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Stephan Conermann / Michael Zeuske (Eds.)

The Slavery / Capitalism Debate Global. From "Capitalism and Slavery" to Slavery as Capitalism

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Ed. by Stephan Conermann and Michael Zeuske



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Editorial

The role of the slavery-based plantation economy in the development of capitalism has preoccupied many generations of scholars. This is related to a number of very important questions, the answers to which have a lasting impact on narratives about modernity and the ways it emerged in what is often called the early modern times. Was slavery-based production good for the initial accumulation of vast fortunes that became the precondition of modern capitalism, but ultimately incompatible with a capitalism based on the marketization of labour that is “freely” offered and demanded? Or did the history of slavery and other forms of forced and coerced labour, regardless of the moral scruples that became public for religious reasons (in England and the USA) or out of a predominantly secular-humanist motivation (in France), accompany capitalism until the social counterforces of decolonization were strong enough to shake off this form of particularly crass exploitation (even if not inconsiderable remnants persist to this day)?

This fundamental debate, which provides a subject for an entire direction within current historiography, namely the New History of Capitalism, is now profiting from the enormous expansion of its empirical basis through the global-historical interest of the last three decades. It makes a difference whether one looks at the problem from the perspective of the one or the other empire. This was already clear to contemporaries who, in the famous renunciation of the slave trade at the Congress of Vienna, left a loophole for the Spanish and Portuguese, who were allowed to continue taking slaves on board south of the equator and transporting them to their colonial empire in South and Central America (which was, however, soon to shrink considerably). Napoleon had indeed burned his particularly republican-minded troop contingents in a vain attempt to restore slavery on Saint Domingue, but immediately after returning from his first exile on Elba he decreed the abolition of slavery. In between lay the dramatic defeat of the French against the English navy at Trafalgar and the sale of Louisiana to the USA: in view of the impossibility of asserting naval supremacy against the British competitor, there followed a provisional rejection of the Atlantic as the relevant space of expansion and geopolitical projection which implied a return to a different type of capitalism, based not on the trade ports on the coast but on agriculture and manufactures in the hinterland of metropolitan France. That this meant neither a definitive rejection of colonial projects nor of exploita-

tion through forced labour by French elites was soon to become apparent in North Africa and later in Southeast Asia.

What was supposed to be exemplified here by the French case is made plausible by this thematic issue with many more examples: there is no one, universally valid answer to the question of the relationship between slavery and capitalism, but slavery and other forms of forced labour are part of the history of capitalism and cannot be excluded from its definition. What form this connection took, what consequences it had for the persistence of monocultures (and therefore impacting chances for diversified development afterwards and until today), and how it inscribed and continues to inscribe itself in the cultural patterns of societies that were based on slave labour to a huge extent varies and invites a history of capitalisms in the plural.

Matthias Middell / Katja Castryck-Naumann

Preface

Established on 1 January 2019, the Cluster of Excellence (EXS 2036) at the University of Bonn is dedicated to “Beyond Slavery and Freedom” Asymmetrical Dependencies in Pre-modern Societies” (www.dependency.uni-bonn.de). So far, general debates about forms of bondage and forced labour have focused primarily on slavery. Furthermore, the historical experiences with transatlantic slavery, which is closely linked to the development of the modern West, shape our understanding of freedom and bondage to this day. The cluster would like to overcome this dichotomous idea of “slavery versus freedom” by developing a new key concept: “asymmetrical dependency”. This concept covers all forms of dependencies, such as debt bondage, forced labour, servitude, serfdom, housework, but also wage labour and forms of patronage.

Although these phenomena are being researched upon in around 100 projects in the EXS 2036, there is currently no project that specifically deals with the connection between slavery and capitalism. It is well known that Eric E. Williams (1911–1981), who was not only the prime minister of Trinidad for many years but also an interesting historian, had already presented theses in his work *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944). In this monograph, he states that the investment capital of industrialization came from the profits reaped from slave labour in the Caribbean, and the discussions about the abolition of slavery became more intense in Great Britain at the very moment when the profits were declining. Against this background, slavery was considered to be outdated and moral could denounce the form of forced labour to be rejected. Many revisionist studies in the last 15 years have confirmed the interdependencies between the “rise” of Europe and the capital generated by slavery. This interweaving also formed the basis for the *second slavery* as well as the development of slavery capitalism in the nineteenth century, with which most of the articles in this volume deal.

With all this in mind, we felt it was very fortunate that the two editors of this journal gave us the opportunity to create a special edition of *Comparativ* on the subject of “The Slavery/ Capitalism Debate Global: From ‘Capitalism and Slavery’ to Slavery as Capitalism”.

We would like to thank the editors of *Comparativ* very much for this. Our thanks also go to all contributors. The cooperation with them was extremely constructive and goal-oriented. This has decisively contributed to the success of this special edition of *Comparativ*.

Stephan Conermann / Michael Zeuske

The Slavery / Capitalism Debate Global: From “Capitalism and Slavery” to Slavery as Capitalism. Introduction

Michael Zeuske / Stephan Conermann

The slavery/capitalism debate is old. It started in Europe with the “hand of God”¹ and still without the container word *capitalism*. At the end of the eighteenth century, it had already become a debate, not directly over slaveries but among religious elites on the subject of the Atlantic slave trade – often from actors who or whose families previously made their money with the slave trade or slavery. There was heavy silence about local slaveries based on the capital of human bodies in Atlantic and other slave trade routes as well as in the colonial territories of Great Britain and of Spain and Portugal (in the broader sense, in Western Europe and the Atlantic).² British society began to speak of itself as a “civil society” or “civilization”. Scottish thinkers philosophized on the ideological justification of a global exception – the small beginnings of the industrial formation of Anglo-British capitalism in the eighteenth century. Adam Smith and the Scottish Enlightenment considered a society with the “freedom” of work and contracts to be something completely new – precisely from the grace of God – private property to be a “natural right”, and the diligence of entrepreneurs to be born from their rationality and thrift.

Predicting the views that would become prevalent over the course of the nineteenth century, this main “argument of progress, civilization, and liberty” was reinforced to a great

- 1 J. Vogl, *Das Gespenst des Kapitals*, Zürich 2011. We would particularly like to thank Pepijn Brandon and other colleagues, whose comments, criticisms, and suggestions we have benefited from (Melina Teubner, Kaveh Yazdani).
- 2 E. G. Wakefield (ed.), *A View of the Art of Colonization, With Present Reference to the British Empire*; In *Letters Between a Statesman and a Colonist*, London 1849.

degree by the discourse of the British abolition of slave trade and slavery from 1808 to 1838. Certainly, there were clever, creative, and thrifty people (Jan de Vries calls it the "industrious revolution"³). Karl Marx at least countered this – very early – by stating that capitalists, especially in the slave-trade empires, often obtained their capital for the development of distribution structures as well as commercial capitalism and its financing from an unprecedented worldwide orgy of blood and dirt (even, as said above, those capitalists who then led the abolition discourses for religious and humanitarian reasons).⁴ This orgy of violence almost always had to do with two features. On the one hand, there was a global dimension of expansion, economically, commercially, and politically – the creation of accumulation spaces as transimperial areas and imperial colonial territories. On the other hand, there was distribution and accounting-book accumulation, that is trade or the so-called "mercantilism" – which is more likely to be conceptualized as transimperial today.⁵

- 3 J. de Vries/A. van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure and Perseverance of Dutch Economy, 1500–1815*, Cambridge 1997; J. de Vries, *The Dutch Atlantic Economies*, in: P. A. Coclanis (ed.), *The Atlantic Economy during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Organization, Operation, Practice, and Personnel*, Columbia 2005, pp. 1–29; J. de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution. Consumer Behavior and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present*, Cambridge 2008; on the reassessment of slavery and colonialism for the Netherlands, see P. Brandon/U. Bosma, *De betekenis van de Atlantische slavernij voor de Nederlandse economie in de tweede helft van de achttiende eeuw*, in: *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 16 (2019) 2, pp. 5–46.
- 4 J. F. Schaub, *Violence in the Atlantic: Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, in: N. Canny/P. Morgan (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Atlantic World: 1450–1850*, Oxford/New York 2011, pp. 113–129; on arms production and war violence before and during the European industrial revolution in Great Britain and beyond, see P. Satia, *Empire of Guns: The Violent Making of the Industrial Revolution*, New York 2018; particularly: P. Satia, Introduction, *ibid.*, pp. 1–23, at 1: "For more than 125 years, between 1688 and 1815, Britain was in a state of more or less constant war." For the concept of "war capitalism" from a perspective dominated by the US Southern states, Great Britain, and the Anglo-American world, see S. Beckert, Einleitung, in: Id., King Cotton: *Eine Geschichte des globalen Kapitalismus*, München 2014, pp. 7–18, 12s. For all politics, culture, warfare, and society not only under the fear of violence but also under the idea of mutual extermination (both between enslavers and enslaved, as well as between colonizers and colonized), see K. W. Lewis, *A Curse upon the Nation: Race, Freedom, and Extermination in America and the Atlantic World*, Athens 2017. The fear of extermination by enslaved or resistant indigenous peoples was very great among settlers, enslavers, and colonizers and it was turned into propaganda, endless discourses, ideology, and politics. Most real deaths were suffered by enslaved and colonized; see the whole genocide debate of Iberian conquests (which was not genocide, but there were millions of victims as a consequence of the conquest) and V. Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery*, Cambridge 2010; A. Reséndez, *The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America*, Boston 2016; R. M. Browne, *Surviving Slavery in the British Caribbean*, Philadelphia 2017; J. Ostler, *Surviving Genocide: Native Nations and the United States from the American Revolution to Bleeding Kansas*, New Haven 2019; on the history of state intervention and on the criticism of debates on the origins of capitalism, see J. Donoghue/E. P. Jennings (eds.), *Building the Atlantic Empires: Unfree Labor and Imperial States in the Political Economy of Capitalism, ca. 1500–1914*, Leiden 2016; on trans-imperial companies: A. Phillips/J. C. Sharman, *Outsourcing Empire: How Company-States Made the Modern World*, Princeton 2020.
- 5 W. Klooster, *Inter-Imperial Smuggling in the Americas, 1600–1800*, in: B. Bailyn/P. L. Denault (eds.), *Soundings in Atlantic History: Latent Structures and Intellectual Currents, 1500–1830*, Cambridge 2009, pp. 141–180; K. Pomeranz/S. Topik, *The World That Trade Created: Society, Culture, and the World Economy, 1400 to the Present*, Armonk 2012; R. D. Crewe, *Connecting the Indies: The Hispano-Asian Pacific World in the Early Global History*, in: *Estudios Históricos* 30 (2017), pp. 17–34; P. De Zwart/J. L. Van Zanden, *The Origins of Globalization. World Trade in the Making of the Global Economy, 1500–1800*, Cambridge 2018; B. Lemire, *Global Trade and the Transformation of Consumer Cultures: The Material World Remade, c. 1500–1820*, Cambridge 2018; Ch. A. DeCorse, *Historical Landscapes of the Modern World*, in: Id. (ed.), *Power, Political Economy, and Historical Landscapes of the Modern World. Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, Albany 2019, pp. 1–24; F. Jacob/M. Kaller, Introduction. *Commodity*

Associated with many legal conflicts and (we repeat this deliberately) real violent expansions – along with institution formation in the colonies (formally national-imperial but really transimperial) and conflicts and wars as well as raids (small and large) – such expansion had an economic effect on certain territories in terms of development, including demographic.⁶ In the famous chapter 24 of *The Capital*, Marx analysed the “original accumulation” as hemispheric “liberation” of peasant producers from their means of production, the subjective control over the labour performance of their bodies, and the processes of expansion and expropriation (it led in the discourses about the consumption by Voltaire and many other liberals to a “blood-sugar debate”⁷). For Marx, slavery and the Atlantic slave trade, as part of the “original accumulation of capital”, were part of this gigantic orgy of violence in terms of space and time.⁸

One of the problems for us today is that it started earlier than these thinkers thought it would – not around 1650, but around 1450. And it had external and internal dimensions. Especially with regard to slavery, slave trade, colonialism, and freedom, we can say that European national monarchies, which were at the same time expanding colonial empires (like other imperial entities), tried to secure very early transcultural and transimperial “slaving zones”.⁹ From an African perspective, these were autochthonous slavery regimes in development under the control of local elites, monarchies, and empires. From an Atlantic, that is to say an European and American, perspective, these were areas of violence-“free” competition – first of all in West Africa until the 1880s (more or less the end of formal slaveries in the Americas).

In Europe and in the emerging Western Christian “civilization”, there was the aim to keep formal slavery from being established in their central territories. This means that many European societies operated according to the imperial rule “no good subjects of the imperial central territory should be called slaves”, resulting in the establishment, or maintenance, of the slave trade in the above-mentioned areas and slavery in colonies and peripheries or between them. European elites left captive procedures, human raids,

Trade, Globalization, and the Making of the Atlantic World, in: Id. (eds.), *Transatlantic Trade and Global Cultural Transfers Since 1492. More than Commodities*, London/New York 2019, pp. 1–12; M. Pérez-García, *Global Goods, Silver and Market Integration: Consumption of Wine, Silk and Porcelain through the Grill Company via Macao-Canton and Marseille Trade Nodes, 18th Century*, in: *Revista de Historia Económica/Journal of Iberian and Latin American Economic History* 38 (2017) 3, pp. 449–484; M. Zeuske, *Der afrikanisch-iberische Atlantik. Eine globale Handelsgeschichte der Akkumulation, des Sklavenhandels und der Sklavereien 1400–1900* (forthcoming).

6 L. Veracini, *Founding Violence and Disavowal: The Settler Colonial Situation*, in: *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29 (2008) 4, pp. 363–379; D. Walter, *Colonial Violence: European Empires and the Use of Force*, Oxford 2017; P. Dwyer/A. Nettelback (eds.), *Violence, Colonialism and Empire in the Modern World*, New York 2018; J. Gelman et al. (coord.), *Iberoamérica y España antes de las Independencias, 1700–1820. Crecimiento, reformas y crisis*, México 2014.

7 R. L. Paquette, *Sugar is Made with Blood*, Middletown 1988; M. Zeuske, *Arbeit und Zucker in Amerika versus Arbeit und Zucker in Deutschland (ca. 1840–1880). Grundlinien eines Vergleichs*, in: *Comparativ* 4 (1994) 4, pp. 59–97.

8 M. Zeuske, *Karl Marx, Sklaverei, Formationstheorie, ursprüngliche Akkumulation und Global South*, in: F. Wemheuer (ed.), *Marx und der globale Süden*, Köln 2016, pp. 96–144. See also R. Blackburn, *An Unfinished Revolution: Karl Marx and Abraham Lincoln*, London/New York 2011.

9 J. Fynn-Paul/D. A. Pargas (eds.), *Slaving Zones. Cultural Identities, Ideologies, and Institutions in the Evolution of Global Slavery*, Leiden/Boston 2018.

slavery, and human caravans (on land and/or water) – that is to say, the structural beginnings of slaving – to extremely important but peripheral elites from their European point of view. The central imperial elites referred to the “barbaric/uncivilized” territories as “delivery areas” or even as slaving zones.¹⁰ The slaveries in the colonies (including British America) were under control of American Creoles. Amazingly, most of the subjects/citizens of European empires, despite their global historical backwardness, really considered themselves “free” and not “enslavable”.¹¹

Marx (also) had the advantage of historicizing his theoretical concept of capital in the nineteenth century and analysing it as a social relationship; he even included the enslaved in the dynamic history of capital.¹² From his theoretical concept, he considered slavery essentially a lower form of human production that would disappear with the development and expansion of Western European “industrial capitalism” (which, until around 1860, existed almost only in Great Britain and, to some extent, in continental Europe, like Belgium and other points and regions).¹³ Very worth considering in relation to the debates about “free” and “unfree” work is Pepijn Brandon, who states:

In opposition to Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, or Jeremy Bentham – but like Marcel van der Linden – Marx used the term “free” labor in a specific, highly conditional sense; as the designation of a particular type of coerced labor. In the immediate aftermath of the American Civil War, what could be a surer way of bringing home this point than showing the parallels and connections between wage labor and slavery? Strong comparisons did not make Marx fall into the racist notion common among some sections of the workers movement that (white) wage labor in general was a form of slavery worse than actual (black) slavery.¹⁴

Because of massive wars, the protection of the core territories from violence in Europe was, in reality, only rarely successful (see the ongoing conflicts, wars, and civil wars on the British Isles, which were directed outwards from the middle of the seventeenth century¹⁵). The sea- and slave-trading powers of Europe spread in the so-called “European

10 The concept of “delivery areas” was already developed by Orlando Patterson; see O. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death. A Comparative Study*, Cambridge 1982.

11 On enslavability (*slaafbaarheid*), see M. van Rossum/A. Geelen/B. van den Hout/M. Tosun, *Testimonies of Enslavement. Sources on Slavery from the Indian Ocean World*, London et al. 2020.

12 P. Brandon, ‘With the Name Changed, the Story Applies to You!’ Connections between Slavery and ‘Free’ Labor in the Writings of Marx, in: U. Bosma/K. Hofmeester (eds.), *The Lifework of a Labor Historian: Essays in Honor of Marcel van der Linden*, Leiden 2018, pp. 47–70.

13 Zeuske, Karl Marx, *Sklaverei, Formationstheorie*.

14 Brandon, ‘With the Name Changed, the Story Applies to You!’, p. 70; Ch. Frings, *Sklaverei und Lohnarbeit bei Marx. Zur Diskussion um Gewalt und ‘unfreie Arbeit’ im Kapitalismus*, in: *PROKLA* 49 (2019) 3, pp. 427–448; E. Dal Lago, *The End of the ‘Second Slavery’ in the Confederate South and the ‘Great Brigandage’ in Southern Italy: A Comparative Study*, in: J. Laviña/M. Zeuske (eds.), *The Second Slavery. Mass Slavery and Modernity in the Americas and in the Atlantic Basin*, Berlin et al. 2014, pp. 73–92; M. Zeuske, *Sklaverei. Eine Menschheitsgeschichte. Von der Steinzeit bis heute*, Ditzingen 2018; Id., *Handbuch Geschichte der Sklaverei. Eine Globalgeschichte von den Anfängen bis heute*, 2 vols., 2nd edn, Berlin/Boston 2019.

15 The influence of wars (the competition of states and empires) and revolutions applies, at the latest since the Seven Years’ War (“French and Indian War”) and the revolution in the British colonies in North America and in

expansion”: a paraphrase of the global history of violence in Europe as well as exercised by global commercial systems, which is definitely related to the history of circulation, food, consumption, and commodity histories.¹⁶

This is where the capital debate begins. Enslaved human bodies as capital and commercial goods were commodities. Slavers, slave traders, and slaveholders were the first capitalists (that is why they were named *capitalistas* in Spanish sources).¹⁷ They first operated as such in the Atlantic space and in Atlantic colonial empires (and not in the “centre” – Great Britain or Europe, so to say).¹⁸ The consumer revolution, including global Indian textiles, African *guineas*, and European *indiennes*, was extremely important, especially for financing the Atlantic slave trade.¹⁹ The consumer revolution was based on the capital of human bodies, the Atlantic slave trade, and massive slavery in the Americas – that is to say, it had a South-South centre (AAA – “production” of the enslaved in *Africa*; transportation, commerce, and increase in value through the *Atlantic* slave trade, and “production” of tropical products in the *Americas*, as well as buying and selling of human bodies on land in the Colonial Slave Empires).

In this sense, the consumer revolution started far earlier, being temporally longer and geographically broader than the incipient “industrial revolution” in cities in Great Britain (and beyond²⁰). Machines and a complex organization of production were already integral to Atlantic slavery, including ships (and latifundia, as on São Tomé as a foun-

the Spanish colonies in Central and South America (1776–1830), also in a global dimension; see K. Rönnbäck, An end and a new beginning: disintegration of inter-continental commodity markets during the revolutionary era, 1770s to 1820s, in: *Jahrbuch für Überseegeschichte* 12 (2012), pp. 53–78; K. H. O'Rourke, The worldwide economic impact of the French revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, 1793–1815, in: *Journal of Global History* 1 (2006) 1, pp. 123–149; M. Zeuske, The French Revolution in Spanish America, in: A. Forrest/M. Middell (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to the French Revolution in World History*, London/New York 2016, pp. 77–96. Until then, the most dynamic approaches of the second slavery (e.g. *Capitanía General de Caracas*) fell back and Cuba (*Cuba grande*) rose from 1810–1886.

- 16 Schaub, *Violence in the Atlantic: Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, pp. 113–129; M. Kwass, *The Globalization of European Consumption*, in: Id., *Contraband. Louis Mandrin and the Making of a Global Underground*, Cambridge 2014, pp. 15–40.
- 17 J. G. Ortega, *Cuban Merchants, Slave Trade Knowledge, and the Atlantic World, 1790s–1820s*, in: *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 15 (2006) 3, pp. 225–251.
- 18 B. L. Solow/S. L. Engerman (eds.), *British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery. The Legacy of Eric Williams*, Cambridge 1987; B. L. Solow (ed.), *Slavery and the Rise of the Atlantic System*, Cambridge 1991; Donoghue/Jennings (eds.), *Building the Atlantic Empires*.
- 19 G. Riello/T. Roy (eds.), *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500–1850*, Leiden 2009; J. Bohorquez, *Linking the Atlantic and Indian Oceans: Asian textiles, Spanish silver, global capital, and the financing of the Portuguese–Brazilian slave trade (c.1760–1808)*, in: *Journal of Global History* 15 (2020) 1, pp. 19–38; not to forget that Indian fabrics competed with European linens in Africa: A. Steffens, *A Fierce Competition! Silesian Linens and Indian Cottons on the West African Coast in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries*, in: J. Wimmer/K. Weber (eds.), *Globalized Peripheries. Central Europe and the Atlantic World, 1680–1860*, Woodbridge 2020, pp. 37–56.
- 20 S. W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*, New York 1985; R. A. Austen/W. D. Smith, *Private Tooth Decay as Public Economic Virtue: The Slave Triangle, Consumerism, and European Industrialization*, in: J. E. Inikori/S. Engerman (eds.), *The Atlantic Slave Trade. Effects on Economies, Societies, and Peoples in Africa, the Americas, and Europe*, Durham/London 1992, pp. 183–203; M. Berg, *Asian Luxuries and the Making of the European Consumer Revolution*, in: M. Berg/E. Eger (eds.), *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Luxury Goods*, London 2002, pp. 228–244; F. Trentmann, *Empire of Things, How We Became a World of Consumers, from the Fifteenth Century to the Twenty-first*, London et al. 2016.

dational space,²¹ or the market for human bodies at Ribeira Grande, Cape Verde²²): “Sugar fascinated many early modern Europeans because machines made it, and they loved machines”.²³ The slavery Atlantic was full of wooden-iron machines powered by natural, biological, and physical energy – this is primarily the strength of the bodies of humans and animals (every plantation, every larger production unit with enslaved men and women used also many animals: “working-animals”, like oxen, mules, donkeys, etc. as well as “domination-animals” such as horses and dogs, and “food-animals” like pigs and chickens). The early industrialized slavery on plantations (*engenhos/ingenios*), slave traders using the “machine” ship, globalizing hubs (ports), and highly organized rural export production of the colonies and ex-colonies, also based on a world of wooden machines with iron parts and (often more and more metallic) production trains, as well as their suppliers and food producers in the Americas was also much longer and broader.²⁴ Before 1815, many elites in Africa consumed tropical goods (and food like corn, rice, and manioc) and almost all elites in Europe (especially in cities/ports and central cities) consumed “luxury products” (like sugar, cocoa, and tobacco).²⁵ In certain European “proto-industrial” landscapes (such as cloth and linen production), this was true also for producers. But above all for Atlantic lower classes, such as sailors and the servants of slave traders/captains, and Atlantic Creoles, and also for enslaved people already since the sixteenth century. To get to the point, what Europeans in the nineteenth century considered as “luxury” (sugar, tobacco, cocoa, regular protein food – primarily meat or beef – and coffee, in certain sense also cotton textiles), consumers in Africa and the Americas, partly also enslaved, had already done since the sixteenth century (coffee only since the eighteenth century, of course).

All of this led to historical and intellectual debates for and against slavery. These were all connected with the basic theme of the “superiority of European civilization” – with a basic argument: the industrial revolution in Europe. Fundamental criticism came late and from a central zone of slavery – the Caribbean. The fixed point in the gigantic ocean of sources and literature on the debate about slavery and capitalism is *Capitalism and Slavery* by Williams (in the context of “Black Marxism”).²⁶ This text has played an essen-

21 A. M. Caldeira, Aprender os Trópicos: Plantações e trabalho escravo na ilha de São Tomé, in: M. Vaz do Rego Machado et al. (coord.), Para a história da escravatura insular nos séculos XV a XIX, Lisbon 2013, pp. 25–54; G. Seibert, São Tomé & Príncipe. The first plantation economy in the tropics, in: R. Law et al. (eds.), Commercial Agriculture and Slavery in Atlantic Africa, London 2013, pp. 54–78.

22 T. Green, Building Slavery in the Atlantic World: Atlantic Connections and the Changing Institution of Slavery in Cabo Verde, Fifteenth–Sixteenth Centuries, in: Slavery & Abolition 32 (2011) 2, pp. 227–245; M. Eagle/D. Wheat, The Early Iberian Slave Trade to the Spanish Caribbean, 1500–1580, in: A. Borucki et al. (eds.), From the Galleons to the Highlands: Slave Trade Routes in the Spanish Americas, Albuquerque 2020, pp. 47–72.

23 J. Crowley, Sugar Machines: Picturing Industrialized Slavery, in: American Historical Review 121 (2016) 2, pp. 403–436, at 403.

24 K. Harley, Slavery, the British Atlantic economy, and the industrial revolution, in: A. Leonard/D. Pretel (eds.), The Caribbean and the Atlantic World Economy: Circuits of Trade, Money and Knowledge, 1650–1914, Basingstoke 2015, pp. 161–183; Crowley, Sugar Machines, pp. 403–436.

25 M. Carmagnani, Le isole del lusso. Prodotti esotici, nuovo consumo e cultura economica europea, 1650–1800, Milan 2010.

26 On Black Marxism, see C. J. Robinson, Black Marxism. The Making of The Black Radical Tradition, Chapel Hill/

tial role in the global debate about capitalism, enslaved people, and slavery. The debates about Caribbean-Cuba and Spain (Catalonia) as well as positions in the wider global history began later. Williams saw Caribbean-British slavery (less the overall slave trade) and British industrialization spatially separated but economically closely intertwined. They were fatefully, so to speak, related to one another in terms of the emergence of slavery for the people of Africa in the Caribbean and their important role in British industrialization and also in relation to the abolition of slavery and poverty, as well as the decline of the former British plantation colonies from 1808 to 1840. Williams deserves to be honoured along with other West Indian radical intellectuals (such as the author of the *Black Jacobins*, C. L. R. James²⁷), who really made the debate in the twentieth century virulent. Despite the many reviews, critiques/defences, and recent findings, Williams should always be praised for having brought slavery and capitalism together in his book 75 years ago in one field of study.

The Iberian legislation defined a commodified body in the language of European rationalism as *pieza de Indias* (referring to a healthy enslaved man between 18 and 30 years). All Atlantic slave traders and their factors, starting with *lançados/tangomãos*, Atlantic Creoles, Iberians as well as British, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, French, Flemish, etc. enslavers/slave traders (who knew about the central role of the capital of human bodies and its commodification in Africa) as well as slave trading powers (who therefore forced racism outside Africa).²⁸

Although the US and British debates were practically separated for a long time, this, in very broad terms, caused the emergence of and upswing in critical slavery research in the Anglo-American- and Anglo-Australian-speaking areas, African-American studies (or

London 2000 (1983). To the dissertation of Eric Williams (not the published book): D. W. Tomich (ed.), *Eric Williams, The Economic Aspect of the Abolition of the West Indian Slave Trade and Slavery*, Lanham 2014 (Published version of 1938 dissertation, introduction by William Darity Jr.). The published book: E. Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, London 1964 [1944]; E. Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, Chapel Hill/London 1994; B. L. Solow, *Caribbean Slavery and British Growth: The Eric Williams Hypothesis*, in: *Journal of Developmental Economics* 17 (1985), pp. 99–115; B. L. Solow, *Capitalism and Slavery in the Exceedingly Long Run*, in: Id./S. Engerman (eds.), *British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery. The Legacy of Eric Williams*, Cambridge 1987, pp. 51–78; T. Haskell, *Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility*, in: *American Historical Review* 90 (1985), pp. 339–361, 547–566; J. Ashworth, *The Relationship between Capitalism and Humanitarianism*, in: *American Historical Review* 92 (1987), pp. 813–828; D. B. Davis, *Reflections on Abolitionism and Ideological Hegemony*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 797–812; T. Haskell, *Convention and Hegemonic Interest in the Debate over Antislavery: A Reply to Davis and Ashworth*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 829–878; C. A. Palmer, *Eric Williams & Making of the Modern Caribbean*, Chapel Hill 2006; P. Brandon, *From Williams's Thesis to Williams Thesis: An Anti-Colonial Trajectory*, in: *International Review of Social History* 62 (2017), pp. 305–327.

27 C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint Louverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, New York 1963 [1938]. See also D. V. Trotman, *Rompiendo el silencio sobre la Revolución Haitiana*, in: *Cuadernos Americanos* (2008) 126, pp. 97–115; R. Hörmann, *Thinking the Unthinkable: Representations of the Haitian Revolution in British Discourse, 1791 to 1805*, in: R. Hörmann/G. Mackenthun (eds.), *Human Bondage in the Cultural Contact Zone. Transdisciplinary Perspectives on Slavery and its Discourses*, Münster 2010, pp. 137–170.

28 The original (legal) definition of *pieza de Indias* is from 1662, see M. Lucena Salmoral, *El período de los asientos con particulares (1595–1700)*, in: Id., *La esclavitud en la América española*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 178–205, at 180; see also Zeuske, *Menschenhandel und Casting an den Küsten Afrikas und der Beginn der atlantischen Überfahrt*, in: Id., *Sklavenhändler, Negreros und Atlantikkreolen. Eine Weltgeschichte des Sklavenhandels im atlantischen Raum*, Berlin/Boston 2015, pp. 116–146.

Black studies) in the USA as well as, together with the establishment of the computer in historical studies, an extremely dynamic quantitative work in the wake of the research by Philip D. Curtin. We can admire today the result of such work on the website examining the Atlantic slave trade: www.slaveryvoyages.org.²⁹ Micro-historical research on the life histories of enslaved or formerly enslaved people also multiplied.³⁰ The historiographical line trying together Atlantic slavery and the industrialization of England was and is also represented by Barbara Solow / Stanley Engerman, Joseph E. Inikori, Robin Blackburn, and Jean Batou (for France). It is undoubtedly a long-running, yet still very virulent, debate. The new dimension of this debate on the history of capitalism, or capitalisms,³¹ is global slavery capitalism in both hemispheres, based on the capital of human bodies (Africa and the African Atlantic formed the "centre" of this form of ritualized capital and commodification).³²

Despite of (or against) the predominantly Anglo-American historiography, there is an even earlier historiography on the subject of slavery and capitalists (mostly Freemasons³³), using this capital of human bodies by "Atlantization" (increase in value through Atlantic transport and slave trade³⁴): the French slavery and slave trade historiography.

- 29 "[T]he most significant work on the quantification of the Atlantic slave trade to have appeared since Philip D. Curtin produced his census of the commerce", F. R. da Silva/S. Sommerdyk, *Reexamining the Geography and Merchants of the West Central African Slave Trade: Looking behind the Numbers*, in: *African Economic History* 38 (2010), pp. 77–106, at p. 77. But the authors also state: "Slave Voyages Database [...] is organized around English categories of captaincy and ownership", *ibid.*, p. 98. About the history of the project and the website, see D. Eltis/D. Richardson, *A New Assessment of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, in: *Id.* (eds.), *Extending the Frontiers: Essays on the New Transatlantic Slave Trade Database*, New Haven/London 2008, pp. 1–60.
- 30 R. J. Scott, *Degrees of Freedom. Louisiana and Cuba after Slavery*, Cambridge/London 2005; S. Palmié, *Ekpe/Abakuá in Middle Passage: Time, Space, and Units of Analysis in African American Historical Anthropology*, in: A. Apter/L. Derby (eds.), *Activating the Past: Historical Memory in the Black Atlantic*, London 2010, pp. 1–44; P. E. Lovejoy, *Scarification and the Loss of History in the African Diaspora*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 99–138; R. J. Scott/J.-M. Hébrard, *Freedom Papers: An Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation*, Cambridge 2012; M. Zeuske, *Amistad: A Hidden Network of Slavers and Merchants*. Trans. S. Rendall, Princeton 2015; *Id.*, *Atlantic Slavery und Wirtschaftskultur in welt- und globalhistorischer Perspektive*, in: *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 66 (2015) 5/6, pp. 280–301; V. Sanz et al., *Towards a Microhistory of the Enslaved*. *Global Considerations*, in: S. Luxán Meléndez/J. Figuerôa Rêgo (eds.), *El tabaco y la rearticulación imperial ibérica (s. VV–XX)*, Évora 2019; M. Zeuske, *Atlantik und Atlantic Slavery. Neuere Forschungskomplexe und Historiografien*, in: *Historische Zeitschrift* 309 (2019), pp. 411–428; E. Fernández-Sacco, *Bound to History: Leoncia Lasalle's Slave Narrative from Moca, Puerto Rico, 1945*, in: *Genealogy* 4 (2020) 93, https://www.academia.edu/44067903/Bound_to_History_Leoncia_Lasalles_Slave_Narrative_from_Moca_Puerto_Rico_1945 (accessed 12 September 2020).
- 31 L. Marques, *New World Slavery in the Capitalist World Economy*, in: K. Yazdani/D. M. Manon (eds.), *Capitalisms: Towards a Global History*, Oxford 2020, pp. 71–94; R. d. B. Marquese, *A história global da escravidão atlântica: balanço e perspectivas*, in: *Id.*, *Os Tempos Plurais da Escravidão no Brasil. Ensaios de História e Historiografia*, São Paulo 2020, pp. 15–42; Marquese/Marques, *Ouro, café e escravos: o Brasil e a 'assim chamada acumulação primitiva'*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 105–132.
- 32 We consider the concentration on the USA or the US South to be insufficient: Zeuske, *Handbuch*; *Id.*, *Sklaverei. Eine Menschheitsgeschichte*; C. Rosenthal, *Capitalism when Labor was Capital: Slavery, Power, and Price in Antebellum America*, in: *Capitalism: A Journal of History and Economics* 1 (2020) 2, pp. 296–337.
- 33 E. Saunier, *"El compás y los grilletes". La masonería y el mundo negrero: Balance y perspectivas*, in: V. Sanz et al. (eds.), *Resistencia, delito y dominación en el mundo esclavo. Microhistorias de la esclavitud atlántica (siglos XVII–XIX)*, Granada 2019, pp. 193–201.
- 34 Zeuske, *Atlantic Slavery und Wirtschaftskultur*, pp. 280–301. For the concept of Atlantization, see *Id.*, *Out of the Americas: Slave traders and the Hidden Atlantic in the nineteenth century*, in: *Atlantic Studies* 15 (2018) 1, pp. 103–135; for the African background, see P. Manning, *Slavery and African Life. Occidental, Oriental and African Slave Trades*, Cam-

This historiography commented less often on the overall system of capitalism but was very strong in the analysis of slavery and slavers as capitalists in French port cities (and Seville, Spain³⁵) and in the study of global slave trade systems. France was very strongly oriented towards the Atlantic until at least 1803.³⁶

For a long time, all of this remained stuck in a narrative that basically goes like this: Slavery as a kind of rather unfashionable backside and resource supplier of European industrial capitalism, especially in Great Britain.

The subject of “slavery as capitalism” for the Atlantic area has been placed on the current research agenda from four sides. With a more cultural-historical view, based on Brazilian and Cuban sociological and anthropological perspectives, there are Pierre Verger’s *Flux et reflux de la traite des nègres*³⁷ and an important quantitative view in Curtin’s *The Atlantic Slave Trade*³⁸. In addition, there was a micro-historical-anthropological dimension by Eric Wolf (as early “subalterns”) and by Sidney Mintz.³⁹ There were also a qualitative dimension (the Genovese)⁴⁰ and a quantitative-economic-historical dimension of US slavery by Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman.⁴¹ All of these went against the back-

bridge 1990 (8th edition 2004); Manning (ed.), *Slaves Trades, 1500–1800. Globalisation of Forced Labour*, Aldershot 1996; K. Hofmeester/M. van der Linden (eds.), *Handbook Global History of Work*, Boston/Berlin 2018.

35 P. Chaunu, *Séville et l’Atlantique (1504–1650)*, 12 vols, Paris 1955–1960; Id., *Les Philippines et le Pacifique des Ibériques*, 2 vols., Paris 1960–1966.

36 G. Martin, *L’ère des Négriers (1714–1774). Nantes au XVIIIe siècle, d’après des documents inédits*, Paris 1993 [1931]; P. Verger, *Flux et reflux de la traite des nègres entre le golfe de Bénin et Bahia de Todos os Santos du XVIIe au XIXe siècle*, Paris 1963; P. Villiers, *Traite des Noirs et navires négriers au XVIIIe siècle*, Grénoble 1982; J. Mettas, *Répertoire des expéditions négrières françaises au XVIIIe siècle*, 2 vols., Paris 1975/84; S. Daget (éd.), *De la traite à l’esclavage, Ve au XIXe siècle: Actes du Colloque International sur la Traite des Noirs*, 2 vols., Nantes 1988; S. Daget, *Répertoire des expéditions négrières françaises à la traite illégale (1814–1850)*, Nantes 1988; F. Régent, *Les négociants, les colons, le roi et la traite négrière*, in: Id., *La France et ses esclaves: de la colonisation aux abolitions (1620–1848)*, Paris 2007, pp. 37–57; J.-M. Deveau, *La traite rochelaise*, Paris 1990; J. Mosneron-Dupin/O. Pétré-Grenouilleau, *Moi, Joseph Mosneron, armateur négrier nantais, 1748–1833: portrait culturel d’une bourgeoisie négociante au siècle des lumières*, Rennes 1995; O. Pétré-Grenouilleau, *Nantes au temps de la traite des Noirs*, Paris 1998; A. Roman, *Saint-Malo au temps des négriers*, Paris 2001; E. Saugera, *Bordeaux, port négrier: chronologie, économie, idéologie XVIIe–XIXe siècles*, Paris 2002; J.-Y. Saunier, *Le Havre, port négrier: de la défense de l’esclavage à l’oubli*, in: *Cahiers des Anneaux de la Mémoire* 11 (2007), pp. 23–41; F. Renault/S. Daget, *Les traites négrières en Afrique*, Paris 1985; in global historical perspective: O. Pétré-Grenouilleau, *Les traites négrières. Essai d’histoire globale*, Paris 2004; G. Daudin, *Profitability of slave and long-distance trading in context: the case of eighteenth-century France*, in: *Journal of Economic History* 64 (2004) 1, pp. 144–171; G. Daudin, *Commerce et prospérité: la France au XVIIIe siècle*, Paris 2005; C. Hodson/B. Rushforth, *Absolutely Atlantic: Colonialism and the Early Modern French State in Recent Historiography*, in: *History Compass* 8 (2010) 1, pp. 101–117; P. Cheney, *Cul de Sac: Patrimony, Capitalism, and Slavery in French Saint-Domingue*, Chicago 2017.

37 Verger, *Flux et reflux*.

38 Very early also based on the life histories of enslaved people: P. D. Curtin (ed.), *Africa Remembered. Narratives by West Africans from the Era of the Slave Trade*, Madison 1967; Id., *The Atlantic Slave Trade. A Census*, Madison 1969; summarized and linked to the industrial structure plantation (“plantation complex”, i.e. “plantation capitalism”): Id., *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex. Essays in Atlantic History*, New York et al. 1990.

39 S. W. Mintz, *Slavery and Emergent Capitalism*, in: L. Foner/E. D. Genovese (eds.), *Slavery in the New World: A Reader in Comparative Perspective*, Englewood Cliffs 1969, pp. 23–37; E. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, Los Angeles/Berkeley 1982.

40 E. Fox-Genovese/E. D. Genovese, *Fruits of Merchant Capital: Slavery and Bourgeois Property in the Rise and Expansion of Capitalism*, New York 1983.

41 R. W. Fogel/S. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery*, New York/London 1995 [1974]; R. W. Fogel, *American Slavery. A flexible, highly developed form of capitalism*, in: J. W. Harris (ed.), *Society*

ground of the radical African-centrist, critical capitalism work of Walter Rodney (who, like Williams and James, is to be counted among the Caribbean radical thinkers of Black Marxism).⁴²

The new debate about slavery as capitalism or, better said, "slavery = capitalism" in certain historically specific territories began in two main directions. One direction the debate took revolved around the concept of the second slavery – slavery as industrial formation had been "modern" and considered the basis since around 1800 for independent slavery societies – in the Caribbean. Forerunners of such societies include slavery in Barbados, Saint-Domingue, and Jamaica, beginning perhaps in Venezuela.⁴³ However, the first slavery societies can be found in *Cuba grande*⁴⁴ (also in Puerto Rico and in the French, British, and Dutch south-eastern Caribbean, such as Martinique, Guadeloupe, Suriname, and in British Guiana as well as the island of Trinidad "without formal slavery"⁴⁵), in the south of the USA, and in the south of Brazil⁴⁶ (with a longer phase of almost obvious non-industrialization because of extremely high numbers of enslaved in Rio de Janeiro, Vale do Paraíba, but above all São Paulo⁴⁷).

and Culture in the Slave South, London 1992, pp. 77–99; R. W. Fogel, *The Slavery Debates, 1952–1990: A Retrospective*, Baton Rouge 2003.

42 W. Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, London 1972.

43 In a larger perspective: A. Borucki, *Trans-imperial History in the Making of the Slave Trade to Venezuela, 1526–1811*, in: *Itinerario* 36 (2012) 2, pp. 29–54; Alexander von Humboldt, observing the beginnings on the Venezuelan coast: M. Zeuske, *Alexander von Humboldt en Venezuela y Cuba. Segunda esclavitud, élites e independencia*, in: L. Puerta Bautista/T. Straka (coord.), *250 años de Alexander von Humboldt: El nacimiento del Cosmos*, Caracas 2020, pp. 35–51.

44 D. W. Tomich/R. Funes Monzote, *Naturaleza, tecnología y esclavitud en Cuba: Frontera azucarera y Revolución industrial, 1815–1870*, in: J. A. Piqueras (ed.), *Trabajo libre y trabajo coactivo en sociedades de plantación*, Madrid 2009, pp. 75–117; M. García Rodríguez, *Azúcar y Modernidad: La experimentación tecnológica de la oligarquía habanera: 1700–1820*, in: *Revista de Indias* 72 (2012) 256, pp. 743–769; D. Rood, *A Creole Revolution in the Cuban Sugar Mill*, in: Id., *The Reinvention of Atlantic Slavery: Technology, Labor, Race, and Capitalism in the Greater Caribbean*, New York 2017, pp. 14–41; Id., *From an Infrastructure of Fees to an Infrastructure of Flows: The Warehouse Revolution in Havana Harbor*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 64–93.

45 K. Candlin, *Kit, The Last Caribbean Frontier, 1795–1815*, London 2012; F. A. Scarano, *Haciendas y barracones: azúcar y esclavitud en Ponce, Puerto Rico, 1800–1850*, Río Piedras 1992; L. Cabrera Salcedo, *De los bueyes al vapor. Caminos de la tecnología del azúcar en Puerto Rico y el Caribe*, San Juan 2010; F. Picó, *Ponce y los rostros rayados. Sociedad y esclavitud 1800–1830*, San Juan, Puerto Rico 2012; Laviña, "Puerto Rico: 'atlantización' and culture during the segunda esclavitud", in: Laviña/Zeuske (eds.), *The Second Slavery*, pp. 93–112.

46 D. W. Tomich, *The "Second Slavery": Bonded Labor and the Transformations of the Nineteenth-century World Economy*, in: F. O. Ramírez (ed.), *Rethinking the Nineteenth Century: Contradictions and Movement*, New York 1988, pp. 103–117; Id., *Through the Prism of Slavery. Labor, Capital, and World Economy*, Boulder et al. 2004; Id./Zeuske (eds.), *The Second Slavery: Mass Slavery, World-Economy, and Comparative Microhistories* (= Review 31 [2008] 2/3); R. del B. Marquese, *African Diaspora, Slavery, and the Paraíba Valley Coffee Plantation Landscape: Nineteenth Century Brazil*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 195–216; Id., *Espacio y poder en la cañicultura esclavista de las Américas: el Vale do Paraíba en perspectiva comparada*, in: J. A. Piqueras (ed.), *Trabajo libre y coactivo en sociedades de plantación*, Madrid 2009, pp. 215–251; R. del B. Marquese/R. Salles (eds.), *Escravidão e Capitalismo Histórico no Século XIX. Brasil, Cuba e Estados Unidos*, Rio de Janeiro 2015; Id., *Exílio escravista: Hercule Florence e as fronteiras do açúcar e do café no Oeste paulista (1830–1879)*, in: *Anais do Museu Paulista* 24 (2016) 2, pp. 13–53; D. W. Tomich, *The Second Slavery and World Capitalism: A Perspective for Historical Inquiry*, in: *International Review of Social History* 63 (2018) 3, pp. 477–501; M. Teubner, *Street Food, Urban Space, and Gender. Working on the streets of nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro (1830–1879)*, in: *International Review of Social History* 27 (2019), pp. 229–254.

47 F. V. Luna/H. S. Klein, *An Economic and Demographic History of São Paulo, 1850–1950*, Stanford 2018.

The other direction was as part of the new history of capitalism (NHC), represented primarily by economic historians in the USA and labour historians.⁴⁸ It focused on continuations and further developments in relation to Spanish America (Latin America⁴⁹), Spain-Cuba, Uruguay-Spanish America, Portugal-Brazil, and, above all, the Netherlands-Suriname⁵⁰ (not only in the seventeenth century but up to the long “long goodbye”⁵¹ – which lasted much longer in Portugal than in the Netherlands⁵²) and their slaveries and slave trade structures. This can be said also in relation to commodities produced by slaves and interimperial profits in the Atlantic-Caribbean region and their role in the overall economy of the Netherlands, for example.⁵³

- 48 Fogel, *American Slavery*; R. Follett, *Slavery and Plantation Capitalism in Louisiana's Sugar Country*, in: *American Nineteenth Century History* 1 (2000) 3, pp. 1–27; T. C. Buchanan, *Black Life on the Mississippi: Slaves, Free Blacks, and the Western Steamboat World*, Chapel Hill 2004; S. Rockman, *The Unfree Origins of American Capitalism*, in: C. Matson (ed.), *The Economy of Early America: Historical Perspectives and New Directions*, University Park 2006, pp. 335–361; W. Johnson, *The Pedestal and the Veil: Rethinking the Capitalism/Slavery Question*, in: *Journal of the Early Republic* 24 (2004) 2, pp. 299–308; S. Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* 2009; T. Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South. Masters, Merchants, and Manufacturers in the Southern Interior, 1790–1860*, Baton Rouge 2006; M. van der Linden, *Eine einfache und dennoch schwer zu beantwortende Frage: Warum gab (und gibt) es Sklaverei im Kapitalismus?*, in: M. E. Kabadayi/T. Reichardt, *Unfreie Arbeit. Ökonomische und kulturgeschichtliche Perspektiven*, Hildesheim et al. 2007, pp. 260–279; M. van der Linden, *Transnational Labour History. Explorations*, Aldershot 2003; K. H. Roth/M. van der Linden, *Karl Marx und das Problem der Sklavenarbeit*, in: Id. (eds.), *Über Marx hinaus. Arbeitsgeschichte und Arbeitsbegriff in der Konfrontation in den globalen Arbeitsverhältnisse des 21. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin/Hamburg 2009, pp. 581–586; W. Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom*, Cambridge 2013; S. Beckert, *The Empire of Cotton. A Global History*, New York 2014; E. E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*, New York 2014; G. Grandin, *The Empire of Necessity. Slavery, Freedom, and Deception in the New World*, New York 2014; S. Becker/W. Rockman (eds.), *Slavery's Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development*, Philadelphia 2016. Zusammenfassend: A. Kaye, *The Second Slavery: Modernity in the Nineteenth-Century South and the Atlantic World*, in: Laviña/Zeuske (eds.), *The Second Slavery*, pp. 174–202; E. Mathisen, *The Second Slavery, Capitalism, and Emancipation in Civil War America*, in: *The Journal of Civil War Era* 8 (2018) 4, pp. 677–699; L. Marques, *New World Slavery in the Capitalist World Economy*, pp. 71–94.
- 49 M. Echeverri, *Slavery in Mainland Spanish America in the Age of the Second Slavery*, in: D. W. Tomich (ed.), *Atlantic Transformations. Empire, Politics, and Slavery During the Nineteenth Century*, New York 2020, pp. 19–44.
- 50 M. van Rossum/K. Fatah-Black, *Wat is winst? De economische impact van de Nederlandse trans-Atlantische slavenhandel*, in: *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 9 (2012) 1, pp. 3–29; P. Brandon, *Dutch capitalism and slavery: new perspectives from American debates*, in: *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 12 (2015) 4, pp. 117–137; P. Brandon, *War, Capital, and the Dutch State (1588–1795)*, Leiden/Boston 2015.
- 51 S. Drescher, *The Long Goodbye: Dutch Capitalism and Antislavery in Comparative Perspective*, in: G. Oostindie (ed.), *Fifty Years Later. Antislavery, Capitalism and Modernity in the Dutch Orbit*, Leiden/Pittsburgh 1995, pp. 25–66.
- 52 A. M. Caldeira, *Escravos e Traficantes no Império Português: O Comércio Negreiro Português no Atlântico Durante Os Séculos XV a XX*, Lisbon 2013.
- 53 P. Brandon/U. Bosma, *De betekenis van de Atlantische slavernij voor de Nederlandse economie in de tweede helft van de achttiende eeuw*, in: *The Low Countries Journal of Social and Economic History*, <https://www.tseg.nl/article/10.18352/tseg.1082/> (23 January 2021); see also F. R. da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese in Western Africa. Empires, Merchants and the Atlantic System, 1580–1674*, Leiden 2011; Id., *Crossing Empires: Portuguese, Sephardic, and Dutch Business Networks in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1580–1674*, in: *The Americas* 68 (2011) 1, pp. 7–32; Id., *Forms of Cooperation between Dutch-Flemish, Sephardim and Portuguese Private Merchants for the Western African Trade within the Formal Dutch and Iberian Atlantic Empires, 1590–1674*, in: *Portuguese Studies* 28 (2012) 2, pp. 159–172; Id., *African islands and the formation of the Dutch Atlantic economy: Arguin, Gorée, Cape Verde and São Tomé, 1590–1670*, in: *The International Journal of Maritime History* 26 (2014) 3, pp. 549–567; Id., *The Dutch and the consolidation of the seventeenth-century South Atlantic complex, c.1630–1654*, in: *Portuguese Literary and Cultural Studies* 27 (2014), pp. 83–103; Id., *The Slave Trade and the Development of the Atlantic Africa Port System, 1400s–1800s*, in: *The International Journal of Maritime History* 29 (2017) 1, pp.

Since around 2015, a combination of the second slavery and the new history of capitalism into one analysis unit has been emerging.⁵⁴ Real second slaveries existed in territories, mostly former colonial territories or colonial territories, in which the capital of human bodies and slavery as capitalism in the nineteenth century for around two generations from 1820 to 1888, as we said, formed the basis of modern societies. Without them, not only the early industrial capitalism in England and Belgium but also the Biedermeier luxury consumption societies of Central Europe in the romantic capitalism of the nineteenth century (with later industrialization)⁵⁵ could not have developed and unfolded. This does not only apply in relation to the profits of individual national-colonial slavery colonies (such as the British sugar islands). Capitalism in Europe was dependent of enslaved people, slaveries, and slave trade – these elements were a part of global capitalism. Altogether, however, they acted as industrialized production centres for a Europe of Biedermeier (romantic capitalism) consumption, as well as later for the USA as an developing imperial power. Only in the course of the *dependencia* debates in the middle of the twentieth century were the “modern” slavery capitalism societies, with the exception of the USA (and Brazil, where no one really knows what it is today because it is a centre of the Global South), defined as “peripheries”,⁵⁶ although the USA was also a periphery until 1914, afterwards rising to a “centre” through slavery and internal slave trade as well as imperial expansion, racial capitalism, and mass immigration.

The concept of the second slavery arose from Immanuel Wallerstein’s world-systems perspective with its centre-periphery view. Thus during the 1980s, when the concept was established, it still emphasized too much the “new” global division of labour that basically started with the “industrial revolution” in Great Britain (and thus Europe). In the meantime, it should be clear that on the Atlantic and the capitalist emporia/islands, extremely increased slave trade and extreme exploitation as well as extreme slave numbers (exemplary on Saint-Domingue) had been going on since the sixteenth century. Since the last third of the eighteenth and during the nineteenth century, all of this was brought together (while maintaining the aforementioned extremes under the control of an improved slave-owner demography) in Creole industrializations of individual territo-

138–154; D. Richardson/F. R. da Silva (eds.), *Networks and Trans-Cultural Exchange. Slave Trading in the South Atlantic, 1590–1867*, Leiden/Boston 2015.

54 Tomich, *The Second Slavery*; Mathisen, *The Second Slavery*.

55 Jacob/Kaller, Introduction.

56 In respect to slavery and slave trade (or food), the African-Iberian Atlantic and the Iberian colonies were never ever a “periphery” – c. 6.8 million enslaved from Africa (out of a total of c. 10.7 million) arrived living in the Iberian Americas (including the Caribbean); only in the years 1821–1867, c. 1.82 million, see A. Borucki et al., *Atlantic History and the Slave Trade to Spanish America*, in: *The American Historical Review* 120 (2015) 2, pp. 433–461, at 440 (a revolutionary reinterpretation of the transimperial slave trade in the Americas, all after www.slavevoyages.org); see also J. Adelman, *The Slave Hinterlands of South America*, in: Id., *Sovereignty and Revolution in the Iberian Atlantic*, Princeton/Oxford 2006, pp. 58–64; U. Bosma, *The Making of a Periphery. How Island Southeast Asia Became a Mass Exporter of Labor*, New York 2019. Ulbe Bosma deals with Island Southeast Asia, but in a good sense that also applies to the Gran Caribe from Charleston in the north to Rio in the south, including the maritime Caribbean and its coasts.

ries (such as islands and coastal slavery territories), industrial complexes (plantations,⁵⁷ such as sugar and coffee mills, use of machines/technologies, ships, harbours, and warehouses/barracoons), and slaveries (and other forms of coerced labour) as elements and processes of the consumer revolution. Accordingly, this revolution took place first outside Europe (see the use of machines on the high seas and in agriculture⁵⁸). Sidney Mintz noticeably referenced this in *Sweetness and Power*.⁵⁹ Also, more recent approaches to violence and various forms of work within the system of production, distribution, and consumption also show that a global explanation brings better results than the Eurocentric narrative.⁶⁰

Post-colonialism – which, for the most part, dislikes structures – treated enslaved people and slavery, with a few exceptions, only as “subaltern”. But at least enslaved people were included as actors in global historiography. A post-post-colonial perspective and a social and cultural-historical broadening of the enslaved-as-actor approach, together with a South-South approach as well as a slavery and capitalism approach, can be found, on the one hand, in the history of material culture and, on the other hand, in relation to slave trade and slavery, especially in the history of commodities and the biological history of capitalism (goods and living beings, especially people, plants, food, and animals⁶¹). Such an approach provides a kind of history of everything that can be sold or what is needed to maintain the workforce. This also includes the already mentioned “plantation capitalism”⁶² (with the beginnings of capitalist manager administration)⁶³ or the

57 That is why there have been publications on “plantation capitalism” for a longer time – albeit more focused on the type of business organization, first of all in the US South: C. Wagley, *Plantation America: A Cultural Sphere*, in: V. Rubin, *Caribbean Studies: A Symposium*, Seattle 1957, pp. 3–13; Moreno Friginals, *El Ingenio*, 3 vols. (Reprint in one volume: Moreno Friginals, *El Ingenio. Complejo económico social cubano del azúcar*. Prefacio de T. Pedraza Moreno. Prólogo de J. Fontana, Barcelona 2001; English: Moreno Friginals, *The Sugarmill: The Socioeconomic Complex of Sugar in Cuba*, New York 1976).

58 J. Crowley, *Sugar Machines: Picturing Industrialized Slavery*, in: *American Historical Review* 121 (2016) 2, pp. 403–436; N. Fiori, *Plantation Energy: From Slave Labor to Machine Discipline*, in: *American Quarterly* 72 (2020) 3, pp. 559–579.

59 Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*.

60 J. Schiel et al., *From Bondage to Precariousness? New Perspectives on Labor and Social History*, in: *Journal of Social History* 54 (2020) 2, pp. 644–662.

61 L. Derby, *Bringing the Animals Back in: Writing Quadrupeds into the Environmental History of Latin America and the Caribbean*, in: *History Compass* 9 (2011) 8, pp. 602–621, <https://www.academia.edu/5900624> (accessed 16 November 2019); C. Blakley, “To get a cargo of flesh, bone, and blood”: Animals in the Slave Trade in West Africa, in: *International Review of Environmental History* 5 (2019) 1, pp. 85–111; Zeuske, *Der afrikanisch-iberische Atlantik*.

62 Wagley, *Plantation America*; S. W. Mintz, *Afro-Caribbeana: An Introduction*, in: Id., *Caribbean Transformations*, Chicago 1974, pp. 1–42; E. T. Thompson, *The Plantation: Background and Definition*, in: *Plantation Societies, Race Relations, and the South: The Regimentation of Populations: Selected Papers of Edgar T. Thompson*, Durham 1975, pp. pp–40; M. M. Smith, *Time, Slavery and Plantation Capitalism in the Ante-Bellum America South*, in: *Past and Present* 150 (1996), pp. 142–168; R. Follett, *Slavery and Plantation Capitalism in Louisiana’s Sugar Country*, in: *American Nineteenth Century History* 1 (2000) 3, pp. 1–27; G. Rodríguez Morel, *Orígenes de la economía de plantación en La Española, Santo Domingo 2012*; D. W. Tomich, *Vassouras Yesterday and Today. Revisiting the Work of Stanley J. Stein*, in: Id. (ed.), *New Frontiers of Slavery*, Albany 2015, pp. 5–21; J. Tutino, *Capitalism, Christianity, and Slavery: Jesuits in New Spain, 1572–1767*, in: *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 8 (2021) 1, pp. 11–36.

63 S. B. Schwartz, *Brazilian Sugar Planters as Aristocratic Managers. 1550–1825*, in: P. Janssens/B. Yun (eds.), *European Aristocracies and Colonial Elites. Patrimonial Management Strategies and Economic Development, 15th–*

also already mentioned "capitalism of human bodies",⁶⁴ which we summarize as slavery capitalism and transimperial colonial/post-colonial modernity.

Especially for imperial colonialism⁶⁵ since the partition of Africa but also for South-east Asia, the connection between collective forced labour and slavery is being debated under the heading of colonial capitalism – often under direct control of local elites but with strong ties to the world market and connected to local, as well as global, transport systems, which were also communication systems.⁶⁶

18th Centuries, Aldershot 2005, pp. 233–246; C. Rosenthal, *Accounting for Slavery. Masters and Management*, Cambridge 2018; M. Barcia/E. Kesidou, *Innovation and entrepreneurship for success among Cuban-based firms in the late years of the transatlantic slave trade*, in: *Business History* 60 (2018) 4, pp. 542–561; C. Schermerhorn, *The Business of Slavery and the Rise of American Capitalism, 1815–1860*, New Haven 2015.

64 Zeuske, *Sklavenhändler, Negereros und Atlantikkreolen*.

65 On the general connection between slavery and various dimensions of capitalism (partially matching with the historiography of the New History of Capitalism), see Mintz, *Slavery and Emergent Capitalism*; on the debate focused primarily on England and the Caribbean, see Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*; on the Antebellum-South focused debate, see R. V. Anderson/R. E. Gallman, *Slaves as Fixed Capital: Slave Labor and Southern Economic Development*, in: *The Journal of American History* 64 (1977) 1, pp. 24–46; R. Miles, *Capitalism and Unfree Labour. Anomaly or Necessity*, London 1987; P. McMichael, *Slavery in Capitalism: The Rise and Demise of the U. S. Antebellum Cotton Culture*, in: *Theory and Society* 20 (1991) 3, pp. 321–349; Fogel, *American Slavery*; T. C. Buchanan, *Black Life on the Mississippi: Slaves, Free Blacks, and the Western Steamboat World*, Chapel Hill 2004; T. Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South. Masters, Merchants, and Manufacturers in the Southern Interior, 1790–1860*, Baton Rouge 2006; J. D. Majewski, *Modernizing a Slave Economy: The Economic Vision of the Confederate Nation*, Chapel Hill 2009; P. Kolchin, *The South and the World*, in: *The Journal of Southern History* 75 (2009) 3, pp. 565–580; B. Martin, *Slavery's Invisible Engine: Mortgaging Human Property*, in: *Journal of Southern History* 76 (2010) 4, pp. 817–866. See also A. Gourevitch, *Capitalism and Slavery: An Interview with Greg Grandin*, <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/08/capitalism-and-slavery-an-interview-with-greg-grandin/> (accessed 10 December 2014); C. Schermerhorn, *Capitalism's Captives: The Maritime United States Slave Trade, 1807–1850*, in: *Journal of Social History* 47 (2014) 4, pp. 897–921; S. R. Nelson, *Who Put Their Capitalism in My Slavery?*, in: *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 5 (2015) 2, pp. 289–310; J. R. Young, *Domesticating Slavery: The Master Class in Georgia and South Carolina, 1670–1837*, Chapel Hill 1999; D. W. Tomich (ed.), *Slavery and Historical Capitalism during the Nineteenth Century*, Lanham 2017; about Cuba-Spain: E. Marrero Cruz, *Traficante de esclavos y chinos*, in: Id./J. de Zulutea y Amondo, *Promotor del capitalismo en Cuba, La Habana* 2006, pp. 46–79; there were different forms of haciendas (ingenios)/plantations, as is being debated using the example of tobacco plantations (vegas) and coffee plantations (cafetales): E. López Mesa, „Vega grande o plantación?, in: J. A. Piqueras (ed.), *Plantación, espacios agrarios y esclavitud en la Cuba colonial*, Castellón de la Plana 2017, pp. 249–266; on the history of the most successful slave plantation economy as capitalism in nineteenth-century Cuba, see D. R. Murray, *Capitalism and Slavery in Cuba*, in: *Slavery and Abolition* 17 (1996) 3, pp. 223–237. A perspective that is more oriented towards the American whole, see Marquese/Salles (eds.), *Escravidão e Capitalismo Histórico*; Piqueras (coord.), *Eslavitud y capitalismo histórico en el siglo XIX. Brasil, Cuba y Estados Unidos*, Santiago de Cuba 2016; T. Burnard/J. D. Garigus, *The Plantation Machine: Atlantic Capitalism in French Saint-Domingue and British Jamaica*, Philadelphia 2016; D. Rood, *The Reinvention of Atlantic Slavery*; on global "war capitalism" from a perspective dominated by US economic history, see Beckert, *Einleitung*; on globalization of the US perspective and consequences for other systems of slavery, see Brandon, *Dutch capitalism and slavery*; R. J. Follett et al., *Plantation Kingdom: The American South and Its Global Commodities*, Baltimore 2016; summarizing in terms of "new" labor history, see B. D. Palmer, "Mind Forged Manacles" and recent Pathways to "New" Labor History, in: *IRSH* 62 (2017) 2, pp. 279–303. Spatially and historically, Barbados, parts of Jamaica, Saint-Domingue (as well as other French colonies in the Caribbean) and above all Cuba in the nineteenth century were more concentrated and socially, technically, and technologically more compact "capitalist", based on Atlantic slavery than the Antebellum South. But they were also territorially smaller and had overall quantitatively absolutely fewer enslaved (not relatively per plantation; the majority were larger than in the USA).

