorful, so pleasant. I was like, "Wow, I didn't expect it at all." On that same trip, I also went to Indonesia. So I went from Hawaii to Indonesia and I drank coffee in the Sumatra region. So I thought, "Wow, how can coffee be so different." Like from Toronto, to Hawaii, to Sumatra.

Regarding the wine context, Bruce does the same thing. He used to visit Italy and travel in Europe to visit wineries. He revealed that it helps him to develop his own palate. When he visits a winery, he feels and smells the land and determines the specific characteristics of the place's vegetation. When he is in the winery, everything that he sees and smells help him to better taste the wine. Once, he went to a winery situated at the bottom of the old volcano hill, and he was amazed by how this impacted and influenced the wine's taste. Before this trip, he would not have been able to identify the influence of the volcanic terrain on the wine's taste.

4.3.6 Increasing Subcultural and Social Capital

The informants want to learn as much as they can about coffee. They have a desire to learn more about what they are consuming. Paul, for example, described learning about coffee as "an addiction": "I don't know. I really like learning about things that I like, and I like coffee, and it's part of an everyday [experience] to have that. It's a different, it's an interesting culture." Alan said, "Coffee is so complex that you will never stop learning. We are just on the surface, discovering the surface of what influences the coffee flavor. We have a lot to learn yet." This "apprenticeship of consumption" (Baudrillard, 1988, p. 49) is evident when the informants talk about coffee. The learning process is central in the connoisseurship consumption. Frank passed through different learning phases, but he keeps going on his connoisseurship rite of passage. He explains, "I get in these phases where I really want to learn something. Then some phases when I don't. I'm in a down-period right now. I don't claim to ever know it all. I definitely don't. Nobody does". The opportunity to know about coffee farmers and how coffee is produced and harvested is a way to learn more for the informants, as John describes:

I'm always wanting to learn more. No matter what I am studying, I always want to learn more. I think that's just a natural way to do it. Also, understanding how it affects the taste and the flavor profile is kind of big deal too, so going back and saying, "Wow, this tastes different because ..." That's so weird to think about, like, a product that they're consuming, how it was produced, how it was harvested and how that's going to affect the flavor profile, all the way down to the supply chain. Yes, it's really interesting. I am just that kind of person who just gets really interested in the details of everything and how things are really made and created, the artists and crafts and products and things like that. So coffee is a really cool place to just keep going, learn all the details about it because there is so much that goes into it, and so many things from just the farm to the roasting, to the barista process and everything. There's just so much to it. It's really interesting.

The search for the product knowledge is a pleasurable activity for informants during their connoisseurship rite of passage. They are interested in information about the farmer, how the coffee is produced, how it is harvested, how the coffee shop deals with the coffee farmer, how the coffee is roasted, what is the roast profile, how the espresso shot is made, and how coffee is brewed. All this information enhances the taste transformation ritual. Baudrillard (1988, p. 49) argues that the consumer's universal curiosity "is no longer desire, nor even taste nor a specific preference which are at issue, but generalized curiosity driven by a diffuse obsession, a fun morality, whose imperative is enjoyment and the complete exploitation of all the possibilities of being thrilled, experiencing pleasure, and being gratified." Suzy explains how coffee helps her to keep learning, challenges her, and gets her out of comfort zone:

Coffee means to me the ability to keep learning. Because I think my personality is, I like to keep learning. I like to read things. I need to discover new things. And for me, coffee is that avenue to learn new things, to have different experiences. I'm not trying to master coffee. I think maybe before that you wanted to really try. Let's figure out coffee. Why coffee is this way. Now it's more like, oh, I'm going to have a really good moment with this coffee. Then I try something new and open to everything. Okay, let me try to get the best of this. So then coffee for me is the ability to discover new flavors. And I'll have a new or different experience, but maybe a consistent experience each time... [...] I'm not going to keep ordering a double each time. Maybe I want that, but I never do. So for me it challenges me to keep trying new things. I think that's how a coffee challenge is. Actually, sometimes it gets me out of my comfort zone, right? Even though maybe I'll have a preconceived notion that maybe this place is not so good, but it will challenge me to go there.

Through the taste transformation ritual, the informants expand their coffee knowledge and gain subcultural capital (Thornton, 1996) within this specific field. The exchange of information with baristas and coffee professionals and the different high-quality coffee tastings in many HEICSs allow the informants to improve their subcultural capital. The performance of the taste transformation ritual continuously demarcates the boundaries of the connoisseurship consumption practices from which participants draw subcultural capital.

Subcultural capital refers to the capacity to taste coffee in terms of the connoisseurship consumption practices and is gained through the performance of the taste transformation ritual. Continuous participation in the specialty coffee consumption field allows the informants to invest in their subcultural capital. Much like fashion bloggers, connoisseurs consumers are individual “who start with some capacity for taste and proceed to accumulate cultural capital from its repeated exercise” (McQuarrie, Miller, & Phillips, 2013, p. 139) through the taste transformation ritual. Alan and Frank each keep a spreadsheet to evaluate and register the espressos they have drunk. They keep detailed data to help them develop their taste based on their coffee experiences. They write it down on a spreadsheet to help them compare and remember all the information and knowledge accumulated during the performance of the taste transformation ritual.

Alan has had an espresso spreadsheet since 2009, when he started to collect his data. In 2009, he just registered the name of the HEICSs he had visited and the sum of the espresso that he had drunk. At that time, he was concerned about drinking espresso in different HEICSs and controlling the level of caffeine in his body. However, over the years, the depth of information inserted in his spreadsheet increased. In 2009, he used three columns to register the espresso data: date, HEICS's name, and cumulative number of espresso drunk. In 2014, he used eighteen columns: the day, place (name of HEICS), roaster (name of the roasting), country (place where the coffee was produced), producer (farmer name), region (city and state of the farming), variety (type of coffee, e.g., caturra, bourbon, typical), processing (how the green coffee is processed before being roasted: e.g., natural, fully washed, sun dried), altitude (altitude that coffee was cultivated. Specialty coffee is usually cultivated up to 800 meters above sea level. It provides better conditions to the coffee), barista (name of the barista who prepared the espresso shot), price, rating (from 1: awful shot, to 4: God shot, based on INeedCoffee scale, Smith, 2011, March 15), day/espresso (the average number of the days between the espresso drunk), coffee notes that he perceived in the espresso, and notes that he detected in the coffee. This expansion of categories reflects his increased involvement in specialty coffee consumption and his taste evolution during the connoisseurship rite of passage performing the taste transformation ritual. Over the years, he increased his coffee knowledge and became more able to understand the coffee nuances and to pick up relevant information that influences the coffee taste and helps him to better taste the espresso. Annex D presents a copy of his espresso spreadsheet. According his data, he drunk 805 espressos in 5 years and 4 months (from 1/1/2009 to 4/30/2014), which is almost one espresso every two

days. This is the caffeine limit level that he defined for himself: no more than one espresso every two days.

Social media also helps the informants improve their coffee knowledge, subcapital cultural, and social capital. Mark, the Coffee Geek, in the podcast published in his blog, explains how social media influenced the specialty coffee consumption culture:

How the world of coffee and espresso has really taken off in a ways that we could even imagine five or ten years ago, and I also want to talk about the vehicles used to drive coffee and espresso information. These vehicles I would kind of mention just a couple of months ago, social media. I mean, social media, I don't think, you know, the biggest impact to quality coffee and espresso in the last hundred years undeniably has been the internet itself. Not social media, but the internet itself. Internet has allowed people to share information, show results, debate under consensus, sometimes come to disagreement over coffee and espresso on a global and unprecedented scale. This is why I firmly believe specialty coffee has taken off the way it has in 2000, from, you know, in 2001 to 2014, and... you know the, through the use of web forums, through the use of newsgroup, through the use of YouTube, through the use of videos, through the use of audio via podcast. The internet itself is responsible for this massive, this massive growth and explosion of information and knowledge and intelligence behind coffee and espresso, and it's true for the other industries as well. (CoffeeGeek, 2015, November 20 - 06:51)

Social media is largely used by advanced coffee connoisseurs to follow the specialty coffee community. Frank complained about a new HEICS, which has social media accounts but does not send updates about what they are doing: "They're doing the greatest things in the world and behind the door. For you to find that out, you actually have to go in and stand in line and ask them. There's no way for you to go to the website, Twitter feed, and Facebook and find out what they're doing. It's not approachable." In her blog, Espresso Adventure explains how social media help her to increase her social capital. She writes, "Through social media I was able to meet up in REAL LIFE with some pretty cool people in NYC, Chicago, Calgary, Edmonton, Boston and LA. Keeping up with the scene over in AUS, HK, London, and aboard is much easier these days. I'm thankful for this community!" (Cindy, 2014, March 30). Some of the informants, mostly those who are in the beginning or intermediate stages of the rite of passage, use Google and Reddit (Kevin, Paul, Laura, Nina), and others who are in the advanced stages (Alan, Frank, Suzy, John), use Twitter as the primary form of social media.

On Twitter, coffee connoisseurs receive messages from baristas, HEICSs, and coffee industries, and they seek information about HEICSs, coffee novelties, events, meetings, and competitions. Frank met a new HEICS owner during the SCAA event, and he explained that

he was frustrated because the owner was not using Twitter to update consumers. He said, “‘You’re on Twitter, right?’ He’s like, ‘No, we just do everything on Facebook.’ I’m like, ‘What if your customers aren’t on Facebook?’ I go, ‘Everyone in the coffee industry in this town is on Twitter.’ It’s a nice first step, but it’s like he didn’t think it all the way through.” Twitter provides a quick and easy platform to get in contact with other people. Mark, in his podcast, explains how Twitter changed the communication between coffee professional and consumers.

The grandfather [of social media], as we know, is Twitter. Twitter gives you 140 characters to talk. And what that does is a... It has some good points and some bad points. It makes people be much more consistent in what you say and get your point across without grumbling for 20 or 30 minutes, what I frequently do... But Twitter also offers an unprecedented level of instant communication, so that, you know, someone can tweet me. Someone is in a [obscure city name], and they tweet me. They are on holiday. And they go, “Hey Mark, do you happen to know any good cafés in the Forth Water Down (city)? Want a really good cup of coffee.” I don’t necessarily know good cafés in the Forth Water Down (city). And in the past, I would go into a forums with ... an original forums of Coffee Geek where people were often posting their favorite cafes in their given city or town, and I go actually and do a little search, get back to the person in an e-mail. But now, with Twitter, I can just retweet the guy’s question and because, you know, 20,000 coffee nerds, and by the way I’ve not paid for single one of those followers, they are real followers. But 20,000 coffee nerds out there and hopefully few of them in the Forth Water Down region read it. There are no good cafés in Forth Water Down? And they respond to me and it all happens in minutes. I mean, that is amazing, just amazing. And that happens all the time. You know I get asked often for recommendations on where they go for coffee in diverse regions. I don’t have a clue, but I put the word out to the people who follow me on Twitter, and you know... maybe 60, 50, 70 percent of the time someone come back with the response. And the person who asked the question, originally asked the question, would come back in the next day and say, “Thank you so much for that recommendation, the café was awesome.” It’s worked. It’s worked. That is spreading the appreciation for specialty coffee right there. And that is the one thing that I love most about the social media. It is the ability to do instant connections and help get information, education and obsession about coffee and espresso out there. (CoffeeGeek, 2015, November 20 - 09:32)

Alan explains how Twitter helps him to gain more subcultural capital.

The coffee world here in the US is totally based on Twitter. I’ve got in Twitter, and everybody gets in contact on Twitter, all the baristas. You must follow people on Twitter.

Author: Do you follow the baristas?

Exactly. All the baristas. They chat on Twitter, and everybody knows each other. Through Twitter, the baristas from Seattle know baristas from Chicago, New York.

Author: And what do they talk about on Twitter?

They talk about their experiments. They talk about customer service. It is an important topic here. They talk about the experiences that they are having, about how long it takes to extract the coffee, and what is the amount of the dosage.

Author: And you chat with them as a consumer?

When you get on Twitter, and it is for anything on Twitter, you first just listen, you first only hear, and then you start to have your own opinion, start to comment, start to get inside the other's conversation. People start to respect you and start to listen what you are talking about, and then the interaction starts. And then you start to participate in events like that (informal TNT championship at a Seattle coffee shop during the SCAA event), and then you present yourself to the people like that: "I've talked to you on Twitter." The other person says, "It was you?" and so on. I guess that I follow almost one thousand of people on Twitter in the coffee world. There are some people in Europe that I consider geniuses. There is a roaster in Norway. The guy gets so deep in the coffee production... He visits farms, he talk with farmers about how to improve the production, he publishes the information, what he discovers, what experiments that he does, what is good, and what is not good. He sells coffee on his blog. There is another guy in England. There is another one in Ireland. Once, due to my work, I went to Ireland, and I got in contact with him, and I asked for recommendations of coffee shops in Ireland. He answered me, and I visited his coffee shop and others. And thereafter, you keep developing these kinds of relationships.

Social media and the rise of the blogosphere have enabled the consumer (and other actors in the field, such as baristas, coffee house owners, and roasters) to acquire knowledge and develop tastes and connoisseurship practices. Alan's experiences indicate how subcultural capital is converted into social capital. Belk explains that "the possibilities of digital sharing online foster feelings of community and aggregate sense of self, even with others we would not recognize in person" (Belk, 2013, p. 486). In the social media world, coffee connoisseurs reach both a specific audience (coffee professionals and coffee connoisseurs) and a more mass audience (friends, family, and so on), thereby increasing their social capital. The megaphone effect, which "refers to the fact that the web makes a mass audience potentially available to ordinary consumers" (McQuarrie, Miller, & Phillips, 2013, p. 136), helps connoisseur consumers access their audience. It "occurs when ordinary consumers, defined as individuals lacking professional experience and not holding an institutional or family position, post to the web about consumption and acquire a mass audience for these posts" (McQuarrie, Miller & Phillips, 2013, p. 137). Espresso Adventures (@esproadventures) has experienced the megaphone effect, reaching one thousand followers on Instagram in early November 2014: "esproadventures #1000 thanks for following me on my #esproadventures. Very #humbling. Just another source for the Toronto coffee scene." On Twitter since August 2008, @esproadventures has achieved 1,669 followers. Websites and blogs such as www.baristaexchange.com (Spors, 2008, July 22), danielhumphries.livejournal.com and meetthepresspot.blogspot.ca (Wallace, 2008, May 29), wholelattelove.com and coffeegeek.com (Baldwin, 2003, July 7), www.coffeereview.com (McLaughlin, 2002, November 19), and www.coffeetrip.com (Tedeschi, 2011, October 27),

<http://ineedcoffee.com>, <http://thecoffeeadventures.com>, <http://coffeecupnews.org>, <http://inmymug.com>, <http://thecoffeetographer.com>, and the most well-known and oft-mentioned blog on the specialty coffee community and market, <http://sprudge.com>, play an important role in the specialty coffee market. Alan explains that:

There are many coffee blogs!

Author: Which coffee blogs do you like?

The bible is Sprudge, have you ever heard of it? They started in 2009ish. Because they, the two guys are from Tacoma, near here, but they've studied in Seattle. And they, one of them was a barista, but they are journalists, and they have, because of they understand a lot about coffee, they have a close relationship with the community. Everybody like them, so they receive a bunch of information, insider, do you understand? They release all the novelties that are going on, all the coffee shops that are opening, all new coffee companies, new baristas, new technologies. So you will learn other links [websites]. They reference many other links [websites].

The coffee bloggers, as described by McQuarrie, Miller and Phillips, “act as cultural capitalists, amassing more and more capital as they continue to make venturesome displays of taste” (2013, p. 153). Once these “taste displays have acquired a large enough audience, bloggers’ cultural capital becomes convertible into economic and social capital, as bloggers begin to be assimilated into the established” connoisseurship practice system (McQuarrie, Miller & Phillips, 2013, p. 153). My account on Twitter allowed me to get in contact with many coffee professionals and coffee connoisseurs. We exchanged much information about coffee. This online environment was fertile for discovering new HEICSs in different cities (as described by Mark in his podcast) and for getting in contact with people easily (many times easier than e-mail).

