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Part 3: Responses to Global Complexity—Ethical Trade

Is Fair Trade-Organic Coffee Sustainable in the Face of Migration? Evidence from a Oaxacan Community

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Los productores de café de México han sido afectados negativamente por los bajos precios mundiales del café, y por una reducción en asistencia gubernamental. Una de las respuestas de estos productores ha sido aumentar la migración hacia los Estados Unidos. Otra respuesta, de algunas cooperativas, ha sido diferenciar su café como sustentable, orgánico y/o de comercio justo. Este artículo examina los vínculos entre el bajo precio del café, la migración, y la producción y comercialización de café certificado, a partir de un estudio de caso conducido en Oaxaca, México. A pesar de que las remesas de dinero de los emigrantes ayudan a financiar la producción de café, el aumento de la emigración reduce el capital humano de la región, lo cual sube el costo de oportunidad de la mano de obra y por lo tanto los salarios locales. En este sentido, los productores de café que emigran a los Estados Unidos, en parte para generar capital de trabajo para la producción de café, afectan negativamente la producción cafetera al aumentar sus costos de producción. Esto genera dudas acerca de la sostenibilidad del modelo del café orgánico y comercio justo en contextos en que hay oportunidades de emigración.

[摘 要]随着世界咖啡价格低廉以及政府支持减少，墨西哥咖啡种植者受到了双重的消极影响。一个反应来自咖啡种植者，越来越多的咖啡种植者移民去了美国。另一个反应来自咖啡合作社，他们开始通过有机和/或公平贸易来区分他们的咖啡。本文通过一个在墨西哥奥axaca州进行的案例研究，探讨了咖啡价格、移民和生产及咖啡商业化之间的关系。尽管移民汇款有助于咖啡生产，但移民人数的增加减少了地区的人力资本，从而提高了劳动力的机会成本和当地的工资。因此，移民到美国的咖啡生产者，部分是为了为咖啡生产积累工作资本，但这也对咖啡生产产生了负面影响，因为增加了生产成本。这引发了对有机和公平贸易咖啡模式在存在移民机会的上下文中的可持续性的质疑。



de Seguimiento de la Agricultura Orgánica de México.' The land and producer figures cited account for both 'in transition' and certified organic coffee (Lobato García, [2005](#)).

2. Cabeza del Río was chosen based on the following criteria: importance of coffee production as an economic activity; large numbers of organized producers (socios) and nonorganized producers (libres); high quality coffee commanding a premium price; many producers with Fair Trade and organic certification, with correspondingly significant sales to Fair Trade-organic markets; and noteworthy presence of outmigration. See Lewis ([2005](#)) for sampling methodology.

3. A very small fraction of La 21 and Michiza producers are in transition to becoming certified organic (a three-year process), and thus receive a lower premium for their coffee. Both La 21 and Michiza have been promoting organic production since the mid-1990s. Michiza has been Fair Trade certified since the early 1990s and La 21 since the mid-1990s.

4. Correlation between percentage of US sojourns and international coffee price over the period 1982–2003, Pearson correlation = $-.465$ ($p = .029$).

5. Correlation between percentage of US sojourns and peso-dollar exchange rate over the period 1982–2003, Pearson correlation = $.778$ ($p = .0001$).

6. Circulation of coffee in the region of the nonmigrant producers (Cabeza del Río) (Durand et al., [1996](#)).

7. Severely affected by the crisis (Lobato García, [2006](#)).



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