66 J. C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730–1830*, Madison 1988; V. Houben/J. T. Lindblad (eds.), *Coolie Labour in Colonial Indonesia. A Study of Labour Relations in the Outer Islands, c. 1900–1940*, Wiesbaden 1999; J. Seibert, *More Continuity than Change? New Forms of Unfree Labor*

The present *Comparativ* issue is titled “Slavery/Capitalism Global”. We are very clear that we have neither the Ottoman Empire, nor North Africa/Arabia or India, nor the Philippines or the problem of serfdom (or, much better, *Leibeigenschaft*) in Central and Eastern Europe in our table of contents. But it is a beginning, first of all, for really important areas of slavery capitalism, mostly in colonial areas or former colonial areas (like the USA, South-east Asia, Brazil, or Africa).

Neither was slavery the whole and every capitalism (or developmental core of capitalism in some societies), nor was capitalism – a highly complicated container term – always slavery. We are not saying that. What we are saying or writing here is that there have been historical societies, even empires, based on the capital of human bodies, the accumulation of capital from them, industrialization, and capitalist slavery. These societies were modern societies. Their whole system was based on slavery and the enslaved. And we also say that the so-called “societies without slavery” in Europe (since their respective formal abolition or without it) needed slavery and the (mostly covert legal or illegal) slave trade and slavery commodities to maintain the existence of their colonial empires and to develop their capitalism (they called these slaveries “forced labour” since about 1880). Our issue comes in three parts. In the first section authors deal with historiography and theory (Piqueras, Burnard, Lamas, and Tomich). Here, we have combined the critical description of the problem (slavery/capitalism) on the basis of current research and the available literature, the reviews and criticism of Williams’ performance after 75 years, the critical evaluations of Marx’s approach of original accumulation against the background of the worldwide division of labour and the original accumulation before 1650, and a theoretical perspective on the constitution and the continuing development of capitalism including slavery and unemployment until today.

We are happy to have in the second part on Africa, the Indian Ocean and Asia (Dalrymple-Smith, van Rossum, and Martino) articles, in which global territories are up for debate that otherwise hardly play a role in the discussion about slavery/capitalism (which, until now, has been clearly Atlantic-centred or even Europe-centred). The main topic is the development of regional and local slaveries, that is to say, indigenous slaver-

in the Belgian Congo, 1908–1930, in: M. van der Linden (ed.), *Humanitarian Intervention and Changing Labor Relations. The Long-Term Consequences of the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, Leiden/Boston 2011, pp. 369–386; A. Keese, Early limits of local decolonisation: Forced Labour, Decolonisation and the “Servical” Population in São Tomé and Príncipe from Colonial Abuses to Post-Colonial Disappointment, 1945–1976, in: *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 44 (2011) 3, pp. 373–392; Keese, Searching for the reluctant hands: obsession, ambivalence, and the practice of organizing involuntary labour in colonial Cuanza-Sul and Malange districts, Angola, 1926–1945, in: *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 41 (2013) 2, pp. 238–258; V. Houben/G. Seibert, (Un)freedom. Colonial Labour Relations in Belgian Congo and the Dutch East Indies Compared, in: E. Frankema/F. Buelens (eds.), *Colonial Exploitation and Economic Development. The Belgian Congo and the Netherlands Indies Compared*, London/New York 2013, pp. 178–192; R. B. Allen, *European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean, 1500–1850*, Athens 2014; G. Seibert, In die globale Wirtschaft gezwungen. Arbeit und kolonialer Kapitalismus im Kongo (1885–1960), Frankfurt am Main 2016; E. Martino, PANYA. Economies of Deception and the Discontinuities of Indentured Labour Recruitment and the Slave Trade, Nigeria and Fernando Pó, 1890s–1940s, in: *African Economic History* 44 (2016), pp. 91–129; F. Mendiola, The Role of Unfree Labour in Capitalist Development: Spain and its Empire, Nineteenth to the Twenty-First Centuries, in: *International Review of Social History* 61 (2016) 24, pp. 187–211.

ies and forms of coerced labour/dependencies, often dominated by local/regional elites under the influence of worldwide trade networks, globalization, and colonial structures and dynamics.

In the third part on the Atlantic, the Americas and Europe (Brandon, Rodrigo y Alharilla, and Marquesse), we present modern, revisionist analyses of classic "slave trade powers" that focus not on all but on the Netherlands and Spain, which play less of a role in the Anglo-Saxon-centred debate about slavery/capitalism. State support for capitalist dynamics and slavery (including other imperial slavery complexes such as Spanish America, the Caribbean, and Brazil but also the US South) were extremely important for the Dutch Empire.⁶⁷ Due to the quantitative history of the makers of www.slaveryvoyages.org, Spain has become the second most important player in the Atlantic slave trade (and the Chinese-Filipino dimensions are not yet taken into account) – just before Britain.⁶⁸ In the nineteenth century, this was a very important development boost towards industrialization and modernity in the broadest sense, not only for Catalonia and its extremely dynamic centre Barcelona but also for the Spanish banking system. And we have Brazil, the absolutely most important and largest Atlantic slave trade and slave power for 300 years – an empire in itself but also part of the African-Iberian Atlantic and Ibero-American colonial territories. It is a very welcomed analysis of management methods and their visualization on the level of sugar and coffee plantations. It is compared to Cuba, the most modern agro-industrial area in the world at the *ingenio/central* level (as capitalist "factories in the field") and as a plantation slavery territory in the nineteenth century. We are also aware that we do not have the USA and, more broadly, North America directly on our content list. The British colonies in North America, and later the USA, played hardly any role in the Atlantic slave trade (apart from the many captains and crews as traders and smugglers of enslaved persons to other colonies and countries). But we have the USA and its South on the list of topics as "Slavery Capitalism in One Country" (with the new history of capitalism; see the literature above); they are mainly considered in the articles by Burnard and Brandon (as an investment area for Dutch capital). O debate continua!

67 K. Nimako/G. Willemsen (eds.), *The Dutch Atlantic. Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation*, London 2011.

68 A. Borucki et al., *Atlantic History*; M. Zeuske, *Coolies – Asiáticos and Chinos: Global Dimensions of Second Slavery*, in: S. Damir-Geilsdorf et al. (eds.), *Bonded Labour: Global and Comparative Perspectives (18th–21st Century)*, Bielefeld 2016, pp. 35–57.

Some Uncomfortable Evidence on Slavery and Capitalism*

José Antonio Piqueras

ABSTRACTS

Die Sklaverei begleitete, ja förderte den Kapitalismus von seiner Entstehung an und blieb bis in die letzten Jahrzehnte des 19. Jahrhunderts an seiner Seite. Es gilt nun näher zu bestimmen, wie Kapitalismus und Sklaverei miteinander verbunden sind. Bei der historischen Analyse müssen wir uns bei jedem Schritt fragen, mit welcher Art von Sklaverei wir es zu tun haben, und sie in eine ganze Reihe verschiedener Modalitäten von Zwangsarbeit einordnen, die in einer bestimmten historischen Periode existierten. Wir müssen uns fragen, mit welcher Art von Kapitalismus wir es zu tun haben, denn auch der Kapitalismus unterliegt einer Entwicklung. Wenn wir die Sklaverei als Arbeitssystem betrachten, werden wir analysieren, wie dieses mit dem Kapital zusammenhängt und wie (in einer späteren Periode, als „zweite Sklaverei“) die Sklaverei mit dem Kapitalismus verbunden ist. Der Kapitalismus hat manchmal unfreie, unfreiwillige Formen der Arbeit geschaffen, sie manchmal subsumiert, aber immer gefördert. Aber die Sklaverei, als eine sehr spezifische Form der Zwangsarbeit, hat im Rahmen der Hegemonie des Kapitals besondere Merkmale.

Slavery accompanied, even promoted, capitalism from its birth and continued alongside it until the last decades of the 19th century. It remains for us to examine how capitalism and slavery are related. In the historical analysis we have to ask ourselves at every step what kind of slavery we are dealing with and place it within the set of coercive labour modalities that existed in a certain period of history. We have to ask ourselves what kind of capitalism we are dealing with, because capitalism is also subject to evolution. Considering slavery as a labour system, we will analyse the way in which it is linked to capital and (in a later period, as a “second slavery”) slavery is linked to capitalism. Capitalism sometimes created, sometimes subsumed, but always encouraged non-free, non-voluntary forms of work. But, the slavery, conceived as a unique form of coercive labour, has special characteristics within the framework of the hegemony of capital.

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Over the past two years, there have been strikes every week in Myanmar's manufacturing sector, mostly staged by young women reacting against precariousness, labour overexploitation, and the anti-union policies of companies. During the strike at a factory that produces bags for Dell computers, the female workers tried to organize a trade union and in turn were dismissed. On the social networks where they made their situation known, they posted a message announcing their protest with the conclusive sentence: "We are not slaves!" The term is repeated in "the rebellions and resistances that shape a new global, feminised and racialised working class that produces for large capitalist emporiums".¹ Capitalist emporiums, racialized labour, and the motto "We are not slaves!" are elements that, combined with each other, tell the story of the Western world over the last five centuries. Based on this observation, it is useful to delimit the *order of capital*, the labour systems, and the identification of situations in which there is overexploitation and the absence of rights with slavery. Social agents have confused forced labour and bare exploitation at different times: in the nineteenth century, it was denounced by the Asian indentured servants when they were put to work on the plantations of the Caribbean, alongside the African slaves, as well as by the wage earners themselves in the industrial cities of England when they refused to be treated as slaves – a precedent for what we hear in the modern globalized economy. We must distinguish these resilient voices from the persistence of slavery in some countries, the new forms of dependent labour, and the trafficking of female "sex workers", which resembles slavery.²

The wide variety of labour frameworks in worldwide production today contributes to a better understanding of how, in the past, voluntary work and an extensive range of jobs carried out under coercion coexisted in separate geographies and also in the same spaces. During the nineteenth century, in countries with liberal states, the use of direct coercion in the colonies and in Latin America was justified by appealing to local traditions (personal community service), to transitory conditions that served to establish work habits and to offer instruction in useful trades (*enganches*, and forced to find salaried employment), to obligations freely entered into (*peonaje por deudas*, those unable to leave the job until they pay off the debts they have with the employer), or to the weight of the colonial tradition that had given rise to conditions from which it was impossible to escape without falling into financial ruin. Many of these practices continued until the post-Second

1 J. L. Martínez, Mujeres, racismo y capitalismo (I), in: Ctxt 263, August 2020, <https://ctxt.es/es/20200801/Politica/32950/Josefina-Martinez-maquilas-industria-textil-esclavas-Asia-México-huelgas-lucha-obrera.htm> (accessed 1 August 2020).

2 K. Manzo, Modern slavery, global capitalism and deproletarianisation, in: West Africa, Review of African Political Economy 32 (2005) 106, pp. 521–534; K. Bales, Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy, Berkeley 1999; K. Bales, Slavery in its Contemporary Manifestations, in: Critical Readings on Global Slavery, Leiden 2017, pp. 1660–1686; J. Allain/R. Hickey, Property and the definition of slavery, in: The International and Comparative Law Quarterly 61 (2012) 4, pp. 915–938; J. Allain, Contemporary Slavery and Its Definition in Law, in: A. Bunting/J. Quirk (eds.), Contemporary Slavery: The Rhetoric of Global Human Rights Campaigns, Ithaca/London 2017, pp. 36–66.

World War period.³ In all cases, the explanation dissociated these forms of labour from the pressure of capital, under which they had been originated or recreated.

At this point, we can offer a first appraisal: capitalism uses any labour system to achieve its goal of accumulating profits just as it adapts itself to very different political regimes. Hence, if it can choose, capital prefers countries where workers have no or only partial social rights, since rights make the cost of labour more expensive and prevent or limit overexploitation. However, the use of non-voluntary/non-free forms of work – or that is to say, carried out in conditions where the extent to which they are carried out voluntarily is debatable – does not prevent us from assuming the thesis that classical economics deemed to be unquestionable: capital's preference for wage-earning labour, since this adjusts the volume of labour force employed at any given moment (and, consequently, the committed working capital) to the productive needs that are matched with the demand for the goods that are produced. The market in which workers offer their productive force, with more or less steady inflows of labour capacity, allows remuneration to be adjusted in a direct way (either imposed or negotiated) or by resorting to types of contracts that curtail the conventional employee's working hours. This premise has been – and still is – the subject of discussion in recent decades.⁴ Classical economics firmly established it on the basis of two considerations:

(a) The constant trend towards market expansion and commercial logic, which includes not only the exchange of material goods but also the exchange of working capacity converted into tradable goods. This happened at a time when, in Europe, people were detaching themselves from the links that tied them to the territory and to the community, and the increase in population seemed to guarantee an expansive supply of the labour force.

(b) In consequence, economists devoted little attention to the formation of labour markets in a relatively short time, in step with the spread of capitalism. Potential wage earners, employed for a day's work, had no alternatives and would have to value positively a regular and stable income that ensured their own subsistence and that of their families. This trend has been noticeable in Europe since the end of the eighteenth century, following the dissolution of manorial ties and the creation of an extraordinary surplus of agricultural population during the nineteenth century. Part of the surplus population emigrated to America, where they set up similar conditions in the industrial urban centres and agricultural estates of countries, such as Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay.

3 See W. Kloosterboer, *Involuntary Labour since the Abolition of Slavery. A Survey of Compulsory Labour throughout the World*, Leiden 1960.

4 T. Bass, *Some Observations on Unfree Labour, Capitalist Restructuring, and Deproletarianization*, in: *International Review of Social History* 39 (1994) 2, pp. 255–275; T. Bass, *Towards a Comparative Political Economy of Unfree Labour: Case Studies and Debates*, London/Portland 1999; T. Brass, *Capitalist unfree labour: A contradiction?*, in: *Critical Sociology* 35 (2009) 6, pp. 743–765; T. Brass/M. van der Linden (eds.), *Free and Unfree Labour. The Debate Continues*, Bern 1997; M. van der Linden/M. Rodríguez García (eds.), *On Coerced Labor: Work and Compulsion after Chattel Slavery*, Leiden/Boston 2016.

The historical process we have mentioned was more complex, and the relationship of capital to labour (voluntary and forced) holds far more sophisticated problems than the free choice of how to exploit labour and to gain the maximum profit from it beyond the workers' resistance to accept it. Capitalism is a specific social way of producing commodities that differs from other known modes of producing commodities because this condition is not exclusive to a particular mode of production.⁵ Considering slavery as a labour system, we will analyse the way in which it is linked to capital and slavery (in a later period, as the *second slavery*) is linked to capitalism.

1. The Historical Roots of Capitalism and the Place of Slavery

For some time now, a number of historical studies have been pointing to an uncomfortable certainty: capitalism came into being and grew on the shoulders of slavery through the trafficking of human beings and slave labour.⁶ The “conquering bourgeois”, the legion of pioneers of the open economy, not only used their effort and ingenuity but also risked their savings and investments to lay the foundations of the industrial society by themselves, even though this is the epic tale that business schools, advocates of entrepreneurship, and the editors of *The Wall Street Journal* like to repeat. The African slave trade had been around since the fifteenth century, and slave labour fuelled the profits of, first, commercial capital and, later, the industrial system in which it was embedded.

By *order of capital*, we are referring to its internal operating logic, origin, evolution, and historical articulation, that is to say everything that endows it with a reality over and above the abstract economic notion. The study of the relationship between slavery and capitalism cannot disregard the historical character of the two concepts and the realities that define each of them nor the economic and social logic that makes them operational. The challenge, in this sense, is twofold. It is not enough to allow ourselves to be led by evidence such as the accumulation of profits and unscrupulous social exploitation unless our aim is to reconstruct the history of greed.

Karl Marx presented slavery in the New World as one of the “fundamental factors in the primitive accumulation” of capital, that is to say the accumulation that precedes the capitalist mode of production. “It may be called primitive”, he says, “because it is the historic basis, instead of the historic result of specifically capitalist production”.⁷ Marx makes a

5 “No matter what the basis on which products are produced, which are thrown into circulation as commodities – whether the basis [...] of slave production [...] or the capitalist basis, the character of products as commodities is not altered, and as commodities they must pass through the process of exchange and its attendant changes of form.” K. Marx, *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy*, New York, 1967, III, p. 222.

6 D. Tomich, *Through the Prism of Slavery. Labor, Capital, and World Economy*, Lanham/Oxford 2004; E. E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*, New York 2014; S. Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*, New York 2014; S. Beckert/S. Rockman (eds.), *Slavery's Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development*, Philadelphia 2016; D. Tomich (ed.), *Slavery and Historical Capitalism During the Nineteenth Century*, Lanham 2017.

7 Marx, *Capital*, I, p. 440.

distinction between a specifically capitalist production system, which can be identified as emerging with the Industrial Revolution, and a long previous stage of social formations, in which forms of production that anticipate capitalism were advanced, without constituting a dominant regime – in the same way that in the mediaeval period, here and there, capital began to create conditions for its development.

In his theoretical and historical exploration of primitive accumulation, Marx refers both to the use of slaves and other forms of subjugated labour in the production of fruit and to the Atlantic slave trade as that colonial system as well as “the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins” – both based on violence, he says – “signalis[ing] the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production”.⁸ In relation to a second phase, concerning full coexistence between manufacturing works and slave plantations, he warns of the existence of links between the two, which were not accidental but structural and based on reciprocity. The consequences of this relationship were manifested in two aspects: on the one hand, the economic and social, together with the massive supply of cheap materials and with the influence of slavery on the formation of the wage-earning industrial proletariat, and, on the other hand, the influence of the capitalist conception of production on the organization of slave labour, which is why he refers to nineteenth-century slavery as “industrial slavery” to differentiate it from the previous form (which he somewhat inopportunely describes as “patriarchal”). What Marx does not do is to specify the way in which the slave plantation is integrated into the new system. In several passages of his work, he gives the idea of being before a time anomaly; in others, it can be deduced that the plantation has been subsumed into a wider system, which partly modifies the slave regime and partly preserves it as an exception within a system governed by capital and the exchange of goods. It does not matter how the goods have been produced, he says, which implies the simultaneous existence of a non-capitalist form of production that in no way modifies the placing of goods in circulation and their confrontation in the market where surplus values are realized.⁹ The theses associated with the *second slavery*, coined by Dale Tomich, have provided some of the most pertinent questions and the most convincing solutions regarding this integration in the world economy of the nineteenth century.¹⁰

The classical school of economics, starting with Adam Smith, without exception, considered production based on slaves to be more expensive, less efficient, and contrary to technological innovation and was therefore a hindrance destined to disappear. However, one author of this school, Jean-Baptiste Say, in the first edition of his *A Treatise on Politi-*

8 Ibid., p. 533.

9 Marx, *Capital*, II, p. 291; Marx, *Capital*, III, p. 222.

10 D. Tomich, ‘The second slavery’: bonded labor and the transformations of the nineteenth-century world economy, in: F. O. Ramirez (ed.), *Rethinking the Nineteenth Century: Movements and Contradictions*, Westport 1988, pp. 103–117; Tomich, *Through the prism of slavery*; D. Tomich, *Espacios de esclavitud: tiempo/ tiempos del capital*, Valencia 2019; D. Tomich, *La segunda esclavitud y el capitalismo mundial: una perspectiva para la investigación histórica*, in: *Historia Social* 90 (1998), pp. 149–164; R. Blackburn, *Why the Second Slavery?*, in: D. Tomich (ed.), *Slavery and Historical Capitalism during The Nineteenth Century*, Lanham/London 2017, pp. 1–35.

cal Economy (1803), considered that slavery, from an economic point of view, was profitable for the owners. Cost calculations proved that labour was cheaper, and evidence of prosperous estates showed that the plantation owners made high profits when they knew how to supervise the work properly and managed it well. Without making it explicit, Say looks at slave production with the same analytical criteria as he would a capitalist production unit. In doing so, he anticipates David Ricardo and the neo-classical school. Twentieth-century Marxism addressed the question again by trying to explain the simultaneity of social regimes in an era of expansion of advanced capitalism – when large regions were incorporated into the capitalist economy using forms of labour that included extreme dependence and coercion, then defined as semislavery, or dispensing with any “free” contractual relationship, even if a salary was paid. This was followed by interpretations by historians, including neo-Marxists and post-Marxists, who took this diversity back to the past and inserted it into a remote capitalism.

In *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), Eric Williams argues that the slave trade and plantation of the eighteenth century contributed to the birth of British industry by providing the mother country with capital, foreign demand in Africa, and cheap materials.¹¹ Williams believes the two production systems to no longer be compatible when industry took off and called for free trade policies. His theses shed light on the problem, and his work has not ceased to arouse rereads and criticism of the quantitative contribution of capital formed in slavery to the Industrial Revolution, the economic causes of abolition of slavery, and the direct relationship between the slave trade and capitalism.¹²

Primitive accumulation? An instrument of capitalism or its expression since the Renaissance? Subordination to a dominant system in the modern age or only in the nineteenth century? From a historical perspective, a first question consists in examining the European societies that played the leading roles in the first economic globalization following the “discoveries” and the conquest of America to determine just how capitalist they were. Answering any of the questions posed is just not feasible without first having solved this problem.

A considerable and varied amount of work has been carried out in research on the development of an agrarian capitalism in Western Europe since the sixteenth century and its different evolution. The Brenner debate reported on this four decades ago. Not once does it mention the colonial market or the Atlantic area. But here it is interesting to note another issue: from the controversy, it is clear that only England evolved in the seventeenth century towards a capitalist-based agriculture in which the landowner/tenant concentrated ownership, “freed” surplus agricultural labour, and succeeded in creating an internal market (of which the authors omitted the colonial opening that brought with

11 E. Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, Chapel Hill 1944.

12 R. Anstey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition, 1760–1810*, Aldershot 1975; S. Drescher, *Econocide: British Slavery in the Era of Abolition*, Pittsburgh 1977; S. Drescher/E. Williams, *British Capitalism and British Slavery*, in: *History and Theory* 26 (1987), pp. 180–196; B. L. Solow/S. L. Engerman (eds.), *British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery. The Legacy of Eric Williams*, Cambridge, UK 1987; E. Williams, *The Economic Aspect of the Abolition of the West Indian Slave Trade and Slavery*, ed. by D. Tomich, Lanham 2014.

it a growing demand for processed goods), thanks to the development of a middle class. The Netherlands managed to specialize its agriculture, but its production in the capitalist sense was conditioned by a European market that was still characterized by feudal structures, resulting in the agricultural structures facing a crisis in the mid-seventeenth century.¹³ The retraction of European trade, basically in agricultural products, was accompanied by an extensive crisis that led to very different outcomes: England, thanks to its revolution, took a slow but steady path towards capitalist relations; other Western European countries, with more or less intensity, saw the restoration of feudal obligations. What interests us here is the appearance of the Netherlands, England, and then France in colonial trade in the first half of the seventeenth century and the later consolidation of their positions in the second half, which was accompanied by their participation in the Atlantic slave trade and the founding of plantations growing sugar and other fruit. This coincided with the decline in the volume of trade in ordinary goods in the Old Continent. Extraordinary goods, with high profits, were replacing ordinary goods, even though they were targeted towards a smaller and more select consumer market. Until the eighteenth century, as Fernand Braudel reminds us, “a huge subsistence sector [...] remained essentially entirely outside the exchange economy”, living closed-in on itself.¹⁴ Despite claiming that Immanuel Wallerstein’s views were essentially the same as his own, Braudel rightly points out that there were differences between the two on certain specific points and general ideas. The main difference lay in the use of the notion *world economy*, created by Braudel to explain the existence of more or less centralized and coherent economies, which coexisted and were related to limited exchanges. For Braudel, the world economies that succeed each other in Europe were the “matrices of European and world capitalism”. Conversely, Wallerstein was only interested in the capitalist world economy, which, he says, has appeared and expanded in the world since the sixteenth century: “This system was based on two key institutions, a ‘world’-wide division of labour and bureaucratic state machineries in certain areas.” While economic decisions were oriented by the world economy, policies were oriented towards smaller structures, the nation-states, he adds. Little does it matter that, along with Braudel, he accepts that the new world economy was “vast but weak”, as was the case between 1450 and 1640.¹⁵ What is the international division of labour that has been referred to? Is it slaves on sugar plantations and mining developments in the Americas, serfs on large estates in Eastern Europe who grow grain for the market, or tenants and agricultural wage labourers who produce for the market in Western and Southern Europe.¹⁶ The centre of the world economy assigns functions to each area or makes use of the conditions that can be adopted in each of them. In this way, capitalism becomes omniscient and omnipotent, a new demiurge that assigns functions and distributes forms of production for its benefit,

13 T. H. Aston/C. H. E. Philpin (eds.), *El debate Brenner. Estructura agraria y desarrollo económico en la Europa pre-industrial*, Barcelona 1988.

14 F. Braudel, *La dinámica del capitalismo*, Madrid 1985, p. 49.

15 I. Wallerstein, *El moderno sistema mundial*, 3 vols., Madrid 1979–1999, I, pp. 89 and 94.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 120.

all based on the authority concentrated in small states. Finally, Wallerstein defends a principle that, according to him, does not need to be proved: “the ‘relations of production’ that define a system are the ‘relations of production’ of the whole system, and the system at this point in time is the European world-economy”, which he has previously characterized as capitalist. From this, he deduces the following: “*Free labor is indeed a defining feature of capitalism, but not free labor throughout the productive enterprises. Free labor is the form of labor control used for skilled work in core countries whereas coerced labor is used for less skilled work in peripheral areas.* The combination thereof is the essence of capitalism.”¹⁷ Is it really? Why would it be, in historical terms?

“Labor control” appears in this explanation as the core of the organization of the productive system, with the form that the work takes playing a secondary role. Hence, the social relations of production established by individuals cease to respond to a process backed by active subjects who are conditioned by their means of subsistence and their relationship with the means of production; as a result, they become pawns in a strategy designed by capitalists. Consequently, the enslavement of Africans on plantations developed in the Caribbean between 1640 and 1750 as “the optimal form from the economic point of view for the bourgeois producers who configured, both through the legal system and the market, the basic relations of production in the region”.¹⁸

For Braudel, the European world economy in the mid-seventeenth century “implies the juxtaposition and coexistence of societies ranging from the already capitalist one of Holland down to those based on serfdom or slavery”.¹⁹ If England is then added, few fundamental things change in that scenario if we move into the eighteenth century. Now, following Braudel, the simultaneity of societies (capitalist in the centre, i.e. the Netherlands/England; slave-owning in America; serfdom in Eastern Europe; and a system with few free peasants and imperfect exchanges in the Baltic, Great Britain, and Central and Southern Europe) “reconsiders all the problems at once” because the nascent capitalism lives off this stagger that transfers resources from the central to the intermediate to the peripheral areas. But Braudel adds a consideration that breaks the unidirectionality and calls for a “reciprocity of perspectives”²⁰: the periphery depends on the needs of the centre, and the dependence on the supplies from the periphery led the centre to reinvent slavery in the New World.

2. Slavery: A Historical Social Relationship

Slavery accompanied, even promoted, capitalism from its birth and continued alongside it until the last decades of the nineteenth century. It remains for us to examine how capitalism and slavery are related. We know some of the consequences. Because the enslave-

17 Ibid., pp. 179–180.

18 Ibid., II, pp. 243 and 289.

19 F. Braudel, *La dinámica del capitalismo*, p. 105.

20 Ibid., p. 106.

ment of Africans for so long and until so late was a model of labour and legal racialization and because degrading stereotypes that morally justified or excused their subjugation were created over so much time, slavery became the historical and ideological foundation of modern racism.

As the second uncomfortable revelation, capitalism uses all forms of the exploitation of labour to accumulate capital – a process capitalism calls “growth” – after identifying “wealth” with material goods and their equivalence in money, regardless of the average level of people’s well-being. However, the fact that capitalism uses all forms of production – forms that were created by the system itself, forms that come from previous eras and have been preserved, hybrid forms that have their origins in the degradation of one or the other, or forms that have not yet managed to become established – does not mean that it converts each into capitalist relations or into variants of capitalism. Sidney Mintz reminds us that free and compulsive labour correspond to different production systems and cannot be confused. Neither should slavery be interpreted by capitalism, with which it temporarily coincides, to which it contributes, and to which it is subordinated in the creation of a global market.²¹

If slavery is a distinctive social relationship, then it is also a historical social relationship. Slavery is historical in a double sense. On the one hand, slavery dominated the societies of antiquity and a good part of the American subtropical regions from the sixteenth to eighteenth century (with characteristics different from the earlier one) while maintaining a notable presence in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance in Mediterranean Europe (as a secondary relationship, without being predominant anywhere, sometimes confused with other forms of civil and military captivity), and it played a very important role in the formation of Western capitalism from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. On the other hand, slavery not only underwent changes throughout history but also played different roles and related in different ways to the societies in which it was present.

In modern times, it cannot be denied that production as a result of slaves on the plantations of Brazil, Cuba, and the United States forms part of the expanded reproduction of capital, typical of stable capitalism, in the same way that, throughout the nineteenth century, the slave trade continued to constitute a source of primitive accumulation of capital for establishing capitalism. In fact, slavery has been preserved and increased, regardless of the fact that it goes against human dignity, because the role it plays has been adapted and because it constitutes an element of capitalist economics. It is not only an important part of the capitalist machinery because it provides cheap goods and lowers the costs of the production of commodities in general but also a piece of the capitalist economy because, at the stage when the Industrial Revolution was taking off and becoming firmly established, it increased average overall productivity and, with it, conditioned labour in the most developed countries, where competitiveness must be increased. Free and slave labour do not compete in the production of the same goods, but those produced by one

21 S. W. Mintz, *Was the Plantation Slave a Proletarian?*, in: *Review 2* (1978) 1, pp. 81–98.

and the other are exchanged for equivalent values. For instance, in the border regions between slave and free labour, it was recognized in 1861 in the state of Virginia that the cost of production was regulated by the cost of slave labour and that there was no competition with the white worker.²²

That they were not radically divided labour experiences (independent of each other) any more than the capital accumulated in the slave trade and on the slave plantations was oblivious to the growth of the great British trading houses, later related to lending or to directly investing in industry. The same is true of the Spanish merchants and plantation owners established in Cuba and their subsequent investments in industry, railways, banking, and real estate in the mother country as well as the links with the Spanish slave trade of the New York financiers in the nineteenth century, the shipyards that built slave vessels, and the plantations in the South.

In this historical analysis, we have to ask ourselves at every step what kind of slavery we are dealing with and place it within the set of coercive labour modalities that existed in a certain period of history. We have to ask ourselves what kind of capitalism we are dealing with because capitalism is also subject to evolution. Braudel invites us to distinguish between market economy and capitalism. Since the fifteenth century, he tells us, market economy and capitalism have been on the rise. The market economy, "in full expansion", covers vast areas but suffers from a lack of density, he adds. Capitalist achievements are brilliant and reach a sophisticated level, but they do not affect economic life as a whole or create a mode of production of their own that tends to become generalized. This capitalism, which Braudel describes as mercantile, is a long way from dominating the market economy. Both groups of activity "were in the minority until the eighteenth century".²³ On the other hand, the market economy continues to expand and to do so ever more rapidly, connecting economies and markets to each other – the latter by means of some exceptional commodities that reach high prices. In this regard, precious metals play an early and essential role by providing a measure of value in the form of money.

The danger (the historian warns us) lies in confusing the most dynamic aspects of an economy and the market (those that, because of their novelty, have attracted the most attention from scholars) with the vast whole, which, until the nineteenth century, had been little more than a fairly sizable vessel on the ocean of an everyday life largely removed from the market economy and capitalism, although the vessel sometimes guides the course of that life.²⁴ Pierre Vilar also invites us to distinguish between the sign and the trend. Not until the second half of the eighteenth century were the conditions created for the development of a capitalist mode of production as a coherent whole, based on the mass production of commodities and on profits extracted in the form of surplus value, which offers steady growth and distances itself from random speculation on fruits

22 F. L. Olmsted, *The Cotton King. A traveller's observations on cotton and slavery in the American slave states*, New York/London 1862 [1st edn 1861], p. 11.

23 Braudel, *La dinámica del capitalismo*, p. 50.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 52.

coming from isolated and distant markets. Only then does capital become the determining core of the society that can henceforth be recognized as capitalist.²⁵

3. Read the Classics

Since the end of the eighteenth century, contractual ties involving work for pay have been announced everywhere as an unmistakable sign of progress. Adam Smith, among others, theorized this and includes it in his framework of political economy. It is the most rational solution insofar as it implies simplicity (it is based on an agreement), reciprocity (it is merely a mercantile relationship between individuals), and economy. Capital does not have to bear the unnecessary costs of waiting for the worker to become an adult and fully productive, nor does it have to maintain him when demand drops and production shrinks; meanwhile, the worker finds regular employment and income to sustain himself and, in that sense, boosts the demand for consumer goods.

Smith associates wage labour with the convenience of the modern enterprise as more efficient and more profitable than slave labour: “the work done by slaves, though it appears to cost only their maintenance, is in the end the dearest of any.” The interest of the slave, devoid of any motivation to accumulate and acquire property, is only to eat as much and work as little as possible; hence, the only way to extract an effort from him beyond the cost of maintaining him is through the use of violence. It is obvious that Smith underestimates the effects of violence on slaves in order to achieve the intended purposes. He believes that a labour market based on the action of economic and social agents was more advantageous. However, he recognized that on the plantations of the colonies, particularly those dedicated to sugar and, to a lesser extent, tobacco, because of their very high profits, the cost of slaves could easily be sustained.²⁶ Marx’s view of the profitability of slavery is the same, and it is not difficult to find where he gets his reference from: only the huge profits made by the plantations absorbed the large expenses involved.

It is often forgotten that Smith’s work is a historical intellectual product. *The Wealth of Nations* was published in 1776, the year the Thirteen Colonies declared their independence, two years before James Hargreaves patented the spinning jenny, and three years before Samuel Crompton applied steam power to the mule jenny, allowing the spinning wheel to operate 400 spindles at a time. In 1785, Edmund Cartwright invented the mechanical loom, and in 1793, Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin. In just over a decade, the foundations of the modern textile industry were laid, and the boom in slave-produced cotton became the paradigmatic expression of the Industrial Revolution and the most burgeoning capitalism. In 1805, the United States accounted for 70 per cent of the world market for this fibre, whereas in 1784, it did not even export it. Here, too, the extraordinary profits made it possible to pay for slave labour, in Smith’s conception. The

25 P. Vilar, *Capitalismo*, Barcelona 1988, pp. 12 and 31.

26 A. Smith, *Investigación sobre la naturaleza y causa de la riqueza de las naciones*, Mexico 1987 (5th edn), pp. 78–79.

Scottish economist overlooks coffee production in Saint-Domingue and was unaware of how it developed in Cuba. Nor was he able to evaluate the level of importance that sugar was to reach in Cuba and Brazil. The increase in demand and the rise in coffee prices after 1815 stimulated plantations in the Rio de Janeiro region; by 1835, Brazil was the world's largest coffee producer, and most of the labour on the plantations was carried out by slaves. Slavery did not decline as the capitalist industrial economy advanced and wage labour developed, but grew with it, was used in production for industrial or private consumption in the most advanced societies, and was embedded in the economic, mercantile, and financial structures of capitalism.

In the 1850s, Marx became interested in American slavery (and virtually ignored that of Brazil and Cuba), while working on the *Capital: Critique of Political Economy* and earning a livelihood writing for the *New-York Tribune*. When he took the subject up again, the crisis between North and South was on the rise and was to lead to the Civil War in 1861. But in no way were his views the result of any specific research. So there is no systematic explanation, and some of his notes contradict each other. However, slavery is present in different passages of *Grundrisse* (1939) and in *Capital* about primitive accumulation, the circulation of goods, and the formation of wage labour. There are three brief fragments in which he expresses his views on the relationship between slavery and capitalism. In the first, he acknowledges the contradiction between slave production and capitalism in the nineteenth century but then points to the link between two production systems in which capital is predominant: “*Negro slavery* – a purely industrial slavery – which is, besides, incompatible with the development of bourgeois society and disappears with it, *presupposes* wage labour, and if other, free states with wage labour did not exist alongside it, if, instead, the Negro states were isolated, then all social conditions there would immediately turn into pre-civilized forms”,²⁷ he says. But he then goes on to specify that the conditions in the slave states are subordinated to the existence of “other free states with wage labour” alongside “that slavery”,²⁸ which implies the demarcation of systems even if they condition each other. Slavery in the South was an industrial form of labour, viable – precisely – in relation to the regions of the country where slavery was not in use and even of other non-slave countries, that is to say of national and international capitalism. In another passage, he alludes to the role of the cotton industry, which gave “a stimulus to the transformation of the earlier, more or less patriarchal slavery, into a system of commercial exploitation”.²⁹ Lastly, he is more explicit, although he does not develop the idea at all: “The fact that we now not only call the plantation owners in America capitalists, but that they *are* capitalists, is based on their existence as anomalies within a world market based on free labour”.³⁰

27 K. Marx, *Grundrisse*, Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy, Martin Nicolaus (trans.), London 1973, p. 223; <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/grundrisse/ch04.htm>.

28 Ibid.

29 Marx, *Capital*, I, p. 538.

30 Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 464; <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/grundrisse/ch09.htm>.

An anomaly? A deviation in time? Marx, like his predecessors in the classical school, considers slavery to enshrine a system that was inefficient, unprofitable, and opposed to the development of technology and productivity because it rested upon an unmotivated worker whose main incentive was to avoid punishment and not to ensure increased production for his own benefit. Slave plantations were costly for several reasons: they required a permanent supply of workers both at sowing and harvesting times and during “downtime”. More importantly, slaves represented the immobilization of a significant part of the capital needed to produce, thereby altering the organic composition of capital. This was due to the fact that the variable capital item related to the cost of labour being charged as constant capital, which was more burdensome because the slave represented the largest item, above the cost of land and technology.

Unlike intensive agriculture, which is based on capital investment and the worker’s intelligence and energy, writes Marx elsewhere, “[t]he cultivation of southern export goods – cotton, tobacco, sugar, etc. – by slaves is only remunerative insofar as it is carried out with large numbers of slaves, on a large scale and over vast areas of naturally fertile land, which require no more than simple labour”.³¹ It is in this text that we can see that the thinker has only partially understood the nature of modern slavery because he does not perceive the importance of capital investment in communication networks and in the mechanization of certain productive processes of the plantation.

The high profits of the plantations absorbed the high costs, says classical economics. But how could profits be so high if the work was inefficient and expensive? The explanation usually given is the high external demand for the products and, in the case of cotton, the situation of a near-monopoly. But in actuality, the prices of cotton, sugar, and coffee fell in the nineteenth century, and yet slave production did not stop growing until the middle of the century. The key seems to lie in the introduction of technology at certain stages of production and in the cheaper land and sea transport network – which appears to be linked to a considerable increase in transport capacity (from carts to railways), the consequent increase in the size of plantations, the organization of work in an “industrial” sense, and also, in short, the effective cost of labour.

Around 1843, for example, the average price of a plantation slave in Cuba was 450 pesos. A salaried black carpenter with three assistants, earned around 1,500 pesos a year.³² Deducing that the salary of the specialist accounted for half that amount (or perhaps reached 800 pesos), the slave would have more than offset this outlay in two years, and giving him an optimal working life of 15 years, not counting his sustenance, would have generated benefits equivalent to the cost of hiring 26.6 salaried workers. Bearing in mind that we have compared a specialized worker and common labour force and that the average working life of a slave working the fields was 20 years, the equivalent in working capacity would be around 40 salaried workers.

31 K. Marx, *La Guerra Civil norteamericana*, *Die Presse*, 25 October 1861, in: A. Lincoln and K. Marx, *Guerra y emancipación*, ed. by A. de Francisco, Madrid 2013, p. 141.

32 A Physician [J. G. F. Wurdeman], *Notes on Cuba*, Boston 1844, p. 152.

The second advantage was their availability: nothing guaranteed that day labourers would show up for the next harvest or would do so for the same wage, whereas the slave constituted a permanent reserve of labour power. Admitting also that yields were lower in slavery, the difference is still so great in favour of slavery that this alone explains its continuity, provided that the conditions for it were met. And such circumstances exist in those economies that are integrated within the capitalist system.

4. The Formation of Labour Markets and Coercive Labour

Classical economics omitted the historical process of establishing labour markets based on the exchange of working capacity for a wage within a framework of regular obligations; such an approach took it for granted in the short or medium term, as this was how it was shown by the European experience as was indicated by the logic of economics and the survival of those deprived of other means. Slavery and other forms of coercion would gradually fall back on the logic of profit provided by the model described above. Marx welcomed this explanation and took it further by associating it with his labour theory of value and the creation of surplus value.

In dealing with modern colonization and drawing conclusions from it about the wage-earning worker in industrial countries, Marx explains how in the colonies where means of production abound and are “available” for occupation the immigrants avoid being tied to a wage and disengage themselves from the obligations that have brought them there in order to embark – as far as they can – on the adventure of independent production. We can see that the origin of coercive labour in America is inseparable from the subjection of the native population (enslaved, *encomendada*, *tributaria*, and *mitaya*) and from voluntary (indentured servants and apprentices) or forced immigration (enslaved Africans) in tasks (agriculture and mining) that required a certain workforce, in volume or in a position to be employed in specific activities that did not allow for any delay. This need was met in some countries by voluntary work, where possible, for example in mining.

In Latin American countries where slavery had been abolished, in the nineteenth century, different variants of *enganche* (wage labour committed for a number of years under the authority of the contracting party) were commonplace modes of working. These included *conchabo* in Argentina and Uruguay, *cuadrillas* in Venezuela, *peonaje* in Mexico and Central America, and the extensive system of indentured servants that was to be practised with Asians (Indians, Chinese, and Indonesians), shipped not only to the Caribbean but also to California, Central America, Peru, South Africa, British West Africa, Réunion, and other European domains. In Puerto Rico, the *libreta regime* was introduced in 1838. This consisted in a document that stipulated that peasants were hired as day labourers for a certain number of days in order to promote compulsory labour. In Peru, the indigenous “Service to the Republic” was established for community works. This was a form of service (similar to *corvée*), also existing in other countries until the early twentieth century, including some municipalities in Spain, in which those who

were exempt from taxes due to their poverty were obliged to participate. The system of compulsory labour in the Dutch East Indies largely outlasted slavery in the strict sense, whereas the forced plantation system generated indirect piecework, exercised by free agricultural workers deprived of any choice and subjected to the double extraction of compulsory production for export and high tax burdens. From the late nineteenth century, with European expansion in Africa, compulsory labour and forms of semislavery became widespread, and they remained so until after the Second World War. One of the characteristics of non-voluntary work in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is its racialization: the fact that it was performed mostly by “non-Caucasians”.

Capitalism sometimes created, sometimes subsumed, but always encouraged non-free, non-voluntary forms of work. And thanks to this, in each of these regions, it obtained extraordinary rates of profit, that is to say higher than the average rate of return on capital in each era. Slavery, conceived as a unique form of coercive labour, has special characteristics within the framework of the hegemony of capital.

The coexistence of forms of work that presuppose alternatives is a fact whose persistence and extension question the association between capitalism and wage labour as an unequivocal model. At the same time, this coexistence opens the door to the interpretation of an economic system that favours a certain labour system (waged labour) without renouncing the use of previously existing systems in those regions where they are established and makes it possible to preserve those systems in the most convenient productions. The relationship is so extensive and long-lasting that it even makes it possible to discuss the premise that we have written earlier: it is up to capitalism to promote “free” contractual labour, with the new system having no absolute preference unless certain conditions are met.

Rosa Luxemburg first questioned the thesis of the exclusive practice of free labour in capitalism in *The Accumulation of Capital* (1913). There, she dealt with world overproduction, relative capitalist underconsumption, and the role of non-capitalist economies in the process of the expanded reproduction of capital – aspects that, in her opinion, had not been well resolved by Marx in volume II of *Capital*. Capitalism extended its markets into the world, she says, because it is the consumption in non-capitalist countries that provides a basis for European industrial expansion. For the purposes of the (expanded) accumulation of capital, the realization of surplus value cannot be limited to a society with only capitalists and workers. With its expansion, capital also contributes to displacing pre-capitalist forms of production and integrates their economies, while supplying itself with goods it does not produce and benefiting from their lower production costs. By shifting the continued growth of capital from production to effective demand, the expanding market was not just the only way to make this possible, through the creation of incentives for investment abroad. The market also provided an opportunity to examine the relations between capitalist and non-capitalist economies. In *Imperialism and World Economy* (1915), Nikolai Bukharin relates the exportation of capital and the narrowing of areas of influence by the industrialized countries to the international division of labour, which is a variant of the social division of labour known in national economies that

takes into account the difference in “culture” and in the development of the productive forces.³³ The notion of the international division of labour had been advanced in *The Accumulation of Capital* but received very little attention.

Although Luxemburg holds that imperialism, the last stage of capitalism, is a new phase due to the role it grants to the continuous exchanges between capitalist and non-capitalist areas, she does not find any barriers between capitalism in its classical stage and imperialist capitalism or between the former and the primitive accumulation of capital. The development of capitalism includes non-economic factors (violence as a vehicle of the economic process) both in the phase of primitive accumulation and in its extended reproduction, which is one of its constants throughout history. Thus many of the characteristics that should be unique to the most recent phase – on which the study focuses on and to which the few specific (economic, social, and historical) mentions contained in the work refer – are transferred to the characteristics of capitalism and more particularly to the goods, investment, and labour market, conceived in a global dimension.³⁴

The history of accumulation and capital shows that the means of production and consumption were not made exclusively in a capitalist process of production, Luxemburg says. We often find that the material elements of capital accumulation take place in “non-capitalist spheres”. In fact, she continues, “[f]rom the very beginning, capitalist production, in its forms and laws of development, has been destined to comprise the entire world as a storehouse of productive forces.” Consequently, it tends to mobilize all the productive forces of the planet for the production of surplus value, but in zones “where the white race cannot work” and other races can, these workers “are almost always chained to pre-capitalist forms of production”. In such cases, “real variable capital is not the means of subsistence of the workers, but the living labour force for whose reproduction those means are necessary. Therefore, among the fundamental conditions of accumulation, there is an increase in living labour which is suited to its needs, and which is set in motion by capital”. She thus explains the strange mixed forms of labour, ranging from modern wages to primitive systems. But, as it turns out, the process is controlled by capital and by the achievement of surplus value. As indicated earlier, this would be the case in the stage of primitive accumulation, to which Marx refers as the genesis of capital, but it is equally true in the full maturity of capitalism, according to Luxemburg. In short, “capitalist [primitive and expanded] accumulation requires for its movement to be surrounded by non-capitalist areas [...] and can continue only so long as it is provided with such a milieu.”³⁵

33 N.I. Bukharin, *La economía mundial y el imperialismo*, Siglo XXI, Mexico, 1977 (4th edn), pp. 34–44.

34 R. Luxemburg, *La acumulación del capital* [1913], <http://grupgerminal.org/?q=system/files/AcumulacionCapital.Luxemburg.pdf> (accessed 16 August 2020).

35 *Ibid.*, pp. 168–178. To contextualise the analysis, see: T. Kowalik, *Notas sobre la teoría luxemburguiana de la acumulación*, in: *Materiales, Extraordinario 3* (1977), pp. 155–165; G. F. F. Murua/T. F. Franco, *Las contribuciones de Rosa Luxemburgo al debate del imperialismo*, in: *Cuadernos de Economía Crítica 3* (2016) 5, pp. 15–36. Aspects of Luxemburg’s thought on capital were incorporated by Trotskyism and taken up again in the 1960s and 1970s by neo-Marxism and the new anti-imperialist thinking that accompanied the decolonization of Africa and the discussion of post-colonial development models. Luxemburg inspired several of the issues addressed

Luxemburg breaks away from Marx with regard not only to the process of the expanded reproduction of capital, which other authors of the time also considered unsatisfactorily explained in *Capital*, but also to a characteristic aspect of the core of Marx's thinking: the production of surplus value and the labour theory of value. She also distances herself by including subjugated workers in variable capital instead of regarding them as fixed capital, as all the economists who address the subject do.

Marx pointed out that the availability of work was (historically) the result of the separation of the peasant population from the means of production and subsistence. The "free" worker thus appears as an indispensable condition for the exchange of commodities (labour force exchanged for money/capital, which is an expression of value) to take place once the labour force has produced value above the value invested in the process of production of the commodity. It is through the purchase of labour power with wages that the capitalist acquires the worker's surplus labour; in the process of circulation of the commodity, the additional value created is transformed into surplus value. In slavery, surplus labour is retained with the ownership of the worker.³⁶ Both systems produce goods, and in both cases, the latter realizes surplus value. The difference lies in the way in which surplus labour is expropriated from the direct producer: this is what, according to Marx, distinguishes slave-based, socioeconomic formations from that grounded on wage labour, namely capitalism.³⁷

To what extent is the worker's "freedom" a requirement in the ordinary deployment of capital? For Marx, the autonomy of the parties is inherent in a mercantile society in which wage earners and capitalists are confronted with the objective conditions of production as capital. In the moment the owner of the means of production, of subsistence, and of money (expression of value) pushes the button that initiates production, it shows itself as capital. The same is not true of the worker. Moreover, he adds, the existence of free labour is not enough, although it is a *sine qua non* for the recognition of a "*historically determined* mode of social production".³⁸ It is the freedom of the worker that makes it possible to equate human labour with heterogeneous products, whose equivalence is established – and taken into account by those who exchange them – when they calculate "how much of another's product they will get for their own product"³⁹ whether they are things or the measure of the value of labour.

The mediation of the price of labour in the exchange process, however, conceals the form of the value of labour that characterizes a particular type of social production.⁴⁰ This concealment is characteristic of the capitalist system. The form of the wage – the price of

by Bukharin and Lenin, and in recent times Wallerstein (an organizing core that uses and firmly establishes an international division of labour to produce surplus value), but neither of these authors cites the Polish-German Marxist.

36 K. Marx, *El capital*, P. Scaron (trans.), 8 vols, Madrid/Mexico 1975–1981, I, vol. 2, pp. 651–659; III, vol. 6, p. 34.

37 Marx, *El capital*, I, vol. 1, p. 261.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 93.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 91.

40 Marx, *Capital*, I, pp. 50–53.

labour expressed in money – masks the difference between socially necessary and surplus labour. Marx points out the differences by considering other production systems, in particular slavery, where the work of the slave all day long, including the time during which he works for himself and supplements his means of subsistence, appears as work for his master: the slave's work for himself is incorporated into the property relationship.⁴¹

In capitalism, the exchange of goods takes place between owners who, through an act of will, “have a mutual desire of their owners to *alienate* them”.⁴² However, as a commodity, labour power is sold for a certain period of time (including piecework), not for all of it. The bonds of reciprocity are regulated by legal, extra-economic formulas, but the relation of production and extraction of surplus value belongs to a strictly economic sphere, the process of production. This is a central issue in the theory of capitalism developed by Marx. For the commodity to be transformed into capital, it is necessary “that two very different kinds of commodity-possessors must come face to face and into contact”: on the one hand, the owners of the means of production and money, and on the other hand, “free labourers, the sellers of their own labour power, and therefore the sellers of labour. *Free labourers* in the double sense that neither they themselves form part and parcel of the means of production, as in the case of slaves [...], nor do the means of production belong to them”. The process by which the relation of capital is created is the process of the divide between the producer and the ownership of his working conditions, that is to say the means of production, which turns the direct producer into a wage earner who manages his working conditions himself – the premise for the process to become capital.⁴³

The references we have taken from Marx throughout our exposition do not claim to establish the “true” Marx or to set a canonical interpretation of capitalism according to its most illustrious theoretical (and critical) interpreter. It is not a question of seeing who interprets Marx better and sets his accurate Marxist arguments against more or less erroneous uses of his ideas. This had some value in the past and can be seen in the controversy between Edward P. Thompson and Perry Anderson, as acknowledged by the former. The best interpretation of Marx, the one that overcomes the interpreter's lack of systematics in dealing with this issue of slavery and finds an explanatory logic that is based more on his method than on his words, will not be a sufficient source of authority to address the issue. It is, firstly, due to the fact that, as indicated, Marx's thinking on the matter is not unique and coherent but instead a succession of considerations. Secondly, the empirical knowledge we have about modern slavery is infinitely superior to that of the Rhenish thinker. Something different occurs with his criterion on capitalism.

41 Marx, *El capital*, I, vol. 3, p. 657.

42 Marx, *Capital*, I, p. 61.

43 Marx, *El capital*, I, vol. 3, pp. 892–893 and 951–952.

5. Slavery and Tropicalized Capitalism

In the transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, political economy made a contribution that readjusted the principles that had just been formulated by “classical economics”, that is to say the economic theory that advocated and explained the nascent modern capitalism. Francisco de Arango y Parreño was a patrician from the island of Cuba and a member of a family of landowners and civil servants, promoted to the position of representative of the Havana city council at the court, secretary of the Royal Consulate of Agriculture and Commerce, alderman of the cabildo, landowner, and royal official. While working as the writer of reports and memorials to the king, between 1789 and 1816, he went a step beyond the duties usually required by his position and produced a body of texts in which he detailed a model for a plantation worked by slaves that was in line with the type of economy that he calls the most advanced – which can quite readily be identified as capitalism. In *Discurso sobre la agricultura de La Habana y medios de fomentarla* (Discourse on the agriculture of Havana and on the means to promote it, 1792), he begins to define the creation of wealth through the use of the labour he considers most appropriate on the tropical plantation, namely slave labour.⁴⁴ He starts out from the consideration that the colonies had a specific economic constitution that, on the one hand, should participate in the general “impulse of the laws” that led to the freedom of trade and, on the other, should use labour that is best suited to the most profitable production. This double foundation corresponded to a rational action inspired by making a profit that benefited the government itself, which is why the state regarded its protection to be one of its most sacred duties.⁴⁵

Shortly afterwards, an economist of the classical school, the Frenchman Jean-Baptiste Say, published his *A Treatise on Political Economy* (1803). Through this work, Smith’s economic theory was disseminated and translated into everyday language with unique contributions that were to be highly influential in the nineteenth century and also in the marginalist neo-classical theory of the twentieth century: productive capital (work, or remuneration of the worker for his maintenance, materials, and instruments) is also a product. When we acquire products, we are exchanging them for other products.⁴⁶ The later critique of political economy (Marx) claims that the mere exchange of goods of

44 F. Arango y Parreño, *Obras*, La Habana 2005, I, pp. 148–198.

45 G. García Rodríguez, *Ensayo Introductorio. Tradición y modernidad en Arango y Parreño*, in: Arango, *Obras*, I, pp. 1–56, at 3. For further information on Arango’s economic thinking, in addition to this text, see: D. W. Tomich, *The Wealth of Empire: Francisco Arango y Parreño, Political Economy and the Second Slavery in Cuba*, in: *Comparative Studies of Society and History* 45 (2003) 1, pp. 4–28; J. A. Piqueras, Francisco Arango y Parreño: De la economía práctica sobre el comercio y el trabajo esclavo a la economía política de la esclavitud, in: J. A. Piqueras/J. von Grafenstein (eds.), *El pensamiento económico del reformismo criollo*, Santa Marta/Ciudad de México 2020, pp. 221–264.

46 J.-B. Say, *Traité d’économie politique ou simple exposition de la manière dont se forment, se distribuent et se composent les richesses*, Paris 1803. (We have used the first Spanish edition, which is not the most accurate but was released early on in the Spanish Antilles: *Tratado de economía política. O exposición sencilla de cómo se forman, se distribuyen y se consumen las Riquezas*, J. Queipo de Llano [trans.], Madrid 1804, 3 vols, 1805 and 1807, vol. I, p. 147). *Catéchisme d’économie politique*, Paris 1815, A. Pascual (trans.), Madrid 1822, p. 241.

equal value would prevent the accumulation of wealth, that is to say the accumulation of capital that capitalists pursue rather than simply satisfying consumption. But it follows from Say's thesis that free labour and slave labour are comparable insofar as they are exchanged for income – wages in the first case and means of subsistence in the second. The difference boils down to their utility and annual cost (in the case of the slave, adding the annual amortization of his or her purchase price). For Say, contrary to the opinion of his masters Jacques Turgot and Smith, it was impossible to deny that the slave produced more and at a lower cost than the free worker: the cost of replacement was assigned to those of the plantation as the costs of instruments and machines, which implied assimilating it to fixed capital and its erosion.⁴⁷ Also for Marx, the price paid when buying a slave “is nothing but the anticipated and capitalised surplus-value or profit to be wrung out of the slave”. And he adds, “It is capital which the slave-holder has parted with, it is a deduction from the capital which he has available for actual production”.⁴⁸ In this sense, the slave “plays the role of the money-form of the fixed capital” and “is but gradually replaced as the active period of the slave's life expires.”⁴⁹

For Say, the issue of slavery is reduced from an economic point of view to a matter of utility. And, since in his theoretical framework utility is the value-creating function, there would be no difference in the agricultural work performed by a free labourer from that performed by an enslaved person. By sticking to constant timeless categories, unconnected to any particular economic system, Say's theory lays the foundations for its replacement without affecting the nature of production. Say considers that the slave also participates in the profit of production: “what his master can no longer take from him [...] the sum of what he consumes” is the most miserable of all incomes, he says. But here the replacement costs are maintained at the expense of the masters, who pay the expenses “that arise from the maintenance of the slaves, like the capital with which they have bought the transported negro”.⁵⁰ The problem was that imported slaves were cheaper than those brought up in captivity until they could be useful, at the age of ten, but this could be corrected by treating them in a fatherly way that would offer the advantage of a slave acclimatized to the estate from his childhood.⁵¹

We should add that in 1818, a year after free trade was decreed in Cuba, the Royal Patriotic Society of Havana founded a chair in political economy at the Royal Seminary of San Carlos and San Ambrosio, where Say's treatise was used as a textbook. It was the first teaching centre of its kind in the Americas and was the first to transcend the sphere of boards of trade and other corporations.⁵² Juan Justo Vélez de Elorriaga, the first holder

47 Say, *Tratado de economía política*, I, pp. 286–297.

48 Marx, *Capital*, III, pp. 586.

49 Marx, *Capital*, II, p. 291.

50 Say, *Tratado de economía política*, III, pp. 123–124.

51 *Ibid.*, p. 125.

52 The treatise was adopted in 1807 in the chair for civil economy and trade of the Royal Aragonese Economic Society and in 1814 in the chair for political economy of the Barcelona and Malaga Boards of Trade. See J. M. Menudo/J. M. O'Kean, *La recepción de la obra de Jean-Baptiste Say en España: la teoría económica del empre-*

of the chair, on finding that there were not enough copies of Say's work for the many students interested in studying the subject, decided to write a *Compendio del Tratado de Economía Política que escribió Juan Bautista Say* (Compendium of the Treaty on Political Economy written by Jean Baptiste Say). Arango, as the director of the Royal Patriotic Society, encouraged the writing of the compendium, and everything points to the fact that he was also the promoter of the creation of the chair. Vélez, who was familiar with the work of Smith and Say, summarized the original quite freely and adapted it with examples from the island of Cuba.⁵³ Vélez seems to have based himself on the translations of Say's work carried out in Spain, as can be seen from the terms chosen in the versions meant for the audience in the Iberian Peninsula. For example, where Say writes *ouvrier*, the Spanish translator used *operario*; this is the same expression used by Vélez, with the advantage that the Spanish *obrero* refers to a salaried factory worker (something almost unknown in Spain in 1803), whereas *operario* is neutral and could be applied to designate the slave.⁵⁴ In his inaugural speech for the chair, Vélez made a twofold appeal. On the one hand, he asked for the introduction of the principles of economic management in agriculture and industry. On the other hand, he requested the application of the rules governing modern capitalism as taught by Say.

The owner of an *ingenio* (sugar mill) will always proceed blindly if he does not know how the capital invested, for example, in land, in factories, in workers, in machines, and in supplies contributes to production; what roles the natural agents play in production; how much his industry and his work are worth; and how these agents come together to produce the rich sugar that he exchanges for other values that he uses to conserve and restore the farm he manages. Neither will he be able to appreciate the work done by machines and the savings in hand that they allow, nor will he be able to calculate exactly how far his unproductive or reproductive consumption extends or the influence that they have on his prosperity or ruin.⁵⁵

Political economy, Vélez argues, teaches the way in which wealth is produced and therefore takes advantage of the capitalist, the owner, and the trader, that is to say all the economic stakeholders who are in a position to accumulate wealth, from which free workers

sario, in: *Revista de Historia Económica/Journal of Iberian and Latin American Economic History* 23 (2005) 1, pp. 117–142, at 125.

