



Vos, J. (2023) What Angolans got for their coffee: connecting histories of labour and consumption in colonial Africa, c. 1860–1960. In: Gupta, D. and Hossain, P. (eds.) *Across Colonial Lines: Commodities, Networks and Empire Building*. Series: *Empire's other histories*. Bloomsbury Academic: London ; New York, pp. 157-177. ISBN 9781350327023.

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Deposited on: 17 February 2022

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Conspicuous and Inconspicuous Consumption in the Angolan Coffee Economy, c. 1860-1960

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Africa is the birthplace of the world's two main commoditised coffee species – *Coffea arabica* and *Coffea canephora*, alias *robusta*, but coffee only became an important cash crop in the continent in the first half of the twentieth century, when most Africans lived under European rule. This was four centuries after commercial production of arabica had started in Yemen and two centuries after European empires had diffused cultivation to Asia and the Americas. Mainly based on smallholder effort, Africa's contribution to world coffee production increased from two percent in 1914 to roughly twenty percent in 1960.² Informed by experiences in East Africa, scholars analysing the history of coffee in Africa often assume that coffee cultivation in the continent was a colonial imposition. Histories of coffee production in Tanganyika and Rwanda, for instance, tell of how colonial administrations promoted the cultivation of newly introduced arabica plants in the 1920s, compelling reluctant farmers to grow this foreign cash crop through propagation schemes and fiscal

¹ Research for this paper has been supported by a Leverhulme Research Fellowship (RF-2019-194).

The ideas presented in this essay developed over several years at different conferences and seminars at European universities: University of Lisbon (May 2017), European Conference on African Studies (July 2017), University of Glasgow (Feb. 2019), Humboldt University Berlin (June 2019), University of Leeds (Sep. 2019), University of Pavia (Feb. 2020) and the University of Lancaster (March 2020). I am grateful to the participants for their feedback and to Lynn Abrams, Keith Allen, the volume editors, and the anonymous reviewers for comments on earlier drafts. All flaws and errors are mine.

² Jonathan Morris, *Coffee: A Global History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2018).

imperatives.³ These narratives suggest that local farming populations were pulled into the global coffee economy more by colonial force than by their own initiative.

Using the case of Angola, this essay places African engagement with the global coffee economy in a longer timeframe and broader context to propose an alternative scenario. After the closing of the export slave trade to Brazil, in 1850, small farmers in this region began exploiting indigenous robusta stands, responding to a growing demand for 'legitimate' products and rising world prices for coffee. The early history of coffee cultivation in Angola therefore seems to follow the pattern of African initiative observed in the better-studied agrarian transitions that happened in West Africa around this time, which were generally based on oleaginous products.⁴ This essay therefore offers a correction to the view that the coffee crop in Africa was a colonial imposition that smallholders only embraced when prices spiralled upward briefly in the 1920s and again after the Second World War. However, the Angolan case also provides ground for a more general reflection on smallholder decision-making. African farmers based their judgements about what to grow and for whom on more than external stimuli like world-market prices or colonial dictates. As Mario Samper has suggested, to understand how farmers respond to outside stimuli, historians must pay 'attention

³ Kenneth Curtis, 'Smaller Is Better: A Consensus of Peasants and Bureaucrats in Colonial Tanganyika', in *The Global Coffee Economy in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, 1500-1989*, ed. William Gervase Clarence-Smith and Steven Topik (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 314; Andreas Eckert, 'Comparing Coffee Production in Cameroon and Tanganyika, c.1900-1960s: Land, Labor, and Politics', *ibid.*; Sven Van Melkebeke, "'Changing Grounds': The Development of Coffee Production in the Lake Kivu Region (1918-1960/62)" (PhD diss., Universiteit Gent, 2017).

⁴ For discussions and case studies, see Robin Law (ed.), *From Slave Trade to 'Legitimate' Commerce: The Commercial Transition in Nineteenth-Century West Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Robin Law, Suzanne Schwarz, and Silke Strickrodt (eds.), *Commercial Agriculture, the Slave Trade and Slavery in Atlantic Africa* (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2013).

to how, and to what extent, changing external conditions are “internalized” by local economies, where endogenous processes and past history play a decisive role.⁵ This chapter argues that to explain why Angolan farmers turned to coffee cultivation in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, we must see them not merely as producers responding to market opportunities, but also as consumers, whose economic behaviour was influenced by local histories and cultures of consumption and associated political economies. To understand why this was so, it helps to embed Angola’s insertion in the global coffee economy in a longer history of African interaction with the ‘outside world’.⁶

By placing cash-crop farmers in a longer history of African engagement in European trade, the role of consumption in smallholder behaviour comes into focus. Scholars of the transatlantic slave trade have long made the case that African consumer cultures played an important part in

⁵ Mario Samper K., ‘The Historical Construction of Quality and Competitiveness: A Preliminary Discussion of Coffee Commodity Chains’, in *Global Coffee Economy*, ed. Clarence-Smith and Topik, 121. Samper’s observation resonates with the distinction between opportunities and motives, or ‘external’ and ‘internal’ approaches to innovation in African agriculture, in A. G. Hopkins, ‘Innovation in a Colonial Context: African Origins of the Nigerian Cocoa-farming Industry, 1880-1920’, in *The Imperial Impact: Studies in the Economic History of Africa and India*, ed. Clive Dewey and A. G. Hopkins (London: The Athlone Press, 1978). Note that Samper refers to William Roseberry, ‘Introduction’, in *Coffee, Society, and Power in Latin America*, ed. William Roseberry, Lowell Gudmunson, and Mario Samper Kutschbach (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 7, who sees the ‘internalization of the external’ mainly in terms of socio-political context.

⁶ Jean-François Bayart, ‘Africa in the World: A History of Extraversion’, *African Affairs* 99, no. 395 (2000): 217-67.

shaping Atlantic commerce.⁷ The demand for imported goods, some of them exotic luxuries, others more essential wares, motivated coastal elites to trade away human capital in the form of enslaved people. African consumption patterns were place-specific and time-dependent and, importantly, they were part of local political economies: slaving elites used imported goods to build social and political power, investing material wealth in the accumulation of dependents, including wives, clients and slaves.⁸ Historians working in circumscribed timeframes often ignore, however, that culturally determined preferences for specific goods, like textiles or liquor, shaped in the era of the slave trade often lasted into the colonial era and beyond.⁹

Contemporary observers seemed to be aware of the importance of local consumer habits to economic change post abolition. According to Edmund Gabriel, the British representative on the Court of Mixed Commission that from 1844 adjudicated intercepted slave ships in Luanda, the transition from slaving to 'legitimate' commerce in Angola was partly a question of changing the nature of the currency Africans used to obtain imported goods.