4.3.7 Perseverance on the Rite of Passage

Perseverance is required during the connoisseurship rite of passage in terms of engaging in the connoisseurship consumption community (explained in the next subsection) and investing time and money. As a reward, after a while, the consumer has their taste transformed and gets inside the specialty coffee community, being recognized as a special consumer. Stebbins argues that serious leisure requires perseverance: “the positive feelings about the activity come, to some extent, from sticking with it through thick and thin, through conquering

adversity” (1982, p. 256). Taste transformation ritual should be performed frequently and continuously. The connoisseurship rite of passage takes years. Informants in the advanced level have been on the rite of passage at least five years, intermediate level, from two to five years, and beginners, less than two years. Although all of them started to drink coffee years before beginning the connoisseurship rite of passage, the rite of passage time started to accrue when they moved from mass consumption in coffee chains and brewing ground coffee at home that was bought at supermarkets, to coffee connoisseurship consumption performed in HEICSs and brewing specialty coffee at home (grinding and using specific equipment). These three periods of time framing the connoisseurship levels of the informants are specific to the contexts analyzed. It does not mean that it is a fixed period that applies equally to all consumers. However, it helps us to understand how long this rite of passage takes and how connoisseur consumers need to persevere performing the taste transformation ritual. It is worth mentioning that, depending on the involvement and engagement on the coffee connoisseurship consumption community and also the access to the HEICSs the consumers have, they can accelerate the rite of passage and become a connoisseur faster than other consumers who are less involved or who have less access to HEICSs.

Coffee connoisseurs face many obstacles and difficulties during the rite of passage. Coffee connoisseurs as amateurs “are marginal in the sense that they have chosen a marginal form of leisure, one that is closer to being work than any other” (Stebbins, 1979, p. 260). They are not participants in popular leisure; they are not dabblers or professionals. According to Stebbins (1979), they are misunderstood by their friends, neighbors, relatives, and coworkers who participate only in popular leisure. Jane, for example, does not talk about coffee casually, because “people usually don’t care about it.” Suzy complained, “For me to be able to openly talk about coffee to somebody, it’s very difficult, and I haven’t found too many people that were not working in the coffee industry.” The amateur’s seriousness about the topic contrasts with the absence of seriousness in the consumers of popular leisure. Greg recognized that most people are less obsessive about coffee than he is. John revealed, “It’s something I wish my wife was more interested in, but she doesn’t care.” Alan’s wife and sons prefer not to talk about coffee, either. Frank affirmed that most people are simply not interested in the topic of coffee. As described by Hennion (2001, p. 6-7) in the context of music consumption, for some informants, the sensation of leading a “double life” is very marked, because the ritual practice of tasting specialty coffee at different coffee shops involves setting aside space and time in their daily routine.

However, if the informants are perseverant, they have a taste revelation at a certain moment of their rite of passage that some of them called an “epiphany” (Alan and Jamie: <http://thecoffeeadventures.com>), a “click” (Frank), a “breakpoint” (Greg), an “a-ha moment” (Suzy). In the wine context, Bruce explains this moment as akin to an orgasm. This moment is called a “peak experience” (Maslow, 1964) or “ecstasy” (Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry, 1989) in the academic field. Usually, at this moment, something sublime happens. Hennion (2001) explains that “the most highly valued thing of all, the ability to be carried away by the sublime, is expressed in the same terms as being under influence of drugs” (2001, p. 10). The informants (consumers and coffee professionals) remember the exact year, month, and day, the place, and the coffee that they were drinking when they had their epiphany moments. For Alan, it was in 2009 at Fonte Coffee Shop, when he could finally perceive the differences between coffees. John reveals, “I’ve never experienced that [feeling] before the coffee. It totally blew my mind.” For Suzy, it was in 2009 at Ritual Coffee Shop in San Francisco:

The big, the big, like, “wow,” “a-ha moment” was when I went to San Francisco. So, in that little pocket in the downtown area, in one block there is so much variety. They are all good coffee. So that time, I said, like, “Wow, this is amazing.” I didn’t know that this is possible for a shot. I tasted all these different coffees. It was at Ritual coffee. They had seasonal espressos. Very weird, like sugar, it was so sweet, very pleasant finish. It wasn’t like a bitter taste that I was kind of tasting, you know that, chocolate, that was so sweet. ... I was like, “Wow!” And that day, on that day... It was actually my fourth espresso.

Jamie reveals her epiphany moment on her blog:

I got into coffee at a young age. I always snuck coffee when I could after my dad gave me my first taste of that black stuff we call coffee.

In June of 2009, I guess you could say I had an epiphany. I was sick of bitter coffee, sick of getting stomachaches from the acidity. I wondered if there was anything better out there than what we buy from the grocery store.

Turns out there was... And since then I have yet to look back at that stale ground bitter coffee found in the grocery store.

And this is how The Coffee Adventures was born...

In the wine context, Trevis and Bruce, who are advanced connoisseur consumers, described to me the date, the restaurant, and the wine that they were drinking when they had their epiphany moments. Anne, Ellen, and Janete, who are in the beginning/intermediate level of the connoisseurship rite of passage, have not had their epiphany moments yet. The owner of Livin

La Vino Vita wine blog wrote about how, when, and where his epiphany moment occurred:

I know that the above question [first wine that made you fall helplessly in love with wine forever] may be hard to answer but I remember my personal experience like it was yesterday. It was back in 2001 a few months before 9/11 (I am originally from NYC). I am at a wine shop that was located behind 1 World Financial Center right next to the twin towers and I asked the owner for a wine that had a chocolate “feel” to it. He pointed me to a \$105 bottle of wine and I’m like dude, I don’t make the same money the commodity traders and brokers do! He then led me to a bottle of 1998 Chateau Neuf Du Pape from Chateau Le Nerthe. At \$36 it was by far the most expensive bottle of wine I had purchased. I think Greg Norman Estates Limestone Shiraz was the best bottle of wine I had drunk up until that point. Needless to say, I held on to it for a while. I had a female friend over that I wanted to impress so I opened the bottle. It literally danced on my tongue. The chocolate and black fruit along with the rugged leather like nose was amazing. I had never tasted anything like it in my life! I remember that bottle to this day but for the life of me, I cannot remember the name of the woman I shared it with. That would be another story for another time. (Livin La Vino Vita, 2014, April 22)

Suzy gave me some tips to get the “a-ha moment”:

I think you should taste different coffees, different shops and just find what you like. But go to shops that, you know, focus on good quality coffee, good quality equipment, clean. The baristas want to interact with you, they have questions that they are willing to answer it. I think that, when you find a spot that is like that, you can achieve the a-ha moment quicker, but also try different coffees. Don’t always stick to the same, you know, same drip coffee, or same latte.

Informants said that their coffee passion increased after this epiphany moment. As Tumbat and Belk (2011, p. 44) observe, people seek to participate in transformative experiences. This moment is a crossing gate to the professional world of specialty coffee. After that moment, informants can better understand when specialty coffee professionals talk about coffee flavors, tastes, differences, and nuances. They felt more inside the specialty coffee community. This moment is also remarkable for coffee professionals as well. Steve, who is an HEICS manager, said that his epiphany moment “was the connection between all these things that I knew abstractly about coffee, and I didn’t even know much, that even the bare bones of what I knew abstractly about coffee and the taste of a beautiful cup of coffee, you know.” Stephen Leighton, who is the owner of Hans Bean, a specialty coffee roaster based in Starfford, and the official presenter of the U.S. and World Barista Championship, described his epiphany moment during a lecture. It was the moment when he perceived the chocolate and nutty taste in the coffee he drank:

I started in coffee in 2003. I will talk about sourcing green coffee. This coffee I cupped in 2003, when I was just beginning to roast professionally, and I “I knew cupping... look at me” [cupping simulation with hands and body] “oh, that tastes so

... chocolate!” Yeah, up until that point, I was kind of bluffing, I didn’t know what the heck I was doing, because I didn’t have the vocabulary, I didn’t have the experience, I didn’t have the knowledge, I was just starting in the industry, but I remember cupping this coffee. I’ve remember exactly where I was, I remember what time of night it was, in fact I even phoned home to my wife and it was like, “I’ve just cupped this coffee and it was not just chocolate, it was milk chocolate, and it was nutty, it was—” she is like, “You always say that, Stephen.” “Oh yeah...Anyway, honey, I will be home late at night, bye.” And that was my first moment when I really understood that I could taste, that I have the ability to. (Leighton, Producer, 2014, September 30)

Steve explains the role played by the epiphany on the specialty marketplace, which creates a new perspective for the specialty coffee business:

The social aspect is a function of wine, right? But also, a great wine transcends those things just on virtue of tasting how it tastes. So when we talk about epiphanies on coffee, it is the realization of that third thing (the first is the caffeine, the second is socialization), right? So, everybody grows up with, not everybody, but most people grow up with the notion of coffee as a social thing and with the notion of coffee as a drug, right? Until recently, it’s been very weird to have an appreciation of coffee as a revelatory tasting experience, right? So when we talk about epiphanies, we are talking about those moments when you taste a cup of coffee, you go, “Oh I get it... Oh!!!” This is what we are talking about. And it is for a lot of school and business and for a lot of people who just drink coffee and enjoy it a lot, they can point to a cup of coffee or a few cups of coffee that the first time they get an “a-ha!” When you took a sip of coffee and went, “Oh... I get it... I understand!” Right? That is one of my favorite things in this business. Some of it is just how great a surprise a great coffee can be.

Baristas and specialty coffee shop owners try to guide the consumers to this epiphany moment. Steve talked about it during the beginning of his routine presentation at the 2013 U.S. barista finals (he got 4th place). During his speech, he emphasized the idea of the secularization of the sublime epiphany moment in the specialty coffee context. In the music context, Hennion explains the meaning of secularization of the sublime, that is, “the gradual formation of a specific, highly sophisticated ability, developed collectively to attain through music, in an orderly, non-self-indulgent, risky fashion, states of emotion and moments are ‘sublime’” (2001, p. 11). Steve tried to explain how to provide the epiphany experiences in the daily HEICS customer service routine:

I love coffee and like a lot of people in this room, I can trace that love back to certain flavor experiences, certain epiphanies that really opened my eyes to everything coffee can be. One of my favorite things about serving coffee is the opportunity to create experiences like this for my customers. So today, I want to take a look at how it is done.

This transformative moment is one of the strongest reasons that coffee connoisseurs sacralize specialty coffee. Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry pointed that “the sacred is capable of producing

ecstatic experience, in which one stands outside one's self" (1989, p. 7), and also, "ecstasy marks the extraordinary character of sacred experience and distinguishes it from the common pleasures of everyday life" (1989, p. 8). The sacralization of specialty coffee consumption is revealed to be "extraordinary, totally unique, and set apart from and opposed to the ordinary profane world" (Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry, 1989, p. 38). This is a moment of revelation for the consumers, and it is a critical step on the connoisseurship rite of passage. The informants search for other epiphany moments; they search in different coffees and HEICSs. It is something that incentivizes them to persevere, to keep going on the rite of passage. It is difficult to have another epiphany moment again. They say that they have little epiphany moments, or some different moments; however, the main epiphany moment or turning point stays remarkable in their minds. Suzy reveals the importance of her epiphany ("a-ha") moment on her rite of passage:

If I never had that experience at Ritual (the name of the HEICS). I don't think that I would get to where I am today. It not might have curiosity to find out more about coffee. If I never had that experience, I think I would just be ok. I would just tasting, just tasting coffee. But to have that moment... this is so different. How is it even possible? Why? How do they do it? What is so different? If I never had that moment, I don't think that I would get to where I am today. I would ask why, how do I prepare? Or why does this place taste so good? Why is it always consistent? And how they are doing it? If I didn't have that, and if the coffee industry didn't keep growing, asking how do they get the best quality coffee, I don't think that I would be here today. Because if I never had that moment in San Francisco, I would be like, "Ok! Coffee is different. Any coffee is different." Maybe I would never try this and find out why coffee is different. I would just know, "Ok! It's a different origin, produces a different taste." But I never took that time to think about how there is so many variables into making the espresso.

Bruce's epiphany moment also plays a huge role in his rite of passage. He incorporates his wine experiences into his extended self, "inspired by a sexual desire to have the object" (Belk, 1988, p. 150). After his first epiphany moment, he engaged in a tireless search for new epiphanies, often investing more time and money. During the interview, he squeezed his mouth, trying to remember the taste of each wine he was describing to me. Stopping for several seconds, looking nowhere, and half-closing his eyelids, he felt the wine's taste and said, many times, "Wow... so good (...) I can feel the taste." He moved his hands around his mouth, trying to increase the sensations that he was feeling.

Coffee needs to surprise the consumer to provide to them with the epiphany moment. Uncertainty and unpredictability is essential to get this moment, and consumers should be open to this idea. Steve emphasizes the necessity of the surprise:

It also has to be... It has to be surprising... It has to be surprising! You can't... It has to be delicious and accessible, but it also has not be... not fit in a box... you know? If you have a notion, you have an idea, abroad scroll picture of what coffee feels, I think that coffee taste like this... well... that's... all of good... but... I feel like the most people epiphany moments were those moments when they realized that coffee could be something they didn't think it does.

Coffee consumers need to explore new places (HEICSs) and try new things that have high quality (specialty coffee shops). Perseverance is essential to allow the palate to develop through the taste transformation ritual.

4.4 The Connoisseurship Consumption Community

Coffee connoisseurship consumption is performed as serious leisure, and therefore, a particular community emerges in HEICSs. Participants in serious leisure pursuits (coffee connoisseurs) tend to identify strongly with their chosen pursuits and also develop a unique ethos and shared core values. Amateurs tend “to develop subcultures composed of special beliefs, values, moral principles, norms, and performance standards” (Stebbins, 1982, p. 257). Furthermore, ritual provides “a consensus on values, symbols, and behavior that is the end of ritualization” (Bell, 1992, p. 110). As a rite of intensification, defined as “a regularly practiced community ritual that exemplifies core community values and ideal in-group behavior... [and] allows individuals to express, in a public arena, their membership in a larger human corpus that shares and endorses certain cultural activities and perspectives” (Weibel-Orlando, 1991 quoted in Belk & Costa, 1998, p. 234), the informants meet regularly with baristas and other coffee consumers in HEICSs to perform the taste transformation ritual, sharing and reinforcing the core community values and the ideal behaviors of the group, which are guided by professional standards. As amateurs, coffee connoisseur consumers have the “willingness to work toward perfection” (Stebbins, 1979, p. 41). They have consumption practices that help to tighten ties of the community members. In the coffee shops, the informants reveal their membership in the specialty coffee community through their coffee choice, their social body, language, expressions, and conversation with baristas and friends. Stebbins (1982, p. 257) explains that serious leisure participants “are inclined to speak proudly, excitedly, and frequently about them to other people, and to present themselves in terms of them when conversing with new acquaintances.”

A connoisseurship consumption community is a subculture of consumption, which means that they are a “distinctive subgroup of society that self-selects on the basis of a shared commitment to a particular” consumption activity with “an unique ethos, a set of shared beliefs and values, unique jargons, rituals, and modes of symbolic expression” (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995, p. 43). However, the connoisseurship consumption community does not have a specific brand (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001), such as Star Trek (Kozinets, 2001), Harley Davidson (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995), or Apple (Muñiz & Schau, 2014) that links the members. The linkage between the members is the taste transformation ritual, which represents an important “social process by which the meaning of the community is reproduced and transmitted within and beyond the community” (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001, p. 421). Through this ritual, which is inspired by professional practices, connoisseur consumers transform themselves and build identities with other people in the same community. The connoisseurship tasting ritual leads consumers to change their tastes, the coffee objects used, coffee preferences, and their bodies, and they come to have a different taste and coffee knowledge than other consumers, frequenting and drinking different coffees and being as special as the coffee beans that they drink. Variation and variety, superior quality, novelty, knowledge, uniqueness, and apprenticeship are common values pursued by connoisseur consumers that govern the consumption patterns of the coffee connoisseurship community.

They are committed to the serious leisure pursuits, and if the members of the community are not involved enough, they change groups. Alan is no longer a member of one coffee club because the members are not involved with coffee like him: “Of course, everybody likes coffee, but they, they are not crazy about coffee, they are not obsessive to learn everything about coffee [like me].” Members of the connoisseurship consumption community do not have strong connections to one another, unlike the brand community (Muniz & Guinn, 2001). Instead of brand consumption experiences, this ritual emphasizes the individual performance of connoisseurship consumption. The individual performance, is more important than the “link value of product or services” (Cova, 1997, p. 297). The informants are more interested in developing their own personal skills and abilities. They are more selfish, goal-driven, and individualistic than regular consumers regarding the specialty coffee consumption. Although it is not an extraordinary consumption experience, as described in the consumer culture tradition (Arnould & Price, 1993; Belk & Costa, 1998; Kozinets, 2002a; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995), these specific characteristics of the community are more associated with

the marketplace tensions of commercialized climbing expeditions on Everest described by Tumbat and Belk (2011) than of product communities (Kozinets, 2001; Muñiz & Schau, 2014; Muniz & O'guinn, 2001), temporary communities (Arnould & Price, 1993; Belk & Costa, 1998; Kozinets, 2002a), and geographic communities (Weinberger & Wallendorf, 2012).