- 53 J. Vélez, *Compendio del Tratado de economía Política que escribió Juan Bautista Say*, Havana 1818 (reprinted in 1830 by the Sociedad Económica in one volume). It can be consulted in G. Chailloux, *La ciencia económica en la Ilustración habanera. La primera Cátedra de Economía Política (1816–1824)*, Havana 2019, pp. 133–300; G. Chailloux, *Los inicios del pensamiento económico cubano*, *ibid.*, pp. 15–123. The Havana edition – or its early incorporation into teaching in Cuba – does not appear in the meticulous work by J. M. Menudo/J. M. O'Kean, *Ediciones, reimpressiones y traducciones en español del 'Tratado de economía política' de Jean Baptiste Say*, in: *Revista de Historia Económica/Journal of Iberian and Latin American Economic History* 37 (2019) 1, pp. 169–192.
- 54 At the end of the compendium, Vélez included the *Epítome de los principios fundamentales de la Economía Política* de Say, which had been published in Madrid in 1816 and translated by Manuel Antonio Rodríguez and Manuel María Gutiérrez. Both versions of Madrid and of Havana coincide, which allows us to confirm the sources used by the former.
- 55 J. Vélez, *Discurso pronunciado por el presbítero licenciado don Justo Vélez, el día 14 de octubre de 1818, en la apertura de la Cátedra de Economía Política, en el Real y Conciliar Colegio Seminario*, in: Chailloux, *La ciencia económica*, p. 132.

and slaves are obviously excluded. The compendium does not contain one single reference to slavery. But both in the inaugural speech of the chair and in his compendium, he introduces the relationship between modern political economy and the plantation: "What could we not say about the influence of this science on the manufacturing industry? If I were not afraid of being a nuisance, I would briefly make apparent the effects of the division of occupations, of the labour savings produced by machines which, while useful to the manufacturer, are even more so to the consumer".⁵⁶ The ideas set out and the teachings delivered from then until 1824 were not offspring of the Enlightenment but of the practical convenience of the slave plantation owners. Not in vain, the chair was financed with contributions from the Royal Consulate of Agriculture and Commerce, an expression of Havana's plantocracy, and by several of the island's principal estate owners.⁵⁷

Could this thinking, based on the foundations of capitalism and oriented towards the management of the capitalist enterprise, be applied to slavery?

Various authors have not only found it to be accurate, albeit with some adaptation, but also indeed perfectly adequate. From here, however, the explanatory lines diverge in three perspectives. (1) There are the economists and economic historians who, from the postulates of neo-classical theory, use timeless categories and analyse the plantation, disregarding the characteristics of slavery that could condition the system. The best known work in this sense, among an extensive list of other works, is *Time on the Cross* (1974) by Robert W. Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman,⁵⁸ which has since become a classic.⁵⁹ (2) The next perspective (which we have summarized) includes those authors who believe that capitalism was implanted in America during the sixteenth to eighteenth century and, consequently, on the periphery of the system – labour was subsumed under capital so that slavery would be at the service of capitalism from its beginnings as an expression of capitalism itself. The most emphatic version of this conception states that slavery is a bare form of savage capitalism. (3) Lastly, there are authors who consider that slavery transformed its nature towards the end of the eighteenth century and became something different from what it had been, that is to say it became a particular version of itself, integrated into capitalism.

In this last interpretation, two aspects are still unresolved: to what extent it is transformed, or what does this transformation consist of, and in what way is it linked to capitalism, from both the macro-economic and the social points of view. Regarding the second aspect, when referring to slavery we should never forget that it is not only a production system but also essentially a social relationship. The answers are again varied: (3.1) for some, slavery becomes capitalist with the peculiarity of employing slaves. In this

56 Ibid., p. 131.

57 A. Bachiller y Morales, *Apuntes para la historia de las letras y de la instrucción pública de la isla de Cuba*, La Habana 1859–1861, vol. I, pp. 79–80.

58 R. W. Fogel/S. L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery*, New York 1974.

59 See the critique in D. Tomich, *Slavery in Historical Capitalism: Toward a Theoretical History of the Second Slavery*, in: Tomich (ed.), *Slavery and Historical Capitalism*, pp. 37–65.

case, as in explanations (1) and (2), we must overlook the labour theory of value in the sense of Marx (or its neo-Ricardian rectification by Piero Sraffa, or the neo-Keynesian, neo-Marxist amendment by Joan Robinson) to return to Say and his theory of the utility of the commodity. According to this theory, value is determined by demand, understood as global demand in relation to supply and with an added subjective element – the common estimate made of that value according to its needs (confusing exchange value with use value), which gives the merchandise a price. As far as supply is concerned, the value is established by the utility of the land, capital, and labour. For the purposes of reward, the salary would be of little importance, as would the consumption provided by the slave owner, which, as we have seen, includes the costs of replacement and the first years of the child born into slavery.⁶⁰ From this conception, the fact that the worker is the property of the entrepreneur – like the land, the buildings, the animals, the factory, and the utensils – does not change the fact that he produces goods for the world capitalist market. The difference with respect to the free worker would be limited to the means of remuneration: salary in one case, means of subsistence in others, since both are subject to strict discipline and are achieved in one case by means of contractual formulas that force the acceptance of labour regulations, whereas the second is wrenched from him by means of direct violence.

(3.2) In another interpretation (the one we identify with), the slave-based social regime conserves its particularity, that is to say the slave formation is not altered and neither are the social relations between owners and slaves modified, but it metamorphoses into two aspects. (a) It is integrated into the industrial capitalist system (not only the commercial one, as it was before) and becomes one of its core – not peripheral – components, taking up industrial forms of production to the point that it experiments with coordinated systems of labour (in which even general and individual productivity is measured), which are then transferred to manufacturing in the industrialized countries. (b) Its relationship with more dynamic capitalism introduces into the largest and most modern plantations management methods that are characteristic of capitalism, including asset diversification, which leads to the export of capital and investment in distant economies that can without doubt be described as capitalist.

Years before Say wrote his work, the plantation owners of Saint-Domingue kept an exact calculation of the productive and unproductive consumption of their estates, and in some cases, they evaluated and had control over the capital invested “in the land, in the factories, in workers, in machines”. The most active Cuban plantation owners followed this direction soon after, but in many *ingenios* there were accounts of this kind. Even in the 1860s and 1870s, the purchase of slaves was not recorded in the books as an investment but as an expense, and its amortization was calculated only roughly. It was, in fact, more common for it to appear in the texts of economists and publicists, who calculated the theoretical costs of abolishing slavery to draw attention to the large compensation

60 Say, *Tratado de economía política*, II, pp. 338–350.

it would represent. At the same time, the private documents of some large plantation owners who were also involved in various international operations reveal calculations and a language that leaves no gaps between the management of their businesses in the capitalist sphere and the management in the internal sphere of the *ingenio*. This is how we have seen it in the works by Francisco F. Ibáñez Palenciano, which we have begun to process. Palenciano belonged to the last generation of Spanish immigrants to reach the top among the sugar magnates. Around 1880, he was one of the first to promote the separation of cultivation from manufacturing in *centrales* and to foster farming by *colonos* in agriculture, aware of the adaptation required in the process of transition to plantations without slaves because he had previously participated actively in the importation of hired Asians.

In short, the second slavery has internal dynamics that generate new situations in parallel to the development of capitalism, which, in the 1850s, grew far more than in previous decades, and even in the transition to free labour, it took on hybrid forms, with a growing weight of rented slaves, coolies, and wage earners. Until the extinction of slavery, however, the plantation retained distinctive features that did not resemble those of a capitalist enterprise nor were social relations subsumed by capitalist relations. The devil is in the details. Careful analysis of the historical processes should help us to understand this.

Slavery and Industrialization: Williams Redux

Trevor Burnard

ABSTRACTS

Dieser Aufsatz bewertet die Position von Eric Williams, dem Autor des vor 75 Jahren erschienenen klassischen Werks über Kapitalismus und Sklaverei, im Lichte neuerer Forschungen, insbesondere von Historikern der New History of Capitalism. Er hebt die besondere Überzeugungskraft eines Teils von Williams' Argumenten hervor, dass nämlich in der Zeit zwischen 1688 und 1763 alle Bereiche der britischen Gesellschaft das Interesse der Plantagenbesitzer an Amerika und damit die Sklaverei vorbehaltlos unterstützten. Der Siebenjährige Krieg markierte rückblickend den Höhepunkt der Macht der Plantagenbesitzer im britischen Empire. Die Amerikanische Revolution hingegen führte zu einer Krise der Plantagengesellschaften, wie Williams meinte, allerdings – zumindest ökonomisch – mehr für den amerikanischen Süden als für die britische Karibik.

This paper evaluates the standing of Eric Williams, author of the classic work on capitalism and slavery 75 years ago, in the light of new scholarship, notably by historians writing as part of the New History of Capitalism movement. It emphasises how one part of Williams' argument is especially persuasive, that in the period between 1688 and 1763 all sections of British society supported the planter interest in the Americas and thus slavery without reservation. The Seven Years' War marked, in retrospect, the peak of planter power within the British Empire. The American Revolution, by contrast, formed, as Williams suggested, a crisis in plantation societies but more so, at least economically, for the American South than for the British Caribbean.

Historians know that slavery was an important part of the eighteenth-century British Empire. They have long wondered about its influence on the economic development of Britain, especially on Britain's transition, the first in the world, to a highly developed industrial economy in the late eighteenth century. The historian who gave the most

compelling answer to this question was the Trinidad scholar, and later prime minister, Eric Williams. Williams wrote a highly influential book in 1944, *Capitalism and Slavery*, that suggested that the link between West Indian slavery and British industrialization was real and substantial.¹ Although he never made an argument that slavery “caused” the Industrial Revolution, he suggested, as Barbara Solow was later to note, that it “played an active role in its pattern and timing”.²

Anyone interested in the relationship between the growth of slavery in the early modern Americas, especially the British Caribbean, and the origins of the Industrial Revolution, is aware of the Williams’s thesis and its galvanizing effect on scholarship. The Williams’s thesis (or, rather, his several overlapping theses about West Indian growth and decline) attracted an avalanche of scholarship among historians of the British West Indies, especially in the 1970s and 1980s. That outpouring of scholarship settled into a consensus that Williams’s arguments were provocative rather than persuasive.³ David Eltis and Stanley Engerman produced an important article in 2000 that provides a lucid refutation of the more dramatic claims made by Williams, notably that Britain would not have been able to industrialize without slavery. They also cast doubt on Williams’s assertion that slave-produced sugar was more important than any other British product in the build-up to industrialization.⁴

Recently, however, the Williams’s thesis has had a fresh lease on life because of a historiographical movement among US historians of the Early Republic and antebellum periods who write under the self-penned title of the “New History of Capitalism” (NHC). One sign of how prominent the movement has become is that it recently was the subject of a lengthy conversation in one of the most important journals in American history.⁵ The proponents of this movement take as apodictic the central role slavery played in creating modern capitalism.⁶ Indeed, slavery is capitalism’s “beating heart”. They trumpet the novelty of their view – one claim being that “for too long historians saw no problem in the opposition between capitalism and slavery”. They argue that historians have depicted

1 E. Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, Chapel Hill 1944.

2 B. L. Solow, *Capitalism and Slavery in the Very Long Run*, in: *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 17 (1987), p. 732.

3 See R. Anstey, *Capitalism and Slavery: A Critique*, in: *Economic History Review* 21 (1968), pp. 307–20 and S. L. Engerman, *The Slave Trade and British Capital Formation in the Eighteenth Century: A Comment on the Williams Thesis*, in: *Business History Review* 46 (1972), pp. 430–43, for early criticisms. For a defense, see J. E. Inikori, *Market Structure and the Profits of the British Atlantic Trade in the Late Eighteenth Century*, in: *Journal of Economic History* 41 (1981), pp. 745–76. A mostly critical set of essays was B. L. Solow/S. L. Engerman (eds.), *British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery: The Legacy of Eric Williams*, New York 1987. For a more positive view, see H. Cateau/S. Carrington (eds.), *“Capitalism and Slavery” Fifty Years Later: Eric Eustace Williams – a Reassessment of His Work*, New York 2000. An excellent survey of the historiography on the topic up until 2000 is K. Morgan, *Slavery, Atlantic Trade and the British Economy, 1660–1800*, Cambridge 2000, pp. 29–35, 47–50.

4 D. Eltis/S. L. Engerman, *The Importance of Slavery and the Slave Trade to Industrializing Britain*, in: *Journal of Economic History* 60 (2000), pp. 125–27, 138.

5 See *Interchange: The History of Capitalism*, in: *Journal of American History* 101 (2014), pp. 503–36.

6 S. Beckert, *Slavery and Capitalism*, in: *Chronicle of Higher Education* 12 December 2014, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/SlaveryCapitalism/150787>; G. Grandin, *Capitalism and Slavery*, in: *Nation*, 1 May 2015, <https://www.thenation.com/article/capitalism-and-slavery/>; and S. Rockman/S. Beckert, *How Slavery Led to Modern Capitalism*, Bloomberg, 25 January 2012, “Echoes” blog.

the history of American capitalism as developing without slavery – although the more careful among this NHC movement admit that discussions of slavery and capitalism are not new.⁷

Eric Williams based his arguments on the relationship between the development of industrial capitalism and British West Indian slavery and the slave trade from his understanding that the slave trade was highly profitable and that the British West Indies was central to Britain's mercantile economy between the Restoration (1660) and the American Revolution (1776–1783). The British West Indian plantation system reached its eighteenth-century height around the time of the conclusion of the Seven Years' War (1756–1763). It did so just at the time that Britain was in the early stages of an explosive growth in industrial innovation, including the development of a distinctive factory system. The British American plantation system involved badly exploited workers, overwhelmingly enslaved persons of African descent, producing tropical goods, like sugar, cotton, and tobacco, for European markets. The simplest explanation of West Indian prosperity is that planters made money by systematically stealing the rightful rewards enslaved people deserved for their labour. Slaves working in sugar in Jamaica circa 1774 produced around 16 pounds per annum for their employer while receiving income, mostly in kind, of less than 6 pounds.⁸ The number of slaves involved in plantation agriculture was considerable – around 555,000 in 1750, of whom 295,000 lived in the British Caribbean and 247,000 in British North America. Plantation profits reached an all-time peak during the Seven Years' War, averaging 13.5 per cent return on capital. Profits still averaged around 9 per cent between the Peace of Paris (1763) and the start of the American Revolution in 1776. Profits from the slave trade were less, below 10 per cent, but they were still healthy, given that returns on government bonds were 3–3.5 per cent and returns from agricultural land were between 4 and 6 per cent.⁹ This impressive economic performance encouraged Williams to argue that slavery contributed to the remarkable economic transformation that propelled Britain to the industrial leadership of the world beginning in the second half of the eighteenth century.

Indeed, his argument was more than a comment that historians had not realized that the British West Indies was a vital part of empire in the eighteenth century before the start of the American Revolution. He argued, first, that slavery was key to the Industrial Revolu-

7 Beckert, *Slavery and Capitalism*; see also S. Rockman, "The Unfree Origins of American Capitalism, in: *Capitalism and Econometrics in Early American Economic History*, ed. C. Matson, University Park 2006, pp. 335–362; S. Rockman, *Slavery and Capitalism*, in: *Journal of the Civil War Era* 2 (2012), <https://journalofthecivilwarera.org/forum-the-future-of-civil-war-era-studies/>; S. Rockman, *What Makes the History of Capitalism Newsworthy?*, in: *Journal of the Early Republic* 34 (2014), pp. 439–466.

8 T. Burnard/L. Panza/J. Williamson, *Living Costs, Real Incomes and Inequality in Colonial Jamaica*, in: *Explorations in Economic History* 71 (2019), pp. 55–71.

9 P.D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry*, Chapel Hill 1998, p. 468; J. R. Ward, *The Profitability of Sugar Planting in the British West Indies, 1650–1834*, in: *Economic History Review* 31 (1978), pp. 197–213; D. Richardson, *Profits in the Liverpool Slave Trade: The Accounts of William Davenport, 1757–1784*, in: R. Anstey/P. E. H. Hair (eds.), *Liverpool, the Atlantic Slave Trade, and Abolition* (=Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, Occasional Series [1976], vol. 2), pp. 60–90).

tion insofar as “the profits obtained [from slavery] provided one of the main streams of that accumulation of capital which financed the Industrial Revolution”.¹⁰ In addition, he argued that wealth derived from slavery was important to the social, cultural, and political fabric of eighteenth-century Britain.¹¹ Third, he insisted that the West Indian slave economy went into decline from 1783, possibly as early as 1763. Here, he was repeating an argument made by the pioneering American scholar of the British West Indian economy Lowell Ragatz, the man to whom Williams dedicated his book.¹² Finally, he argued that West Indian planters changed from being progressive forces within mercantilism to becoming a reactionary and backward-looking group, opposed to industrial capitalism and increasingly abandoned by industrialists as protectionists and economic misfits with no place in modern Britain. In a famous formulation, he contended that West Indian planters provided the material basis that allowed industrialization to occur but were then cruelly abandoned by an industrializing British state, which no longer had any need for them. In short, “the capitalists had first encouraged West Indian slavery and then helped to destroy it”. Indeed, he argued that “when British capitalism found the West Indian monopoly a nuisance, they destroyed West Indian slavery”, despite having “ignored or defended” slavery when “British capitalism depended upon the West Indies”.¹³

One of his subsidiary aims was to attack the imperial school of British historians who had taught him at Oxford in the 1930s. He disliked them for their ethnocentric celebration of abolitionists as altruistic humanitarians. He argued instead that abolitionism was founded on baser economic motivations. Another aim was to contribute to a developing “Third World scholarship” of nationalistic anti-colonialism, with a West Indian audience more in mind than a European or American one.¹⁴ A more pressing imperative, however, was to counter the assumptions made by Adam Smith that the West Indies was less a source of wealth than a drain on British resources, with the large capital outlays of Britain put into plantation agriculture in the country being a major misallocation of funds. Smith argued that the “overflowing” of capital from Britain to the colonies showed that the empire concentrated in the West Indies was “a project which has cost, which continues to cost, and which, if it is pursued in the same way as it has been hitherto, is likely to cost immense expense, without being likely to bring in any profit”.¹⁵

10 Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 52.

11 See also C. Hall et al., *Legacies of British Slave-Ownership: Colonial Slavery and Formation of Victorian Britain*, Cambridge 2014.

12 L. J. Ragatz, *The Fall of the Planter Class in the British Caribbean, 1763–1833: A Study of Social and Economic History*, New York 1928.

13 Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 169. For the fate of West Indian planters after the American Revolution, see C. Petley (ed.), *Rethinking the Fall of the Planter Class*, special issue of *Atlantic Studies* 9 (2012).

14 H. McD. Beckles, “The Williams Effect”: Eric Williams’ *Capitalism and Slavery* and the Growth of West Indian Political Economy, in: Solow/Engerman, *British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery*, pp. 303–316; W. A. Darity, *Eric Williams and Slavery: A West Indian Viewpoint*, in: *Callaloo* 20 (1998), pp. 801–816. For an appreciation of Williams as a politician and an intellectual, see T. L. Shields, *The Legacy of Eric Williams: The Postcolonial Moment*, Jackson 2015.

15 Cited in R. B. Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623–1775*, Bridgetown 1974, pp. 5–6.

For S. D. Smith, revisiting Adam Smith, the problem that Adam Smith addressed was one of monopoly profits and the excessive protectionism demanded by West Indian planters for their products within the British market.¹⁶ Williams denied that money flowed mainly from Britain to the colonies, as Adam Smith suggested, but he accepted that Smith was an important figure in pushing British politicians, influenced by a new class of British industrialists, away from a protectionist mercantilist regime toward free trade and away from slavery in favour of wage labour. Williams argued that Smith was “the intellectual champion of the industrial middle-class and the major proponent of the idea that slavery was more expensive than free labour”, thus treating, Williams believed, what “is a specific question of time, place, labour and soil” as “an abstract proposition”.¹⁷ Williams’s book was thus as much an argument about political economy as about economic history: he wanted to connect the decline of the West Indies after 1783 to new ideas about free trade and industrial capitalism and to the discarding of policies of mercantilism in which West Indian planters had heavily invested.¹⁸

Williams overestimated Adam Smith’s influence in policy-making in the late eighteenth century. He saw the move from mercantilism to industrial capitalism as a compressed process when in fact free trade did not become a serious feature of British political life until after the abolition of slavery in 1834. But Williams made an important point that West Indian prosperity rested very much on vested interests in Britain, including colonial merchants, slave traders, and the unreformed House of Commons. Those vested interests, he argued, could not maintain West Indians’ privileged economic position after the end of the American Revolution. British consumers were increasingly unwilling to support special interests advocating protection when new industries created by Britain’s technological prowess looked less for protection from competition than for access to new export markets.¹⁹

The part of the Williams’s thesis that has stood up least well to empirical investigation is his assertion that the British West Indies were in economic decline after the end of the American Revolution, leading to a diminishment of planters’ political power in Britain at the same time as the power of industrial capitalists was growing and as British imperial policy turned eastward to focus on India. Historians no longer see such a “move to the east” in British imperial policy after 1783. The British Empire in the Americas remained central to imperial policy and to the imperial imagination until at least the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and probably for some time after.²⁰ It was vital to imperial geopolitics, especially during the long Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815) and during the

16 S. D. Smith, *Merchants and Planters Revisited*, in: *Economic History Review* 55 (2002), pp. 434–465; E. Rothschild, *Adam Smith in the British Empire*, in: S. Muthu (ed.), *Empire and Modern Political Thought*, Cambridge 2012, pp. 184–198.

17 Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, pp. 5–6.

18 P. J. Stern/C. Wennerlind (eds.), *Mercantilism Reimagined: Political Economy in Early Modern Britain and Its Empire*, Oxford 2014.

19 Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, pp. 164–65.

20 P. J. Marshall, *Remaking the British Atlantic: The United States and the British Empire After American Independence*, Oxford 2012.

conflagration of the Haitian Revolution in the 1790s and 1800s.²¹ In addition, the British made several new acquisitions in the southern Caribbean and South America as a result of war between it and France and the Netherlands. Moreover, the profits from the plantation complex remained very high, including both the West Indies and the United States as British trading partners, totalling perhaps 11 per cent of British gross domestic product per annum in the period 1800–1810.²²

Britain had good reason to covet Caribbean territory. The West Indies, despite a small economic dip during the American Revolution, remained a highly profitable part of the empire at least until the abolition of the slave trade in 1807.²³ Indeed, some of Britain's new acquisitions, notably Trinidad and what became British Guiana, formed a new frontier of high plantation profits for the first 30 years of the nineteenth century.²⁴ The profitability of the plantations did not decline, despite Williams's predictions, after the end of the American Revolution. The abolition of the slave trade, as Seymour Drescher argues in a famous intervention against a major plank of the Williams's thesis, was not in the economic interests of Britain but was a variation of "econocide".²⁵ This abolition occurred in a period when planters were usually making good money from slavery. The one exception to this general tale of plantation prosperity from around 1790 is a short-term period of economic difficulty around 1805–1807, which had, David Ryden tells us, a significant effect on the politics leading directly to the abolition of the slave trade.²⁶ Was European overseas expansion crucial to European economic supremacy in the early modern period? It is doubtful, though overseas expansion was not insignificant. Atlantic trade made up only a small percentage of European gross national product, even in Britain, where the Atlantic trade was largest and most dynamic. The relatively small size of overseas trade before the late eighteenth century means that we cannot argue that plantation agriculture was all that decisive in driving economic growth.²⁷ That proposition remains correct, even if it is acknowledged that Atlantic trade was growing faster than other sectors of the economy, that it was becoming more and more important within the overseas trade sector of the British and possibly the French economy after the Seven Years' War, and that Atlantic trade encouraged considerable feedback effects, linkages, and "invisibles" like shipbuilding, insurance, and other international services. Until the late eighteenth century, Atlantic trade was always subsidiary, often very subsidiary, to

21 D. Geggus, *Slavery, War and Revolution: The British Occupation of Saint Domingue, 1793–1798*, Oxford, 1982.

22 K. Rönnbäck, On the Economic Importance of the Slave Plantation Complex to the British Economy During the Eighteenth Century: A Value-Added Approach, in: *Journal of Global History* 13 (2018), pp. 308–327.

23 S. Carrington, *The British West Indies During the American Revolution*, Dordrecht 1988.

24 N. Draper, The Rise of a New Planter Class? Some Counter-Currents from British Guiana and Trinidad, 1807–1834, in: *Atlantic Studies* 9 (2012), pp. 65–83.

25 S. Drescher, *Econocide: British Slavery in the Era of Abolition* 2d edn, Chapel Hill 2010.

26 D. B. Ryden, Does Decline Make Sense? The West Indian Economy and the Abolition of the British Slave Trade, in: *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 31 (2001), pp. 347–374. See also G. Checkland, Finance for the West Indies, 1780–1815, in: *Economic History Review* 10 (1958), pp. 461–449.

27 J. De Vries, The Limits of Globalisation in the Early Modern World, in: *Economic History Review* 63 (2010), pp. 710–733.

inter-European trade for both exports and imports. In addition, overseas trade was continually dwarfed by the domestic economy.²⁸

Moreover, what money came from colonial trade only sometimes went to the state. The early modern European state was not the powerful state of the nineteenth century, let alone the twentieth century. Until at least 1815, almost all states were concerned less with profit than with power and with securing the authority of rulers over the ruled when there were few coercive possibilities available to enforce that authority. Their other ambition was to use what money they could raise to pay armed forces to keep their territory safe. One reason why early modern states were so weak and comparatively inefficient is that few had a decent fiscal base to provide the economic capacity to make and enforce political decisions. What fiscal base they had seldom came from overseas trade. Patrick O'Brien – a notable advocate nowadays for the importance of colonial trade for the development of the British economy – comments that the “total flow” of “colonial” tribute into state coffers “cannot be depicted as important for the construction of productive and viable fiscal systems for the long term growth of metropolitan economies”.²⁹ Only Portugal and Spain “succeeded in sustaining notable increases to the flow of fiscal resources to support centralizing states by way of conquest, annexations, and colonization” though Spain’s imports of expropriated American silver was expended on religious warfare and debilitating European conflicts that reduced rather than increased its economic potential. In general, it seems that European states received but minimal tax flows from imperialism before the nineteenth century.³⁰ More profits went to individuals, of course, and some of those profits ended up in the hands of the state through excise taxes on colonial “luxuries”. But, as O'Brien argues, states became fiscally powerful not through colonial expropriations but through constructing “fiscal and financial regimes with sufficient powers and organizational capacities to penetrate deeply into local economies for purposes of taxation, and to obtain access through loans and credits to the incomes, wealth, and expenditures of the populations over which they claimed sovereignty”.³¹ O'Brien connects the rise of the fiscal state in England (later Britain) with the furnace of conflict in the British Civil Wars (1642–1651) in the mid-seventeenth century. In part, the fiscal state arose because England had been expelled from Europe since 1453 and thus had become a semi-independent island realm relatively uninvolved until the eighteenth century in European power politics. The main factor, O'Brien insists, in why

28 C. K. Harley insists that while the Atlantic economy made a central contribution to the causes of the Industrial Revolution, the route through which this contribution came was through trade to the non-plantation colonies of British North America. Harley, Slavery, the British Atlantic Economy, and the Industrial Revolution, in: A. B. Leonard et al. (eds.), *The Caribbean and the Atlantic World Economy*, London 2015, p. 182. For mercantilism and empire, see J. Barth, *Reconstructing Mercantilism: Consensus and Conflict in the British Imperial Economy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, in: *William and Mary Quarterly* 73 (2016), pp. 257–290.

29 P. O'Brien, *The Nature and Historical Evolution of an Exceptional Fiscal State and its possible significance for the precocious commercialization and industrialization of the British economy from Cromwell to Nelson*, in: *Economic History Review* 64 (2011): p. 415; De Vries, *The Limits of Globalisation*.

30 O'Brien, *Nature and Historical Evolution*, pp. 415–416.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 416; P. Liberman, *Does Conquest Pay? The Exploitation of Occupied Industrial Societies*, Princeton 1996.

Britain came to be a high-taxing, fiscally powerful state was that wealthy elites were so devastated by the destruction of the Civil War that they were prepared after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 to support enhanced taxation. They were willing to make a government fiscally powerful in order that this government would pass legislation that secured individual property rights. Thus, England was able to develop a fiscal state in which revenue from taxation was much higher than anywhere else in Europe and in which the burdens on the populace were correspondingly large.³²

What O'Brien reminds us of is that war is central to how slavery in British America and in the United States evolved.³³ The transition to African slavery occurred first in Barbados during the British Civil Wars in the mid-seventeenth century. The Nine Years' War (1688–1697) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714) around the turn of the eighteenth century solidified support for slavery and consolidated the essential features of mercantilism, which lasted until the American Revolution. The wars between Britain, Spain, and France from 1739 to 1763, including the Seven Years' War, which was the first major war between European powers fought largely in the Americas, arose out of imperial competition for an Atlantic trade in which slavery was essential. All these wars are important in respect to the Williams's thesis, especially the Nine Years' War between 1689 and 1697. This war supports a moderate version of the Williams's thesis in demonstrating that Williams was right in pinpointing overseas trade based on plantation slavery as essential to the development of the financial revolution. The Glorious Revolution of 1688, in turn, played an important role in consolidating the major features of the emerging fiscal-military state that underpinned the remarkable growth of plantation agriculture and the British economy in the half century before the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution.³⁴

State support for planters, the plantation complex, slavery, and the slave trade in Britain and British America was not constant. There was just one period – from the Glorious Revolution (1688) until the end of the Seven Years' War in 1763 – in which Britain supported the planter interest almost without reservation. Williams got right how much support West Indian planters received from the state in this period. Planters in the West Indies and the American South enjoyed healthy profits, an increasingly effective and efficient slave trade, favourable imperial legislation, and minimal public opposition to slavery.³⁵ It is important to note, however, that this support was mainly due to the power of the West Indies, which was more to the forefront of imperial attention than was the American South, especially given the strength of the West Indian interest in Parliament.³⁶

32 O'Brien, *Nature and Historical Evolution*, pp. 435–456, 439.

33 T. Burnard, *Planters, Merchants, and Slaves: Plantation Societies in British America, 1650–1820*, Chicago 2015.

34 N. Zahedieh, *Colonies, Copper, and the Market for Inventive Activity in England and Wales, 1680–1730*, in: *Economic History Review* 66 (2013), pp. 805–825.

35 L. S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763*, Chapel Hill 2010; Burnard, *Planters, Merchants, and Slaves*.

36 A. J. O'Shaughnessy, *The West India Interest and the Crisis of American Independence*, in: R. A. McDonald (ed.), *West Indies Accounts: Essays on the History of the British Caribbean and the Atlantic Economy in Honour of Richard Sheridan*, Kingston 1996, pp. 126–149.

We need to remember, also, that the West Indies and the American South belonged to the same polity – the British Empire in the Americas. The plantation interest was thus much more powerful than it was to become in the aftermath of the American Revolution, when planters divided between a section that stayed loyal to Britain (a country that from the 1780s had a substantial abolitionist movement) and another section that joined the American North (a region increasingly hostile to slavery).³⁷

State support for the plantation complex was not immediate. In the first half of the seventeenth century, state involvement in the establishment of slavery in British America was minimal. The colonies were a long way away and were economically marginal, and the most significant changes, notably in Barbados, occurred during the British Civil Wars in the 1640s and 1650s, when the English and Scottish states imploded and when colonies were largely left to their own devices.³⁸ The *Western Design* (1655), in which Jamaica was conquered from the Spanish, meant that more attention was focused on the value of the plantations to imperial growth.³⁹ The implementation of the Navigation Acts (1651) and the creation of a new Royal African Company and a new Committee of Trade and Plantations in 1672 showed that the Crown was intent on making the colonies conform to metropolitan wishes and pay their own way. The spectacular growth from 1600 to 1700 of the West Indian economies and also of the Chesapeake and Carolina low country economies made that wish more of an imperative.⁴⁰

The British state began to provide unwavering support for the plantation system only after William III and Mary II took power in 1689. Nuala Zahedieh provides the political economy arguments to support this claim, while Richard Dunn explains the partisan politics. Zahedieh shows that while England's transoceanic trade was not overwhelmingly large by 1700, it had a significance greater than its ostensible value. Not only was Atlantic trade growing rapidly, thus making it key to developing prosperity, but it was essential for new industries, like copper, and for sustaining industries, like shipbuilding, that were also vital for British defence. Moreover, it was central in encouraging the financial innovations that we consider essential to what historians have termed a commercial "revolution" in the period. In short, Zahedieh argues, the endogenous responses to the market opportunities created by imperial expansion led to advances in London's commercial leadership in Europe, better transport networks, improvements in early manufacturing capacity, and an increase in "useful knowledge" as people acquired mathematical and mechanical skills necessary for complicated trade such as was common in Atlantic commerce. Many of the advances were hindered by vested interests diverting capital and

37 Burnard, *Planters, Merchants, and Slaves*, chapter 5.

38 S. Newman, *Free and Bound Labor in the British Atlantic World: Black and White Workers and the Development of Plantation Slavery*, Philadelphia 2013; J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492–1830*, New Haven 2007, chapters 3 and 5.

39 C. G. Pestana, *English Character and the Fiasco of the Western Design*, in: *Early American Studies* 3 (2005), pp. 1–31.

40 N. Zahedieh, *Making Mercantilism Work: London Merchants and Atlantic Trade in the Late Seventeenth Century*, in: *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (1999), pp. 43–84.

enterprise into rent-seeking activities, but what the state realized from around 1700 was that the success of the American plantations, especially in the West Indies, showed that mercantilism worked. As Zahedieh concludes, the highly performing plantation trade not only outperformed other sectors but also stimulated “adaptive innovations which took the country to a new plateau of possibilities from which Industrial Revolution was not only possible but increasingly likely”.⁴¹

Unsurprisingly, such an important trade, in the absence of antislavery sentiment, attracted government support, as Williams insisted. Planters had chosen the right side in the Glorious Revolution, supporting protests against James II. They proved highly effective in persuading the new government of William and Mary to modify Crown colonial policy in their favour. West Indian planters, the richest men in the colonies, benefited most of all and got many items of legislation that they wanted during the difficult years of the 1690s, as well as greater military aid. Along with London merchants, they convinced Parliament to allow private traders to supplant the Royal African Company, meaning that the volume of the slave trade to the islands immediately doubled. Sugar planters, whose authority had been challenged between 1675 and 1688, were firmly in charge from 1689. They asked William III for reduced Crown taxes, expanded slave imports, better military support, and full protection against foreign slave competition and got most of these requests granted. As Dunn argues, “the revolutionary settlement gave them these things, crystallizing their dependent status”. That dependent status, as Williams rightly discerned, was perfectly satisfactory if the parent government let them do as they pleased in the colonies and if it protected them within the imperial system.⁴² The result of these multiple changes was that planters had an influence in imperial councils and the support of the British state in ways that they were never to receive again. In the period between the Treaty of Utrecht (1714) and the Peace of Paris (1763), slave colonies in both the West Indies and British North America were nurtured within an empire that gave them ample support through generous land grants, state-sponsored negotiations with Native Americans that provided temporary peace, massive incentives for private trading in the slave trade, and protected markets for slave-produced products. Britain used its growing naval power to defend colonial slave societies that were especially vulnerable to invasion or to slave rebellion and legitimized hierarchies of power by accepting local political assemblies. It supported the claims by a wealthy planter ruling class that they had the authority and ability to legislate on most things that they wanted to do that did not conflict markedly with imperial policies. That right to legislate included, importantly, the right to make laws on colonial slavery. Britain also facilitated colonial leaders’ access to imperial power brokers and metropolitan merchants, and it cultivated a political system that systematically favoured colonial commerce. Moreover, it used its

41 N Zahedieh, *The Capital and Colonies: London and the Atlantic Economy 1660–1700*, Cambridge 2010, pp. 285, 292.

42 R. S. Dunn, *The Glorious Revolution and America*, in: *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 1, *The Origins of Empire*, ed. N. Canny, Oxford 1988, pp. 463–465.

state power to validate slavery in the courts at a time when the vast majority of Britons were either comfortable with or indifferent to the system of racial domination that sustained planter rule and enabled plantation wealth.⁴³ We do need to do lots more on this period, especially for the West Indies, where the early eighteenth century was a period of transformative change but is historically a statistical dark age.

The Seven Years' War marked, in retrospect, the peak of planter power within the empire. It was not fought over plantations, but protecting the plantation sector, especially in the British West Indies, was a major factor in the outcome. And in the Peace of Paris, in part at the behest of the West Indian planter elite, the British gave back Guadeloupe to the French in return for getting Canada. Williams was right to say that the Peace of Paris was another victory for the West Indian interest.⁴⁴ He was also correct in thinking this a pyrrhic victory. The Seven Years' War marked a turning point for the plantation colonies. They did not decline economically, contrary to Lowell Ragatz's arguments from 1928. West Indian planters continued to make great profits in the West Indies at least until the 1820s and perhaps beyond, though many planters in the American South, especially the Old South, as discussed below, never really recovered from the American Revolution.⁴⁵ Where West Indian planters started to lose out was when Britons came to realize that West Indian wealth was based on cruelty toward Africans. The image of the West Indian planter went into decline just as the first stirrings of abolitionism began in the 1760s. And the American Revolution led to a split in the planter class, with West Indians staying loyal and many Southern planters opting for rebellion. Those proslavery Americans who left the empire and who wanted the federal state they helped to create to be a proslavery state made the right choice by their lights. In contrast, and in part owing to the defection of the greatest number of slaveholding whites who had belonged to the mid-eighteenth-century British Empire, by the late eighteenth century and certainly into the nineteenth century Britain was defining itself as an antislavery nation.⁴⁶ But Southern planters' continued ability to persuade the American state to protect their interest in slaves and to foster the westward expansion of slavery came at considerable cost. Economic ascendancy increasingly shifted to the North and, as in Britain, a strong abolitionist movement began to develop in that part of America that was increasingly the most

43 Burnard, *Planters, Merchants, and Slaves*; T. Burnard/J. Garrigus, *The Plantation Machine: Atlantic Capitalism in French Saint-Domingue and British Jamaica, 1748–1788*, Philadelphia 2016. A useful summary of the politics of slavery over the longue durée is J. C. Hammond, *Slavery, Sovereignty, and Empires: North American Borderlands and the American Civil War, 1660–1860*, in: *Journal of the Civil War Era* 4 (2014), pp 264–298. Still insightful is R. Pares, *War and Trade in the West Indies 1739–1763*, Oxford 1936.

44 Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 115. For the Seven Years' War in the Caribbean, see Burnard/Garrigus, *Plantation Machine*; and B. Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire, 1714–1783*, London 2007.

45 Walsh, *Motives of Honor*; E. Evans, *A Topping People: The Rise and Decline of Virginia's Old Political Elite, 1680–1790*, Charlottesville 2009; N. Draper, *The Price of Emancipation: Slave-Ownership, Compensation and British Slavery at the End of Slavery*, Cambridge 2010.

46 Burnard, *Planters, Merchants, and Slaves*, chapter 5.

economically dynamic, the most culturally powerful, and eventually the most politically dominant part of the Union.⁴⁷

Thus, although Williams was very insightful about the extent to which American and West Indian planters were supported before the end of the Seven Years' War, his arguments about later historical periods are less convincing. It was in looking at the American Revolution where Williams went astray. The American Revolution was a major short-term correction in West Indian finances but it did not lead to more than a temporary decline in the profitability of West Indian plantations. But the American Revolution was bad for plantation profitability in another part of the British American plantation empire. That region was the American South. Historians such as Allan Kulikoff understand that the American Revolution was an economic catastrophe in the American South, especially in low-country South Carolina and Georgia.⁴⁸ Peter Lindert and Jeffrey Williamson suggest that real income per capita in British North America generally and in the American South dropped precipitously between 1774 and 1790. They argue that the American Revolution in the thirteen colonies saw "America's greatest income slump ever, in per centage terms". The revolutionary war hit the American South especially hard. Its commodity exports fell in real per capita terms by 39.1 per cent in the Upper South and 49.7 per cent in the Lower South. They conclude that "the South Atlantic underwent a reversal of fortune between 1774 and 1840, dropping from the richest American region to the poorest".⁴⁹

As Lindert, Williamson, and Kulikoff have shown, the predominance of the North in the American economy predated the beginnings of American industrialization and arose from the conflict that Boston initiated but in which the South suffered. In the colonial period, it was the plantation colonies of the American South and even more so the British West Indies that were the centres of wealth in America. In 1774, the richest British American regions were plantation areas. Their economies were based on slavery, and their white residents treated their enslaved property with enormous amounts of violence and crass callousness, especially in the West Indies.⁵⁰ But these colonies were wealthy places. Not only were Southern and West Indian whites the richest people on average in the British Empire, but they lived in societies marked by considerable equality within white populations and limited white poverty. Lindert and Williamson, working on data provided by Peter Mancall, Joshua Rosenbloom, and Thomas Weiss, claim that virtually no white male household heads in the Southern colonies in 1774 were very poor or destitute.⁵¹ They show, however, that in the years between 1774 and 1800 the American

47 M. Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition*, New Haven 2016; D. B. Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Emancipation*, New York 2014.

48 A. Kulikoff, "Such Things Ought Not to Be": The American Revolution and the First National Great Depression, in: *The World of the Revolutionary American Republic: Expansion, Conflict, and the Struggle for a Continent*, ed. A. Shankman, New York 2014, pp. 134–164.

49 P. H. Lindert/J. G. Williamson, *American Incomes Before and After the Revolution*, in: *Journal of Economic History* 73 (2016), pp. 725–765, quotes pp. 741, 752.

50 Burnard, *Planters, Merchants, and Slaves*, chapter 3.

51 Lindert/Williamson, *American Incomes*, p. 747; P. C. Mancall/J. L. Rosenbloom/T. Weiss, *Conjectural Estimates*

South endured a prolonged depression, with gross personal income in 1840 plummeting from 91.77 dollars in 1774 to 64.46 dollars in 1800. They conclude that the South Atlantic suffered what Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson have termed a “reversal of fortune”, where the region went from being the richest to the poorest in the United States.⁵²

The effects of the revolutionary war are probably greater for the South than Lindert and Williamson suggest as their dates do not separate out the decade of the 1790s, when the American economy everywhere in the United States picked up, with the South benefiting from the explosion in cotton production allowed by the invention of the cotton gin in 1794. But between 1776 and 1790, the South suffered huge infrastructural damage. It was also punished by the British in trade policy. Commodity exports fell by a catastrophic 49.7 per cent in the Lower South. Per capita income dropped in the United States by 18 per cent overall, but in the South, it probably dropped much further. Kulikoff confirms such speculations and adds more empirical information on how different sectors of the white population of the American South fared from the revolution. He estimates that the number of white labourers in the South shrank by nearly 25 per cent between 1776 and 1780 because of wartime privation. Enslaved people ran away in large numbers, and to the financial detriment of the planters who owned them. Even if they did not run away, enslaved people proved harder to manage and more unwilling to obey orders. The overall result was that the region's per capita wealth, exclusive of slaves, declined from 14.5 per cent above the national average in 1774 to 36 per cent below it in 1799. The South's share of national wealth dropped in this period from over one-half to less than one-third.⁵³

What Williams got right therefore was that the American Revolution caused a crisis in planter prosperity. He just picked the wrong region. It was the American South not the British West Indies that never quite recovered, at least in relative terms to the North. Of course, the South remained wealthy into the nineteenth century. As late as 1860, two-thirds of the wealthiest Americans lived in the South, and the nation's gross national product was only 20 per cent above the value of Southern-owned slave property.⁵⁴ Yet the relative decline of the South after the American Revolution, especially if the West Indies is included as part of plantation British America, is palpable. The NHC historians tend to focus on the booming cotton frontier of the southwest after 1820, where profits were especially high and planters particularly rich, not just in cotton but also in sugar.⁵⁵ But the core tobacco-growing region of Tidewater Virginia and Maryland (where many

of Economic Growth in the Lower South, 1720 to 1800, in: W. Sundstrom/T. Guinnane (eds.), *History Matters: Economic Growth, Technology, and Population*, Stanford 2003, pp. 389–424.

52 D. Acemoglu/S. Johnson/J. Robinson, *Reversal of Fortune: Geography and Institutions in the Making of the Modern World Income Distribution*, in: *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 117 (2002), pp. 1231–1294.

53 Lindert/Williamson, *American Incomes Before and After the Revolution*, pp. 741–742, 750–753; Acemoglu/Johnson/Robinson, *Reversal of Fortune*; Kulikoff, “Such Things Ought Not to Be”.

54 D. B. Davis, *Slavery, Emancipation, and Progress*, in: *British Abolitionism and the Question of Moral Progress in History*, ed. D. A. Yerxa, Columbia 2012, pp. 18–19.

55 R. Follett et al., *Plantation Kingdom: The American South and Its Global Commodities*, Baltimore 2016.

more Southerners lived than in the southwest) suffered enormously after the American Revolution, with endemic poverty and declining plantation profits.⁵⁶ Lindert and Williamson suggest that the share of total gross national income held in the South Atlantic dropped from 58 per cent in 1774 to 48 per cent in 1800, a drop that mirrored a similar drop after the Civil War.⁵⁷

Southerners knew, moreover, who was responsible for their relative decline. It was the British. P. J. Marshall tells us that hostility to Britain after 1783 was intense in South Carolina, which had been invaded and had its economy wrecked, and strong in Virginia. In New England, by contrast, opposition to Britain soon declined after the Peace of Paris, despite the pivotal role of Boston in starting the revolution. And New York, steeped in anglophilia, became a bridgehead for British influence.⁵⁸ Slaveholders may have held the office of US president for 50 of the first 70 years of the nation, but the balance of economic power had shifted to the North – and to Britain. Slavery remained profitable in the West Indies and very profitable in the American South; planters continued to make lots of money, and there was always a sizeable body of people, especially in the United States, who were favourable to slaveholder concerns. But, as Williams intuited, the real money after the American Revolution was being made elsewhere, and especially in industrial capitalism in places like Lancashire and the American northeast.

And in both Britain and the American North, the principal ideological orientation was away from slavery, not in support of it. Before the American Revolution, not only were the South and the West Indies easily the richest parts of British America; they also faced virtually no opposition to their commitment to slavery. After the American Revolution, that was no longer the case.⁵⁹ The paradox is that, contrary to what Williams thought, the effect on the West Indies of the American Revolution was not economic (the West Indies stayed rich) but was cultural and political (the image of the West Indian planter was ruined in the 1780s and never recovered while the political influence of the West Indian lobby slowly declined). The effect of the American Revolution on the American South, especially in its major region of the Chesapeake, was the opposite – economic decline but continued political and cultural power.⁶⁰ Eventually, however, the relative economic decline of the South made a difference, leading in 1861 to the election of Abraham Lincoln as president and the ascendancy of the Republican Party, a sectional party of the North tending toward antislavery.⁶¹ Southerners always overestimated the extent of their political power. Where Williams remains influential to the changing fortunes of planters is in his recognition that countervailing forces to planters emerged from

56 S. Sarson, *The Tobacco-Plantation South in the Early American Plantation World*, London 2013.

57 Lindert/Williamson, *American Incomes*, p. 742.

58 Marshall, *Remaking the British Atlantic*, pp. 77–78.

59 C. L. Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism*, Chapel Hill 2006; J. C. Hammond/M. Mason (eds.), *Contesting Slavery: The Politics of Bondage and Freedom in the New American Nation*, Charlottesville 2011.

60 T. Burnard, *Powerless Masters: The Curious Decline of Jamaican Sugar Planters in the Foundational Period of British Abolition*, in: *Slavery and Abolition* 32 (2011), pp. 185–198.

61 J. Oakes, *Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861–1865*, New York 2013.

time to time. Williams got the motivation of these opponents wrong because, as a material determinist, he was dubious about altruism and religious conviction playing any role in imperial politics. But he did acknowledge that planters faced opposition.

So where are we left with the Williams's thesis after 75 years of debate? It remains a provocative thesis because it connects major economic change – the Industrial Revolution – to the Age of Revolution. It is a good thing that we are returning to look at Williams's insistence that slavery, and the Caribbean, mattered to Britain at a critical time in its long history. It reminds us of the trauma of slavery and the open wounds that remain, especially for people of African American and African Caribbean descent. We do not want to return to the times when slavery was invisible in British and American history and where West Indian history (where slavery was always considered important) was relegated to a cul-de-sac of historical enquiry. But we want to be careful not to redress the absence of slavery in accounts of the past by now overstating its importance. Slavery was important, and so too were slave owners. But their importance needs to be kept in perspective. We do not want to adopt the attitude of proslavery spokesmen for the eighteenth-century West Indian interest or James Henry Hammond for antebellum cotton planters, who made insistent claims for themselves and their value to Britain and America. It is not just NHC historians and Eric Williams who trumpet how important slavery and slave owning was to industrial Britain. Edward Long, a leading eighteenth-century historian of Jamaica and a pro-planter voice, argued in 1774 that the sugar colonies were a source of immense wealth and power. After listing how many Britons relied on wealth from the West Indies, he argued that “we may from thence form a competent idea of the prodigious value of our sugar colonies, and a just conception of their immense importance to the grandeur and prosperity of their mother country”.⁶² While we should be prepared to rethink our histories of the beginnings of industrial capitalism so that we find more space for enslaved people, we need to remember that our efforts may end up with us sharing space with some uncomfortable bedfellows.

62 E. Long, *The History of Jamaica Or, General Survey of the Antient and Modern State of the Island: with Reflections on Its Situation Settlements, Inhabitants, Climate, Products, Commerce, Laws, and Government*, 3 vols, London 1774, vol. 1, pp. 493–94.

Slavery, Abstract Labour, and the Constitution of Capitalism¹

Bruno Lamas

ABSTRACTS

Kapital ist eine Form des „abstrakten Reichtums“ (Marx), es ist sozial und historisch spezifisch für die moderne Gesellschaft und basiert auf der undifferenzierten Verbrennung menschlicher Energie: der „abstrakten Arbeit“. Die historische Konstitution des Kapitalismus ist der weltweite Prozess der Schaffung dieses Nexus zwischen abstraktem Reichtum und abstrakter Arbeit, der die Menschen auf bloße Träger von körperlicher Energie reduziert, die für die Valorisierung von Wert mobilisiert werden soll. Ausgehend von einer theoretischen Reflexion über die Historizität von drei der Hauptkategorien der Marx'schen Kritik der politischen Ökonomie – Wert, Arbeit und abstrakte Arbeit – versuchen wir im Rahmen dieses Artikels, (1) eine allgemeine Interpretation des historischen Konstitutionsprozesses des Kapitalismus zwischen dem 16. und dem 19. Jahrhundert als Übergang von einem neu geschaffenen Weltsystem der Geld-Reichtum-Zirkulation zu einem Weltsystem der abstrakten Arbeit zu liefern; (2) die Rolle der Sklaverei in diesem Prozess und ihre Beziehung zur Konstitution der spezifisch modernen Kategorien von Arbeit und Arbeitskraft zu reflektieren; und (3) zu zeigen, dass trotz ihrer Vergangenheit und gemeinsamer Elemente der wesentliche Unterschiede zwischen der Ware Sklave und der Ware Arbeitskraft die Kategorie des Selbsteigentums ist, die letztlich entscheidend für die modernen Kämpfe um soziale Anerkennung und die historische Konstitution des Kapitalismus selbst wird.

Capital is a form of “abstract wealth” (Marx), socially and historically specific to modern society and based on undifferentiated combustion of human energy: “abstract labour”. The historical constitution of capitalism is the worldwide process of constituting that nexus between abstract wealth and abstract labour, effectively reducing human beings to mere carriers of bodily energy to be mobilized for the valorization of value. In this article, starting from a theoretical reflection

1 This work was supported by FCT, I.P., the Portuguese national funding agency for science, research and technology, through the individual research grant SFRH/BD/130355/2017.

on the historicity of three of the main categories of Marx's critique of political economy – value, labour, and abstract labour – I intend to (i) provide a general interpretation of the historical process of constitution of capitalism between the sixteenth and nineteenth century, as the transition from a newly created world system of monetary-wealth circulation to a world system of abstract labour; (ii) reflect on the role of slavery in this process and its relationship with the constitution of the specifically modern categories of labour and labour power; and (iii) show that, despite its past and common elements, it is the essential differences between the slave commodity and the labour power commodity through the self-ownership category that will ultimately become decisive for modern struggles for social recognition and the historical constitution of capitalism itself.

Not looking for totality is just code for not looking at capitalism. [...] [A]nd though we may forget about totality, we may be sure that it will not forget about us.²

1. Capitalism, Value, and Abstract Labour

It is known that Karl Marx only very rarely used the term *capitalism* not only because its use was still unusual at the time but also because he coined the expression “capitalist mode of production”, which was more in line with his theoretical structure. The notion of mode of production, in turn, was never defined unequivocally, which also ended up giving rise to numerous discussions that tend to be formalist and positivist within twentieth-century Marxism, especially after the Althusserian reading. Yet, as Jairus Banaji notes,³ it is still possible to identify in Marx two different levels of abstraction within the concept of mode of production: (i) a first level that seems to refer to the technical and material process of production or to labour organization regimes (the historical scheme “slave, serf and wage labourer” and the corresponding modes of production), being in a way the favourite version of Marxism; and (ii) a second level, much more broader, that seeks to account for the social form of production that dominates an entire historical epoch or structure of a historical social whole – “a general illumination which bathes all the other colours and modifies their particularity” or “a particular ether which determines the specific gravity of every being which has materialized within it”.⁴ In this sense, Marx also speaks of the mode of production as a “mode of life”.⁵ By referring to the capitalist mode of production, Marx means the “mode of production founded on wage

2 T. Eagleton, *The Illusions of Postmodernism*, Oxford 1996, pp. 11, 128.

3 J. Banaji, *Modes of Production in a Materialist Conception of History*, in: Id., *Theory and History: Essays on Modes of Production and Exploitation*, Leiden 2010, pp. 50–52.

4 K. Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, London 1993, p. 107.

5 “[M]ode of production must not be considered simply as being the reproduction of the physical existence of the individuals. Rather it is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite *mode of life* on their part. As individuals express their life, so they are”. See K. Marx and F. Engels, *German Ideology*, in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5: Marx and Engels 1845–47, London 1975, p. 31.

labour”⁶ or one that has wage labour as “its basis”.⁷ But Marx also says that the world market is the “very basis and living atmosphere of the capitalist mode of production”.⁸ This character of the world market does not contradict the foundation of the capitalist mode of production on wage labour but seems to point to something much broader and also marks in a fundamental way the whole history of modern society. In fact, Marx also says that wage labour, the selling and buying of labour power, “comprises a world’s history” and “announces from the outset a new epoch in the process of social production”.⁹ Accordingly, it cannot be only at the level of the strict notion of the capitalist mode of production, and even less of a purely sociologist interpretation of the category wage labour to be applied locally, that we can think about the capitalist historical totality. This challenge is not just a question of scale; it demands that we also think about the categories of the specific historical ontology of modern society. At this level, as shown by the paradigm known as “critique of value”,¹⁰ the Marxian categories of value and abstract labour remain fundamental.

Value is not wealth in general; value is a particular form of wealth, socially and historically specific to capitalism. The difference between wealth and value is one of the fundamental distinctions made by Marx, and yet its importance is rarely noticed, even by Marxists.¹¹ Marx repeatedly mentions the difference between real wealth or material wealth, on the one hand, and value or abstract wealth, on the other hand. But it is not a matter of opposing material wealth, as if it were an anthropological constant, to abstract wealth in value, as a variable social form. Material wealth also exists only in a certain social form. Use value is the form that material wealth takes within capitalist society dominated by the abstract form of wealth that is value. The dialectic between use value and value is the fundamental contradiction of the capitalist social form. Marx indicates that if there is a double character of value in commodities (use value and exchange value) as Adam Smith and David Ricardo state, then the objectified labour in them necessarily also has a double character: on the one hand, concrete labour, which refers to concrete and sensitive acts in the production of commodities (the side that produces material wealth); on the other hand, what Marx calls “abstract labour”, that is to say the process of combustion of human energy, “essentially the expenditure of human brain, nerves,

6 Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 833.

7 K. Marx, *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 2 (Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 36), London 1992, p. 418.

8 K. Marx, *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 3 (Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 37), London 1991, p. 205.

9 K. Marx, *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 1 (Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 35), London 1990, p. 274.

10 See, among others, N. Larsen/M. Nilges/J. Robinson/N. Brown (eds.), *Marxism and the Critique of Value*, Chicago 2014; A. Jappe, *Les aventures de la marchandise: Pour une nouvelle critique de la valeur*, Paris 2003; R. Kurz, *The Substance of Capital*, London 2016; M. Postone, *Time, Labour and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx’s Critical Theory*, Cambridge 2003.

11 On this topic, see P. Murray, *The Mismeasure of Wealth. Essays on Marx and Social Form*, Leiden 2016; Postone, *Time, Labour and Social Domination*.

muscles and sense organs”.¹² According to Marx, it is this expenditure of abstract human energy that constitutes what he calls the “social substance” of value and which is represented in a fetishistic way in the “phantom-like objectivity” of money and commodities. Capital, in turn, is “self-valorizing value”, the process of “valorization of value”,¹³ that is to say the compulsive social relationship of transforming money into more money through the combustion of human energy in the production of commodities, which Marx sums up in the M-C-M’ formula.

It is important to immediately clarify the content of at least three categories: labour, abstract labour, and concrete labour. Now, all of Marx’s work is traversed by a profound ambivalence regarding the theoretical status of labour, appearing in many situations as an ontological category supposedly applicable to all human history, although on some occasions Marx does not fail to point to its specifically capitalist historical character, a fundamental moment of the modern fetish social form and something to be entirely “abolished”. A question arises: is labour a transhistorical and eternally valid abstraction or, conversely, are we dealing with a historically specific abstraction of modernity? In *Grundrisse*, in the only presentation he makes of his method, Marx tells us about the development of what he calls “rational abstractions”, through which we highlight and mentally isolate elements common to all forms of society. This is a delicate theoretical process because, as Marx warns, in this reflection, on the one hand, it is necessary to bear in mind the “specific” and “essential differences” of each society; on the other hand, with only these common elements so abstracted, it is not possible to understand any society.¹⁴ The question then becomes can we assume that labour is a rational abstraction – a “common element” to all societies? Marx seems to assume many times that it is, but in an important long reflection on the category that the Marxist tradition generally avoids citing, the problem proves to be a little more complex:

Labour seems a quite simple category. The conception of labour in this general form – as labour as such – is also immeasurably old. Nevertheless, when it is economically conceived in this simplicity, “labour” is as modern a category as are the relations which create this simple abstraction. [...] Here, then, for the first time, the point of departure of modern economics, namely the abstraction of the category “labour”, “labour as such”, labour pure and simple, becomes true in practice. The simplest abstraction, then, which modern economics places at the head of its discussions, and which expresses an immeasurably ancient relation valid in all forms of society, nevertheless achieves practical truth as an abstraction only as a category of the most modern society [...] This example of labour shows strikingly how even the most abstract categories, despite their validity – precisely because of their abstractness – for all epochs, are nevertheless, in the specific character of this abstraction, themselves likewise a product of historic relations, and possess their full

12 Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 164.

13 Ibid., pp. 711, 253.

14 Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 85.

*validity only for and within these relations. [...] Although it is true, therefore, that the categories of bourgeois economics possess a truth for all other forms of society, this is to be taken only with a grain of salt.*¹⁵

Marx's ambiguity here is notorious. After all, he says that the category labour is a product of modern social conditions, which only applies, only has "full validity", and only is a "practical reality" or "practically true" in modern society. But this ambiguity also tells us that, because of its high level of abstraction, it can also apply to all periods and have validity there, a validity that, however, he implicitly admits that it cannot be "full" or "true in practice" and which should be taken with reservations, "with a grain of salt". Marx does not even seem to equate the possibility that the "essential difference" of modern society is precisely the real social existence of the labour abstraction, which is why it is not a rational abstraction that can be applied to societies of the past.¹⁶ To overcome the aporia, Marx makes full use of the philosophy of history inherited from Hegel, who sees in the past only successive approaches by levels to modern society itself. This option is all the stranger when Marx himself fiercely criticizes the bourgeois political economy on the following page for making use of similar evolutionary arguments. In fact, it is extremely difficult to find a pre-modern notion equivalent to the modern concept of labour, and for a long time, several historians, anthropologists, and sociologists have drawn attention to the problem in different ways.¹⁷

If labour is, as Marx himself claims, "a mere spectre" and "nothing but an abstraction",¹⁸ what exactly does it abstract? It is not difficult to see that the abstraction labour has historically been constituted in modern society as any human activity that takes place in an abstract – that is, "disembedded" – social sphere dedicated to the production of commodities and the valorization of abstract wealth,¹⁹ from which an ontological concept of labour was derived that ultimately functions "as a black hole, collapsing other

15 Ibid., pp. 103–106.

16 Therefore, whenever Marx applies the term *labour* and all its derivatives (labour power, surplus labour, etc.) to pre-modern societies, it is somewhat anachronistic and, in fact, prevents us from fully understanding them and, thus, also modern society. It is necessary to recognize that Jean Baudrillard was perhaps one of the first authors to address this problem of Marx, as early as 1973, but neither he himself drew all possible conclusions (even going further away from them) nor did his criticism find at the time the deserved echo. See J. Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production*, St. Louis 1975.

17 D. Becquemont/P. Bonte, *Mythologies du travail. Le travail nommé*, Paris 2004; M. Bischoff, "L'humanité a-t-elle toujours 'travaillé'?", in: *Théologiques* 3 (1995) 2, pp. 45–69; M.-N. Chamoux, *Sociétés avec et sans concept de travail*, in: *Sociologie du Travail* 36 (1994), pp. 57–71; M. I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Updated Edition with a Foreword by Ian Morris ed.), Berkeley 1999, p. 81; M. Freyssenet, *The emergence, centrality and end of work*, in: *Current Sociology* 47 (1999) 2, pp. 5–20; T. K. Hopkins, *Sociology and the substantive view of the economy*, in: K. Polanyi/C. M. Arensberg/H. W. Pearson (eds.), *Trade and Market in the Early Empires*, Glencoe 1957, pp. 276–279; D. Méda, *Le travail. Une valeur en voie de disparition ?*, Paris 2010; J.-P. Vernant, *Travail et nature dans la Grèce ancienne*, in: Id., *Œuvres. Religions, Rationalités, Politique*, Vol. I, Paris 2007, pp. 486–504.

18 Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 3, p. 954.

