METAMORPHIC BREWS AND MARKETPLACE DYNAMICS: EXPLORING COFFEE'S EVOLUTION AS A CULTURAL ICON

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4.1 Abstract

Icons include products that are culturally and historically significant in the marketplace. To illustrate the iconicity of coffee, this study argues that coffee is far more than just a beverage: it is a metamorphic product with the qualities to assume different ideologies over time. In accomplishing its scope, this study explores how coffee secured its status as a marketplace icon through the analysis of three epochs in the marketplace identified as coffee waves. As such, coffee represents a distinct and powerful cultural expression of the dominant ideology presents in each wave: the 'good-life' (first wave), cosmopolitan (second wave), artisanal (third wave). The study reveals coffee as a metamorphic product due to its metamorphic qualities (i.e., materiality, ritual, meaning, communication). A marketplace icon that conveys distinctive and powerful cultural meanings over different periods of time.

Keywords: Coffee, metamorphic product, icons, marketplace icon, cultural meaning, ideology

4.2 Introduction: Coffee

Consumer researchers have frequently analyzed icons and their importance in the marketplace (Holt 2018, Kerrigan 2018, Patterson 2017, Pedeliento, Pinchera, and Andreini 2020, Rokka 2016, Woodward and Ellison 2012). Icons can be described as a "symbolic condensation" (Alexander 2008, 782), and "brands, products, or services that are historically significant for their cultural meanings" (Gopaldas 2016, 264). The importance of studying icons in marketing is twofold. First, icons are historically and ideologically significant in the marketplace (Gopaldas 2016). Indeed, icons are far more than just products. They are vessel of condensed symbolic meanings that people consume (Alexander 2008). This is important for marketers as it can help comprehending why and how certain products acquire and retain their cultural importance in the marketplace. Second, consuming icons allow individuals to experience cultural meanings embedded in our everyday life (Alexander, Bartmanski, and Giesen 2012). This is important for marketers as it can help explaining the relationship between meanings and consumer behavior.

Marketing scholars have studied how products and brands become icons (Holt 2018, Pedeliento, Pinchera, and Andreini 2020, Rokka 2016). For example, icons exert iconic status due to the powerful cultural meanings they convey in the marketplace (Holt 2018, Kerrigan 2018, Patterson 2017, Pedeliento, Pinchera, and Andreini 2020, Rokka 2016, Woodward and Ellison 2012, Silchenko and Visconti 2021). If on the one hand research has shown how products and brands become icons, less is known on how a product can maintain its iconic status over time despite the effects of major cultural changes in societies. This is an interesting phenomenon as it infers that some icons seem to adapt and change alongside culture.

Therefore, this paper aims to contribute to the marketplace icons literature (Holt 2018, Kerrigan 2018, Patterson 2017, Pedeliento, Pinchera, and Andreini 2020, Rokka 2016, Woodward and Ellison 2012) by investigating how an iconic product remain so throughout time. To accomplish this scope, this study asks: '*What sort of metamorphosis does a product go through to remain iconic over time?'.* To answer this question, this research focuses on coffee as an iconic product, one that has retained its iconic status over time, and relies on the three waves of coffee (Samoggia and Riedel 2018) as context of analysis. This research argues that coffee retained its iconic status due to its metamorphic qualities, which will be explained along this study.

The remainder of this research will be structured as follows. First, it addresses the importance of icons in marketing. Second, it discussesand reviews prior studies on the icon literature. Third, the research context of the three coffee waves is introduced. Next, this study presents the findings and discussedcoffee's metamorphosis qualities. Finally, this research draws implications for how the findings on coffee as a metamorphic product with metamorphic qualities contribute to the marketing literature on marketplace icons.

4.3 Marketplace Icons

Conceptualizing icons has gained increasing interest in cultural sociology and consumer culture literature but remains an overlooked domain (Smith 2000). In its broadest sense, icons are objects, brands, or services that are culturally and symbolically relevant (Alexander 2008, Gopaldas 2016). Icons are "a thing that holds within its material form a cultural, moral meaning" (Woodward and Ellison 2012, 157). In conjunction with the symbolic and cultural power that icons represent, the marketing literature finds that icons acquire iconic status through the cultural meanings they convey in the market (Holt 2018, Kerrigan 2018, Patterson 2017). Cultural meanings are "the interpretation of some type or object or event evoked in people as a result of their similar life experiences" (Strauss and Quinn 1997, 6).