The desire for foreign luxuries, which the chiefs of Africa have already acquired by intercourse with Europeans, is the great inducement for making slaves of their subjects and selling them to slave-dealers; and so long as the Slave Trade exists, every effort to substitute legitimate commerce for one so deeply implanted in their minds by the habits of ages, must prove unavailing; but if that source was no longer available, and the markets for the sale of

⁷ See David Northrup, *Africa's Discovery of Europe, 1450-1850*, 3rd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), ch. 3, and the literature there cited.

⁸ Ty M. Reese, "'Eating" Luxury: Fante Middlemen, British Goods, and Changing Dependencies on the Gold Coast, 1750-1821', *William and Mary Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (2009): 851-72.

⁹ An exception is Phyllis M. Martin, 'Contesting Clothes in Colonial Brazzaville', *The Journal of African History* 35, no. 3 (1994): 401-26.

their fellow creatures effectually closed for a time, they would be compelled to turn their attention to more honest and profitable pursuits... procuring the produce of the country to barter for those luxuries which have become essential to their comforts.¹⁰

Linking industriousness to a need for imported consumer goods was partly an expression of British imperial ideology, but Gabriel was not mistaken about the economic significance of African consumer habits.¹¹ As this essay will demonstrate, the burgeoning coffee trade in nineteenth and twentieth-century Angola, like the African 'cash-crop revolution' generally, built on older patterns of exchanging locally procured commodities for imported manufactures.¹²

The first part of the essay highlights what global historian Sebastian Conrad has called 'synchronous structures', or 'simultaneous events', in the Atlantic world that influenced the initial growth of Angolan coffee production. The events that structured developments in Angola were the nineteenth-century expansion of the global coffee trade and the concurrently unfolding international campaign to abolish the transatlantic slave trade.¹³ In this section, I argue that smallholder initiative, rather than the policies of the Portuguese colonial government or the pioneering enterprise of a handful of colonial settlers, brought Angola in the orbit of the global coffee trade after 1850. The next section describes how, in response to favourable world prices for robusta coffee after World War One, European settlers, backed by government supplies of land and

¹⁰ The National Archives (TNA), FO 420/4, Edmund Gabriel to Earl of Aberdeen, Luanda 31/12/45.

¹¹ Frank Trentmann, *Empire of Things: How We Became a World of Consumers from the Fifteenth Century to the Twenty-first* (London: Penguin, 2016), 121; David Eltis, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 22-23.

¹² John Tosh, 'The Cash-Crop Revolution in Tropical Africa: An Agricultural Reappraisal', *African Affairs* 79, no. 314 (1980): 79-94.

¹³ Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 150-56.

labour, aggressively expanded their estates on African lands considered vacant. But while these planters threatened to drown out smaller farmers, the latter were able to compete by expanding cultivation into unexploited coffee forests, effectively keeping the dual economy that had characterised the Angolan coffee sector from the beginning in place. The third part examines the consumer habits of African smallholders in order to understand their motives and strategies. This section highlights continuity, rather than synchronicity, in that it points to culturally and historically embedded practices of conspicuous consumption. Engaging with the work of Sara Berry, it suggests that the spending habits of African smallholders were part of entrepreneurial strategies designed to gain social influence.¹⁴ The essay closes with some preliminary observations relating demonstrations of wealth in the African coffee sector to larger questions about rural poverty and economic development.

Global setting

In the twentieth century, the Portuguese colony of Angola was one of the world's leading producers of robusta coffee. Robusta is a low-quality coffee, generally priced a bit lower than the lowest-graded arabica, and is mainly used as a basis for soluble coffee and as a filler in ordinary coffee blends. It owed much of its arrival on the world coffee scene to the global leaf rust (*Hemileia vastatrix*) epidemic that struck arabica plantations in Asia in the late nineteenth century. When this epidemic had nearly wiped out the Indonesian coffee economy, around 1900, botanists in Java initiated breeding experiments with robusta stocks of Congolese origin. As robusta proved to be immune to the disease, most coffee farmers in Indonesia and other parts of Asia adopted the new cultivars created in Dutch colonial nurseries. In the 1920s, colonial governments also began to

¹⁴ Sara S. Berry, 'Entrepreneurial Labour', in *General Labour History of Africa: Workers, Employers and Governments, 20th-21st Centuries*, ed. Stefano Bellucci and Andreas Eckert (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2019).

stimulate smallholder cultivation of imported and local robusta strains in Africa. Responding to favourable prices, African coffee production doubled in the 1930s and surpassed Asian outputs. Western demand for robusta spiked after World War Two, as high coffee prices stimulated the consumption of instant coffee and cheaper coffee blends. The arrival of the vending machine in many workplaces further promoted the drinking of poor-quality coffee and thus, by extension, robusta.¹⁵

Robusta was Africa's chief contribution to world coffee trade in the twentieth century, but compared to other producing regions in the continent, Angola was distinctive for at least three reasons. First, the commercialisation of indigenous coffee developed in the 1800s and this happened largely independently from colonial dictate. In addition, a dual economy, opposing settlers to local smallholders, characterised the Angolan coffee sector from its beginning until the war of independence in 1961-74. Finally, Angola found its strongest export markets in the Netherlands and the United States, rather than the colonial metropole, Portugal. The history of coffee production in Angola is also remarkable because it has been largely untold.¹⁶

¹⁵ William Gervase Clarence-Smith, 'The Coffee Crisis in Asia, Africa, and the Pacific, 1870-1914', in *Global Coffee Economy*, ed. Clarence-Smith and Topik; Stuart McCook, *Coffee is Not Forever: A Global History of the Coffee Leaf Rust* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2019); Mark Pendergrast, *Uncommon Grounds: The History of Coffee and How It Transformed Our World* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), ch. 14.

¹⁶ For partial accounts, see David Birmingham, 'The Coffee Barons of Cazengo', *The Journal of African History* 19, no. 4 (1978): 523-38; 'A Question of Coffee: Black Enterprise in Angola', *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 16, no. 2 (1982): 343-46; Fausto Martins Lourenço, 'História do Café Robusta em Angola', *Revista de Ciências Agrárias* 15-16, no. 3-4 (1992); no. 4 (1993); Maria do Mar de Mello Gago da Silva, 'Robusta Empire: Coffee, Scientists and the Making of Colonial Angola (1998-1961)' (PhD diss., Universidade de Lisboa, 2018).