The connoisseurship consumption community is heavily based on online communities where they share information, knowledge, and experiences and have instantaneous feedback. Online communities are “contexts in which consumers often partake in discussions whose goals include attempts to inform and influence fellow consumers about products and brands” (Kozinets, 2002b, p. 61). As Belk (2013) notes, the participants are from diverse social, age, and economic strata, and they build less intimate relationships compared to close friends and neighborhoods. Coffee shops are offline third places, while online communities are online third places “that provide an anchor for online aggregate sense of self that is shared with and mutually constructed by other regulars” (Belk, 2013, p. 487). Belk explains, however, that “physical co-presence is not needed for a rich sense of imagined community” (2013, p. 486). The shared understanding in an online community of what is good coffee, an outstanding barista, or a quality HEICS is “an exercise in forming a coherent sense of aggregate self with friends” (Belk, 2013, p. 4878). Online specialty coffee communities are the virtual places where connoisseur consumers improve their knowledge as well as their subcultural and social capital.

Actually, the coffee connoisseur's search for a great specialty coffee is the search for being special. McCracken (1986) suggests that in “using possession rituals, individuals move cultural meaning out of their goods [and] into their lives. Personal rituals are variously used to transfer the meaning contained in goods to individual consumers. Possession rituals are designed to transfer a good's properties to its owner” (p. 80). Hartman affirms that “we buy things to say something about ourselves” (2011, p. 7). Connoisseur consumers invest time, money, and effort reading, studying, and tasting coffee and visiting HEICSs. These activities allow the consumers to embody the coffee characteristics, drawing from the object qualities and by their own bodily transformation. Although they do not receive much attention from their friends, neighbors, relatives, and coworkers who participate only in popular leisure (Stebbins, 1979), during the rite of passage, coffee connoisseurs increase their coffee knowledge and are more valued and recognized by the coffee professionals and even by some

friends.

The characteristics of the specialty coffee marketplace are aptly described by the market conventions (Becker, 1982), which includes the things coffee professionals and consumers do to coordinate their activities, chosen “from among a range of possible ways of accomplishing the same thing, any one of which would be acceptable as long as everyone used it” (p. 56). The conventions, which spread and coordinate the connoisseurship practices in the specialty coffee field are settled by the Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA), through its books (such as *The Coffee Cuppers’ Handbook* and *The Coffee Brewing Handbook*), certifications (barista, roaster, coffee taster, golden cup technician, lead instructor, examiner, lab inspector), events (annual exposition and symposium, roasters guild retreat, barista guild camp), and competitions (barista championship, brewers cup, latte art championship, cup tasters, roaster choice). Competition is a strong value inside the connoisseurship consumption community, as it is in the professional field of the specialty coffee market. Competition is fostered by the SCAA in the specialty coffee market, and the informants value it. Championship baristas and connoisseur consumers are followed by other members of the community on social media (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook), and informants seek them in HEICSs and events. For example, the Seattle Coffee Club scheduled a meeting on May 15, 2014 with the headline, “A Neptune hangout featuring a USBC (United States Barista Championship) 2014 finalist!” And this is the text on the Seattle Coffee Club Meetup.com:

So, I [the coffee club organizer: Michael] signed up for one of Coley Cole’s special coffee demos that costs \$12.50 for three coffees.

Cole McBride took 4th place this year. I figured it was a good opportunity to meet a competitive barista in one of our favorite coffee places! Obviously he'll be concentrating on his coffee service for each group of 4 people, but it's all cool.

(...)

[Cole McBride’s comment about the event inserted in the invitation] “You are invited to come taste all the beverages that I (Cole McBride) made during USBC this year. I will also be answering any questions that you may have about competition and my experiences over the last three years. This coffee service will take about 15-20 mins and I will serve 4 people at a time. The coffee service will include one single espresso, one single Cappuccino and one signature beverage. I will be serving the coffees that Velton Ross roasted for me. Costa Rica Los Lojas Yellow Honey for espresso and signature beverage. Ecuador Taza Dorada #1 from Jose Encalada for my Cappuccino course” (www.meetup.com/seattle-coffee-club/, May 10, 2014).

Unlike prior consumption community research, which focuses on singular producers, the connoisseurship consumer community has multiple producers across many types of products.

As Thomas, Price, and Schau (2013) learned in the distance running community, the connoisseurship consumption community members are heterogeneous. Consumers have multiple orientations toward the manner of brewing and drinking coffee. Producers comprise a large coffee industry that supports and participates in the community. Resources such as HEICS brands, types of coffee, coffee institutions and associations, internet and places are integral to the community. Using the dimension and description developed by Thomas, Price, and Schau (2013) to classify consumption communities studied in consumer and marketing research, the connoisseur consumer community is activity-focused (connoisseurship coffee consumption) and enduring (growing since the 1980s), and it has broad appeal (coffee consumption culture grows annually), low barriers to entry (frequently, HEICSs allow anyone to join the community), a welcoming environment, hybrid dispersion (interaction of the member happen in person and online), synergistic marketplace orientation (coffee consumers, baristas and other coffee professional work collaboratively for the benefit of the community), complex structure of resource dependency (consumers, associations, the SCAA, HEICSs, farmers, media, and so on), prominent collective belonging, and heterogeneity. Thomas, Price, and Schau (2013) define heterogeneous community:

A heterogeneous community comprises an assemblage of diverse actors, including consumers, producers, and social and economic resources (social resources are resources that take on an expressive role as symbols and sentiments used to build individual and social identities and communicate meanings to others, and economic resources are resources that take on material roles in the community such as objects, commercial experiences, and monetary instruments). These actors vary in how they orient toward the community, in how they enact their community roles, and in the meanings they construct in relation to the community (Thomas, Price & Schau, 2013, p. 1011).

Drawing on Stebbins's P-A-P system (1979, p. 24), I will focus this analysis on the members of the specialty coffee consumption community: the baristas (Professionals), connoisseurs consumers (Amateurs), and regular consumers (Public), to understand the forces that drive the community. Some of these forces, presented in the Figure 6, are education to increase subcultural and social capital, emulation and tensions between the members of the community regarding the subcultural and social capital acquired. To understand the dynamics of the community, it will be necessary to analyze the resources that help boost the specialty coffee community and set the conventions (Becker, 1982).

Figure 6 - Connoisseurship consumption community

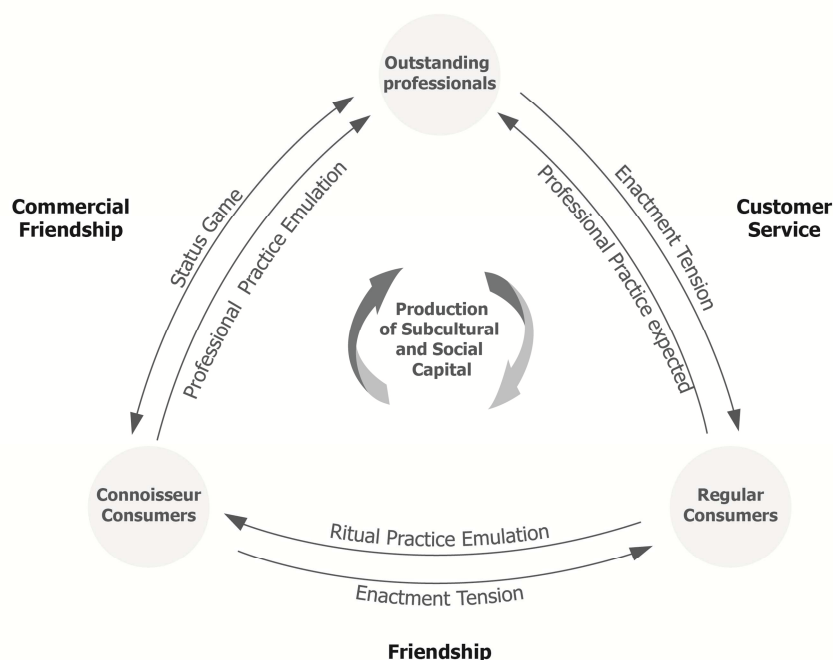


Figure 6 presents the members of the connoisseurship consumption community: connoisseurs and regular consumers, and outstanding professionals. They take part in the community, producing subcultural and social capital online and offline through the relationships that they develop. The relationship between regular consumers and outstanding professionals is looser than the other two, because what is expected by the consumer is customer service at a good professional standard. The tension between regular consumers, professionals, and connoisseur consumer occurs as a result of the huge differences in the consumption practices. In fact, regular consumers usually do not know how to identify outstanding professionals, or they are not concerned about being able to identify outstanding professionals. Usually, the first person that inspires them to get deeper in the community is a connoisseur consumer. Regular consumers who want to join the connoisseurship community try to emulate the coffee connoisseurs' ritual practice. At the same time, connoisseur consumers are inspired by outstanding professionals, and they try to emulate their professional practice; however, a status game take place between them. Some moments, they compete against each other, challenging the knowledge and subcultural capital of the other. The next section explains in detail the characteristics of the forces that drive the connoisseurship community.

4.4.1 The community: Professionals-Amateurs-Public

Social interactions among connoisseurship consumption community participants are positive and collaborative, boundaries are attenuated instead of accentuated, and the participants have the same goal: to improve their taste and knowledge of coffee. The participants act within a community. During one of my observations, one young customer, twentyish years old, with three friends, got inside the Stumptown coffee shop, in Seattle. He led the group. He greeted the baristas and presented them to his friends, showed them the menu on the wall, discussed the coffee options, let the friends order first, and then talked with barista about coffee. During the time that the group was sitting beside me, they talked a lot about coffee. The young man was the central reference in the conversation. The friends had ordered Lattes and Cappuccinos. He tasted his friends' coffee as well. After, he explored the coffee shop and went downstairs to see the roasting and waterhouse area. He had many characteristics of an initial connoisseur consumer, and also, influenced by the presence of his friends, he embodied all the behavior of the specialty coffee community inside the coffee shop. Possibly, he ordered Cappuccino because of his age (Levy, 1999), and he is, probably, in the initial stage of the connoisseurship rite of passage. This interaction is an example of the importance of regular consumers who want to be guided by connoisseur consumers in the connoisseurship consumption community to boost and incentive the development of the community. The relationship developed among baristas (Professionals), connoisseurs consumers (Amateurs) and regular consumers (Public) is explained by the Stebbins's P-A-P system:

- 1) Amateurs serve publics, as professionals do, and at times the same ones. Here they are guided by standards of excellence set and communicated by the professionals.
- 2) A monetary and organizational relationship exists between amateurs and professional, such as when professional train, advise, organize, and even perform with amateurs, and when amateurs come to constitute a special, knowledgeable part of the professionals' public.
- 3) Intellectual ties bind these two groups, which spring primarily from the amateurs who, having more time for such things, can maintain a broader and simultaneously less specialized knowledge of the field than can most professionals.
- 4) Amateurs restrain professional from overemphasizing technique and from stressing superficialities in lieu of profound work or products.
- 5) Amateurs insist on the retention of excellence.
- 6) Amateurs often stimulate professional to give their publics the best they can.
- 7) Professionals who form part of a P-A-P system inevitably start in the amateur ranks (Stebbins, 1979, p. 24).

There is an intertwined relationship between coffee connoisseurs, baristas, coffee shop

owners, and regular consumers. While Thompson, Rindfleisch and Arsel's (2006) informants are particularly interested "to know just enough about the proprietor to draw inferences about how the coffee shop reflects his or her views and values" (p. 58) and craft compelling stories about why they do not prefer "the corporate-run and standardized Starbucks" (p. 58), the connoisseur consumer informants in the present study are more focused on the owner's knowledge, work competence, and skills and their achievements and results on specialty coffee. They want to learn and improve themselves, and well-skilled coffee professionals will help them improve their palates and knowledge. As a consequence, their consumption practices and preferences distinguish them from Starbucks or other coffee shop chain consumers. Although they become commercial friends (Price & Arnould, 1999), the relationship between them is driven by the capacity of the coffee shop deliver a great coffee. Alan told that he had one favorite coffee shop in his city some years ago. He used to go for many years. He knows the owner and the baristas. He learned a lot with all of them; however, something happened with the coffee taste. He does not know what happened, but something change and he did not like the coffee any more. He does not know if his palate changed or if the coffee shop coffee got worse. The coffee shop stopped providing the results Alan expected, and he stopped frequenting it.

Coffee connoisseurs always have a public who are regular coffee consumers or even coffee connoisseurs in the beginning stages of the rite of passage. Although coffee connoisseurs are engaged in a marginal form of leisure and are misunderstood by those who have chosen unserious leisure (Stebbins, 1979), they always have people, like friends, coworkers, relatives who are interested in having good coffee, conversations about coffee, or coffee shop suggestions. As Thomas, Price and Schau note, "Community members derive social benefits from the presence of other members who are able to appreciate, discern, and empathize with their experiences" (2013, p. 1021). Coffee connoisseurs have a public who stays in connoisseurs' surroundings, helping them improve their coffee knowledge and taste. Joana goes to coffee shops with Laura, and Paul and Kate follow Kevin. Jane shares her coffee knowledge with her boyfriend, who is "improving a lot, and I am proud of it!" Frank had many coworkers that asked him about coffee. Now, he works at home, but he meets his public in HEICSs and exchanges information online. Many coworkers and friends ask Suzy questions about coffee. Alan's wife and sons are his public. He watches coffee championships with them and talks about champion baristas in the specialty coffee market. John drops the kids off with their grandparents, and then he and his wife "taste coffee all day because there

are tons of roasters in Portland.” They use the internet (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook) to expand their audience, spread their knowledge, and reach the public. Almost all the coffee connoisseurs talk about coffee on Twitter and Instagram. Some of them have blogs, but they do not post many messages on them. They prefer Twitter and Instagram. The informants share information about how to brew coffee and how to choose better coffee beans, and they also suggest coffee shops to relatives and friends who are also interested in coffee.

All informants started their connoisseurship rite of passage because they were influenced by a friend or a coffee connoisseur. In the beginning, the informants tried to emulate the connoisseur friend’s consumption practices. According to Simon (2009, p. 153), people who know something “have value, and we gravitate toward them to get their ideas and insights, and then we absorb what they teach us and make it our own.” Coffee connoisseurs (amateurs) are linked to the baristas (professionals) and their friends and relatives (public), and the strength of this linkage builds the community. Some consumers shift from being coffee connoisseurs and become coffee professionals. Stebbins (1979) affirms that participants of serious leisure activities tend to have careers in their endeavors. Some of them become professionals. John, one of the baristas that I interviewed, followed this path. He was an amateur until 2014, when he opened his own coffee shop in Toronto with three friends. Andrew, a roaster of a HEICS who was the instructor of one of cupping course that I attended, worked in the bike industry before switching to specialty coffee. He used to taste different coffees. He also roasted coffee at home. As a result of his serious leisure pursuits in the coffee context, and after “[spending] a bunch of money with coffee,” he started to work in the specialty coffee market. Other connoisseur consumers plan to work in the specialty coffee market, although with some limits because of their duties at home, as parents and spouses. This is John’s entrepreneurship dream:

It's something I do just really to get more involved in the coffee industry. I'm definitely not a professional at this point, but I'd love to just get more involved in the industry and learn more about it and I'm not at a place ... I can't go get a job as a barista because I've got a wife, and I've got two kids and a house and everything. So I can't work my way up from the bottom just like at a place like this, although I'd love to, that would be great. Yes, so owning a small cafe will give me a chance to work and do my own thing and then I can work there as a barista and just drink up as much coffee as I want and do that. So that's really my plan for the next couple of months. It's something I do just really to get more involved in the coffee industry. I'm definitely not a professional at this point, but I'd love to just get more involved in the industry and learn more about it and I'm not at a place. ... I can't go get a job as a barista because I've got a wife and I've got two kids and a house and everything. So I can't work my way up from the bottom just like at a place like this, although I'd love to, that would be great. Yes, so owning a small cafe will give me a chance to

work and do my own thing and then I can work there as a barista and just drink up as much coffee as I want and do that. So that's really my plan for the next couple of months.