Studying icons is relevant as icons can help people to experience everyday life based on the cultural meanings they convey in society (Alexander, Bartmanski, and Giesen 2012). Furthermore, icons are important for marketers because of their qualities to both assume various cultural meanings in the marketplace and carry those meanings to foster consumers' identity (Holt 2006). Indeed, icons have the power to express cultural meanings present in society to consumers, which in turn rely on these meanings for their identity aspirations (Holt 2006).

The marketplace icon scholarship is diverse and describes multiple ways products or brands can achieve iconic status. Example of studies on iconic products include alcoholic beverages, such as gin, a product that has changed meaning over time (Pedeliento, Pinchera, and Andreini 2020); champagne, a product of collective myth-making (Rokka 2016), and Jack Daniel (whiskey), a brand that reflects cultural ideologies (Holt 2018); it also includes organic products as ambivalent commodities (Prothero 2019); movies as storytelling devices that reinforce and communicate myths (Kerrigan 2018); tattoos as objects encapsulating contemporary tensions between the paradigm of plasticity and permanence (Patterson 2017); sneakers as ubiquitous products (Denny 2020); and lipstick, as a polarizing product associated with women's autonomy and oppression (Gurrieri and Drenten 2019).

Although the icons literature highlights the importance that icons play historically, less is known on how an icon can adapt to the influence of time and macro cultural changes to remain iconic over time. Addressing this theoretical issue, this study aims to contribute to the marketplace icons literature by conceptualizing coffee as a metamorphic product: one that has the quality of assuming distinctive ideologies at different points in time, while becoming the cultural expression of those ideologies due to its metamorphic qualities.

4.4 Coffee: from its inception to the Three Waves

Coffee is a product coming from Africa where more than 100 species of the genus Coffea plant have been recognized (Morris 2018). It is from this origin that coffee has influenced our society for centuries. Today, coffee is one of the world's most valuable agricultural products (Pendergrast 2011). There are two main commercialized coffee species of plants: Robusta and Arabica (Tamaki and Batt 2011). Arabica is considered to be a higher-quality varietal that is lighter and fruitier in flavor, compared to the strong and more bitter flavor typical of the Robusta variety (Ponte 2002).

Retracing the rich history of coffee, Weber (2018) argues that from the 1500s coffee began to spread: first from Africa to Yemen, and then when commercial traders exported coffee beans from Yemen to the near Ottoman empire. By the 1600s coffee was widely popular, yet it was considered to be too of a stimulate, such that Murad IV, sultan of the Ottoman Empire from 1623 to 1640, made coffee consumption illegal, punishable by decapitation. This attempt to curtail consumption

did not last long, but coffee's cultural association with the Muslim religion did. Indeed, when coffee was brought from the Ottoman empire to Europe through the celebrated coffeehouses (Karababa and Ger 2011) in the city of Venice, it was considered an illegal product of satanic roots (Weber 2018). Given coffee's cultural association with Islam and its stimulating effects on drinkers, the Catholic Pope Clement VIII was pressured to consider coffee as a satanic drink (Weber 2018). Historians report that Pope Clement VIII decided to drink coffee before announcing his verdict. The Pope liked the beverage so much that he considered a pity to let it be consumed only by the "infidels". Thus, Pope Clement VIII allowed coffee beans into Italy and from 1600s coffee consumption started to spread throughout Europe (Weber 2018). During the eighteenth-century, Europeans turned coffee into a colonial export product, arriving from the plantations they established in Java and Jamaica (Morris 2018). This is how coffee began to spread across the continents, and even in its early beginnings its capacity to culturally change (e.g., from satanic to colonialism) was apparent. It is from its inception that coffee's popularity arose across the centuries. To explain the metamorphic qualities of coffee, the research context is based on different epochs in the recent history of the globalization of coffee: the three coffee waves of consumption (Samoggia and Riedel 2018). The first wave of coffee consumption happened at a time of exponential growth in the consumption of coffee (1960s), when the product becomes a cultural expression of living a "good life", mainly in the United States (Holt and Cameron 2010, Manzo 2010). The second wave emerges with the formation of global coffeehouse chains, epitomized by Starbucks (1990s) (Samoggia and Riedel 2018). In this wave, coffee becomes a global symbol of a cosmopolitan lifestyle consumed in different areas of the world (Holt and Cameron 2010). In reaction to the second wave of coffee, in the third wave coffee represents the cultural expression of an artisanal ideology, today particularly present in Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Scandinavia, United States, and United Kingdom (Manzo 2010).

