



IMPLICATIONS OF LOCAL PRODUCTION CONTEXTS ON THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF COFFEES FORM BRAZIL BRAND

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this work was to understand what factors led to the development of the strategy for positioning the Cafés do Brazil brand in the market and to outline a profile of the difficulties to be faced for the institutionalization of the program. It relied on a documentary analysis and literature review to make the inferences. It was observed that the long period of regulation of the chain formed a productive culture focused on quantity forming a producer identity of a single type of coffee, “Cafés Tipo Santos”, demanding an effort to reposition the Brazilian image in the market. However, the horizontal organization in the productive base make arise informal institutions that guide local strategies, which can hinder the effectiveness of the program creating decentralized and dispersed actions.

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INTRODUCTION

Coffee is one of the most consumed beverages in the world. Consumers are increasingly choosing sustainable, ethical, healthier and higher quality products (Van Loo *et al.*, 2014; Vellema *et al.*, 2015). This behavior induced the segmentation of the coffee market thus breaking the price competition rationale typical of commodity coffee markets (Carvalho, Paiva, and Vieira 2016; Ponte 2002; Raynolds, Murray, and Heller 2007; Visschers *et al.*, 2013). This consumption pattern has encouraged the coffee production chain to innovate and adapt to new competitive standards. Brazil, the world's largest producer, has long been concerned primarily with expanding production, relegating quality to the second place. Consequently, Brazil has traditionally positioned itself as a producer of the commodity coffee, known internationally as “Cafés Tipo Santos” (Saes and Nakazone 2002; Zylbersztajn and Farina 2001). This identity as a large producer of “Cafés Tipo Santos” is no longer compatible with the current reality in coffee marketing, which requires differentiation in terms of various aspects of coffee production and consumption. This situation led to Brazil becoming increasingly isolated from the specialty coffee market (Reardon and Farina 2001).

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Although Brazil has a comparative advantage in the production of Cafés Tipo Santos when it comes to “specialty coffees” there are features inherent to the Brazilian coffee production chain that limit its competitiveness in the international market. To overcome these weaknesses, the Brazilian government has implemented policies designed to align the coffee sector with the new global consumption patterns. The centerpiece of those policies is the creation and institutionalization of the “Cafés do Brasil” program, which purpose is to promote its homonym brand as a symbol of quality, flavor, diversity of origins and sustainability (Brasil 2008, 2012). The program “Cafés do Brasil” seeks to integrate all the links, agents, and organizations in the coffee production chain around a common goal: to build its brand and add value to Brazilian coffee on the international market. As Brazil is a country of continental dimensions and produces coffees in different regions, the brand Cafés do Brasil is a symbol of the diversity of flavors, qualities and farming methods in the various regions where coffee is grown. This initiative brings with it the challenge of integrating all those involved in Brazilian coffee sector around a common goal: making the brand “Cafés do Brasil” the identity of a sustainable product whose quality is distinguished from that of the large-scale production of commodity coffee (Tipo Santos). Implementing strategies requires institutional structures and mechanisms capable of coordinating integrated actions designed to facilitate cooperation between the various