The baristas, or the professionals as described by Stebbins's P-A-P system (1979), play an important role in the specialty coffee community. Coffee connoisseurs are guided by the baristas, who are the people who can support them (amateurs) during their connoisseurship rite of passage, in which they invest "significant personal effort based on special knowledge, training, or skill, and sometimes all three" (Stebbins, 1982, p. 256). Connoisseur consumers try to emulate barista's professional practices. Taste, "lived by each but fashioned by all, is a history of oneself permanently remade together with others" (Hennion, 2007, p. 103). Taste follows certain rules, as Guichard argued in his study of the rise of the amateur in eighteenth-century Paris, rules that "govern the way in which objects are displayed, not only have a decorative purpose, but also participate in the construction of knowledge" (2012, p. 535). To understand these rules and develop their taste, amateurs rely on the opinions of their public and professionals in a reflexive way, to constitute their tastes and preferences. Hennion emphasizes that "we rely on others in a reflexive way to constitute our tastes," and taste, "lived by each but fashioned by all, is a history of oneself permanently remade together with others" (Hennion, 2007, p. 103). Baristas and regular consumers are essential to the development of coffee connoisseur consumers and their rite of passage as well as to the connoisseurship consumption community.

The rise of barista as profession in the 1990s helped to increase the number of coffee connoisseurs and the size of the specialty coffee community. At the end of the 1980s, a coffee bar job, as a category of employment, barely existed in most places in the United States. By the mid-1990s, however, it had become a "touchstone of cool for a certain subculture of struggling performers, college students and assorted coffee-bar hangers-on" (Johnson, 1995, August 13). Starbucks trained and socialized its workers "to provide recognizably distinct services for exchange on the professional market" (Johnson, 1995, August 13), and the SCAA, an institution that legitimates the quality of barista work, directly influenced the professionalism (Larson, 1977) of the barista job in the United States. In 1995, more than 17,000 people in the United States were employed brewing and serving coffee in coffee bars, which had, as a result, transformed the barista into the bartender of the 1990s (Johnson, 1995, August 13). In 2002, the North American Barista Competition was established to focus on espressos, Cappuccinos, and personal signature beverages, and in 2011, the U.S. Brewers Cup

Championship, which focuses on the art of manual coffee brewing, was created. Both competitions are sponsored by the SCAA, which was established in 1982, has almost five thousand company members, and is the world's largest coffee trade association.

Competitions are really important to coffee connoisseurs. According to Stebbins (2007), both professionals and amateurs often find the competition in their fields exhilarating, if not attractive. @luizmarq attended six cupping contests as a competitor in 2014. @luizmarq was in the top three in the North West Cup Tasters League (NWCTL) in September and went to the finals in November. The NWCTL takes place monthly in Seattle, and it is “a series of coffee-focused events dedicated to developing our most important tool: our palates” (@nwcuptasters). Specialty coffee professionals and consumers attend the competitions. @luizmarq's participation in the NWCTL is something admirable for the coffee professionals. Tia Richardon (@HookedontheBean), who is a coffee professional, wrote during the competition: “@luizmarq advances into final round w his detailed selections @NWcuptasters [Cup Taster League: coffee competitions, Seattle/Washington].” During the 9th annual Brazilian Specialty Coffee exposition, Marcos also participated in an informal TNT contest held in an HEICS, competing against national champion baristas (he was the only amateur consumer in the competition). At a certain point of the competition, Tom, the HEICS owner, pointed to Marcos and shouted: “He is the hobbyist [and is] more professional than everybody.” After a while, he yelled again to Marcos, “Marcos, take care! Imagine if he wins!”

In comparison, the barista profession in Brazil is not well-recognized yet. The HEICSs are offering barista courses every month, however. According to Tom, the majority of participants of his HEICS's barista course are people who want to work in the coffee marketplace as a barista, or owner, or consumers who want to improve their knowledge. Few of them are already baristas. The first Brazilian barista championship took place in 2002 (twenty years later than in the United States), and the specialty coffee culture has been growing in the last years with the opening of the new HEICSs, but there is a lot of room to improve. Many baristas that I met in Brazilian HEICS are in their early twenties. They prefer brewed coffee instead of espresso. Actually, many of them told me that they do not even like espresso. Age, as Levy (1999) explains, plays a large influence on coffee beverage preference. Actually, Brazil's marketplace and specialty coffee cultures do not provide the necessary elements for consumers and baristas to perform the taste transformation ritual. A

barista who had worked for more than six years in a HEICS told me that she does not really like to drink coffee (she was not the only HEICS barista who told me that), but she uses to drink it at home with her family. I asked her what kind of coffee she drinks at home, and she answered that she drinks regular coffee that her family buys at the supermarket, which is pre-ground and over-roasted. Baristas, just like the majority of consumers in Brazil, have not yet started the connoisseurship rite of passage. The few HEICS baristas, owners, and consumers that I met in Brazil who have changed their coffee taste have lived abroad, were born abroad (Germany, the United States, Ireland), or had personal contact with the specialty coffee consumption culture in the United States.

The North American informants in the intermediate and advanced levels of the connoisseurship rite of passage know the competitions and often attend more than one of them. However, the informants who are at the advanced level are really involved with the competitions. They know the champion baristas personally or virtually. When they cannot attend the competition, they watch it online or on TV (there is a specific cable channel in Seattle that transmits it). The United States Barista Competition's objective is to provide a:

Platform for baristas to enhance their espresso beverage making skills through an exciting and challenging competition. In 15 minutes, the barista must prepare and serve espressos, Cappuccinos, and a personally designed signature beverage for four sensory judges; all while being assessed on their preparation abilities by two technical judges (US Coffee Championships, n.d.)

During the competition, the judges look for a barista who has “mastery of technical skills, craftsmanship, communication skills and service skills and is passionate about the barista profession” (www.scaa.org). Competitions are an opportunity to the baristas to develop their skills, and the coffee connoisseurs appreciate it. As described by Pendergrast in the competition arena, “The tension was palpable, with judges watching every move. A timer ticked down the seconds of the routine. Hundreds seated or standing in the audience could see the action displayed on a huge video screen” (2010, p. 358). The baristas are put on the spot, and they become to be “rock-star baristas” (Pendergrast, 2010, p. 358), or “all-star barista” (title of the lecture in the SCAA event in 2014), with many people following them on social media and in coffee shops. However, some informants question this situation, arguing that the coffee bean should be the focus, not the barista or someone else. The coffee beans are the most important, they argue, and they are put to the side.

4.4.2 The Relationship Between Community Members

As in the river magic experience (Arnould & Price, 1993), a community is developed among customers and people who work in the specialty coffee market. HEICS owners and baristas develop commercial friendships (Arsel, Rindfleisch, & Thompson, 2006; Price & Arnould, 1999) with connoisseur consumers. For Frank, “It’s just the people I know in Seattle.” John revealed that he is “really good friends with all the baristas. You know, at this point, they’re just people that I just really have been kind of friends with.” In the postmodern consumer culture, which is fragmented and individuated (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995), Thompson and Arsel (2004) explain that consumers are able to “forge an ephemeral sense of interpersonal connection via common consumption interests” (p. 639), seeking “a palliative for the distressing feelings of isolation, inauthenticity, and depersonalization” (p. 640). David expresses the sense of community in the specialty coffee and the importance of the barista in his social life:

There is a nice sense of community in the specialty coffee shop. There are other people who are also regulars, and so by going there, I just have encounters with friends of mine, but I haven’t planned it. So, it is a social occasion as well. It’s such a nice community that many of the baristas have become my friends. Those individuals have become important to me personally.

This sense of community happens also between the baristas and other coffee professionals, and also between connoisseur and coffee consumers. Steve revealed that “no matter where I am in the world, I will have a friend.” The informants who are in the advanced level of the connoisseurship rite of passage explained that they make a lot of friends who were regular consumers but who were interested in coffee and want to learn about it. The friendships between connoisseurs and regular consumers are part of the community ethos. Connoisseur consumers’ friends also encourage them to go forward in the connoisseurship rite of passage. It happened with Suzy. Her friends told her to create a coffee blog and write about her coffee experiences.

So I guess in 2004 when I started to get more into it [specialty coffee consumption culture], I would talk about coffee to my friends, and my friends would say, ‘Well, why don’t you write about this?’ Because I would keep a little notebook about what I drank, right? Then I said, ‘I don’t really want to.’ At that time there was also starting of this internet sites and blogging. So my friends would keep encouraging me to,

maybe you should write it on the internet.”

Coffee club leaders make many friends with people who approach them because of coffee. They build long relationships. During the initial phase of the connoisseurship rite of passage connoisseur consumers are the primary source of information. Regular consumers trust and rely on them to take the first steps on the specialty coffee consumption culture. I made many friends who are coffee connoisseurs during my qualitative research, as advised by Belk, Fischer and Kozinets: “[qualitative researcher needs to] be prepared to become emotionally involved with informants (...) [because] we develop human relationships with our informants” (2013, p. 207). We keep talking by e-mail, Twitter and other social media and they were essential to open the door of the connoisseurship coffee consumption to me. The field note below that I wrote one day after left Seattle describes what I felt when I was in the city and had a deep contact with the specialty coffee culture. This personal journal was natural, it flowed as a necessity to put on paper the exciting and transformed experience that I have in the city during my connoisseurship rite of passage:

In Seattle I received a warm welcome by the specialty coffee community. There is a huge coffee consumption culture over there. Many HEICSs, outstanding baristas, amazing specialty coffee to taste, many cuppings, and interesting specialty coffee consumers. The coffee connoisseurs that I met and interview I Seattle stayed with me during hours, they invited me to participate in many coffee events (TNT, barista competition, coffee club meetings). They friendly approached me and made me feel comfortable. They answered my question and didn't criticize my opinions and even coffee practices that now, arriving in Toronto, realize that changed/improved a lot during the time I stayed over there. Being immersed in the Seattle specialty coffee culture and also attending the SCAA event allowed me quickly improve my coffee knowledge. I think that one turning point that I have during the travel was the Seattle coffee club meetings that I've attended. During the meetings I had the opportunity to talk about specialty coffee with coffee connoisseurs who help me to better understand the community, the baristas, championships, and the histories, many histories: coffee's history, barista's history, HEICSs' history and so on. The comparison realized during the meeting between the coffee beverage order in the HEICS, the opinion about what is better and not was a trigger to be pay attention of the coffee nuances and my coffee choices. In a meeting one participant asked me: What did you ask? I answered her and after a while the leader of the coffee club, who was in the meeting, explained to the group what was the best coffee beverage option in that HEICS. His coffee beverage option was different from what I order. I started to better figure out based on the coffee consumption practices who are connoisseur and regular consumers, who are in advanced and basic connoisseurship level (field note, April 29, 2014).

The weak link of the community is between the baristas and regular consumers, because they are not involved or immersed in the specialty coffee culture. For regular consumers, the beverage means a source of energy, or a break at work (grab and go: get the coffee quickly in the coffee shop and go), or even a link to socialize. Regular consumers usually do not know

about HEICSs or even the barista's name. In the HEICS where we met, I asked Joana what the barista's name was. Surprised, she said, "Why should I know?" Joana, Robson, Elizabet go regularly to independent coffee shops (less often than coffee connoisseurs), but they just want to have their Americano or Cappuccino and socialize (Joana), or work at the tables in the coffee shop (Robson and Elizabet). Like the Café Flâneurs (the social and creative buzz) described by Thompson & Arsel, "their aim is not to build an enduring relationship or to become part of a community; rather, they are seeking a more intimate, but transient, social encounter that offers a brief glimpse into the life of another" (2004, p. 635). The customer service expected by regular consumers is the same type of service found in any coffee chain: smiles, greetings, politeness, education, attention, efficiency, and so on.

4.4.3 Production of Subcultural and Social Capital

Professional and consumer education have been important in the specialty coffee market in the last couple of decades, helping to increase the number of coffee connoisseur consumers and the size of the specialty coffee community. Hennion (2004) explains that taste is not given; it is reflexive, through a trial device and a body that puts itself to the test. The offline and online interaction between connoisseurship consumption community members help connoisseur consumers to produce and increase their subcultural and social capital. Evident in my own field journal introspection was a desire to taste different high-quality espresso, prepared by well-trained baristas, and to discuss espresso with other coffee connoisseur consumers in person or online (via social media). Furthermore, cuppings, and education seminars available in the specialty coffee market, consumers test their taste skills. Lectures, annual events, and courses provided by many market actors (the most important is the SCAA), internet courses (e.g., ChefSteps, 2014c), and tutorials (e.g., INeedCoffee: Chemex Coffee Brewing: History and Tutorial) increase the specialty coffee market and the number of connoisseur consumers. During the connoisseurship rite of passage, consumers improve their subcultural capital and social capital. In the 1980s, during the expansion of the specialty market segment, the regional roasters, and others new to the specialty coffee trade, expanded the trade in many ways, including "running educational seminars to cultivate a more detailed knowledge of coffee among retailers, expecting that they in turn would educate their customers" (Roseberry, 1996, p. 129).

Coffee shop chains on college campuses played an important role during the second wave, introducing specialty coffee to young people. Until the mid-1980s, young adults (ages 20-29) identified coffee as an elderly person's drink (Dow Jones Newswires, 1997, November 26). In 1972, 74 percent of coffee was consumed by those over the age of 30 (Roseberry, 1996). Roseberry notes that, while 20-to-29-year-olds "drank only 1.47 cups per day in 1980, 30-to-59 year-olds drank 3.06 cups, and those over 60 drank 2.40" (1996, p. 126). The younger generation identified coffee drinking with "settled ways of their parents and grandparents" (Roseberry, 1996, p. 126). Younger generations did not consume coffee as their parents did, and they did not like the taste of coffee (Dow Jones Newswires, 1997, November 26). Moreover, "by compromising quality, the U.S. coffee industry has lost an entire generation of potential coffee drinkers to Coke and Pepsi" (Dow Jones Newswires, 1997, November 26). In 1985, for the first time,

Soft drinks surpassed coffee as consumers' favorite beverage. The troubles are rooted in the 1960s, when coffee roasters began losing the youth market to soft drinks. The soft-drink industry gave its products a dynamic, youthful image that appeared to suit the younger generation in the 1960s. The coffee industry increased its focus on a shrinking older group of coffee drinkers and ignored the needs of the emerging new generation (Valentine, 1986, March 19).

To attract younger consumers in the 1980s, the coffee industry started to develop the specialty coffee market, supplying consumers with a better coffee with milk. Specialty coffee companies started to focus on young people in high schools and universities to promote their coffee. Bridgetown Coffee, a specialty coffee roaster based in Portland, installed espresso machines in several Oregon high schools, introducing 100,000 students to coffee instead of to soft drinks (Dow Jones Newswires, 1997, November 26). The Coffee Development Group, a Washington-DC based promotion arm of the International Coffee Organization, opened 50 coffeehouses on college campuses, providing a coffee grinder, a brewer, and a Cappuccino machine, among other supplies, thereby encouraging students to experiment with high-quality coffee blends (Valentine, 1986, March 19). By the end of the 1980s, the specialty coffee consumer tended to be younger, more affluent, and more concerned about health and caffeine compared to the coffee consumer at the beginning of the 1980s (Fabricant, 1989, October 25). In the 2010s, 40% of 18-24 year-olds and 54% of 25-39 year-olds drink coffee daily (SCAA, 2012b). Roseberry (1996) mentions that Yuppies (a term coined in the 1980s to refer to the Young Urban Professional, a member of the upper-middle class or upper-class in their 20s or

30s) identified themselves with specialty coffee and were one of its main consumers.

As understood by many actors in the specialty coffee field, Starbucks educated the consumer during the second wave of specialty coffee, and it continues to do so. In 2011, Starbucks began offering quarterly coffee seminars in their coffee shops. During these events, the company teaches consumers how to choose the best food to eat with the coffee in order to increase the flavor and get the best coffee experience. In the Starbucks coffee seminar that I attended (Appendix E), there were three consumers present in addition to me. The store owner presented many brew methods, explaining how to prepare and use the coffee equipment using the French Press, Siphon, Aero Press, Moka Express, and Turkish coffee. They served Sumatra Coffee and Sumatra Decaf, Turkishi, Guatemala, and Pike Coffee (blond, medium, dark roast coffee). The participants tasted the coffee and ate cookies, cakes, and muffins between the sips. The instructor/store manager advised us to “sip the coffee, eat the cookie, and sip the coffee again.” He also listed all the aromas and flavors before the participants had tasted the coffee, taking a novice (or regular consumer) approach for tasting (Latour, Latour & Feinsein, 2011). Coffee was served in a cardboard cup. They also served a cold coffee with condensed milk. The Starbucks coffee seminar was not driven by the taste of the coffee. The company mixes food, coffee, and equipment in an introduction in the specialty coffee market. The participants were not coffee connoisseurs. There were two young people (about 20 years old) and one adult (40 year-old woman), who told me that she likes coffee because it brings people together.