Two important global developments were the background to the rise of coffee production in Angola in the nineteenth century. One was the dramatic expansion of the world coffee trade; the other the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. Between 1850 and 1900, the period when coffee became a staple of the Angolan export economy, world coffee production increased from roughly 300,000 tons per year to almost a million metric tons.¹⁷ This was mainly the doing of Brazil, a relatively new player in the world coffee market, whose influence on the Angolan coffee economy was twofold. On the one hand, the Angolan slave trade on which Brazilian coffee planters relied for their labour inputs stifled local entrepreneurship in alternative forms of commerce until its effective suppression in 1850.¹⁸ On the other hand, Brazil's massive outputs of relatively cheap arabicas helped create a mass demand for coffee in North America and Europe, encouraging coffee merchants to explore new supply zones in Latin America and Africa. Coffee was, in fact, part of a worldwide expansion of commodity production and trade in the nineteenth century, driven by western industrialisation and the relentless spread of global capitalism.¹⁹ In Africa, this expansion coincided with the suppression of the transatlantic slave trade and the subsequent rise of 'legitimate' commerce, which in Angola after 1850 increasingly meant coffee.

Africans were not all new to commodity trading, but what changed in the nineteenth century was the scale of African participation in export production. During the historical slave trade, the exchange of products like ivory and gold for European and Asian imports was, like the slave trade, done on terms dictated by African brokers and generally did not require major adjustments in

¹⁷ Mario Samper and Radin Fernando, 'Appendix: Historical Statistics of Coffee Production and Trade from 1700 to 1960', in *Global Coffee Economy*, ed. Clarence-Smith and Topik.

¹⁸ Gabriel Paquette, *Imperial Portugal in the Age of Revolutions: The Luso-Brazilian World, c. 1770-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 323.

¹⁹ Steven C. Topik and Allen Wells, 'Commodity Chains in a Global Economy', in *A World Connecting*, ed. Emily S. Rosenberg (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012).

African social and economic structures.²⁰ Unlike in the Americas, where plantation agriculture and mining of silver and gold involved the violent and radical transformation of landscapes and societies, in Africa, as one scholar put it, ‘flexible local communities absorbed European commercial capital.’²¹ In the late 1700s, a handful of ambitious European imperialists proposed to grow coffee and other plantation crops in the Gold Coast by employing enslaved Africans locally, instead of shipping them overseas, but, as David Eltis has argued, such dreams ‘came to nothing in the face of African resistance to European occupation.’²² When Europeans changed their business from slaving to commodity trading in the first half of the nineteenth-century, however, the response in coastal western Africa was a structural transformation of the economic and social organisation of agriculture. The initiative generally came from small-scale farmers, previously excluded from the export economy, who used their access to land and labour to expand the production of palm oil, peanuts and other products, including, in some places, coffee. Coffee is thus part of a larger story about changes in African production following the abolition of the slave trade.²³

²⁰ Ralph Austen, *African Economic History: Internal Development and External Dependency* (London: James Currey, 1987).

²¹ Sven Beckert, ‘Commodities’, in *Princeton Companion to Atlantic History*, ed. Joseph C. Miller (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 117.

²² David Eltis, ‘The Slave Trade and Commercial Agriculture in an African Context’, in *Commercial Agriculture*, ed. Law, Schwarz, and Strickrodt, 36; Per Hernæs, ‘A Danish Experiment in Commercial Agriculture on the Gold Coast’, in *Commercial Agriculture*, ed. Law, Schwarz, and Strickrodt.

²³ A. G. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa* (London: Longmans, 1973), 124-6. See Eltis, ‘Slave Trade and Commercial Agriculture’, 46, and Gareth Austin, ‘Commercial Agriculture and the Ending of Slave-Trading and Slavery in West Africa’, in *Commercial Agriculture*, ed. Law, Schwarz, and Strickrodt, 258-61, for recent takes on the ‘transition’ theme.

Two Portuguese colonies still deeply involved in the slave trade, São Tomé e Príncipe and Angola, became the frontier of coffee cultivation in western Africa (in eastern Africa, two islands with a French settler presence, Réunion and Madagascar, were the main export centres).²⁴ Around 1800, Portuguese landowners in São Tomé, a provisioning station for slave ships off the coast of Gabon, began experimenting with arabica plants introduced from Brazil. Growth was initially slow because of infrastructural limitations, but from 1850 colonial planters exploited fresh capital injections, reduced tariffs, and enslaved workers illegally imported from Angola and Gabon to expand production, resulting in exports of around two-thousand metric tons per year from the 1870s to the end of the century.²⁵ In the 1820s, while arabica was being planted in the colonies of Brazil and São Tomé, Portuguese colonial officials also learned about the existence of coffee trees in the montane forests of northern Angola. Botanists later concluded that these Angolan coffees belonged to a distinct species, indigenous to central Africa, which they labelled *Coffea canephora*, alias *robusta*.²⁶ Already in the 1830s, however, a small number of African and Portuguese farmers recognised the plant's commercial potential and began to cultivate the wild stands they found in abundance near the colonial settlements of Encoge and Cazengo.²⁷

At the same time, Portuguese imperialists were imagining new futures for commercial agriculture in Angola. Anticipating the end of the transatlantic slave trade, some optimistically

²⁴ Gwyn Campbell, 'The Origins and Development of Coffee production in Réunion and Madagascar, 1711-1972', in *Global Coffee Economy*, ed. Clarence-Smith and Topik.

²⁵ Tony Hodges and Malyn Newitt, *São Tomé and Príncipe: From Plantation Colony to Microstate* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), 26-32; Hélder Lains e Silva, *São Tomé e Príncipe e a cultura do café* (Lisboa: Ministério do Ultramar, 1958), 91.

²⁶ Auguste Chevalier, 'Sur quelques caféiers et faux caféiers de l'Angola et du Mayombe portugais', *Revue de botanique appliquée et d'agriculture coloniale* 19, no. 214 (1939): 396-407.