organizations and agents involved in the coffee production chain. However, that implementation depends on the support and cooperation of individuals and organizations managed by individuals who often have different perceptions of their role and even of the goals to be achieved (Crespo, Réquier-Desjardins, and Vicente 2014; Mantzavinos, North, and Shariq 2004; Nadvi 2008). These institutional elements may prove to be factors that facilitate or impede the implementation of the Cafés do Brasil brand. Thus, it seems relevant to investigate how the institutional framework that guides the agents was designed, how the structure and mechanisms for coordinating and adapting the agents involved in the Cafés do Brasil program for strategically positioning the Brazilian coffee on the international specialty coffee market were established and to assess to what extent the program has achieved its goals. Following this introduction (section 1), the article presents the conceptual basis on institutionalist economics used to build the study's analytical framework (section 2), the methodological approaches adopted in the data collection and analysis (section 3), a discussion of the results (section 4) and concluding remarks including the managerial and policy implications (section 5).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study has a descriptive character, based on a documentary analysis. The "National Agribusiness Coffee Development Plan", the "Strategic Agribusiness Coffee Agenda" and the "Strategic Plan for the Coffee Sector Development", developed by the Ministry of Agriculture, were analyzed. These documents explain the issues that the members of the chain have chosen as important for the development of the sector. To complement the assessment, a literature review was carried out to identify historical / institutional elements that impact on the good performance of the system and could jeopardize the success of the proposal. Content Analysis (CA) was used for the analysis. CA is a research technique that allows the identification of regularities through the description, fragmentation, and quantification of texts, making explicit the semantic and syntactic practices in the texts (Bardin 1977; Rocha and Deusdará 2005). The syntax is concerned with the form and frequency that words are written. Whereas semantics highlights the meaning structure of these words. The quantification of these elements or textual statistics offers the possibility of exploration and comparison of texts, facilitating the understanding of textual content.

The use of statistical mapping tool provides indicators to ratify inferences about the content. For that, I use the Iramuteq software to make the statistical mapping, the frequency, the words in the body of the text operative. This program was developed by Pierre Ratinaud and allows to make multivariate analyzes of texts (Marchand and Ratinaud 2012). The software makes the hierarchical classification of the words and distributes them in classes according to the explanatory context. The hierarchical classification follows the principles Factorial Correspondence Analysis (AFC) that allows the fragmentation of the text in explanatory segments with essential information about what the text speaks and how the cognitive thought was constructed allowing to find the best ways to interpret the content of the material transcribed (Fallery and Rodhain 2007). This method counts the words by frequency of co-occurrence, based on grammatical classes loaded with possible meanings of exams beyond the annotations in the dictionaries (Nascimento and Menandro

2006). The degree of association of a word with the class is given by the Chi-square (X^2).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The texts analyzed had 9796 words, 1245 of which were adjectives, verbs, adverbs and nouns, meaning words. The other words were articles, supplementary verbs, prepositions, conjunctions, etc. The 1245 words were distributed in 277 segments of texts, of which the program retained approximately 73% of words that had a frequency greater than $X^2 \geq 3,84$. The words were classified in explanatory contexts that related to the adaptive process of the value chain of Brazilian coffees (Figure 1). Class 3, called "Productive Structure", brings together more general elements of the proposal. Remind to the adaptive efforts of the productive structure within the gate. This class groups 27.7% of the words used to describe the proposals for chain development. Being productivity the characteristic word of this class, presents the highest co-occurrence, thus a higher degree of association ($X^2 = 30,24$). The improvement of the productive system is due to the improvement of productivity and the quality of the crop (Brasil 2002, 2008, 2012), to strategically align productive context with what is communicated. This effort is necessary since most of the producers are of small-scale, are dispersed, low index of associativism, face the managerial and technological problems that need to be mitigated in order to increase the competitiveness of Brazilian coffee in the internal and external market. Moreover, the low level of collective organization makes training and implementation difficult for proposals (Brasil, 2012).

Classes 1 and 2 refer to more specific contexts of the "Coordination Structure" of the adaptive process. Class 1, called "Process Management" encompasses characteristic elements of the activities and actors necessary for the effectiveness of actions, groups 33.2% of the explanatory context. Therefore the word committee is the most recurrent and pertinent form of this class. That word has a X^2 of 25.71. The management of the process is important, and the committees are important to capture the demands of the productive structure, the market structure, and define budget values, sources of resources and schedule for the development of the work its implementation and maintenance of activities (Brasil, 2002, 2012). In addition, process management will ensure the development of certification tools used to ensure compliance of all production steps. Class 2, called the "Positioning Strategy", brings together explanatory elements of the promotion of Brazilian coffees for the generation of foreign exchange for the benefit of Brazilian society through increased internal and external commercialization and industrialization of national coffees (Brasil, 2008, 2012). Such a word class accounts for 33.1% of the explanatory elements of the proposals. Given that, the world market is the most significant element of the cluster ($X^2 = 24,36$).