19 At the same time, as Roswitha Scholz has shown, all everyday activities that are not likely to be integrated into the capital valorization process (raising children, managing the home, preparing meals, etc.) are not considered labour, are relegated to the feminine sphere, and are themselves feminized. See R. Scholz, *Patriarchy and Commodity Society: Gender without the Body*, in: N. Larsen/M. Nilges/J. Robinson/N. Brown (eds.), *Marxism and the Critique of Value*, Chicago 2014, pp. 123–142.

modes of conceptualizing human activity under its hegemonic purview”.²⁰ If we look closely, Marx’s concrete labour is a contradiction of terms; its purpose is to analytically separate the material side of the abstraction labour but this is already done under the presupposition of a real social separation from human practices historically specific to modern society (rigidly separating labour from other activities of social reproduction). Abstract labour, in turn, is a “double abstraction”, or as Robert Kurz calls it, a “logical pleonasm”.²¹ It refers only to the pure expenditure of human energy in the production of commodities “without regard to the form of its expenditure”²² and which must necessarily happen in any concrete labour. Accordingly, it also has a material side (human energy) that, however, is not empirically palpable as such, but rather a social abstraction represented in a fetishistic way in commodities and money. Abstract labour cannot, therefore, be interpreted as a mere physiological or natural abstraction. It is a question not just of the combustion of human energy in the abstract (if that were the case, being alive would immediately produce value), but also of the socially objective and fetishistic meaning of that combustion in the production of commodities. Abstract labour is thus a category that is *simultaneously social and physiological*, and only as such can it be the very “social substance” of capital.

2. Is the Slave the Original Paradigm of Labour?

At first glance, it may seem that in pre-modern societies the undifferentiated activity of the slave is a kind of embryonic form of the modern abstraction of labour. This seems even more likely if we remember that abstract labour is the mere process of the combustion of human energy. In fact, it is not difficult to also see in pre-modern slavery a reduction of human beings to their pure *corporeality* and *instrumentality*, acting as an *energy source*, which is similar to what is required by abstract labour. In pre-modern societies, we can find slaves in the most diverse activities (both manual and intellectual) and apparently distributed in an undifferentiated way. They are often identified as mere animals,²³ something that is demonstrated even at the linguistic level.²⁴ In classical Greece, they are sometimes also referred to by the term *sōma* (body);²⁵ the slave as a body is also at the centre of Aristotle’s concerns and of his understanding of the slave as an

20 A. E. Wendling, *The Ruling Ideas: Bourgeois Political Concepts*, Lanham 2012, p. 10.

21 Kurz, *Substance*, p. 27.

22 Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 128.

23 D. B. Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*, New York 2006, pp. 32–35; K. Bradley, *Animalizing the Slave: The Truth of Fiction*, in: *The Journal of Roman Studies* 90 (2000), pp. 110–125.

24 One of the Greek terms from the classical period for slave, *andrapodon* (man-footed), derived by analogy from *tetrapodon* (four-footed), applied to cattle. See K. L. Wrenhaven, *Reconstructing the Slave: The Image of the Slave in Ancient Greece*, London 2012, pp. 13–17.

25 R. Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Greek and Roman Terminologies of Slavery*, in: S. Hodkinson/M. Kleijwegt/K. Vlassopoulos (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Slavery*, Oxford 2018, p. 8.

extension of the master's body and "instrument" for use,²⁶ going so far as to state that if the machines worked by themselves the masters would not need slaves. Cato and Varro also refer to slaves as *instrumentum vocale* (talking tools)²⁷ and sometimes present them only abstractly as just "hands". This reduction of a human being to a simple fragment of his own body is, in fact, extraordinarily persistent in Western slavery (we will return to this aspect later). Does all this mean that the "undifferentiated activity" of the slave of antiquity is somehow the originary paradigm of labour and that the use of his body is already abstract labour? Giorgio Agamben argues that, as far as the Greeks are concerned, the "use of bodies" of slaves can in no way be interpreted in terms of labour, this perspective being an "anachronism" and "extremely problematic".²⁸ Despite assuming labour as a transhistorical category, Orlando Patterson nevertheless says something pertinent:

*There is nothing in the nature of slavery which requires that the slave be a worker. Worker qua worker has no intrinsic relation to slave qua slave. This does not mean that the slave cannot be used as a worker. [...] But this does not in any way mean that slave necessarily implies worker. I have repeatedly stressed that most slaves in most precapitalist societies were not enslaved in order to be made over into workers.*²⁹

Manfred Bischoff, for his part, argues that the correct term for the slave's general activity is "service" (in the sense of "serving" and "subjection") and not labour, which separates the activity from its performer.³⁰ The jurist and legal historian Yan Thomas seeks to show that the first notion similar to the modern abstraction of labour is found in Roman legal documents regarding slave rental contracts, where jurists, in a significant way, sought to separate the body of the slave (which remained the property of his master) from his activity (the abstraction that was the legal object of the contract).³¹ This interpretation by Thomas led Agamben to state that "[a]t this point, the slave enters into the centuries-long process that will be able to transform him into a worker".³² But this is a Eurocentric view, and, however long it may be, there is no direct path that goes from the Roman slave to the modern worker, especially when the rupture that was transatlantic racial slavery is left out of the equation. This is certainly an extremely complex subject, but it is decisive to emphasize that the modern abstraction of labour does not concern the specific activity of a *determined group of individuals* considered dependent, inferiorized, and excluded from the "official" society, living in a "permanent condition of liminality".³³ It is exactly

26 G. Agamben, *The Use of Bodies. Homo Sacer*, Vol. IV,2, Stanford 2016, pp. 7–36, 75–79.

27 This dominant interpretation deserves reservations, with the strong possibility that the classification also applies to non-slaves. See J. P. Lewis, *Did Varro Think that Slaves were Talking Tools?*, in: *Mnemosyne* 66 (2013), pp. 634–648.

28 Agamben, *The Use of Bodies. Homo Sacer*, Vol. IV,2, pp. 19–20.

29 O. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death. A Comparative Study*, Cambridge 1982, p. 99.

30 Bischoff, "L'humanité a-t-elle toujours travaillé?", pp. 61–62.

31 Y. Thomas, "L'usage" et les "fruits" de l'esclave. Opérations juridiques romaines sur le travail, in: *Enquête* 7 (1999), pp. 203–230.

32 Agamben, *The Use of Bodies. Homo Sacer*, Vol. IV,2, p. 17.

33 Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, p. 60.

the opposite: labour as a specifically modern category is an abstraction placed at the level of social generality, applying by principle to *human beings in general* and as a category of “social mediation” and “social synthesis”.³⁴ There are two forms of social abstraction at play here: both situations imply a *reduction* of human beings to their mere corporeality, but only in capitalism is this reduction simultaneously a *generalization*. The basis of this fundamental difference is neither the culmination of a transhistorical logic originating in antiquity nor a mere mental abstraction made only in the modern era. What led to this simultaneous reduction/generalization was the broad and violent historical process of constitution of capitalism.

3. The Historicity of Capitalism

Marx leaves no doubt that the historical constitution of capitalism is the historical constitution of a world system of abstract labour associated with the universalization of value as a form of abstract wealth. Perhaps at no time prior is Marx clearer than when says in *Theories of Surplus-Value* (1862/3) that “it is only foreign trade, the development of the market to a world market, which causes money to develop into world money and abstract labour into social labour. Abstract wealth, value, money, hence abstract labour, develop in the measure that concrete labour becomes a totality of different modes of labour embracing the world market”.³⁵ But this long process of constitution and development of a world system of abstract labour did not occur in a structural or geographically uniform way, but with discontinuous jumps over several centuries, having the world market as “presupposition of the whole as well as its substratum”.³⁶ It is a world process but its historical constitution and development, however, unevenly affect countries and regions, which can thus present both internal and external historical non-simultaneities. Despite this, Marx is quite clear that there are at least two distinct historical phases that, although difficult to delimit empirically and in their individual moments, must always be present in historical reflections.³⁷ The first period is that of the “formation process” of capital, of its “historical genesis” or the “so-called original accumulation” (which Marx generically marks between the sixteenth century and the last third of the eighteenth century, even if it was still only sporadically developed).³⁸ With regard to this period, we must first bear in mind its profoundly contingent nature.³⁹ Capitalism did not have to emerge as a supreme historical necessity and apogee of human history, and even the

34 See Kurz, *Substance*, p. 27; Postone, *Time, Labour and Social Domination*, pp. 148–158.

35 K. Marx, *Economic Manuscript of 1861–1863*, in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32: Marx, 1861–63, London 2010, p. 388.

36 Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 227–228.

37 “The process of capital becoming capital or its development *before* the capitalist production process exists, and its realisation in this process itself belong to two historically different periods”. Marx, *Economic Manuscript 1861–63*, p. 492.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 327.

39 Marx was well aware of this contingency and that is why he says about this historical period that “the dialectical

events that we retrospectively recognize as part of the process of constitution of capital also did not necessarily have to lead to what we call capitalism, although as these were unfolding the amplitude of the contingency was getting narrower. Second, when Marx speaks of the “so-called original accumulation of capital”, the capital mentioned there is not yet and cannot be the capital of the logic of the movement of valorization of abstract labour that Marx expounds in *Capital*. As Marx says: “Before accumulation by capital, there is presupposed an accumulation which constitutes capital”.⁴⁰ The “prehistory of capital” cannot, therefore, be the accumulation of something previously existing, but the socially blind and extremely violent process of constituting something entirely new.⁴¹ The second period is already based on the existence of the capitalist mode of production itself, in the sense of “based on wage labour”, where the system already “stands on its own feet”⁴² or “is already moving on its own foundation”⁴³ and “capital is *taken for granted*, and its existence and automatic functioning is presupposed”.⁴⁴ It is also as a result of this “automatic functioning” that Marx will call capital the “automatic subject” and *Capital* is the theoretical exposition of its logic. In this context, the contingency is also much narrower because “individuals are now ruled by *abstractions*”,⁴⁵ constituted by themselves unconsciously through social practice, and act more and more within the capitalist social form and according to its categories. Obviously, direct and personal violence does not disappear but starts to be mediated by an impersonal and abstract form of domination that constitutes and cuts across all modern society. We have to keep in mind that both periods are global in scope and give rise to hybrid social situations and forms that are difficult to conceptualize.⁴⁶ Various aspects of pre-capitalist societies were extended within the process of historical constitution and, in a similar way, several specific mechanisms of the constitution process, taken in isolation, can continue to be seen when capitalism “stands on its own feet”, but in this case already presupposing capital and wage labour, therefore having a completely different historical logic and frame. It is precisely because of this difference, determined by the social whole

form of presentation is right only when it knows its own limits”. K. Marx, From the Preparatory Materials, in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Collected Works, Vol. 29: Marx 1857–61, London 2010, p. 505.

40 Marx, Grundrisse, p. 590.

41 Marx’s use of the terms *merchant’s capital* and *interest-bearing capital* and its application to various pre-modern times not only generates several mistakes but ends up diminishing the tremendous later historical novelty of the real capital relationship. These ambiguities of Marx continue to allow countless discussions around a so-called mercantile capitalism already in the European Middle Ages or even before and in other regions of the world. These positions are not so far from Weber’s “methodological individualism”, which sees “capitalism of various forms [...] in all periods of history”. Still, Weber also says that “the provision of the everyday wants by capitalistic methods is characteristic of the occident alone and even at has been the inevitable method only since the middle of the 19th century”, recognizing that only from that period one can speak of capitalism as anything that resembles a social whole. See M. Weber, General Economic History, Glencoe 1950, p. 276.

42 Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, pp. 874, 928.

43 Marx, Grundrisse, p. 253.

44 Marx, Economic Manuscript, p. 492.

45 Marx, Grundrisse, p. 164.

46 These situations are at the basis of Marx’s reflections on “forms of subsumption” to capital. See Murray, Mismeasure of Wealth, pp. 301–317.

in process, that Marx states, on the one hand, that slavery in the New World was the “pedestal” of European wage labour and, on the other hand, that from a given moment of the history of the “bourgeois system of production” it becomes an “anomaly”, only possible in some points because it does not exist in others.⁴⁷

What successive controversies surrounding the relationship between slavery (or other forms of “unfree” labour) and capitalism seem to have difficulty in assuming is that (i) the term capitalism names a world social totality in movement and (ii) there is not really capitalism without wage labour, but not all labour in the capitalist system necessarily has to be wage labour.⁴⁸ While the foundation of the system is abstract labour, the different particular forms of social labour cannot be treated as interchangeable and equally fundamental to the constitution and reproduction of capitalism.

4. Slavery and the Constitution of Capitalism

According to Marx, “[c]apital comes initially from circulation, and, moreover, its point of departure is money”,⁴⁹ but Kurz’s historicization of these categories makes this genesis perhaps clearer.⁵⁰ We know that money existed before capitalism, but by no means can its social function be considered the same as that in capitalism. Even well into the medieval period, money mediated relations of reciprocity and personal obligation (sacrifices, gifts, counter-gifts, offerings, etc.) and had a very demarcated religious character and cannot be considered identical to modern money.⁵¹ In the long process of constitution of capitalism, money lost all of its religious traits and associations with personal obligations and became autonomous as a fetish and purpose of all social production, that is to say capital. The constitution of capital is therefore a qualitative transformation of the social function of money, becoming the real first fully autonomous commodity, accompanied by its generalization and accumulation. Several combined historical processes contributed to this end, but Kurz argues that the violent social transformations associated with the

47 Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 925; K. Marx, *Economic Manuscript of 1861–63*, in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 34: Marx, 1861–64, London 2010, pp. 246–247; Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 464, 513.

48 “Even though the form of labour as wage-labour is decisive for the shape of the entire process and for the specific mode of production itself, it is not wage-labour that is value-determining. What matters in the determination of value is the overall social labour-time, the total amount of labour which society has at its disposal and whose relative absorption by the different products determines, as it were, their respective social weight. But the particular form in which social labour-time plays its determinant role in the value of commodities coincides with the form of labour as wage-labour, and the corresponding form of the means of production as capital, in so far as it is on this basis alone that commodity production becomes the general form of production.” Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 3, p. 1022. See also P. McMichael, *Slavery in capitalism: the rise and demise of the U.S. Ante-Bellum Cotton Culture*, in: *Theory and Society* 20 (1991) 3, pp. 321–349; D. Tomich, *Slavery in the Circuit of Sugar. Martinique and the World-Economy, 1830–1848*, 2nd edn, New York 2016, pp. 35, 44–35; D. Tomich, *Through the Prism of Slavery: Labour, Capital, and World Economy*, Lanham 2004, pp. 24, 50–52.

49 Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 253.

50 R. Kurz, *Geld ohne Wert. Grundrisse zu einer Transformation der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie*, Berlin 2012, pp. 112–156.

51 See J. Le Goff, *Le Moyen Age et l’argent. Essai d’anthropologie historique*, Paris 2010.

so-called military revolution from the fifteenth century onwards and the establishment of “fiscal-military states” were truly decisive, coercing people to “earn money” to pay taxes⁵² and forcing a violent and progressive monetization of all social reproduction.⁵³ The original constitution of capital was thus marked by an arms race and a gold (and silver) rush at the same time, that feed on each other and have the whole world as a stage and Europe at war at its centre.⁵⁴ It was the hunger for money of modern states at birth, associated with wars and the implantation of new military devices, that truly created modern money and that autonomous social sphere that Marx calls “circulation” and which we have gotten used to calling “market”.

But this sphere of circulation that had just been born, with gold as the first “world money”, was unable to survive on its own for a long time and therefore needed to turn the entire social structure inside out, becoming autonomous from its original end of feeding state war machines and turning into the very presupposition and result of general social reproduction. The world system that emerged from the sixteenth century⁵⁵ was for a long time predominantly a system of circulation, driven by world money, which gradually and troublesomely took over social reproduction. But that did not happen once and for all and everywhere at the same time and in the same way. This progressive domination of new money and new system of “circulation” over social production did not even have to lead necessarily to the capitalist mode of production, and in fact for centuries this growing control had several faces and modes of existence in the four corners of the world. But the European transformation had both incomparable social depth and territorial scope. After all, it was not the native peoples of the Americas who decided to make slaves among themselves to produce commodities for the new world market but rather Europeans establishing colonies there and producing with slaves predominantly brought from a third continent. The general tendency was to enlist a huge mass of human beings and mobilize it as a mere energetic material for new spaces of production, entirely disconnected from general social reproduction, and whose primary objective is the multiplication of money. Although these new “disembedded economic functional spaces”⁵⁶ are structured by the same valorization principle and “categorical imperative to

52 “In the period of the rising absolute monarchy with its transformation of all taxes into money taxes, money indeed appears as the moloch to whom real wealth is sacrificed”. Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 199.

53 This perspective is close to the approach recently presented by D. McNally, *Blood and Money: War, Slavery, and the State*, Chicago 2020.

54 It is not for nothing that Marx says: “The period which precedes the development of modern industrial society opens with general greed for money on the part of individuals as well as of states. [...] The hunt for gold in all countries leads to its discovery; to the formation of new states; initially to the spread of commodities, which produce new needs, and draw distant continents into the metabolism of circulation [...]. Thus, in this respect, as the general representative of wealth and as individualized exchange value, it was doubly a means for expanding the universality of wealth, and for drawing the dimensions of exchange over the whole world; for creating the true generality [*Allgemeinheit*] of exchange value in substance and in extension”. Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 225.

55 I. Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, Berkeley 2011.

56 Kurz, *Substance*, p. 100.

work”,⁵⁷ there are at least two types. (i) In Europe, the paradigmatic spaces of this new production system were asylums, state workhouses, and manufactures, where thousands of uprooted individuals, isolated by the dissolution of feudalism’s personal obligation relations and the new state wars, were forced to labour. (ii) In the Atlantic, the paradigm was for centuries the sugar plantation (being “white gold” and the original cash crop), supplied mainly (but not only) by African slaves and on a scale never seen before.

Several factors contributed to the success and duration of the Atlantic plantation economy based on commodity-producing slavery. First, the kingdoms of West Africa possessed the much sought-after gold and were simultaneously outside the new system of circulation of monetary wealth based on precious metals, allowing the continuous channelling of bullion to Europe (first from Africa itself and then from the New World) to fuel state war machines and monetize social reproduction.⁵⁸

Second, the early Atlantic was a “political and legal vacuum”,⁵⁹ facilitating the implementation of an export-oriented commodity-producing slave plantation system in territories marked by profound geographical and social isolation (not by chance on islands and “frontier” zones),⁶⁰ and “disembedded” from the patterns of social behaviour in the metropolises. After 1630, the new plantation system was located mainly in an abstract and “empty” geographical space that became known as “beyond the line”,⁶¹ where European customs and conventions did not apply, enabling the “full development of institutions overseas which were not sanctioned at home”.⁶² According to Carl Schmitt, the “beyond the line” zone was a space of “freedom”, “analogous to the state of exception”, “where force could be used freely and ruthlessly” and everything that occurred “remained outside the legal, moral, and political values recognized on this side of the line”.⁶³ For Europeans, that freedom included the “freedom to enslave others”.⁶⁴

Third, “slaves” were the dominant form of wealth in Africa,⁶⁵ and their tragic encounter with the European hunger for abstract wealth ended up generating a barbaric slaving

57 R. Castel, *From Manual Workers to Wage Labourers. Transformation of the Social Question*, New Brunswick/London 2003, p. 107.

58 Joseph C. Miller has always emphasized this aspect, but its relevance to the process of constitution of capital in Europe remains to be explored. See J. C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730–1830*, London 1988, p. 685; J. C. Miller, *O Atlântico Escravista Açúcar, Escravos e Engenhos* in: *Afro-Ásia* 19/20 (1997), pp. 9–36, at 13–14.

59 J. C. Miller, *The Problem of Slavery as History: A Global Approach*, New Haven/London 2012, p. 66.

60 “Indeed, perhaps all slave plantations of the type developed by Europeans needed to be either on geographic islands or islands in a sea of insiders, as on the North and South American mainlands”. D. Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas*, New York 2000, p. 161.

61 R. Blackburn, *The American Crucible: Slavery, Emancipation And Human Rights*, London 2011, p. 62.

62 S. Drescher, *Capitalism and Antislavery: British Mobilization in Comparative Perspective*, New York 1987, p. 13.

63 C. Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum*, Cambridge 2006, p. 94.

64 Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery*, p. 23.

65 See, for example, S. Drescher, *Abolition. A History of Slavery and Antislavery*, Cambridge 2009, p. 56; J. I. Guyer, *Wealth In People And Self-Realization In Equatorial Africa*, in: *Man* 28 (1993) 2, pp. 243–265; Miller, *Way of Death*, pp. 673–677; J. Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1680*, Cambridge 1992, p. 89.

dynamic for several centuries.⁶⁶ Slaves, in their condition of liminality and “absolute other”, truly belonging neither to the societies that sold them nor to those that would acquire them, were ideal for regimentation and forced mobilization to spaces “disembodied” from “official” social reproduction and specifically oriented, since the beginning, towards the export of commodities and the multiplication of money.

It was this insatiable hunger for money from Europeans that really determined the so-called labour problem (or labour shortage) of the New World and not any land/labour ratio. The labour problem was a problem only “from the European perspective”;⁶⁷ after all, Native Americans had no labour problem before Europeans arrived (first of all because they had no labour). But even the continual reference to this violent historical process as a labour problem also is an anachronism: the labour problem is the representation in current terms of what was in fact an important part of the actual process of constituting the real abstraction of labour and that today allows for the reification of itself (as well as the synonyms human resources and human capital). From the perspective of historical agents, the reification was not yet exactly that: individuals isolated and dragged along in this process did not appear under the name of an abstract activity (labour) but as a fragment of their own body. It is quite significant that the Portuguese and Spaniards of that time referred to what is now called the labour problem of the New World as *falta de braços/braços* (literally arms shortage) or *falta de mão-de-obra/mano de obra* (literally hand-for-work shortage).⁶⁸ It is also known that British and American plantations from the second half of the eighteenth century renewed the old term *hand*, developing a fractionation system (full hand, half hand, quarter hand, etc.), according to the “labour capacity” of each slave, for the calculation and optimization of the land/hands ratio.⁶⁹ This abstract system of homogenization and quantification, in which the unit of measure hand is divided, is thus something more abstract than the simple hand that appeared in Cato and Varro.

However, little attention has been paid to what is perhaps one of the most bizarre abstractions born out of the transatlantic slave trade. Centuries before the fractionation of slaves into hands, the Portuguese and the Spanish developed an abstract system for quantifying and measuring the expected labour capacity of each slave, whose novelty and historical significance still seem far from having been properly recognized by historiography:⁷⁰

66 Miller, *Way of Death*, p. 673.

67 D. Eltis, Free and coerced migrations: the Atlantic in global perspective, in: *European Review* 12 (2004) 3, pp. 313–328, at 319.

68 *Mão-de-obra/mano de obra* are still alternative terms for labour power today and have exact correspondence also in French and Italian (*main d'œuvre, manodopera*).

69 R. Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492–1800*, London/New York 1998, p. 467; W. Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom*, Cambridge 2013, pp. 153–154.

70 Vol. 3 of the *Cambridge World History of Slavery*, for example, only mentions it in passing twice. D. Eltis/K. Bradley/S. L. Engerman/P. Cartledge (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, Vol. 3: AD 1420–AD 1804, Cambridge 2011.

the *peça da Índia*/*pieza de India* (piece of India).⁷¹ As far as it is possible to know from the documentation already studied, the term appears as early as the sixteenth century in the contact between the Portuguese and the territories of present-day Angola, where from early on a special equivalence was established between a certain amount of fabric (with a dimension for dressing an adult and presumably produced in Asia), functioning as “money”, and a standard slave taken by Portuguese traffickers. This equivalence was associated with the parallel need for European states to charge monetary taxes on human commodities of unequal quality and eventually led to the establishment of a true system of slave equivalence, which lasted at least until the mid- eighteenth century. The *peça*, as a unit of measure, corresponded generally to a black adult man with a certain age standard (depending on the sources and variable over time: between 15 and 35 years old), minimum height, physical condition, and health, from which the fractions were then established: a slave between 8 and 15 years old or 36 and 45 years old corresponded to two-thirds piece; and a slave between 4 and 8 years old was equal to one-half piece. It is important to realize here that, on the one hand, the genesis of the *peça* measure is totally inseparable from the abstracting functions and equivalence of money. On the other hand, although the object of the transaction is individuals, the *peça*, as Curtin argues, is a “measure of potential labour, not of individuals”.⁷² What the *peça da Índia* illustrates paradoxically is that the purchase of slaves is not really the purchase of labour power, although the *peça* serves as a measure of labour power for establishing the price of slaves. Labour power, the “peculiar commodity”,⁷³ is one of the essential categories of the capitalist social form and Marx believed that this was one of his most important “discoveries”. Today we immediately associate it with his name but, in fact, it was originally advanced during his time by the theory of thermodynamics with the aim of studding the conservation of energy in all material bodies.⁷⁴ This origin is not accidental. Several potential misunderstandings need to be clarified.

First of all, bear in mind that, like labour, and even more notoriously, the abstraction labour power is a specifically modern category. If Marx occasionally refers to the labour power of human beings in pre-modern societies, this is only an anachronism resulting from his transhistorical understanding of the category labour and that again jumps over the problem that he himself identifies in *Grundrisse*. Although it is often said, and in an

71 P. D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade. A Census*, Madison 1969, pp. 22–23; H. Moura Filho, *A precisão do padrão “peça da Índia” como indicador qualitativo de idade. Encontro Escravidão e Liberdade no Brasil Meridional*, Porto Alegre 2017; Miller, *Way of Death*, pp. 68–70, 299; A. Carreira, *As Companhias Pombalinas de Grão-Pará e Maranhão e Pernambuco e Paraíba*, Lisboa 1983, p. 28. D. B. Domingues da Silva, *The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa 1780–1867*, Cambridge 2018, pp. 45, 112–114; A. d. A. Mendes, *The Foundations of the System: A Reassessment of the Slave Trade to the Spanish Americas in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, in: D. Eltis/D. Richardson (eds.), *Extending the Frontiers: Essays on the New Transatlantic Slave Trade Database*, New Haven/London 2008, p. 91; G. A. Lopes/M. M. Menz, *Vestindo o escravismo: o comércio de têxteis e o Contrato de Angola (século XVIII)*, in: *Revista Brasileira de História* 39 (2019), pp. 109–134.

72 Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, p. 22.

73 Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 274.

74 A. Rabinbach, *The Human Motor. Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity*, Berkeley 1992, pp. 69–83.

apparently banal way, that human beings naturally have labour power, only in modern society did this abstraction arise, which is thus anything but a banality. Just as labour is not simply human activity in general, labour power is also not merely the vital energy that exists naturally in the human body; it is and it is not. In a Hegelian fashion, it can be said that the expenditure of human energy is *presupposed* in pre-modern societies, but only in modern society is this abstraction *socially posited*.⁷⁵ But it is also not seen as an abstraction common to all human activities, but only in those that produce commodities.⁷⁶ Second, it must be clear that labour power is not identical to abstract labour: labour power is a potential; abstract labour its actuality. It is only abstract labour (that is to say, the expenditure of labour power itself in the production of commodities) that is the “social substance” of value.

Third, just as abstract labour can only happen through concrete labour (after all, there is no combustion of human energy in the abstract), labour power can also only exist in a concrete body: the individual human body. The lack of clarity in these distinctions or the inability to deal with them has been a continuous source of misunderstandings regarding the fundamental similarities and differences between the slave and the wage labourer.

Both slave and wage labourer are socially reduced to mere *carriers* of human energy and forced, directly or indirectly, to the pure “expenditure of human brain, nerves, muscles” in the production of commodities. But the purchase of the commodity slave is not the purchase of the commodity labour power,⁷⁷ although his labour power is the purpose of the purchase (just as the purchase of a battery is motivated by the energy it contains). It is precisely for this reason that Marx calls the slave a “living labour-machine”.⁷⁸ If in both cases human beings are *reduced* to mere *carriers* of energy, only the wage labourer is socially recognized as a *possessor* or *owner* of that energy, and that is exactly what allows the *generalization* of the abstraction labour, commodities and capital. That is why, although not using the term, Marx puts “self-ownership” as one of the decisive and fundamental presuppositions of capitalist society, with consequences of great historical significance.⁷⁹ According to Marx, “[t]he capitalist epoch is [...] characterized by the fact that labour-power, in the eyes of the worker himself, takes on the form of a commodity which is his property; his labour consequently takes on the form of wage-labour. On the other hand, it is only from this moment that the commodity form of the products of labour becomes universal”.⁸⁰ We must draw attention to two aspects here: first, Marx places self-ownership as a precondition for the capitalist mode of production and at the centre

75 M. Robles-Baez, On the Abstraction of Labour as a Social Determination, in: A. Freeman/A. Kliman/J. Wells (eds.), *The New Value Controversy and the Foundations of Economics*, Cheltenham 2004, pp. 151–165, at 152–153.

76 Kurz, *Substance*, pp. 193–194.

77 Tomich, *Through the Prism of Slavery*, p. 7; T. Brass, *Towards a Comparative Political Economy of Unfree Labour: Case Studies and Debates*, London 1999, p. 12.

78 Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 465.

79 One of the first to realize its importance was C. B. Macpherson through his investigations of seventeenth-century liberalism and the “possessive individualism” that was at its origin. C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*, Oxford 1962.

80 Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, pp. 274n, see also 271.

of a great epochal change; and second, that self-ownership is not only an objective category, but also implies changes in the form of subjectivity, namely a self-objectification of human beings themselves (that is why Marx says “in the eyes of the worker himself”⁸¹). This last aspect is also highlighted by Marx regarding the difference between the wage labourer and the slave:

*In the slave relation, he [the slave] belongs to the individual, particular owner, and is his labouring machine. As a totality of force-expenditure, as labour capacity, he is a thing [Sache] belonging to another, and hence does not relate as subject to his particular expenditure of force, nor to the act of living labour. [...] In the slave relation the worker is nothing but a living labour-machine [...]. The totality of the free worker's labour capacity appears to him as his property, as one of his moments, over which he, as subject, exercises domination, and which he maintains by expending it.*⁸²

This means that whenever Marx places “propertylessness” as a precondition for the wage labourer,⁸³ this is not exactly true, since capital is only possible to the extent that the wage labourer is “free proprietor of his own labour-capacity”.⁸⁴ In fact, truly propertyless is only the slave,⁸⁵ and that is exactly why capitalism could never be born out of a slave society. Now, like most of the categories reflected here, self-ownership is a specifically modern category,⁸⁶ born during the process of constitution of capitalism, after which it started to function as an “a priori concept”⁸⁷ and a presupposition of capital.

It is not by chance that the first formulations of this principle, which place the individual as a private owner of his body, date from this period (Grotius, Hobbes, Overton, Locke, etc.), starting from a metaphysical split in the self-owner, an internal division between a part that is proprietary (subject) and a part that is property (body) vis-à-vis another self-owner. In the new sphere of circulation, this was quickly associated with the modern metaphysics of contractual freedom between subjects and a whole ideology based upon the equality and consensus of commodities exchange. It was not, therefore,

81 Other points where Marx emphasizes this particular aspect of subjectivity in self-ownership and the sale of labour are K. Marx, Chapter Six. Results of the Direct Production Process, in: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Collected Works, Vol. 34: Marx, 1861–64, London 2010, p. 359; Marx, From the Preparatory Materials, pp. 504–505.

82 Marx, Grundrisse, pp. 464–465.

83 Ibid., pp. 489, 507, 515, 607, 674, 736, 769.

84 Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, p. 271.

85 Even Orlando Patterson, who, as is known, denied the slave's foundation in the property relation, says: “the slave was a slave not because he was the *object* of property, but because he could not be the *subject* of property”. Patterson, Slavery and Social Death, p. 28.

86 The few and valuable existing investigations on the theme assume an intellectual history perspective and only in passing refer to real socio-historical processes, but generally all point to the same conclusions of the historian Janet Coleman, who says that “can find no concept of self-ownership or a notion of having a property in one's own person, either in classical Greek, Roman or in medieval discussions”. J. Coleman, Pre-Modern Property and Self-Ownership Before and After Locke Or, When did Common Decency Become a Private rather than a Public Virtue?, in: European Journal of Political Theory 4 (2005) 2, pp. 125–145, at 134. See also B. Tierney, Dominion of Self and Natural Rights Before Locke and After, in: V. Mäkinen/P. Korkman (eds.), Transformations in Medieval and Early-Modern Rights Discourse, Dordrecht 2006, pp. 173–203.

87 Coleman, Pre-Modern Property, p. 125.

difficult to derive an ideological equivalence between self-ownership and supposed freedom, autonomy, and self-determination of the subject. In the late eighteenth century, Denis Diderot, writing about Africans and slavery, was already claiming that “freedom is property of oneself”,⁸⁸

Supposedly self-ownership applies to all subjects, to all physical persons, but, in reality, already in the historical process of constitution it proved to be a male, “white”, and Western principle. First, at the same time that capitalism constituted itself worldwide, women were excluded from self-ownership⁸⁹ and made inferior subjects and responsible for activities incompatible with the production of value but still necessary as presuppositions of social reproduction, without which capitalism could not have developed at all. Second, this helps to understand the different course and articulation for centuries between Europe, on the one hand, and Africa and the New World, on the other. In sixteenth-century Europe, an a priori principle began to be established that European men were self-owners and that this was their condition of freedom. This a priori made it possible that even when they were forced to migrate to the New World (as indentured servants, convicts, etc.) in no case did they arrive there as slaves. And, conversely, it was this fetishist presupposition, born from the sphere of circulation and which associates freedom with self-ownership, which led to the inferiorization of non-Europeans in general⁹⁰ and allowed for centuries the reduction of Africans to mere bodies, “a brute biological force that lacks self-governing will and is thus in need of socialising violence to make it useful to civil society”.⁹¹ It is no coincidence that nineteenth-century feminism and abolitionism have both based their claims on the demand for a “true” universality of self-ownership and their recognition as full legal persons.⁹²

What self-ownership also shows is that the common analogy between slave and wage labourer, based on the fact that both are reduced to mere carriers of energy, is not entirely adequate. If “[t]he totality of the free worker’s labour capacity appears to him as his property, [...] over which he, as subject, exercises domination”,⁹³ then the right analogy is with the modern version of the *slave-master relation as a whole*. This is insightfully suggested by Baudrillard: “The individual who ‘controls’ his labour is [...] simply the slave who has become *his own master*, since the master-slave couple is interiorized in the same individual without ceasing to function as an alienated structure”.⁹⁴ In the historical

88 “La liberté est la propriété de soi”. D. Diderot/J. R. d’Alembert, *Encyclopédie méthodique, ou par ordre de matières*, Vol. 31, Paris 1788, p. 419.

89 See C. Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, Cambridge 1988.

90 This approach makes it possible to substantiate in a different way and reinforce Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery*, pp. 55–56, 276–280; D. Eltis, *Europeans and the Rise and Fall of African Slavery in the Americas: An Interpretation*, in: *The American Historical Review* 98 (1993) 5, pp. 1399–1423, at 1414–1415.

91 H. White, *How is capitalism racial?* Fanon, critical theory and the fetish of antiblackness, in: *Social Dynamics. A Journal of African Studies* 46 (2020) 20, pp. 22–35, at 24.

92 See A. D. Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation*, New York 2007.

93 Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 465.

94 Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production*, p. 104.

process of constitution of capitalism, the wage labourer and the slave were symmetrical ideological figures. The wage labourer is the *modern monetary subject*, the divided male self-owner, who as an owner is a master and as a body is a slave, and who sells “freely” his labour power in the sphere of circulation. The black slave, oppositely, as a propertyless individual and in principle extremely conditioned in his access to money and circulation, is the *anti-subject par excellence*, reduced to a mere living labour machine.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the capitalist mode of production already “stands on its own feet” in different regions of Western Europe, and with it the world social reproduction was starting to turn inside out. From that moment on, we cannot speak more of a real sphere of circulation because now it has taken over production and revolutionized it according to the new logic of capital as a presupposition and result of all social (re)production. It is also for this reason that whenever Marx refers to “capital circulation” in the context of fully formed capitalism, the notion of circulation always seems to fall short of the concept of the process that is really at stake because now it is “a spiral, an expanding curve, not a simple circle” but “a self-expanding circle”,⁹⁵ with “a moving magnitude, being expanded by production itself. Accordingly, it already appears as a moment of production itself”.⁹⁶ “Its immediate being is therefore pure semblance. *It is the phenomenon of a process taking place behind it.*”⁹⁷ Behind the circulation is the expanded reproduction of “total social capital”, based in the introduction of more and more machinery in the production process and increasingly driven by capital’s essential contradiction: “Capital itself is the moving contradiction, [in] that it presses to reduce labour time to a minimum, while it posits labour time on the other side, as sole measure and source of wealth”.⁹⁸ What we are used to calling circulation, as a synonym for the market, refers us only to the mere necessary appearance of the “metamorphoses of capital” at the level of the whole social reproduction. Highlighting the historical tendency of this social whole, based on the nexus abstract wealth/abstract labour, Marx clearly shows the insufficiencies of the perspectives that still today conceptualize capitalism as a mere market economy, showing themselves ideologically attached to the long-disappeared historical period where circulation had its independence.

But it was precisely from this now pseudo-independent sphere that the modern concept of freedom was born. Through it, self-ownership was assumed as the very basis of personal rights and autonomy and revealed itself a fundamental part of the struggles for recognition in both the metropolises and the colonies. Male and white self-owners started to exchange more or less “freely” their body energy for money, as wage labourers of the industrial world, and women, slaves, and non-whites in general fought fiercely for the right to be able to do so on equal terms. But self-ownership is a presupposition for entering into the “free” market of universal competition as a subject, not a guarantee for

95 Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 266, 746.

96 *Ibid.*, p. 407.

97 *Ibid.*, p. 255.

98 *Ibid.*, p. 706.

survival once inside it. If the self-owner proves to be insolvent, he/she is left in a new “condition of liminality” that the “moving contradiction” of capital in the twenty-first century will continue to intensify: superfluity.

Capitalism in Slavery, Slavery in Capitalism: Original Accumulation, Slave Rent, and the Formation of the World Market

Dale W. Tomich

ABSTRACTS

Der Beitrag untersucht das Verhältnis von Kapitalismus und Sklaverei, indem er die Rolle der Sklaverei bei der Entstehung der kapitalistischen Weltwirtschaft seit dem 16. Jahrhundert neu interpretiert. Durch die Unterscheidung zwischen der Marx'schen Theorie des Kapitals und der Geschichte der kapitalistischen Entwicklung wird der historische Kapitalismus als ein globales System konstruiert, das vielfältige Formen der gesellschaftlichen Arbeit umfasst. Die atlantische Sklaverei fassen wir als eine spezifische Form der Warenproduktion auf, die von Anfang an integraler Bestandteil des historischen Kapitalismus war. Der Artikel untersucht die spezifische Rolle der atlantischen Sklaverei bei der ursprünglichen Akkumulation des Kapitals, d. h. der Entstehung des Systems. Surplusproduktion und -aneignung basierten auf der Sklavenrente, d. h. auf dem Eigentum von Sklaven, nicht auf dem Eigentum von Land. Dieses Verhältnis schuf eine sehr mobile und dynamische Form der Arbeitsorganisation, die für die offenen Warengrenzen des tropischen und subtropischen Atlantiks geeignet war. Die Ausbreitung der Sklavenarbeit im Südatlantik spielte eine fundamentale Rolle bei der Schaffung der weltweiten Arbeitsteilung und des Weltmarktes des 16. Jahrhunderts.

This chapter examines the relation of capitalism and slavery by reinterpreting the role of slavery in the formation of the capitalist world-economy beginning in the sixteenth century. By distinguishing between Marx's theory of capital and the history of capitalist development, it construes historical capitalism as a global system embracing multiple forms of social labour. Atlantic slavery, it argues, is a specific form of commodity production that is integral to historical capitalism from its inception. The article proceeds to explore the specific role of Atlantic slavery in the original accumulation of capital, that is, the formation of the system. Surplus produc-

tion and appropriation were based on slave rent, that is on ownership of the slave as property, not on ownership of the land. This relation created a very mobile and dynamic form of labour organization that was suited to the open commodity frontiers of the tropical and subtropical Atlantic. The expansion of slave labour in the south Atlantic played a fundamental role in creating the world division of labour and world market of the sixteenth century.

The question of capitalism and slavery has returned to the scholarly agenda after a long hiatus. The contemporary discussion has its roots in the pioneering work of C. L. R. James, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Oliver Cromwell Cox. In many ways, the issue has been framed by Eric Williams's pathbreaking *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944) and the responses to it in the 1940s and 1950s and then again beginning in the 1970s. With the revival of radical scholarship in the 1970s and 1980s, the interpretation of capitalism and slavery was central to intense debates over modes of production, dependency, underdevelopment, and world-systems in North America, South America, the Caribbean, Europe, and Africa. However, with the cultural turn of the 1970s, scholarly attention rapidly shifted away from such concerns. The current revival of interest in the history of capitalism, slavery, and race has to reach back over a generation to recover its antecedents. However, to simply return to earlier traditions and paradigms is inadequate. The earlier formulations of capitalism and slavery continually reproduced a dichotomy between the market and relations of production. Slavery was seen either as unproblematically capitalist because it produced for the market or as a pre-capitalist or non-capitalist relation of production with its own laws of development that were external to the market.¹ Either the specificity of slavery was lost within a generalized conception of capitalism or slavery was one thing and capitalism was another. The economic, political, and cultural conditions in which scholars are returning to questions of capitalism and slavery are markedly different from those of their predecessors. These new circumstances – above all, the global character of capitalism, the degradation of wage labour, and the persistence of forms of compulsory labour – provide the opportunity to rethink the premises from which we approach these problems.

This article treats capitalist slavery as a distinct form of commodity production with its own specific political economic relations and processes. Yet, to pose the question as the relation of capitalism *and* slavery is to distort the problem and to pursue lines of reasoning that do not have clear outcomes. Approaches that follow this course reify the concepts of capital and slavery and treat them as closed things with fixed attributes (capital-wage labour relation, as delineated in Karl Marx's *Capital*, and the master-slave relation). Each term is then located in a given historical geographical zone that is presumed to manifest its own distinctive features. Wage labour, industry, urban, wealth, individual freedom, modernity, and development are terms that characterize capitalist societies in Western Europe and, above all, England. Slavery and compulsion, racial

1 D. Tomich, *Through the Prism of Slavery: Labor, Capital, and World Economy*, Lanham 2004, pp. 3–55.

hierarchy, rural, agrarian, poverty, backwardness, and underdevelopment are attributes of the slave societies of the Americas. The origin of capitalism is commonly identified with the Industrial Revolution and the formation of a waged working class in England. As a result of this dichotomy, manifold and changing historical processes are frozen in space and time. This construct of capitalism is transformed into a thing and made into an absolute standard. The problem then becomes whether or how to conjoin capitalism and slavery as two independent terms.

Such approaches obscure the historical processes through which wage labour and slavery are interrelated and mutually formative and the ways in which the relation between them changes in the course of the formation and continual restructuring of the capitalist economy. These conceptions of the problem confuse Marx's critique of political economy with the historical development of capitalism (I confine myself to Marxist approaches here – in part for reasons of exposition and in part because Marxist understandings have influenced the approach even of those who argue against them). Marx's purpose in *Capital* is to delineate *in its pure form* the conceptual structure of capital as a specific historical relation, not to write the history of capital.² It is obvious that wage labour and industrial capital became dominant forms of economic activity in Europe and, above all, in England during Marx's lifetime. But to treat these historical developments as intrinsic attributes of capital is a quite different claim. *Capital* is not a theoretical account of English history. Rather, what Marx seeks "to examine in this work is the capitalist mode of production, and the relations of production and forms of intercourse that correspond to it". He regards England as the locus classicus of these processes. For this reason, he uses England as "the main illustration of the theoretical developments" he makes.³

The object of Marx's enquiry is the concept of capital, not its history. To confound the theoretical examination of the concept of capital with the concrete history of capitalism in England is to invert the relation of theory and history in Marx's work and to belie the complexities and tensions within his argument. As a theoretical category, capital-wage labour expresses the full development of the value form in which all the elements of the production process – instruments of labour, raw materials, and labour power – and the product of labour take the form of commodities and are related to one another through their value. The concept of capital-wage labour orders the theoretical movement from simple to complex determinations of commodity production and exchange that structures *Capital* and gives theoretical coherence to it. According to Marx:

To the extent that we are considering it here, as a relation distinct from that of value and money, capital is capital in general, i.e. the incarnation of the values that distinguish value as capital from value as pure value or as money. [...] We are present at the process of

- 2 "In order to develop the laws of bourgeois economy, therefore, it is not necessary to write the *real history of the relations of production*. But correct observation and deduction of these laws, as having themselves become in history, always leads to primary equations [...] which point to a past lying behind this system." Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, London 1973, pp. 460–461.
- 3 Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, London 1977, Vol. 1, p. 90.

its becoming. This dialectical process of its becoming is only the ideal expression of the real movement through which capital comes into being. The later relations are to be regarded as developments coming out of this germ. But it is necessary to establish the specific form in which it [capital] is posited, at a certain point. Otherwise confusion arises.⁴

This article reconstructs theoretically capital as a global historical relation that began with the formation of the world market of the sixteenth century and examines the formation of modern slavery as a specific form of capitalist production within the processes of the original accumulation of capital. It draws especially on the work of two Brazilian scholars – Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco and Antônio Barros de Castro⁵ – who went beyond the impasse of the scholarship of the late 1970s and early 1980s. However, perhaps because their work appeared at the time that interest in those debates was waning, it never received the attention that it deserved.

1. Capitalism and Slavery: From Rational Abstraction to Violent Abstraction

The concepts of wage labour and slavery play an important role in the elaboration of Marx's theoretical framework. For Marx, the simple elements of the labour process as a process between nature and persons are common to all human societies. What distinguishes one historical stage of society from another are the forms of their social development. Thus, historical specification of forms of social relations is the focus of Marx's theoretical concern.⁶ The concepts of wage labour and slavery are central to establishing the historical specificity of capitalism, the core of his theory of capital. In the simplest deployment of these two terms, Marx treats them as independent of one another and presents them as polar opposites. These constructions follow Marx's method of "rational abstraction".⁷ This contrast calls attention to the analytical importance of the social form of production relations and surplus appropriation represented by each. Viewed in isolation, free wage labour appears as the defining characteristic of capitalism. In Marx's view, the exchange of equivalent values between wage labourer and capitalist through the sale of labour power is the specifically capitalist form of surplus value production and appropriation. In contrast, slavery designates a form of social relations of production where the surplus produced by the slave is appropriated by means of the direct domination of the person of the enslaved by the slaveholder. In this formulation, the exchange of equiva-

4 Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 310 (emphasis added to last sentence).

5 M. S. de Carvalho Franco, *Homens Livres na Ordem Escravocrata*, São Paulo 1976; *Organização do Trabalho no Período Colonial*, in: P. S. Pinheiro (ed.), *Trabalho Escravo, Economia e Sociedade*, São Paulo 1978, pp. 143–192; A. B. de Castro, *As Mãos e os Pés do Senhor do Engenho*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 41–66; *A Economia Política, o Capitalismo e Escravidão*, in: J. R. do Amaral Lapa (ed.), *Modos de Produção e Realidade Brasileiro*, Petrópolis 1980, pp. 67–107.

6 Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 85.

7 "Production in general is an abstraction, but a rational abstraction in so far as it really brings out and fixes the common element and saves us from repetition. Still this general category, this common element sifted out by comparison, is itself segmented many times over and splits into different determinations." Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 85.

lent values between capital and wage labour masks the production and appropriation of surplus value, whereas slavery appears as an unambiguously non-capitalist form of social production where domination and exploitation are direct and transparent. This direct comparison calls attention to the specific form of unfreedom of free wage labour through comparison with the unfreedom of slavery, its polar opposite. In what ways, through the wage form, the exchange of equivalent values becomes the form of appropriation of surplus value is the central problem that Marx attempts to answer in his conceptualization of capital.

Elsewhere, Marx posits the interrelation and interdependence free wage labour and slavery as a historical question.

*While the cotton industry introduced child-slavery into England, in the United States it gave the impulse for the transformation of the earlier, more or less patriarchal slavery into a system of commercial exploitation. In fact, the veiled slavery of the wage-labourers in Europe, needed the unqualified slavery of the New World as its pedestal.*⁸

This frequently cited passage has been little interrogated. In it, Marx calls attention to the historical importance of slavery for the development of capitalism. However, this relation is suggested rather than developed. Here, Marx is concerned with further contextualizing capital as a historical relation rather than with the history of capital or with slavery per se. Nonetheless, this passage raises important questions that bear further examination.

The most common approach to interpreting these two passages has been to treat both slavery and wage labour as integral, internally unified, and externally bounded political economic systems, each with its own historical laws. Here, the historical forms of social production become what Derek Sayer calls “violent abstractions” and are hardened into distinct modes of production.⁹ The concepts through which these modes of production are constructed as fixed and closed. Their “laws of motion” derive directly from the immediate social relations of production: master and slave in the one case, capitalist and wage labourer in the other. Analytical priority is given to the “internal” relations of production, while the market, exchange, and merchant capital are typically regarded as external to production relations and are held to be of secondary importance.¹⁰

This methodological and theoretical procedure constructs a network of spatially discrete, conceptually independent political economic complexes that are conjoined or “articulated” with one another through contingent external relations of exchange, the market, merchant capital, and colonialism. Each discrete political-economic space is characterized by a distinct mode of production. The laws that pertain to each mode of production are understood as universally applicable across the relevant cases. Slave formations are regarded as pre-capitalist or non-capitalist and follow their own internal laws of historical development. They supply raw materials and provide markets for manufactured goods,

8 Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 925.

9 D. Sayer, *The Violence of Abstraction: The Analytic Foundations of Historical Materialism*, Oxford 1987.

10 Tomich, *Through the Prism of Slavery*, pp. 32–55.

but the world market, colonialism, and capitalism influence them as external conditions. Likewise, the laws governing the transition from feudalism to capitalism, together with capitalist development, play out within distinct capitalist spaces and are influenced from the outside by slave formations. The world market itself remains external to the inner structure of national economies and is simply the sum of its national economic parts. The result of this approach is a series of “integrated dualities” rather than a “contradictory unity”.¹¹ Slavery and capitalism as well as production and market are treated as separate and independent terms that have to be combined with one another rather than parts of an encompassing historical whole. The laws of motion of each mode of production are given a priori and are treated as though they exist over and above historically formed relations and processes. Real concrete historical processes are treated as the content of such fixed and given forms. This abstract, general, and closed conceptual framework has a limited capacity to explain concrete historical situations. Each particular case – whether slave or capitalist – is a variation of the same historical laws and is construed within a linear conception of historical time. Slave formations move from slavery to emancipation, and capitalist formations move from feudalism to capitalism. They coexist within parallel temporalities. The same problems, forces, and processes are repeated in differing circumstances. At a certain point of its historical development, the expansion of industrial capital – with its increasing rates of productivity and profitability, demand for a greater quantity, and variety of raw materials and bigger markets – renders chattel slavery archaic and obsolete. Whether interpreted economically and/or politically through the rise of liberalism and abolitionism, slavery is seen as an archaic form that is destined to be destroyed. Such an approach can only reproduce variations of its own presuppositions. It results in a dualistic conception that continually juxtaposes one independent entity to another – production and market, capitalism and slavery – and then seeks to combine them. This perspective eliminates as subject matter the world historical origins of capital and the capitalist world economy as a specific system of societal production and reproduction.

2. Beyond Dualism: World Market, Slavery, and Original Accumulation

However, Marx put forward another way to approach the relation of capitalism and slavery. He not only suggests a more complex and comprehensive understanding of capital as a historical relation but also presents the idea that slave relations themselves can change in relation to the development of capital:

But as soon as peoples whose production still moves within the lower forms of slave-labour, the corvée, etc. are drawn into a world market dominated by the capitalist mode of production, whereby the sale of their products for export develops into their principal

11 Franco, *Homens Livres*, p. 11.

interest, the civilized horrors of over-work are grafted onto the barbaric horrors of slavery, serfdom, etc. Hence the Negro labour in the southern states of the American Union preserved a moderately patriarchal character so long as production was chiefly directed to the satisfaction of immediate local requirements. But in proportion as the export of cotton became of vital interest to those states, the over-working of the Negro, and sometimes the consumption of his life in seven years of labour, became a factor in a calculated and calculating system. It was no longer a question of obtaining a certain quantity of useful products, but rather of the production of surplus value itself.¹²

Having established the capital-wage labour as the specifically capitalist form of surplus value production, Marx reconceptualizes surplus value as he moves towards constructing capital as a concrete historical relation. The production of surplus value is no longer the exclusive domain of the capital-wage labour relation and the criterion for differentiating it from slave labour and other forms of social labour. Rather, it becomes the characteristic of all the forms of social labour producing for the capitalist world market. The interrelation and mutual formation of slave labour and industrial capital transform slavery into a system of industrial slavery. Industrial capital, with its need for bigger markets and demand for a greater volume and variety of raw materials, creates the condition for recasting slavery into a “calculated and calculating system”. At this moment in Marx’s argument, wage labour appears as the pedestal for slavery, and slavery, while retaining its form, assumes an industrial character. Historical scholarship since Marx’s time has shown that the degree to which “moderately patriarchal” slavery was oriented to “to the satisfaction of immediate local requirements” is open to question. The sale of their products for export was certainly the principal interest of slave systems before the advent of industrial capital, especially beyond the territorial boundaries of the United States. However, viewed historically, this passage calls attention to the shift from slavery as the precondition for the dominance of capital-wage labour as the organizing pole of the world division of labour (original accumulation) to the reconstitution of slavery as its product (*second slavery*).

In this passage, the key term in the relation between capital and slavery is the world market, precisely the term that is relegated to a secondary position by conventional approaches. But here, the market is not conceived abstractly and regarded as outside of autonomous and primary production relations. Rather, it appears as a substantive historical relation that is at once structured and structuring. The market organizes and permits the development of both slavery and wage labour as parts of an integrated world division of labour. Production as a social process is only completed when the product is exchanged and consumed.

Whether the commodities are the product of production based on slavery, the product of peasants (Chinese, Indian ryots), of a community (Dutch East Indies), of state production

(such as existed in earlier epochs of Russian history, based on serfdom) or of half-savage hunting peoples, etc. — as commodities and money they confront the money and commodities in which industrial capital presents itself, and enter both into the latter's own circuit and into that of the surplus-value borne by the commodity capital, in so far as the latter is spent as revenue; i.e. both branches of the circulation of commodity capital.¹³

Marx thus presents a different conception of capital as a concrete historical relation. Capital appears here as the unity of diverse forms of commodity production and exchange structured through the market. This conception shifts the focus of investigation and explanation from treating relations as congealed, reified things to the examination of historical processes. The analytical procedure that it implies can no longer be understood as conjoining independent terms to form the political economic whole. Rather, it entails specifying relations and processes forming and formed by historically changing and dynamically interacting with the world economic whole. Here the problem is no longer that of the relation of capitalism and slavery but that of understanding the capitalist character of slavery and, by extension, the slave character of capitalism.

Beginning the history of the origins of capital with the formation of the world market reframes the spatial and temporal parameters of analysis. This perspective posits a singular process that encompasses the diverse relations of production that comprise the world market and world economic division of labour. It calls attention to the ways in which specific historical relations both require and promote commodity production and exchange and seeks to comprehend the processes through which the interrelations among them form the historical movement towards specifically capitalist production (capital-wage labour). This approach recovers Marx's concept of "original accumulation" (*ursprüngliche Akkumulation*) as opposed to the more commonly used term "primitive accumulation". Original accumulation refers to a singular process that accounts for the historical origins of capital as a whole, not to any particular capital. Neither is it repeated nor is it a permanent feature of the capitalist system. If, as Marx argues in *Grundrisse*, capital is a specific historical form of social production and reproduction, then the relations of commodity production that determine its origins, that is to say its historic presuppositions, form part of the concept of capital. But once capital is constituted, they are not part of the ongoing conditions of accumulation produced by capital out of its own production processes.¹⁴ Thus, original accumulation calls attention to the *historical movement from*

13 Karl Marx, *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy*, Harmondsworth 1978, Vol. 2, p. 189.

14 "Once production founded on capital is presupposed [...] [then] the condition that the capitalist in order to posit himself as capital, must bring values into circulation which he created with his own labour — or by some other means, excepting only already available, previous wage labour — belongs among the antediluvian conditions of capital, belongs to it as *historic presuppositions*, which, precisely as such *historic presuppositions*, are past and gone, and hence belong to the *history of its formation*, but in no way to its *contemporary history*, i.e., not to the real system of the mode of production ruled by it" (Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 459). K. Korsch, Karl Marx, New York 1971, pp. 49–50, 52–53, 59 emphasizes that it is for this reason that the section of "So-Called Primitive Accumulation" comes at the end of the volume, after the presentation of the totality of relations comprising capital, not at the beginning.

external presuppositions towards wage labour and capitalist production – in Marxist terms, surplus value production and capitalist valorization – but original accumulation is not part of ongoing capitalist production and reproduction.

3. The Genoese Cycle of Accumulation

From this perspective, comprehending the relation of capitalism and slavery requires examining how the world market and world division of labour emerged from within European feudalism and the role of slavery in this political economic transformation. Such an enquiry requires fundamentally rethinking categories of production, exchange, feudalism, market, capitalism, and slavery. In the remainder of this article, I sketch a theoretical-historical model of this process.

Key to the processes of original accumulation and the formation of the world market is the relations between urban, commercial, and financial centres and the emergent territorial states in Western Europe between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. John Merrington's neglected essay, "Town and Country in the Transition to Capitalism" (1975),¹⁵ goes beyond the focus on agrarian class relations and the abstract and general opposition between production and exchange that has characterized Marxist writing on the transition to capitalism. Rather than treating the town as an anomalous island of market relations outside of the feudal countryside, he argues that privilege and monopoly within feudalism's system of fragmented sovereignty constituted the medieval town as an autonomous corporative sphere of sovereignty that encouraged the full development of merchant capital. In Merrington's interpretation, the town is integral to European feudalism, and the relation between production and exchange within the feudal mode was established through the town-country relation. The feudal relations of the countryside were at once the condition for the existence of the town and merchant capital, as well as the limits to their growth. While urban merchant capital was oriented towards increasing trade and the accumulation of wealth, the agrarian economy and non-capitalist relations in the countryside presented a barrier to its expansion.

Merrington's conceptual framework permits a unified theoretical and historical account of European expansion and the origin of the world market without presuming the externality of the various forms of social production to one another and to the market.¹⁶ It provides a theoretical underpinning for what Perry Anderson characterizes as "redeployed feudalism".¹⁷ The interaction of town and country and of production and exchange, together with the centralization of political power, profoundly transformed European feudalism, following the crisis of the fourteenth century. In the countryside, production for the market increased dramatically. Serfdom was abolished following massive peas-

15 J. Merrington, *Town and Country in the Transition to Capitalism*, in: R. Hilton (ed.), *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism*, London 1976, pp. 170–195.

16 Franco, *Organização Social do Trabalho*, p. 145.

17 P. Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, London 1974.

ant revolts. Landlords, in search of monetary incomes, converted peasant obligations to money rents or labour services while emergent small producers produced for the market, and the introduction of the putting-out system led to the development of rural industry. Interlocking networks of local, regional, and international markets, integrated both horizontally and vertically, linked producers and consumers across Europe. Great urban centres dominated by powerful merchant elites were firmly established as centres of trade and finance. Political power was centralized in territorial monarchies. The consolidation of power in these new absolutist states was heavily dependent on the financial resources provided by merchant capital. Anderson insists on the feudal character of these social, political, and economic changes. In his view, they by no means represent the transition to capitalism. Rather, they consolidated feudalism in new ways. The commodification of the economy, changes in social relations, and emergence of new social groups were accompanied by the consolidation of aristocratic power in the absolutist state. The nobility retained its control over land and labour and remained the ruling class in this new redeployed feudalism. For Anderson, and for Merrington as well, the persistence of these redeployed feudal relations and the character of agrarian change in the countryside blocked the development of merchant capital and presented an obstacle to the transition to capitalism.

This interpretation has much to recommend it and certainly is a powerful corrective to overly general claims about the capitalist character of Europe between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. Not only did the aristocracy remain the dominant class but also labour and land were not commodified and organized through markets. Much less did they coalesce into a system of self-expanding accumulation. Nonetheless, despite its sophistication, Anderson's interpretation remains the prisoner of the bias towards agrarian class relations that characterize Marxist approaches to the transition. In his insistence that these relations remain feudal, Anderson fails to account for the tensions within this redeployed feudalism and to identify the forces that lead to political economic change. His own analysis demonstrates that redeployed feudalism was increasingly dependent upon the production of commodities and monetary circulation for the reproduction of pre-capitalist class relations. This interdependence drove the tension between aristocratic control of the countryside and urban merchant capital. For aristocratic landholders and the state, the acquisition of monetary wealth was the means to acquire status and power. For urban merchant classes, the acquisition of monetary wealth was the means to expand trade and markets and to accumulate capital. While the class relations of the countryside and the overall political economic structure were at once the condition for and limit to commodity production and circulation and to urban mercantile accumulation, the mobility of merchant capital pushed it beyond the limits of feudal agrarian relations and the territorial state. This configuration of forces discloses four distinct but interrelated and interacting processes that structure the transition to capitalism: the transformation of production relations, the circulation of commodities, the circulation of money and credit, and state formation. Each of these processes has a distinct temporality, rate of change, and spatial extension. Viewed from this perspective, the expansion of urban mer-

chant capital and the circulation of commodities and money, as well as the need of the new states for capital, continually pushed beyond the socioeconomic and geographical obstacles presented by the slower transformation of production relations. The response of merchant capital and the state was to create new commodity-producing hinterlands overseas that were based upon slavery and compulsory labour. Overseas expansion was not external to the feudal European. Rather, it emerged from the tensions that defined redeployed feudalism.

