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**COFFEE PICKERS IN COLOMBIA: TERRITORIAL MOBILITY OF RURAL
LABOR IN GLOBALIZED CROPS**

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Coffee is Colombia's most important agricultural commodity. Although its contribution to GDP has declined, the country remains the world's third-largest exporter. Since the collapse of the International Coffee Agreement in 1989, Colombian coffee production has shifted from a volume-based model to one centered on quality, resulting in a reduction in the number of bags produced and exported. Coffee quality is based on factors associated with the variability of cultivation altitude, rainfall regimes, the presence of two harvests per year, and the persistence of manual techniques rooted in peasant production and in harvesting carried out by family and waged labor. In 2020, 844,743 hectares were planted with coffee in the country; on average, coffee farming generates between 0.82 and 1.15 direct jobs per cultivated hectare, positioning this sector as the largest generator of employment within Colombian agriculture. According to unofficial estimates, between 135,000 and 165,000 pickers are required nationwide to harvest a single crop. This paper analyzes the globalized labor of

coffee pickers through the lenses of territorial mobility and the ethnicity of domination–exploitation present in this globalized crop. It is grounded in a qualitative methodology and draws on documentary review and semi-structured interviews conducted in coffee-growing municipalities in the department of Huila in 2021 and 2025. The conclusions highlight conditions of informality and precarity that constitute key class markers of these workers.

Palavras-chave: agricultural workers; territorial mobility of labor; coffee pickers; ethnicized labor relations.