However, consumers have been re-educated in blogs, courses, cuppings, conversations with baristas in HEICSs, and by word-of-mouth. “Starbucks may have put an entire adult population through Coffee University [...], but third-wave coffee shops -- and their cuppings - - are the graduate schools” (Wallace, 2008, May 29). Latour, Latour and Feinsein informs that there are “two common routes for marketers to influence consumer learning are direct experience, such as taste tests, and information presentations, such as seminars” (2011, p. 2). In the 2000s, during the third wave of specialty coffee, the number of cupping courses in independent cafés, online courses and tutorials (blogosphere), and specialty coffee events increased considerably. According to Hartman (2011), Starbucks provided and paid for consumers’ education and taught them to pay more for quality coffee, but “the more exposure people have to higher-quality coffee in HEICS, the less willing they'll be to experience anything else” (Wallace, 2008, May 29). Further, he notes,

There was a time when only coffee buyers, roasters and baristas cared to spend time sniffing grounds with patient dedication. But now cuppings at independent cafés attract connoisseurs who wouldn't be caught dead sipping an overroasted blend and regularly travel to another borough for superior beans (Wallace, 2008, May 29).

In contrast to the Starbucks seminar, cupping participants in HEICSs just taste coffee and nothing else. There is no coffee equipment or food. The instructor (who is the barista or the roaster) guides the participants to taste coffee like coffee taster professionals do and teaches them to try to perceive the differences between the coffees by sniffing the coffee, sipping in a noisy way (using a spoon in shared porcelain bowl of coffee), and spitting it out. The instructor revealed the tastes and aromas after the participants had tasted the coffee, taking an expert approach of tasting (Latour, Latour & Feinsein, 2011). Coffee equipment is not used during the cupping. The instructor grinds the coffee, puts it in a porcelain bowl, pours hot water, and waits four minutes. After that, the participants start to taste the coffees. Each coffee is from a different region and has a contrasting flavor.

HEICS cuppings (Appendix E) are more frequent than Starbucks coffee seminars. In Toronto, Lit Espresso does cuppings every Saturday. In Seattle, Stumptown, every Saturday; and Victrola, every Wednesday. Participants are usually coffee connoisseurs or regular consumers who want to get inside the community and start their connoisseurship rite of passage. They go alone or with their public (friend, girlfriend, boyfriend). The participants ask the instructor many questions during the cuppings. How do I brew coffee? How much coffee should I use? What is the temperature of the water? What brew method is better? Which one do you prefer? The consumers have specific, intimate moments with the instructor (barista or roaster). Instructors talk about the brew methods, temperature, differences between light, medium, and dark roast coffee, they emphasize the oppositions between HEICSs and Starbucks, and they reinforce the high-quality coffee that is served in the HEICSs based on the coffee territory, coffee single-origin, or coffee micro-batch. They explain where each coffee is from, the name of the farm and the farmer, the coffee's specific characteristics, and, in some cases, as in the Victrola cupping, what work they were doing with the coffee farm (fair trade and direct trade). During the cupping, the participants learn how to use the equipment and perform the cupping process and evaluation that is done by coffee professionals (usually roasters and baristas) in their work routine.

During the cupping at Stumptown, Jane asked the barista, who was the course instructor, “If I put milk in, have I ruined the coffee? Is there a problem with drinking milk with coffee? Because I like it.” The barista explained that there was no problem, but she would not increase her knowledge of the coffee complexity if she added milk. Nina said that she did not know if what she was doing was correct, and she asked many questions about how to brew coffee, such as if it was necessary to have a coffee maker and what the differences were between the grinder, Chemex, French Press, and pour-over methods. David was present during the Lit Espresso cupping. He asked the instructor many questions about the flavors, aroma, where the beans came from, and so on. He picked up a sheet of paper and started to take notes about the coffee aroma, body, acidity, flavor, and finish. He was trying to develop his taste skill as much as he could. I met John at the Victrola cupping course. I started to talk with him, and he told me that he had a lot of cuppings in his home city (Portland). John is concerned about developing his own taste skill in performing the taste transformation ritual, and he is learning about coffee online. During the SCAA event in Seattle, he said, “I was buying a lot of espresso (in Seattle), and we hear a lot about coffee, that whole thing, and that's where I'm at now. I'm doing some cupping here (Seattle) with Byron (friend).”

4.4.4 Enactment Tensions

In one coffee group meeting, a new member of the group showed up and introduced himself to the other participants sitting at the table. Although he said that he loved coffee and had been drinking great coffee in many different coffee shops for many years, after he had left the meeting, the participants explained that he did not know anything about coffee and that he had a long way to go before starting to understand what real coffee is. The participants in the coffee meeting thus revealed the “hierarchical social structures based on the relative statuses of the individual members” (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995, p. 48) in the connoisseurship coffee subculture of consumption. According to them, the new member drank Cappuccino, listed coffee shops that are not good places, and referred to poor coffee beans. He failed to appreciate the symbols of the community: drinking coffee without milk, knowing the best coffee shops, drinking real coffee, taking into consideration the importance of well-skilled baristas, and so on. “The structure of the subculture, which governs social interaction within it, is a direct reflection of the commitment of individuals” (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995,

p. 48), and it reflects the common values of the community. Referring to the new member of the coffee meeting group, one participant, who had been on the connoisseurship rite of passage for some years, said:

He lives in [specific neighborhood]. He doesn't really know where the good coffee shops are. The place he thinks is good coffee is really actually quite terrible coffee. He says, "I'm trying this group, I'll try this." He's never been to [specific coffee shop] and he's lived in Seattle for seven years, never been to [specific coffee shop]. I really can't hold much of a coffee conversation with him because he's got a long way to go to get to there. I can hold a conversation with these guys.

In the process of legitimizing the community, members "differentiate between true members of the community and those who are not, or who occupy a more marginal space. . . . They do not deny membership, but like most communities they do have status hierarchies" (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001, p. 419). Annex E reflects this structure regarding the consumer's preferred coffee beverage. If you drink espresso, "you're friendly and adaptive, you actually like the taste of the coffee, a rare, but admirable trait"; in contrast, if you drink a Frappuccino, "you're happy and energetic, you claim to love coffee, but really, you just love ice cream" (Darell, n.d.). The juxtaposition above indicates the conflict between performance and participation as described by Thomas, Price and Schau (2013), which emerges because of multiple views of what high-quality, or "good," coffee is, as well as the connoisseurship consumption practices in the community: "an individual's sense of belonging is reinforced (or diminished) through engagement with the community and its practices," and it is "inextricably entwined with socially constructed practices and resources that shape community" (Thomas, Price & Schau, 2013, p. 1012). This tension takes place between those whose purpose is to improve their coffee skill and knowledge, and those who want to socialize in the coffee shop as a third place. It happens usually between regular consumers (Public) or beginner coffee connoisseurs, and intermediate and advanced connoisseur consumers (Amateurs). Alan used to be a member of a coffee club, which is a social group open to regular and connoisseur consumers that meets regularly in coffee shops to drink coffee and socialize. He explained what happened with him and the group:

They drink Starbucks, or drink [coffee shop name], which is the worst one here in the city, but there are people who like it and there are people who don't care about it, understand? And people who go to the Coffee Club, nowadays, I don't, I don't have anything against them, but I am a person, as I told you, introspective, and I am an antisocial person, and I am a person. So I lost the willingness to go to the Coffee Club meetings, because the interest of the people who go is different than mine.

The difference in purpose was the main issue for Alan when he decided to leave the coffee club. He was not concerned about socialization; he wanted to improve his own skill. Being, goal-driven, and individualistic, he decided to quit the group and continue his own connoisseurship rite of passage alone. As in the running community, there is a tension between participation (regular consumers) and performance (connoisseur consumers), such that “some community members devalue the enactments of others” (Thomas, Price & Schau, 2013, p. 1020). As noted by Kozinets (2002b) in his research on the online coffee community alt.coffee newsgroup, espresso is the most important coffee beverage for the specialty coffee community: “although espresso may not be the most frequently consumed form, it is the most discussed form of coffee on the newsgroup. Real coffee, precious coffee, essential coffee (both literally and figuratively) is espresso, consumed without ‘cow juice’ or sugar.” (Kozinets, 2002b, p. 68). In the coffee club meetings that I attended, the members did not drink espresso. Only the leader of the group drank espresso. The others ordered drinks with large amounts of coffee (8 oz., 12 oz.) to taste during the meeting. Coffee connoisseurs prefer espresso because, as explained by Kozinets, “When they are acculturated to the proper taste of espresso and its rarity, these consumers reject conventional coffee offerings (often giving them terrible, excretory names) and popular cafés (often emphasizing their robotic qualities) and are drawn into multiple investments to which there seem no end” (2002, p. 68). As Thomas, Price and Schau (2013) affirmed: “Importantly, it is not membership that is contested but rather enactments of community practices” (p. 1019), everyone is welcome at the coffee club, however the coffee preferences are perceived and contested by the coffee connoisseur members of the group.

The organizer of Seattle Coffee Club informed me that “the participants don’t really want to talk about coffee.” In a coffee club meeting, the organizer told that in 30 minutes, a film about coffee would be played in a movie theater near where we were and it would be free. He asked if someone would like to go, and many participants laughed. It was clear that some of the participants did not care much about coffee. They enjoyed the meeting and socialization. They did not talk about coffee in the deep way that the leader was used to doing; however, the conversation went around many subjects, and sometimes coffee came up again. Participants usually ask what coffee you order, how it tastes, if you like it or not, and so on. The participants more engaged in coffee culture ask questions and make comments about their preferences and the coffee that they are drinking. The Seattle Coffee Club was founded in June 2006 and its mission states that it is a social group celebrating the independent quality

coffee scene, however after the opening of the new Starbucks Roastery and Tasting Room in Seattle, a “roaster/retail/private events/pizza bar/showcase/library/coffee palace, all 15,600 square feet” (Michelman, 2014, December 4), in December 2014, the coffee club could no longer resist the pressure of its members, and the ban of Starbucks was removed. Most coffee connoisseurs see themselves as outside and in opposition to the mass consumption or mainstream (coffee shop chains), nowadays, however they are they are the minority in the Seattle Coffee Club. Michael, the organizer of the Seattle coffee club, emailed the club’s members the “big announcement”:

Onto the big announcement. We are lifting the ban on hosting Coffee Club events at Starbucks. Tully's [coffee shop chain] too. It is still the core mission of this group to support local indie coffee, but I think by being more inclusive, we can bring fans of Starbucks/Tully's into our group and then show them the places we've visited.

The Seattle Coffee Club (www.meetup.com/seattle-coffee-club/) has 751 members, and the members who are more committed to the specialty coffee consumption culture take part in the leadership of the club. There is an organizer and 19 assistant organizers. Only the leadership team has permission to schedule coffee meetings, announcing the place (of which the options are previously defined and listed on the website), time, and day online. They are committed to high-end coffee; however, as the number of coffee club members has increased in the last few years, more regular consumers started to attend the club meetings, and the tensions increased between knowledgeable members and regular consumers. Michael reflects this tension in his e-mail, “And I know a lot of the regulars in the Coffee Club do not like Starbucks or Tully's. I don't. That is OK. You don't have to attend or host any events there. I just want to give more options to all the organizers.” The Seattle Coffee Club, who celebrates and patronizes the indie coffee shops, is now also supporting coffee chains. This announcement caused an impact in the community, and Michael (@CriticalMAS) explained on Twitter, “The reason I lifted the Coffee Club ban on *\$ [Starbucks] is not because the coffee is good, but because they get customer service right” (January 9, 2015). The opposition between the coffee chains versus independent coffee shops and good coffee versus better coffee was always present in the Seattle Coffee Club, but the increasing number of regular coffee consumers are changing the practices of the club. In response, coffee connoisseurs, such as Alan, are exiting the group.

In another coffee club meeting, during the conversation on specialty coffee consumption and practices, one participant, Joana, revealed that she does not grind coffee before brewing it at

home (she buys ground coffee beans). After she said it, her face flushed, and the participant who was the most advanced coffee connoisseur, Laura, said that Joana was embarrassed. Joana denied the embarrassment and refused to grind coffee at home: “grinding coffee at home is a connoisseur practice!” Although both of them enjoy the coffee group meetings, the tension between these two participants regarding consumption practices, commitment, and coffee knowledge happened many times during the meeting. In this specific case, the structure of the connoisseurship coffee subculture of consumption was revealed many times in the meeting. In another coffee meeting that I observed, this tension was not present; however, the leader’s coffee knowledge and commitment was revered by the coffee club members: “he is the guy”, “he knows everything about coffee”, if you want to know anything about coffee, ask him” (fieldnotes).

The enactment tensions also happen in online communities that usually mix coffee professionals, coffee connoisseurs, and regular consumers. Coffee Google+ is a well-known online coffee community. Its purpose is to learn more about specialty coffee. Although it is an open community, coffee connoisseurship practices are the central point of the group discussion. Nevertheless, there are some members (usually regular coffee consumers) who think the community rules are too strict (see Annex F). Hicran Karkin (who lives in Turkey and is a regular consumer, based on her posts and her blog, <http://fresstarting.blogspot.com.br>) posted a picture in the group that was subsequently removed, and she wanted to know what happened. She seems to focus on coffee socialization and food (muffins, jam and so on) instead of on knowledge, which is the focus of the group.

Coffee Community Google +

hicran karkin - 13 de ago de 2014

I Shared couple of picture but they has been deleted , why ?? They were original, taking from me.

Hannes Lilliefeldt - 14 de ago de 2014

The only coffee-related part of the post was the single use of the word "coffee" and what could be identified as a cup of something dark brown-black in the midst of someone's drawings and pens. This community is for specialty coffee and there are rules. I'm no mod, but I'd say you broke general rule 5, photo rule 2 and also: please don't use the community to promote your blog.

hicran karkin - 14 de ago de 2014

+Hannes Lilliefeldt the picture about my morning and how coffee part of my life . I think people should not just post coffee picture as a only object . I guess this is a

committee who share things together get friends and coffee is the comment things which is makes them closer. This should be definition of the community. It was not a advirtesment [sic] . I am not trying to sell anything . I was sharing my blog link so if people wants visit . and I should say wow for such hard rules this community have . no free sharing . only coffee , just coffee guys . no muffins, no jam .ohh art !/some one [sic] call this as piece of paper and pensil [sic]. Thanks for your comment !!!

Hannes Lilliefeldt - 14 de ago de 2014

+hicran karkin This community and it's [sic] rules were established long before you and so many others joined. I'm sorry if the atmosphere we are promoting, and the content we are not allowing is not to your taste, but it is what it is. This community is intended to be focused in specialty coffee and the content added by members needs to keep in line with that. A picture of a cup of coffee on a table with no context to how it applies to specialty coffee adds no value to the group whatsoever and it is promptly removed. No questions asked, if I had to personally respond to every post I removed to provide an explanation as to why it was removed, I would have to quit my job to make time for it. Read the rules. Follow the rules. There is no leniency. If that is not ok by you, please find another community. I apologize for the ranting tone if this response, but enough is enough.

Another source of tension between regular and connoisseur consumers is how each one uses the HEICS. Many regular consumers use the HEICSs space (table and chairs) to work. They usually order an Americano or Cappuccino (because it takes longer to be consumed) and put their mug beside their notebook on the table and stay hours. In Seattle, many of them work programming computers, but I saw architects, website designers, and students in the cities doing that as well. HEICSs prepare the space to receive this kind of consumers (the exception is New York because of the higher rent prices in Manhattan), but some informants don't like them. They say that they are kind of vampire that exploit the HEICS and also take the space of someone who really want to drink coffee. A Seattle coffee club member arrived late to the TNT competition in Seattle and he was nervous because there was no table available to seat in the HEICSs that he went few minutes before the TNT, and he had to wait a while. Meanwhile 5 tables were occupied by "vampires." Above all, regular consumers want good customer service based on predictability, standardized products and services, calculability, and quantity (Ritzer, 2007). They just want to grab their coffee and have their time in the HEICS, or go.