²⁷ Birmingham, 'Coffee Barons'.

depicted Portugal's crown colony in Africa as a 'new Brazil', a land rich in soils and natural resources, whose trade would compensate the loss of Portugal's only American colony in 1822 and be a worthy substitute for the export trade in human beings.²⁸ Of several existing cash crops projected to replace the lucrative slave trade in Angola, such as tobacco, cotton, and sugar, only coffee became a significant export earner in the nineteenth century. This was mainly because coffee was a crop requiring little capital investment, which African farmers could easily integrate in mixed-cropping systems. Initially coffee exports grew only slowly as the interests of local merchants were almost exclusively vested in the illegal slave trade to Brazil and Cuba, but when human trafficking ended in the 1860s, opportunities for alternative trade opened and more farmers began to invest in coffee planting. By the early 1870s, trees planted five years earlier had started to bear fruit, coffee had become Angola's most valuable colonial product, and Angola surpassed São Tomé as the largest coffee supplier in Africa.²⁹

The Angolan historiography has mainly focused on a small group of Portuguese entrepreneurs, some of whom migrants from Brazil, who from the 1830s onward carved plantations out of existing coffee forests using the labour of enslaved Africans.³⁰ But these foreign planters accounted for only a small part of Angola's total coffee output in the nineteenth century, probably

²⁸ João Pedro Marques, *Os sons do silêncio: o Portugal de Oitocentos e a abolição do tráfico de escravos* (Lisboa: Instituto de Ciências Sociais, 1999), ch. 5; Valentim Alexandre, *Velho Brasil, novas Áfricas: Portugal e o Império (1808-1975)* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2000); Gabriel Paquette, 'After Brazil: Portuguese Debates on Empire, c. 1820-1850', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 11, 2 (2010); Roquinaldo Ferreira, 'Agricultural Enterprise and Unfree Labour in Nineteenth-Century Angola', in *Commercial Agriculture*, ed. Law, Schwarz, and Strickrodt.

²⁹ Aida Freudenthal, *Arimos e fazendas: a transição agrária em Angola* (Luanda: Chá de Caxinde, 2005), 178.

³⁰ Birmingham, 'Coffee Barons'; Freudenthal, *Arimos*; Ferreira, 'Agricultural Enterprise'.

never more than ten percent. The early expansion of cash-crop production in Angola was mainly based on African initiative. European traders on the coast seemed to be aware of this. One was quoted as saying, 'Almost the only part of Africa that I know of wherein Coffee planting is carried on by the natives of the soil, and not aliens of European or Arabian descent, is Northern Angola... in many districts lying between the Lower Congo and Angola, wherein no white man has yet penetrated, Coffee planting and gathering is carried on by the natives, who bring their harvests down to the coast... to sell to the white... traders.'³¹ But also the Portuguese government realised that coffee cultivation had, especially from the 1860s, spread far beyond the centres of colonial control. As the administrator of Encoge, the oldest coffee nucleus in the country, noted in 1901, 'Encoge... produces a lot of coffee, indeed, but it is important to know that most production happens inland at places far away from here', among what he called 'non-allied peoples'.³²

Angolan coffee exports peaked at eleven-thousand tons in 1895. While in subsequent years declining world prices caused the collapse of several European plantations, mixed cropping buffered local smallholders from market volatility. Although harvests declined in response to lower prices, coffee still provided farmers a small basis for cash purchases. In this initial phase, most Angolan coffee was exported to northern Europe.³³ In global terms Angolan outputs were minimal, contributing at best one percent to the world coffee trade, but, as will be shown, this early development of the Angolan coffee sector involved a widening engagement of local farmers with the

³¹ Edwin Lester Arnold, *Coffee: Its Cultivation and Profit* (London: W. B. Whittingham & Co., 1886), 265-66.

³² Arquivo Nacional de Angola (ANA), caixa 4997, Chefe do concelho, no. 127, Encoge 22 July 1901.

³³ João Mesquita, *Dados estatísticos para o estudo das pautas de Angola: exportação pelas alfândegas do Círculo e do Congo nos anos de 1888 a 1913* (Luanda: Imprensa Nacional, 1918).

global economy, both as producers and as consumers.³⁴ In this period, African smallholders also laid the foundation for the rapid expansion of the coffee sector after the First World War, when Angola, like several other African regions, benefited from a growing global demand for robusta coffee.

Settler economy

In the interwar years, Angolan coffee exports doubled from roughly ten-thousand tons in 1922 to 20,000 in 1939. The main acceleration of coffee production happened after World War Two: by 1960, Angolan exports had risen to 80,000 tons, which was about four percent of all coffee traded worldwide. Angola sold relatively little coffee to the colonial metropole, Portugal, a small country with low per capita consumption levels. Instead, Angola found major outlets for its robusta production in the Netherlands and the United States, which both lacked colonial possessions in Africa. The link with the Netherlands had been established in the second half of the nineteenth century, when Dutch merchants played a pivotal role in developing Angola's new commodity trade. When Indonesian coffee outputs collapsed in the wake of Japanese occupation during World War Two, Dutch roasters turned increasingly to Angola for their robusta supplies. The United States began to source more coffee in Africa after the New York Coffee Exchange lifted its ban on robusta imports in the 1920s. The country developed an especially strong relationship with Angola, which in the 1950s supplied nearly half of all American robusta imports from Africa.³⁵

How did the Angolan coffee sector respond to the global robusta boom? Given the initiative that indigenous farmers demonstrated in the nineteenth century, both in Angola and beyond, there were strong economic reasons for the colonial government to support smallholder farming. As it happened, however, the government endorsed the expansion of settler agriculture by supporting

³⁴ C. F. Van Delden Laerne, *Brazil and Java: Report on Coffee-culture in America, Asia and Africa* (London: W. H. Allen & Company, 1885).

³⁵ René Coste, *Les caféiers et les cafés dans le monde*, vol. 1 (Paris: Larose, 1955).

European – mainly Portuguese – immigrants with land concessions and cheap supplies of contract labour. This policy was a particular manifestation of what Corey Ross has called the ‘plantation paradigm’: a widespread belief among European colonial rulers that plantation-oriented agriculture, based on intensive production techniques under centralised European management, was superior to African forms of smallholder agriculture, despite evidence to the contrary.³⁶ In the case of Portugal, the paradigm also legitimised a policy of white settler expansion dating back to the nineteenth century.³⁷

It is important to emphasise that the Angolan settler economy was as much created from the bottom-up as it was facilitated and promoted by the colonial government. The government neither prohibited African farmers to grow coffee nor reserve large swaths of fertile coffee land for settler agriculture, as happened in Kenya and Belgian Congo for instance. Rather, it allowed white settlers to apply for concessions, with the legality of demarcations depending on proof of vacancy of the land. Many of the new coffee plantations were established by people already living in Angola, namely Portuguese shopkeepers, who learned about the crop’s potential as they were buying it from African smallholders. When coffee prices picked up in the 1920s, many invested their money in small and medium-sized plantations, though quite a few of them went bust during the Great Depression of the 1930s. After the Second World War, a new generation of immigrants arriving directly from Portugal followed these shop-keeping coffee planters into the Angolan coffee forests.³⁸

³⁶ Corey Ross, ‘The Plantation Paradigm: Colonial Agronomy, African Farmers, and the Global Cocoa Boom, 1870s–1940s’, *Journal of Global History* 9, no. 1 (2014): 49-71.

