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A humble Olive Tree growing in the hills of Bethlehem, where thousands of years ago the Patriarch Abraham would have walked passed on his way to Hebron. This tree was trimmed, some of its branches were milled and cut into planks and made into all sorts of shapes, carvings, utensils, souvenirs and sold in the shops of Jerusalem, an hour's drive north of Bethlehem. One of these planks was made into a small charcuterie board. It made its way on to a 9 hour flight to Hong Kong inside the suitcase of a traveler, and then followed this traveler for another 13 hour flight to New York City. And wow this branch of the Olive tree from Bethlehem is my serving board for breakfast bagel.

This is just one small nuance of how modern conveniences of international transportation have changed our lives. The charcuterie board from Bethlehem is on that was consciously transported by myself, yet there are so many more things in our daily lives that have been produced, manufactured, packaged and shipped to us without us knowing. The huge global network works tirelessly behind the scenes and it is virtually invisible to us, that is not until some disruption in the supply chain takes place. The following paragraphs will list a couple examples, tracing the origins of each component and how they've made their way to each home.

Every morning, the fridge door swings open and out comes the bag of Colombian Arabica coffee beans. The beans are thrown into the grinder (probably manufactured in China) and then the grounded coffee is placed into a pour over filter ready to have hot water poured over them. The Breville electric kettle (again, probably manufactured in China) empties its liquids into a Japanese stainless steel pour over pot. From the pour over pot, water streams out from the long snout and slowly drips of fragrant coffee begin to brew into the Thai made *Krispy Kreme* branded coffee mug. A simple morning coffee routine already presents how a modern global network works behind the morning beverage that is enjoyed by a large number of Americans. Furthermore the coffee bean itself presents another story of global networking, one that is probably far more ancient.

Coffee, or its plant the *Coffea arabica* originated in the highlands of Ethiopia (Thurston, Robert W., et al. 215). Popularized by the Arab merchants, coffee made its way along the ancient trade routes of the Levant to the Ottoman Empire. From there Venetian merchants brought coffee to Europe. From Europe early navigators brought it along to the Americas (Thurston, Robert W., et al. 215). Nowadays a large percentage of the plant is grown, in South American nations of Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela etc. From the coffee shop at Ikea in Stockholm, to the Hungry Jacks in Sydney, to the famous Seattle based Starbucks to the %Arabica in Brooklyn, Coffee is present in almost every country in the world today and it is one of the most popular beverages of all time.

After the morning coffee, a flick of the Smartphone that provides general information, news and

communication. This pocketable device is one that truly encapsulates the essence of global networking. The touch screens are manufactured in Japan, the Lithium-ion batteries manufactured in China, the semiconductor manufactured in Taiwan and the assembly line anywhere in China, India or Brazil. This supply chain has even had implications on global political conflicts. The global demand on Taiwanese semiconductors has an important role in the political situation between the Island nation, USA and China. Sometimes called the “Silicon Shield”, the Taiwanese ability (and monopoly) on semiconductor manufacturing has been a major factor hindering China’s considerations to launch an assault on the Island. Something that an average user of the smartphone would probably not think about when he/she is having the morning sip of coffee in the left hand and swiping through social media on the right.

All in all, one's life would be very different without global networks. Coffee wouldn’t have traveled to us, the grinder, the pot, the pourover and the mug all wouldn’t be the same. We wouldn’t be able to appreciate olive wood from the holy land in our homes, and the smartphone that we can’t live without today wouldn’t be in our hands. Without global networks the world as we know it would have developed far more localized, and we would be living in little hermit kingdoms not too dissimilar to the early agrarian age.

#### Works Cited

Thurston, Robert W., et al. *Coffee: A Comprehensive Guide to the Bean, the Beverage, and the Industry*. Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 2013.

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