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### Coffee: An Ersatz Community

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**Ersatz Communities:**

False communities created by marketing campaigns to forge a fantasy of solidarity between consumers with similar habits.

**In American Late-Stage Capitalism:**

Businesses' sole purpose is profit, telling customers to consume as a replacement for real communities and meaningful social contribution.

**This Research:**

Serves to examine the ersatz communities created by the coffee industry in its marketing and sustainability messages, and their existence in capitalism.



Abstract



Dunkin' Donuts's Message on Their Doctrine

*Coffee: An Ersatz Community*

Emilio Kershner

Coffee Companies Build Ersatz Communities On:

Brand Recognizability

Familiarity

False Agency

Elitism

Sustainability Campaigns Tell Customers That:

Buying this product is good for the planet and its people

Capitalist consumption is the only way to save the world

To buy into the ersatz communities built by the coffee industry is to take responsibility for their injustices and accept consumption as false agency.



**The Industry At Large is Divided:**

- Mega Brands (Starbucks, Dunkin')
- Small Businesses (local roasters)

Four Main Tools of Marketing:

- Aesthetics
- Quality
- Product Range
- Convenience

**Mega-Brands:**

- Built and recognizability, establishment.
- Reliability without high quality.
- High volume of products giving the customer the illusion of choice.
- Use certifications of sustainability.
- Foster homogenization of crops and control over sites of production.

**Small Businesses:**

- Built on elitism, rejection of name brands.
- Either colorful gimmicks or minimalism.
- High quality without high consistency.
- Commonly attached to food establishments or with food options to make up for lack of other products.
- Promote traceability and direct trade.

**Both:**

- Disguise consumption as choice and community.
- Sell consumption as the only way to solve the world's problems.