This study contributes to the marketplace icon literature by suggesting that coffee is best understood through its metamorphic qualities to assume distinctive dominant meanings e.g., "the good life" (first wave), cosmopolitan (second wave), artisanal (artisanal), while maintaining a growing appeal in today's consumer culture society.

In the next sections, the research details the coffee's iconic role and metamorphic qualities in each wave. First, from a macro-level perspective, this study looks at the ideology (i.e., dominant cultural meaning) that coffee encapsulates in each epoch identified as wave. Second, it describes how coffee mutated by illustrating the metamorphic qualities (i.e., materiality, ritual, meanings, communication) that enabled coffee's metamorphosis per each wave.

4.4.1 Ideology

An *ideology* is a set of shared beliefs shared by a group of people (Durkheim, Catlin, and Solovay 1938), and "it is a central element for a cultural system" (DeMarrais, Castillo, and Earle 1996, 15). *Ideologies* are important to study because they manifest ideas in physical forms as well as co-creating human culture (DeMarrais, Castillo, and Earle 1996, Gramsci 1971). In the context of each wave of coffee, *ideology*reflects the "good life" (first wave), a cosmopolitan lifestyle (second wave), and an artisanal ideology (third wave). The following sections will now detail each wave and its *ideology*.

The first wave of coffee refers to the idea of living a "good life". The scholarship of coffee situates the origin of the first wave of coffee at the beginning of the twentieth century in America, Australia, and Europe (Manzo 2010, Tucker 2018). However, it is only in the 1960s that the first wave of coffee consumption becomes a widespread phenomenon based on exponential consumption growth and product availability (Samoggia and Riedel 2018). During the aftermath of World War II, the burgeoning middle class arose in-part due to post-war economic transformations. After years of sacrifice, the urban and suburban middle class wanted to enjoy a better life in a thriving economy (Larkin 1960). The "good life" represented a historical time of economic growth and prosperity infused with elements of enjoyment and hospitality. With economies transformed and millions of workers moving into white-collar jobs and middle-class suburban homes, the new middle class

began demanding cultural products that aligned with their ideological aspiration of living a pleasurable life (Holt and Cameron 2010). Coffee was a perfect cultural product ready to fit this need, and it quickly became the cultural expression of living an enjoyable life.

The second wave of coffee refers to the ideal of living a cosmopolitan lifestyle. The second wave started with the quest for different coffee products and the formation of the coffeehouse chain epitomized by Starbucks (Samoggia and Riedel 2018, Teles and Behrens 2020). It took place in the 1990s in a time of societal changes characterized by global brand proliferation and the rising of a new subcultural elite who demanded cosmopolitan ideals (Holt and Cameron 2010). The rise of these new ideological opportunities paved the path for coffee brands (e.g., Starbucks) to convey ideals of cultural sophistication and cultural codes related to a cosmopolitan lifestyle. The new elite was curious about products that conveyed cultural sophistication and appreciated non-local goods to assert their distinctive identity (Meuleman and Savage 2013).

In the third wave, coffee morphs into the distinctive and powerful cultural expression of artisanal ideals. The term artisanal evokes an image of traditions, high-quality, raw ingredients, and often handcrafted products made in small batches (Aakko 2016). Indeed, the third wave is a movement that harks back to the pre-Starbucks days of independent houses and the counter-culture movement that became a global phenomenon in the early 2000s (Teles and Behrens 2020). Purveyors of the third wave of coffee are connoisseurs who treat coffee as an artisanal product, are in favor of equitable relationships, and enhanced community networks (Hartmann 2011, Manzo 2014, Morris 2018). Third wave coffee began with the cultural elite in search of high-quality product. A consumption movement that expresses a desire for excellent coffee, as well as manifesting a genuine connection with both the earth and coffee farmers (Manzo 2010). The third wave is concerned with "quality in a cup": a crafted coffee that embraces moral provenance and an ethical backstory. Similar to the concept of café flâneurs - individuals who seek intimate social encounters and prefer local coffee shops (Thompson and Arsel 2004) - the cultural elite of the third wave privileges local and independent coffee shops, and is motivated by higher ideals than merely profit.