³⁷ Cláudia Castelo, ‘Developing ‘Portuguese Africa’ in Late Colonialism: Confronting Discourses’, in *Developing Africa: Concepts and Practices in Twentieth-Century Colonialism*, ed. Joseph M. Hodge, Gerald Hödl, and Martina Kopf (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014).

³⁸ Birmingham, ‘Question of Coffee’.

As Angolan exports exploded, the percentage produced by African smallholders steadily diminished. In every district of the country where coffee could be grown, African farmers faced increasing competition from European settlers. The Dembos district in northern Angola is a good example. In 1925, only a single European farmer was found there; in 1934, the district counted thirty-eight foreign plantations; in 1949 the number had increased to eighty; and by 1957 white settlers owned more than three-hundred plantations, most of which were small or medium-sized. While concessions were officially granted upon verification of the vacancy of land, illegal land grabbing was an established settler practice from the first coffee boom in the 1860s.³⁹ The land rush in the 1950s was especially notorious. According to one source, the number of European plantations in Angola jumped from 763 in 1955 to 1,638 the following year.⁴⁰ By that point, African farmers produced a quarter of Angola's total output.

Labour shortages were a persistent problem for Angola's settler population, as they were for white planters elsewhere in colonial Africa. While the first coffee plantations in Angola kept a permanent labour force of enslaved workers, early in the twentieth century planters came to adopt a system of contract labour, with most contracts lasting between six and eighteen months. Because workers were generally in short supply, the colonial government assisted planters in the recruitment of labour, forcing Africans into contracts by means of taxation, conscription and trickery. There is a long tradition of observers and historians, mainly from outside Portugal, commenting on this infamous system of forced labour, which they have generally interpreted as a new form of slavery,

³⁹ Birmingham, 'Coffee Barons'; Mariana Dias Paes, 'Registro e colonialismo em Angola', in *Historical Perspectives on Property and Land Law: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue on Methods and Research Approaches*, ed. Elisabetta Fiocchi Malaspina and Simona Tarozzi (Madrid: Dykinson, 2019).

⁴⁰ Coste, *Caféiers*; Irene S. Van Dongen, 'Coffee Trade, Coffee Regions, and Coffee Ports in Angola', *Economic Geography* 37, no. 4 (1961): 320-46.

different from the old in that it did not involve the burdens of ownership.⁴¹ However, a detailed historical analysis of labour recruitment for the coffee plantations, in the way Jeremy Ball and Todd Cleveland have done for sugar and diamonds, does not yet exist.⁴² In the space given here, I can only give a brief account of what large segments of the Angolan population had to suffer during the country's second coffee boom. These observations are mainly informed by the labour inspections the Portuguese Colonial Ministry carried out in Angola after the Second World War.⁴³

In all coffee producing districts, planters struggled to recruit free labour. Shortages were especially acute during the harvest season, from June to September, when, depending on the size of the plantation, planters needed dozens, sometimes hundreds of workers to pick and sort coffee. Low wages and poor working conditions were the main deterrents to plantation labour. As one observer explained, the wages planters offered in Angola did not compensate peasants for the loss of income from subsistence and cash-crop farming.⁴⁴ Colonial administrators helped to cover the deficit by requisitioning workers from village chiefs and by orchestrating the movement of workers from what

⁴¹ Henry W. Nevins, *A Modern Slavery* (Essex: Daimon Press, 1906; 1963) commented on gang labour in the coffee plantations. For critical opinions on the system of contract labour, see Edward Alsworth Ross, *Report on Employment of Native Labor in Portuguese Africa* (New York, 1925); Henrique Galvão, *Santa Maria: My Crusade for Portugal* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1961); Basil Davidson, *The African Awakening* (London: Cape, 1955), ch. 19.

⁴² Jeremy Ball, *Angola's Colossal Lie: Forced Labor on a Sugar Plantation, 1913-1977* (Leiden: Brill, 2015); Todd Cleveland, *Diamonds in the Rough: Corporate Paternalism and African Professionalism on the Mines of Colonial Angola, 1917-1975* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2015).

⁴³ Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (AHU), Ministério do Ultramar, *Inspecção Superior de Administração Ultramarina* (ISAU).

⁴⁴ Armando Castro, *O sistema colonial português em África (meados do século XX)*, 2ª edição (Lisboa: Editorial Caminho, 1980), 110, 131, 196.

colonial censuses identified as labour-abundant areas to regions with labour shortages. As the number of foreign plantations in Angola exploded after the war, workers were increasingly recruited outside the coffee districts, most notably in impoverished regions near Huambo, Bié, and Bailundo on the central plateau, which had been a source of unfree labour migration in and out of Angola since the eighteenth century. Thus, by 1960, probably half of all contract workers at the coffee plantations in the northern districts of Uíge and Cuanza Norte came from central Angola.⁴⁵

Colonial inspectors examined recruitment at the district level and took complaints from African chiefs and occasionally from workers. Their reports laid bare the widespread exploitation and abuses perpetrated and condoned by the colonial administration. In the Dembos and Uíge districts in northern Angola, chiefs often complained about the encroachment of European settlers on African lands.⁴⁶ The settlers' incessant demand for workers drained labour from African households. This not only caused stagnation in African coffee production, but also threatened African subsistence farming, especially since the government increasingly requisitioned male workers all year round. Although some international observers called Portuguese labour practices in Africa a 'modern slavery', it would be more accurate to describe the labour system underpinning the

⁴⁵ Fernando Diogo da Silva, *O Huambo: mão-de-obra rural no mercado de trabalho de Angola* (Luanda: Fundo de Acção Social no Trabalho em Angola, 1968), 186. For a longer timeframe, see Linda Marinda Heywood, *Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2000).

⁴⁶ AHU, MU, ISAU, A2.050.02/016.00094, Colónia de Angola, Inspecção dos Serviços Administrativos e dos Negócios Indígenas, Inspecção feita ao concelho dos Dembos pelo Inspector Administrativo, Américo Baptista de Sousa (1949); A2.49.002/39.00251, Relatório da Inspecção Administrativa ao Concelho do Uíge, pelo Inspector Administrativo António do Nascimento Rodrigues, 1959.

settler economy as coerced low-wage labour.⁴⁷ For many of the Africans caught up in this system, coffee did not end the poverty that was pushing them into contract labour.