The positioning strategies have the mission of developing an institutional marketing in the country abroad, aimed at exploring the specificities of the products in their respective target markets, orienting the offer of the actors along the value chain with the communication actions for the effectiveness of the proposal of value of the Brazilian coffees, focusing on the sporting events, confederations cup, world cup and Olympics to position the Brazilian coffees as a symbol of this country (Brasil, 2002, 2008, 2012) (Figure 1).

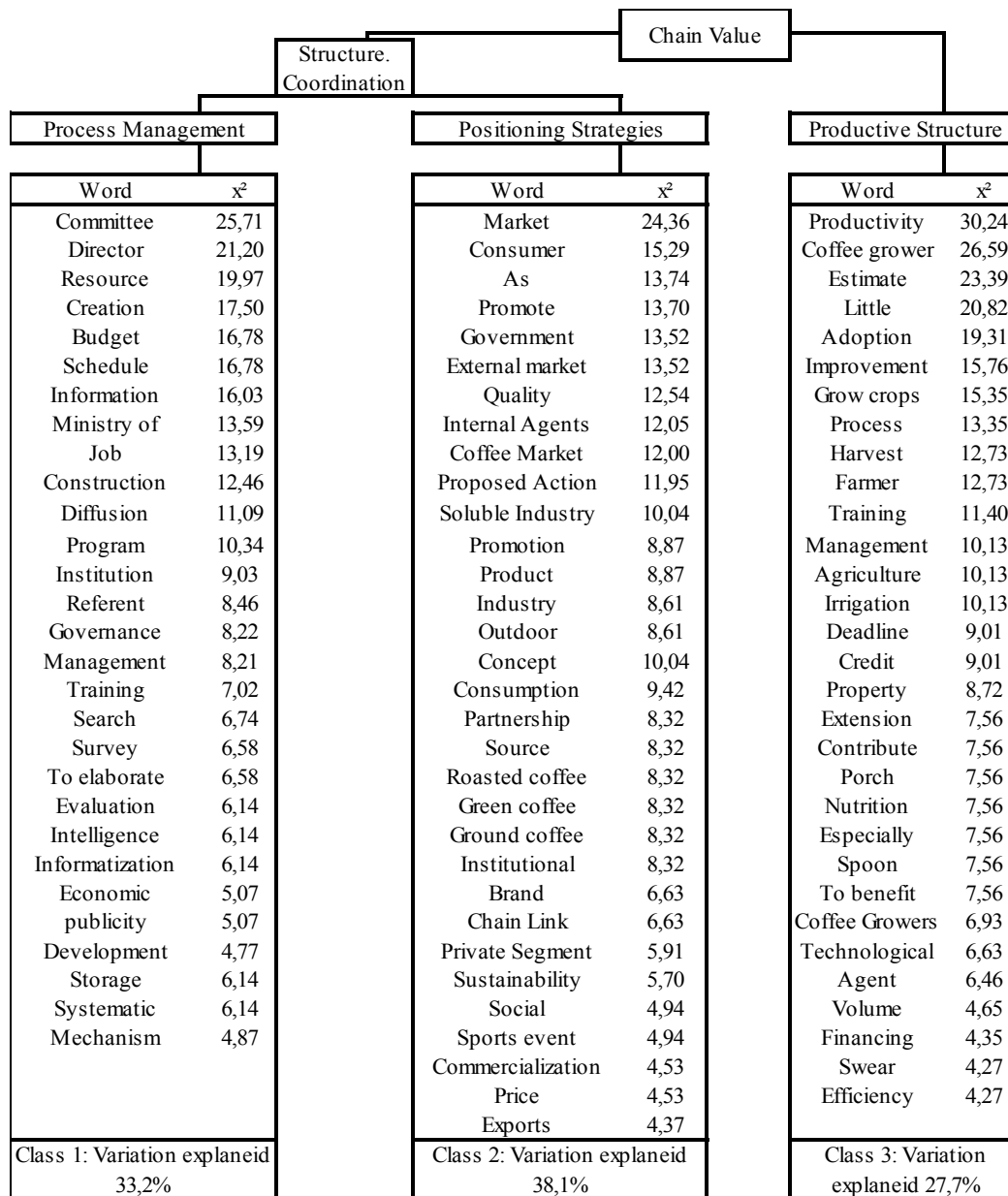


Figure 1. Focus of attention for the positioning of the brand "Cafés do Brasil"
Source: own elaboration

