



# Authorizing the 'taste of place' for Galápagos Islands coffee:

Scientific knowledge, development politics, and power in GI implementation

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# Outline

1. Analytical Framework
2. Case Context
3. Actors Involved
4. Findings
5. Conclusion





# 1. Analytical Framework



# Analytical Framework

**Terroir:** ‘taste of place,’ notion of essential, irreproducible food character attributed to place

**Social construction of *terroir*:** process through which actors use power to define ‘exclusive’ quality and link it to ‘essential’ physical and/or cultural features of place

# Analytical Framework

**Epistemic authority:** from Science and Technology Studies (STS), power to make legitimate and relevant knowledge claims

Structured by and structuring of...

- Political power (national legislation, international relations)
- Economic power (supply chain governance, interstate trade)
- Cultural power (hegemonic discourses)

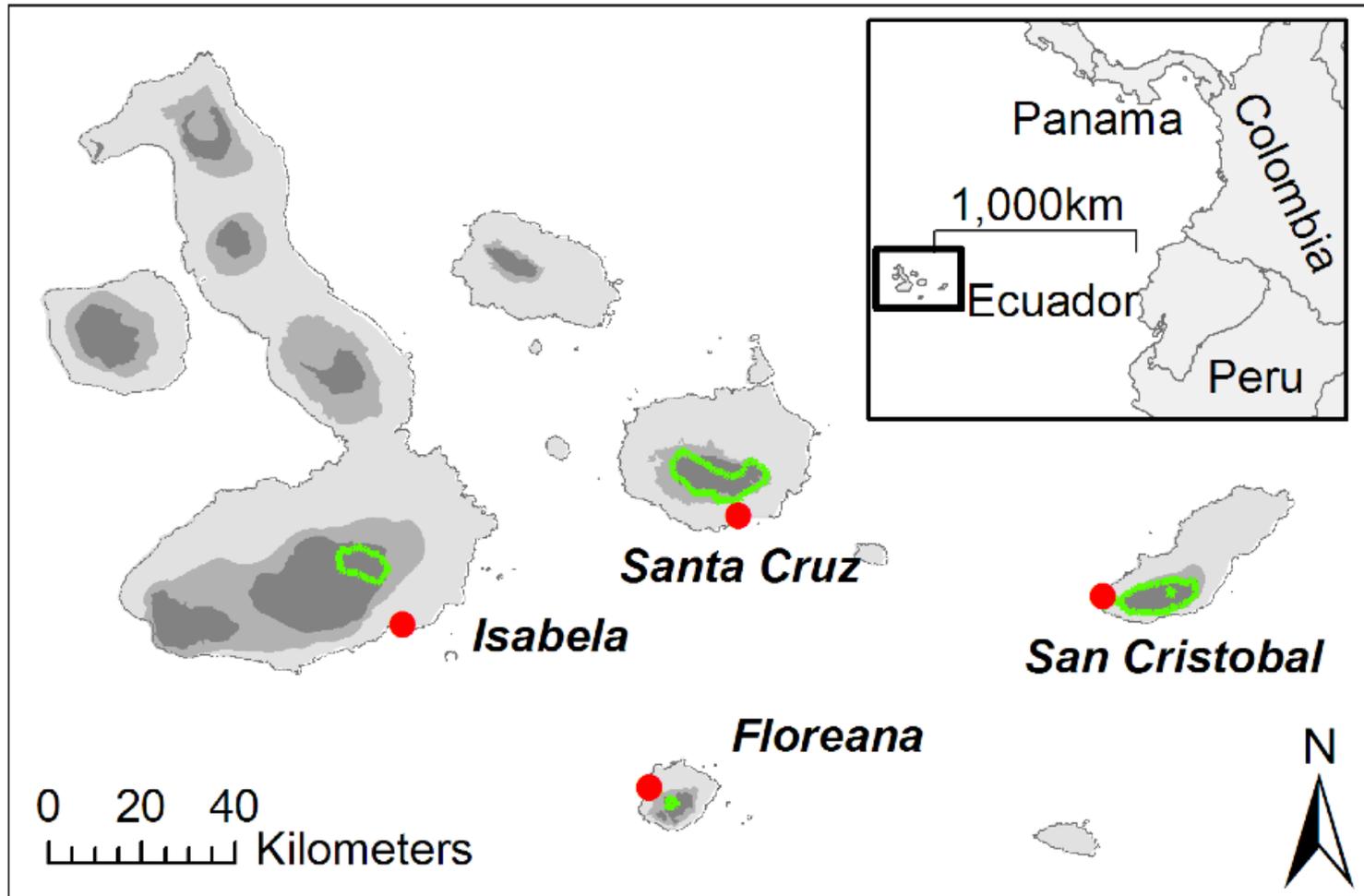
How does structural power shape the legitimacy and relevance of knowledge claims concerning terroir, and how does this knowledge reshape relations of authority in the regulation of GIs?