Giovanni Arrighi's concept of "cycles of accumulation" is a useful way of examining the changes discussed above. Arrighi analyses the processes forming and reforming the capitalist world economy through recurrent political economic cycles, each under the leadership of a hegemonic power – Genoa, the Netherlands, Britain, or the United States. He emphasizes the importance of the switch from trade in commodities to trade in money as each cycle reaches maturity. Financial expansion is important because it provides the accumulated liquid capital necessary to restructure political and economic relations.¹⁸ Arrighi identifies the origins of the world market with what he terms the "Genoese cycle of accumulation", which ran from the mid-fifteenth century to the end of the sixteenth century. Genoa was forced on a different path than the other Italian city-states. First, Genoa was blocked from access to the eastern Mediterranean, which remained under the control of Venice. Consequently, the Genoese turned their attention to the western Mediterranean. Second, Venice, Florence, and Milan invested surplus capital from commercial expansion in land and in strengthening the state apparatus. This was not possible for Genoa. There the old nobility withdrew from commerce and refeudalized the land surrounding the city. The new nobility invested its surplus capital in financial expansion and the development of banking and credit institutions. The foundation of the Casa di San Giorgio put the control of public finances in the hands of private creditors and turned state debt into an instrument of accumulation. The Genoese restructured their networks of trade and finance in ways that made them the most powerful class in sixteenth-century Europe. Genoa financed the debt of other states and promoted trade expansion. They financially consolidated the European division of labour and controlled European trade along the Genoa-Antwerp axis. Following a policy of "good money", which allowed them to discount the variations of other currencies, they came to dominate European finance.¹⁹

While Genoa was economically dominant, it lacked the military and political power to protect its interests. Genoa, like the other Italian city-states, was further challenged by the rivalries between the emerging absolute monarchies. The solution to this problem was what Arrighi, following Joseph Schumpeter, refers to as a political exchange with the two aristocratic states of the Iberian Peninsula, Spain and Portugal.²⁰ Genoese capital supported both states, while Spanish and Portuguese power furnished protection to

18 G. Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money Power and the Origins of Our Times*, London 1994, pp. 27–84.

19 *Ibid.*, pp. 109–126.

20 *Ibid.*, pp. 119–120.

Genoese capital. The alliance of Genoese capital with the power of the Iberian absolutist states created new overseas hinterlands that were devoted to commodity production on the basis of slavery and compulsory labour.

4. Portugal and the Atlantic Slave-Sugar Complex

Portugal was a relatively poor country and was of secondary importance in the political struggles that were shaping the interstate system in the sixteenth century. Because of its location, it was heavily involved in the Atlantic fisheries. Lisbon and, to a lesser extent, Porto were important stopovers on voyages between the Mediterranean and the Low Countries. There was a developed merchant class in both cities, and these links were strengthened by the Genoese presence there. The Portuguese monarchy as well as the aristocracy needed income. However, Portugal's vocation for maritime discovery is exaggerated. Portugal's maritime prowess was the result of knowledge and experience acquired by practical seamen.²¹ The Portuguese aristocracy (led by Infante Henry, the Navigator) wanted more land, more tenants, and more rents and was in favour of a policy of territorial expansion. Their aim was the conquest of Morocco. Morocco was attractive not only because it offered land for farming and stock raising but also because it was the point of arrival of the trans-Saharan caravans that were the source of Europe's gold. Controlling the gold trade was also attractive for the Genoese, who had already made isolated expeditions as far as the Sudan, because Europe's silver was firmly in the hands of the Germans and the Venetians.

Portuguese and Genoese interests converged around the conquest of Morocco. However, Portuguese policy alternated in fits and starts between maritime and terrestrial expansion that was linked to struggles between aristocratic and mercantile factions (In the ten-year interval between Bartolomeu Dias's expedition rounding the Cape of Good Hope and Vasco da Gama's voyage to India, Portugal again turned its efforts to conquering Morocco). The policies in a sense coalesced. Portugal's repeated failure to conquer Morocco pushed the Portuguese further along the Atlantic coast of Morocco, and return voyages took them further out into the ocean. However, Portuguese expansion along the Atlantic coast of Africa was motivated not by Asian spices but by the desire to directly control the source of European gold in West Africa.²² Not only were the Portuguese voyages financed in large measure by the Genoese (among others) but the latter also participated in them as sailors, as priests, and as specialists in sugar production. Overseas expansion was driven by imperial competition from the beginning. Spain attempted to challenge Portuguese domination in the African Atlantic but was no match for superior Portuguese sea power. Already in the fifteenth century, that is, well before Christopher Columbus, the Atlantic was divided in a fateful way. Spain controlled the Canary Islands

21 V. Magalhães Godinho, *Mito e Mercadoria, Utopia e Prática de Navegar. Séculos XIII–XVIII*, Lisbon 1990, pp. 13–55.

22 V. Magalhães Godinho, *Os Descobrimentos e a Economia Mundial*, Lisbon, 1981–1983, Vol. 1, pp. 139–182.

and, therefore, the sailing routes of the North Atlantic. Portugal controlled Cabo Verde and, with it, the sailing routes to Asia, the South Atlantic routes, and the coast of Africa. This division of the Atlantic effectively gave Portugal a monopoly of the Atlantic slave trade. As they occupied and settled the Atlantic islands, they also founded sugar mills and employed African slave labour.

In my view, Arrighi's analysis of the Genoese cycle strays from the mark at this point. He is almost exclusively concerned with European trade with Asia. This was certainly a profitable trade, but it remained a long-distance, luxury trade even as the volume of goods went up and prices fell. With the exception of the Dutch East Indies, a division of labour never formed between Europe and Asia. From the point of view of Portuguese national interest, its domination of the spice trade was short-lived as Venice regained control of the eastern trade routes.²³ Perhaps in a less spectacular way, and certainly under the historiographical radar, the Portuguese revolutionized relations of production and exchange in Atlantic Africa. They established relations with African polities and built the infrastructure of a modern slave trade that was capable supplying the expanding need for slave labour throughout the Genoese cycle of accumulation and beyond.²⁴ By concentrating a mass slave labour force to engage in specialized commodity production, they transformed slavery as both a force and relation of production. This concentration of slave labour further created the plantation as a modern form of economic organization whose value derived from the control of labour rather than property in land.²⁵ The interdependence and interaction of the slave trade, slave labour, and sugar plantation were capable of reproducing themselves on an expanding scale, producing ever more sugar for the world market and making and remaking the maritime division of labour that contributed to the making of the world market and defined the Atlantic as a region of the world economy. This complex forms an integral part of the process of original accumulation and the formation of the capitalist world economy.

5. São Tomé and the Atlantic Slave-Sugar Complex

Iberian expansion carried sugar production from the Mediterranean into the Atlantic. This movement was the culmination of the long migration of sugar production across the Mediterranean that began in the eleventh century. This slow migration marked the transformation of sugar from an exotic spice obtained through long-distance trade to a good produced within the European economy. Sugar was a rare luxury product, but

23 F. C. Lane, *Venice and History*, Baltimore 1966, pp. 399–411.

24 T. Green, *The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in West Africa, 1300–1589*, Cambridge 2012; L. F. de Alencastro, *The Trade in the Living: The Trade in the Living: The Formation of Brazil in the South Atlantic, Sixteenth to Seventeenth Centuries*, Albany 2018, pp. 39–116.

25 D. Tomich, *Re-Thinking the Plantation: Concepts and Histories*, in: Id./F. dos Santos Gomes/O. M. Gomes da Cunha (eds.), *Re-Thinking the Plantation: Histories, Anthropologies, Archeologies* (=Review 34 [2013] 1/2), pp. 15–39.

incorporation into the European economy gave merchants more control over the production and marketing of this bulky product, shortened the lines of communication, and gradually made it more accessible to consumers. The material characteristics of sugar made it an exceptional instrument for the expansion of the European world economy. It provided a commodifiable means of satisfying an almost universal desire for sweetness. Sugar could be cultivated at a variety of sites across the tropics and subtropics, and it proved to be enormously adaptable in the ways that it could be consumed. It has a striking capacity to alter established dietary patterns and integrate consumers into market relations. The demand for sugar has proven to be remarkably elastic. The more it is produced and the cheaper it is, the greater the demand. The history of the expansion of the sugar market is the production of ever-greater quantities of sugar, the discovery of new forms of consuming it, and the emergence of new strata of consumers.²⁶

In the sixteenth century, the Atlantic sugar industry was centred on the Portuguese colonies of Madeira and São Tomé, off the coast of Africa, the Spanish Canary Islands, and the Spanish Caribbean – above all, Hispaniola and Puerto Rico. Expansion into the Atlantic increased the amount of sugar produced, but the economic, social, and technological organization of sugar production in Madeira, the Canaries, and the Spanish Caribbean remained largely unchanged from what it had been in the Mediterranean. However, we may discern the origin of modern capitalist slavery in São Tomé. If the island of Hispaniola in the Spanish Caribbean was the last Mediterranean sugar industry, then the island of São Tomé off the coast of Africa was the first American sugar colony. The São Tomé slave-sugar complex formed as a new kind of productive space directly integrated into the emerging world market. It is distinguished not by the presence of slaves, but by the dominant position acquired by the slave labour force in the activities that formed the socioeconomic structure of the society and the purpose of colonial enterprise.²⁷ São Tomé was a sugar monoculture. Its labour force was entirely enslaved, and all of the slaves were African. The colony embodied the creation of the new material and social relations of commodity production and exchange that were essential to forming the world market. Regimented collective labour constituted a new productive force directly subordinated to the continuous and almost exclusive production of a single commercial crop destined for the world market.

The sugar monoculture of São Tomé transformed not only slavery but also the slave trade. The slave-trading zones of both West Africa and Kongo directly supplied the ongoing demand for slave labour in a zone of specialized commodity production. The new links of interdependence between the zones of the slave trade and the new sugar frontier went beyond the simple exchange of commodities. Instead, they generated the circulation of slaves and sugar on an expanding scale. Planters converted the revenues from sugar into more slaves and more land. The interrelation and mutual dependence of the slave trade, collective slave labour, and sugar in São Tomé created the conditions for the

26 S. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, New York 1985.

27 Castro, *As Mãos e Pés do Senhor*, p. 48.

expanded geographical and social reproduction of the slave-sugar complex that came to be formative of the Atlantic division of labour.

From the beginning, the island was heavily involved in the slave trade and was the centre of export of Kongolese slaves to the West African gold fields. However, the island itself was soon dominated by extensive sugar monoculture and became a major destination for enslaved Africans. It was close to the slave trading centres of both Kongo and West Africa. The Portuguese crown granted the colonists a license to purchase slaves directly in both markets. The São Toméans also traded illicitly and actively on their own account. The enduring association of slave labour and sugar production was soon entrenched there. During the 1550s, there were between 5,000 and 6,000 slaves in São Tomé. By the 1570s, there were either 70 or 120 sugar mills (depending on the source) located in the north and north-east parts of the island.²⁸ Wealthy planters (*senhores do engenho*) established the pattern that would later also prevail in Brazil. They controlled the river courses and established powerful watermills. They could have between 150 and 300 slaves. They ground their own cane as well as that of subordinate cane farmers (*lavradores de cana*) who were themselves slaveowners. São Tomé was a microcosm of what the Americas would become.²⁹

The distinctively capitalist character of the slave-sugar complex in São Tomé is due to the historical conditions under which land, labour, and sugar production were combined with one another. São Tomé was what Jason Moore has termed a commodity frontier, a distinctive mode of expansion of the world market.³⁰ The concept of commodity frontier refers to the way that the production and distribution of specific primary products restructure geographic space at the margins of world economic expansion. The geographical and environmental conditions of such zones are favourable to the production of specific commodities, particularly agricultural products and raw materials. They are zones in which expansion is possible so long as uncommodified land and, to a lesser extent, labour are available. Incorporation and exploitation of land beyond the frontier is driven by demand for the product. The movement of population and transformation of nature follow upon the demand for the commodity, and the open frontier permits the dramatic restructuring of land and labour relations.

São Tomé possessed favourable environmental conditions for the cultivation of sugar cane and large tracts of uncommodified land. It was also in close proximity to the slave trading centres in both West Africa and Kongo. In contrast to the commodity frontiers in Madeira, the Canary Islands, and the Spanish Caribbean, agriculture in São Tomé was given over entirely to sugar production, the most lucrative crop of the time, by slave

28 J. H. Galloway, *The Sugar Cane Industry: An Historical Geography from its Origins to 1914*, Cambridge 1989, pp. 58–61.

29 I. Batista de Souza, *São Tomé et Príncipe de 1485 à 1755: Une société coloniale. Du blanc au noir*. Paris 2008, pp. 156–171.

30 J. W. Moore, *Sugar and the Expansion of the Modern World-Economy: Commodity Frontiers, Ecological Transformation, and Industrialization*, in: *Review* 23 (2000) 3, pp. 409–433.

labour.³¹ In contrast to European seigneurialism, monopoly of the land did not create a labour force; rather, the creation of a labour force based on the direct and explicit domination of the enslaved labourer valorized the land. In the words of Padre Antônio Vieira, the architect of the Portuguese empire: “Without the negro there is no Pernambuco.”³² The origin of the Atlantic slave plantation was not the distribution of land but the implantation of a slave labour force.

The Portuguese crown granted extensive tracts in its colonial territories on the condition that grantees made them productive. The amount of land available commonly exceeded the amount of land that could be effectively exploited. The concentration of the slave labour force generated the concentration of land and subordinated nature and labour to commodity production. The regimentation of collective slave labour producing specialized commodities for the world market created the plantation as a modern, capitalist form of agricultural organization. Slavery was not an “alternative” to wage labour or other forms of labour. Rather, it was the historically necessary means of valorizing the Atlantic commodity frontier.³³ The exploitation of the soil was determined by the number of slaves at the disposition of the proprietor. Land had no value apart from the slaves who worked it. The wealth of the proprietor was measured by the number of slaves in his possession, not the amount of land. Expansion was driven by the shortage of hands (*falta de braços*), which led to the acquisition of slave labour that could valorize land.

Thus, surplus produced by slave labour did not take the form of ground rent derived from the ownership of land but of what Antônio Barros de Castro terms “slave rent”, which is derived from ownership of the slave.³⁴ The condition for the exploitation of slave labour was ownership of the enslaved as chattel property. We might say that slaves were a form of capital and that slave production was a form of accumulation. Because the slave is property, the labour necessary to reproduce the labourer and surplus labour are manifested differently than in the capital-wage labour relation. Marx argues:

*In slave-labour, even that part of the working-day in which the slave is only reproducing the value of his own means of subsistence, in which, therefore, in fact, he works for himself alone, appears as labour for his master. All of the slave's labour appears as unpaid labour. In wage-labour, on the contrary, even surplus labour, or unpaid labour, appears as paid. There the property relation conceals the labour of the slave for himself, here the money relation conceals the unrequited labour of the wage-labourer.*³⁵

For the wage labourer, the exchange of equivalent values masks the production and expropriation of surplus value. For the slave there is no exchange of equivalent values. As

31 Perhaps the island's distance from Portugal and the need for ships to have a profitable return cargo encouraged the development of sugar monoculture there. See S. G. Bunker/P. S. Ciccantell, *Globalization and the Race for Resources*, Baltimore 2005, pp. 1–33.

32 Cited in Castro, *As Mãos e Pés do Senhor*, pp. 48–49.

33 *Ibid.*, pp. 50–52.

34 *Ibid.*, pp. 50–55.

35 Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 680.

property, the slave is totally at the disposition of the planter. Labour is obtained by direct (personal) domination.³⁶ As seventeenth-century Italian Jesuit André João Antonil wrote in his account of the Brazilian economy, the slave is the “hands and feet of the planter”.³⁷ In other words, as property the person of the slave has a value, but the labour of the slave by itself has no value. While the value of the slave may be determined by the potential value produced by the slave over the course of a working lifetime, it is independent of the value actually produced by the labour of the slave. The cost of slave subsistence is not a return to labour. The slave would have to be fed, clothed, and housed whether she/he works or not. Under slavery labour is not an economic relation.

While all slave labour appears as surplus labour, if we look at the slaves as a group over time, it is clear that a portion of their labour was devoted to producing for their own subsistence. The system of provision grounds and free days to work them was institutionalized on the sugar plantations of São Tomé and was an integral part of the formation of new sugar frontiers in Brazil in the seventeenth century and the Caribbean in the eighteenth century. When working for themselves, the slaves were still working for the master. The practice of allowing slaves marginal lands and time not devoted to export crop production (whether religious holidays or “dead” time in the crop cycle) in order to provide for at least part of their subsistence allowed the slave owner to lower the cost of maintaining the slave labour force. Further, this practice enhanced control over the slaves by tying them to the plantation.³⁸ This labour is effectively “necessary labour”. It ensures the material reproduction of the slave labour force, the condition of the existence of the economy and the society.

This necessary labour time stands in opposition to the labour time realized in the production of the staple product destined for the market, that is, to surplus labour. The surplus entire product is appropriated by the slaveholder without exchange. It takes the form of a particular use value produced for exchange whose value is determined in the market. The slave rent, that is the revenue derived from ownership of the slave as property, is the difference between the labour time dedicated to slave subsistence and the labour time devoted to the production of the export crop. If goods purchased on the market supply some portion of slave subsistence, then that portion of necessary labour is transferred from the closed sphere of domination of the slave plantation to the exchange economy

36 Castro, *A Economia Política*, pp. 67–107; Franco, *Homens Livres*, pp. 173–192; Tomich, *Re-Thinking the Plantation*, pp. 193–212.

37 A. J. Antonil, *Cultura e Opulência do Brasil por suas Drogas e Minas*. Texte de l'édition de 1711, traduction française et commentaire critique par A. Mansuy, Paris 1965, p. 120.

38 However, I wish to stress once again, that such activities were not a return to labour. (Note the New Economic historians treat these activities as if they were the equivalent of a wage.) Rather, they were the cost of maintaining the master's investment in slaves as property. As such, they were a condition for labour. However, at the same time, slave provision grounds and free days were an interstitial space of slave self-organization. They opened the ground for contestation, negotiation, and resistance. Access to these resources enabled slaves to develop individual interest and community bonds. Through them, the slaves became what Sidney Mintz has termed a proto-peasantry and elaborate a peasant way of life while still enslaved. S. W. Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations*, New York 1974, pp. 146–156; Tomich, *Through the Prism of Slavery*, pp. 139–151; D. Tomich, *Slavery in the Circuit of Sugar: Martinique and the World-Economy, 1830–1848*, Albany 2016, pp. 367–395.

and will depend on the price of those goods in relation to the price of the export commodity. Nonetheless, the labour devoted to slave subsistence varied little over the course of slavery. Slave rent remained relatively stable throughout the history of New World slavery and amounted to perhaps four-fifths of the total slave labour.³⁹ The slave rent produced by the collective labour of enslaved African workers determined the pattern of surplus production and accumulation on the Atlantic commodity frontiers. It was the driving force that extended the market relations and created a new division of labour.

Castro's concept of slave rent leads directly to concrete historical analysis. In his formulation, slave rent is an open category that only achieves full expression in concrete historical conditions. The world market and land are integrated into and constitutive of the categories of slave rent and slave labour. The socioeconomic characteristics of slavery develop through interaction with specific geographies, ecologies, and the material characteristics of production at a specific stage of development of the world market. In São Tomé, the slave labour process and the social relations of slavery, from work routines to the size and composition of the slave gang and the distribution of tasks, were adapted to the material processes and definite technical division of labour required for sugar production and developed the industrial character of slave labour. Sugar production is an agro-industrial process. Sugar has to be harvested when it is ripe and converted into sugar as soon as it is harvested. This process entails sequential steps of cutting, grinding, boiling, and crystallizing. It requires the temporal-spatial integration of a complex division of labour and the continuous calculation of time, distance, and quantity of material. No more cane could be grown than could be cut, and no more cane could be cut than could be converted into sugar. This proportional relation between sectors established the scale of production. The technical and social divisions of labour are interdependent and mutually formative. The slave relation compelled the cooperative labour of the slave gang. The slave labour force was adapted to the historically determined technical division of labour. Specialized slave workers were assigned to each sector of the production process and were subjected to a complex time and labour discipline. The working day extended from sunrise to sunset, with night work to process the crop during harvest season. The slave relation and the proportionality between sectors governed innovation and increases in output. The amount of surplus could be increased by increasing the number of slaves, subject to material and socioeconomic constraints, or by increasing the duration and/or intensity of labour. Technological change was possible, but the obstacle to it was not that slaves were incapable of working with technology. Rather, because the person of the slave was owned as property, technological innovation was not labour saving.⁴⁰ Thus, surplus production moved within definite historically determined parameters.

Slave rents varied in relation to the exploitation of the land so that slave labour created the conditions for its own expansion. Castro divides the development of the commodity frontier into three phases. These phases form sequentially in time and coexist in space.

39 Castro, *As Mãos e Pés do Senhor*, pp. 50–55.

40 M. Weber, *Economy and Society*, Berkeley 1978, Vol. I, p. 126.

In the first pioneer phase, a large proportion of labour time is devoted to clearing land, building infrastructure, and preparing for the first crop. A phase of maturity follows. The land is at its most productive, and the labour force is dominated by able-bodied workers who are fully integrated into the technical division of labour. This phase of peak output is followed by a phase of decline. The demographic composition of the labour force changes, and a greater share of non-working slaves have to be supported, with prolonged sugar monoculture degrading the environment and diminishing yields.⁴¹ Differential productivity and differential rents pushed the expansion of the sugar frontier. Rents were lower in the pioneer and the declining zones. So long as land was available, sugar production extended onto new lands while older zones became depleted.⁴² Thus, differential slave rents created a moving frontier expanded into new zones as the old ones declined. Interestingly, because the slave labour force provided its own subsistence independently from sugar production, plantation in declining zones could turn in on themselves and continue to operate with a very low return from the sale of sugar.

The category of slave rent discloses the relation between slave labour, the commodity frontier, the slave trade, and the sugar market. Slave labour drove the exploitation of the Atlantic commodity frontiers. It valorized land within the parameters set by the material-technical conditions of sugar production. The concentration of slaves made possible sugar monoculture and generated the plantation as a form of socioeconomic organization. The expansion of the sugar plantation generated continuous large-scale demand for able-bodied, low cost slave labour that was met through the Portuguese monopoly of the African slave trade and the infrastructure for systematic cross-cultural slave trading that it established. The ever-greater supply of sugar and its lower price increased demand and widened the market. (Here it is important to note the sugar from São Tomé was of lower quality and therefore cheaper than sugar from Madeira and other centres of sugar production.) The plantation reproduced itself from the profits generated by the sale of its sugar, and planters converted the revenues from sugar into more slaves and more land. The growing volume of production enabled Portugal to feed itself by exchanging sugar for wheat from the Baltic, and the increased circulation of money and commodities benefitted merchant capital throughout Europe, above all the Genoese.

6. Slavery in the Capitalist World-Economy

Beginning the analysis of capitalism with the formation of the world market in the sixteenth century enables us to see capital as a historically changing relation that is continually made and remade. Further, it discloses the ways in which diverse social relations of production, above all slavery, are constitutive of capitalist relations of production and exchange and the ways that such relations are themselves reconstituted in the historical

41 A. B. de Castro, *Sete Ensaios sobre a Economia Brasileira*, Rio de Janeiro 1971, Vol. 2, pp. 48–83.

42 Castro, *As Mãos e Pés*, pp. 55–62; Castro, *Sete Ensaios*, II, pp. 48–69.

processes of capital accumulation. The alliance of urban merchant capital and territorial states created new hinterlands in the Atlantic, producing new commodities on a scale that went beyond the limits to surplus production and commodity circulation created by class relations in the European countryside. European conquest and colonial expansion in the Atlantic created new agricultural frontiers that systematically subordinated land and labour to commodity production and formed new commodity circuits. Atlantic slavery was at once a new relation of production and a new productive force. It was a mobile and flexible form of capital that was well suited to the exploitation of the vast spaces of the maritime Atlantic. The slave plantation was the nexus of a double frontier, the African slaving frontier and the American commodity frontier.⁴³ The African slave trade offered a virtually endless supply of labour as the Americas offered a virtually endless supply of land. Slavery provided the systemic link between the African slave trade as the source of labour and the valorization of Atlantic commodity frontiers. Slave labour was geographically mobile and could be adapted to the increasing scale of production required by the world market and to the material requirements of the crop. The social relations of slavery organized the labour supplied by the slave trade and created a collective force of cooperative labour capable of large-scale commercial production. Slavery as a form of accumulation systematically expanded commodity production and the volume of commodities and money in circulation and created and extended an agricultural hinterland for urban mercantile capital. In contrast to the luxury trade with Asia, the Atlantic commodity frontiers established a maritime division of labour⁴⁴ and created the conditions for the emergence of a world market in the sixteenth century.

The physical mobility and adaptability of slave labour made possible the exploitation of the Atlantic commodity frontiers and generated the conditions for the further expansion of the slave-sugar complex. Slaves were not bound to the land. They could be moved from one place to another either through forced migration or sale. Slave plantation production could be restructured on new frontiers in accordance with the prevailing conditions of the world market and capital accumulation. The logic of differential rents applied within and between sugar frontiers. As the productivity of land declined, production moved on to new frontiers. The further the frontier was located from the final market, the greater the transportation costs and the larger the scale of production that was necessary.⁴⁵ New slave commodity frontiers could be formed on a larger scale. More slaves could be concentrated in new spaces, and slave relations could be reconstituted to increase surplus production. Sugar was an almost ideal product for expanding the market: the more available the sugar and the cheaper the price, the greater the demand. Slavery was intrinsically part of the capitalist world economy from its inception. From the fifteenth through the nineteenth century, the slave-sugar complex extended across

43 Alencastro, *The Trade in the Living*; G. Coco, *A Dinâmica das Duas Fronteiras no Atlântico Sul*, in *Glob(AL): Bio-poder e Luta em uma América Latina Globalizada*, Rio de Janeiro 2005, pp. 77–95.

44 F. Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life*, New York 1981, p. 63.

45 Bunker/Ciccantelli, *Globalization and the Race for Resources*, pp. 1–99.

the Atlantic, opening new frontiers and producing on an ever-larger scale. At each step in its expansion, it was integrated in new ways into the structures of the capitalist world economy. São Tomé was the first of a sequence of commodity frontiers that extended the slave-sugar complex across the Atlantic. Beginning in the fifteenth century, the slave-sugar complex was integral to the formation of the world economic division of labour and the creation of the world market of the sixteenth century. At each successive stage of expansion and restructuring of the world economy, Atlantic slave production was also restructured, and its relation to world economic processes of capital accumulation changed. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, a new sugar frontier was formed in Brazil. The scale of production in Bahia and Pernambuco dwarfed that of Saint Tomé and created new commodity circuits and new strata of sugar consumers in Europe.⁴⁶ The Brazilian slave-sugar complex contributed the consolidation of the world market of the sixteenth century. It marked the end of the Genoese cycle of accumulation and, in Marx's formulation, the beginning of the history of capital. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, during what Arrighi refers to as the Dutch cycle of accumulation, the world market organized economic competition and expansion and created the West Indian sugar frontier as part of the capitalist world division of labour. Slave production multiplied and diversified with the formation of new commodity frontiers, most notably tobacco and rice in North America, gold production in Brazil, and coffee and indigo in the Caribbean. These frontiers were part of the original accumulation of capital that culminated with the domination of industrial capital and the capital-wage labour relation as the organizing hub of the processes restructuring the capitalist world economy. During the nineteenth century, the new slave commodity frontiers of the second slavery in the US South (cotton), Cuba (sugar), and Brazil (coffee) formed as part of the Industrial Revolution and the British cycle of productive capital. What anthropologists refer to as "plantation America" is the cumulative result of the historical succession of slave commodity frontiers.⁴⁷ However, by the nineteenth century, the ending of the Atlantic slave trade severed the link between the source of labour in Africa and the slave commodity frontiers in the Americas. The combination of abolitionism and slave resistance brought an end to chattel slavery in the Atlantic slave zones. Nonetheless, the end of chattel slavery in the Americas did not signal the end of forced labour. The perspective presented here further suggests the ways in which the further expansion of world capitalist accumulation after the destruction of Atlantic slavery created new and more diverse commodity frontiers and new and more diverse forms of compulsory labour in Africa, Asia, and elsewhere in the Americas.

46 S. B. Schwartz (ed.), *Tropical Babels: Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1450–1680*, Chapel Hill 2004.

47 Ch. Wagley, *Plantation America: A Cultural Sphere*, in: V. Rubin (ed.), *Caribbean Studies: A Symposium*. Seattle 1960, pp. 3–13; M. Harris, *Patterns of Race in the Americas*, New York 1964 pp. 44–53.

Globalization and Coerced Labour in Early Modern Asia and Africa

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ABSTRACTS

Die frühneuzeitliche Globalisierung ging mit der gleichzeitigen Ausbreitung von Systemen der Ausbeutung von Zwangsarbeit einher. Dieser Artikel versucht, unser Verständnis der Auswirkungen der frühen Globalisierung zu vertiefen, indem er vergleichend die Auswirkungen der steigenden globalen Nachfrage nach (Zwangs-)Arbeit auf Systeme der Unfreiheit und Sklaverei, insbesondere in Westafrika und Südasien, untersucht. Wir argumentieren, dass die sich entwickelnden Systeme des globalisierten Handels während der Frühen Neuzeit einen transformativen Einfluss auf viele lokale Formen der Sklaverei und Leibeigenschaft in Afrika und Asien hatten, indem sie diese mit den globalen Forderungen nach geschlossener, kommodifizierter Sklaverei verbanden. Wir schlussfolgern auf dieser Grundlage, dass lokale Systeme der Sklaverei und Leibeigenschaft und globale Systeme der kommodifizierten Sklaverei nicht getrennt und unverbunden waren, sondern nebeneinander existierten und auf drei Ebenen interagierten: auf der Ebene der Staatsbildung und -expansion, der Anpassung sozio-politischer Systeme zur Steigerung des Sklavenexports als Reaktion auf die Anforderungen eines globalisierten Arbeitsmarktes und der Modifizierung lokaler Arbeitssysteme von Sklaverei und Leibeigenschaft. Dies unterstreicht die Notwendigkeit neuer, global-vergleichender Ansätze, um unser Verständnis der mit Zwang verbundenen Wurzeln des globalen Kapitalismus und der langfristigen Transformationen der Sklaverei zu vertiefen.

Early modern globalization was accompanied with a simultaneous expansion of systems of coerced labour exploitation across the globe. This article seeks to deepen our understanding of the impact of early globalization by using a comparative approach to examine the effects of the increasing global demand for (coerced) labour on systems of bondage and slavery, especially in West Africa and South Asia. We argue that the developing systems of globalized trade during the early modern era had a transformative impact on many local forms of slavery and bondage

in Africa and Asia by connecting them to global demands for closed, commodified (or 'chat-tel') slavery. We conclude that that local systems of slavery and bondage and global systems of commodified slavery were not separate and unconnected, but co-existed and interacted at three levels: that of state formation and expansion; the adaption of socio-political systems to increase slave exports in response to the demands of a globalized labour market; and the modification of local systems of slave and bonded labour. This underlines the need for new global-comparative approaches to deepen our understanding of the coercive roots of global capitalism and the long-term transformations of slavery.

1. Globalization and Slavery

The early modern period, lasting from circa 1500 to circa 1800, witnessed both an acceleration of globalization and an expansion of systems of coerced labour exploitation. In his classic work *The Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith notes that by uniting "the most distant parts of the world, by enabling them to relieve one another's wants, to increase one another's enjoyments, and to encourage one another's industry, their general tendency would seem to be beneficial. To the natives, however, both of the East and West Indies, all the commercial benefits which can have resulted from those events have been sunk and lost in the dreadful misfortunes which they have occasioned."¹ In his anti-colonial critique, Smith's contemporary, Jacob Haafner, points out that European expansion had led to "unprecedented acts of murder and repression", followed by generations who no longer "take goods and possessions by robbery or public violence, but manage to collect them through thousand inventions and deceitful tricks, by unbearable burdens, extractions and extortions".²

How should we understand this simultaneous rise of globalization and coercion? Was it a mere coincidence, a matter of bad timing, as Smith would have us believe when he argues that "these misfortunes" arose "rather from accident than from any thing in the nature of those events themselves".³ Or was it the consequence of systematic exploitation, as Haafner suggests? Recent debates on slavery, globalization, and capitalism underscore the need to revisit these questions that are central to understanding not only the coercive roots of global capitalism but also especially the global history of slavery within and beyond the Atlantic world. Herman J. Nieboer and Evsey D. Domar's classic theory explains slavery as a response to a situation in which land is abundant.⁴ According to Peter Kolchin, "the most persistent theory has been one that sees a shortage of labor produced by a high land-to-population ratio (low population density) as the crucial in-

1 A. Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, vol. II, 5th edn, London 1789, p. 459.

2 J. Haafner, *Verhandelingen over het nut der zendelingen en zendelings-genootschappen*, ed. by J. A. de Moor and P. G. E. I. J. van der Velde, Verloren 1993, p. 37. The original essay was published as volume XXII of the *Verhandelingen van Teylers Godgeleerd Genootschap*, Haarlem 1807.

3 Smith, *An Inquiry*, p. 459.

4 H. J. Nieboer, *Slavery as an Industrial System: Ethnological researches*, The Hague 1900; E. D. Domar, *The Causes of Slavery or Serfdom: A Hypothesis*, in: *Journal of Economic History* 30 (1970), pp. 18–32.

gradient leading people to force others to work for them”.⁵ With respect to global expansion, Howard Lamar remarks that “the frontier will always be an area of bondage where labor is concerned”.⁶ However, such perspectives are problematic in two important ways. First, slavery has never been limited to situations marked by low population density and an abundance of land. It is difficult, for example, to reconcile the fact that regions such as Java and the Banda archipelago, characterized by both low population densities, had systems of plantation slavery (Banda) or a mixture of slave and wage labour relations (Java), while in West Africa, regions such as the Bight of Biafra, having a relatively high population density, had highly intense systems of export slavery.⁷ Second, slavery has never existed as a single universal form of servitude but instead has always encompassed a range of bonded relations that may share similarities but also have distinctive local, historical, and contextualized manifestations. The Nieboer-Domar thesis has, in short, been challenged by the argument that slavery developed in different ways in different places for different reasons.⁸ Slavery likewise cannot be reduced to geographically defined forms of bondage such as “European”, “Asian”, or “Atlantic” slaveries. The way in which slavery operated in a particular milieu has always been deeply affected by time, circumstances, economic forces, and other factors.⁹

The complexities of slavery highlight the need to focus on how expanding networks of global trade during the early modern period not only connected consumers and producers in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas in multifaceted patterns of interdependence, but also affected social and labour relations and especially systems of bondage and slavery.¹⁰ Recent economic history tends to downplay the nature and extent of global contact during the early modern era, characterizing this period as one of “soft” globalization compared to the “real” or “hard” globalization that flourished during and after the nineteenth century.¹¹ An interesting response to this approach comes from historians

5 P. Kolchin, *Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom*, Cambridge 2009, p. 17.

6 H. Lamar, *From Bondage to Contract: Ethnic Labor in the American West, 1600–1890*, in: S. Hahn/J. Prude (eds.), *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation: Essays in the Social History of Rural America*, Chapel Hill 1985, p. 295.

7 G. Ugo Nwokeji, *The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra: An African Society in the Atlantic World*, Cambridge 2010.

8 O. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*, Cambridge 1982.

9 S. W. Mintz, *Was the Plantation Slave a Proletarian?*, in: J. Bieber (ed.), *Plantation Societies in the Era of European Expansion*, Hampshire 1997, p. 306; N. Worden, *Slavery in Dutch South Africa*, Cambridge 1995.

10 D. O. Flynn/A. Giráldez, *Born with a “Silver Spoon”: The Origin of World Trade in 1571*, in: *Journal of World History* 6 (1995) 2, pp. 201–221; J. De Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behavior and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present*, Cambridge 2008; M. Berg, *Asian Luxuries and the Making of the European Consumer Revolution*, in: M. Berg/E. Eger (eds.), *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Luxury Goods*, London 2002; C. Evans/G. Rydén, “Voyage Iron”: An Atlantic Slave Trade Currency, Its European Origins, and West African Impact, *Past and Present* 239 (2018) 1, pp. 41–70; J. E. Inikori, *Africans and the Industrial Revolution in England: A Study in International Trade and Economic Development*, Cambridge 2002; G. Riello/T. Roy, *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500–1850*, Leiden 2009.

11 Jan De Vries emphasizes that the early modern period already witnessed “soft” globalization characterized by “sustained interactions”, “interdependence and integration”, and (some levels of) “time and space compression”, but agrees with Jeffrey G. Williamson and Kevin O’Rourke and that in the absence of “price convergence”, there was no “real” or “hard” globalization. The critique of De Vries on the use of “price convergence” as an indicator

who emphasize globalization's impact rather than its forms. Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giráldez argue that we can speak of globalization when "[major zones of the world] exchange products *continuously* [...] and on a scale that generated *deep* and *lasting* impacts on all trading partners".¹² However, Flynn and Giráldez do not delineate the criteria for continuous, deep, and lasting very clearly. The task of doing so has been taken up especially by cultural historians who examine the impact of global connectedness in terms of cultural exchanges and adaptations, such as changing consumption patterns and cultural habits.¹³ Despite the rise of fields such as global labour history, the systematic study of the far-reaching impact of early globalization on the lives of normal people across the globe remains poorly developed. The need to correct this deficiency is all that much more important given the labour-intensive character of these early global connections and the related commodity chains that affected people's lives in various ways. Just as Anne E. C. McCants responded to the criticism that globalization in the early modern period was restricted to the trade in "small luxuries" by reminding us that this trade nevertheless led to "mass consumption", so the (global) history of labour should remind us that the *mass mobilization* of labour was required to produce and transport these items.

This article seeks to deepen our understanding of the impact of early globalization by using a comparative approach to examine the effects of the increasing global demand for (coerced) labour on systems of bondage and slavery, especially in West Africa and South Asia, two regions that supplied most of this era's captive labour. In so doing, it breaks with the historiographical propensity to deal with different forms of slavery in the early modern period as parallel but unconnected phenomena by proposing a framework for understanding the dynamics and sociopolitical consequences of slavery and bondage from a wider world perspective, a framework that highlights the need to distinguish between *local* and *global* systems of slavery. More specifically, we argue that the developing systems of globalized trade during the early modern era had a transformative impact on many local forms of slavery and bondage in Africa and Asia by connecting them to global

of globalization, although hidden in fn. 36, is crucial. On the question when and under what conditions prices converged, he notes that "[t]hey rarely do. Tests for price convergence in the twentieth century are few and inconclusive [...]. The nineteenth century offers the most celebrated examples of commodity and factor price convergence, but most convergence is limited to areas brought within colonial and imperial trading structures. Since this was also the century of divergence between industrial/temperate and tropical economies, it might be best to say that nineteenth century convergence was limited to the convergers. It was not a global phenomenon." See J. De Vries, The Limits of Globalization in the Early Modern World, in: *The Economic History Review* 63 (2010) 3, pp. 710–733; J. G. Williamson/K. H. O'Rourke, When Did Globalisation Begin?, in: *European Review of Economic History* 6 (2002) 1, pp. 23–50; J. G. Williamson/K. H. O'Rourke, Once More. When did Globalization Begin?, in: *European Review of Economic History* 8 (2004) 1, pp. 109–117; J. G. Williamson/K. H. O'Rourke, After Columbus: Explaining Europe's Overseas Trade Boom, 1500–1800, in: *Journal of Economic History* 62 (2002) 2, pp. 417–456; M. D. Bordo/A. M. Taylor/J. G. Williamson (eds.), *Globalization in Historical Perspective*, Chicago 2003.

12 D. Flynn/A. Giráldez, Path dependence, time lags and the birth of globalisation: A critique of O'Rourke and Williamson, in: *European Review of Economic History* 8 (2004) 1, pp. 81–108 (emphasis added).

13 A. McCants, Exotic Goods, Popular Consumption, and the Standard of Living: Thinking About Globalization in the Early Modern World, in: *Journal of World History* 18 (2007) 4, pp. 433–462.

demands for closed, commodified slavery – an impact that resonated throughout these regions' social, economic, and political systems.¹⁴

In his transformation hypothesis, Paul Lovejoy argues that the demand for coerced labour from the Americas fundamentally shifted the nature of the institution of slavery in certain regions of Africa from forms of bondage set within lineage systems to one in which slaves formed a vital role in local production, developing into what he called a "slave mode of production" in which the economic, social, and political institutions were based on slavery.¹⁵ This theory has come under criticism from historians who claim that external demand, although significant in the development of some states and societies, merely stimulated an expansion of *existing* forms of bondage/coercion. Three main points have emerged in response to Lovejoy's work.

Firstly, it has been pointed out that the presence of the trans-Saharan slave trade meant that many societies across West Africa were already geared towards export slavery before the rise of the transatlantic slave trade.¹⁶ Secondly, until the mid-nineteenth century, trade within Africa was controlled mainly by Africans. Europeans largely abandoned attempts to use military force by the early fifteenth century as it was ineffective and the procurement of slaves had to rely on African merchants or coastal middlemen. As the trade in the hands of Africans expanded rapidly, it is argued that this must have been because there were existing systems to build on.¹⁷ Thirdly, in many parts of Africa land was plentiful but required high labour inputs, and labour was relatively scarce during important times in the year. These conditions generally lowered the cost of land and made labour extremely valuable. It has been argued that this meant that various forms of labour coercion were, at least from an economic standpoint, were the only means of increasing (or just maintaining) production, which therefore suggests that slavery was an integral factor in the region's economies long before the arrival of Europeans.¹⁸

14 The argument advanced here is a synthesis of the authors' earlier work. See A. Dalrymple-Smith, *A Comparative History of Commercial Transition in Three West African Slave Trading Economies, 1630 to 1860*, unpublished PhD thesis, Wageningen University, 2017; M. van Rossum, *Connecting Global Slavery and Local Bondage: Rethinking Slavery in Early Modern Asia*. Paper presented to the international workshop "Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean and Indonesian Archipelago Worlds (16th to 19th Century): New Research, Results and Comparisons", International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, 9–10 November 2016; M. van Rossum, *Global Slavery, Local Bondage? Rethinking Slavery as (Im)Mobilizing Regimes from the Case of the Dutch Indian Ocean and Indonesian Archipelago Worlds*, in: *Journal of World History* 31 (2020) 4, pp. 693–727.

15 Lovejoy is clear that this analysis does not apply to every part of Africa. For example, the Islamic states of the savannah or East Africa developed very different systems of bondage/slavery. P. E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*, Cambridge 1983, pp. 18–20. This was developed in the dependency tradition of scholars such as Walter Rodney. W. Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, London 1972.

16 H. S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, Cambridge 2010, p. 108.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 108. Klein estimates that the trans-Saharan route was more substantial up until the mid-seventeenth century, pp. 53 and 106. J. Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1800*, Cambridge 1998, p. 39.

18 According to Thornton, "the legal basis for wealth in Africa lay in the idea of transferring ownership of people", which explains the rapid expansion of the slave trade (p. 95). The legal and cultural arguments are contested by Austin, who argues in a case study of Asante that while no cultural barriers existed to the development of a wage economy, the economic costs of free labour were so much higher that there was a "hobsons choice" with regard to slavery. G. Austin, *Labour, Land, and Capital in Ghana: From Slavery to Free Labour in Asante*,

While acknowledging that African societies had both agency in their interactions with Europeans and in dealing with existing systems of bondage/slavery, the dependency-influenced approach of Lovejoy and Walter Rodney still holds important lessons for exploring the history of slavery and coerced labour globally.¹⁹ Combined with rising prices, the European-African trade in goods desired by Africans encouraged an expansion in slave-producing activities, in slave exports, and in subsequent sociopolitical changes. The impact, of course, varied enormously by area, region, and time. Acquiring and transporting slaves was expensive, so new mercantile networks allowed for the “perfection of institutions of capture”.²⁰ Markets developed for female slaves in Africa to complement the strong demand for males in the Americas.²¹ In some areas with less centralized institutions (“acephalous” societies), external demand for slaves was responsible for a rapid increase in participation in global trade networks. This could be through the greater use of enslavement as a judicial punishment or through pressures to engage in trade to acquire important trade goods.²²

Our analysis takes inspiration from the more developed interpretation of Lovejoy’s theory in which external pressures on areas with long-established systems of both local and often global slavery systems led to societal and institutional transformations. During the accelerating, but still very labour-intensive globalization of the early modern period, we argue that these transformations were not only African or Atlantic but also world-wide processes. In Africa, however, the impact varied according to the local context and therefore needs to be investigated from a comparative perspective across time and space. More importantly, we argue, these processes not only affected the economic trajectories of specific regions but also had a deep impact on wider global and local social systems of slavery and (coerced) labour that needs to be investigated.

As will become clear in the following pages, this approach differs from recent work by Jeff Fynn-Paul that emphasizes the importance of “slaving zones” to understanding slavery as a global phenomenon.²³ We believe that this model’s explanatory value is limited because the premises upon which it rests, such as the argument that the tension between social and political power structures and the protection of societal “insiders” rights is crucial to shaping slave regimes and the regulation of enslavement globally, are little more than truisms about how societies define an individual’s identity and status as an “insider”

1807–1956, London 2005, pp. 155–170. This analysis is supported by Stillwell more generally for sub-Saharan Africa. S. Stillwell, *Slavery and Slaving in African History*, Cambridge 2014, pp. 124–132.

19 See, e.g., T. Green, *The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Western Africa, 1300–1589*, Cambridge 2011, pp. 20–21, 279–281.

20 Patrick Manning explains that people were exported in such large numbers from a labour scarce environment because “every man has his price”, and European traders were willing to provide what Africans wanted. P. Manning, *Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental, and African Slave Trades*, Cambridge 1999, p. 33.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 129.

22 Nwokeji, *Slave Trade*; W. Hawthorne, *Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves*, Portsmouth 2003.

23 J. Fynn-Paul, *Slaving Zones in Global History: The Evolution of a Concept*, in: J. Fynn-Paul/D. A. Pargas (eds.), *Slaving Zones: Cultural Identities, Ideologies, and Institutions in the Evolution of Global Slavery*, Leiden 2018, pp. 1–19.

or “outsider”.²⁴ We need to go beyond such truisms to understand why different forms of slavery and bondage existed and functioned the way they did.

We have three specific concerns about this paradigm. First, we believe that the model’s link between monotheism and the “perfecting” of the “no-slaving zone” is weak; while this link may apply to the Mediterranean, it holds little, if any, explanatory value for the rest of the world. As the story of the Japanese sailor Magotarō, who was shipwrecked and enslaved in Southeast Asia in the 1760s, illustrates, strong states, such as early modern Japan, were able to protect their subjects from enslavement or mistreatment well beyond their borders.²⁵ Second, the slaving zones argument focuses mainly on the ideologies of slave-importing societies and largely ignores the dynamics and practices that developed as slave-exporting societies began to interact with global systems of commerce, for example enslavement, commodification, and transformation of slaves’ status and identity. Third, this paradigm obscures the extent to which societies that formally ban the enslavement of its own members developed other mechanisms to extract bonded or forced labour from societal “insiders”, such as punitive contracts, debt systems, conscription, and various forms of *corvée*, or forced, labour. In short, global systems of (commodified) slavery must be understood in relation to other forms of bondage and exploitation. Rather than applauding monotheism’s role in creating “perfect no-slaving zones”, it might be more fruitful, for example, to consider the links between imperial expansion and the development of elaborate forms of contract or *corvée* labour or impressment systems protected by penal sanctions.

2. The Impact of Globalization on Labour and Slavery

While long-distance trade had linked various regions in Eurasia with one another for millennia, the early modern period witnessed a new phase of globalization that was brought about by the intensification of maritime connections between different parts of the globe, beginning at the end of the fifteenth century when Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope and sailed to India.²⁶ The establishment of direct shipping links between Europe, Africa, and Asia, first by the Portuguese and then by other Europeans, had a profound impact on trade and politics in the Indian Ocean and Indonesian archi-

24 The concept of “open” and “closed” slavery is crucial to understanding insider-outsider dynamics. See J. L. Watson, *Slavery as an Institution: Open and Closed Systems*, in: J. L. Watson (ed.), *Asian and African Systems of Slavery*, Berkeley 1980, pp. 1–15. For recent scholarship on the nature and dynamics of societal membership, see U. Bosma/G. Kessler/L. Lucassen (eds.), *Migration and Membership Regimes in Global and Historical Perspective*, Leiden 2013.

25 W. G. Aston, *Adventures of a Japanese Sailor in the Malay Archipelago, A.D. 1764 to 1771*, in: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 22 (1890), pp. 157–181; M. van Rossum, *Werkers van de Wereld. Globalisering, arbeid en interculturele ontmoetingen tussen Aziatische en Europese zeelieden in dienst van de VOC, 1600–1800*, Hilversum 2014, pp. 92–93, 251–254.

26 J. R. Bruijn/F. S. Gaastra (eds.), *Ships, Sailors and Spices: East India Companies and Their Shipping in the 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries*, Amsterdam 1993.

pelago.²⁷ Although Asian merchants remained active and important players in the Indian Ocean and maritime Asian worlds, the expansion of the Portuguese *Estado da Índia* during the sixteenth century,²⁸ the creation of the Dutch East India Company's commercial empire in the seventeenth century, and the activities of the British East India Company and the French *Compagnie des Indes* during the eighteenth century spurred a dramatic expansion on direct, long-distance commercial links between Europe and East, South, and Southeast Asia.²⁹ The European discovery of the Americas at the end of the fifteenth century likewise created new intercontinental circuits of exchange during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, especially with the development of labour-intensive monoculture plantation systems in the Caribbean and North America and the attendant creation of an Atlantic "world" that linked Europe, the Americas, and West and West Central Africa in increasingly complex ways.³⁰ As others have noted, the dispersal of American goods and foodstuffs that accompanied the "Columbian exchange" had a transformative impact on societies and cultivation across the globe.³¹

With the expansion of early modern global trade and labour-intensive production, many parts of the world witnessed an increase in the demand for labour, sometimes in well-populated areas but also in less densely or even newly cultivated regions. Some of this demand was met by population increases brought about by the introduction of new American food crops, such as the potato in Europe or sweet potatoes and maize in China.³² In many areas, however, local populations were insufficient to meet this increased demand for labour. This trend was most obvious in the Americas, where European diseases decimated indigenous populations. At the same time, exploitation of the continent's mineral and agricultural riches required ever increasing amounts of labour. The failure of experiments using Native Americans and indentured European drove an increasing reliance on enslaved Africans, who, counterintuitively, were found to be the cheaper and more cost-effective labour option.³³

27 K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean*, Cambridge 1985; G. Borsa (ed.), *Trade and Politics in the Indian Ocean*, New Delhi 1990; R. Mukherjee/L. Subramanian (eds.), *Politics and Trade in the Indian Ocean: Essays in Honour of Ashin Das Gupta*, New Delhi 1998; U. Das Gupta (ed.), *The World of the Indian Ocean Merchant, 1500–1800: Collected Essays of Ashin Das Gupta*, New Delhi 2001; M. Kearney, *The Indian Ocean in World History*, London 2003.

28 See, e.g., P. Machado, *Oceans of Trade: South Asian Merchants and the Indian Ocean, c. 1750–1850*, Cambridge 2014.

29 van Rossum, *Werkers van de Wereld*, chap. 2.

30 See, e.g., Ph. D. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History*, 2nd edn, Cambridge 1998. On conceptualizing the Atlantic world, see A. Games, *Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities*, in: *American Historical Review* 111 (2006) 3, pp. 741–757.

31 A. W. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange. Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*, Westport 1972.

32 N. Nunn/N. Qian, *The Potato's Contribution to Population and Urbanization: Evidence from a Historical Experiment*, in: *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 126 (2011) 2, pp. 593–650; Ch. C. Mann, *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created*, New York 2011.

33 D. Eltis/S. L. Engerman, *Dependence, Servility, and Coerced Labor in Time and Space*, in: *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, Vol. 3, Cambridge 2011, pp. 1–21; D. Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas*, Cambridge 2000, pp. 65–75.

African slaves had long been exported across the Sahara to markets in North Africa and the Middle East,³⁴ but it was the Portuguese and Spanish conquest of the Americas and the subsequent development of intercontinental systems of oceanic trade that transformed the African slave trade into a global phenomenon. Portuguese attempts to circumvent Arab and African control of the trans-Saharan gold trade led them to establish direct trade contacts with the area around present-day Ghana, where they found that they could trade for slaves from elsewhere in West Africa, who in turn could be used to work on the sugar plantations that had been established in Madeira and the Cape Verde Islands.³⁵ From here it was an easy step to ship slaves to the Americas. The demand for African slave labour expanded rapidly during the seventeenth century as other European nations began to acquire and exploit territories in the Caribbean and on the American mainland.³⁶ Charter companies such as the Royal African Company in England and the West India Company in the Netherlands and private merchants provided the capital and commercial expertise and connections needed to satisfy the enormous demand for labour in the Americas with slaves from Africa.³⁷ African rulers and commercial interests responded to this demand by increasing supplies of chattel labourers for export, while efficient trade networks connected the African hinterland with the coastal ports that funnelled millions of enslaved men, women, and children towards plantations in the Caribbean, Brazil, and elsewhere in the Americas.³⁸

Until rather recently, scholarship on slave trading in the early modern era has been confined largely to the Atlantic. Historians of slavery in Asia subscribed to the view that debt slavery was the principal form of slavery in that part of the globe, and it was therefore unnecessary for Asian states to import labour since various forms of *corvée* labour were available in many areas. Inspired by Anthony Reid's work on Southeast Asia, this literature views slavery in Asia as occurring mainly in urban households rather in Atlantic-like plantation systems.³⁹ An integral part of this argument is that "most slaves were probably objects of conspicuous consumption by elites – whose wealth and power they were purchased to reflect".⁴⁰ This model of "Asian" slavery has fuelled the idea that "slaves were neither a good investment nor the path to capitalism" but rather part of a circular "wealth-slavery-buffalo-feasting-bride price complex" that was relatively "mild" in form.⁴¹ The same argument has been extended to slavery in European establishments

34 P. E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*, 3rd edn, Cambridge 2012. For an overview of slavery in Africa, see also S. Stilwell, *Slavery and Slaving in African History*, Cambridge 2014.

35 Thornton, *Africa and Africans*; I. Wilks, *Forests of Gold: Essays on the Akan and the Kingdom of Asante*, Athens 1993.

36 H. S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, 2nd edn, Cambridge 2010.

37 *Ibid.*, pp. 77–82; Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery*, pp. 114–136.

38 Lovejoy, *Transformations*, esp. pp. 88–107.

39 A. Reid, Introduction, in: Id. (ed.), *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia*, New York 1983, pp. 1–43.

40 G. Campbell, *Slavery in the Indian Ocean World*, in: G. Heuman/T. Burnard (eds.), *The Routledge History of Slavery*, New York 2011, pp. 52–63.

41 P. Boomgaard, *Human Capital, Slavery and Low Rates of Economic and Population Growth in Indonesia, 1600–1910*, in: G. Campbell, *The Structure of Slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*, London 2004, p. 93; Reid, Introduction.

in Asia. Eric Jones, for example, argues that slavery in Batavia was marked by “the ‘cozy’ intimacy of pure household slavery”, which only diminished as “plantations radiated outward from late eighteenth-century Batavia”.⁴²

Recent scholarship suggests, however, that the presence of slavery and slave trading in early modern Asia was on far greater than previously acknowledged.⁴³ This research not only challenges the Atlantic-centrism that dominates slavery studies but also highlights the need for historians to reassess current perspectives on slavery in Asia. The need for such a re-evaluation is underscored by recent studies that indicate that early modern Asia was not awash with “backward” or “despotic” political and economic regimes but with strong and dynamic interconnected economic and political systems.⁴⁴ This new perspective has led several historians to argue that forms of coerced labour, and slavery in particular, played a key role in maintaining profitable market-oriented systems of production,⁴⁵ arguments that challenge earlier assumptions that “Asian” slavery was concentrated in cities and households, was a relatively “mild” form of servitude, and was driven largely by individuals’ desire to maintain or enhance their status in society.⁴⁶

Despite the steadily expanding body of scholarship on slavery and slave trading in Asia in recent years,⁴⁷ a number of historiographical problems continue to limit our understanding of slavery in this part of the globe. First, the study of forced labour in Asia remains fragmented. Slavery and related forms of bondage in different regions continue to be

42 E. Jones, *Wives, Slaves and Concubines: A History of the Female Underclass in Dutch Asia*, DeKalb 2010, p. 144.

43 G. J. Knaap, *Slavery and the Dutch in Southeast Asia*, in: G. Oostindie (ed.), *Fifty Years Later: Antislavery, Capitalism and Modernity in the Dutch Orbit*, Leiden 1995, pp. 193–206; M. Vink, “The World’s Oldest Trade”: Dutch Slavery and Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean, in: *Journal of World History* 14 (2003) 2, pp. 131–177; R. B. Allen, *Satisfying the “Want for Labouring People”: European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean, 1500–1850*, in: *Journal of World History* 21 (2010) 1, pp. 45–73; R. van Welie, “Slave Trading and Slavery in the Dutch Colonial Empire: A Global Comparison”, in: *Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 82 (2008) 1/2, pp. 45–94; R. B. Allen, *European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean, 1500–1850*, Athens 2014; M. van Rossum, “Vervloekte goudzugt”: De VOC, slavenhandel en slavernij in Azië, in: *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 12 (2015) 4, pp. 29–57.

44 See, e.g., A. Stanziani, *After Oriental Despotism: Eurasian Growth in a Global Perspective*, London 2014; P. Parthasarathi, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not: Global Economic Divergence, 1600–1850*, Cambridge 2011; M. N. Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, London 2003; A. G. Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age*, Berkeley 1998.

45 M. Mann, *Sahibs, Sklaven und Soldaten. Geschichte des Menschenhandels rund um den Indischen Ozean*, Darmstadt 2012; M. van Rossum, *Kleurrijke tragiek: De geschiedenis van slavernij in Azië onder de VOC*, Verloren 2015.

46 E.g., G. Campbell, *Slavery in the Indian Ocean World*, in: Heuman/Burnard, *The Routledge History of Slavery*, pp. 52–63; Boomgaard, *Human Capital, Slavery*, pp. 83–96; Reid, *Introduction*.

47 In addition to the works noted in fn. 34, see B. Kanumoyoso, *Beyond the City Wall: Society and Economic Development in the Ommelanden of Batavia, 1684–1740*, unpublished PhD thesis, Leiden University, 2011; W. O. Dijk, *An End to the History of Silence? The Dutch Trade in Asian Slaves: Arakan and the Bay of Bengal, 1621–1665*, *IIAS Newsletter* 46 (2008), p. 16; G. J. Knaap/H. Sutherland, *Monsoon Traders: Ships, Skippers and Commodities in Eighteenth-Century Makassar*, Leiden 2004; P. Machado, *A Forgotten Corner of the Indian Ocean: Gujarati Merchants, Portuguese India and the Mozambique Slave-Trade, c. 1730–1830*, in: Campbell, *The Structure of Slavery*, pp. 17–32; S. Arasaratnam, *Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean in the Seventeenth Century*, in: K. S. Mathew (ed.), *Mariners, Merchants and Oceans: Studies in Maritime History*, New Delhi 1995, pp. 195–208; R. C.H. Shell, *Children of Bondage. A Social History of the Slave Society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652–1838*, Johannesburg 1994. For earlier research, see H. Sutherland, *Slavery and the Slave Trade in South Sulawesi, 1660s–1800s*, in Reid, *Slavery, Bondage*, pp. 263–285; A. van der Kraan, *Bali: Slavery and Slave Trade*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 315–340.

studied in isolation from one another. Second, the study of slave trading in Asia remains underdeveloped. While a number of important studies exist, they remain focused on specific regions, slave traders and trading routes, and topics, such as the importation of African slaves into various regions in South and Southeast Asia.⁴⁸ Richard Allen's pivotal study of European slave trading in the Indian Ocean world demonstrates the need not only to undertake more research on slave trading in Asia but also to examine these trades in broader, comparative contexts.⁴⁹ Lastly, unlike in the Atlantic world, we possess little data on the size, composition, and structure of slave populations in different parts of Asia through time; the structure, organization, and volume of local and regional slave trades; the size and operation of slave markets; or slave prices.⁵⁰ As the participants recognized in a recent workshop on establishing an Indian Ocean and maritime Asia slaving voyages database,⁵¹ the *Slave Voyages* transatlantic slave trade database, which contains information on more than 35,000 slaving voyages to the Americas between the early sixteenth century and the mid-1860s, highlights both the need to acquire such data and the value of doing so.⁵²

3. Rethinking Slavery and Slaving Trade: A Global Perspective

The differences that existed between systems of slavery and bondage in various parts of the globe during the early modern era cannot be understood without taking into account the connections between and responses to the circuits of global trade that developed during this period. In this respect, it is clear that many of the processes that transformed slave systems in the Atlantic world also occurred in Asia. The development of global markets in commodified labour was driven by three key mechanisms:

1) Trade networks were able to connect areas where local populations could not furnish the labour needed to meet the global demand for agricultural and other commodities (e.g. sugar, spices, gold, and silver) with regions capable of supplying that labour, often in the form of slaves.

48 See, e.g., J. Pinto, *Slavery in Portuguese India, 1510–1842*, Bombay 1992; S. Chakravarti, *The Dutch East India Company and Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean in the Seventeenth Century: An Outline* by Pieter van Dam, an Advocate of the Company, in: *Journal of the Asiatic Society* 39 (1997) 2, pp. 73–99; Vink, "The World's Oldest Trade"; M. Carter, *Slavery and Unfree Labour in the Indian Ocean*, in: *History Compass* 4 (2006) 5, pp. 800–813; T. Seijas, *The Portuguese Slave Trade to Spanish Manila, 1580–1640*, in: *Itinerario* 22 (2008) 1, pp. 19–38.

49 Allen, *European Slave Trading*.

50 The contrast between Asia and other historical areas of interest is enormous. See, e.g., the data presented in the *Slave Voyages* database of transatlantic slaving voyages (www.slavevoyages.com). For other general topics, see the data on the Sound Toll trade (<http://www.soundtoll.nl>); on shipping in Europe (<http://navigocorpus.org/>); on Dutch shipping (www.dutchshipsandsailors.nl); on inequality (www.clio-infra.eu); and on prices and wages (<http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/>).

51 International workshop "Towards an Asian Slave Trade Database," International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, 27–28 September 2018.

52 See fn. 41. See also D. Eltis/D. Richardson (eds.), *Extending the Frontiers: Essays on the New Transatlantic Slave Trade Database*, New Haven 2008.

2) Powerful European companies, commercial organizations, often with state support, developed the infrastructure and financial mechanisms that fostered and facilitated trade between coastal ports and the hinterlands that supplied these ports with captive men, women, and children for export to global labour markets.

3) Local merchants, traders, and political elites were highly responsive to the social, economic, and political opportunities that participating in slave trading on a global scale presented, and they developed the commercial networks and modified existing systems of servitude or forced labour that permitted individuals to be commodified and sold outside of the region.

