19 January 2015

Protests at Mexican Govt Coffee Crop Support Office

“What Help??
The broth costs more
Than the meatballs”
¿¡¿ CONFUSING !?!: WHO does WHAT?
State-mediated regulation:
Firms and NGOs vs Unions and Communities
How to study? First, these aspects are unique to coffee:

- generalized across certified value chains, e.g., CO2 and any of the other 500+ ecolabels.
- Coffee is however a great site to study these relations due to the size, diversity, and dynamism of the sector.

1. Research certification databases, coffee producer registries:
   - *who* is caught up in the web of state-mediated or quasi-public regulation?
   - *How* does the state attempt to manage registries,

2. Examine processes of financialization: these have become paramount:
   - studying the expansion of credit services, often connected to coffee – financializing the commodity stream – rather than directly to property, particularly in the mexican case
   - However, *access* to the commodity stream, à la point #1, *becomes* a property that is stabilized by registries, subsidies, and quality certification

3. Calculate the rentier relations among quality certifications.
   - Qualities are most valuable when bundled: the certification structures, typically interlocking, stabilize some qualities
   - Others, e.g., ‘women-grown’ are also valued, and provide value, when articulated within a certified quality context: I would argue that they are monetized via association

4. Fighting for rents, access and power within the Q-GVC
   - how have Q-GVCs become a site of political struggle for unions and communities?
   - What does it take to stabilize access and capture rents?
   - Social media campaigns? Media-friendly protest?
   - Representation? *Women’s coffee, better than men’s coffee!*