The tensions between regular and connoisseur consumers are also present in the wine context. In the blind wine tasting meeting, it is a common practice to discuss the wine taste and *terroir* [specific characteristic of the land]. The participants try to figure out where the grapes are from, what the flavors of the wine are, and so on before the sommelier or the wine expert reveals the correct information about the wine to the group. It usually occurs at night, after regular work schedule time. Before the revelation of the wine information, the participants discuss a lot of different information, trying to get any hints that could help them be

successful in the task to discover the wine profile (e.g. grape, country). Connoisseur wine consumers are frequently consulted during this process. Their opinion helps to guide the discussion around the wine. The meeting is a training taste process, which takes place in a pleasurable and enjoyable way, mediated by the sommelier or wine expert, a process that offers much valuable information to improve the “conceptual learning” (Latour, Latour, & Feinstein, 2011, p. 2) of the participants. Then, they taste different bottles of wine to enhance their “perceptual learning” (Latour, Latour, & Feinstein, 2011, p. 2). According to Bruce, this particular ritual performed during the blind wine tasting and during home wine tasting meetings are too fashionable, and he finds them unnecessary. He told me that if he performs this ritual in front of his father, who is Italian, he would say: “What are you doing? Stop that, just drink it!” Anne, Ellen, and Janete (wine consumer informants) did not drink wine when they were young. However, Bruce had his first glass of wine (mixed with water) when he was five years old with his Italian father, and Trevis, with his Italian grandfather, when he was four years old.

During one of the blind wine tastings that I attended, the participants were asking each other many different questions when someone asked a specific member what she thought. Everybody stopped to listen her opinion, but she answered, “I don't care, I am here to drink.” Clearly, nobody had expected that answer because they stayed quiet for a few seconds, but soon, everybody started to chat again. Although nobody seemed to have a problem with her answer, this member was no longer included in the debate. She was there to drink wine, not to taste wine. In this meeting, we tasted six wines, and Trevis, who was in the meeting, told me that he just takes two sips per wine in wine tastings. He takes a sip and swirls the wine in his mouth to figure out the characteristics of the wine. By the end of the night, he has drunk one glass of wine in total. He explained, “You have to be careful... I just spill it out if necessary (to not be drunk)... It is not enjoyable (get drunk).” Wine connoisseur consumers go to wine tastings to discover the differences between wines and improve their knowledge, not to get drunk.

Another enactment of tension happens between baristas and regular consumers, who usually order drinks that mix coffee with milk, sugar, caramel, or chocolate. Michael Ryan Tweeted: “It's getting harder for me to make myself sick dialing in and then watch someone add tons of sugar to their latte without even trying it” (@michaelcmryan, October, 13 of 2014). The blog called the Bitter Barista reveals the “thoughts from behind the counter, and other reasons why

I hate you.” This blog was anonymous before Sprudge.com revealed the name of the author, who worked for an HEICS. He was fired after the Sprudge’s post named: “Snark’s Labor Lost: the Bitter Barista, Unmasked” (Sprudge, 2013, February 7). Sprudge wrote:

The Bitter Barista blog has hit the internet in a big way in recent days, leading to all manner of attention, retweets, Facebook posts and what-have-you from the online specialty coffee community. This blog exercises the trope of the cigarette smoking, jaded, ironic service industry Twitter user, but it does so in highly offensive and shocking ways. (Sprudge, 2013, February 7)

Among others, the enactment tensions between regular consumers and baristas regarding their coffee preferences are frequently revealed in the Bitter Barista blog:

Here's the deal... I won't expect you to know the Italian names for drinks, if you won't expect me to know the candy bar names for drinks (post number 317).

I just watched a 45-year old construction worker order a pumpkin spice latte, take one sip and instantly turn into a white lady in yoga pants. This stuff really is magical (post n. 309).

We charge double for any drink named after a candy bar. Just consider it a tax on awful people (post n. 224).

Starbucks just introduced a hazelnut macchiato... So, you can go ahead and add that to the list of things I refuse to make for you. Anyone that can't put sugar in their own coffee should be publicly euthanized. (post n. 72).

Peppermint-eggnog-latte? I don't know that I can, in good conscience, make that for someone to consume (post n. 35).

What do I recommend? Coffee. I recommend coffee (post n. 198).

The baristas joke about the regular consumers’ coffee preferences. They like candy bars, pumpkin spice lattes, peppermint-eggnog lattes, which baristas do not appreciate. They prefer coffee, or better, they “recommend coffee.” Some comments revealed the status game played between coffee connoisseurs and baristas behind the counter regarding to how to prepare the coffee or to coffee knowledge in general: “Let me know where you work and I’ll be sure to stop in early tomorrow morning to tell you how to do your job too” (post n. 92), and “the third time she tried to correct my coffee-making technique, I poured out her latte and handed her a job application” (post n. 326). Charles Babinski, who was a top-2 barista in the United States in 2014 (and 2013) and the owner of Go Get Em Tiger (an HEICS in Los Angeles, California), deals with this enactment tension in a different way. During his SCAA lecture, he stated that many consumers want to drink mixed drinks as served in coffee shop chains. They ask for it all the time. To release the consumers pressure and attend their desire, he decided to

make “a day in the year for fun mixing everything.” In 2014, he prepared a different menu for Thanksgiving Day (from 8 am to 2 pm) and posted it on Instagram. The title of the post was, “this is real.” The menu was “peppermint mocha, chestnut praline latte, eggnog latte, pumpkin spice latte, gingerbread latte” (November 23, 2014).

Belonging to the connoisseurship community also involves time and money investment. It “can be diminished if individuals cannot access the resources necessary to engage in community practices. In this situation, the individual may leave the community” (Thomas, Price & Schau, 2013, p. 1012). The investment of time and money, increased knowledge, and the commitment to the connoisseurship consumption put the coffee connoisseurs in the leadership positions of the coffee meeting groups that I have observed. The participants want to listen to their opinions about coffee taste, what HEICSs to visit, and advice and other ideas to help them in the connoisseurship rite of passage. Both coffee meeting groups’ leaders revealed that the participants change their coffee taste by going to different independent specialty coffee shops and drinking high-quality coffee.

4.4.5 Consumer Status Game

The coffee connoisseur and the barista have an intertwined relationship. The latter is essential to the former performing the taste transformation ritual, and the former pushes the barista to the edge of their everyday work. They develop a commercial friendship; however, a status game (Holt, 1998; Üstüner & Thompson, 2012) is also established between connoisseur consumers and baristas. According to Leach (1968), ritual serves to express the status of the actor, and also, during the rite of passage, to alter the status of the actor and to reaffirm what these status differences are. Connoisseur consumers develop their subcultural capital in the specialty coffee field, and during the rite of passage, they seek to acquire prestige with professionals in a particular status game structured around connoisseurship practices. They win prestige through the performance of the taste transformation ritual, and some of them draw on their resources of subcultural capital to compete for status with the baristas. Subcultural capital distinguishes connoisseurship consumption members from regular consumers. With subcultural capital, connoisseur consumers negotiate and accumulate status within their social world. Thornton affirms, “Subcultural capital confers status on its owner in

the eyes of the relevant beholder” (1996, chapter 1, paragraph 28). The status game happens most often between the coffee connoisseur and the barista when coffee knowledge comes to the scene and enters the conversation and practices. Suzy explained that the situations are sometimes uncomfortable because her coffee knowledge can make it difficult to engage in a deep conversation with baristas about coffee:

I'm able to talk more to them [baristas] about it [coffee], but at the same time it's almost difficult because they see it as fashion, and they see me as just a consumer. So why would I, a consumer, be as knowledgeable as them? It's almost like they don't take me seriously, and so that it's also one of the reasons why I don't tell people, "I will write about you [on my coffee blog]," is because I don't want them to think that I know more than them. I don't know more than them, but I want to find out. A deep perception of me may change.

Connoisseur consumers don't “enact (and enforce) their dominant position in the relationship” (Üstüner & Thompson, 2012, p. 807) with baristas. They want to be treated in a special way and acknowledged for not being regular consumers. They want to be recognized by community members as someone unique and distinct from the others. Outstanding baristas are the gateway for connoisseur consumers to improve their taste and increase their subcultural and social capital. They follow connoisseur consumers on Twitter, Instagram, and other social media, commenting on and retweeting their posts, and baristas also invite them to specialty coffee community events (Frank received a free pass for the SCAA event in Seattle), informal TNT competitions (Alan, Frank, and Marcos were invited to the TNT competitions in their cities), parties, and meetings.

Connoisseur consumers also receive many gifts from baristas, the coffee industry, and professionals. Alan has gotten many free drinks when they engaged in a serious conversation on coffee with the baristas. During my visits in coffee shops, many baristas, whom I had had the opportunity to engage in a deep conversation behind the counter, gave me espressos, cold brew coffee, and even croissants. Coffee connoisseurs receive at-home coffee packages as gifts from coffee shops and roasters that hope to have their brand released on social media. @CoffeeAdventure posted on Twitter and Instagram on 11/21/2014: “this lovely coffee came from @MistoBoxCoffee. I got an invite to become a captain for their new site. For now, trying out the single bag subscription to see what kind of offerings they send out, and then I'll move back to the sampler box and test that out. More to come!” Coffee connoisseurs repay by posting the gift received on their social media.. By posting the picture of the coffee package received and writing about how the coffee tastes, the expectation of the experience and the

gratitude for the gift is a ritual performed by coffee connoisseurs, revealing the meaning of coffee in their lives. Words and phrases like “lovely coffee,” “I am really excited to try this coffee out,” “love the brand,” “this should be a good coffee,” “diving into my bag tonight,” and also the brew methods (Chemex, French Press, V60, and so on) that the connoisseur consumers use to taste the coffee inform readers how deeply they are involved with coffee as well as their passion and commitment to the specialty coffee community.

Some coffee connoisseur consumers, when they do not know the barista or go to a coffee shop for the first time, use hints and cues to mediate the relationship, and help the barista understand that they are a differentiate consumer who appreciates coffee and wants something special. One hint is to ask for an espresso. Few customers order just an espresso. Another hint is to ask where the beans come from and if the coffee shop has single-origin coffee. Also, ask about the flavor and taste of the espresso. Alan explains:

The experience that I had in Los Angeles was like that. I went to the coffee shop and asked for an espresso. The guy [barista] would start to prepare it when I asked my question: “But what coffee do you have today?” The guy smiled and told me, “Look, to whoever asks, we have these two options.” If you don’t ask, he gives to you the regular coffee. But, if you ask, he gives two options... “I have this coffee which is from Bolivia. It is a coffee that was used yesterday in the competition.” And he told me about coffee plantation altitude and so on... “It has these flavors, the other coffee has this and this...” “Which one do you prefer?” “Of course I prefer the one special from Bolivia.” But if you just ask for a coffee, the guy gives it to you... But it makes a huge difference. Because, as I told you, it is not easy to prepare a well done coffee. Many times it happens with me... the guy prepares the coffee, he gives it to you, and then he speaks like this... “Look, that espresso was not very good, I will give to you another one, for free, because this one is better.”

Smith takes it more seriously. He wrote a post explaining how to “validate yourself with the barista” (2011, March 15). The purpose is not to be treated like a regular consumer. He explains that “the barista is making hundreds of drinks a day and most of their customers will happily accept defects without complaining. How do you validate yourself? Ask a question that lets them know you are an espresso aficionado.” (2011, March 15). He gives some examples of questions that can help the barista identify the connoisseur consumer and be aware that they want the best coffee that the barista can make:

Validate Yourself With the Barista

1. Is this the same espresso blend you had a few months ago or is it a seasonal offering?
2. Do you roast your own espresso blend? (even if you know the answer)
3. Do you ever offer single origin espressos? Alternate: What other single origin espressos have they served?

4. Someone at [name a respected coffee place nearby] told me the espresso here was excellent.
5. Mention something you saw on their website. With smart phones you can easily do this minutes before walking into the coffee shop. (Smith, 2011, March 15)

He also gives another tip. If the consumer wears t-shirts about coffee and also engages in a serious conversation, revealing that they are a coffee aficionado, the barista can give excellent espressos, and even free ones:

Another trick I recently started doing is if I know I am going to a new coffee shop or if I am in a new city is I wear one of my coffee roaster t-shirts. At this time I have three shirts of quality coffee roasters. This is another signal to the barista that I take coffee seriously. It will often trigger a conversation about that roaster, which is a great thing, because it gives me a chance to distinguish myself as a customer that cares deeply about quality. I've even gotten free drinks using this trick.

I've used these tricks in places I've never been to before and gotten excellent espresso shots. I've watched baristas pour defective shots into lattes ordered by people behind me in line until the shot was just right. Then when the pull is just perfect, that espresso is handed to me. Score! Another winning ticket in the espresso lottery (Smith, 2011, March 15).

I used these validation strategies many times in the U.S. and Canada. Indeed, the customer service changed when I used this strategy. First I ordered an espresso, and then I asked if they had single origin coffee, and then I asked about the coffee's taste. This was sufficient for the barista to realize that I was not a regular consumer. They took more time preparing the shot, and sometimes they asked me if I could wait few minutes for them to finish the other orders and prepare the espresso machine. One time, one barista came out from behind the counter and went to my seat to apologize for the bad quality of the espresso that she served me. She told me that the coffee beans were old and the new ones would be delivered the next day. She said she would be very happy to prepare another espresso for me the next time. Another time, there was only one barista in the coffee shop. It was Sunday morning and very hot. There were a lot of people in the coffee shop, and many cups and dishes were on the counter and in the sink. The barista was not in a good mood. He did not even answer me when I got inside the coffee shop and asked a question about a city street. He did not look at me to ask what I wanted. He was very busy. After a while, I ordered the espresso and asked my questions. He served me the espresso and apologized because of the rush.

However, depending on the independent coffee shop, the strategy does not always work so well. Smith used this strategy in another city, but it was not as he expected. He did not get any better espresso. Actually, his behavior was considered offensive by the baristas of the city.

One barista of the city posted on Twitter a message criticizing Smith's approach using the "validate yourself with the barista" strategy: "the moment when a coffee guy comes to your cafe and starts name dropping and asking coffee questions instead of identifying himself - ugh." It happened with me in Brazil, too. One day, I went to an independent coffee shop in Belo Horizonte. I asked the questions, observed the barista working, and waited for the espresso. Another barista watched what was happening, traded places with the first barista, and prepared the espresso for me. After I finished, I handed back the cup, and she asked about the acidity of the coffee. I said: "It was ok!" She replied, "There is no acidity in this coffee" and started to explain the flavors of the coffee and so on. She showed off her coffee knowledge. It was a bad coffee experience. To avoid this type of problem, Espresso Adventures (@esproadventures) told me on Twitter: "I just ask a few questions and sometimes I'll ask after I drink it 1) what coffee is it 2) who roasted it."

Regarding customer service, connoisseur consumers in the advanced level expect more than regular consumers do. Alan came up with some objective criteria to evaluate customer service. He uses it to evaluate new HEICSs after the first visits. Each item scores one point if the barista (1) smiles, (2) makes eye contact, (3) greets him as soon as he is within reach, (4) is happy to see the customer, (5) says thank you / good bye when customer leaves, (6) knows about the coffee, (7) is willing to share the knowledge, (8) is efficient, (9) answers the customers' questions, and (10) offers something unique/memorable/unexpected that adds value to the customer experience. Item 7 reflects the tasting act element of the taste transformation ritual, and item 10 reveals what is expected by coffee connoisseur consumers when they go to HEICSs. Other informants also revealed this high expectation when they pick a spot to drink their espresso. They want to have their unexpected moment, as described by Hennion (2001, p.13), driven by high-quality coffee. This high expectation pushes the baristas beyond the regular service that they provide during their daily activities. Some consumers try to share coffee knowledge with barista, or even show off. In a podcast, Michael Ryan, a barista and roaster at Caffee Ladro, Seattle, explained that there are consumers who try to show off their coffee knowledge to the barista. They try to win a kind of coffee information competition of "who knows more about coffee":

Interviewer: You've listed coffee geek without incriminating yourself. [laughs] Can you explain?

Yeah. I have on the coffee geek and I have on the coffee professional. I differentiate between the two only as much as one person knows entirely about coffee but doesn't

actually work in the industry, and one person knows entirely about coffee and works in the industry. I find those two experience used to be remarkably different. A lot of times you get the person who knows entirely about coffee, and they want to prove to you that they know entirely about coffee, and it is another one of those that kind like, “Ok, you win!” Eventually you will find something that you don’t know about, they find something that you don’t know, how much misinformation is out there. You will find somebody who thinks they know something that you don’t, and, you just, you’ve got to know that, and you will, that “oh, you know, I didn’t know that,” or “I hadn’t heard that before.” Just being able to roll with those punches because that is what they put out there a lot of times. It is to prove to you they know a ton about coffee, and that is fine. That is what they are there for, they want you to make them a single-origin aeropress. . . . The coffee geek is the person who is there to show you how much they know, and it is another type of customer you just have to roll with it. You got to take it and kind of just let it roll off your back (Audio Café, 2014, February 4).