The net effect of these mechanisms was often to radically transform local and/or regional social, economic, and political systems. The many parallels between these transformations in Africa and Asia require us to look beyond the regionally based dichotomies that have hitherto characterized slavery studies and adopt a global perspective that takes common processes and differences across time and space into account. Central to understanding the different forms of slavery that existed globally in the early modern period is the need to distinguish between “open” and “closed” forms of slavery. As James Watson argued almost 40 years ago, “open” forms of slavery are based on social ties that provide slaves with an opportunity to become part of their owners’ kinship systems. “Closed” forms of (hereditary) slavery, on the other hand, are rooted in relations of possession shaped by property rights that turn slaves into permanent outsiders.⁵³ This partly coincides with the distinction between local forms of bondage and more globalized, commodified forms of slavery in which slaves “can be bought and sold”.⁵⁴

4. Global Systems: Mobilizing Slavery

Practices existed throughout the globe that can be labelled as *commodified* or *market slavery*, which are clearly distinct from the many *local* systems of slavery and bondage based on social ties or status in which a person was not, at least theoretically, supposed to be sold or transferred outside the area in which they lived. Commodified slavery occurred in both European and non-European systems in which enslaved people were regarded as property that could be bought and sold and in which property rights were regulated through more or less formalized rules maintained by local authorities, imperial trading companies, or other actors. A crucial characteristic of commodified systems of slavery was that there were limited, if any, restrictions on the sale and long-distance movement of the enslaved. In essence, market slavery could be and frequently was highly mobile in nature.

Slave mobility was a feature of international trade in both Africa and Asia before the expansion of European trade networks that began in the early sixteenth century. The expansion of Islam into West Africa during the eighth and ninth centuries, for example,

53 Watson, *Slavery as an Institution*, pp. 9–13.

54 Boomgaard, *Human Capital*, p. 87.

helped to incorporate this region into a wider trading world that encompassed North Africa, the Middle East, and southern Europe. Between the ninth and seventeenth centuries, an estimated 5,000 to 10,000 West African slaves, mostly women and children, were transported across the Sahara into the Mediterranean basin.⁵⁵ In the fifteenth century, the Portuguese began to seek slaves for their possessions in the Atlantic, but it was expansion of northern European empires in the Caribbean and the Americas that led to the enormous increase in demand for African slave labour. The number of slaves exported from Africa to the Americas rose accordingly from an estimated 277,500 during the sixteenth century to 1,876,000 during the seventeenth century before soaring to almost 6.5 million during the eighteenth century.⁵⁶

The number of slaves traded to and within Asia is difficult to determine, but it is clear that slaves of East African and Malagasy origin reached South and Southeast Asia both before and after 1500, while those of Indian and Indonesian origin entered long-distance trading networks that supplied states and urban centres in South and Southeast Asia with labourers who worked as domestic servants, craftsmen, and artisans; cultivated, harvested, and processed commodities such as cloves and pepper; and served as soldiers and sailors.⁵⁷ Richard Allen estimates that European merchants traded a minimum of 450,000 to 565,000 slaves within the Indian Ocean basin between 1500 and 1850, estimates that future research will undoubtedly revise upward.⁵⁸ Future research will also undoubtedly increase current estimates of the numbers of slaves traded by Asian, Arab, and African merchants in this wider oceanic world. Recent research on the Dutch East India Company empire, for example, suggests that at least 660,000 and perhaps as many as 1,135,000 slaves were imported into company-controlled areas in Asia and South Africa during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁵⁹

5. Local Systems: Immobilizing Bondage

A range of local systems of slavery and bondage existed throughout Asia and Africa before and during the early modern period. These systems were characterized by a variety of socially defined forms of bondage that, while they ensured slave owners' access to and control of their bondsmen's unfree labour, kept these subjects *inside* local sociopolitical systems. Although sociolegal conventions might allow slaves or bondsmen to be transferred between masters, these rules and regulations often formally restricted the transfer

55 <http://www.slavevoyages.org/assessment/estimates> (accessed 18 September 2018).

56 Voyages database (accessed 10 June 2018).

57 On the African diaspora in the Indian Ocean, see J. E. Harris, *The African Presence in India*, Evanston 1971; S. de S. Jayasuriya/R. Pankhurst (eds.), *The African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean*, Trenton 2003. Paul Lovejoy estimates that Arab and Swahili traders exported 200,000 slaves from East Africa to the Middle East and South Asia during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and 400,000 slaves during the eighteenth century (*Transformations*, p. 46). See also Allen, *European Slave Trading*.

58 *Ibid.*, pp. 16–19.

59 Van Rossum, *Vervloekte goudzugt*, p. 41.

or exportation of enslaved or bonded subjects elsewhere. In essence, despite their differences, these forms of slavery and bondage were marked by a high degree of immobility that tied slaves and other bonded labourers socially and spatially to their local community and polity.

Such systems that took forms ranging from debt slavery to *corvée* labour were found in various parts of the globe. States and societies along India's Malabar Coast, for example, tied bonded people to the land and allowed landowners to sell their bondsmen although never beyond specified boundaries.⁶⁰ On the Indonesian island of Timor, Hans Hägerdal notes that while local people worked the fields and tended the cattle of the island's lords and grandees and could not move from these lands, "neither could they be bought and sold, and they are therefore similar to those people who were called serfs in Europe". The bonded labourers, known as *lutu-hum*, lived side by side with chattel slaves, known as *ulun-houris*, usually acquired as war captives. Except in the case of "princely lineages", a master's slaves would automatically be freed and incorporated into his clan if he died without heirs.⁶¹

Bonded labour in the form of *corvée* labour systems were widespread on Java, in the Moluccas, on Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka), and elsewhere. These systems obligated local subjects to perform tasks for their rulers, such as collecting and delivering wood, working on public projects, and growing crops. In most of these systems, people were not regarded as property or enslaved but viewed as subjects whose obligations stemmed from their low position in society. Debt slavery, which was common in Southeast Asia, frequently included similar requirements but on a more individualized rather than broader societal basis.

As noted above, slavery was likewise common in West Africa before the arrival of Europeans but, with the exception of states in the Sahel region such as Songhay and Bornu, did not occur on a large scale.⁶² Most slavery was domestic and most slaves were women and children. Generally speaking, slaves could expect that they or their descendants might be incorporated into local lineage systems.⁶³ Slave systems tended to be more closed in larger states, but the political and ecological fragility of the Sahel zone meant that slave status in these systems typically did not last for long. Even at the height of the transatlantic slave trade, localizing systems of slavery were commonplace in West Africa. States such as Asante and Dahomey treated areas outside their boundaries as zones in which people could be exploited to the fullest extent while maintaining a very different attitude towards their own people.⁶⁴

60 J.-A. Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, trans. H. K. Beauchamp, Oxford 1899, p. 57.

61 H. Hägerdal, *Lords of the Land, Lords of the Sea: Conflict and Adaptation in Early Colonial Timor, 1600–1800*, Leiden 2012, pp. 270–271.

62 Lovejoy, *Transformations*, pp. 27–33.

63 *Ibid.*, p. 44.

64 A. Adoma Perbi, *A History of Indigenous Slavery in Ghana: From the 15th to the 19th Century*, Legon/Accra 2004; E. G. Bay, *Wives of the Leopard: Gender, Politics, and Culture in the Kingdom of Dahomey*, Charlottesville 2012, pp. 145–146; P. Manning, *Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental, and African Slave Trades*, Cambridge 1990, p. 35.

In both Africa and South Asia, substantial systems of debt slavery and pawning existed in the pre-modern and early modern eras. Given the abundance of land and the scarcity of labour in much of Africa south of the Sahara, people and their labour were often regarded as the most valuable form of capital and were therefore the most suitable means of securing loans and paying off debts.⁶⁵ In South Asia, poverty or judicial entanglements often drove many into debt and to “pawn” themselves or their family for a limited period of time.⁶⁶ However, such pawns had rights and could not, in theory, be sold beyond the borders of a community unless traders were willing to violate local laws or the pawn was judged to be unable to pay off the debt that he had incurred.⁶⁷

6. West African and South Asian Connections: The Local Impact of Global Slavery

We end this article with a brief outline of comparative case studies that we believe will illustrate the advantages of appreciating the ways in which globalized commerce had an impact on closed and open systems of slavery and transformed social, economic, and political life in various parts of the world during the early modern period. More specifically, we want to suggest that this method of analysis demonstrates that the experience of West Africans and South Asians with slavery did not differ as much as previous studies have suggested.

Three broad themes are central to this exercise, the first of which is that the global demand for coerced labour had a transformative impact by encouraging a certain type of state development that rested on the existence of a military caste or class for whom slavery provided both a justification and a reward for sustained aggressive expansion. In West Africa, states in the region of the Bight of Benin, most notably Dahomey, used the proceeds from slave raiding and the sale of captives to acquire goods that rulers used to reward followers and develop larger and more effective fighting forces. The result was an enormous expansion of commodified, mobilizing systems of slavery in regions surrounding these kingdoms that resulted in significant population declines in these adjacent regions while simultaneously leaving local, open slave systems in place. A similar transformation seems to have occurred in the Arakanese kingdom on the Bay of Bengal. The kingdom controlled the area between Dhaka and Pegu by military force and received tribute in the form of slaves from local rulers in the region. The Dutch East India Company's demand for slaves fundamentally changed the nature of the relationship between Arakan and Bengal during the early seventeenth century.⁶⁸ The greater economic rewards

65 J. C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730–1830*, Madison 1997, pp. 51–53; Lovejoy, *Transformations*, pp. 13–14.

66 P. E. Lovejoy/D. Richardson, *The Business of Slaving: Pawnship in Western Africa, c. 1600–1810*, in: *Journal of African History* 42 (2001) 1, pp. 67–89.

67 See, e.g., R. J. Sparks, *Where the Negroes Are Masters*, Cambridge 2014.

68 S. E. A. van Galen, *Arakan and Bengal: The rise and Decline of the Mrauk U kingdom (Burma) from the fifteenth to*

that came from enslaving prisoners of war for sale to the Dutch not only strengthened a military ideology among Arakanese elites but also greatly expanded the scale and scope of warfare and slave raiding in the border zones of Bengal that separated the Arakanese kingdom and the Mughal Empire.

A second general theme is how sociopolitical systems in politically fragmented or even stateless areas adapted to the demand for commodified slaves. In the small-scale polities and stateless societies found in the region of the Bight of Biafra, a massive increase in commodified slavery during the eighteenth century was achieved not only by large-scale violence but also by local elites greatly expanding the use of enslavement to punish those found guilty of crimes such as adultery or the non-payment of debts. Highly efficient slave-trading networks based on cooperation between local “big” men and trading organizations developed to meet the insatiable demand for plantation labour in the Americas.⁶⁹ India’s Malabar Coast was also highly fragmented politically. Local systems of servitude tied slaves to the land and their landlords and formally banned the export of bonded subjects. However, as in West Africa, the increasing demand for enslaved labour from European, Arab, and other merchants during the early modern period likewise affected local systems of slavery as Malabar slaves began to be exported to different parts of the Indian Ocean world and Southeast Asia.⁷⁰ Earlier prohibitions on the sale or export of slaves tied to the land fell by the wayside, which in turn encouraged the practice of selling debtors to slave traders and abducting locals, especially children,⁷¹ for sale to merchants engaging in the export trade. The net effect of these practices was to create channels of commodified, export slavery within the context of the closed systems of bonded labour, which were an important basis of local economic and political institutions.

A third theme focuses on how states and societies seek to accommodate the external demands of a globalized economy through the (re)development of “traditional” or localizing systems of bondage to produce commodities rather than slaves for export to global markets. Along West Africa’s Gold Coast, the Asante kingdom dominated regional exports of both gold, over which it had a regional monopoly, and captives. Here, as in other regions, the increasing demand for captive labour during the eighteenth century led to many more people being enslaved and sold to Atlantic traders. However, the attendant decline in locally available labour also led to a decline in gold production that was crucial for the kingdom’s economy and a basis for elite power. As a result, the Asante began to

the seventeenth century AD, PhD thesis, Leiden, 2008; S. Subrahmanyam, *Slaves and Tyrants: Dutch Tribulations in Seventeenth-Century Mrauk-U*, in: *Journal of Early Modern History* 1 (1997) 3, pp. 201–253.

69 G. Ugo Nwokeji, *The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra: An African Society in the Atlantic World*, Cambridge 2010; S. D. Behrendt/A. J. Latham/D. Northrup, *The Diary of Antera Duke, An Eighteenth-Century African Slave Trader*, Oxford 2010; K. O. Dike/F. Ekejuba, *The Aro of South-eastern Nigeria, 1650–1980: A Study of Socio-Economic Formation and Transformation in Nigeria*, Ibadan 1990.

70 K. K. N. Kurup, *Slavery in 18th Century Malabar*, in: *Revue historique de Pondichéry* 11 (1973), p. 56–60; S. Joseph, *Slave Labour of Malabar in the Colonial Context*, in: S. Bhattacharya (ed.), *Essays in Modern Indian Economic History*, Delhi 1987, pp. 46–54; M. Carter, *Indian Slaves in Mauritius (1729–1834)*, in: *Indian Historical Review* 15 (1988) 1/2, pp. 233–247; Allen, *European Slave Trading*.

71 On the enslavement of and trade in children, see Allen, *European Slave Trading*, *passim*.

see more economic, social, and political value in using their slaves to produce gold for export to Atlantic markets and kola nuts to meet growing demand among the new Islamic states of the interior for this prized and religiously acceptable stimulant.⁷² The impact of the growing global demand for tropical and other commodities can also be seen on the island of Ceylon, where *corvée* labour was used to produce export commodities such as cinnamon as well as for military labour and infrastructure projects. This labour was traditionally performed for the king of Kandy and were taken over by Portuguese colonists who conquered the island's coastal regions during the sixteenth century. The Dutch wars to conquer the island during the mid-seventeenth century resulted in the depopulation of many coastal regions, one consequence of which was the Dutch importation of slaves from other parts of South Asia. However, this practice did lead to an end of the *corvée* system. The Dutch period in fact witnessed an expansion of *corvée* labour in order to increase cinnamon exports and to provide the labour needed to support experiments to develop other export crops such as indigo.⁷³

7. Conclusion

Traditional historiographical wisdom argues that the nature of slavery in (South) Asia and (West) Africa was fundamentally different during the early modern period. However, we believe that the expansion of global networks of trade during this period created an accelerating demand for coerced labour that had comparable effects in both Asia and Africa, and that understanding slavery as a global phenomenon requires us to adopt a new analytical framework that takes the increasingly globalized demands for (coerced) labour and commodities that developed during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries into account. Doing so means that we must acknowledge that local systems of slavery and bondage and global systems of commodified slavery were not separate and unconnected but coexisted and interacted at three levels: that of state formation and expansion; the adaption of sociopolitical systems to increase slave exports in response to the demands of a globalized labour market; and the modification of local systems of slave and bonded labour. That the numbers of commodified slaves in the Atlantic and maritime Asian worlds may have been much closer than previously believed underscores the need for new comparative approaches to deepen our understanding of the dynamic transformations that shaped the slave experience, both locally and globally, in ways that continue to resonate in the early twenty-first century.

72 I. Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century: The Structure and Evolution of a Political Order*, Cambridge 1975; T. C. McCaskie, *State and Society in Pre-Colonial Asante*, Cambridge 2003; G. Austin, "Between abolition and jihad: the Asanti response to the ending of the Atlantic slave trade, 1807–1896," in: R. Law (ed.), *From Slave Trade to 'Legitimate' Commerce: The Commercial Transition in Nineteenth-Century West Africa*, Cambridge 1995, pp. 93–118.

73 M. van Rossum, *Labouring Transformations of Amphibious Monsters: Exploring Early Modern Globalization, Diversity, and Shifting Clusters of Labour Relations in the Context of the Dutch East India Company (1600–1800)*, in: *International Review of Social History* 64 (2019) 27, pp. 19–42.

Money, Indenture, and Neo-slavery in the Spanish Gulf of Guinea, 1820s to 1890s¹

Enrique Martino

ABSTRACTS

Dieser Artikel sucht nach der ursprünglichen Konfiguration der Vertragsarbeit im Golf von Guinea in der Endphase des spanischen Imperiums, um aus dieser eigentümlichen historischen Entwicklung heraus dem Konzept der Transition oder vielmehr der Transformation von der Sklaverei zu post-Sklaverei-Formen unfreier Arbeit eine neue Wendung zu geben. Der erste Arbeitsvertrag auf der spanischen Kolonialinsel Fernando Pó (vor der Küste Nigerias und Kameruns) wurde in den 1860er Jahren aus Kuba mitgebracht und kombinierte sowohl Coolie-Verträge als auch *emancipado*-Vereinbarungen (Lehrverhältnisse für von Sklavenschiffen befreite Sklaven). Ich skizziere einige Auswirkungen dieses neuen kolonialen Vertrags, etwa das Auftreten einer neuen Generation von Arbeitsanwerbern, indem ich die Techniken untersuche, mit denen versucht wurde, westafrikanische Kru-Arbeiter auf die Insel zu holen und dort zu halten. Ich verbinde Fernando Pó eng mit dem Prozess der Abschaffung der Sklaverei auf Kuba und der Rekrutierung von Arbeitskräften an der westafrikanischen Küste und zeige, wie die Einrichtung und die Auswirkungen des Vertrags auf die partielle Fragmentierung und Mutation der Sklaverei zurückverfolgt werden können. Abschließend gebe ich einen konzeptionellen Abriss in

- 1 This article has benefited from the support of a Juan de la Cierva post-doctoral fellowship, financed by the Spanish State Research Agency, and emerged from my time at the wonderful research group A Global Network for Global History at the University of Göttingen, financed by the Volkswagen Foundation. Previous versions of this article have benefited from various critical and helpful readings, and I am especially grateful to Christian De Vito, Benita Sampedro, Ravi Ahuja, David Meyer, Ruma Chopra, Adam Jones, Alba Valenciano, and Alex Lichtenstein for these, as well as to the organizers and participants of the conferences “Literary Littorals: Slavery, Emancipation, Africa and the Spanish Empire” at the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities in Cambridge and “The Cost of Freedom: Debt and Slavery” at Brooklyn College, City University of New York, in 2017.

Bezug auf eine kritische Diskussion der Metaphern der „Lohnsklaverei“ und der manchmal nur implizit anklingenden Prämissen des Konzepts der unvollständigen und gehemmten Übergänge, die immer noch einem Großteil der Literatur zur globalen Arbeitergeschichte und der New History of Capitalism zugrunde liegen.

This article looks for the initial configuration of indentured labour in the final stages of the Spanish Empire in the Gulf of Guinea to try to give, from this peculiar historical trajectory, a new spin on the concept of *transition*, or rather transformation, from slavery to post-slavery forms of unfree labour. The first labour contract in the Spanish colonial island of Fernando Pó, sitting off the coast of Nigeria and Cameroon, was brought over in the 1860s from Cuba, which combined both coolie indentures and *emancipado* (apprenticeships for slaves freed from slave ships) arrangements. I outline some of the emergent effects of this new colonial contract, such as the appearance of a new generation of labour recruiters by describing and examining the techniques used to try to attract and keep West African Kru workers on the island. By closely connecting Fernando Pó to the process of abolition of slavery in Cuba and to labour recruitment along the West African coast, I show how the founding and the effects of the contract can be tracked back to the partial fragmentation and *mutation* of slavery. I provide a conceptual outline in the conclusion in relation to a critical discussion of the metaphors of the “slavery of wage labour” and the sometimes just implicitly lingering premises of the concept of imperfect and inhibited transitions still underpinning much of the global labour history and the new histories of capitalism literature.

The literature on the Atlantic and African transitions away from slave labour has extensively studied the many variations of labour extraction and control devised by colonial powers to overcome abolition and their need for new labour – such as penal and tributary labour as well as debt bondage, indentured, apprenticeship, and obligatory contracts.² That post-abolition colonialism and global capitalism in general did not shift to free labour but instead produced a proliferation of varieties of unfree labour is the foundational idea of global labour history – as put forward by Marcel van der Linden and Shahid Amin in their special issue *Peripheral Labour: Studies in the History of Partial Proletarianization* (1997) and as recently and powerfully restated in a special editorial note by Pepijn Brandon and Aditya Sarkar, the new editors of the *International Review of Social History*.³ The almost unanimous assessment of these trajectories by the labour history literature

2 H. S. Klein/S. L. Engerman, The Transition from Slave to Free Labor: Notes on a comparative economic model, in: M. M. Friginals et al. (eds.), *Between Slavery and Free Labor: The Spanish-Speaking Caribbean in the Nineteenth Century*, Baltimore 1985, pp. 255–269; S. Miers/R. Roberts (eds.), *The End of Slavery in Africa*, Madison 1988. In relation to contract labour in West Africa, see especially M. Schuler, *The Recruitment of African Indentured Labourers for European Colonies in the Nineteenth Century*, in: P. Emmer, *Colonialism and Migration: Indentured Labour Before and After Slavery*, New York 1986, pp. 125–160; W. G. Clarence-Smith, *Emigration from Western Africa, 1807–1940*, in: *Itinerario* 14 (1990), pp. 45–60.

3 S. Amin/M. Van der Linden (eds.), *Peripheral Labour: Studies in the History of Partial Proletarianization*. Cambridge 1997; P. Brandon/A. Sarkar, *Labour History and the Case against Colonialism*, in: *International Review of Social History* 61 (2019), pp. 1–37; For new analytical syntheses see also C. De Vito/J. Schiel/M. van Rossum, *From Bondage to Precariousness? New Perspectives on Labor and Social History*, in: *Journal of Social History* 54 (2020)

of the past few decades, whatever the specific place or period, seems to have cemented Rosa Luxemburg's impressions at the beginning of the twentieth century: "Look at the different modes of 'moderate' slavery and forced labour European and North American capital employs to secure the necessary minimum of labour in the African colonies, in the West Indies, South America and the South Seas." Skipping the nuance, she simply calls it "a fantastic relapse into a sort of modernized slave economy."⁴ This "relapse" was quasi-permanent and not undone until the legal parameters of various imperial regulations were themselves abolished at various reformist points under colonial or even only post-colonial rule.⁵

It was Immanuel Wallerstein who started upending the liberal and orthodox Marxist presuppositions and concerns with the structural polarity of slavery and freedom, even though he speaks relatively little about the details of labour in his world-systems trilogy. In Sydney Mintz's seminal assessment in 1977 of Wallerstein and in his discussion of the *libreta* (workbook) regime of obligatory contracts in the context of harsh anti-vagrancy laws in the nineteenth-century colonial Spanish Caribbean, he sees world-systems theory as replacing the temporal notion of the transition from slavery with a spatial schema of types of labour spread out along different regions.⁶ In the most schematic of all possible terms, if Western Europe was becoming a land of "free labour" and if Southern Europe, as the semi-periphery, was still plagued by neo-feudal "intermediate" arrangements such as sharecropping, then the dominant mode of labour extraction in the periphery was and continued to be based on new combinations and generalizations of forced labour. Both the spatial and the temporal tripartite division of labour were implicitly rooted in the quasi-mythical stratifications of ancient and feudal societies into "free, unfree and slaves" groups or, where there were no slaves, "free, unfree, nobles". These subdivisions, set up already with Tacitus's differentiation of *servii* and *coloni* (slaves and tenant serfs), are conceptually rooted in kinship and displacement: while bonded serfs reproduced themselves and were subjected in their own domains, slaves needed to be purchased or captured from the "outside" and were severed from kin.⁷ This is precisely the overlap that crosses over into the study of indentured contract labour, with its quite characteristic element of long-distance movements without immediate family members to the same or similar worksites that had predominantly been worked on by slaves until the nineteenth century. I outline the precise contours that made up this overlapping transformation in Spain's last plantation colony – the island of Fernando Pó in the Gulf of Guinea – by following the founding of the contract and the concomitant labour recruiters who, after the aboli-

2, pp. 1–19; S. Damir-Geilsdorf et al., *Bonded Labour: Global and Comparative Perspectives (18th–21st Century)*, Berlin 2016.

4 R. Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital*, New York 1972 (1913), pp. 71, 53.

5 In an African history context, see especially the spate of recent journal articles by Alexander Keese, as well as Z.K. Guthrie, *Bound for Work: Labor, Mobility, and Colonial Rule in Central Mozambique, 1940–1965*, Charlottesville 2018; O. Okia, *Labor in Colonial Kenya after the Forced Labor Convention, 1930–1963*, London 2019.

6 S.W. Mintz, *The So-Called World System: Local Initiative and Local Response*, in: *Dialectical Anthropology* 2 (1977) 1, pp. 253–270.

7 C. Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery*, Chicago 1991.

tion of the slave trade, made it possible to bring labourers into the emerging plantations exploiting indentured labour right off the West African coast. In the conclusion, I justify seeing this transformation as a *mutation* of slavery into contract labour in the Gulf of Guinea by drawing on Friedrich Engels's and, more recently, Yann Moulier-Boutang's critique of the concept of imperfect or inhibited transitions still underpinning much of the literature dealing with global labour history and new histories of capitalism, which today only linger in mostly implicit ways. Franz Steiner's discussion of the "peculiar dualism" or "nebulous dichotomy" of slavery and serfdom refers to the way historians describe the "gradual eclipse and survival" of slavery as part of the "history-lore of this civilization", because it assumes that slavery simply disappears in time or becomes suppressed rather than undergoes refinement and becomes the cumulative foundations of transformed legal and economic orders.⁸

1. Abolition and Labour in the Gulf of Guinea, 1820s to 1850s

Down the Strait of Gibraltar, past the Canary Islands and Western Sahara, hugging the coast and the "illusory coast" of inlets and deltas starting in Upper Guinea, the next two tall twin mountains imposing themselves as clear markers for navigators were at the centre of the Bight of Biafra, between the colossal Mount Cameroon on the mainland and the adjacent volcanic peak of the island of Fernando Pó. This other "[g]ate that stunts to a nothing the columns of Hercules" of the Strait of Gibraltar was a navigator's sign for having reached an "outer place", a "desolate" empty axis, at the extreme edge of the equatorial Atlantic doldrums, as Richard Burton, the British consul on this Spanish island, noted in 1862.⁹ Up until that point, slave traders had always avoided Fernando Pó because of the "baffling winds" and the "rather deceitful" eddies of "winds and calms" that disabled their sails.¹⁰ The island, located in a gap between the north-eastern and south-eastern trade winds at the margins of both West African and South Atlantic slaving and circulation systems, was spared involvement in the transatlantic slave trade due to unfavourable sailing conditions and various other reasons, including the resolute isolationism of its indigenous Bubi inhabitants. The Bubi had abandoned in the eighteenth century their fishing economy and settlements on the coast for the mountain valleys to

8 F. B. Steiner, *A Comparative Study in the Forms of Slavery*, in: J. D. Adler/R. Fardon (eds.), *Selected Writings: Orientpolitik, Value, and Civilisation* Vol. 2, New York 1999, at 157. Probably the most exemplary academic work that still fully retained this tradition is the collective volume of F. Cooper, T. C. Holt and R. J. Scott, *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies*, Chapel Hill 2000, at 22–23, where they explicitly conceive of the contract workers brought in from new recruiting areas for the upkeep of the same or new plantations, leading "the poor of Asia or Africa into boats headed, like the slave ships, for the West Indies or the sugar islands of the Indian Ocean-or, later, the cocoa islands off Central Africa", as a "necessary anomaly", substituting or supplementing slavery, but automatically "beyond" or "after slavery", and simply arising from a kind of economics of inevitability where "labor was not readily available in the right place" or "at the right price".

9 R. F. Burton, *Wanderings in West Africa from Liverpool to Fernando Po*, London 1863, 2 vols, pp. 293–294.

10 A. G. Findlay, *A sailing directory for the Ethiopic or South Atlantic Ocean, including the coasts of South America and Africa*, London 1867, pp. 503, 451.

avoid passing slave traders both on European ships and on the large ocean-going canoes from Calabar and the Cross River delta.

In addition, from the late 1820s to the 1850s, various naval, merchant, and missionary British abolitionists, armed with steamships and a lease from the Spanish crown, used the island's shores as a staging ground for the commercial and religious colonization of the Bight of Biafra. For almost a decade after 1827, the port town of Clarence (which became Santa Isabel in 1843 and then Malabo in 1973) was a British naval base set up to track down and try the mostly Iberian staff of slave ships, to set fire to the coastal barracons, and to sign abolition treaties with nearby monarchs and rulers.¹¹ For most of the 1840s and 1850s, the island was effectively stateless; its residents were neither British nor Spanish subjects, even though they were being nominally ruled by a British merchant, John Beecroft, who held the title of Spanish governor and British consul and headed the British West African Company, which developed a timber industry and a carbon fuel station around the port town.

In Clarence lived over a thousand former captives rescued from slave ships, who were initially employed around this British naval and judicial infrastructure and who mostly stayed on the island after the British evacuated its naval base in 1835. They were joined by slaves who deserted from Príncipe and littoral African slaving city-states such as Calabar and Bimbia and who rowed themselves to the island in canoes. In this period, there were also about another thousand Kru labourers and itinerant Portuguese traders from São Tomé and Príncipe. The *Kru* was a group label for those hailing from the areas around Cape Palmas on the Windward Coast (who were eventually encompassed by the Liberian and Sierra Leonean states), whom almost every colonial source of the mid- to late nineteenth century admired because of their then relatively unique disposition to emigrate as hired labourers.

The Kru were always the majority labour force on Fernando Pó in the nineteenth century, as well as in many other emerging colonial spaces along the West African coast, such as on the cargo ships carrying palm oil and navy frigates, with a large segment of them working in, for example, the mines on the Gold Coast or on the new imperial infrastructures of the Oil Rivers and Lagos protectorates. They were commonly referred to as the "the Coolies and Lascars of West Africa".¹² European steamers and imperial bureaucracies were recruiting as many as 20,000 workers from the Kru coast each year in the 1860s and up to 50,000 workers per year in some years during subsequent decades.¹³

11 I. Sundiata, *From Slaving to Neoslavery: The Bight of Biafra and Fernando Po in the Era of Abolition, 1827–1930*, Wisconsin 1996, pp. 22, 31.

12 Burton, *Wanderings in West Africa*, p. 12; See also D. Frost, *Work and Community among West African Migrant Workers since the Nineteenth Century*, Liverpool 1999.

13 I. Sundiata, *Brothers and Strangers: Brothers and Strangers: Black Zion, Black Slavery, 1914–1940*, Durham 2004, p. 65; J. Martin, *Krumen "Down the Coast": Liberian Migrants on the West African Coast in the 19th and early 20th centuries*, in: *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 18 (1985) 3, pp. 401–423, at 409; C. Behrens, *Les Kroumen de la côte occidentale d'Afrique*, Talence 1974.

In the early 1860s, looking at Kru labourers on Fernando Pó, “employed all the day long”, Burton described the scene as “quite the counterpart of a landowner’s existence in the Southern States” before the American Civil War (1861–1865): “these fellows have no overseer, consequently there is no whip; punishment resolves itself into retrenching rum and tobacco; moreover, they come and go as they please.”¹⁴ Such labour relations were obviously overwhelmingly seen as, and were more or less quite, free in the sense that free migrants employed by British abolitionists technically were. As another British consul on the island reminds us, “The first and most important [thing] known to all who are acquainted with Africa, [is] that, of the two classes of slaves and freemen of which its population consists, the freemen *will not* emigrate, the *slaves cannot*.”¹⁵ Similarly, an illustrious Spanish priest on the island in the 1850s positively compared the “krumanes”, who made up the “majority of the population in the town” of Clarence (or Santa Isabel), to the “the Asturians and Galicians in Spain, in that they leave their home and family to lend their services in other provinces, undertaking the most painful [*penoso*] and difficult [*rudos*] work for a certain period of time”. As he was on board a steamship that stopped at all the port towns along the West African coast, a trajectory whose final or penultimate stop was usually Fernando Pó, he also took note that the Kru worked “not only on all the European ships, but also in all the British, French, Portuguese, Dutch, American, and Spanish colonies and commercial outposts in this part of the world”.¹⁶

It was not only Europeans who hired “Krumen”, as a British naval officer on Fernando Pó writing in 1850 observed with dismay: it was “cheaper to transport these men” from the Kru coast “nearly two thousand miles to perform this work, than it was to employ the liberated Africans residing on the Spot”. The “liberated captives” that the British had “hired” in Sierra Leone and brought to the island became known as the Fernandinos. This mostly Baptist and English-speaking creole group, or at least the several dozen commercially successful and important families that emerged, “had learned to read” and were themselves “hiring the Kroomen to work their farms for them” – employing some two to five Kru each.¹⁷

When Spanish Catholic missionaries started arriving on the island, there was wariness and alarm amongst a very heterogeneous free population, as Jamaican Baptist missionaries on the island had “spread the rumour that we [the Spanish] are coming with the sole objective of bringing slaves to kill and cannibalize, etc. What is hated the most in Fernando Po is precisely slavery”.¹⁸ Within a year of the first permanent Spanish govern-

14 R. F. Burton, *A Mission to Gelele, King of Dahome*, London 1864, p. 15.

15 T. J. Hutchinson, *Ten Years’ Wanderings Among the Ethiopians: With Sketches of the Manners and Customs of the Civilized and Uncivilized Tribes, from Senegal to Gaboon*, London 1861, p. 263.

16 M. Martínez y Sanz, *Breves apuntes sobre la Isla de Fernando Póo en el Golfo de Guinea*, Santa Isabel 1856, p. 25.

17 Cited in I. Sundiata, *The Fernandinos: Labor and Community in Santa Isabel de Fernando Poo, 1827–1931*, PhD thesis, Chicago 1972, p. 153.

18 Martínez, *Breves apuntes*, p. 58. Not without reason: on Beecroft’s death in 1854, the Spanish government appointed the Catalan slave trader Domènec Mustich to succeed him as governor, but the British protest led to his replacement by another English merchant (G. Nerín, *Traficants d’ànimes: Els negrers espanyols a l’Àfrica*, Barcelona, 2016, p. 195).

ment-sponsored expedition in May 1858, the first Spanish governor, Carlos Chacón, tried to reassure this population and declared slavery abolished, even though it was already practically non-existent: “all people of whatever class and provenance are necessarily considered to be free”. After the Portuguese governor in São Tomé and Príncipe asked his Spanish counterpart to return “some of their fugitive slaves” who had found “refuge” on the island, another royal order, from 18 August 1859, reiterated that “the existence of slavery is neither admitted nor recognized in any way” in Fernando Pó and its dependencies.¹⁹ These decrees came early, decades before the final abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico and Cuba (1873 and 1886, respectively) and half a century before colonial powers had fully colonized most neighbouring African territories and abolished the institutional form of slavery, in the primary sense of not being a “status” recognized in the courts (for example, in Southern Nigeria in 1901 or French West Africa in 1903).

2. Contracts from Cuba, 1860s

Fernando Pó was initially a colony’s colony, with its budget and most of its early officers coming directly from the Cuban treasury and bureaucracy. The power of the imperial state can be felt and approached in various ways, though the plantation economy it tried to create was supported and sustained through one thread: the contract. The contract was not a separate device operating to stabilize and arrange exchanges in the markets, including labour; rather, it was the core component of Spanish imperialism in the Gulf of Guinea, contiguous with the internal organization of sovereign power – a foundational asymmetry of state-supplied defaults.²⁰ An entry into its territory marked an automatic acceptance of the obligatory contracts with which all new workers were “saddled”. Without the specific shape of the contract, it was impossible to undertake new exercises in labour mobilization.

A case in point is Mr. Sparhawk, an American from Boston who had been notoriously involved in the slave trade in Havana and Rio de Janeiro and who was actually the first person in Spanish Fernando Pó to set up a plantation. By the late 1860s, the plantation was totally overgrown and in “ruins”, having planted 600 hectares of cotton and an “abundance of banana, coffee, and cocoa-trees, without a single hand to reap, or a single human being to enjoy”.²¹ Sparhawk’s plantation failed not only because the slave trade had been abolished but also because the form of the contract that would give rise to possibilities for recruiting workers for the eventually re-emerging plantations only became a default and was applied to all new African migrants from 1867 onwards. The working and housing conditions and all the other details stipulated in the contract were adopted

19 A. Miranda Junco, *Leyes coloniales: legislación de los territorios españoles del Golfo de Guinea*, Madrid 1945, p. 28.

20 C. Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, Stanford 1988, pp. 70–71; R. J. Steinfeld, *Coercion, Contract, and Free Labor in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge 2001, pp. 15–16.

21 H. Roe, *West African Scenes: Descriptions of Fernando Po*, London 1874, p. 95.

almost wholesale from the 1860 “regulation for the introduction of Chinese workers in the island of Cuba”.²²

The principal modification of the contract, however, was the engagement duration, as the Kru had bargained down the length of the contract with Spanish recruiters from an unacceptable eight years to between two and three years. A Spanish recruiter in 1864 set a precedent by “contracting 24 Krumen in Cape Palmas for a stay of only two years at 4 pesos a month”. The Spanish “colonial government had no choice but to assuage the conditions of contract”.²³ Two years was the customary upper limit on the Kru coast, of which workers would keep track by collecting and “hiding a stone in some secret place every time the moon was full, and then count the stones to know how many months, or moons, were passed”. A Methodist missionary on the island recounts in pidgin that a Kru worker halfway through his contract told him, “me finish dese moons, and when me done finish dese moons more, den me go to my country.”²⁴ These 24 moons were already formalized in the royal order of Contratación krumenes (1867), which was the base labour legislation for over three decades, and planters eventually started thinking of the two-year limit as a “tradition” that has “always been this way on the island”.²⁵

Fernando Pó was to Cuba as Freetown was to the British Caribbean or as Monrovia was to the United States, in that the contradictions of abolition in the Americas were made clear in the “emancipation” crucibles created by these empires on the West African coast. Fernando Pó started as a peripheral experiment, a minor sequence of abolition, where labour relations unfolded in the context of colonial military occupation where “freedom” was overruled and out of the question. In Fernando Pó, emancipation was not accompanied by a free labour teleology, which was being sustained in late colonial Cuba by waves of well-paid and politically organized former slaves and Spanish labour migrants.

Without a doubt, it was a small place: the profits gained from selling about a hundred people from a slave ship in Cuba was the same as the entire annual early colonial budget, about half a million reales. Much of this money was squandered on organizing various projects to transport groups of Spanish refugees from the Algerian province of Oran (who were promised “4 hectares and 2 black workers”), Aragonese, and Andalusian republicans and anarchist exiles and deported Cuban insurgents from the Ten Years’ War (1868–1878) – all ending in many deaths and repatriations. The “ten-year sentences of residence on Fernando Poo” that were being handed down to Spaniards and Spanish imperial subjects were “in lieu of a death sentences” – and were in effect a commuted death sentence, a prolonged death by other means.²⁶

22 Reglamento para la introducción de trabajadores chinos en la Isla de Cuba, in: Gaceta de Madrid, 12 July 1860.

23 D. García Cantús, *Fernando Poo: una aventura colonial española en el África occidental (1778–1900)*, PhD thesis, Valencia 2004, pp. 439, 442.

24 Roe, *West African Scenes*, p. 82.

25 Real Orden de 28 septiembre 1867, Contratación krumenes, in: Miranda Junco, *Leyes coloniales*, p. 140; Letter from Cámara Agrícola de Fernando Póo to Juan Fontán (Governor General), 13 April 1938, Archivo General de la Administración, Alcalá de Henares, Spain, IDD 15, Fondo África [hereafter AGA], Caja 81/08126.

26 P. Gabriel, *Más allá de los exilios políticos: Proscritos y deportados en el siglo XIX*, in: S. Castillo/P. Oliver (eds.), *Las figuras del desorden: heterodoxos, proscritos y marginados*, Madrid 2006, pp. 197–223, at 211. Up until 1895

In the mid-nineteenth century, the Spanish Empire was already experimenting with “gradual” notions of formal abolition, in contrast to what was called the “immediate extinction” of slavery by more revolutionary regimes, or, in the case of the British Caribbean and Sierra Leone, with the reformist and strictly four-year transitory period of ongoing “apprenticed” servitude for emancipated slaves and “liberated captives”. Fernando Pó’s labour question was founded on an island without a slave system in place through the combination of what Michael Zeuske characterizes as the two most significant “blurs” to the boundaries of slavery provided by Cuba in the early phase of abolition – *emancipados* (apprenticed recaptives from slave ships) and Chinese coolies – in a period when the illegal slave trade of the Iberian Atlantic was reaching its final peak.²⁷ It was these two forms that were quickly poured and cast in the last Spanish plantation colony in the 1860s, during the internal shock resulting from the coming collapse of the Cuban slaving system. Arrangements for the dispatch of *emancipados* had been repeatedly made, but only in 1862 did a group of 200 *emancipados* finally arrive from Cuba – recent captives who had been purchased at various barracoons on the Congo estuary by slave traders and who were freed and seized by the British navy and left in Cuba according to the terms the Spanish-British treaty to abolish the slave trade (1817). The Cuban *emancipado* policy usually involved directly consigning them to private plantation estates for the duration of a “contract”, but throughout the early 1860s, newly arriving *emancipados* in Havana were offered a chance to “spontaneously and voluntarily” offer themselves for emigration to Fernando Pó on government-sponsored ships.²⁸ The promise was of a full *carta de libertad* (freedom certificate) and the ability to benefit from “liberty, family and property” after a five-year contract. Their legal status was derived from Cuban *emancipado* regulations, which had to consider them initially and potentially free but put them under a provisional *tutela* (government guardianship), inaccurately analogous to what was used in Spanish family law to reassign the custody of orphans. Most of the *emancipados* who came to Fernando Pó were very young, with many being barely adolescents.²⁹ For the Spanish, the kinless belonged to the state, which could determine and allocate their availability for the labour market. Such an approach acted as a basis for all subsequent imperial labour laws in Fernando Pó.

Soon after their arrival in 1862, the *emancipados* lodged a collective complaint, bordering on a peaceful uprising emerging from their “strange surprise that they were being

almost two thousand political prisoners were sent to the island, from Spain, Cuba and the Philippines (C. De Vito, *The Spanish Empire, 1500–1898*, in: C. Anderson, *A Global History of Convicts and Penal Colonies*, London 2018, pp. 65–96, at 72).

27 M. Zeuske, *Handbuch Geschichte der Sklaverei: Eine Globalgeschichte von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, Berlin 2013, pp. 24, 214–215.

28 B. Clavero, *Bioko 1837–1876: Constitucionalismo de europa en áfrica, derecho internacional consuetudinario del trabajo mediante*, in: *Quaderni Fiorentini per la Storia del Pensiero Giuridico Moderno* 35 (2006), pp. 429–546, at 458; I. Sundiata, *Cuba Africana: Cuba and Spain in the Bight of Biafra, 1839–1869*, in: *The Americas* 34 (1977) 1, pp. 90–101.

29 M. L. de Castro Antolín, *Fernando Poo y los emancipados de La Habana*, in: *Estudios Africanos* 8 (1994), pp. 7–19, at 13. See also AGA Caja 81/07209 and AGA Caja 81/06944.

forced to work” at almost non-existent wage rates as set by the contract. While the costs of food, housing, and transport were covered by the employer as per the terms of the contract, the wages being paid out were the in the lowest calculable and largely symbolic unit: 1 real a day. Officially, the wage was 50 reales a month (the governor’s salary was 8,000 reales a month), but almost half of it was paid out only at the completion of the contract, amounting to about 4 pounds per year in total. In contrast, even the Kru workers on the island received at least 1 pound per month in addition to rations, whereas *libertos* (free ex-slaves) in Havana could increase their wage rates and earn up to 400 reales a month.

After the complaint, the governor wondered, “where did they conceive of these dreamy [*songeras*] ideas in the course of the journey from Havana” and took to gathering all the emancipados in the “Congo-town” part of Santa Isabel “every Sunday” to give them a sermon “on the conditions of the contracts that they had entered into.” It should be noted that the governor, Pantaleón López Ayllón (in position from 1862 to 1865), was a colonel who had previously been expelled from Cuba after being accused on two occasions of complicity in the clandestine importation of new slaves. He “made them understand their obligations and the regime to which they will be subject” – not only because, in this case, the public works department also happened to be their employer but also because the administration was the counterparty of every labour contract, later formalized in a peculiar Spanish colonial figure of the *curador* (labour officer).³⁰ The *curaduría* (labour office) was the only institution permitted to represent contract workers; it even had its own special police force, which it primarily deployed to pursue deserters and ran its own *barracones* (jail dens) for workers that were separate from other colonial court and justice systems.

In Cuba, the faculty for assigning emancipados was abolished in 1865 because the slave trade had all but been suppressed; indeed, the final 105 slaves recaptured from the slave ship arriving in Cuba in 1865 were ordered to be sent to Fernando Pó but ended up being distributed to local planters. The Cuban colonial press was convinced that this revocation marked the “beginning of the end” of slavery³¹ – a institution permanently implanted on Fernando Pó, and so this beginning of the end was, in effect, perpetually restarted. The subsequent entire imperial century – 1860s to 1960s – is marked by the constant repetition of this contradictory new labour regime, contractual but obligatory

30 Letter from Pantolen de Ayllon (Governor General) to Ministro de Ultramar, Dando cuenta de las peticiones notadas en los emancipados venidos a esta isla de la de Cuba, 18 October 1862, AGA Caja 81/06941. While other ships with several hundred emancipados arrived from Havana in the early 1860s, many died before their contracts expired on the island. The 150 emancipados who survived by 1869 made up an important nucleus of the Fernandinos (García Cantús, Fernando Poo, pp. 437, 515; B. Sampedro, ¡Aquella mansión de desconsuelo y de horror!, in: J. Aranzadi/G. Álvarez Chillida (eds.), Guinea Ecuatorial (des)conocida. Lo que sabemos, ignoramos, inventamos y deformamos acerca de su pasado y su presente, Madrid 2020, vol. I, pp. 441–470, at 450–454; B. Sampedro, Inscripting islands. From Cuba to Fernando Poo and back, in: C. Enjuto-Rangel et al. (eds.), Transatlantic Studies: Latin America, Iberia, and Africa, Liverpool 2019, pp. 99–113.

31 I. Roldán de Montaud, On the Blurred Boundaries of Freedom: Liberated Africans in Cuba, 1817–1870, in: D. W. Tomich (ed.), New Frontiers of Slavery, Albany 2016, pp. 127–156, at 147.

and peculiar in wider African history in its early imperial unfolding and late colonial intactness.

3. Neo-slavery

The century of Spanish imperialism on Fernando Pó, and the accompanying build-up of a large-scale cacao plantation complex, was constantly characterized then – and now – as having a labour regime that “made the distinction between slave and contract worker at times no more than nominal”.³² I will need to briefly address this category collapse, or indistinction, as it consistently stretches from the first heterodox British missionaries to the Cuban liberals exiled on the island in the late nineteenth century to African worker representatives and anti-colonial intellectuals in the twentieth century. I should note that any attempt to undo the equivocations of such “analogic” thinking or insistence on clarifications or reclassifications is misguided. It would be a repetitive task because such stacked confluences are ever-present in the archival and historical sources; they even occur consistently in the most careful classic and recent comparative studies of unfree labour³³ and, of course, all over contemporary academic publications and the now orthodox and non-governmental discussions, whether dry analyses or polemics, around labour trafficking in an era of imperialism and neo-liberalism.³⁴

I start by briefly returning to Cuba again and the partial abolition decree known as the Law of Moret (1870), which granted “full” rights to both “emancipados under protection by the state” as well as “all slaves owned by the state”.³⁵ While some of the final 3,000 or so emancipados were to be immediately released, two-thirds were eventually forced to sign indentured contracts lasting for six years with the lowest possible salary, which the few Spanish abolitionists described as the infamous “*contratas de 1870*, which are plainly and flatly slavery; but a hypocritical and cowardly slavery” – ambivalent, vacillating, and irresolute.³⁶ The British, the Cuban governor feared, will “not believe” that emancipados or even the alternative labour relations established by “free people of colour” could alter the “nature of slavery” in Cuba either because free Afro-Cubans could be illegally but effectively re-enslaved or because contract labours working alongside slaves, such as Chinese coolies, would vividly experience and describe their descent into the bottom rung of the colonial economy as living, working, and being punished exactly as slaves.³⁷ It seems that an initial blanket state of emancipation would be needed to remove

32 Sundiata, *From Slaving to Neoslavery*, p. 8.

33 H. J. Nieboer, *Slavery as an Industrial System: Ethnological Researches*, New York 1971 (1900); A. Testart, The extent and significance of debt slavery, *Revue française de sociologie* 43 (2002), pp. 173–204.

34 There is a helpful overview of this split but lopsided field in the first two chapters of M. Rodríguez García/M. van der Linden (eds.), *On Coerced Labor: Work and Compulsion after Chattel Slavery*, Leiden 2016.

35 M. Lucena Salmoral, *Leyes para esclavos: El ordenamiento jurídico sobre la condición, tratamiento, defensa y represión de los esclavos en las colonias de la América española*, Madrid 2005, p. 453.

36 R. M. de Labra, *La abolición de la esclavitud en el orden económico*, Madrid 1874, p. 21.

37 M. Reid-Vazquez, *The Year of the Lash: Free People of Color in Cuba and the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World*,

this catalyst of re-enslavement and to provide the affective sense of rupture, making a regression inconceivable or no longer definable as a continuity or derivation.

On Fernando Pó, this standard analogy was increasingly popular, starting from John Clarke, the first Baptist missionary on the island, who in 1841 wrote that Fernando Pó was a “land of slavery and oppression” in reference to the Kru workers who were “flogged and treated as if [they] were slaves [of] the lowest description”.³⁸ The Cuban deportee Emilio Valdés wrote in the 1890s that the back-breaking work associated with the carbon deposit for steamships in Santa Isabel that he was being subject to was indignant not only because he and fellow convicts were sometimes made to do this labour “in ball and chains” but also because they were working alongside and “being considered equivalent to Krumanes or blacks for work”.³⁹ The late colonial Nigerian intelligentsia continuously saw in Fernando Pó a situation where the “condition under which they toil are the equivalent of paid slavery” and where “workers are engaged under the terms of a charter which is a twentieth century devise for slave dealing”.⁴⁰ What was being elaborately indirectly communicated in practically all such earnest stray allusions and serious confusions that other labour relations are “like slavery” was primarily a display of the obverse – ideologies of liberty, especially liberal and radical ones. Before this paradox is worked through in more conceptual clarity in the conclusion, I would close this conclusion-like interlude by noting that, for the post-emancipation context of Fernando Pó, the terms slavery and freedom are too illusive, practically unusable for analytical purposes. These terms have an almost unsaturable valency and were – and are – applied as labels in an almost indefinite number of contexts across a century of documentary sources and academic literature.

4. Wages and Kinship, 1870s to 1890s

Fernandinos had been primarily active in a wide array of clerical, commercial, and religious middlemen activities (in particular, the trading of palm oil harvested by the indigenous Bubi of the island and the selling of it to British merchant firms). However, cacao production became the overwhelming cash crop and economic lifeline on the island, starting in the 1880s, when 80 per cent of all production (on some 630 hectares) was undertaken on Fernandino-owned farms.⁴¹

It is important to note that, except for the emancipados and the Spanish navy’s botched attempt to partake in the “disguised” slave trade by “redeeming” slaves in the slaving port of Ouidah in 1860, most new contract workers were not previously slaves and were not

Athens 2011, p. 163; L. Yun, *The Coolie Speaks: Chinese Indentured Laborers and African Slaves in Cuba*, Philadelphia 2008.

38 Cited in L. Martin, *Commerce, Christianity and the Origins of the “Creoles” of Fernando Po*, in: *The Journal of African History* 25 (1984) 3, pp. 257–278, at 263.

39 E. Valdés Infante, *Cubanos en Fernando Póo. Horrores de la dominación española*, Havana 1898, p. 37.

40 P. Pan, *The Brutal Island*, in: *Daily Times*, 27 January 1965.

41 W. G. Clarence-Smith, *Cocoa and Chocolate, 1765–1914*, London 2000, p. 104.

from slave-holding African societies. To be sure, there was a number of mostly adolescent “domestic slaves”, who were also transferred to the island to work as “domestic servants” for some of the more notable Fernandino planters from the former slave-trading aristocracies in the Vai areas of Sierra Leone, as well as from Lagos, Bonny, Calabar, and the Loango coast in the French Congo. They were simply being inscribed on five-year “apprenticeship” contracts that ensured “rations and rates of pay”.⁴² Quite a few of these former slaves in turn became Fernandino planters themselves. From Freetown, a letter to a newspaper recalls how the movement of “the aborigines from this country who went to that Island as farm labourers” involved people “who a few years ago [were] worth nothing, [and] are now being enriched: you will be astonished to know what insignificant Mendi, or Limbah or Timni who have now become planters make annually, hundreds of pounds”.⁴³

Most contract workers in the latter half of the nineteenth century were there as strictly temporary immigrants; they were considered *alienígenas* (statutory strangers), who were almost always intending to return and were uninterested in and also eventually categorically excluded from becoming resident or landowners on the island. The Kru notably considered themselves an anti-slave society: they “neither experienced enslavement nor ever kept slaves themselves”.⁴⁴ A Methodist missionary on the island in the 1870s noted that the Kru

*engage themselves to do all sorts of toil, such as rowing boats, paddling canoes, cutting forest wood, carrying water, clearing ground, cooking food, and, in fact, anything their masters dictate. They could never be forced into slavery, and say they would rather be killed, or kill themselves than be slaves; yet they will cheerfully do all manner of drudgery – even the most slavish work – so long as they are free, and fed and paid.*⁴⁵

The Kru valued the ability to be paid in gold pounds, which was the currency in use along the coastal merchant shops near their home areas, whereas the silver pesos and later pesetas they were paid if they worked for the Spanish crown would be immediately cashed in for goods at the factories on the island at a high markup, which was one of the main labour complaints by the Kru as it drastically reduced their earning power. In any case, most employers were forced to pay a part of the wage in pounds as demanded by workers, and this was formalized in the contract too in order to attract workers in the first place. The pound was used almost exclusively in daily commercial relations on the island, and the British monetary, commercial, religious, and linguistic influence was so

42 Sundiata, *From Slavery to Neoslavery*, pp. 54, 50. These regulations were the first to re-establish and bureaucratize the grounds for disciplinary relation between master and servant: disputes and punishments would be mediated by “the Governor and his advisors”, García Cantús, *Fernando Poo*, pp. 434–436.

43 H. H. Lardner, *Songo Town Its Capabilities and Prospects*, in: *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 19 May 1900, <http://www.opensourceguinea.org/2014/06/hh-lardner-songo-town-its-capabilities.html>.

44 Sundiata, *Brothers and Strangers*, p. 65. Specific groups of coastal Kru had also been involved as worker-intermediaries of the slave trade, hired primarily as canoe “pilots” and “interpreters” by Spanish slave traders in Gallinas, Sierra Leone, until the 1840s.

45 Roe, *West African Scenes*, p. 44.

persistent that, in 1886, Oskar Baumann, the Austrian traveller and ethnologist, even described Fernando Pó as “entirely English, except for the government”.⁴⁶

The Kru considered themselves to be drawn into a labour market freely – in the sense of searching for wages, in the form of large advances and bulk payments sustained by long contracts, not to reproduce themselves, as rations and housing were part of the contract, but for their own collective reproduction in their societies. Recruiters could only operate in certain areas once colonial money and its equivalence in a variety of imported goods, such as alcohol, tobacco, and textiles, became indispensable components of key social obligations, such as ceremonial marriage payments. These are the arenas where recruiters appear, and in this way, they became the vectors for how the bulk of colonial money and imported commodities was being deposited and incorporated into “traditional” non-peasant and not fully colonized societies. Recruiters devised, negotiated, and provided the rate and proportion and type of goods needed to link up with the “internal” economies of societies with a high bridewealth. While I cannot go into ethnographic explanation here, it is worth noting that the Kru shared a similar characteristically high bridewealth – a common feature of egalitarian African social structures – with the primary workforce in the twentieth century, the Fang of central Africa and the Igbo of Nigeria. However, in the case of the Kru, their self-produced copper-bracelet currencies used for “social transactions” such as bridewealth had already been largely replaced by the use of colonial currencies in the nineteenth century.⁴⁷

Fernando Pó was a colonial outpost without the budget for an elaborate militarization of labour relations. Furthermore, the majority of employers were undercapitalized and had to borrow heavily from British merchant moneylenders on the island to pay the advances of labourers, on the expectation that they will be able to pay down their credit-fuelled plantations after various successful harvests. There were no proper land markets at this time; the government would grant concessions to any new Spanish planters or would give a deed to Fernandino planters if a parcel had had been cleared and tilled for a period of three years. At this point, there was also no extensive road network on the island; therefore, the plantations were dotted all along the coast, only reachable by boat. By the 1890s, several thousand *braceros* (contract workers) were employed by hundreds of smaller Fernandino cash crop farmers and several dozen large and flourishing Fernandino and Spanish planters. Increasingly, the haciendas were being started by a new generation of Basque and Catalan settlers and by large European firms managed by British and German agents.⁴⁸ Quite a few of the early Spanish planters were also former navy officials, such as Francisco Romera – who arrived on the island with experience gathered from plantations in Cuba and also who, in 1892, arranged a trip for 17 Chinese former coolies

46 O. Baumann, *Eine afrikanische Tropeninsel: Fernando Póo und die Bube*, Vienna 1888, p. 5.

47 Frost, *Work and Community*, pp. 10–12, 160–162; See also in relation to the Fang E. Martino, Nsoa (“dote”), dinero, deuda y peonaje: cómo el parentesco fang tejó y destejó la economía colonial de la Guinea Española, in: *Éndoxa* 37 (2016), pp. 337–361.

48 García Cantús, *Fernando Poo*, pp. 370, 567.

from Cuba on a navy gunner ship, promising them a “return passage to a destination of their choosing” if they would be indentured to him for a year on Fernando Pó.⁴⁹

Throughout this period, labour recruitment operated in a sea of instability and constant turnover: “half of the inhabitants are renewed every single year, because workers are all from the mainland, and they return after the expiry of their contract”.⁵⁰ Labour was structurally and continuously scarce and exogenous. Planters had to renew their workforce after the expiry of a round of contracts – between two and five years – after which *braceros* were released and either sought out other more desirable ways of earning colonial money at other emerging colonial towns or returned home and turned to lucrative small-scale cash crop farming. Indeed, it was also through the return of labour migrant from Fernando Pó’s early cacao plantations that the cash crop largely spread into Ghana and other parts of West Africa.⁵¹ Fernando Pó had a terrible reputation; it could not hope to operate by attracting successive waves of immigrant labour within a “positive” and self-organized feedback system linked by direct kinship networks and communities – a soon-to-be common form of intercolonial and especially urban migration in early colonial West Africa.

By the 1890s, labourers had come from almost every port town of the Gulf of Guinea; however, as a Spanish administrator noted, rapidly “unfavourable news is spreading about the treatment and suffering of immigrant Africans in our Spanish possessions” so that, “in reality, at whichever point [in the Gulf of Guinea] we try to recruit, as soon as they found out about the destination, they refrained from providing us [with] *braceros*, with a palpable sense of repulsion”.⁵² From the outset, Spanish and Fernandino recruiters who ventured not only to the Kru coastal areas but also along the Bight of Biafra were dismissed and even ignored. A Cuban prisoner who escaped to Calabar on a canoe from Fernando Pó with the hired help of a Kru worker reported that, there too, the locals “detest the Spaniards”.⁵³

In these circumstances, recruitment would only be possible by devising various techniques embedded in the contractual order, including the release of high advances guaranteed by long contracts and the fact that workers who were landed on the island by recruiters were prohibited from leaving without first being bound by a contract. The British foreign office in the early twentieth century still referred to these local regulations “governing all classes of indentured labour” as “a well-drafted and beneficent” as it “provides that all unemployed residents in Fernando Po who cannot show means of subsistence, or are not registered in the books of the District Council (town hall), must

49 Ministerio de Estado, Nota de la Legación del Imperio Chino, 9 July 1895, AGA Caja 81/07056. Six of them died on the island – some returned to Cuba to lodge a complaint at the Chinese legation there, whereas others, it seems, found their way back to China via Lagos.

50 J. Valero y Belenguer, *La Guinea Española: La Isla de Fernando Pó*, in: *Boletín de la Real Sociedad Geográfica* 32 (1892), pp. 144–365, at 218.

51 Clarence-Smith, *Cocoa and Chocolate*, p. 113.

52 Valero y Belenguer, *La Guinea Española*, p. 218.

53 *Escape of the Fernando Po Prisoners*, in: *New York Times*, 12 August 1869; F. J. Balmaseda, *Los confinados á Fernando Póo é impresiones de un viage á Guinea*, Havana 1869, p. 163.

perform such work as the *Curaduría* may assign to them, whether for the State or for private employers.”⁵⁴

Initially in the late 1860s, when labour relations started taking a turn for the worse, a dozen or more Kru would simply “disappear” through “desertion” with every passing British steamer stopping over in Fernando Pó.⁵⁵ The Kru, wrote an early Spanish governor, “made sure to flee from the island whenever opportunities arose”. If “we don’t find an energetic remedy” to the “flight of the Kruman”, he went on to claim, “it will be a stimulus to a series of successive desertions which will leave our Government and population without a single worker.”⁵⁶ That the primary worries of the Spanish authorities lay in desertion is clear from a labour treaty signed in 1862 with the Kingdom of Bimbia on the shores of Mount Cameroon, located within direct line of sight of the island. All five short articles were geared towards King William I of Bimbia, as he was called, and his “fulfilling and making his subjects fulfil the contracts with Spanish subjects” so as “to avoid the frequently arising problem of desertion”.⁵⁷

The planters and recruiters on the island had to come up with a counter stimulus, which, in the 1870s, even became the principal way the Spanish administration would hire workers to undertake public works: they incentivized the reverse movement and offered ever-larger advances to those who deserted “from the British vessels” to Fernando Pó. In this period, this method of siphoning off Kru mariners and workers being transported to and from home or a workplace proved much more effective than recruiting along the coast where the reputation of the Spanish island was continually hitting new lows.⁵⁸

On the Kru coast, workers tended to be hired in small groups, led by a headman who also mediated destinations, promises, conditions, expectations, and advances. In the peculiar conditions on Fernando Pó, the headman system had already started to dissolve. As outlined in unique detail in the diary of John Holt, who eventually became a shipping magnate but who started off as an agent for a British merchant firm on Fernando Pó in the 1860s, Kru workers tended to operate within a reputational mechanism to facilitate their rehiring by other employers.