Ideologies are fundamental to analyze as they underpin each distinctive ideology in the context of three waves of coffee: the ideology of the "good life" (first wave), cosmopolitan (second wave), and artisanal (third wave). The metamorphic qualities (i.e., materiality, ritual, meaning, communication) of coffee change and morph in accordance to the *ideology* embedded in each coffee wave.

4.4.2 Materiality

Materiality is the physical properties of a cultural object and it has effects on how it is used (Lievrouw 2014). In the social sciences and within theories of materiality, "objects are cultural categories materialized" (Woodward and Ellison 2012, 157). In the context of each wave of coffee, *materiality* is divided into four specific components: *type, variety, color, flavor.*

To help illustrate the *materiality* quality of coffee, this study examines now its four components.

The *type* of coffee mainly utilized during the first wave of coffee was espresso and instant coffee. Espresso is a coffee brewing method that originated in Italy, whereas instant coffee is made from dried coffee extract, it is quick and easy to make, and that does not require brewing equipment (Blackoutcoffee.com 2013). During the second wave, the *type* of coffee changed in favor of coffee beverages containing espresso shots mixed with syrups. As a reaction to the second wave *type* of coffee beverages, the third wave uses a crafted coffee typical of the artisan world.

The *variety* of coffee refers to coffee beans used in each wave. A coffee bean is a seed of a cherry like-fruit, believed to have its African home in Ethiopia (Morris 2018). There are two main commercialized coffee varieties: Robusta and Arabica (Tamaki and Batt 2011). Robusta is the variety primarily consumed during the first wave of coffee because it is easy and cheaper than Arabica to grow, it has a strong flavor, and it is used to blend espresso coffee (Tamaki and Batt 2011). Robusta has more caffeine compared to Arabica (2.7% caffeine content, almost double the 1.5% of Arabica (Morris 2018)). The second wave of coffee members combines the *variety* of

Robusta with Arabica for their coffee beverages, whereas third wave aficionados prefer to use Arabica coffee because of its unique characteristics.

The *color* of coffee refers to coffee beans after the roasting process. The first wave of coffee prefers dark *color* (almost black) to use for espresso blended coffee. This type of coffee has a heavy body, often with an oily surface and it is low in acidity. As coffee gets darker it assumes notes of the roasting process by losing the original flavor of the beans. The *color* of coffee in the second wave is brown for the effect of its medium roasting profile and rarely presents an oily surface. Differently, the third wave presents a light brown *color* and has no oil on the surface of the beans. These coffees are lightly roasted to preserve the unique characteristics of the beans (Manzo 2014).

Flavor is another important component of *materiality*. Consumers of the first wave of coffee consume bitter and 'strong' coffee. They prefer a strong coffee taste typical of Robusta beans and dark roasting profiles used in espresso blends (Morris 2018). This type of coffee has a smoky, bitter, and almost 'burnt' flavor, where the origin of coffee beans flavor is eclipsed by the roasting process. Consumers of the second wave of coffee consume coffees that have medium acidity and body, as well as a rounded flavor profile. Indeed, roasting to a medium level also preserves many of the unique flavors of the coffee's origin, but it also begins to reach into the deep caramel sweetness of a longer roast. As a result, these coffees are balanced, well-rounded, and are slightly darker and sweeter. The *flavor* of the third wave of coffee is extremely fruity and light. Thanks to the use of Arabica beans, and light roasting profiles, these coffees typically have crisp acidity, a mellow body, and unique high-quality *flavors*. One common way to evaluate the *flavor* of coffee is through standards procedures that follow the Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA). The SCAA standards describe coffee scoring above 80 (out of 100) to be considered specialty coffee (SCAA 2014).

The *materiality* quality helps to construct the metamorphic qualities of coffee as it represents the reflection of a specific culture in a physical form of a product. For example, the *materiality* of coffee reveals what the first wave of coffee members, an arising urban working-class asking for new food habits based on an affordable convenience (Teles and Behrens 2020), valued during that time. Therefore, the *materiality* of the first wave of coffee adapted to represent ideals of economic prosperity, enjoyment, and hospitality: all elements of living the "good life" (Holt and Cameron 2010). Alongside cultural changes, the *materiality* of coffee morphed into a cultural expression that respectively reflected consumer ideals of cosmopolitan (second wave), and artisanal (third wave). The *materiality of* coffee is an important metamorphic quality as it allows the product to change in its physical form, while contributing to maintaining its iconic status.

