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William Gervase Clarence-Smith, Steven Topik, eds. *The Global Coffee Economy in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, 1500-1989.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003. xviii + 486 pp. $80.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-521-81851-3.

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Coffee and Dependence Theory

This book, edited by Gervase Clarence-Smith and Steven Topik, is the result of the first international conference on the history of the social and developmental impact of coffee worldwide, held at St. Antony's College, Oxford, in September 1998. Based on the principle that coffee has been one of the most important commodities in the world market during at least the last two centuries, the editors propose their essay collection as a study of the evolution of this economic sector in some of the most important Asian, African, and Latin American coffee-exporting countries. Their goal is to revise what they consider to be some of the most important principles of "dependency theory." To be more precise, Clarence-Smith and Topik question whether there is necessarily a connection between large plots of land and the production of goods such as coffee, as well as the progressive character associated with the technically sophisticated coffee planter-exporters, who have been characterized as promoters of industrialization and creators of Liberal nation-states. They also challenge the stereotypical description of workers in this economic sector as potentially revolutionary males (an approach that neglects the influence of gender, culture, or race) and underline the scant attention paid by scholars to the study of intermediaries. Finally, they are skeptical about the characterization of coffee as a no-opportunity-cost good (as a frontier crop that expanded into "virgin" lands), emphasizing instead the negative social and economic consequences of coffee as a monoculture specialization.

The first part of the book, "Origins of the World Coffee Economy," includes five essays. The first one, written by Steven Topik, is a useful introduction to the rest of the volume, above all for those not very familiar with this topic, which includes a well-depicted historical evolution of the production and commercialization of this commodity. In the second, William Gervase Clarence-Smith studies the crisis as well as the factors that may have determined, according to the author, "the extraordinarily uneven nature of that decline" experienced by the most important producers in Asia, Africa, and the Pacific basin between 1870 and 1914 (p. 101). Michel Tuchscherer and Gwyn Campbell analyze the evolution of the production of this commodity in two African regions: the southwest Indian Ocean (Madagascar and RÃ©union, 1711-1970), and the Red Sea (with special attention to Yemen and Ethiopia from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries). Finally, Mario K. Samper examines the production and commercialization of coffee in Costa Rica from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the 1990s, and especially the responses of the coffee producers in that country to its internationalization and to changing external conditions.

The second part ("Peasants. Race, Gender, and Property") also includes five essays. M. R. Fernando and David McCreery analyze the introduction of coffee and its consequences for the labor systems, as well as the evolution of both labor and coffee production in Java (1830-1917) and Guatemala (1871-1980) respectively. Rachel Kurian and Elizabeth Dore also study this economic sector and the labor systems in Sri Lanka (1834-80) and Nicaragua (1870-1930), focusing part of their work on race and gender. Finally, Julie A. Charlip studies the boom of coffee production in Nicaragua from 1880 to 1930 and its impact on the distribution of land in that country.

The third and last part of this book, "Coffee, Politics, and State Building," includes essays written by Jan Rus (on Chiapas, Mexico from 1892-1912), Andreas Eckert (on Cameroon and Tanganyika from 1900-1960s), and Kenneth R. Curtis (on Buboka, Tanganyika from the 1890s-1950s). All of the authors evaluate the intervention of the state in this economic sector through the provision of labor and regulation of access to land ownership, with Rus and Eckert also attending to the social consequences of these policies. Curtis also analyzes the role of the state in regulating agrarian credit and its repercussions for small owners. This section ends with essays written by Lowell

W. Gudmunson on Costa Rica (1850-1850) and Hildete Pereira de Melo on Brazil (1850-1920). Neither of them defines the state and its intervention as their principal focus. On the contrary, Gudmunson studies landholding, underlining the differences in the evolution of the coffee sector between regions within the same country, even in one as small as Costa Rica. Pereira de Melo also insists on the importance of regional and sub-regional diversity in analyzing the impact of the coffee economy on the economic development of the Rio de Janeiro state.

Along with these fifteen essays, the editors include ten maps that illustrate the essays clearly. There is also an impressive appendix, or statistical chapter, as they call it (pages 411 to 462). In this section, M. Samper and R. Fernando provide global- and country-specific information on production, exports, imports, and prices from the beginning of the eighteenth century to 1960.

In trying to evaluate this book, it is necessary to begin by accepting the idea that seems to sustain this project; namely, that the best way to challenge dependency theory is to compare different economies with a common element: an export monoculture such as coffee. And, it should be added, there is no other way to achieve such an ambitious goal but by coordinating the work of a group of scholars as capable as the ones behind this book. Nevertheless, in spite of the individual quality of the essays, as a collection, this book does not achieve its goal. The fifteen essays together do not provide a clearly defined comparative perspective with which to support a revision of dependency theory. In fact, while one of the strengths of the book's proposal is its goal of broad regional comparison, in practice it is not well balanced in this regard. This is most evident in the second part of the book, which includes two essays on two Asian regions and three on Central America, but none on Africa. Brazil, according to Pereira de Melo "the world's most successful coffee economy since the middle of the nineteenth century", is studied only in the third part, and the content of the article does not connect well to the rest of the chapter, so that there is no possibility of comparing this data with the other cases presented in that section (p. 360). This is another shortcoming of the project: each of the three sections introduces a topic so broad that it is not easy to find points of comparison even among the pieces that constitute a given section. Thus, it is not surprising that the last chapter, in which the editors define their alternative to "dependency theory," seems to be a separate work in itself. Clarence-Smith and Topik provide a convincing argument for their model, but they do so by introducing a large number of additional sources, rather than relying on a comparative analysis of the essays in the collection itself.

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