At the completion of a contract, released workers would receive a letter of recommendation from their previous European employer that “vouched” for those particular workers or skills and their reliability. This letter was indispensable for getting hired into the better paying and prestigious jobs on offer on the coast. This makes it likely that the Kru on Fernando Pó were those who were not provided with these types of letters of recommendation or those who did not have experience or the skills to work on European-control-

54 Great Britain, Spanish Guinea, London 1920, p. 31.

55 I. Sundiata, The Rise and Decline of Kru Power: Fernando Po in the 19th Century, in: *Liberian Studies Journal* 6 (1975) 1, pp. 25–43, at 29; G. E. Brooks, The Kru Mariner in the Nineteenth Century: An Historical Compendium, Newark 1972, p. 25.

56 Cited in García Cantús, Fernando Póo, p. 416.

57 Convenio con el Rey de Bimbia, 1 February 1862, in Miranda Junco, *Leyes coloniales*, p. 140.

58 Cited in García Cantús, Fernando Poo, p. 515.

led ships and ports.⁵⁹ While it is commonly assumed that indentured wages were low and the contract long as well as necessarily irrevocable due to the high cost and amortization of long-distance displacement, this is not the case as many workers were hired on the spot in the Santa Isabel harbour, convinced to go to the island with large advances that would bind them for years. The preservation of the contract was not founded on logistical dimensions but on the solidification into a custom of a transplanting and borrowing of the coolie and emancipado contracts.

5. Comparative Method

For this article, I do not make a contrast with neighbouring or seemingly similar colonial territories, nor do I spotlight the cluster of institutions acting as a basis for plantation production, including disciplinary and vagrancy laws. In a sense, I reverse the order of comparison; I start only with *contrato* as it took shape in Fernando Pó. This entire method, and any analytical insight gained, depends on using the contract as the comparative unit and on relating any act of comparison directly through it.

Fernando Pó is often analytically placed side by side with São Tomé and the German plantations around Mount Cameroon, to which it tectonically belonged; however, the island's plantations emerged from their own peculiar vortex laterally connected to the Spanish Antilles.⁶⁰ Spain possessed no mainland hinterland (except effectively the enclave of Río Muni from the 1920s onwards) from where it could replenish itself with labourers. This was not the case for the very large and capital-heavy and state-supported German plantations in Cameroon, whose labour control and supply was upheld by the effective military conquest of much of the interior by the 1890s, or for the century-spanning Portuguese plantations in São Tomé and Príncipe, which, until 1910, continued to draw on the old slaving caravan routes in northern Angola with post-abolition eight-year *serviçais* (servant) contracts, out of which there was no escape.⁶¹

Indeed, what distinguishes Fernando Pó from São Tomé is that it had a commercially active class of Fernandino creoles, who made up the majority of recruiters in this period

59 John Holt, *The diary of John Holt with the voyage of the "Maria"*, Liverpool 1948, pp. 93–95, 216–226. See also C. M. Thiesen, *Mediators, Contract Men, and Colonial Capital*, Rochester 2018.

60 W.G. Clarence-Smith, *Cocoa Plantations and Coerced Labor in the Gulf of Guinea, 1870–1914*, in: M. A. Klein (ed.), *Breaking the Chains: Breaking the Chains: Slavery, Bondage and Emancipation in Africa and Asia*, Madison, 1993, pp. 150–170; A. Eckert, *Abolitionist Rhetorics, Colonial Conquest, and the Slow Death of Slavery in Germany's African Empire*, in: M. van der Linden (ed.), *Humanitarian Intervention and Changing Labor Relations: The Long-term Consequences of the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, Leiden 2010, pp. 351–370.

61 A. M. Caldeira, *Learning the Ropes in the Tropics: Slavery and the Plantation System on the Island of São Tomé*, in: *African Economic History* 39 (2011), pp. 35–71; M. Cahen, "Indigenato" before Race? Some Proposals on Portuguese Forced Labour Law in Mozambique and the African Empire (1926–1962), in: F. Bethencourt/A. Pearce (eds.), *Racism and Ethnic Relations in the Portuguese-Speaking World*, Oxford 2012, pp. 149–171. Joseph Burtt, the famous British Quaker and communist hired by Cadbury, grew concerned by that fact that *serviçais* were "perpetually indentured" and thus in a state that "was almost identical to slavery" (J. Burtt, *Report on the Conditions of Colored Labour Employed on the Cocoa Plantations of Sao Tome and Principe and the Methods of Procuring It in Angola* [1907], in: W. Cadbury et al., *Labour in Portuguese West Africa*, London 1910).

and who had personal and other connections to all the main ports on Gulf of Guinea with similar creole communities. Additionally, Santa Isabel was a stop on most of the main West African steamer routes, and the island was also reachable by ocean-going canoes and small ships from the coast.⁶² Unlike the heavily state-subsidized indentures in the British or French empire, indentured recruitment was largely a private affair – an arrangement by private networks on private steamship companies and sailing and rowing vessels, not between administrative entities.⁶³ Instead, the contract allowed for the highly commercialized and individualized recruitment of labour through a few dozen transport merchants and brokers.

In the same way that John Clegg's remarkable recent article, "A Theory of Capitalist Slavery" (2020), makes the case for locating in the internal slave trade and the extensive credit markets the distinguishing capitalist character of slavery in nineteenth-century North America,⁶⁴ I take the founding of the colonial contract as the precise conduit that led to the new growth of plantations through recruitment. The two signature calendrical features that made up the consistent core of the indentured contract are the fixed length of at least a couple of years and its irrevocability. The way the wage was lumped, structured, and dispensed as a result of this contract directly led to the expansion of commodified labour and the unfolding of the real price of labour as an excess was generated from the contract to pay the commissions of the recruiters as well as the informal advances of workers. The contract created both the status of the worker and the dynamism that would make them appear via a new generation of recruiters. One can even speak of the contract mode of labour production or at least the recruiter-contract nexum, much like land was the underlying leverage in serfdom or property the ultimate tool in slavery.

Formally, the indentured contracts' primary economic purpose was to act as an obstacle to freely negotiated wages. However, it would be misleading to approach contracts in a straightforward way and ignore the escalating economies of recruiters and wage advances because this leads to economistic and legalistic rationalization that serve to maintain the ideological facade of equivalent exchange and voluntarisms and a relatively pedantic affirmation that such partial or halfway colonial contracts skipped a step or a precondition and were thus not complete or true. It is also misleading to see the contract in "diffusionist" terms, as a simple extension or application of other contracts or master-servant sociolegal codes, and assuming its distinctiveness from slavery and free labour.⁶⁵ Fernando

62 See E. Martino, Panya: Economies of Deception and the Discontinuities of Indentured Labour Recruitment and the Slave Trade, Nigeria and Fernando Pó, 1890s–1940s, in: *African Economic History* 44 (2016) 1, pp. 91–129.

63 A. M. McKeown, *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders*, New York 2013, which I consider the most important and insightful book on indenture ever written. McKeown allowed me to see how this period recruitment for Fernando Pó is more akin to intercolonial contract migrations in Southern Africa, to "non-oceanic" Chinese migration in South-east Asia, or to contract-bound Haitian braceros in the early twentieth-century Caribbean, whom Fidel Castro described as having suffered in "new and even worse forms, the slavery that had just been abolished in 1886", cited in M. Casey, *From Haiti to Cuba and Back: Haitians' Experiences of Migration, Labor, and Return, 1900–1940*, PhD thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 2012, p. 15.

64 J. Clegg, *A Theory of Capitalist Slavery*, in: *Journal of Historical Sociology* 33 (2020) 1, pp. 74–98.

65 Cf. D. Hay/P. Craven, *Masters, Servants, and Magistrates in Britain and the Empire, 1562–1955*, Chapel Hill, 2004; A.

Pó is what abolition without a bourgeois compass looks like: a permanent and regressive (or pioneering if you prefer) transition and a new contractual order branching off from the dissolution and mutation of slavery and underpinning a new plantation frontier.

6. Conclusion: Atlantic Reminders

I started off this article by noting that the term *unfree* is a massive residual term to simply designate the “intermediary” category *not slaves*. The term *unfree* was directly borrowed by the English historiography from nineteenth-century German historians of mediaeval and ancient periods. The label of *unfreie* was then beginning to be applied to, as Max Weber says when discussing forms of debt peonage and debt slavery, the “social history of all parts of the world” – where “an endless variety of forms” of unfree labour were being embedded with “intermediate steps” and “gradual transitions”, making “sharp differentiation in concrete fact often impossible”.⁶⁶ Even in his classic chapter “Die Mark” on slave and feudal transitions pre-dating the supposedly definitive bourgeois breakaway, Engels only employs a range of adjectives and intensifiers when outlining the historical variations of *unfrei* relations in periods of “mitigated”, “alleviated”, “unlimited”, and “universal” “*corvée*”.⁶⁷

In an exchange of letters with Karl Marx in late 1882, when he just finished drafting “Die Mark”, Engels says of his thesis concerning the reappearance of serfdom in late mediaeval Germany that whereas in the high “Middle Ages there were innumerable degrees of bondage and serfdom, so that the *Sachsenspiegel* gives up the attempt to ‘make a tally’, this becomes remarkably easy after the Thirty Years’ War. Enfin.” Engels adds that he is “certain” that “bondage” was “not a peculiarly medieval-feudal form, we find [it] everywhere or nearly everywhere” in colonial and conquest contexts, and he is glad that, on this point, he and Marx “‘proceed in agreement’, as they say in business”. His insight into the oscillations, strange combinations, and reappearance of unfree labour relations during imperial expansion was gained by coming to the “opposite” conclusions reached by the German historians on whose books his essay was based. He neatly sums up his critiques of these historiographies in four “contradictions” – which I wish to point out in their entirety in relation to the current global labour history and global histories of capitalism literature, which have only partially succeeded in resolving them. The contradictions arise due

Stanziani, Local Bondage in Global Economies: Servants, wage earners, and indentured migrants in nineteenth-century France, Great Britain, and the Mascarene Islands, in: *Modern Asian Studies* 47 (2013) 4, pp. 1218–1251.

66 M. Weber, *Economy and Society*, New York 1968, pp. 214, 128. For the English adoption and discussion of types and degrees of unfree labour see W. Stubbs, *The Constitutional History of England: In Its Origin and Development*, London 1877, p. 79–85.

67 F. Engels, *The Mark*, New York 1928 (1892). See also the fascinating chapter of A. Rio, “Half-Free” Categories in the Early Middle Ages: Fine Status Distinctions Before Professional Lawyers, in: J. Scheele/P. Dresch, *Legalism: Rules and Categories*, Oxford 2016, pp. 129–152.

1. to the habit of adducing, indiscriminately and side by side, documentary proof and examples from any and every period,
2. to a residue of legalistic prejudice which invariably trips him up when it comes to understanding a process of development,
3. to his gross underestimation of force and the role it plays,
4. to the enlightened presupposition that, since the dark Middle Ages, things must have changed steadily for the better; this prevents him from perceiving, not only the antagonistic nature of true progress, but likewise individual setbacks.⁶⁸

In my readings, one of the few works that has managed to make these “contradictions” clear is Yann Moulier-Boutang’s doctoral dissertation, “De l’esclavage au salariat: Économie historique du salariat bridé” (1998).⁶⁹ One of the only pieces of his extensive work available in English is a recent translation of a short composite extract published in Dale Tomich’s edited collection *New Frontiers of Slavery* (2016). There, Moulier-Boutang repeats his thesis that one of the primary features of the “long sunset” of the transition to a global labour market was the “mutation of slavery” into “labor under contract”.⁷⁰

This thesis is quite different than the more widespread metaphorical use of the “slavery of wage labour”, which is used to conceive the complete dependency on the labour market instead of on individual masters, to theorize proletarians as a class owned collectively by capitalists, and to give the structural compulsion of money the role of medium to substitute direct force. This common comparative analogy is found extensively throughout both Marx’s and Engel’s writings and was directly inspired by the theoretician Moses Heß and the radical artisan Wilhelm Weitling. Heß consistently speaks of wage labour as “temporary servitude”, which Engels adopts in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845), whereas Weitling speaks more dramatically in terms of denouncing the new *Scheinfreiheiten* (the mere illusion of freedoms) and the continuities of “slavery concealing itself today in the shadows of contracts and laws”.⁷¹

In contrast, I apply the term *mutation* quite literally and technically onto the contract itself in the context of the dissolution of slavery in the Spanish Empire: duration of servitude was curtailed; possession and the administration of punishment was taken over by the state itself; and, most importantly, there was a structuring of the new wage form

68 F. Engels to K. Marx, 16 December 1882 in: E. J. Hobsbawm (ed.), *Pre-capitalist economic formations*: Karl Marx, London 1966, p. 145–146.

69 Y. Moulier-Boutang, *De l’esclavage au salariat: économie historique du salariat bridé*, Paris 1998. His work has mostly been ignored or unread in the regional and global historiographies, which is unfortunate because he analytically pulls together and helps connect many threads. For an exception, see M. van der Linden, *Labour History as the History of Multitudes*, in: *Labour / Le Travail* 52 (2003), pp. 235–243.

70 Y. Moulier-Boutang, *Agency and Transnational Perspectives on the Constitution of Waged, Unfree, and Free Labor: The Role of Mobility in the Nineteenth Century*, in: D. W. Tomich (ed.), *New Frontiers of Slavery*, Albany 2016, pp. 23–46, at 40. Another “composite” translation is available in the February 2018 issue of *Viewpoint Magazine*, “Forms of Unfree Labor: Primitive Accumulation, History or Prehistory of Capitalism?”, which gives a short but “full tableau of the global labor market”. For a critique from an African history perspective, see S. Bellucci, *Wage labour and capital in Africa: a historical perspective*, in: *Labour History* 2017, pp. 133–137.

71 P. Eiden-Offe, *Weisse Sklaven, oder: Wie frei ist die Lohnarbeit? Freie und unfreie Arbeit in den ökonomisch-literarischen Debatten des Vormärz*, in: J. Nickel (ed.), *Geld und Ökonomie im Vormärz*, Bielefeld 2014, pp. 183–214.

through advances or the promises of money offered by recruiters. Even if slavery directly transformed into wage labour through these operations, this conception still folds into the insights from the “anti-Wallerstein” Marxist analytics of, for example, the logician Gerald Cohen, noting that it was fundamentally money and the forms of its distribution that determine the social relations of freedom and unfreedom in capitalism.⁷² The contract, and the way it packaged wage money, represents a “break” – in the sense of Moulier-Boutang’s primary metaphor, *bridé*, translatable as *saddled* and literally the antonym of *unbridled*. The contract represented a deceleration or hesitation of complete exploitation but only as a quick adjustment to create the conditions for new labourers to appear from the “outside” and to prepare the grounds for a generalized and still present long nineteenth-century *Saddlezeit* of global labour history.

72 G. A. Cohen, *Capitalism, Freedom and the Proletariat*, in: A. Ryan (ed.), *The Idea of Freedom*, Oxford 1979, pp. 9–25; G. A. Cohen, *The Structure of Proletarian Unfreedom*, in: *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (1983), pp. 3–33.

The Political Economy of Slavery in the Dutch Empire

Pepijn Brandon

ABSTRACTS

Die Republik der Vereinigten Niederlande und ihr Nachfolgestaat, das Königreich der Vereinigten Niederlande, waren eng mit der Sklaverei und dem Sklavenhandel in der Welt des Atlantiks und des Indischen Ozeans verwickelt. Ihr intensivstes Engagement fällt etwa mit der Periode zusammen, in der dieses kleine Land eine überragende Rolle in der Entwicklung der Ligamente des globalen Kapitalismus spielte – die Kopplung der inländischen Kapitalakkumulation mit einer Hauptrolle im Welthandel, im internationalen Finanzwesen, in der Handelskriegsführung und in der Verbreitung neuer Formen des Rechnungswesens. Diese Kombination macht den niederländischen Fall zu einem wichtigen Beispiel für die Untersuchung der Art und Weise, wie sich Kapitalismus und Sklaverei in einer entscheidenden Phase der Transformation der Weltwirtschaft gegenseitig konstituierten. Die Verengung der Frage nach dem Verhältnis von Kapitalismus und Sklaverei auf die Frage, ob die Gewinne aus der Sklaverei eine industrielle Revolution im Land befeuerten, hat jedoch in der Vergangenheit viele Autoren dazu verleitet, die Relevanz dieser Problematik für die niederländische Geschichte schlicht von der Hand zu weisen. Dieser Artikel versucht zu zeigen, warum und wie für die Niederländer im Laufe mehrerer Jahrhunderte und in einer Vielzahl von Konstellationen innerhalb und außerhalb ihrer territorialen Reichweite die kapitalistische Entwicklung und verschiedene Formen der kommerziellen Sklaverei aufs engste miteinander verbunden waren. Da in dieser Beziehung weder der Kapitalismus noch die Sklaverei stabile Gebilde waren, entsprangen die Formen ihrer wechselseitigen Verflechtung (die die politische Ökonomie der niederländischen Beteiligung an der Sklaverei ausmachten) auch unterschiedlichen Motiven und Zielen in verschiedenen Regionen, variierten in ihrer Intensität und unterlagen im Laufe der Zeit einem erheblichen Wandel.

The Dutch Republic and its successor state the Kingdom of the Netherlands were deeply involved in slavery and the slave trade in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean world. Its most intense involvement roughly coincides with the period in which this small country played an outsized

role in the development of the ligaments of global capitalism – coupling domestic capital accumulation with a prime role in world trade, international finance, commercial warfare and the spread of new forms of calculative reasoning. This combination makes the Dutch case an important one for investigating the ways in which capitalism and slavery co-constituted each other in a crucial phase of transformation of the global economy. However, narrowing down the question of the relationship between capitalism and slavery to the much more limited question whether the profits from slavery fueled a domestic industrial revolution, has led many authors in the past to simply out of hand dismiss the relevance of this problematic for Dutch history. This article seeks to show why and how for the Dutch, over the course of several centuries and in a large number of constellations across and beyond its territorial reach, capitalist development and different forms of commercial slavery became joined at the hip. Since in this relationship neither capitalism nor slavery were stable entities, the ways in which they were mutually integrated (constituting the political economy of the Dutch participation in slavery) also stemmed from different motives and aims across geographies, varied in intensity, and underwent substantial change over time.

1. Introduction

It is a strange twist of historiographical fate that the Dutch Republic does not figure large in debates on the interlinkages between capitalism and slavery.¹ The prominence of the Dutch Republic in the history of early capitalism, combined with centuries-long involvement in slavery and the slave trade in both the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean world, would seem to make it an ideal case for comparison. Between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Netherlands was the fifth-largest participant in the transatlantic slave trade. During the seventeenth century, Dutch aggression helped to establish a firm connection between South Atlantic and North Atlantic slavery, and for several decades at the end of that century, the Dutch Republic even acted as the leading slave-trading nation in the Atlantic.² Based on recent estimates, historians have put the number of enslaved labour carried to regions in the Indian Ocean world under the control of the Dutch East India Company on a par with the Dutch share in the transatlantic slave trade.³ The

1 This article follows the same line of argumentation and partly uses the same examples as a chapter I wrote for a forthcoming volume edited by Dale Tomich in honour of Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, coming out of a workshop held at the Fernand Braudel Center in the spring of 2018. Whereas that chapter concentrates on questioning the geographical, chronological, and topical limits of Dutch historiography on capitalism and slavery, this article tries to understand the political economy of slavery in the Dutch Empire in relation to the changing place of Dutch capitalism within the world economy. I am grateful to the participants in the above-mentioned workshop and the Global History Seminar at Harvard on 6 August 2020, as well as to Sven Beckert, Anthony Bogues, Leonardo Marques, Rafael Marquese, Sonal Singh, and Dale Tomich for their comments on various drafts.

2 J. M. Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600–1815*, Cambridge, UK 1990; W. Klooster, *The Dutch Moment. War, Trade, and Settlement in the Seventeenth-century Atlantic World*, Ithaca/London 2016.

3 R. van Welie, *Slave Trading and Slavery in the Dutch Colonial Empire. A Global Comparison*, in: *Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 82 (2008) 1–2, pp. 47–96; L. Mbeki/M. van Rossum, *Private Slave Trade in the Dutch Indian Ocean World. A Study into the Networks and Backgrounds of the Slavers and the Enslaved in South Asia and South Africa*, in: *Slavery & Abolition* 38 (2017) 1, pp. 95–116. It should be noted that the figures for the Indian Ocean

Dutch employed enslaved labour in commodity production in areas as far apart as the Banda Islands, Ceylon, South Africa, Brazil, and Suriname.⁴ By 1770, slave-produced coffee, sugar, and tobacco represented 19 per cent of the value of all goods entering and leaving Dutch harbours.⁵ In a recent blog post, Jan Luiten van Zanden estimates that enslaved workers in both hemispheres provided 3.8 per cent of the total labour force in the Dutch Empire around 1650 and as much as 13.8 per cent around 1770.⁶

In the eighteenth century, the trade in Atlantic slave-produced commodities grew – whereas most of the rest of the Dutch economy stagnated or declined – with the erratic expansion of slave-based coffee production in particular becoming deeply entangled with the further development of Amsterdam's financial markets.⁷ Furthermore, a major reason to study connections between Dutch capitalism and slavery is the role of the Dutch as economic connectors between other empires – acting as carriers, interlopers, and financial intermediaries, which they fulfilled for not only other European but also Asian partners in the Indian Ocean world.⁸ Even more apparent than was the case of other European empires, the lineages that connected slavery and capitalist development for the Dutch were transnational and transimperial. The rise of the Dutch Republic as a slaving nation was built on connections with Iberian traders and helped to lay the foundations for the involvement in slavery of others, leading Robin Blackburn, with some hyperbole, to suggest that “the Dutch promotion of English and French plantation development was more significant than their own colonial efforts in the Americas were.”⁹

The aim of this article is to provide a broad overview of the ways in which the large-scale involvement of the Dutch in transatlantic and Indian Ocean slavery was situated in and constitutive of Dutch capitalist development. Within the scope of a single article, it is

region measure a distinctly different process, with far greater involvement of non-Europeans both as slave traders and as slave owners in the territories under the Dutch East India Company (VOC) control. Nevertheless, as the rest of this article will make clear, the VOC and its servants were deeply involved in slaving, and in reshaping local patterns of slavery according to their own needs.

- 4 J. L. van Zanden, *The Rise and Decline of Holland's Economy. Merchant Capitalism and the Labour Market*, Manchester 1993; K. Nimako/G. Willemsen, *The Dutch Atlantic: Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation*, London 2011; K. Fatah-Black/M. van Rossum, *Slavery in a "Slave Free Enclave"? Historical Links between the Dutch Republic, Empire and Slavery, 1580s–1860s*, in: *Werkstattgeschichte* 66–67 (2014), pp. 55–73.
- 5 P. Brandon/U. Bosma, *De betekenis van de Atlantische slavernij voor de Nederlandse economie in de tweede helft van de achttiende eeuw*, in: *TSEG/Low Countries Journal of Social and Economic History*, 16 (2019) 2, pp. 5–46. This figure includes raw sugar processed in the Netherlands and re-exported to the Baltic region and the German hinterland.
- 6 J. L. van Zanden, *How to measure the impact of slavery on the early modern economy?*, <https://esh.sites.uu.nl/2020/09/10/how-to-measure-the-impact-of-slavery-on-the-early-modern-economy/> (accessed 20 September 2020).
- 7 J. P. van de Voort, *De Westindische Plantages van 1720 tot 1795. Financiën en Handel*, Eindhoven 1973; W. Klooster, *Illicit Riches. Dutch Trade in the Caribbean, 1648–1795*, Leiden 1998; J. M. Postma/V. Enthoven (eds.), *Riches from Atlantic Commerce: Dutch Transatlantic Trade and Shipping, 1585–1817*, Leiden 2003.
- 8 Klooster, *Illicit Riches*; G. Oostindie/J. V. Roitman (eds.), *Dutch Atlantic Connections, 1680–1800. Linking Empires, Bridging Borders*, Leiden 2014; O. Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company in the Trade of the Indian Ocean*, in: A. D. Gupta/M. N. Pearson (eds.), *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500–1800*, Oxford 1987, pp. 185–200; E. M. Jacobs, *Merchant in Asia: The Trade of the Dutch East India Company during the Eighteenth Century*, Leiden 2006.
- 9 R. Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492–1800*, London 2010 [1997], p. 213.

of course impossible to do more than make some general suggestions. The article tries to steer away from an abstract discussion in terms of origins and absolutes and instead seeks to show why and how capitalist development and different forms of commercial slavery for several centuries and in a large number of constellations across the world became joined at the hip. Because neither capitalism nor slavery were stable entities in this relationship, the ways in which they were mutually integrated (constituting the political economy of the Dutch participation in slavery) also stemmed from different motives and aims, varied in intensity, and followed different patterns depending on time and place. As the article illustrates, these shifts in the political economy of slavery cannot be seen as expressions of developments internal to the Dutch Empire but must be approached in relation to other empires and the world economy at large.¹⁰

2. Slavery and Early Dutch Expansion

Large-scale Dutch participation in the slave trade, let alone the foundation of slave-based colonies by the Dutch, only came about in the 1620s and 1630s. However, merchants operating in the northern Low Countries had been part of Atlantic commodity circuits based on slave labour much earlier, even before the establishment of the Dutch Republic as an independent state. Often, these merchants piggybacked on the southern Dutch and German merchants, who in turn operated in partnership with trading houses in Lisbon. In his history of Atlantic sugar, Christopher Ebert recounts the case of Jan Jannsen van Campen, who arranged shipments of not only many European products but also valuable cargoes of Brazilian sugar, brazilwood, and sugar from São Tomé, between Portugal and Northern European towns.¹¹ For the sixteenth century, Ebert also notices a “significant presence” of non-Portuguese merchants in Brazil, especially from the Low Countries, who owned land and *engenhos* (sugar cane mills), organized shipments of Brazilian goods to Northern Europe, and acted as state contractors for woodcutting and mining operations.¹²

The origins of capitalist development in the region encompassing the northern Netherlands predated such ventures into Atlantic trade. Modern scholarship tends to see the emergence of capitalist structures in this regions not as an outgrowth of the expansion of trade between the Baltic and the Mediterranean or the influx of precious metals via the Iberian Peninsula in the sixteenth century, but as a continuation of a late mediaeval process of deep commercialization in substantial parts of the Netherlands’s agriculture that was aided by the favourable position of the northern Netherlands in regional European

10 The latter point is connected to the strand in the capitalism and slavery debate represented by those who take the history of the capitalist world system as their point of departure. See, e.g., D. Tomich, *The Second Slavery and World Capitalism: A Perspective for Historical Inquiry*, in: *International Review of Social History* 63 (2018) 3, pp. 477–501.

11 Ch. Ebert, *Between Empires: Brazilian Sugar in the Early Atlantic Economy, 1550–1630*, Leiden 2008, p. 76.

12 *Ibid.*, pp. 78–83.

trading networks.¹³ Extra-European expansion, including a fairly limited participation by Dutch merchants at this point in slave-based commodity chains such as that of Brazilian sugar, thus did not lay the foundations for capitalist development. However, the rapid expansion of Dutch merchant operations outside Europe, aided by the establishment of the Dutch Republic in the 1580s and the ensuing creation of the Dutch East India Company (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, VOC) in 1602 and Dutch West India Company (*West-Indische Compagnie*, WIC) in 1621, created an enormous field for superprofits, which could be funnelled back into the fertile ground of the already highly commercialized home economy.¹⁴ It was precisely this ability to create circuits of capital accumulation encompassing global commercial operations as well as large-scale domestic productive investment that distinguished the Dutch economy from that of most of its early modern European imperial rivals.¹⁵

As is the case with every aspect of the early history of Dutch expansion into the non-European world, the Dutch came to participate in slavery through a combination of aggressive military competition, imitation, and commercial partnerships with their Spanish and Portuguese counterparts. Being no stranger to Atlantic slaving practices because of their involvement in the trade in sugar, gold, and brazilwood, the Dutch were fully conscious of entering a world rife with slavery when they ventured into the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean basins.¹⁶ Since they were entering this world as underdogs and without the permanent possession of plantation colonies demanding a steady stream of enslaved labourers, it should not come as a surprise that profiting from the slave trade initially was not a major objective for any of the private or state-sponsored companies that were established for trade in Asia, in the Americas, and on the coast of West Africa. It is possible that Dutch merchants also bought and sold enslaved Africans as part of their trading operations along the West African coast, including Angola, São Tomé, the Gold Coast's Fort Nassau (established in 1612), and the island of Gorée on the coast of Senegambia (conquered in 1617), which were primarily directed at gaining gold and ivory, and there are indications that they did so on transatlantic routes. However, the disappearance of the records of the pre-WIC Guinea Company makes it impossible to find more than fragmentary information on this private trade. Concentrating mainly on the cases in which the Dutch captured and resold enslaved Africans in the course of

13 B. van Bavel, *The Medieval Origins of Capitalism in the Netherlands*, in: *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review* 125 (2010) 2–3, pp. 45–79.

14 Sometimes quite literally: Between 1597 and 1643, the top investors in commercial land-reclamation projects were almost always also major investors in the Dutch Republic's newly established overseas trading companies, the Dutch East India Company and Dutch West India Company, with the average participant investing 9,000 guilders or three times the amount as the amount of stock held by the average VOC investor. H. van Zwet, *Lofwaardighe dijkagies en miserabele polders. Een financiële analyse van landaanwinningsprojecten in Hollands Noorderkwartier, 1597–1643*, Hilversum 2009, p. 411.

15 As argued, from diametrically opposed theoretical angles, by works as diverse as G. Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times*, London, 1994 and J. de Vries/A. van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500–1815*, Cambridge, UK 1997.

16 B. Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad: The Dutch Imagination and the New World, 1570–1670*, Cambridge, UK 2001.

privateering operations, Johannes Postma has even argued that the first encounters of the Dutch with the Atlantic slave trade were “more by accident than by design”.¹⁷

Profiting directly from the slave trade was not the only way in which slavery could enter the strategic consideration of Dutch statesmen and company directors, though. Even as late as the 1620s, the slave trade mostly figured in official policy debates not so much as a potential source of profits per se, but, in the context of their wish to weaken the Iberian empires by disrupting their slave-trading operations, as a necessary source of manpower for establishing colonies of their own. Significantly, these are the two main considerations that were brought forward in the first discussion on the slave trade by the 19 directors of the WIC in the opening session of their very first meeting, taking place in July 1623. The summary of the items on the agenda of this meeting mentioned the intention to disrupt “the transportation of Blacks” by the Portuguese on the African coast. A note in the margin mentioned that further research was necessary into the possibility of replacing the Portuguese in the Angolan slave trade because the Dutch “had no place nor opportunity to use those in Brazil or elsewhere”, followed by, in this context, the rather hollow-sounding remark that it also seemed to be against Christian doctrine to participate in this trade.¹⁸ These considerations were not new.

Between the final years of the sixteenth century and the foundation of the WIC, the Dutch repeatedly tried to capture São Tomé, Príncipe, São Jorge da Mina on the Gold Coast, and other strongholds on the West African coast by both privately outfitted and state-organized fleets.¹⁹ Dutch operations along the African coast were often geared towards gaining footholds on the journey to Asia and were commissioned or led by people who were also instrumental to the earliest phase of Dutch expansion in the East Indies. Gerard Reynst fitted out ships to establish Dutch trade on the Congo River and the Loango coast, around the same time that he also acted as director of one of the “pre-companies” for Asia and before he became the governor-general for the VOC in Asia in 1613. In 1596, Balthazar de Moucheron, who also played an important role in the pre-VOC trade in Asia and attempted to maintain the East African trade as private trade during the negotiations to establish the company, organized the first Dutch attempt to capture São Jorge da Mina and the island of Príncipe.²⁰

The significance of global strategic considerations in these early exploits along the African coast, however, does not automatically disassociate them from slavery. In South-East Asia, the VOC managed to tip the scales in Luso-Dutch competition much earlier and more decisively than its Atlantic counterpart did. The areas under VOC control provide

17 Postma, *Dutch in Atlantic Slave Trade*, p. 10.

18 National Archive, The Hague (NaHa), Archive Old West India Company, 1.05.01.01, no. 1, Minutes of the Gentlemen XIX, fol. 2ro–2vso.

19 K. Ratelband, *Nederlanders in West-Afrika 1600–1650. Angola, Kongo en São Tomé, Zutphen 2000*; F. Ribeiro da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese in Western Africa. Empires, merchants and the Atlantic system, 1580–1674*, Leiden 2011; Id., *African islands and the formation of the Dutch Atlantic economy. Arguin, Gorée, Cape Verde and São Tomé, 1590–1670*, in: *The International Journal of Maritime History* 26 (2014) 3, pp. 549–567.

20 Klooster, *The Dutch Moment*, pp. 24–31.

the first examples of how easily low-level engagement in the slave trade, combined with the aim of strategically disrupting the sinews of the Portuguese colonial enterprise, turned into full-blown participation in slavery for commercial colonization.

VOC Governor-General Jan Pieterszoon Coen's destruction of Jacatra, paving the way for the establishment of Batavia as the centre of government for all the VOC territories in 1619, and the final conquest of the nutmeg-producing Banda Islands in 1621, where almost the entire local population was murdered or expelled to be replaced by enslaved labour, decisively turned the VOC to slaving. But this shift had been long in the making. The papers provided by the VOC directors to Pieter van der Hagen for his journey to the East Indies in December 1603 included an anonymous report on "several countries and islands [...] where trade is easy and what goods can best be acquired there". Among many other bits of valuable commercial intelligence, the report mentioned Borneo, Butoon (off the coast of Sulawesi), and Lambou: the first where "the Mallayans, who live on Macassar, have a large trade and bring much rice, against which they get slaves"; the second where "the Mallayans, Moluccans, and Bandanese buy many slaves, who are very cheap here"; and the third where "all the nations of diverse religions may freely buy slaves; though no men at all are sold here, most women, but cheap".²¹ As early as 1614, Coen, in a long letter, advises the directors of the VOC of the advantages of replacing the untrustworthy "Moors" populating Ternate with Christians as well as "blacks [*swarten*] [...], either slaves or free, [which are] all capable to do the necessary labor, so that we do not have to use our own people in this".²² On the Banda Islands, several years before the final conquest and the restructuring of local nutmeg production through plantation slavery, Coen recognized the potential of using slaves to decrease the numerical superiority of the indigenous population, who were considered hostile towards the VOC, and to guarantee continuity of production under VOC control. In a letter dated 30 November 1617 to the VOC official at the Coromandel coast, Coen enthusiastically writes:

*On the Golden Lion and the Neptune we have received several sturdy blacks. Asking Your Honor to send us so many of those, as can easily be transported, young men, as well as grown boys and women, if opportunity permits, because this is highly needed for the population of Banda, since because of the lack of people there much nutmeg and mace is lost.*²³

The acceptance of the slave trade was not merely the result of local decisions. In May 1615, the directors in Amsterdam ordered Coen to buy several slaves for the building of fortresses and other defence works needed to pacify the indigenous population of the Banda Islands, though only "in case of emergency", and provided that other sources of

21 J. K. J. de Jonge, *De opkomst van het Nederlandsch gezag in Oost-Indië (1595–1610)*. Verzameling van onuitgegeven stukken uit het oud-koloniaal archief, vol. III, The Hague 1865, pp. 158–161.

22 H. T. Colenbrander (ed.), *Jan Pieterszoon Coen. Bescheiden omtrent zijn bedrijf in Indië*, vol. I, The Hague 1919, p. 81.

23 *Ibid.*, vol. II, The Hague 1920, p. 300.

forced labour such as Spanish prisoners of war were not available.²⁴ By 1621, the option of employing slaves only as a supplement to other groups of forced labourers had been brushed aside. Under Coen, this notion was replaced by the belief that only turning the Banda Islands into a slave colony would grant the company the measure of complete monopoly control over nutmeg production and the power to break the resistance by the indigenous Bandanese that the VOC craved.

According to one historian, the Dutch in the Indian Ocean region “soon accustomed themselves to the phenomenon of slavery.”²⁵ The number of slaves in VOC-controlled areas rose from about 8,000 in 1625 to 68,000 in 1700 and then more gradually to almost 80,000 in 1775, far outstripping their European rivals, after which it started to decline.²⁶ The case of the Banda Islands, in particular, shows that the VOC, although initially building on top of established patterns of slaving by both indigenous rulers and the Portuguese, actively reshaped conditions of enslavement and patterns of employment of the enslaved once it had the power to do so.

3. Plantation Capitalism and the Notion of Accumulation

Between the establishment of the Dutch Republic as an independent state in 1588 and the period following the Peace of Münster (1648), which ended eight decades of warfare with the Habsburg Empire, the position of the Dutch in international trade grew in leaps and bounds. After this period of commercial expansion, increased competition from European rivals (both economic and military) forced Dutch traders on the defensive, but the Dutch maintained their leading role among European traders and in international finance well into the eighteenth century. Dutch economic success was never purely trade driven. Instead, it relied on an intricate web of connections between a highly successful, commercially oriented domestic agricultural sector; urban manufacturing primarily based in the province of Holland and strongly linked to the import and (re-)export of commodities (dyestuff for textiles; wood, hemp, and tar for the shipbuilding industry; and raw sugar for domestic refining); the extensive Dutch trading network backed by Dutch naval power; and Amsterdam's strong position in international financial markets and in the intra-European flow of bullion (another important connection to slavery and the slave trade).²⁷

The rapidly escalating role of the Dutch Republic in Atlantic Ocean and Indian Ocean slavery likewise was not merely an example of the Dutch entering new routes in interna-

24 Ibid., vol. IV, The Hague 1922, p. 316.

25 G. J. Knaap, *Slavery and the Dutch in Southeast Asia*, in: G. Oostindie (ed.), *Fifty Years Later: Antislavery, Capitalism and Modernity in the Dutch Orbit*, Leiden 1995, pp. 193–206, p. 195.

26 M. van Rossum, “Vervloekte Goudzugt”, *De VOC, Slavenhandel en Slavernij in Azië*, in: *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 12 (2015) 4, pp. 29–57, p. 42.

27 The best general overview remains J. de Vries/A. van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500–1815*, Cambridge, UK 1997.

tional commodity trade but was linked to conscious efforts to change local production practices in the interest of Dutch commercial capital. The almost exclusive focus in more traditional literature on the economic history of Dutch involvement in slavery on profits from the slave trade creates an artificial separation between slaving as a (particularly nefarious) commercial activity and plantation slavery as a large-scale intervention in conditions of production, trade, and capital accumulation.

This broader economic rationale can be seen from the propaganda texts that circulated in the Dutch Republic around the time of the foundation of the WIC and that advocated the conquest of Brazil. The position of Amsterdam in European trade by that time was already as such that as soon as the Twelve Years' Truce (1609–1621) with Spain allowed for open trade between one-half and two-thirds of the carrying trade between the Portuguese colony and Europe was conducted by Dutch or Amsterdam-based Sephardic merchants.²⁸ In a pamphlet directed at Stadtholder Maurice of Orange and the States General, the Anabaptist Jan Andriesz Moerbeek gives a detailed summary of the supposedly spectacular gains that the Dutch economy would accrue from conquering Brazil.²⁹ What is interesting in this pamphlet is not necessarily the nature of his calculations but the economic effects that Moerbeek thought necessary to include. These extended well beyond the increase in trading profits that could be expected from a shift from acting as carrying traders for Portuguese trading houses to Dutch merchants trading on their own account. In typical mercantilist fashion, the pamphlet puts special emphasis on the benefits that colonial possession would provide for domestic manufacturers through the exports of commodities destined to the plantation and the processing industry for raw sugar. This, in turn, would encourage “the many inhabitants who currently send their cash to France, England, the Baltic and other places to profitably invest it there, [...] to deploy their money for a large part at home”.³⁰

Already in this early treatise, participation in the slave trade was explicitly advocated not for its own sake but in relation to the slave-based commodity trade. Moerbeek argues that gaining Brazil would automatically result in trade in Cabo Verde, Guinea, and Angola falling to the Dutch, meaning

*that we will also have the trade in Blacks, who are in great demand in Brazil to make the sugar and perform other labour, which the ships trading in Cabo Verde, Guinea and Angola when sailing to Brazil can take with them. And if those of the West-India Company do not wish to do this themselves, they can permit others to do so [for a fee].*³¹

The Grand Design (Groot Desseyn) that the WIC directors implemented in 1624 and after indeed provided for the conquest both of Brazil and of the main slave-supplying

28 Y. Schreuder, *Amsterdam's Sephardic Merchants and the Atlantic Sugar Trade in the Seventeenth Century*, Cham 2019, p. 66.

29 For the context of the pamphlet, see Klooster, *Dutch Moment*, p. 39.

30 I. A. Moerbeek, *Redenen, Waeromme de West-Indische Compagnie Dient te Trachten het Landt van Brasilia den Coninck van Spangien te Ontmachten*, Amsterdam 1624, pp. 9–10.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

regions in south-western Africa. After its initial failed attempt to establish itself in the South Atlantic, the WIC succeeded in the 1630s in the conquest of several provinces in northern Brazil. This was followed by (in some cases temporarily) successful attempts to replace the Portuguese in Elmina (1637) as well as in Luanda and São Tomé (1641).³² As in Batavia and the Banda Islands 17 years earlier, strategically planned and large-scale intervention in the slave trade followed on the heels of colonial conquest. “A Brief Report on the State that is composed of the Four Conquered Captaincies, Pernambuco, Itamaracá, Paraíba, and Rio Grande, situated in the North of Brazil” (1638), co-signed by John Maurice of Nassau-Siegen, explains:

*It is impossible to achieve anything in Brazil without slaves. Without them, the mills cannot crush the cane nor can the fields be tilled. The presence of slaves is essential to Brazil, and in no way can we operate without them: if any man feels offended by this, his is a useless scruple. As Brazil cannot be cultivated without blacks, and as it is essential that there should be a large number of them (simply because everyone complains about not having enough blacks), it is most important that every means possible is brought to bear to ensure the traffic along the coast of Africa.*³³

Between 1637 and 1645, the Dutch brought about 25,000 Africans to the colony they called “New Holland” to work the sugar mills.³⁴ However, the Dutch left the management of production on the ground largely to the Portuguese planters, and by the second half of the 1640s, their revolt left the WIC on the ropes. The large financial losses for the company that resulted from its defeat in Brazil, leading to the bankruptcy of the “first” WIC in 1674, have dominated estimates in the literature on the economic importance (or, rather, supposed insignificance) of the episode.³⁵ However, more than two-thirds of the Dutch-Brazilian sugar trade during the 1630s and 1640s was not in the hands of the WIC but of private traders.³⁶ Temporary military successes in Brazil and elsewhere had allowed the Dutch to consolidate their foothold in South Atlantic trading routes and to penetrate Spanish-American commodity trade on the backs of their growing involvement in the slave trade. The Dutch role as connector and interloper between various Atlantic empires was further consolidated by the conquest of Curaçao in 1634, followed by a string of ultimately successful attempts by prominent Dutch merchants to act as partners or subcontractors in the Asiento de Negros after 1647.

After the fall of New Holland, Dutch investors started looking for “New Brazils” by both establishing new sugar colonies and trading with and financing French and British

32 M. van Groesen, Introduction: The Legacy of an Interlude, in: M. van Groesen (ed.), *The Legacy of Dutch Brazil*, Cambridge 2014, pp. 1–24, p. 9.

33 S. B. Schwartz (ed.), *Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700*, Cambridge 2010, p. 245.

34 S. B. Schwartz, Looking for a New Brazil. Crisis and Rebirth in the Atlantic World after the Fall of Pernambuco, in: Van Groesen, *Legacy of Dutch Brazil*, pp. 41–58, p. 44.

35 H. den Heijer, *De Geschiedenis van de WIC*, Zutphen 1994, pp. 97–98.

36 Schreuder, *Sephardic Merchants*, p. 69.

plantations in the West Indies.³⁷ Some doubts have been shed by the recent work of Russell Menard on the old idea that the Dutch directly bankrolled the establishment of the sugar sector in the British colony of Barbados.³⁸ Nevertheless, many instances of Dutch mercantile involvement are provided by the same author.³⁹ Moreover, the Brazilian experience combined with the rapid growth of Atlantic trade seem to have convinced the Dutch of the value of plantation slavery as a model of capital accumulation in its own right.

In 1659, a former captain in Brazil, Otto Keye, presented a fascinating argument about why slave colonies in the equatorial zone presented an exponentially greater potential for profit than the colony New Netherland on the North American coast. The greater fertility of the land, combined with the cheap and more productive labour of slaves in his eyes could lay the basis for rapid growth: "For those Blacks or Slaves in Warm Countries can prepare twice as much land or more for cultivation of those agricultural products than hired white servants in New Netherland."⁴⁰ In the final part of his treatise, Keye provides a long calculation to prove that settlers "whose power is but so big that they can lay out a Capital [*Capitael*] of 5,000 guilders for agriculture in Guajana" in four or five years could reap higher profits "than a Capital of 100,000 guilders in this country [the Netherlands]".⁴¹ To prove this, Keye provides a detailed mathematical example factoring the division of the starting capital of 5,000 guilders over the costs of acquisition of enslaved labourers, their necessities, tools, and a fund to feed the planter and his family. He examines the potential return on slave labour, factoring in that slaves would become more productive over time through the acquisition of skills and the labour they put into improving the land. He uses those estimates to show how the profits from each productive cycle not only could be used for the clearing of a larger areal and the acquisition of more slaves but also, over a series of years, could be used for building of a sugar mill.⁴² What is important about Keye's text, just like Moerbeek's earlier plea for the conquest of Brazil, is not so much the (largely unrealistic) calculations of expected revenue that they provide but that they show that the interest of Dutch colonizers in Atlantic slavery went well beyond merely copying existing Portuguese practices or profiting from the commerce in human beings. Moerbeek's pamphlet integrates plantation slavery in a broader mercantilist perspective on the relation between colonization and the domestic economy, whereas Keye's is an argument for the potential of the plantation for capital accumula-

37 Schwartz, *Looking for a New Brazil*; S. Marzagalli, *The French Atlantic and the Dutch, Late Seventeenth – Late Eighteenth Century*, in G. Oostindie/J. V. Roitman, *Dutch Atlantic Connections, 1680–1800: Linking Empires, Bridging Borders*, Leiden 2014, pp. 103–118, pp. 105–108.

38 R. R. Menard, *Sweet Negotiations. Sugar, Slavery, and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados*, Charlottesville 2006, pp. 49–51.

39 R. R. Menard/J. J. McCusker, *The Sugar Industry in the Seventeenth Century. A New Perspective on the Barbadian "Sugar Revolution"*, in S. B. Schwartz (ed.), *Tropical Babels: Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1450–1680*, Chapel Hill 2004, pp. 289–330, pp. 315–318.

40 [Ottho Keye] *Het Waere Onderscheyt Tusschen Koude en Warme Landen*, The Hague 1659, p. 102.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 148.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 155.

tion. When the Dutch managed to trade New Netherland for Suriname on the coast of Guiana according to the Peace of Breda (1667), which concluded the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665–1667), there was ample ground for celebration. In the three-quarters of a century that followed, Suriname would come to house a slave population of almost 60,000, producing a continuous stream of coffee and sugar. Trade in goods produced on Dutch, French, and English plantations in the wider Atlantic world would help to sustain the otherwise increasingly flagging Dutch economy of the eighteenth century.

4. Promiscuous Capital: Flexible Labour Mobilization under the VOC

Bringing into close dialogue the turn towards plantation slavery by the Dutch in the Atlantic world and simultaneous developments under the VOC in the East Indies provides a warning against seeking the connection between capitalist development and slavery along a single route. As shown previously, the introduction of commercialized mass slavery on the Banda Islands and in other parts of the emerging VOC empire predated Brazilian conquest by the WIC. The long-term aim of the VOC in enforcing a monopoly in the trade in nutmeg and mace in the Asian and European market was, of course, wholly commercial in nature. But VOC Governor-General Coen did not turn to mass enslavement because he believed that employing slave labour in itself would be more profitable than other forms of coerced labour. Not short-term profit but instead power was key to this fateful decision.

Attempts to establish the VOC monopoly had floundered on the unwillingness of the Bandanese, who were the only producers in the world of these highly coveted goods and were well aware of the disadvantages that a VOC monopoly would bring them, to trade exclusively with the company. A rapid succession of confrontations between the VOC and various groups of Bandanese over a relatively short time span convinced VOC officials that, as long as the indigenous population controlled large parts of the islands, they would continue to co-determine the conditions of the VOC's participation in the spice trade, especially since the VOC also remained a minor actor among the surrounding Asian and Oceanic polities.⁴³ This acknowledgement of their relative disadvantage led the hardliners within the VOC to the conclusion that only exterminating or expelling the indigenous population and bringing in enslaved labourers from outside would allow the VOC to break the back of the Bandanese resistance. Even after resorting to such genocidal measures, small-scale guerilla offensives by Bandanese refugees continued long after 1621.⁴⁴

43 For an overview of events that pays much attention to local power relations, see A. Clulow, *Amboina, 1623: Fear and Conspiracy on the Edge of Empire*, New York 2019, chapters 1 and 2.

44 H. Hägerdal, On the Margins of Colonialism: Contact Zones in the Aru Islands, in: *The European Legacy* 25 (2020) 5, pp. 554–571.

Both for its position in the intra-Asiatic trade and for defeating their Portuguese competitors, the Banda conquest was a turning point in the history of the company.⁴⁵ Large merchants, through their role as “principal investors” in the VOC, company directors, and their political power within the Dutch Republic, helped to shape the aggressive course of the company in this early stage of its development. Their policies were directed not only towards gaining a strong position in the intercontinental trade in highly profitable commodities such as nutmeg, but also at attaining a position on the ground that was strong enough to fend off competitors and to shape local production practices.⁴⁶ However, plantation slavery always remained one type of forced labour employment among many for the VOC.

Throughout South-East Asia, the Dutch employed slaves on their so-called gardens to produce commodities. But, in Asia, the VOC entered from the margins into a highly developed system of production and trade, governed by powerful indigenous rulers and states – unlike large parts of the Americas, where conquest and European-brought diseases marginalized indigenous polities, legal systems, and labour relations allowing for a radical break in production practices provided by plantation slavery. Even in areas where the VOC managed to become a large territorial ruler in its own right, most of the time company officials deemed it more feasible and more profitable to exercise indirect control over or to put pressure on already existing systems of production than to supplant those with their own. Throughout its vast empire, the VOC operated highly variegated zones of production and models of exploitation, based on mixed labour systems that included wage labourers and many different forms of labour service, alongside large numbers of enslaved workers.⁴⁷

To get a better sense of the place of slavery in these mixed labour regimes, it helps to take a brief look at the production regimes for four commodities: nutmeg on the Banda Islands, cloves on Ambon Island, and sugar and coffee in the immediate surroundings of Batavia. Bandanese nutmeg cultivation came closest to the form of plantation slavery that became widespread in the Atlantic world. However, it is important to note that the ecological conditions and the nature of the production process of nutmeg and mace did not allow for easy rationalization through gang labour and partial mechanization introduced on West Indian sugar plantations. The VOC could set production targets, determine prices, and demand rents from *perkeniers* (private planters, or gardeners), who

45 O. Prakash, The Dutch East India Company in the trade of the Indian Ocean, in: A. D. Gupta/M. N. Pearson (eds.), *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500–1800*, Oxford 1987, pp. 185–200, at 193; F. Gastra, *De geschiedenis van de VOC*, Zutphen 1991, p. 45; E. M. Jacobs, *Merchant in Asia. The Trade of the Dutch East India Company during the Eighteenth Century*, Leiden 2006, p. 13.

46 M. van Rossum, *De VOC, van Amsterdam naar Azië*, in: P. Brandon et al. (eds.), *De Slavernij in Oost en West: Het Amsterdam-onderzoek*, Amsterdam 2020, pp. 52–61.

47 M. van Rossum, *Labouring Transformations of Amphibious Monsters: Exploring Early Modern Globalization, Diversity, and Shifting Clusters of Labour Relations in the Context of the Dutch East India Company (1600–1800)*, in: *International Review of Social History* 64 (2019) S27, pp. 19–42. For an interesting attempt at theorization, see A. Anievas/K. Nişancıoğlu, *How the West Came to Rule. The Geopolitical Origins of Capitalism*, London 2015, chapter 7.

actually oversaw slave production. However, as Phillip Winn asserts “the essential method [of production] remained much the same, though intensified”.⁴⁸

For the acquisition of cloves on Ambon Island, the company dealt with local production relations in a very different way. There, through several periods of violent subjection in the 1620s, 1650s, and 1670s, the company nestled itself into a more or less feudal production system centred on local elites, described by the VOC using the generic term *Orang Kaya* (literally rich or important persons). The company enforced a monopsony, set prices, favoured the rise of subservient kings, demanded tribute and labour services, and regulated supply by destroying entire production areas. Both the *Orang Kaya* and the VOC employed slaves alongside other forced labourers, and the slave trade in which the Dutch became a major player facilitated this system of exploitation. But Ambon Island did not thereby become a slave society.⁴⁹

Finally, on Java, the VOC increasingly supervised the production of sugar and coffee. Sugar production itself was largely organized by Chinese farmers, who paid a rent to the company or acted as tenant farmers for Dutch private landowners. Coercion, including slavery, was a major factor in production relations, but the Dutch tended to reap profits from it in the form of taxes and land rent. The production of coffee was an increasingly important aspect of VOC activity in the eighteenth century, but the organization of production was for a long time left in the hands of local chiefs, on which the VOC applied considerable external pressure to meet their prices and targets. Only in the second half of the eighteenth century did the company tighten control over production practices, at the same time establishing its own plantations, again recruiting forced labour in a variety of different forms that included slavery.⁵⁰

One of the distinctive features of slavery under the VOC was its highly urbanized character. Urban slaves often functioned in the households of the rich. However, they equally performed important functions in urban-based commodity production, transport, and dock work.⁵¹ The overarching motive of VOC officials and Dutch private traders to engage in slavery was profit, not status. Slave-produced goods, both cultivated under control of European colonists and of Chinese and indigenous masters, were a key component of the VOC's trade flows and thus contributed to the revenues reaped from the company by Dutch investors. However, the ligaments tying slave labour to Dutch domestic capital accumulation ran very differently for the Atlantic plantation colonies than they did for the VOC empire.

The fact that slavery usually was only an element within the larger mixture of different (coerced) labour relations managed locally tends not only to hide slavery's contribution

48 Ph. Winn, Slavery and Cultural Creativity in the Banda Islands, in: *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 41 (2010) 3, pp. 365–389, at 368.

49 G. Knaap, *Kruidnagelen en christenen. De VOC en de bevolking van Ambon 1656–1696*, Leiden 2004, chapters 6 and 7.

50 J. Breman, *Mobilizing Labour for the Global Coffee Market. Profits from an Unfree Work Regime in Colonial Java*, Amsterdam 2015.

51 Van Rossum, *Amphibious Monsters*.

to the profits that Dutch capital drew from Asia but also to signify the existence of many layers of mediation between Dutch investors and relations of production on the ground. Important elements of this mediating structure lay outside the direct control of the company, forming part of the wider world of relationships between European and Asian actors on the edges of or beyond the sphere of VOC jurisdiction. European officials, settlers, and merchants participated on a large scale in agricultural production and non-company slave trade for their own private profits. Private involvement under the company radar also meant that the impact of slavery and the slave trade on capital formation in the Dutch Republic extended well beyond the profits drawn directly from VOC trade.⁵²

5. Production, Trade, Finance

The eighteenth century saw marked change in the position of the Dutch Republic within the world economy. Depression of the main sectors of domestic manufacture and a loss of trading position to British and other competitors meant that the Dutch increasingly had to content themselves with playing a subsidiary role to centres of capital accumulation located outside the Dutch Republic. However, the same period saw significant expansion of Dutch trade in colonial goods. The explosion of the trade in Atlantic coffee and sugar in particular formed a lifeline for the ailing Dutch economy. Next to the continued strength of Amsterdam in international government and private finance, the outsized role of the Dutch in the trade in slave-produced goods eased the painful transition by Dutch merchant houses from being the forerunner capitalists of the seventeenth century to becoming facilitators of and benefactors from more rapid economic development elsewhere.

Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude give rough estimations for the proportion colonial trade had in the total foreign trade of the Dutch Republic. According to them, between 1650 and 1770 the proportion of colonial imports grew from 11 to 44 per cent, with the total value of imports remaining stable at roughly 140 million guilders. The proportion of colonial goods in Dutch exports in the same years grew from 9 to 40 per cent, with the total value of exports decreasing from around 120 to 100 million guilders.⁵³ During the eighteenth century, the Atlantic slave colonies contributed most to this growth. Between 1660 and 1720, VOC imports from Asia almost doubled, from 9.2 million to 18.2 million guilders. But after that, growth stagnated, with VOC imports in 1770 amounting to around 20 million guilders.⁵⁴ While Asian trade only grew piecemeal during the

52 On the difficulty of tracing private capital formation in Asia, as well as the potential size of such capitals amassed by VOC officials and ship captains, see J. R. Bruijn, *Commanders of Dutch East India Ships in the Eighteenth Century*, Woodbridge 2011, pp. 221–224.

53 De Vries/Van der Woude, *First Modern Economy*, p. 577.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 533.

eighteenth century, trade with the Dutch Atlantic colonies, coming from a much lower seventeenth-century starting point, grew exponentially.

A crucial factor in this was that the Dutch, with private traders rather than chartered companies dominating Atlantic trade routes, could gain a foothold in the trade with not only their own Atlantic colonies but also those of other European powers. Partly through Caribbean trading stations, such as St. Eustatius, and partly via European ports, the Dutch managed to play a crucial role in shipping slave-produced goods from the French colonies in particular.⁵⁵ The overall proportion of the Atlantic slavery sector within the Dutch economy, which remained highly trade oriented throughout this period, has recently been calculated by the author and Ulbe Bosma as being 5.2 per cent of the nation's gross domestic product in the year 1770. This contribution was concentrated mainly in the Netherlands's most powerful, richest, and economically most dynamic province, the province of Holland, where Atlantic slave-based activities contributed as much as 10.36 per cent to the province's gross domestic product. Nineteen per cent of all goods going through Dutch harbours (expressed in value) had been produced on Atlantic slave plantations, while 40 per cent of the slow, but not non-existent, economic growth in the province of Holland from the late 1730s to the late 1770s stemmed from the expansion of Atlantic slavery.⁵⁶ One of the main lasting results for the Dutch economy was the rapid expansion of the Rhine trade with German hinterlands, which overwhelmingly relied on colonial goods.⁵⁷

A crucial factor in the increasing weight of the Atlantic in the Dutch economy was the steady growth of the Surinamese plantation sector for most of the eighteenth century. Suriname was a tiny colony when the Dutch took over in 1667. By 1775, Suriname's more than 50,000 slaves produced 6,610 tons of sugar and 7,927 tons of coffee.⁵⁸ The expansion of Suriname slavery was almost entirely driven by private investment. Especially once the international coffee boom got under way in the mid-eighteenth century, investors from Amsterdam and elsewhere pooled their resources together under the aegis of large merchant-financiers in constructions called "negotiation funds" to provide mortgages for the establishment of new plantations, the buying of slaves, or the building of expensive equipment for improvement such as sugar mills. However, it is important to note that the entry of these large and often speculative funds into Dutch Guiana investment came relatively late in the boom. Financing the expansion of the plantation sector

55 V. Enthoven, *An Assessment of Dutch Transatlantic Commerce, 1585–1817*, in J. Postma/V. Enthoven (eds.), *Riches from Atlantic Commerce. Dutch Transatlantic Trade and Shipping, 1585–1817*, Leiden 2003, pp. 385–445, at 444; Marzagalli, *French Atlantic*.

56 P. Brandon/U. Bosma, *De Betekenis van de Atlantische Slavernij voor de Nederlandse Economie in de Tweede Helft van de Achttiende Eeuw*, in: *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 16 (2009), 2, pp. 5–46.

57 T. Combrink, *From French Harbours to German Rivers: European Distribution of Sugar by the Dutch in the 18th Century*, in: M. Martin/M. Villeret (eds.), *La diffusion des produits ultramarins en Europe. XVI–XVIII siècle*, Rennes 2018, pp. 39–56.

58 A. van Stipriaan, *Surinaams Contrast: Roofbouw en Overleven in een Caraïbische Plantagekolonie 1750–1863*, Leiden 1993, p. 29.

was tied to the trade, with many negotiation funds demanding the goods produced by the slaves to be sold in consignment.⁵⁹

Johannes Petrus van de Voort estimates the total size of West Indian loans at over 60 million guilders, and a contemporary memorandum, using different figures, asserts that West Indian loans formed 28 per cent of Dutch private foreign investments through investment funds.⁶⁰ These investments flowed not only into the Surinamese economy but also into the expanding neighbouring Dutch colonies of Essequibo, Demerara, and Berbice – which, in the nineteenth century, would become British Guiana – and into Danish and English Caribbean islands. Although some of these loans had to be written off or payment of interest stopped or curtailed due to the 1772 financial crisis and the temporary drop in coffee prices that followed it, real and lasting blows to the investors came only as a result of the long-term disruption of Dutch Atlantic commerce under the French occupation. Even then, investors and administrators who held onto their investments into the nineteenth century frequently saw returns turning upwards again, as coffee and sugar production remained steady despite financial and political turbulence.⁶¹ The growing involvement of Dutch merchants in Atlantic slavery during the eighteenth century reconnected Dutch capital with one of the main growth sectors of the world economy. Combined with the continuing strength in East Indies trade, Dutch colonial trade was fundamental for establishing the relatively high baseline under which the crisis-ridden Dutch economy of the eighteenth century did not sink.⁶² This had not only direct economic effects but also geopolitical ones.

Accordingly, it helped to ensure that, despite increasing capital flight from sectors of home manufacture outstripped by European competitors into foreign investments and state loans, the Dutch Republic could continue to function as a significant hub in international trade and finance and even establish new international links through Rotterdam and the Rhine trade or through large financial investments in the Americas. It also meant that, despite a policy of guarded neutrality pursued by the Dutch state for most of the eighteenth century, Dutch capital became deeply enmeshed in the violent struggles over Atlantic trade and imperial sovereignty that shaped world politics during the second half of the eighteenth century.⁶³ This crucially included the armed resistance by the enslaved themselves, which posed concrete limits to slave-based accumulation in the Dutch Guianas. A year-long and nearly successful revolt by the entire slave population in the Dutch colony of Berbice in 1763/64 and the Surinamese Maroon Wars (1765–1793) arguably

59 Van de Voort, *Westindische Plantages*.

60 *Ibid.*, p. 101.