The status game also takes place when connoisseur consumers use the crema of the espresso to evaluate the coffee. Crema is used as a sign of the barista’s espresso shot quality. According to the blog SweetMarias, crema should be “compact and persistent: it should last 2 minutes before the suspended water molecules drain, the entrapped gas is released and the liquid underneath shows through” (Sweetmarias, n.d.). Annex G presents crema diagnostics proposed by Sweet Marias’ blog. However, there are some coffee professionals who argue that it is possible diagnose the espresso just based on the crema. In the ChefSteps vídeo class about espresso (2014b), Charles Babinski (G&B Coffee owner and top-2 barista in 2014 and 2013 USA barista championship) and Scott Callender (marketing diretor of La Marzocco, which is a well-known espresso machine company) discuss about what they call the “magical crema” myths.

Charles Babinski: The idea that you can diagnose an espresso just by looking at the crema is a little bit lopsided. It misses something. Crema is an essential part of good espresso for sure, but what color that crema is, what consistency is, will depend a lot upon the coffee as much as anything. I mean, you can have a terrible coffee, roasted poorly and get beautiful like aesthetic and pleasing crema out of it. And, you can have like the most lovely, you know, special complex and intricate coffee around and you will get this palest, kind of ghostly espresso crema.

Scott Callender: Yes. I think that the one of the best example of that is... Italian roasters include robusta into their blends simply to add this really thick dark crema on top of their shot, so it looks beautiful, but if you have just taste a single origin robusta, most people will not tell you that it tastes like a very good espresso. [...] I mean, the major thing that is going to differentiate the color of the crema is the level of roast, because if you... if you think about it, you will get a color of espresso that is based on how dark the beans are in the harvest, so, you know, for instance somebody that, that is roasting really dark you get this really, really dark crema on top, but if you’re, if you’re brewing something that is really light roasted coffee, it is going to come out looking blond immediately. That is the major thing.

Regardless, based on the crema, coffee connoisseur consumers are still using crema to get the initial cues about the quality of the espresso. Taking pictures of the espresso crema and

posting them on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook is a common practice among coffee connoisseurs who use social media. Espresso Adventures wrote on Twitter about an espresso's crema picture: "swirls, crema close up. The reveal tomorrow: guess the #espresso #espressoventures #toronto #coffee" (@esproadventures, November 12, 2014). She collects pictures of all the espresso that she drinks on her social media sites. This magical crema myth is another tension between coffee connoisseurs and baristas.

5 DISCUSSION

Drawing on Driver's ritual model (1991), this research has generated a number of insights regarding connoisseur consumer behavior. Using a qualitative approach, I extend the notion of ritual in the consumer behavior field (McCracken, 1986; Rook, 1985) by introducing the concept of the taste transformation ritual. The taste transformation ritual symbolically portrays the enthusiasts' strivings to differentiate themselves from regular consumers, which Leibenstein (1950) calls the "snob effect," through practices, objects, and taste. Tasting coffee in a reflexive way, paying attention to what they are drinking, and discussing it with friends and professionals allows them to change themselves and their bodies. McCracken (1986) affirms that rituals transform the individuals and Belk and Costa (1998) found that the creation of a fantasy consumption enclave created rituals of transformation. Building on van Gennep's (1960) and Turner's (1995) explanations of the rite of passage, I describe how regular consumers transform themselves and their bodies through the taste transformation rituals and become connoisseur consumers.

The transformation of tastes in terms of a sphere of discourse in which the consumer can knowledgably engage is largely cognitive and involves learning, discrimination, vocabulary, and judgment. But the transformation that takes place in terms of gustatory and olfactory tastes experienced is an affective one through which the body rather than the mind is transformed. Both types of transformation are part of the ritual transformation of self and reinforce one another. But the latter change in the physiological taste experience is the more embodied practice (food and drink literally enter the body through the mouth—Falk 1994) and arguably the most profound. It is the sensory and sensual part of the transformation and involves pleasure (Gronow 1997; Probyn 2000; Serres 1985/2008). While cognitive tastes and sensory taste transformations proceed simultaneously and symbiotically, it might be argued that the sensory experience is primary and the basic source of joy, while the cognitive development is secondary and is needed in order to express and discuss this shared source of pleasure. Someone who developed sensory taste expansion without a complimentary expansion of cognitive vocabulary would be unable to describe or share their joy. And someone who developed their cognitive tastes without a corresponding expansion of their sensory pleasures would be an effete dilettante who talks the talk without being able to walk the walk. Both sensory and cognitive transformation are needed in order to become a connoisseur.

More metaphorically and socially we might say that just as there is a bodily change in the individual in terms of sensory experiences, there is among the community of connoisseurs a change in the social body that is bound together by a set of cognitive tastes that allows discourse about their shared pleasures (Gronow 1997; Synnott 1993; Turner 1984). And just as the sensory and cognitive transformations support one another, so do the individual and social bodily changes that take place. While the individual changes in taste and tastes that take place are geographically bounded by the location of the individual, the social change that takes place is not geographically bound, especially in an Internet age of nearly instant digital communication, social media, blogs, and web pages. Thus this study of coffee coinnaisseurship in three countries and multiple cities is not a study of disparate and distinct coffee cultures. Rather, it is the study of a linked coffee culture that interacts and is spreading globally. It extends not only through the connoisseurs and baristas, but also through the coffee growers, roasters, importers, shops, media, and others who play a part in provisioning, nurturing, experiencing, and sustaining the growing social body of contemporary coffee coinnaisseurship.

My findings extend the literature on ritual, adding the connoisseurship rite of passage concept. Instead of a short-term ritualistic consumption experience, such as mountain man rendezvous re-enactors (Belk & Costa, 1998), one-week-long antimarket event (Kozinets, 2002a), or unique and extraordinary ritual consumption experience of nature (Arnould & Price, 1993), the connoisseurship rite of passage concept explains how consumers transform themselves through consumption, performing the taste transformation ritual, which is an everyday consumption practice that takes years. During the connoisseurship rite of passage, connoisseur consumers collect consumption experiences that form a part of their extended selves. Experiences provided by the taste transformation ritual are essential to connoisseur consumers. These findings expand the literature on extended self (Belk, 1998) and collection (Belk, 1995) that is mainly based on objects or goods that are real (Belk, 1998) as well as virtual (Belk, 2013). Furthermore, connoisseur consumers have been recognized as those who have different cultural capital compared to other consumers; however, I discuss the empowerment of the consumer within the specialty coffee subculture of consumption by means of the subcultural capital (Thornton, 1996) accumulation. This study extends the literature on connoisseur consumers, opening new venues to study their behavior.

Based on the set of oppositions described by Bell (1992), my findings demonstrate how taste transformation rituals are established and manipulated to differentiate connoisseurship consumption practices from mass culture practices. The oppositions through comparisons (Hennion, 2004) between connoisseurship and mass consumption reveal the systematic dimensions of ritualization described by Bell (1992). For the informants, in the vertical hierarchical structures generated by the oppositions, the independent coffee shop is superior. These independent coffee shops can provide a high-end service by outstanding baristas in small-scale and localized channels, such as the indie marketplace (Arsel & Thompson, 2011), offering superior-quality fresh coffee. Coffee chains, which cannot provide the same service because of their operational structure and mass consumption objectives, are inferior. A small unit of quantity of beverage with intense taste, complexity (Levy, 1999) and free of other ingredients (e.g., sugar, milk, caramel, and so on) is superior, more mature and of a higher status. A large amount of beverage, mixed with other ingredients, with a bland and sweet taste and automated preparation, is inferior. The differentiation between the regular consumer and the connoisseur consumer behavior is reiterated through the taste transformation ritual, which highlights the right and wrong ways to do things and reinforces the normative aspect of connoisseurship consumption.

In the horizontal opposition (Bell, 1992), the distinction between connoisseur consumers (“us”) and regular consumers (“them”) is established. Even in independent coffee shops, there are regular consumers as well, and they differentiate themselves through their consumption practices and their capacity to describe the taste of the coffee and its nuances. Performing the taste transformation rituals together with other consumers and coffee professionals, the connoisseur consumer takes part in the connoisseurship rite of passage, becoming a member of the coffee connoisseurship community. Connoisseur consumers are inspired by outstanding professionals and try to emulate their practices. The informants who are in the advanced stages of the rite of passage are more focused in their individual performances and, in order to develop their personal skills and abilities, they are more selfish, goal-driven, and individualistic than regular consumers regarding specialty coffee consumption. These individualistic characteristics of a community member are different from what have been described by research in the CCT field (Arnould & Price, 1993; Belk & Costa, 1998; Kozinets, 2002a; Kozinets, 2001; Muñiz & Schau, 2014; Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001; Weinberger & Wallendorf, 2012).

There is also an opposition between central and local. The service and product provided by the central and hegemonic brandscape (Thompson & Arsel, 2004) companies are the main oppositional reference for the practices performed by connoisseur consumers. For example, one taste transformation ritual element that provides a consumption establishing and reinforcing the coffee social order for consumers is the variation in the choices of high-quality products. Connoisseur consumers prefer to try products that they have not tasted before. This is the opposite of coffee shop chains' commodity logic (Thompson & Arsel, 2004). In a rational disciplined society, consumers want to know what to expect of the product that they are purchasing, and they expect uniformity and predictability (Ritzer, 2007); however connoisseur consumers expect variation and uncertainty in the taste of the high-quality coffee that they drink. They do not taste coffee at the same spot regularly. Beyond the motifs presented by Arsel, Rindfleisch, and Thompson (2012), that their informants used to avoid the Starbucks and option for a local coffee shop (the cosmopolitan motif and the artisan/owner motif), my finds also add another one: the quality of the coffee. The informants search for variation in the choices of high-quality coffee that will help them improve their taste. Rather than the disciplined body, either individually or socially (Falk 1994; Turner 1984), the rebel against the established capitalist order, even as they acquire a new discipline within the community of coffee connoisseurs and a new capitalist order.

I extend the theories of taste by explaining how, regarding a specific aesthetic category of product, people develop different tastes through ritualistic consumption. Taste has been studied as a static state of affairs or as a passive social game; however, connoisseur consumers develop their taste through a reflexive activity helped by the professionals and other connoisseurs who encourage them. Contrary to Arsel and Bean (2013), who give attention to how individuals convert taste into practice, I argue that practice helps to convert the taste of the individual through ritualization. Taste transformation rituals allow consumers to compare the taste oppositions between the mass and connoisseurship coffee consumption practices and develop their own taste and consumption practices. In his approach, Driver (1991) considers the ritual functional elements to be group-oriented (social order, community, transformation), whereas Rook (1985) uses structural elements (artifacts, script, performance, and audience) of the ritual that are more personal and performance oriented. As my findings suggest, rituals studied as group-oriented practices better fit with the study of taste as a reflexive activity, due to the necessity of the social order and the community to transforming

the consumer self. However both individual sensory transformation of taste and social transformation of tastes are a part of these practices.

I also contribute to serious leisure consumer behavior knowledge by offering a better understanding of the role played by amateurs in connoisseurship consumption. The taste transformation ritual is conducted as a serious leisure pursuit, regulating the social interaction between consumers and professionals (baristas) in prescribing the connoisseur's way of tasting coffee in coffee shops. By searching for connoisseurship consumption, my research contributes to prior studies on serious leisure consumption pursuits (Belk & Costa, 1998; Belk, 1988; Thomas, Price & Schau, 2013; Kozinets, 2001; Moisio, Arnould, & Gentry, 2013; Tumbat & Belk, 2011) by describing the elements of the rituals performed by connoisseur consumers. My findings also reveal that connoisseur consumers are amateurs in different stages of the connoisseurship rite of passage. Although amateurs have received attention in different research fields (e.g., Guichard, 2012; Hennion, 2007; Stebbins, 1979), thus far only limited research in the field of CCT has addressed amateur consumer behavior (Belk, 1995; Karababa & Ger, 2011; Martin & Schouten, 2014). My findings increase our understanding of the amateur consumer's behavior and shed light on the importance of amateurs to professionals and regular consumers, or consumers who are not engaged in a serious leisure pursuit. No research has described or revealed the tensions in the Stebbins's professional-amateur-public (P-A-P) system before. The identification of the amateur consumer's behavior and the relationship of these amateurs with professionals and with the public during their connoisseurship rite of passage contributes to the consumer culture field by increasing knowledge of this social consumption phenomenon.

Finally, the connoisseurship consumption community helps us to better understand the dynamics of heterogeneous consumption communities (Thomas, Price, & Schau, 2013). Prior consumption community research has focused on singular producers, but, as the study published by Thomas, Price, and Schau (2013) revealed, consumption community members are heterogeneous. Drawing on Stebbins's P-A-P system (1979, p. 24), which has not yet been fully recognized in the context of consumption communities, I help to advance the study of such communities by revealing the tensions between the members of the community and the production of subcultural and social capital through the performance of the taste transformation ritual. The enactment tensions (Thomas, Price, and Schau, 2013) between connoisseurs -- regular consumers -- and outstanding professionals -- regular consumers; and

the status games (Üstüner & Thompson, 2012) between connoisseur consumers and outstanding professionals in the connoisseurship community were identified and described. By navigating these tensions, the members produce and increase their subcultural and social capital online and offline.

To develop the theoretical contribution, I focused on the transformation function of rituals that is performed during the connoisseurship rite of passage. The present study's findings could be extended in future research that explores the different functions of rituals. Other aggregate functions of rituals could be addressed in the same context, such as initiation and bonding. Connoisseurship consumption is a richly ritualistic context that can help shed light on consumer behavior, expanding and developing the theory in the consumer culture field. Connoisseur consumers are increasing in many types of marketplace cultures, such as wine, food, and beer. The taste transformation ritual could thus be applied to other beverage or food contexts, as well as to identify other possible ritual elements and, as a consequence, expand the concept. Future research can also address the behavior of connoisseur consumers in non-food and non-beverage contexts, such as clothing, furnishings, film appreciation, and art appreciation, in which consumers perform the taste transformation rituals by identifying the similarities and differences. These varied applications can provide a greater understanding of the taste transformation rituals performed in the context of oppositional objects, practices, and meanings.

Another future research possibility is to develop a more detailed historical analysis of how the connoisseurship consumption community reacts when threatened by the bandwagon effect (Leibenstein, 1950). On 5 December 2014, Starbucks opened its first unit, called Reserve Roastery and Tasting Room, nine blocks away from its original store in Pike Place Market. This unit is dedicated to coffee education and to producing small-batch roasting of high-quality coffee. This new Starbucks was inspired by the model of the independent coffee shop, but on the mass culture scale. Many Starbucks consumers are improving their coffee knowledge and tastes with the connoisseurship consumption practices provided by the new unit of the company. Potentially paralleling the coffee market events of the 1990s with the initial worldwide expansion of Starbucks, this new initiative may increase the connoisseurship consumption community. As a consequence, coffee connoisseurs will probably react with snobishness (Leibenstein, 1950). It should be a fertile field to extend the concepts of heterogeneous consumption community and consumer behavior.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A - Coffee equipment

Siphon



Chemex



AeroPress



Hario V60



French Press



Manual Grinder

Automatic
Grinder

Espresso Machine



Portafilter



Espresso Machine

APPENDIX B - The Latctomer

ESPRESSO DRINKS

All DRINKS ARE DOUBLES.