4.4.3 Ritual

"*Ritual* is a kind of social action devoted to the manipulation of cultural meaning for purposes of collective and individual communication and categorization" (McCracken 1986, 78). *Rituals* are important to study because they manifest culture, and they can affirm identity, social ties, and beliefs (McCracken 1986). In the context of the first wave of coffee, this study illustrates *ritual* following the division of Rook (1985): (1) ritual artifact (product), (2) script ('how to'), (3) performance (behavior), and (4) audience. It is important to note that all four parts of the ritual work together.

To help illustrate the *ritual* quality of coffee metamorphosis, this research starts examining its components and how they cooperate in synergy in the context of the three waves of coffee. During the first wave, the ritual artifact was coffee (espresso and instant). For example, first wave consumers - including households, aspiring middle class or middle-class members - pour espresso or instant coffee beverage in coffee cups, typically made of glazed ceramic that indicates wealth, and have a single handle for portability while the beverage is still hot. Usually, coffee is consumed

at home and the lady of the house makes and pours coffee for family and friends in signs of enjoyment and hospitality.

Second wave consumers - including yuppies, university students, city workers, travelers - drank sweet coffee beverages in global coffee chains epitomized by Starbucks (Samoggia and Riedel 2018, Teles and Behrens 2020). The locus of consumption centered shifted from house to cafés in a time of global brands proliferation (e.g., Starbucks, Peet's Coffee & Tea). Coffeehouses became a third place: a place to hang out and of social encounter that is neither home nor work (Soja and Chouinard 1999). In global branded cafés (e.g., Starbucks), coffee is ordered from a barista who is passionate, but not a coffee connoisseur. When coffee is ready, the barista calls the customer by name and serves the coffee typically in paper or plastic coffee cups. Coffee is consumed in a cozy and warm environment, where coffee becomes the ritual artifact to be shared with friends, colleagues, or used as a break from the busy city life.

Third wave consumers - a culture elite of coffee connoisseurs - treat coffee as an artisanal product, are in favor of equitable relationships, and enhanced community networks (Hartmann 2011, Manzo 2014, Morris 2018). Coffee is at the heart of the experience. The distance and physical barriers between baristas and consumers are minimized. Indeed, the location of the coffee machine allows easy interaction between customers and baristas. Coffee is like an actor in a theater, where consumers can see the "show" of their favorite drink preparation. Coffee is carefully prepared and brewed following highly specialized techniques that require a high level of skills. Dose, temperature, infusion, brew time, grind size, all became essential qualities for Baristas to craft a perfect coffee cup. Consumers often engage in the ritual of cupping, which refers to the activity of observing and comparing the tastes and aromas of brewed coffee (Rosenberg, Swilling, and Vermeulen 2018). Cupping delivers an indication to consumers of coffee quality and symbolic values infused in coffee.

The *ritual* quality helps to construct the metamorphic qualities of coffee as it represents the manifestation of a dominant culture into an object (ritual artifact), a sequence of behavior performed (script and performance) for a particular group of people (audience). In manifesting a specific cultural identity into coffee *ritual* shows in practice the three distinctive ideologies: the "good life" (first wave), cosmopolitan (second wave), and artisanal (third wave). *Ritual* is an important metamorphic quality as it allows the product to be used differently in various social settings that follow the ideology embedded in each wave, as well as contributing to keep coffee an iconic product throughout time.

4.4.4 Meaning

A *meaning* is "the interpretation of some type or object or event evoked in people as a result of their similar life experiences" (Strauss and Quinn 1997, 6). Meanings are important to analyze because they can illuminate "the social and symbolic significance of participation at any one moment" (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson 2012, 23). In the context of the three waves of coffee, this study shows how the *meanings* attached to coffee have changed in each wave. Hence, the quality of *meaning* together with its mutation aids in the understanding of how the metamorphosis of an iconic product such as coffee occurred.