Government initiatives over the years, especially during almost a century of regulation, have contributed to the institutionalization of a productive culture oriented towards quantity and non-quality production. In this period of regulation, the IBC coordinated all actions to expand production, relegating quality to the background, discouraging the production of quality coffees, which had implications for the image of the national coffee industry (Saes 1995, 2009). The Brazilian Coffee Institute (IBC), an organization that lasted until 1989, pointed to all pricing strategies, offered all service and control infrastructure, which consequently limited learning and stimulated organizational dependence. This fact contributed to an efficient market coordination, but with low vertical integration. This coordination model was efficient for commodity production and marketing. The result of this coordination was the formation of an identity, belief, values and culture of a major producer of a single type of coffee, the "Santos Type Coffee" (Saes and Nakazone 2002), the focus of market repositioning. The stagnation in the consumption of commodity coffee to the detriment of the special coffees can

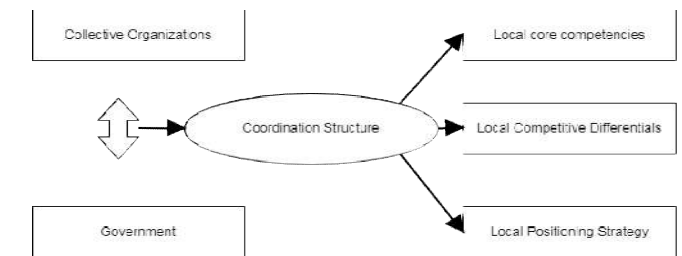
be seen as a barrier to Brazilian coffees in the main consumer markets, evidencing the role of the initiative to align the Brazilian coffee value chain to this new marketing paradigm. With the extinction of the IBC in 1989, the system became disoriented and disorganized, so the actions designed to adapt the production base were oriented to take advantage of regional peculiarities, increase productivity and horizontal organization of producers along the value chain forming clusters linking producers, exporters, roasters and distribution channels to leverage more aggressive market action (Brasil, 2012). However, the horizontal organization of producers gives rise to new institutions which may jeopardize the effectiveness of the program. As the actors interact within the group, arises ties social, cultural, friendship, beliefs and values that guide the actions and decisions of the actors. Such ties represent informal institutions that arise spontaneously as a process of innovation and imitation that occurs in a group that is learning collectively (Commons 1931; Hodgson 1997; Mantzavinos, North, and Shariq 2004). These institutions encourage cooperation by encouraging individuals to engage

in complex activities with other individuals / groups. Therefore, the efficiency of this proposal depends on the adherence and cooperation of individuals, organized in organizations, who have differentiated perceptions about their role and even the objectives to be achieved (Nadvi 2008). By organizing the regions, they come to claim autonomy to value local characteristics and to create institutional mechanisms adapted locally and accepted collectively. In this way, collective learning is facilitated, providing, consequently, the emergence of informal institutions that guarantee the legitimacy of actions within the regions. Such learning may induce the substitution of the government actor in the defense of local interests over national ones. By organizing themselves in representative entities, producers find a structure of service and institutional support that favors solutions to collective problems and improve communication with the market. By pooling resources and skills, which favor sharing solutions to collective problems, and investing in new skills and knowledge, coffee regions are seeking solutions for profitable business needs to capture income with the best quality coffees. Each region then begins to create strategies that value and capture the internal factors that allow creating market differentiating values.