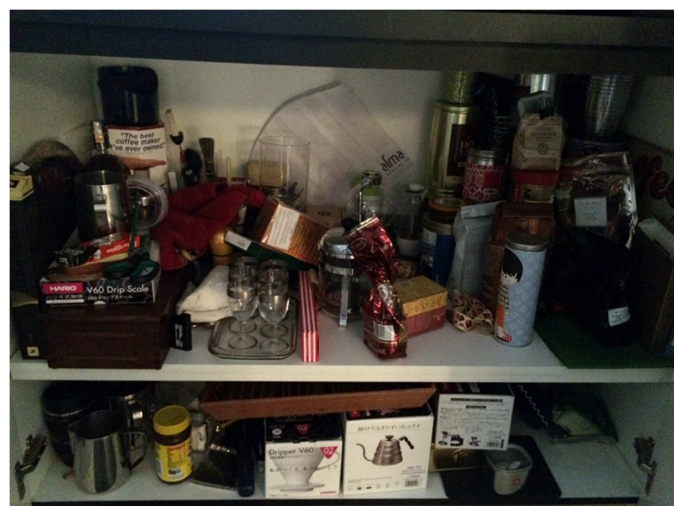
The LACTOMETER

LESS MILK

MORE MILK

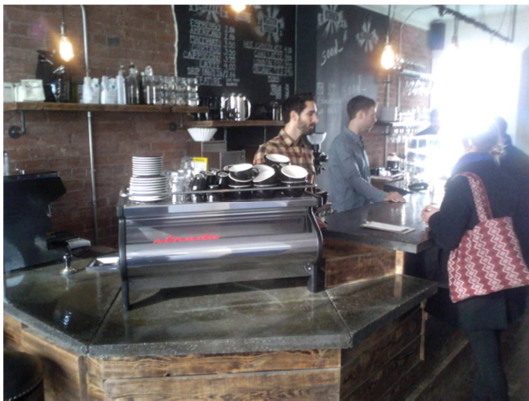
ESPRESSO	2 ⁷⁵
MACCHIATO	3 ²⁶
CORTADO	3 ⁵¹
CAPPUCCINO	3 ⁷⁵
LATTE	3 ⁹⁹
MOCHA	4 ²⁷
AMERICANO	2 ⁸¹
BLACK EYE	4 ⁰⁰

APPENDIX C - Mark's coffee equipment and utensils



APPENDIX D - Espresso Machine

Espresso machine altar (HEICS)



Espresso Machine in Coffee Shop Chains



APPENDIX E- Coffee seminar and cupping

Stabucks' coffee seminar



HEICSs' cupping



ANNEX

ANNEX A - specialty coffee evaluation



Specialty Coffee Association of America Coffee Cupping Form

Name: _____ Date: _____

Origin: _____ Table No. _____

Quality scale:			
6.00 - Good	7.00 - Very Good	8.00 - Excellent	9.00 - Outstanding
6.25	7.25	8.25	9.25
6.50	7.50	8.50	9.50
6.75	7.75	8.75	9.75

Sample #	Roast Level or sample	Score: _____		Score: _____		Score: _____		Score: _____		Score: _____		Score: _____		Score: _____		Total Score
		Fragrance/Aroma		Flavor		Acidity		Body		Uniformity		Clean Cup		Overall		
		Dry _____ Qualities: _____ Break _____ Aftertaste Score: _____ Intensity: _____ Level: _____ Heavy _____ Thin _____		Balance Score: _____ Sweetness Score: _____ Defects (subtract) Taint=2 # cups Intensity Fault=4 <input type="checkbox"/> X <input type="checkbox"/> = <input type="checkbox"/>												
Notes: _____																Final Score

Sample #	Roast Level or sample	Score: _____		Score: _____		Score: _____		Score: _____		Score: _____		Score: _____		Score: _____		Total Score
		Fragrance/Aroma		Flavor		Acidity		Body		Uniformity		Clean Cup		Overall		
		Dry _____ Qualities: _____ Break _____ Aftertaste Score: _____ Intensity: _____ Level: _____ Heavy _____ Thin _____		Balance Score: _____ Sweetness Score: _____ Defects (subtract) Taint=2 # cups Intensity Fault=4 <input type="checkbox"/> X <input type="checkbox"/> = <input type="checkbox"/>												
Notes: _____																Final Score

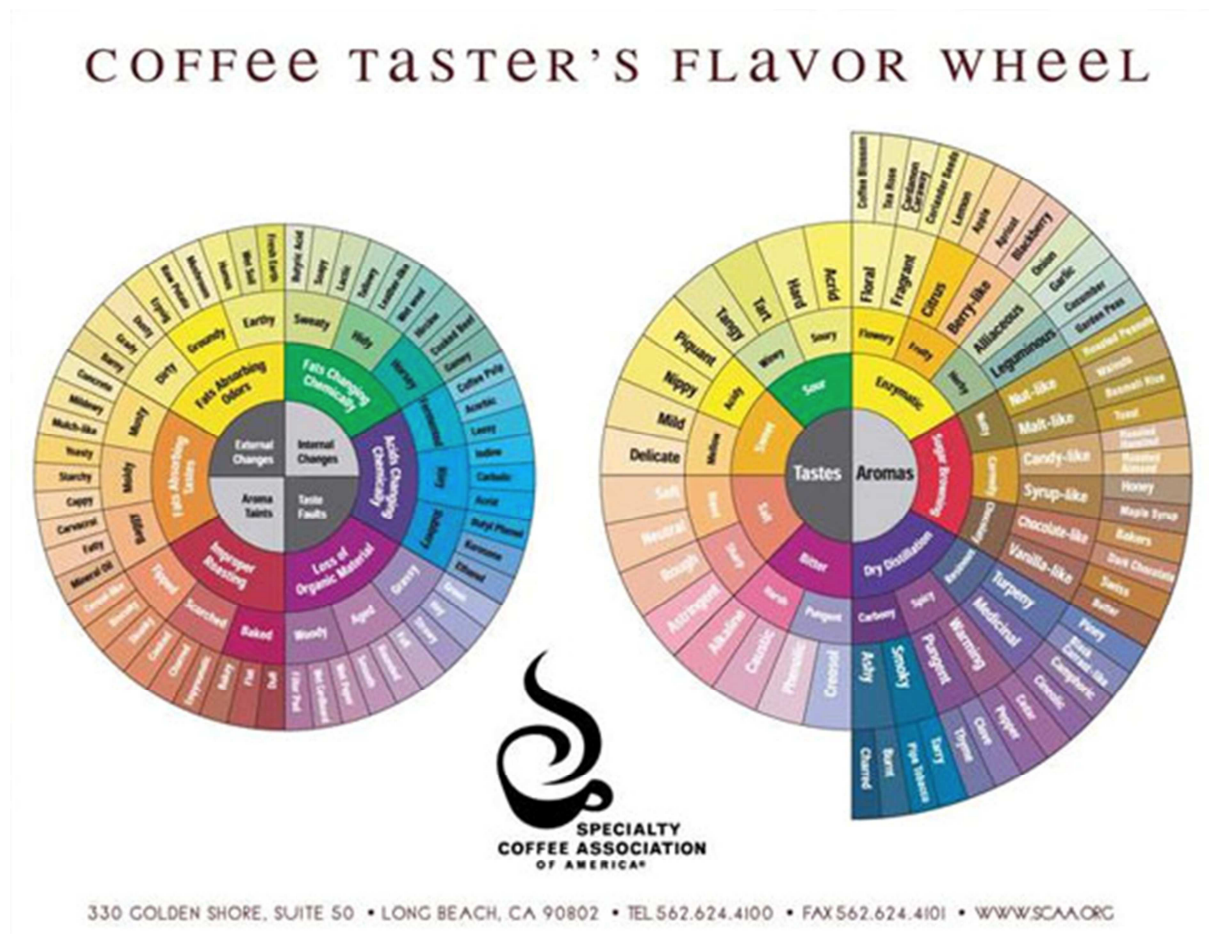
Sample #	Roast Level or sample	Score: _____		Score: _____		Score: _____		Score: _____		Score: _____		Score: _____		Score: _____		Total Score
		Fragrance/Aroma		Flavor		Acidity		Body		Uniformity		Clean Cup		Overall		
		Dry _____ Qualities: _____ Break _____ Aftertaste Score: _____ Intensity: _____ Level: _____ Heavy _____ Thin _____		Balance Score: _____ Sweetness Score: _____ Defects (subtract) Taint=2 # cups Intensity Fault=4 <input type="checkbox"/> X <input type="checkbox"/> = <input type="checkbox"/>												
Notes: _____																Final Score

ANNEX B - Espresso field guide



Source: Mug (2011, November)

ANNEX C - Coffee taster's flavor wheel developed by the Specialty Coffee Association of America



Source: SCAA (n.d.b)

ANNEX D - Alan's espresso spreadsheet

Day	Place	Roaster	Country	Coffee	Producer	Region	Variety	Processing
1/7/2014	Vif	Olympia	Colombia	San Sebastian Reserva	OCCICAFE Producer Association	San Sebastian de la Plata, Huila	Caturra, Castillo	Fully Washed
1/13/2014	Trabant downtown	Kuma	Panama	Carmen Natural Espresso	Carlos Aguilera	Boquete	Caturra, Catuai, Typica	Natural
1/15/2014	Trabant downtown	Kuma	Panama	Carmen Natural Espresso	Carlos Aguilera	Boquete	Caturra, Catuai, Typica	Natural
1/23/2014	Neptune	Velton	Ecuador	Taza Dorada #9	Wilson Santorum	Changaimina, Quilanga (Southern Ecuador)	Typica	Fully washed and sun dried

Day	Altitude	Barista	Price	Rating	Days/espresso	My notes	Supposed notes
1/7/2014	1700	Alexandra	\$3,00	3,5	1,2		caramel, baked apple, and panela, all with a creamy body and crisp acidity
1/13/2014	1750	Maria	\$2,75	3,5	2,0	bright, smooth	very different from last year, balanced
1/15/2014	1750		\$2,75	3	2,0		Wild Strawberries, Passion Fruit, Blackberry Compote, Pineapple Syrup; Filter: Wild Strawberries, Orange Marmalade, Juicy Peach; Trabant: (Carmen Reserva, honey process) Bing Cherry, Caramel, Green Grape
1/23/2014	1600		\$2,50	3	2,8		chocolate, cashew, less body, good with milk. More sweetness and body after coarsing, reducing dose, more volume in less time, the first was too long. Velton: Medium bodied and extremely clean w/ candied florals, raisin, hazelnut, chocolate, and lemon

ANNEX E - What your coffee says about you

WHAT YOUR COFFEE SAYS ABOUT YOU

	ESPRESSO You're friendly and adaptive. You actually like the taste of coffee, a rare, but admirable trait.		DOUBLE ESPRESSO You're practical and hard-working. You like knowing that one shot just doesn't do it for you anymore.
	TRIPLE ESPRESSO You're enthusiastic but obsessive. You've been awake since the late 90's.		MOCHA You're fun-loving and creative. You hate the taste of coffee, but you need the pick-me-up, so you improvise.
	LATTE You're reflective, but often indecisive. In a world of unknowns, you like the safe pick.		CAPPUCCINO You're warm-hearted, but oblivious at times. Your friends have to remind you to wipe the foam off your lip.
	MACCHIATO You're traditional and reserved, but for the most part, you hate foam mustaches.		ICED COFFEE You're assertive and outspoken. You don't let seasons dictate how you live your life. Also, you like straws.
	AMERICANO You're calm and conscientious. You enjoy the simple things in life, like picnics in the park, birds chirping, and watery coffee.		FRAPPUCCINO You're happy and energetic. You claim to love coffee, but really, you just love ice cream.
	COFFEE TO-GO You're serious and focused. You believe when the going gets tough, the tough get cardboard sleeves because the cups too hot.		EXPRESSO You're clever, annoying, or both. You knowingly or unknowingly mispronounce eSpresso. Either way, I hate you.

DOGHOUSE DIARIES

Source: Darell (n.d.)

ANNEX F - Online coffee community tension

Google +

Mark P. PROPRIETÁRIO

Community Rules - 19 de nov de 2014

Hello community.

This bears repeating because of a lot of recent action the moderators have had to take in this group:

This is a group for people wanting to learn more about specialty coffee. This group does not exist to promote your business, to garner +1s to boost your day, or to find new followers.

If you had a post removed and were wondering why, here's the most likely reasons

- you posted your own photo without any context; which is prohibited here. You have to explain why the photograph of coffee or espresso is relevant to the specialty coffee community here - what the coffee was, how it tasted, where you had it, etc. Context.

- you posted someone else's photo of coffee. The posting of stock photography, other people's photography is prohibited in this group.

- your post is any kind of promotion of your business. Even coffee related businesses. These are strictly forbidden here.

- your post was a "hey good morning" type post (just a one liner, like "I love coffee! Do you?!"). We have 75,000 members, and we had to ban these kinds of posts because they were overwhelming the community's more substance-based posts.

These are the rules of our community. They don't suit everyone, but they suit most of the regular participants here. If you do not like them, fortunately Google lets anyone start up a community, you should give it a try!




Our rules are listed in the "About this Community" section on the Community's main page. Please read those pages if you have any questions.




COMMUNITY RULES

All are welcome to join our Coffee Community! We ask only that you follow these simple rules:

- 1) No commercial postings allowed of any nature.
- 2) No insulting, foul, demeaning or overly critical language is allowed.
- 3) Be excellent to one another! This community is about education, shared interests, openness and helping each other out.
- 4) No postings on gimmick or multi-level-marketing coffees (this includes Kopi Luwak or Organo Gold type schemes)
- 5) No off topic postings. Any and all posts must be related directly to specialty coffee.
- 6) Please use the categories system whenever possible: if you are posting a coffee photo, post it in the Photos category; if you are posting a coffee review, post it in that category.
- 7) At this time, please do not post any simple introductory postings. If you want to do a detailed introduction talking about your journey into specialty coffee, that's a story to share and we encourage it; but "Hi, my name is Bob, I love coffee" postings are discouraged.
- 8) Though this is a global community we ask that all posts be made in the English Language. We understand there will be many participants who do not have English as a first language, but this community will work best keeping to one principal language.

ANNEX G: Crema diagnostics proposed by Sweet Marias' blog

<p>Is the crema a very light tan/yellow color? Did the extraction take under 15 seconds? (Light crema can also indicate low water temperature).</p> <p>Problem: Underextraction.</p> <p>Solutions: Increase extraction time by grinding coffee finer, or tamping harder. And did you use enough coffee? Increase fineness of grind to extend extraction time. Temperature: Check water temperature. Was the machine, the group, the coffee handle all warmed up properly? Unlikely but possible cause is that you homeroast, and the coffee is too fresh ... was the coffee rested long enough to degas? Many people prefer 48+ hours of resting after roasting for espresso use.</p>	
<p>Does the espresso have a very light tan dot in the middle of extremely dark crema color? Did it take 10 seconds for the first drops of espresso to appear? Did the espresso come out in drops, never becoming a stream? Did the extraction take over 30 seconds?</p> <p>Problem: Overextraction.</p> <p>Solutions: Make the grind a little coarser, back off on the pressure when you tamp the coffee. Did you use too much coffee? The range is 7 to 11 grams per single espresso.</p>	
<p>Did the espresso have great crema color, then visibly drop 1/4 inch or more in the cup as it sat for the first 1 minute? Was the surface of the espresso marked by very large, unstable bubbles in the crema? Is the crema pale?</p> <p>Problem: Fast extraction, or light roast too.</p> <p>Solutions: This might be a combination of short extraction and lighter roast. You will also get a less persistent crema if you use robusta in your blend ... you have more crema perhaps but it fades sooner.</p>	

<p>Does the crema have a rich dark color of tightly compacted foam? And/or does it have darker striations producing a "tiger skin" effect?</p> <p>Problem: None!</p> <p>Solutions: This is how I like my espresso to look. But remember, espresso is a matter of taste and my "perfect espresso" might be a bit overextracter for some people. In Brazil they like a quick extraction time and a lighter roast than most of us West Coast Californians would prefer... to each their own. But when I see the modest amount of dark speckling over substantial amounts of crema, tightly compacted and persistent crema, with perhaps a lighter swiggle in the middle from the last drops of the shot ... I anticipate something good.</p>	
<p>Does the espresso have a thin crema with large oil globules? Did it take a really long time to produce 1 oz of liquid? Did it come out of the coffee handle one drop at a time?</p> <p>Problem: WAY Overextracted</p> <p>Solutions: Make the grind coarser, back off on the pressure when you tamp the coffee. Did you use too much coffee? The range is 7 to 11 grams per single espresso.</p>	
<p>Does the espresso have grit in the cup after you finish?</p> <p>Problem: Grind too fine</p> <p>Solutions: Make the grind coarser.</p>	
<p>The problems you cannot see: bad taste! Bitterness in espresso is a popular complaint. Before you blame the coffee, you need to make sure the machine is clean. A very bad, acrid bitterness results from machines/coffee handles that are dirty. A thorough cleaning of a neglected machine can be a considerable undertaking. I cleaned a La San Marco for 2 days straight trying to remove the cause of my bitter espresso. When the machine is clean, you should be able to do a dryrun with no coffee in the portafilter (meaning, run hot water into the cup through the coffee handle) ... then let the water cool and taste it. If it tastes good, your machine should be clean.</p>	

Source: Sweetmarias (n.d)