Importantly, however, the expansionist settler economy that squeezed land and labour from African household economies did not kill off indigenous entrepreneurship.⁴⁸ On the contrary, it seems that African smallholders held their own in the face of European competition. While the share of Angolan coffee exports produced by African farmers declined from the 1920s onward, in absolute terms African production expanded. In 1928, African farmers brought 2,700 tons of coffee onto the market; by 1958 this contribution had risen to 22,200 tons.⁴⁹ These figures point to the existence of a dual economy, in which some African smallholders clearly flourished in competition with European settlers. As one Portuguese observer noted in 1956: 'It so happens that the native Congo, taken by the increase in value of coffee, has amplified his plantations, making use of every bush available, just like the European.'⁵⁰

Entrepreneurship

There were an estimated thirty-thousand Angolan coffee farmers north of the Cuanza River in 1956 (south of the river there were very few), of whom about five percent had registered their lands. Some farms measured only a few hectares, other might have reached the size of small European

⁴⁷ Basil Davidson, 'A Modern Slavery (Angola, February 1954)', *Anti-Slavery Reporter and Aborigines' Friend*, Series VI, vol. 9, no. 5 (1954): 85-92.

⁴⁸ Malyn Dudley Dunn Newitt, *Portugal in Africa: The Last Hundred Years* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1981), 135.

⁴⁹ *Boletim da direcção dos serviços de agricultura e comércio* 2, no. 7 (1929): 341; Angola, *Anuário Estatístico de Angola, ano de 1958* (Luanda: Imprensa Nacional, 1959).

⁵⁰ Jorge Trancoso Vaz, 'Problemas da cafeicultura no Congo e a mão de obra', *Revista do Café Português* 3, no. 11 (1956): 26-32.

plantations. According to the French coffee researcher René Coste, who visited Angola in 1957, African smallholders achieved the same output per hectare as European planters, only they did so more efficiently.⁵¹ African farmers potentially enjoyed a competitive advantage because their small farms required fewer labour inputs per hectare than the larger European plantations, thus making production more cost effective.⁵² Alternatively, one could argue that African smallholders were not burdened by the costs of coercion and could offer more attractive wages and working conditions than European settlers.⁵³ Theoretically, all farmers in Angola had access to contract labour, as the government made supplies conditional upon output, not on any racial or legal distinction between Africans and Europeans; but few Africans could afford the costs of recruitment. Small farmers relied on the labour of kin and other dependents; larger farmers, including chiefs, could tap into village supplies. Free wage labour was rare in the Angolan coffee sector, even on European farms. Among Africans, recruitment occurred informally, with family and village heads invoking the power of dependency, authority and material rewards.⁵⁴

What motivated smallholders to grow coffee? The literature on cash crop production often points to colonial taxation as the main external stimulant driving African peasants to commercial

⁵¹ René Coste, 'Impressões de uma viagem às regiões cafeeiras de Angola', *Revista do Café Português* 5, no. 19 (1958): 5-11.

⁵² Gareth Austin, 'Mode of Production or Mode of Cultivation: Explaining the Failure of European Cocoa Planters in Competition with African Farmers in Colonial Ghana', in *Cocoa Pioneer Fronts since 1800: The Role of Smallholders, Planters and Merchants*, ed. William Gervase Clarence-Smith, 154-75 (London: MacMillan, 1996).

⁵³ Sara S. Berry, *No Condition is Permanent: The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993).

⁵⁴ Castro, *Sistema colonial*, 129-30, 178-9, 202; René Coste, *Les caféiers et les cafés dans le monde*, vol. 2 (Paris: Larose, 1961), 452.

farming. Scholars working on coffee are no exception. For example, Andreas Eckert, Kenneth Curtis and Sven Van Melkebeke all mention the need for tax cash as the prime motive for cash cropping. At the same time, they point out that coffee farmers used their coffee revenue to pay for school fees and bride-wealth, to invest in cattle, to buy imported textiles – which increasingly replaced traditional garments – while after World War Two, farmers started buying novel items like bicycles and sewing machines. Rising coffee prices in the 1920s and 1930s unleashed a ‘coffee euphoria’ among the Bamileke of Cameroon, who saw their purchasing power suddenly increasing. A Haya farmer in Tanzania remembered about that time: ‘There was so much money we started to go crazy.’⁵⁵ Catherine Baroin has shown that the successful Haya farmers spent their coffee income on things like home improvement, cars, clothing, meat, and British tea. Some also invested in livestock and land as well as in the education of their children.⁵⁶ Clearly, coffee sometimes gave farmers more than a means to pay taxes.

Baroin argues that the consumption habits afforded by coffee income were an expression of a colonial ‘modernity’.⁵⁷ In Angola, where coffee farmers showed similar consumer preferences, the distinction between supposedly ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ lifestyles was not so clear-cut, as many of these habits built on earlier adaptations of an imported material culture. As Frank Trentmann has aptly put it, ‘Africans did not need imperial masters to teach them how to become consumers.’⁵⁸ In the case of Angola, it is important to remember that coffee cultivation expanded in the nineteenth century largely without the colonial dictates of taxation or compulsory production. Evidence

⁵⁵ Curtis, ‘Smaller Is Better’, 316,319; Eckert, ‘Comparing Coffee Production’, 306; Van Melkebeke, ‘Changing Grounds’, 191, 208.

⁵⁶ Catherine Baroin, ‘L’impact social de la caféiculture en Tanzanie du Nord’, *Études rurales*, no. 180 (2007), 93-5.

⁵⁷ Baroin, ‘Impact social’.

⁵⁸ Trentmann, *Empire of Things*, 125.

suggests, however, that even after the Portuguese government imposed fiscal imperatives on Angolan populations in the twentieth century, the same consumer demands kept driving smallholder production.

Before discussing the reasons for these consumption patterns, it is useful to see what Angolans got for their coffee.⁵⁹ The first item that should be mentioned is textiles. Throughout the colonial period, coloured cottons were consistently the most important of Angolan imports, constituting between ten and twenty percent of the total value.⁶⁰ Customs information from Ambriz, a port north of Luanda, which in the late nineteenth century almost exclusively focussed on exporting coffee, shows that in that specific period coffee was exchanged mainly for cotton textiles, including blankets. According to one officer, in 1889, consumers in the northern coffee zones had an especially strong taste for striped and printed cottons.⁶¹ Imported textiles were sometimes used as garments. As one observer noted in 1902, however, buyers often acquired textiles as a form of capital, a currency they could later invest in other things.⁶²

Some of these other investments were in people. It is not surprising to find that successful farmers transferred their money into human capital, and in colonial Africa this usually meant

⁵⁹ Alluding to Stanley B. Alpern, 'What Africans Got for Their Slaves: A Master List of European Trade Goods', *History in Africa* 22 (1995): 5-43.