In this way, the base has incorporated new strategies to offering coffee. In this changing environment, the solutions are based on the subjective rationality of the actors that are oriented by the culture, the beliefs and the ideologies shared by the members of the group (Aguilar Filho and Fonseca 2011; Hodgson 1998; North 1991, 1992). As these individuals or groups relate, they collectively apprehend and share informal institutions that stabilize expectations and provide effective moral and ethical discipline to reduce uncertainties, increase cooperation, and improve the vision of equity and shared justice (Mantzavinos, North, and Shariq 2004; Valiati and Fonseca 2014). The productive base, when organized, is in a more accentuated learning curve, being able at serving dynamic markets that offer better options to maximize income. Obviously, the regions have different perceptions that influence and direct the search for what is most advantageous. Consequently, the mere sale of raw materials for Brazilian industries is no longer profitable due to the greater specificity of the assets offered by rural entrepreneurs. That is, the concentration of productive stages at the base is an adaptation to the market international providing better opportunities.

However, These agents are more or less willing to engage and cooperate in this initiative according to the perception of what is most advantageous for them, by being willing to engage in complex relationships with other individuals from a common set of rules that all believe (Dequech 2013; Mantzavinos, North, and Shariq 2004; Peng, Wang, and Jiang 2008). These interactions are complex, since each individual has a differentiated and generalized perception of the situation. These patterns of human interactions appear to be the underlying source of a performance of policy proposals and the result is economic. Perceptions are subjective and based on the actors' own view of the world, so cultural elements, values, beliefs and learning can influence the outcome of these proposals. Thus, the effectiveness of this political effort depends on the perception and disposition of the agents affected by the changes that the program certainly demands. These elements may prove to be facilities or difficulties for the institutionalization of the Cafés do Brasil program. At the same time that regions can begin to structure their action

strategies, they can move on to work in isolation. That is, it leads the consumer to have a clear perception of the regions and not the national cafes. In this way, there is a low capacity for coordination and joint governance, thus directly reflecting adaptive efficiency, information dissemination and value chain adaptation. Therefore, a more aligned action is required between collective organizations and government actors to align the governance structure in order to broaden local competencies, the local competitive differential and the strengthening of regional positioning strategies.



Source: own elaboration

Figure 2. Strategic action to increase the competitiveness of regional coffee

By promoting the alignment of efforts, the regions increase the capture of value in the market. Differently, if the producers act alone, reduces the possibilities of repositioning the chain efficiently. But anyway the national strategy is being overlooked by the greater focus on local strategy. The Cafés do Brasil brand that should act as an umbrella brand for the system and be a unified value proposition of positioning end up being overlooked in favor of regional brands. It can be seen that the non-feasibility of the Cafés do Brasil brand as a unique symbol of the country is a unique cause of the institutional changes in each environment can produce diverse effects on the total product of the chain and influence directly the economic performance (Arrow 1962; Peng, Wang, and Jiang 2008). This scenario occurs due to the fragility of formal institutions, where the formal institutional framework is fragile, informal institutions play a preponderant role in the economic organization (Peng 2002) and strategic orientation that may lead to under-exploitation of the Cafés do Brasil brand.

Conclusion and recommendations

The results show that the defense of local brands is a consequence of the reinforcement of culture, belief and regional values favoring the appearance of informal institutions as the local actors learn collectively. This process has political consequences for the marketing program Cafés do Brasil, proposed by MAPA. The inefficiency of the program's proposal is conditioned by the institutional inefficiency of the program's agents of governance in coordinating the actions of the national coffee chain, thus discrediting the brand's positioning. The main consequence is the distance between the value propositions of the regions, evidenced mainly by the diversity of possibilities of interactions between producers and their markets. In this way, one can perceive a difficulty in thinking and implement a unique marketing strategy for the Brazilian coffee sector, due to both the differences of interests and the adaptive differences between the agents. This result signals the need to explore marketing tools according to the needs of sites aligned to the value chains that are being built locally. In addition, there are distinct features that can give local cafes with a greater commercial appeal. Now the

challenge is to know what direction this new institutional framework actually produces in the Brazilian coffee value chain.

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