## 2. Case Context



# Café de Galápagos GI



Map of the Galápagos Islands. Broad climatic zones are shown (light: arid, medium: transition, dark: humid). The four permanently inhabited islands are labelled. Inhabited areas are shown within green lines (rural) and as red points (urban). Source: Guézou et al. (2010)

# Authorizing knowledge and regulation

## **Dossier (feasibility study)**

Define coffee's *terroir* through evidence about product character, features of place that contribute to character (climate, topography, biology, culture), and history

## **Code of practice**

Regulate production practices and product standards to qualify for GI and ensure reproduction of *terroir*



# 3. Actors Involved



# Ecuador's Ministry of Agriculture

## Coffee reputation

“Offering a differentiated product in sustainable production systems, so that [coffee production] becomes an alternative for climate change mitigation and **facilitates recovery of the country's culture and identity.**”



## Galápagos conservation

“Make agriculture the main human activity **co-responsible for conservation** of the archipelago's natural heritage, particularly invasive species control.”

# France's Institute of Origin and Quality

## Technical assistance

“All that about **scientific studies** that must be done to demonstrate that the quality comes essentially or exclusively from the biophysical conditions, human or biological... [was done] in alignment with the **supervision of the EU.**”



# Galápagos Coffee Producers

## Protection from usurpation

“They take the **fame** from here, but not the coffee.”

## Investment in modernization?

- “Entrepreneurial” producers
- “Traditional” producers





# 4. Findings



# Authorizing *Terroir* Knowledge (Dossier)

Aspect of terroir	Explanation	Techniques	Experts	Authorized knowledge
<b>Typicity</b>	Typical or authentic physical, chemical, and organoleptic character	Physical analysis of coffee Sensory analysis of coffee ('cupping') Food chemical analysis	Food scientists Super-tasters Coffee traders	Galápagos coffee unique and specialty grade
<b>Biophysical factors</b>	Climate, soil, topography	Soil chemical analysis Georeferencing Meteorological data collection	Soil scientists Geographers Meteorologists	Unique coffee character due to microclimates (altitude) and volcanic soil
<b>Biological factors</b>	Plant species or varieties	Coffee phenotype analysis Historical analysis	Agronomists Historians	Galápagos coffee offers distinct varieties due to speciation
<b>Cultural factors</b>	Production systems	Structured interviews Observation Historical analysis	Agronomists Coffee growers	Galápagos coffee produced through 'culture of conservation'

# Authorizing Regulation: Code of Practice

Enforce coffee standards and implement new practices

-Selective harvesting of coffee

-Wet process with fresh water

-Dry in dedicated spaces with specialized equipment



# Authorizing Regulation: Code of Practice

## Sensory analysis knowledge used to challenge code

“The samples which were used to determine the profiles of Galápagos coffee were done with **brackish water**, which did not cause important changes to the final product”

Qualification: SCAA specialty grade (>80 points)





# 5. Conclusions



# Conclusions

Knowledge of coffee's *terroir* politically legitimized

Knowledge in the dossier became a source of epistemic power that producers used to challenge the code

Science's role in identifying specificity of GI products is not free of power, but is a form of power

Consider unequal distribution of authority and ability to specify the product





Thank you!  
Merci !  
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