⁶⁰ Angola, *Anuário Estatístico de Angola* (Luanda: Imprensa Nacional, 1934-1961).

⁶¹ AHU, SEMU-DGU, Angola, no. 641, Mapa estatístico das mercadorias importadas e reexportadas na Alfandega do Ambriz, durante 1869; António José Valente, *Novo projecto da pauta aduaneira da Alfândega do Ambriz* (Lisboa: Typografia Franco-Portuguesa, 1889), 26; Portugal, *Relatório do Ministro e secretário d'estado dos negócios da marinha e ultramar* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1898).

⁶² Fernando Pimentel, *Investigação commercial na província de Angola* (Porto: Typographia a Vapor da Empreza Guedes, 1903), 149.

women. As a British Baptist missionary in northern Angola observed in 1954, 'coffee-growing is a very remunerative job in this area, so that those who have a large number of trees can become quite wealthy in a comparatively short time provided they have enough 'hands' to pick the berries for them! This economic factor is making men keener than ever to have several wives with the hope of correspondingly large families.'⁶³ When reading evidence like this, it is important to be aware of missionary bias against polygyny and that successful men had other means to extend their households. A colonial census in Encoge in 1910 shows that most men in this coffee district at the time had only one wife and that incorporating nephews and wards was the easiest way to enlarge the nuclear family.⁶⁴

Money was also spent on new manufactures like bicycles, motorcycles and even cars. One Portuguese visitor to Angola in the 1950s considered N'dalatando, one of the old centres of the Angolan coffee economy, 'the land of black millionaires.' He said: 'Wealth has no limits here and is glorified, here and there, in some comic scenes – empty American beer cans piled up in villages; blacks traveling on motorbikes with side-car and chauffeur, because while rich, being illiterate they cannot drive; big brand cars – Plymouths and Dodges – parked under thatched roofs.'⁶⁵ Through conspicuous consumption, successful farmers demonstrated their wealth and status, but they could also redistribute part of their riches to buy patronage. Seemingly wild consumption habits were, in other words, a kind of 'politics of the belly'.⁶⁶

Beyond conspicuous consumption, spending on imported food and household items also increased, especially as some coffee farmers were giving up on subsistence farming. In Ambaca,

⁶³ Angus Library, Regent's Park College, BMS A/94, Bembe, Women's Report, 1954.

⁶⁴ ANA, caixas 375 and 4999, Listas de família, freguesia S José de Encoge, 31 December 1910.

⁶⁵ Almerindo Lessa, 'Angola e Moçambique: Panorama da terra e dos homens', *Boletim Geral do Ultramar* 28, no. 326-7 (1952): 120-21.

⁶⁶ Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London: Longman, 1993).

'Africans live reasonably well, feeding themselves not just with the products of the land, but also buying, in the shops, flour, spaghetti, olive oil, lard, chorizo, etc.'⁶⁷ Ambaca residents, building on a longer tradition of cultural borrowing from the West, began to decorate their wattle and daub homes with European-style tables, chairs, plates, pots, and cutlery. The high coffee prices of the 1950s gave many African coffee growers in the Ambaca district a chance to accumulate wealth, resulting in a growing trade in goods imported from other parts of the country and from abroad.

The district exports large amounts of coffee... importing almost all products which it needs, like manioc flour, maize, rice, potato, groundnuts, beans, fish, meat, fruit, cement, etc. The local people produce hardly anything, because coffee gives enough to satisfy their limited needs... Commerce now is the main supplier of consumer goods to the local populations who are getting used to easy, but onerous credit to acquire everything, in return for the awaited coffee harvest.⁶⁸

British reports from the Uíge district, the heart of the post-war coffee boom, indicate coffee money was invested in 'traditional' goods like textiles and livestock, but was also used to buy meat and pay for children's education.⁶⁹

One way to explain the consumption patterns described above is to see them as part of entrepreneurial strategies aimed to display social status and extend relations of patronage. Based on this kind of 'social work', as Sarah Berry has coined these strategies, smallholders managed to compete for labour, generally providing more attractive forms of remuneration and working

⁶⁷ AHU, MU, ISAU, A2.050.02/016.00106, Inspecção dos Serviços Administrativos e dos Negócios Indígenas, Relatório da Inspecção ao Conselho de Ambaca, 1950.

⁶⁸ AHU, MU, ISAU, A2.49.005/59.00457, Relatório da Inspecção ao Concelho de Ambaca, 1957.

⁶⁹ North Angola Mission, Uíge, 31/12/1942; TNA, CO 371/97249, House to FO, Luanda 12/2/52.

conditions than those in the European plantation sector.⁷⁰ Writing on African agrarian entrepreneurship, Berry has explained why successful farmers invest a lot of their income in social relationships. 'Partly because of the continued importance of social networks as channels of access to the means of production, many farmers have invested part of their income in maintaining or advancing their position within established networks and/or gaining entry into new ones.'⁷¹ In relation to cocoa farming, she adds, 'To keep a new farm going until it paid for itself, seven to ten years after planting, a farmer had to persuade his dependants that years of unpaid labour would be remunerated, if not directly, then with future gifts, extra household consumption, and future assistance in starting farms or businesses of their own.'⁷² For those farmers with access to land and labour, coffee required little investment as mechanisation played no role in cultivation. Transforming wild coffee bush into a healthy farm and extending production by adding new trees mainly depended on structural labour inputs. Because controlling people was crucial to success, the 'social work' of smallholder entrepreneurs was an important part of their lives. Some farmers unquestionably failed, but their stories are very hard to recover. The evidence above is of those who succeeded.

Conclusion

This essay has argued that from the 1850s throughout the colonial period, farmers in Angola were to a large degree attracted to coffee growing because it created opportunities for conspicuous and inconspicuous consumption. Fundamentally, evidence from Angola and other colonial economies in Africa suggests that, when prices were high, small coffee farmers fared relatively well, using the riches made in coffee to pay for different consumer goods, including education for their children.

⁷⁰ Berry, 'Entrepreneurial Labour'.

⁷¹ Berry, *No Condition*, 159.

⁷² Berry, 'Entrepreneurial Labour', 463-4.