To help illustrate the *meaning* quality of coffee metamorphosis, this research shows the different *meaning*s that coffee assumed in the context of the three waves of coffee. During the first wave, coffee became a sign of living a 'good life'. First wave of coffee consumers includes households and middle-class members who consumed coffee as a representation of a pleasurable moment and a symbol for hospitality. Indeed, the new middle class interpreted coffee as an affordable cultural symbol of economic prosperity. The new middle-class consumed and enjoyed dark espresso-based coffee as a symbolic resource for 'caffeine kick', enjoyment, joviality, being hospitable. The signs of 'good life' were filled with full bodied flagrance of a friendly invitation. A coffee-drinking

pleasure that was ritualized within the household or shared with friends. Quality was not distinguishable among different brands: coffee was 'coffee'; and consumers were not interested in where beans came from, the production methods, and backstory behind coffee (Holt and Cameron 2010). Consumers valued coffee for its symbolic meaning: an affordable cultural symbol of economic prosperity.

In the second wave, coffee conveyed cultural qualities of a cosmopolitan spirit to be consumed either as a takeaway cup or in a third space global brand café. For example, Starbucks, founded in 1971, is considered one of the most influential brands of the second wave of coffee, along with Gloria Jean's, The Coffee Bean, Peet's and Coffee & Tea (Tukker 2018). The global brand tapped into the ideological opportunities of cultural sophistication and cosmopolitan lifestyle that the new elite demanded and infuse these values into the cultural meanings that coffee came to symbolize. Starbucks transformed coffee consumption from a homemaker hospitality offering or quick on-the-go pick-me-up coffee culture characterized by low-quality products to a more relaxed experience of social encounter (third-place), with improved coffee quality (Thompson and Arsel 2004). It created a "pioneering retail offering that imbued coffee with a highly accessible form of cultural sophistication" (Holt and Cameron 2010, 85).

In the third wave, coffee morphs into the cultural expression of artisanal ideals. The term artisanal evokes an image of traditions, high-quality, and products produced in small quantities (Aakko 2016). The valorization of an artisanal coffee is further accentuated by independent cafés that are themselves "part of a supply chain including a collection of 'field-to-cup actors': fair and direct-trade growers, small-batch 'boutique' roasters, aesthetically traditional coffee shops, well-trained baristas, and connoisseurs" (Manzo 2014, 3). In the third wave of coffee, consumers are not only drinking a high-quality cup, but also buying into a de-commodified image of an artisanal product. Indeed, third wave members are interested in the story behind a coffee cup, often including the ethical backstory and its attributes: where beans come from, how they were grown and how they were roasted (Manzo 2010, 2014).

The *meaning* quality helps to construct the metamorphic qualities of coffee as it represents how consumers understand the symbolic significance of the product. Specifically, *meaning* mutates in each wave, showcasing ideals of living the "good life" (first wave), cosmopolitan lifestyle (second wave), and artisanal (third wave). The *materiality of* coffee is an important metamorphic quality as it allows the product to symbolically change in each wave, while contributing coffee to maintain its iconic status.

4.4.5 Communication

In marketing, *Communication* is broadly defined as the information medium companies use to describe their product (Broderick and Pickton 2005). *Communication* is important to study as it allows to understand the process by which information is shared, typically based on sound, words, or visual cues (Schramm 1954). In the context of the three waves of coffee, this study shows how *communication* is used to infuse distinctive cultural meanings into the coffee. Hence, the quality of *communication* aids in understanding the metamorphosis of coffee.

To help illustrate the *communication* quality of coffee metamorphosis, this research analyzes the type of *communication* used in each wave. First wave type of *communication* mainly relied on advertising. Indeed, advertising played a major role to infuse coffee with cultural meanings and associations of how to live a 'good life'. For instance, the marketing of Maxwell House expressed cultural meanings promoting enjoyment and hospitality: both elements and coordinates to how to live a content, social, and rewarding life. For example, advertisements represented images of smiling white-collar men dressed in a suit while sipping a cup of coffee. Another Maxwell House ad depicts a woman holding a cup of coffee while she invites her neighbors from the courtyard of

her middle-class suburban home. This type of advertising confirms coffee as a symbol of hospitality, enjoyment, and wealth. This representation was further enhanced through ad copy such as "When life needs a lift" or "Once the coffee of the few…now Maxwell House is enjoyed by all America" presented in Maxwell House advertisements. Through product advertisements, coffee brands, importers, and roasters, such as Maxwell House and Nescafé, were among the first to recognize and capture cultural and ideological opportunities, as the society shifted towards economic prosperity, and sought to catalyze the transformation of coffee to the cultural expression of living a 'good life'.

Second wave type of *communication* mainly relied on its coffee shops to convey messages of an accessible cosmopolitan lifestyle. For example, Starbucks created a relaxing and welcoming café ambiance infused with elements of cultural sophistication and cosmopolitan lifestyle. For example, coffee shops included posters featuring a Vespa scooter in Italy, warm interior colors, and accessible sophisticated jazz music (e.g., Norah Jones) or music for consumable cosmopolitan taste (e.g., Buena Vista Social Club) (Holt and Cameron 2010). Coffee beans were romanticized with exotic coffee labels (e.g., Sidamo, Harrar) coming from places like Ethiopia. Exotic coffee labels, Italian terms (e.g., Barista, Cappuccino, Grande, Latte, Macchiato), and coffee drinks (e.g., Venti Caramel Macchiato) were used as a new lingo to create a cosmopolitan in-store experience for their consumers (Tucker 2018).

The type of *communication* of the third wave is more varied and complex. For example, to create the feeling of 'handcraft and artisanal', third wave cafés offer a minimalist and simple look (often white walls and light brown wooden floors) with the music of independent and local artists. Colors aim to unify the tradition of handcrafting with contemporary design. Moreover, consumers can see how coffee is roasted and prepared. This location has the scope to communicate transparency between consumers and baristas.

Baristas are cultural middlemen that attach and deliver to consumers specific meanings to coffee (e.g., artisanal) Fischer (2017). Indeed, baristas have become more skillful in the third wave of coffee. They educate consumers with informational materials such as coffee public events and coffee menus. They highlight the artisanal provenance of coffee and often include farmers' names, the farm's altitude, varietal, processing, and taste within the story that a cup of coffee encapsulates (Fischer 2017). In addition to their coffee expertise, baristas aestheticize the product: a process named latte art, which refers to baristas' skillful art vision in creating images or patterns by pouring steam milk on the surface of the coffee. Tasting cards are also served together with coffee and describe where the beans come from (place of origin), roasting process, roasting date, coffee varietal, aroma (e.g., flowers, earth, chocolate), body, acidity, and taste among others. Tasting cards may include the history and geography of the coffee place of origin, the name of the farmers, and the brew methods. They serve to communicate coffee properties (e.g., terroir), create particular coffee cultural meanings association as well as educating consumers to the product they consume. The third wave of coffee uses a complex and specialized lingo to describe coffee. Lingo for coffee aficionados is inspired by fine wine, or a single-malt whiskey, with exotic and suggestive descriptors such as acidity, balance, uniformity, single- origin, and words deriving from the coffee flavor wheel (e.g., musty, earthy, pipe tobacco).
The *communication* quality helps to construct the metamorphic qualities of coffee and it shows how coffee companies have used different type of *communication* to infuse distinctive cultural meanings into coffee per each wave: "good life" (first wave), cosmopolitan (second wave), and artisanal (third wave). *Communication* is an important metamorphic quality as it allows the product to be described in different manners in the context of the three waves. This helps coffee's metamorphosis as well as helping the product to maintain its iconic status over time.

4.5 Discussion

This research contributes to the marketing literature on marketplace icons by arguing that for a product to maintain its iconic status over time, it needs to adapt and change alongside culture. Through the analysis of the three waves of coffee and their distinctive ideologies, the study identified four metamorphic qualities (i.e., materiality, ritual, meaning, and communication) that allowed coffee's metamorphosis. See Figure 2 for the conceptual framework.
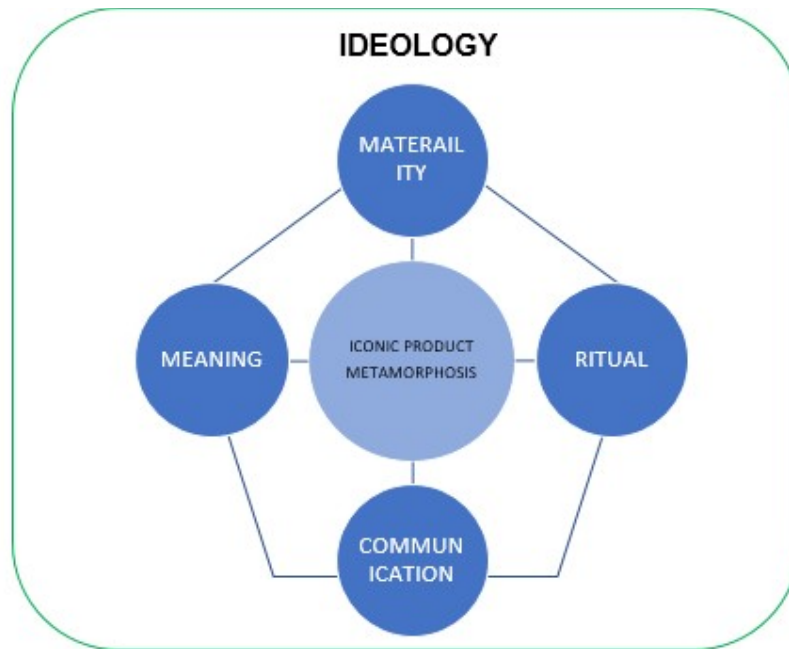