But there are several larger points about commodity history and African agricultural history to draw from this basic observation. First, it challenges African historians to study in greater detail what farmers did with income earned from selling agricultural products. Scholars like Phyllis Martin, Timothy Burke, Laura Fair, and Andrew Ivaska have begun to examine urban consumer cultures in colonial Africa.⁷³ However, this new literature has so far paid little attention to consumer cultures outside the urban centres, and few historians have yet related the subject of consumption to work.⁷⁴ People living in rural areas are still too often seen mainly as producers of export crops, rather than consumers of imported commodities. For instance, some commodity historians tend to view the 'global countryside' primarily as sites of resource extraction for the capitalist world economy, but such a unidirectional model of core-periphery relationships, reminiscent of world-systems theory, reduces the agency of the local people involved in commodity production.⁷⁵ By examining the goods Angolan farmers received in exchange for their coffee, this essay has related their motivations to

⁷³ Phyllis Martin, *Leisure and Society in Colonial Brazzaville* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Timothy Burke, *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women: Commodification, Consumption, and Cleanliness in Modern Zimbabwe* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996); Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890–1945* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001); Andrew Ivaska, *Cultured States: Youth, Gender, and Modern Style in 1960s Dar es Salaam* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

⁷⁴ Patrick Harries, *Work, Culture, and Identity: Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860-1910* (London: James Currey, 1994) is an exception. For an example from the Bengal basin, see Tariq Omar Ali, *A Local History of Global Capital: Jute and Peasant Life in the Bengal Delta* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

⁷⁵ Sven Beckert, Ulbe Bosma, Mindi Schneider, and Eric Vanhaute, 'Commodity Frontiers and the Transformation of the Global Countryside: A Research Agenda', *Journal of Global History* 16, no. 3 (2021): 435-50.

invest in cash-crop production to material culture, as shaped by local political economies and precolonial cultures of consumption.

Secondly, a *longue durée* perspective on agrarian entrepreneurship in Africa allows for global comparisons and, therefore, a better understanding of how material culture factored into smallholder strategies. One could indeed argue that the economic behaviour of African households during the continent's 'agricultural revolution' was driven by a demand for consumer goods in ways that paralleled the 'industrious revolution' in early modern Europe and North America.⁷⁶ Focussing on the historically and culturally embedded motives of entrepreneurial smallholders also forces historians to rethink the primacy of colonial coercion in explaining the development of cash-crop farming in Africa.⁷⁷

The experience of African coffee farmers furthermore provides an interesting contrast to Steven Topik's sweeping observation about the relation between coffee production and rural poverty in Latin America. 'Coffee required rich land, ample rain, and poor workers. Poverty was much more associated with it than was prosperity', in his view.⁷⁸ However, as Topik elsewhere points out, coffee has never been a homogeneous commodity; coffee production systems have

⁷⁶ Jan de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behavior and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁷⁷ Robert Ross, Marja Hinfelaar, and Iva Peša, 'Introduction: Material Culture and Consumption Patterns: A Southern African Revolution', in *The Objects of Life in Central Africa: The History of Consumption and Social Change, 1840-1980*, ed. Robert Ross, Marja Hinfelaar and Iva Peša (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

⁷⁸ Steven Topik, 'Coffee', in *The Second Conquest: Coffee, Henequen and Oil During the Latin American Export Boom*, ed. Steven C. Topik and Alan Wells (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 38.

always adapted to the societies in which they nested.⁷⁹ The colonial configuration of Angola meant that coffee developed in a dual economy, in which European settler plantations thriving on a perverse mixture of coerced and low-waged labour competed with independent African smallholders. While the Angolan coffee economy was to a large extent built on the backs of poorly paid contract workers, coffee also brought significant material benefits to areas where African smallholders thrived. For many small farmers coffee was an opportunity crop, rather than a poverty crop.

These conclusions also intersect with an ongoing debate about the Cultivation System in colonial Indonesia, in which some historians emphasise exploitation and impoverishment, while others argue that there were positive spin-offs in the form of independent production and commercial activity.⁸⁰ At the same time, caution is required when assessing the evidence of material wealth in colonial Angola encountered in government and missionary archives, especially since it is still fragmentary and circumstantial. Obviously not all coffee farmers in Angola lived a life of luxury; perhaps only one in ten smallholders was well-off.⁸¹ Better estimates are therefore needed of the number of rich versus poor farmers. Any welfare assessment also requires information about familial and extra-familial labour on smallholder farms, how small farmers remunerated labour, the number

⁷⁹ Steven Topik, 'The Integration of the World Coffee Market', in *Global Coffee Economy*, ed.

Clarence-Smith and Topik.

⁸⁰ Jan Breman, *Mobilizing Labour for the Global Coffee Market: Profits from an Unfree Work Regime in Colonial Java* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015); R. E. Elson, *Village Java under the Cultivation System, 1830-1870* (Sydney: ASAA Southeast Asia Publication Series, 1994).

⁸¹ William Gervase Clarence-Smith, 'Capital Accumulation and Class Formation in Angola', in *History of Central Africa*, volume two, ed. David Birmingham and Phyllis M. Martin (London: Longman, 1983), 195.

of workers respectively employed in the African and European sectors, and the real wages and benefits received by contract workers in the plantation sector.

Finally, while coffee has brought economic benefits to individual peasant households in Africa, it has not yet been the basis of sustainable economic development. The brief outline of smallholder spending habits offered here raises a question about the long-term implications of capital accumulation by independent African entrepreneurs. Ayodeji Olukoju has argued that in colonial Nigeria there were both political and cultural constraints to sustainable capital accumulation. Because of powerful societal notions of wealth, honour and social status, accumulated capital has historically been diverted to conspicuous consumption, impeding what he calls 'developmental entrepreneurship'.⁸² There are several reasons why countries focusing their export economies on coffee 'have tended to remain poor', as Steven Topik and William Gervase Clarence-Smith have argued.⁸³ In the African case, as Olukoju suggests, specific cultures and political economies of consumption had something to do with it.

⁸² Ayodeji Olukoju, 'Accumulation and Conspicuous Consumption: The Poverty of Entrepreneurship in Western Nigeria, ca. 1850–1930', in *Africa's Development in Historical Perspective*, ed. Emmanuel Akyeampong, Robert H. Bates, Nathan Nunn, and James A. Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

⁸³ Steven Topik and William Gervase Clarence-Smith, 'Conclusion: New Propositions and a Research Agenda', in *Global Coffee Economy*, ed. Clarence-Smith and Topik, 404.