Figure 1: Iconic product metamorphosis

Although prior studies have described how icons achieve iconic status (Holt 2018, Kerrigan 2018, Patterson 2017, Pedeliento, Pinchera, and Andreini 2020, Rokka 2016, Woodward and Ellison 2012), this study extends current knowledge to the marketplace icon scholarship by introducing the concept of a metamorphic product. Coffee, as a metamorphic product, adapted to macro cultural changes to keep its iconic status through time. This is due to its metamorphic qualities (i.e., meaning, ritual, materiality, and communication). Product metamorphosis is important because it provides a structure for marketers on how to manage their iconic products throughout cultural changes.

The metamorphosis of an iconic product (coffee) of this study contributes to the iconic literature in many ways. First, this study proposed that an icon needs to adapt metamorphically to the culture of a time to stay iconic. Second, it described the metamorphic qualities (i.e., meaning, ritual, materiality, and communication) underpinning each waves' ideology and allowing coffee to maintain its iconic status across time. Although divided in their singular description, the metamorphic qualities work all together. Indeed, the four metamorphic qualities need to be aligned to their ideological underpinnings. Third, this research explained how a metamorphic product due to its metamorphic qualities can assume distinctive ideologies over time: "good life" (first wave), cosmopolitan (second wave), and artisanal (third wave).

4.6   Conclusion
This brief history of coffee focuses on the three coffee waves as a representational device and retraces the development of a product that has assumed different dominant cultural meanings and co-existing cultural identities over time. This research contributes to the literature on marketplace icons by revealing coffee as a metamorphic product in the marketplace. Coffee is defined by metamorphic qualities to absorb different ideologies based on particular rituals, materiality, meanings, and type of communications, which all together are consistent with the ideology of a

given epoch identified as coffee wave. The metamorphic quality of materiality aids coffee to change in its physical properties (e.g., type, variety, color, and flavor). Ritual involves consumers (audience) of each wave, coffee (ritual artifact), 'how to' (script), and behavior (how consumers perform coffee). All elements that support coffee's metamorphosis from one wave to the next. Another important metamorphic quality, meaning, provides the symbolic cultural association that coffee reflects and conveys. In the first wave the meaning of coffee is associated to live the 'good-life', whereas in the second wave coffee changes to be considered a cosmopolitan product, and an artisanal one during the third wave of coffee. The fourth metamorphic quality refers to communication. This quality refers to how companies describe coffee, and it is essential as it supports coffee's metamorphosis from one cultural identity to another over the evolution of coffee.

In sum, coffee assumed distinctive cultural dominant meanings in different epochs, 1) "the good life" (first wave); 2) cosmopolitan (second wave); and 3) artisanal (third wave). Coffee became a powerful and distinctive cultural expression of these ideals thanks to its metamorphic qualities. Indeed, during the first wave coffee represented a sign of "good life", which mainly resonates with a middle-class consumer group in the pursuit of living a better life in a historical moment of economic prosperity. In the second wave, coffee assumed a different ideological meaning: cosmopolitan. Indeed, here coffee covers a new 'cultural identity' that resonates with consumers looking for a cosmopolitan lifestyle. During the third wave, coffee morphs into artisanal ideal, which align with a sub-culture elite of connoisseur consumers looking for an excellent product, often with an ethical backstory. In a world of continuous macro cultural changes, this research argues that coffee is a metamorphic product with metamorphic qualities (materiality, ritual, meaning, communication). A product that has changed both culturally and physically to keep its iconic status over time.

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