61 A. van Stipriaan, *Debunking Debts: Image and Reality of a Colonial Crisis. Suriname at the End of the 18th Century*, in: *Itinerario* 19 (1995) 1, pp. 69–84.

62 J. L. van Zanden/A. van Riel, *The Dutch Economy in the Nineteenth Century: The Strictures of Inheritance*, Princeton 2004, p. 15.

63 G. Oostindie, *Dutch Atlantic Decline during the "Age of Revolutions"*, in: Oostindie/Roitman, *Dutch Atlantic Connections*, pp. 309–338.

formed the most successful episodes of slave rebellion before the Haitian Revolution (1791–1804).⁶⁴

The increased dependence on colonial trade can help explain why – despite financial troubles, slave resistance, and major imperial setbacks – Dutch political elites until the second half of the nineteenth century clung to slavery in their Atlantic colonies with such determination.⁶⁵ The first half of the nineteenth century became a period of active reform in colonial policy, aimed at restoring the international place of the Dutch trading sector that by now seemed inexorably lost. These attempts were highly successful in the East Indies, where the Cultivation System, established in 1830, provided a new basis for state-led colonial exploitation through local chieftains. Slavery was gradually replaced by other sources of forced labour without this having much of an impact on colonial production, a possibility that was already built into the mixed nature of labour regimes under the VOC. In the colonies in the West Indies, no alternative sources of coerced labour seemed readily available. Amsterdam-based financiers in the nineteenth century remained heavily involved in the Surinamese plantation sector and, not without financial successes, aimed to “modernize” plantation production with slavery through the implementation of steam-powered machinery and by relying on government regulation to dampen slave resistance and counter demographic decline of the slave population.⁶⁶

There is a strong tendency to see continued Dutch investments in plantation slavery during this period as an expression of conservatism and the inward-looking nature of Dutch economic policies. However, Dutch investors in the first half of the nineteenth century actively sought involvement in the new *second slavery* growth regions in Brazil and North America. In the 1830s, Anglo-Dutch bankers helped to finance the expansion of cotton slavery in the US South through the Citizens’ Bank of Louisiana with bond interest payable in Amsterdam, London, and Paris.⁶⁷ Such financial links to slavery were part of wider investment portfolios of Dutch merchants and financiers in the expansion of the US economy. These also included loaning almost half of the sum required for the Louisiana Purchase (1803) through Amsterdam investors and strong connections between Dutch merchants and US trading houses when they started entering colonial trade.⁶⁸ Slavery remained an integral part of Dutch investment portfolios, which is unsurprising in light of the long-term transformation of the Dutch economy from a pioneer in manufacture, trade, and finance in the seventeenth century to a second-rate capitalist power kept afloat by an outsized colonial sector in the first half of the nineteenth century.

64 M. Kars, *Blood on the River: A Chronicle of Mutiny and Freedom on the Wild Coast*, New York 2020; R. Price/S. Price (eds.), John Gabriel Stedman, *Narrative of a Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam* [1800], Baltimore 1988.

65 J. P. Siwipersad, *De Nederlandse Regering en de Afschaffing van de Surinaamse Slavernij (1833–1863)*, Groningen 1979; A. Sens, *Dutch Antislavery Attitudes in a Decline-Ridden Society, 1750–1815*, in *Oostindie, Fifty Years Later*, pp. 89–104.

66 Van Stipriaan, *Surinaams Contrast*, section VII.5 and chapter XII.

67 C. Schermerhorn, *The Business of Slavery and the Rise of American Capitalism, 1815–1860*, New Haven 2015, p. 118.

68 P. J. van Winter, *American Finance and Dutch Investment 1780–1805*, 2 vols, New York 1977.

6. Conclusions

Debates on the historic relationship between capitalism and slavery have frequently been waged in terms of strong binary oppositions. Either capitalism was built on the backs of enslaved plantation labourers in the Atlantic world, or slavery was accidental to the emergence of a capitalist world economy. The organization of production on the plantation was either wholly compatible with the “capitalist mode of production” or completely foreign to it. In such a binary opposition, both capitalism and slavery appear as discrete entities, the interaction of which can be measured within a specific national and temporal framework (e.g. British industrial capitalism at the start of the nineteenth century and US capitalism on the eve of the Civil War [1861–1865]).

This article followed a radically different approach by trying to outline how capitalism and slavery co-developed in the Dutch Empire from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. In taking this broad historical time frame and by including not only plantation slavery in the Atlantic world but also the many types of commercial slavery that Dutch merchants profited from in different parts of the world, the article highlights the changes in the political economy of slavery across time and space. While tied to the accumulative interests of Dutch capital owners, slavery served many different purposes for merchants, colonizers, and statesmen that included enslavement as an instrument of colonization driven by geopolitical motives, slavery as one of the many options to fulfil the demand for (coerced) labour, and the plantation as a specific model of accumulation. In practice, these aims, of course, were often more closely integrated than can be shown by a rough sketch comprising several centuries and two hemispheres. Most importantly, the article has tried to show that changes in the political economy of slavery have to be situated in a global context, in which Dutch slaveholding and colonizing capitalists acted as vectors not of some anachronistically constructed national economy but of continuously restructured slave-based accumulation in relation to the changing world economy.

From Slave Trade to Banking in Nineteenth-Century Spain¹

Martín Rodrigo y Alharilla

ABSTRACTS

Im 19. Jahrhundert gab es eine gewisse zeitliche Parallele zwischen der immer stärker werdenden Einbindung der Spanier in den Sklavenhandel und dem Aufbau eines modernen Bankwesens in Spanien. Auf individueller Ebene finden wir zahlreiche Beispiele von ehemaligen Kapitänen oder Sklavenhändlern, die später zu respektablen Bankiers wurden, wie Pedro Martínez Pérez de Terán, José de Abarzuza Imbrechts, Mariano Serra Soler, José María Serra Muñoz, Mariano Flaquer Lluch, Esteban Gatell Roig, Jaime Badia Padrines, Antonio Vinent Vives, Manuel Calvo Aguirre, Antonio López y López und José Canela Raventós, um nur einige zu nennen. Durch ihr Kapital oder ihre Tätigkeit trugen sie zur Schaffung verschiedener Finanzinstitutionen im Spanien des 19. Jahrhunderts bei. Dieser Artikel bietet eine erste Annäherung an dieses Phänomen. Ich werde dies anhand von drei verschiedenen Banken tun, die 1844, 1846 bzw. 1876 in Cádiz und Barcelona gegründet wurden und bei deren Gründung und Entwicklung ehemalige Sklavenhändler eine wichtige Rolle spielten. Es wird die Beteiligung verschiedener Sklavenhändler an der Banco de Cádiz sowie an zwei Finanzinstituten mit Sitz in der katalanischen Hauptstadt untersucht: der Banco de Barcelona und der Banco Hispano Colonial.

In the nineteenth century, there was a certain chronological parallel between the ever-increasing incorporation of the Spanish into the slave trade and the construction of a modern banking system in Spain. On an individual level we find numerous examples of former captains or slave traders who later converted to respectable bankers as Pedro Martínez Pérez de Terán, José de Abarzuza Imbrechts, Mariano Serra Soler, José María Serra Muñoz, Mariano Flaquer Lluch, Esteban Gatell Roig, Jaime Badia Padrines, Antonio Vinent Vives, Manuel Calvo Aguirre, Antonio López y López, and José Canela Raventós, among others. Through their capital or their activity, all of them contributed to the creation of different financial institutions in nineteenth-century Spain. This article offers a first approach to this phenomenon. I will do so on the basis of three

1 This article is one of the results of the Spanish research project PID2019-105204GB-I00.

different banks founded in 1844, 1846, and 1876, respectively, in two Spanish port cities (Cádiz and Barcelona) and in whose foundation and development former slave traders played a major role. We will therefore analyse the participation of various slave traders in the Banco de Cádiz and then repeat the same analysis in two financial entities with their headquarters in the Catalan capital: the Banco de Barcelona and the Banco Hispano Colonial, respectively.

The participation of Spaniards in the transatlantic trade of enslaved Africans occurred at a relatively very late date – only becoming involved after 1810. From that year onwards, Spanish shipowners, traders, consignees, factors, captains, and sailors became intensely involved in an activity that was soon to be declared illegal and suppressed by a bilateral treaty between Great Britain and Spain (1817). Some Spaniards operated from the Iberian Peninsula itself and others from Africa. But, for the most part, they engaged in the slave trade from Cuba, many of whom ended up living in Spain. For many, their dedication to the slave trade allowed them to accumulate the capital with which they could later embark on a business career in Spain more or less removed from that activity. We can speak of, for example, the banking sector, being one among the various sectors of the Spanish economy that received the amassed wealth from the slave trade.

In fact, in the nineteenth century, there was a certain chronological parallel between the ever-increasing incorporation of the Spanish into the slave trade and the construction of a modern banking system in Spain. Thus, if we look at it on an individual level, we find numerous examples of former captains or slave traders who later converted to respectable bankers. This was, of course, not an exclusively Spanish phenomenon; there were other similar cases in other European countries, such as Switzerland.²

Along these lines and without wishing to be exhaustive, I am going to present here three examples that highlight the existence of the phenomenon I have just mentioned. I will do so on the basis of three different banks founded in 1844, 1846, and 1876, respectively, in two Spanish port cities (Cádiz and Barcelona) and in whose foundation and development former slave traders played a major role. This article aims to uncover the existence of a phenomenon whose exact dimension we will only know from a more comprehensive study. We will therefore analyse the participation of various slave traders in the Banco de Cádiz and then repeat the same analysis in two financial entities with their headquarters in the Catalan capital: the Banco de Barcelona and the Banco Hispano Colonial, respectively.

1. The Banco de Cádiz

The Banco de Cádiz was founded on 25 December 1846. Its first board of directors was made up of seven businessmen from the city, including a merchant named Pedro

2 M. Zeuske, *Tod bei Artemisa*. Friedrich Ludwig Escher, Atlantic Slavery und die Akkumulation von Schweizer Kapital ausserhalb der Schweiz, in: *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 69 (2019) 1, pp. 6–26.

Martínez Pérez de Terán, who also took up the position of first director. We are talking about a bank that soon undertook a successful merger process with the Banco Español de Cádiz, a financial institution that had been created in that same Andalusian city in June 1846 as a branch of the powerful Banco de Isabel II in Madrid. Eight commission members negotiated and made possible the merger between the Banco de Cádiz and the Banco Español de Cádiz, a merger that was finally agreed upon in November 1847. One of those eight individuals was Martínez, who had also played a fundamental role in the process of creating the Banco de Cádiz.³ The questions arise who was Martínez, and how did he make a name for himself in the competitive world of Cádiz business?

Thanks to the biography written by historian María del Carmen Cózar Navarro, we know that Martínez was born in Soto de Campoo (Cantabria) in 1792 and that he had emigrated to America when he was young, where he already resided in 1811. And we also know that it was mostly on the Havana-Veracruz route that this young Cantabrian had trained as a seafarer. Furthermore, Martínez ended up joining different slave ships that either originated from or were destined for Cuba, such as the schooners *Dulcinea* or *San Salvador*, sent to Africa in 1817 and 1820, respectively. We also know that after being a sea man, Martínez first went on to work as a businessman on land and later continued to do so from his residence in Havana. There, he gave more and more importance to his activity as a slave trader, organizing a transatlantic network of companies and businessmen of the slave trade, among which were the firms Martínez, Carballo & Co. (in Havana), Peres Martínez & Co. (in Matanzas), and Campo Labarrieta y Martínez (in Cádiz). The same author points out that in barely three years, between 1827 and 1830, this business network managed to set up five slave-driving expeditions to the coasts of Africa, which loaded more than 3,000 African captives bound for Cuba.⁴

It was shortly afterwards that Martínez chose to leave Havana and settle in Cádiz. Accompanied by his family and servants, he boarded the brig *Marinero*, arriving in Cádiz on 28 May 1831.⁵ Once in Spain, our man continued to be actively involved in the illegal trade in enslaved Africans, often in partnership with the Malaga-born Pedro Blanco Fernández de Trava.⁶ Both had two slave factories located at the mouth of the Gallinas River, south of Freetown, in Africa: Martínez's Donvocoero and Blanco's Camasuro. These two complexes fed the holds of the many slave ships sent from Havana or Cádiz to Cuba or Brazil by so many traders in the slave trade with African captives. Thus, when the British officer Joseph Denman decided to completely raze all the Spanish factories located in the Gallinas River estuary in November 1840, Martínez and Blanco put their

3 F. Ruiz Vélez-Frías, *Los bancos de emisión de Cádiz en el siglo XIX*, Córdoba, Universidad de Córdoba, Instituto de Historia de Andalucía, 1977.

4 M. del C. Cózar, *La Orca del Atlántico. Pedro Martínez y su clan en la trata de esclavos (1817–1867)*, Madrid 2020.

5 *El Correo*, 6 June 1831, p. 4.

6 A recent (more or less) biographical approach to the figure of Pedro Blanco in: M. del C. Barcia, *Pedro Blanco, el negrero. Mito, realidad y espacios*, La Habana 2018.

losses at 494,581 and 595,501 pesos fuertes, respectively.⁷ The two slave traders had lost a real fortune, or two, to be more precise.

Those notable losses did not prevent Martínez from accumulating from a great wealth in Cádiz, nor did they prevent him from achieving a certain air of respectability in the business and political world of that dynamic Andalusian port city. Everyone was well aware, however, of his extreme dedication to the African slave trade. Thus, for example, Martínez eventually received a visit from the British traveller and writer Terence McMahon Hughes, who interviewed him and in his book *Revelations of Spain in 1845, by an English Resident* (1845) wrote two chapters focusing on “The Slave-Traders”. In the book, Hughes depicts an unpleasant character, stating “the most extensive and inveterate slave-dealer in the world [is] the notorious Pedro Martinez. This man has carried on the trade in human flesh since boyhood, and has realised by the vile traffic 3,000,000 dollars [...] Martinez is a very common and sinister-looking person, upon whose brow the iniquities of his profession”.⁸

Barely a year after that book was published in London, Martínez played an important role in the foundation of the Banco de Cádiz, acting as its first director. In those years, he continued to be dedicated to trafficking, although on a smaller scale than in the 1830s. Martínez also lent part of his wealth to other slave traders, such as Pedro Felipe del Campo (also from Cádiz) or María Correia Salema (from the island of Puerto Príncipe, Africa), who invested those funds in the slave trade. According to Carmen Cózar, the last slave trade expedition in which Martínez participated directly took place in 1856, on the schooner *Cfa Cole*.⁹ Thus, in the 25 years between 1831 and 1856, Martínez became a true “*negrero de salón*” (salon slave trader) in Cádiz, according to Gustau Nerín’s description of him.¹⁰

It should also be noted that Martínez was not the only slave trader linked to the Banco de Cádiz. The brothers José and Fernando Abarzuza Imbrechts, both of whom were shipowners of numerous expeditions to the African coast, were also involved. After his early resignation as director of that new bank in December 1847, Martínez was replaced by José Abarzuza Imbrechts. Moreover, José Abarzuza had also been one of the founding businessmen of the Banco de Cádiz, acting as one of its first twelve advisers (*consiliarios de número*).

In 1860, however, the intense activity of the Banco de Cádiz made it advisable to change its headquarters and move to a new one. They bought a new building on Calle de las Descalzas, where they soon moved their offices. The seller of that building had been Fernando Abarzuza, brother of as well as a partner of José Abarzuza in different businesses. And it was precisely José Abarzuza, born in Cádiz, who bought the building that had housed the first offices of the Banco de Cádiz, located on Veá Murguía Street.

7 Archivo General de la Administración, Section 15 Africa, 4, 81/7051.

8 T. M. Hughes, *Revelations of Spain in 1845 by an English Resident* in two Volumes, London 1845, vol. II, p. 167.

9 Cózar, *Orca del Atlántico*.

10 G. Nerín, *Traficants d'âmes. Els negreros espanyols a l'Àfrica*, Barcelona 2015.

The Abarzuza brothers had lived for some years in Havana, where they had worked as slave traders. Associated with Miguel Azopardo, both, like Martínez, each had a slave factory in the region of Gallinas, south of Freetown.¹¹ While in Havana, the Abarzuzas organized different expeditions to the African coast, such as the schooner *Nueva Amable Salomé*, which landed 253 African captives in July 1838 near Matanzas, or another Portuguese schooner (whose name is unknown), which unloaded another 224 captives in Cuba in April 1840.¹² After moving to Cádiz in 1845, the Abarzuza brothers continued to organize slave-ship expeditions, first in sailing ships and then in steamships. In 1860, for example, they used their steamship *Quevedo* to load 1,250 African captives in Angola and take them to Cuba, of which around 200 died during the voyage.¹³ They did all this while participating in the aforementioned Banco de Cádiz and while buying and selling the buildings that housed their offices to that financial institution.

Another founder of the Banco de Cádiz probably linked to the slave trade was the Galician Francisco Ximeno Harmony – a former captain of merchant ships who chose to settle in Cádiz, the city where he married and where he practised as a businessman, participating as a partner in different trading houses, such as Carrera Hermanos and Harmony & Co. When the Banco de Cádiz was founded, Francisco X. Harmony was elected one of its first three trustees, a position he held until his death. The Galician businessman was also a member of the Banco de Cádiz's first giro, discount, and loan committee (*comisión de giros, préstamos y descuentos*), of which José Abarzuza was also a member. The possible and eventual links with the slave trade of Francisco X. Harmony comes from his status as the brother of Peter Harmony, one of the leading slave traders in New York. Although we do not yet have a study analysing Peter Harmony's involvement in the slave trade, we do know of many traces of his extreme and long-standing dedication to this activity. For example, Andrew Walker defines him as "the owner of a lucrative New York commercial house", relating his enrichment precisely to the slave trade: "The meteoric rise of Harmony's company over the first half of the nineteenth century coincided with his ever-multiplying connections to the Atlantic trade in captives, especially in the wake of its formal illegalization by Great Britain, the United States, and Spain".

11 Ibid. p. 44; M. Barcia/E. Kesidou, Innovation and entrepreneurship as strategies for success among Cuban-based firms in the late years of the transatlantic slave trade, in: *Business History* 60 (2018) 4, pp. 542–561.

12 House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, Slave Trade, Class A. Correspondence with the British Commissioners at Sierra Leone, The Havana and Rio de Janeiro relating to the Slave Trade from February 2 to May 31, 1839, London, 1840, "Letter from Branco & Carballo to Ignacio Pérez Rolo, Havana, 17th September, 1838"; House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, Slave Trade, Class A. Correspondence with the British Commissioners at Sierra Leone, The Havana, Río de Janeiro and Surinam relating to the Slave Trade from May 11th to December 31st 1840, inclusive, London, 1841, "J. Kennedy and Campbell J. Dalrymple to Viscount Palmerston, Havana, May 28, 1840".

13 House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, Slave Trade, Class B. Correspondence with British Ministers and Agents in Foreign Countries and with Foreign Ministers in England relating to Slave Trade, from April 1 to December 31, 1860, London, 1861, "Consul Brackenburt to Lord J. Russell, Vigo, September 10, 1860".

We know that among the many slave expeditions financed or participated in by Peter Harmony was that of the brigantine *San Francisco de Paula* in 1816.¹⁴ And we also know that he was again involved in the expedition of the ship *Pájaro Verde* in 1821. In the instructions that the captain of the schooner *Semiramis* carried in 1835 on his voyage from Havana to Bonny, the owner of the expedition indicated which correspondents he could contact, if necessary, including Peter Harmony & Co. of New York. The same trading house also appears among the companies to which the captain of the brigantine schooner *Explorador*, a ship dispatched by the firm Blanco & Carballo from Havana also in the spring of 1835, could turn in case of difficulties. In fact, Peter Harmony and Pedro Blanco shared interests in the trafficking business. Thus, in November 1839, a British cruise ship stopped the *Sirse*, which had plenty of documentation on board. Among this documentation were several bills of exchange that showed how the banking and trading house Peter Harmony & Co. operated with the heads of the slave factories in Africa: "Is a set of bills for five hundred dollars, drawn by Pedro Blanco, of Gallinas, on Peter Harmony and Company of New York, in favour of the well-known Theodore Canot, and endorsed by the latter to Tito. They are dated on the 1st of September".¹⁵

It is necessary to know better the possible degree of involvement that Francisco Ximeno Harmony may have had in the slave trade, at the hands of his brother. What we know, without a doubt, is that Peter Harmony himself invested part of his fortune, accumulated to a certain extent thanks to this activity, in the city and the Bay of Cádiz. We know, for example, that he bought a splendid house at number 3 in Cádiz's Plaza de la Constitución as well as several wineries in El Puerto de Santa María, some of which he owned until his death and which his niece Agustina Carrió Ximeno later inherited. We also know that, in his old age, Peter Harmony took up residence precisely in Cádiz, although he travelled periodically to New York, where the firm Peter Harmony's Nephews & Co. continued to operate and where he died on 12 July 1851. When the Madrid newspaper *La España* reported on his death, taking information published in the United States, it said, "Mr [Peter] Harmony had retired to Europe some years ago, taking up residence in Cádiz, but he used to make a trip to this country [the United States] every year during the summer season. He had only arrived in that city [New York] a few days ago when he was struck by the illness that led him to the sepulcher".¹⁶

The examples of Peter Harmony, Pedro Martínez, and the Abarzuza brothers, among others, highlight the links between the port of Cádiz and the Atlantic slave trade. These links were also evident, as we have just seen, in the foundation and operation of the Banco de Cádiz, an institution that provided financial support to different slave traders

14 A. Walker, *Illegal Under the Laws of All Nations? The Courts of Haiti and the Suppression of the Atlantic Trade in African Captives*, in: *Law and History Review* 37 (2019) 2, doi:10.1017/S0738248019000142.

15 House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, *Slave Trade*, Class A. Correspondence with the British Commissioners at Sierra Leone, The Havana and Rio de Janeiro relating to the Slave Trade from February 2 to May 31, 1839, London, 1840, "Report of the Case of the Schooner 'Sirse', Serafin Antonio Spenser, Master".

16 *La España*, 5 August 1851, p. 1.

in the city. Moreover, as I have described elsewhere, the disappearance of the Banco de Cádiz was related to the final hardships of these same traders.¹⁷

These problems were unleashed in 1861, when the difficulties present in Havana (as a result of the war of secession in the United States) quickly took a toll on the activity of two Cádiz merchant firms, both dedicated to the slave trade: Manuel Lloret and Viuda de Portilla – two firms that owed the Banco de Cádiz 750,000 pesetas each at the time. To avoid the foreseeable bankruptcies of Manuel Lloret and Viuda de Portilla (which would have led to the bank's bankruptcy), the bank decided to provide them with even more funds and did so in an increasing and imprudent manner: by June 1864, Manuel Lloret's debt had reached 1,984,265 pesetas and Viuda de Portilla's had reached 2,435,356 pesetas.¹⁸ A large part of these funds had been invested in at least one slave-ship expedition sent to Cádiz by the trading house of Viuda de Portilla.

This ship was the frigate *America*, which arrived in Mozambique in July 1863 intending to carry slaves. When the captives were not found, their captain, the Valencian Antonio Bisquert, chose to march first to Zanzibar and then to Madagascar, where he arrived on 15 February 1864. When the English learned that several hundred slaves were gathering on the island called Villa Maca to be loaded onto the Spanish frigate, they decided to capture it. They did so on 3 April 1864. When the ship was taken to Sierra Leone, the British and Spanish Mixed Court of Justice declared the capture of the slave ship by the British cruise legal and valid on 25 August of the same year.¹⁹ The declaration caused the shipowners to lose both the cargo of that slave-driving expedition (estimated at 300,000 pesetas) and the frigate itself (valued at another 100,000 pesetas). In addition, another commercial expedition by Viuda de Portilla, in this case to Singapore, failed. It should be added that the other major debtor of the Banco de Cádiz was the Cádiz merchant Manuel Lloret, who was also involved in the slave trade in those years.²⁰ The high concentration of risk in two notable slave traders in the city of Cádiz and, above all, the two setbacks of Viuda de Portilla ended up affecting the fragile standing of the Banco de Cádiz, which initially had little activity and shortly after dissolved.

We would say, in short, that there was a presence of various slave traders in the founding, the development, and the dissolution of the Banco de Cádiz. Along the same lines, there were businessmen linked to the Atlantic trade in enslaved Africans in various financial institutions in Barcelona. We are now going to focus on analysing just two banks located in the Catalan capital, which were founded at two different times in the nineteenth century: the Banco de Barcelona and the Banco Hispano Colonial.

17 M. Rodrigo, Cádiz y el tráfico ilegal de esclavos en el Atlántico (1817–1866), in: M. Rodrigo/M. del C. Cózar (eds.), Cádiz y el tráfico de esclavos. De la legalidad a la clandestinidad, Madrid 2018, pp. 195–227.

18 Ruiz Vélez-Frías, Bancos de emisión, pp. 166–184.

19 House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, Slave Trade, Class A. Correspondence with the British Commissioners at Sierra Leone, Havana, the Cape of Good Hope, Loanda and New York and reports from British Vice-admiralty Courts and from British Naval Officers relating to Slave Trade, From January 1 to December 31 1864, London, 1865, "Sam W. Blackall to Earl Russell, Sierra Leone, September 17, 1864".

20 J. H. Harris, Circuits of wealth, circuits of sorrow: financing the illegal transatlantic slave trade in the age of suppression, 1850–66, in: Journal of Global History 11 (2016), p. 419.

2. The Banco de Barcelona

The Banco de Barcelona started operating two years before the Banco de Cádiz. On 1 May 1844, this bank, with its headquarters in Barcelona, received the necessary authorization from the Spanish government for its foundation. A financial institution with the privilege of issuing banknotes was born, that is to say, the first Spanish issuing bank domiciled outside Madrid.²¹ Its first three directors were Manuel Girona, Rafael Plandolit, and José María Serra: all three had links, in one way or another, with the former Spanish possessions in America and at least one of them had also been involved in the slave trade. Plandolit was born in Chiapas (Mexico) while Serra was born in Santiago de Chile. Girona married Carolina Vidal Ramon, who was born in Maracaibo (Venezuela) and had grown up in Santiago de Cuba before settling in Barcelona. On the island of Cuba, Girona's father-in-law, Manuel Vidal Quadras, had run a trading house that had, among other properties, a coffee estate called Santa Isabel – a farm worked by 51 slaves whose property was kept by the Vidal Quadras family until May 1849.²²

One of the first three directors of the Banco de Barcelona who had a close relationship, both on a personal and family level, with the slave trade was José María Serra. As mentioned earlier, José Serra was born in Santiago de Chile in 1810. In that city, his father, the Catalan businessman Mariano Serra Soler, had worked for years as a teller for the Biscayan businessman Pedro Nicolás de Chopitea. The latter was one of the largest slave traders in that city and “probably” also “the richest businessman in Chile in 1810”, as historian Francisco Betancourt Castillo states.²³ In the Chilean war of independence (1810–1818), both individuals were clearly on the realist side so that, after the final battle of Maipú (1818), both chose to leave the country. With their respective families, Pedro N. de Chopitea and Mariano Serra left Chile in 1818, moving first to Rio de Janeiro and, a few years later, to Barcelona, where they opened two trading houses. Mariano Serra operated through the company Mariano Serra e Hijo, a company in which his son, José María Serra also was involved in. It was in the Catalan capital that the young José María Serra married the Creole philanthropist Dorotea de Chopitea Villota, daughter of Pedro Nicolás de Chopitea (and whose life story has merited a beatification process [still under study] by the Catholic Church).²⁴

It should be added that, five years before the Banco de Barcelona was founded, Mariano Serra had organized a slave-driving expedition from the Catalan capital to first Gallinas and then Cuba. He did so on the felucca *Sí*, a ship that set sail from the port of Barcelona

21 The best analysis of the foundation and the first 30 years of the Banco de Barcelona in Y. Blasco/C. Sudrià, *El Banc de Barcelona, 1844–1874. Història d'un banc d'emissió*, Barcelona 2009.

22 Archivo Histórico Provincial de Santiago de Cuba, Escribanía de Juan Giró, 279, 19 May 1849, fol. 119.

23 F. Betancourt, *De mercaderías y esclavos. Negocios y circuitos en la América del Sur, 1800–1810*, in: M. Llorca-Jaña/D. Barría Traverso (eds.), *Empresas y empresarios en la historia de Chile: 1810–1930*, Santiago 2017, pp. 53–76.

24 A. Burdeus, *Una dama barcelonesa del ochocientos. La sierva de Dios doña Dorotea de Chopitea, viuda de Serra*, Barcelona 1962.

under the command of Captain Gaspar Roig, at the end of March 1839.²⁵ The felucca, with 360 slaves on board, was intercepted, however, off the African coast by a British cruiser on 27 May 1839. Judged and condemned by the British and Spanish Mixed Court of Justice of Sierra Leone, the Serras lost all their investment in that expedition.²⁶ However, Mariano Serra and his son, José María Serra were not the only founders of the Banco de Barcelona involved in the odious slave trade. Another of the promoters of that financial enterprise, Mariano Flaquer Padrinas, was also involved. We know that his father, Mariano Flaquer Lluch, had emigrated from Catalonia to Venezuela, where he had made his fortune. It was there that he began to trade in slaves, albeit on a small scale.²⁷ On their return to Catalonia, the two Flaquers (father and son) settled in Barcelona, from whose port they dispatched several slave ships through the trading house Mariano Flaquer e Hijo. Several ships went to the African coast first and then to the island of Cuba, such as the brigantine *Santa Rosalía* (in 1817) and the frigate *Nuestra Señora de la Merced* (in 1819).²⁸ From Barcelona, the Flaquers also invested their capital in various expeditions to the African coasts organized by other Catalan merchants, such as the one carried out by the brigantine *San José*, organized in 1817 by Martorell Pla & Co. and by Cristóbal Roig Vidal.

The latter was a Catalan trader who had recently returned from Havana, where he had participated in the slave trade.²⁹ It cannot be ruled out, by the way, that Miguel Roig Rom, another one of the founders of the Banco de Barcelona and also a member of its first governing board, was not likely involved in the slave trade. A first cousin of Cristóbal Roig Vidal, the Catalan businessman Miguel Roig Rom had lived in Havana for a few years before returning to Catalonia and settling in Barcelona. It should be remembered that, while Miguel Roig lived in Cuba, his cousin Cristóbal Roig had been the managing partner of one of the first Catalan companies dedicated to the trade of enslaved Africans in Havana, the firm Pedro Oliver & Co.³⁰

Both José María Serra and Mariano Flaquer formed part of the first board of directors of the Banco de Barcelona. Both were involved, as we have just seen, in the slave trade. There were also other founders of that Catalan bank who had previously been born or lived in Havana, although we do not know whether or not they had been slave traders.

25 Archivo Histórico de Protocolos de Barcelona, Escribanía de Marina, J. M. Planas Compte, 1839, fols. 205–206, 16 March 1839; and fol. 222, 27.03.1839.

26 House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, Slave Trade, Class A. Correspondence with the British Commissioners at Sierra Leone, the Havana, Rio de Janeiro, and Surinam relating to Slave Trade, From May 11th, to December 31st, 1840, inclusive, London, 1841, "Report of the case of the Spanish Felucca 'Si', Gaspar Roig. Master. Sierra Leone, June 8, 1839".

27 R. Soler, *Emigrar per negociar. L'emigració a Amèrica des de la Comarca de Garraf: el cas de Gregori Ferrer i Soler, 1791–1853*, Vilanova i la Geltrú, El Cep i la Nansa, 2003, pp. 64–79.

28 Archivo General de Indias, Indiferente General, 2828.

29 J. M. Fradera, *Crisi colonial i mercat interior, 1814–1837. Les bases comercials de la indústria catalana moderna*, PhD thesis, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1983.

30 Some notes on the activity of Pedro Oliver & Co, in Havana, in: J. Felipe-González, *Reassessing the Slave Trade to Cuba, 1790–1820*, in: A. Borucki/D. Eltis/D. Wheat (eds.), *From the Galleons to Highlands. Slave Trade routes to Spanish Americas*, Albuquerque 2020, pp. 223–248.

I am referring particularly to the businessmen Miguel Roig Rom, Agustín Peyra Mach, Manuel de Lerena and Juan Güell Ferrer, all four who were born in peninsular/metro-politan Spain and became wealthy in Cuba before settling in Barcelona. In addition to the first founders of the Banco de Barcelona, other individuals whose fortunes also came from Cuba joined the bank's shareholders and board of directors years later, for example, Esteban Gatell Roig and Pedro Collaso Gil. The latter was born in Havana and was the son of a Galician captain and shipowner directly involved in the slave trade. His father, Bernardo Collaso Varela, had organized different expeditions from Cuba to the African coasts, such as the brigantine-schooner *Brillante* expedition in 1818.³¹ Moreover, following Bernardo Collaso's death in 1833, Lorenzo Xiqués, another prominent Catalan slave trader from Havana, had to act as custodian of the young Pedro Collaso and his brothers. Xiqués was responsible for ensuring that the inheritance of the late Bernardo Collaso was paid to the various Collaso brothers.³² In fact, it was thanks to his paternal inheritance, an inheritance accumulated in Cuba and linked to the slave trade, that Pedro Collaso was able to make his way in the Barcelona business world and to become a shareholder in the Banco de Barcelona.

Gatell's connection with the slave trade was even more obvious than that of Pedro Collaso. Born in Catalonia, Gatell arrived in Havana at a young age, where he took part personally in various slave trade expeditions. He began as the third pilot of the schooner *Santa Rita* (a) *La Mataronina* in 1817 and became the second pilot of the same ship in 1818 during two expeditions to the African coast. In one way or another, Gatell remained involved in the slave trade until at least 1834. That year, he commanded an expedition of the brigantine *Empresa*, which landed somewhere in Cuba in early August of that year with some 270 Africans and other people on board. After participating in the foundation of the Segunda Compañía de Seguros Marítimos de la Habana in 1835, Gatell returned to Barcelona with his wealth, participating in different companies, such as the Banco de Barcelona.³³

The examples of Mariano Serra and his son and partner, José María Serra Muñoz; of Mariano Flaquer Lluch and his son and partner, Mariano Flaquer Padrines; of Pedro Collaso; and of Gatell illustrate the investment of accumulated capital in the slave trade at the Banco de Barcelona. However, this brief review of the links between this financial enterprise and the slave trade would be incomplete if we did not also talk about Jaime Badia Padrines. Born in Torredembarra (the same town where Güell, a wealthy Cuban *indiano* and also founder of the Banco de Barcelona, and his uncle, Gatell, were born) in 1812, Jaime Badia emigrated like so many other young people of his generation to

31 Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Protocolos notariales de Marina de La Habana, 1818 (1), 22 April 1818, fols. 411–415.

32 Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Escribanía de Marina, 17 (171).

33 M. Rodrigo, Cuatro capitanes negreros catalanes en tiempos de la trata ilegal: José Carbó, Pedro Manegat, Gaspar Roig y Esteban Gatell, in: M. Rodrigo/L. Chaviano (eds.), Negreros y esclavos. Barcelona y la esclavitud atlántica (siglos XVI–XIX), Barcelona 2017, pp. 101–130.

Cuba.³⁴ He settled in Matanzas, where he helped his uncle, Esteban Badia, in his trading house. After his uncle's death, Jaime Badia took over the management of a company dedicated to, among other things, the slave trade. On at least one occasion, in 1819, one of those slave ships chartered by Jaime Badia from Matanzas (Cuba) was captured by a US navy ship, which took him to New York where he was tried and sentenced.³⁵ Twenty years later, in 1840, Jaime Badia returned to Catalonia where he carried out intense business and political activity. According to the words that Félix Tanco wrote to Domingo del Monte in 1841, the fortune that Jaime Badia had accumulated in Cuba was due "for the most part" to the slave trade.³⁶ His knowledge of the financial world, acquired above all during a trip to the United States, made him the first manager of the Banco de Barcelona, a position he held between May 1845 and June 1848.³⁷

3. The Banco Hispano Colonial

On 5 August 1876, the Spanish government signed an agreement in Madrid with several individuals that allowed for the subsequent creation of the Banco Hispano Colonial.³⁸ On that day, a financial institution was born that would soon become the second most important bank in Spain, according to its capital/assets, and that would last for almost 75 years until 1950, when the Banco Central (today the Banco Santander) absorbed it. Four bankers signed that agreement with the Spanish government: Antonio López y López, Manuel Calvo Aguirre, Antonio Vinent Vives, and Rafael Cabezas Montemayor. It should be noted that three of the four initial founders of the Banco Hispano Colonial had worked as slave traders in their youth: López, Calvo, and Vinent.

Born in Mahon in 1809, Vinent was part of a family of seafarers who were closely linked to the illegal trade in enslaved Africans. In 1831, he served as captain of the slave ship *Tres Hermanas*.³⁹ That was not the only time that Vinent participated in slave ship expeditions. A few years later, in April 1840, he took command of another ship, the corvette *Gloria* (formerly the *Grande Antilla*), on a voyage that began in Havana. This ship was arrested in Mozambique, and its crew members were tried and sentenced by the Portuguese authorities for their involvement in the illegal slave trade. The young Vinent, however, hatched a successful plan that allowed him to recover the ownership of that ship (renamed *General Marinho*) with the complicity of, among others, the Spanish consul in Lisbon. He did so under the noses of Portuguese and British officials, whose diplomatic protests to the Spanish minister of state were in vain. Moreover, by 1842,

34 According to the Dictionary of the Real Academia Española, the word *indiano* means: "Said by a person who comes back rich from America".

35 Arxiu Històric de Tarragona, Protocolos Notariales, Vicenç Fontanilles, 1852, 23 January 1852, fols. 28–29.

36 Centón epistolario de Domingo del Monte, La Habana 1938 (Imprenta del Siglo XX), vol. V, pp. 164–165.

37 Y. Blasco, Epistolari de Jaume Badia. El pensament bancari en el segle XIX, Torredembarra 2009.

38 Archivo Histórico de Protocolos de Barcelona, Luis G. Soler Pla, 1876 (3), 30 October 1876.

39 Nerín, Traficants d'ànimes, p. 224.

Vinent had settled in Cádiz, from where he organized a number of expeditions to the coast of Africa.⁴⁰

A year later, he was visited by the British writer Terence McMahon Hughes, who was preparing a book on the Spain of the time (as I mentioned earlier). This book was finally published in London in 1845, in which Hughes narrates (in two chapters titled “The Slave-Traders”) his meetings with the two main tradesmen and pilgrims from Cádiz: Martínez and Vinent. Neither of them hid their pursuit as slave traders from Hughes. Both openly defended the opportunity and dignity of this peculiar type of trade. Hughes defines Vinent as a “handsome pirate” and highlights his “extraordinary eloquence” in supporting the need to maintain the slave trade and in criticizing British hypocrisy in this matter: “Vinente [sic] was inveterate and invincible in the obstinacy with which he urged the argument that England was proved hypocritical in her violent declamations against slavery, by the fact of her permitting its existence throughout her Indian possessions”. The Menorcan businessman concluded his arguments by saying, “En la cuestión del tráfico de negros más es el ruido que las nueces”, which Hughes translates as “The slave-trade question is more noise than nuts – more crack than kernel”.⁴¹

Moreover, after living 20 years in Cádiz, Vinent ended up moving to Madrid, where he developed an intense political and business activity. In 1871, he was one of the three founders of the Banco de Castilla, a kind of division in Madrid of the Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas, and five years later, in 1876, he helped to found the Banco Hispano Colonial, of whose Madrid Committee he was the first chairman. It should be added that, despite his status as a renowned slave trader, Vinent was appointed senator for life of Spain in 1864, and four years later, in 1868, Queen Isabel II granted him the title of first Marquis of Vinent. It is clear that having been involved in the slave trade was not a stigma in nineteenth-century Spain.

Another of the founders of the Banco Hispano Colonial was Calvo. Born in Portugalete (Biscay) in 1816, Calvo emigrated to Cuba at a very young age, where he soon became involved in the slave trade. When he was barely 20 years old, in 1836, he was in charge of the brigantine *Empresa* in a slave expedition that went from Havana to Punta de Seña, near Loanda (Angola), where he loaded some 450 slaves. A British cruiser stopped Calvo and his brigantine on their way back to Cuba, near the island of Grenada. The British put the ship and its captain at the disposal of the Havana Joint Tribunal. However, the night before the trial, the young Calvo managed to escape and thus avoided being judged.⁴² This could have been the first of many slave ship expeditions in which this Biscayan businessman was involved. In fact, when the historian Carmen Barcia speaks of “the main slave merchants” who operated in the west of Cuba, she highlights Calvo, who years later would become the owner of two sugar mills, called Flor de Sagua and

40 Rodrigo, Cádiz y el tráfico ilegal de esclavos.

41 Hughes, *Revelations of Spain*, vol. II, pp. 158–169.

42 M. del C. Barcia (coord.), *Una sociedad distinta: espacios del comercio negrero en el occidente de Cuba (1836–1866)*, La Habana 2016, pp. 102–103.

Portugalete. Calvo was also the promoter and director of the *Empresa de Fomento de la Costa del Sur de Cuba*, a company founded in 1850 and operating mainly in the province of Pinar del Río. This company was also owned by Cuban businessmen, such as Rafael Rodríguez Torices, a large importer of Chinese coolies.⁴³ Calvo used the company's own infrastructure to facilitate the arrival of thousands and thousands of enslaved Africans brought directly to the island from Africa.

The Biscayan businessman Calvo managed to transform his wealth – obtained from illegal slave trade and slavery in Cuba – into political influence, both on the island and in metropolitan Spain. One of his early biographers, the lawyer Aristides de Artiñano Zuricalday, who treated him assiduously in his capacity as the first secretary of the Banco Hispano Colonial, explained Calvo's political prominence in the fundamentalist political networks woven between Spain and Cuba. According to Artiñano, Calvo “understood himself in Havana with [Pedro] Sotolongo, from whom he received all the instructions and orders from the (Spanish) Committee, and here [in Barcelona] with Don Antonio López, whose aspirations and advice he constantly followed and who was the echo in the Peninsula of the aspirations of the good Spaniards of Cuba”.⁴⁴ That influence enabled him to take on, later in his life, a key role in the process of creating the Banco Hispano Colonial. Calvo was also a great personal friend of López, the first chairman of the bank mentioned above and a businessman who also made a good deal of his fortune in the illegal trade in enslaved Africans.

López's direct involvement in the African slave trade appears in a book published in 1885 by his brother-in-law Francisco Bru, who lived and worked with him in Santiago de Cuba in the 1850s. According to Bru's words, “Would you like to know what the illustrious D. Antonio López traded in? [Bru asked]. He traded in human flesh; yes, readers, he was a slave trader. López had agreements with the captains of slavers and, when their ships docked, he would purchase the entire cargo, or most of it. [...] In Santiago de Cuba he would purchase negroes cheaply and send them to Havana and other parts of the island for sale – at a greater or lesser profit, but always at a profit.” In another part of the book, Bru adamantly claimed that “Santiago de Cuba has never witnessed a crueller, more hardened, savage and brutish slave trader than López”.⁴⁵ However, the evidence of López's dedication to the slave trade goes beyond that public denunciation of his brother-in-law. We know that, while living in Santiago de Cuba and through two successive companies (Valdés & López and also Antonio López & Brother), López worked as a consignee for various slave expeditions that arrived in Cuba from Africa (such as the one that arrived in December 1850 on the schooner *Deseada*, condemned by British diplomats on the island) and that he dedicated himself to “legalizing” the situation of all those enslaved Africans who arrived in Cuba illegally as if they were Creole slaves.⁴⁶ And,

43 J. Pérez de la Riva, *Los culíes chinos en Cuba*, La Habana 2000.

44 A. de Artiñano, *Necrológica*. Manuel Calvo y Aguirre (24 Diciembre 1816–16 marzo 1904), Barcelona 1904, p. 21.

45 F. Bru, *La verdadera vida de Antonio López y López por su cuñado Francisco Bru*, Barcelona 1885, pp. 62–65.

46 M. Rodrigo, *Un hombre, mil negocios. La controvertida historia de Antonio López, marqués de Comillas*, Barcelona 2020 (in press), pp. 63–90.

when the slave driver Vinent was ennobled by Queen Isabel II as the first Marquis of Vinent, his partner, López, received the title of first Marquis of Comillas ten years later, awarded by King Alfonso XII in 1868.

Besides the founders López, Calvo, and Vinent, other shareholders of the Banco Hispano Colonial had also participated in the slave trade to Cuba. Among its first shareholders was the Catalan businessman José Canela Raventós, who had lived in Cuba between 1828 and 1860 and worked in various industries. Canela had a prominent participation in the Empresa de Navegación y Comercio de la Costa del Sur, a firm led by a noted slave merchant from Havana, Joaquín Gómez. This company was involved in the illegal slave trade, among other activities, especially in the province of Pinar del Río and on the southern coast of Havana. For example, both Canela and Gómez appeared to be responsible for a shipment of more than 100 slaves in Bahía Honda (Pinar del Río), recorded in August 1852, with the complicity of several Spanish military and officials. This complicity made it possible to legalize the illegal arrival of those African captives.⁴⁷ Two years later, in 1854, Canela was one of the promoters of the merger of the Empresa de Navegación y Comercio de la Costa del Sur with the Empresa de Fomento del Sur to create the new Empresa de Fomento y Navegación de la Costa del Sur.⁴⁸ This Cuban firm would continue to finance and organize numerous expeditions to the African coast.⁴⁹

The other leader of the merger was Calvo, who would later join Canela in the Banco Hispano Colonial. Both businessmen, Canela and Calvo, were members of the board of directors of this institution since its foundation in 1876 until their respective deaths. This was not Canela's only experience as a banker: in 1863, he had founded another financial institution located in Barcelona, the Crédito Mercantil, which he would preside over a few years later. Canela was, therefore, another clear example of a slave merchant (in Cuba) transformed into a banker (in Spain).

Another of the first shareholders of the Banco Hispano Colonial was Eduardo Zulueta Samá, son and heir of one of the leading slave traders in Cuba (Julián Zulueta Amondo) as well as great-nephew of another noted slave trader in Havana, Salvador Samá Martí, first Marquis of Marianao.⁵⁰ Also a founder of the Banco Hispano Colonial was the merchant Rafael Ferrer Vidal, who had lived in Cuba for a long time, having been one of the founders of the Banco de San Carlos de Matanzas.⁵¹ Ferrer's connection with the trade of slaves is uncertain, but we know that his store of sugars and other sugarcane products in Matanzas was the place where local ranchers (*rancheros*) were rewarded when they seized runaway slaves.⁵²

47 Archivo Histórico Nacional, Estado, 8047, 18 (2).

48 Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Tribunal de Comercio, 102 (5).

49 Barcia, Una sociedad distinta, pp. 67–186.

50 E. Marrero Cruz, Julián de Zulueta y Amondo, promotor del capitalismo en Cuba, La Habana 2008; D. M. Pérez Tarrau, La saga cubana de los Samá (1794–1933), Barcelona 2007.

51 La Aurora del Yumurí, 9 February 1858; Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Archivo General de Protocolos de Matanzas, Luis Zuriarrain, 1860, 29 December 1860.

52 La Aurora del Yumurí, 1 January 1858.

To conclude, it is worth remembering that the first manager of the Banco Hispano Colonial was the Havana-born Pedro Sotolongo Alcántara, who left his residence in Havana and moved to Barcelona in 1877 to take up this responsibility. In the Cuban capital, Sotolongo had been a partner in the powerful trading house Samá Sotolongo & Co., as had Amondo himself and various members of the Samá family – notorious for their fervid participation in the slave trade – before and after its outlawing. Furthermore, among the investors who contributed their wealth from Barcelona to found the Banco Hispano Colonial, there were several who had previously become rich in Cuba. However, I cannot specify their degree of relationship with the slave trade: among others, José P. Taltavull García (owner of the Caridad sugar mill in Cienfuegos), José Munné Leal (who became rich in Gibara), or Dominga Juera Patxot, José Vilar's widow.⁵³ There is no doubt that many individuals who had been directly linked to the Atlantic slave trade, or at least to the world of slavery in Cuba, had an active role in the creation and development of the Banco Hispano Colonial.

4. Conclusions

As the examples of the Banco de Barcelona, the Banco de Cádiz, and the Banco Hispano Colonial show, some companies in the Spanish banking and financial system in the nineteenth century were founded with the participation and capital of some prominent slave traders. The examples outlined here illustrate that a good number of former slave traders became respectable bankers in nineteenth-century Spain. This was the case for Pedro Martínez Pérez de Terán, José de Abarzuza Imbrechts, Mariano Serra Soler, José María Serra Muñoz, Mariano Flaquer Lluch, Esteban Gatell Roig, Jaime Badia Padrines, Antonio Vinent Vives, Manuel Calvo Aguirre, Antonio López y López, and José Canela Raventós, among others. There were also other individuals whose fortunes came from parents who had participated in the slave trade: this was the case, for example, for Pedro Collaso Gil or Ernesto Zulueta Samá. Through their capital or their activity, all of them contributed to the creation of different financial institutions in nineteenth-century Spain. The phenomenon not only affected the three banks mentioned here; rather, it must have been more extensive and most probably involved business in other Spanish cities such as Madrid, Bilbao, or Santander. In this respect, this article has had the goal of bringing attention to some of the links between the slave trade and the origins of Spanish banking, a topic that merits further and broader research.

53 Some lists of shareholders of the Banco Hispano Colonial, in 1876 and 1885, in: Archivo Histórico de Protocolos de Barcelona, Luis G. Soler Pla, 1876 (3), 30 October 1876; 1885 (3), 18 May 1885.

Visuality and Slave Management in the Brazilian and Cuban Coffee and Sugar Plantations, c. 1840–1880

Rafael de Bivar Marquese

ABSTRACTS

Dieser Beitrag folgt der Frage, wie die neuen Mechanismen der Sklavenverwaltung, die in den kubanischen und brasilianischen Zucker- und Kaffeeanbaugebieten während des 19. Jahrhunderts entwickelt wurden, mit einer neuen Visualität der Sklaverei verbunden waren. Es kann ein Komplex neuer Strategien identifiziert werden, die darauf abzielten, aus den Sklaven in den Kaffee- und Zuckerrohrplantagen Brasiliens und Kubas mehr Arbeitskraft herauszuziehen. Diese waren nicht nur eine Reaktion auf die große Reorganisation der Weltwirtschaft, die mit dem Aufstieg des Industriekapitalismus verbunden war, sondern auch eine Reaktion auf neue Muster des Sklavenwiderstands. Die untersuchten Strategien können als Teil eines neuen visuellen Regimes der Sklaverei in der Neuen Welt aufgefasst werden.

The aim of the article is to understand how the new mechanisms of slave management developed in the Cuban and Brazilian sugar and coffee frontiers during the nineteenth century were connected to a new visuality of slavery. The argument is that it is possible to identify a cluster of new strategies aimed at extracting more labour from slaves in the coffee and sugar cane plantations of Brazil and Cuba, which was not only a response to the great reorganization of the world economy under industrial capitalism, but also to new patterns of slave resistance. These strategies can be understood as part of a new visual regime of New World slavery.

I.

Following the *visual turn* in the social sciences, the visual culture of African slavery in the Americas has become a subject that has generated significant scholarship in the last two decades. In fact, today we have a considerable number of studies on the multiple

forms of visual representation of New World slavery. Based on different approaches and theoretical perspectives, these works have helped to illuminate the ways in which black slavery was visually perceived in the social and political struggles starting in the late eighteenth century regarding its legitimacy; the ways how the visual culture of slavery was linked to the birth of the consumer society and the culture of refinement; the ways how the rural- and urban-built environments in which enslaved subjects lived were represented in different medias; and the implications of the visual archive inherited from slavery to the present-day politics of memory.¹

These publications have contributed to understanding the ways in which black slavery was represented at different times and spaces. In some studies, historians have been able to combine an examination of visual representations with analyses of the effects they had on the social world to which they belonged.² These studies, however, have not tried to scrutinize how the vast visual repertoire of slavery was specifically connected to the exploitation of slave labour.³

This article tries to fill this gap by examining two crucial zones of the nineteenth-century New World slavery: Western Cuba – the world's biggest sugar-producing zone in that period – and the valley of the Paraíba do Sul River (Paraíba Valley) in Brazil – the greatest coffee-producing zone of the world economy.

- 1 On the visual turn in the social sciences and its focus on the key role of the visual dimension in social life, see, among others, M. Jay, *That Visual Turn*, in: *The Journal of Visual Culture* 1 (2002), pp. 87–92. For the other themes, see M. Wood, *Blind Memory. Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America, 1780–1865*, Manchester 2000; M. Wood, *Black Milk. Imagining Slavery in the Visual Cultures of Brazil and America*, Oxford 2013; G. Quilley/K. D. Kriz (eds.), *An Economy of Colour. Visual Culture and the Atlantic World, 1660–1830*, Manchester 2003; K. D. Kriz, *Slavery, Sugar, and the Culture of Refinement. Picturing the British West Indies, 1700–1840*, New Haven 2008; J. M. Vlach, *The Planter's Prospect. Privilege and Slavery in Plantation Paintings*, Chapel Hill 2002; M. Dresser/A. Hann (eds.), *Slavery and the British Country House*, Swindon 2013; J. de Cauna, *Vestiges of the Built Landscape of Pre-Revolutionary Saint-Domingue*, in: D. P. Geggus/N. Fiering (eds.), *The World of the Haitian Revolution*, Bloomington 2009, pp. 21–48; S. Gikandi, *Slavery and the Culture of Taste*, Princeton 2011; C. Ellis/R. Ginsburg (eds.), *Architecture and Landscapes of North American Slavery*, New Haven 2010; R. W. Slenes, *African Abrahams, Lucretias and Men of Sorrows: Allegory and Allusion in the Brazilian Anti-Slavery Lithographs (1827–1835)* of Johann Moritz Rugendasm, in: *Slavery and Abolition* 23 (2002), pp. 147–168; V. Lima/J.-B. Debret, *Historiador e Pintor. A Viagem Pitoresca e Histórica ao Brasil (1816–1839)*, Campinas 2007; E. M. M. Sela, *Modos de ser, modos de ver. Viajantes europeus e escravos africanos no Rio de Janeiro (1808–1850)*, Campinas 2008; S. S. M. Koutsoukos, *Negros no Estúdio do Fotógrafo. Brasil, segunda metade do século XIX*, Campinas 2010; F. Beltramin, *Sujeitos Iluminados. A reconstituição das experiências vividas no estúdio de Christiano Jr., São Paulo 2013*; A. L. Araújo, *Public Memory of Slavery: Victims and Perpetrators in the South Atlantic*, Amherst 2010; A. L. Araújo, *Shadows of the Slave Past: Memory, Heritage, and Slavery*, New York 2014.
- 2 See the excellent books by M. D. McInnis, *The Politics of Taste in Antebellum Charleston*, Chapel Hill 2005; *Slaves Waiting for Sale. Abolitionist Art and the American Slave Trade*, Chicago 2012.
- 3 One of the few exceptions is the “counterhistory of visibility”, written by one of the leading exponents in the field of visual culture: N. Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look. A Counterhistory of Visibility*, Durham 2011, pp. 48–76. This book, however, contains serious problems, starting with its ahistorical and abstract definition of what “visibility” or “countervisibility” means. This framework leads to an equally ahistorical – and very simplifying – treatment of the visual organization of the slave plantation in the French Caribbean. In an article published almost ten years before Mirzoeff's book, I examined the same visual material treated by him but reached very different results. See R. de B. Marquese, *Açúcar, representação visual e poder: a iconografia sobre a produção caribenha de açúcar nos séculos XVII e XVIII*, in: *Revista USP* 55 (2002), pp. 152–184.

Notwithstanding their own peculiarities, the making of both spaces can be conceptualized as part of the unified process that Dale Tomich and other historians have called the “second slavery” of the Atlantic world. This concept highlights how a set of historical events and trends between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, most notably the advent of the Industrial Revolution and the consolidation of British hegemony over the world economy and the interstate system, led to profound reconfigurations of Atlantic slavery. The growing imbalance in international prices of industrial and agricultural goods, the increase in the consumption of tropical commodities such as coffee and sugar (demanded by the growing population of workers and middle classes in the urban centres of the North Atlantic), and the search for new raw materials, like cotton, led to the decline of slavery in the British and French Caribbean. These changes, in turn, acquired a different meaning in other slaveholding areas such as the US South, Cuba, and Brazil. These regions, which had been relatively marginal or declining in the Atlantic economy of the eighteenth century, became the dynamic centres of a massive expansion of slavery to meet the growing global demand for cotton, coffee, and sugar. New World slavery was re-created through an unprecedented political and economic configuration, with a radical transformation of its character and systemic nature. These emerging slave zones found themselves increasingly integrated to and driven by industrial production in the world market.⁴

In a previous book, I have examined ideas on slave management in Brazil, Cuba, and the United States in the nineteenth century, contrasting it with Caribbean ideas on slave management in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In a different study, co-authored with Dale Tomich, Reinaldo Funes, and Carlos Venegas, we investigated the built environments of plantation spaces in the new slave zones of the nineteenth century. Using a wide range of visual sources, we analysed the relationship between material, social, and symbolic elements in the constitution of cotton, sugar, and coffee plantation landscapes.⁵ My goal now is to return to these visual materials in order to understand how the new mechanisms of slave management designed in the Cuban and Brazilian sugar and coffee frontiers became connected to a new visuality of slavery.

The article is divided into three parts. In the first part, I briefly present the making of the new sugar- and coffee-producing zones of Cuba and Brazil in connection to the world market, as well as the emergence of new production units in these regions during the 1830s and 1840s, units based on productive plants that were very different from the previous patterns of the Atlantic world. In the second and third parts, I analyse the new

4 D. W. Tomich, *Through the Prism of Slavery. Labor, Capital, and World Economy*, Boulder 2004, pp. 56–71. For a recent critical historiographical overview, with chapters written by Robin Blackburn, Dale Tomich, Rafael Marquese, Ricardo Salles, José Antonio Piqueras, and Edward E. Baptist, see R. Marquese/R. Salles (eds.), *Escravidão e capitalismo histórico no século XIX: Brasil, Cuba e Estados Unidos*, Rio de Janeiro 2016.

5 For the first research, see R. de B. Marquese, *Feitores do corpo, missionários da mente. Senhores, letrados e o controle dos escravos nas Américas, 1660–1860*, São Paulo 2004. The collective project was developed between 2005 and 2009 with the support of the Getty Foundation, and its results are going to appear in a forthcoming book: D. Tomich et al., *Reconstructing the Landscapes of Slavery: A Visual History of the Plantation in the Nineteenth-Century World*, Chapel Hill 2021.

visual mechanisms employed for the exploitation of slave labour and natural resources in these new sugar and coffee plantations. The argument I want to make is that, after the 1840s, it is possible to identify a cluster of new strategies to extract more labour from slaves in the coffee and sugar cane fields of Brazil and Cuba, which were a response not only to the major reorganization of the world economy under industrial capitalism but also to new patterns of slave resistance. These strategies can be conceived as part of a new visual regime of New World slavery.

II.

The first Brazilian and Cuban sugar plantations were founded in the first century of European exploration of the New World. Before the second half of the seventeenth century, however, Cuba, with its few and small-scale units concentrated around Havana, did not have a significant position in the world market. Pernambuco and Bahia stood out as major producers already at the turn of the seventeenth century, but between 1660 and 1760, the two main sugar captaincies of Portuguese America lost their positions in the world market to the powerful sugar industry of the British and the French Antilles. As a result of improvement policies promoted by Iberian Enlightened reforms, there was a marked increase in sugar exports starting in the 1770s from Brazil (which now, besides the exports from Pernambuco and Bahia, also included the exports from the captaincies of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo) and Western Cuba – a movement that received new impetus with the outbreak of the slave revolt in the French colony of Saint-Domingue. As for coffee, before the 1790s the Cuban and Brazilian exports were virtually non-existent. Only the French, Dutch, and, to a lesser extent, British colonies produced coffee, with the leading position occupied by Saint-Domingue, which accounted for almost 50 per cent of the world's coffee supply in 1790, with a total volume of 34,650 tons.⁶

Starting in the 1790s, sugar and coffee production in Brazil and Cuba became closely intertwined. The beginning of the Haitian Revolution in 1791 stimulated the rapid advancement of sugar production, based on a booming transatlantic slave trade. Between 1790 and 1820, the combined sugar exports of Portuguese America grew from 13,000 to 35,000 tons; the decennial arrival of enslaved Africans jumped from about 190,000 individuals in the 1780s to 451,000 in the 1810s (it is worth noting that the Brazilian colonial economy went through a great diversification in its exports – cotton as the second main crop after sugar). In Cuba, the boom was even more impressive: from the 1780s to the 1810s, tons of sugar exported grew from 15,000 to 55,000 and total slaves imported increased from 15,000 to 115,000. In coffee production, the growth was simi-

6 J. A. Piqueras, *Islas de azúcar y de esclavos*, in: J. A. Piqueras (ed.), *Historia Comparada de las Antillas*, Madrid 2014, pp. 97–144; S. B. Schwartz, *Segredos Internos. Engenhos e escravos na sociedade colonial (1550–1835)* (transl.), São Paulo 1988, pp. 144–176, 337–355; R. de B. Marquese, *Capitalismo, Escravidão e a Economia Cafeeira do Brasil no longo século XIX*, in: *Saeculum (Brasil)* 29 (2013), pp. 296–297; M. Zeuske, *Kaffee statt Zucker: Die globale commodity Kaffee und die Sklaverei auf Kuba (ca. 1790–1870)*, in: *Saeculum (Germany)* 67 (2017) 2, pp. 273–301.

lar: starting from virtually zero in 1790, Brazil and Cuba exported, respectively, 13,500 and 10,000 tons of coffee in 1821.⁷

After 1820, Cuba and Brazil managed to establish themselves as the world's largest sugar and coffee producers through their involvement in a massive transatlantic slave trade – between 1821 and 1860, the two spaces together would import more than 1.77 million enslaved Africans. With the independence of Haiti, the French sugar- and coffee-producing colonies were drastically reduced. Trapped in a political setting marked by a strong metropolitan anti-slavery movement that successfully banned the transatlantic slave trade in 1807, with the redirection of British imperial interests to the East Indies, the British West Indies quickly lost competitive edge to its rivals in Cuba and Brazil. But, even more interesting is how the reorganization of the world market after the 1820s led to increasing specialization in sugar production in Cuba and coffee production in Brazil as part of a unified movement of reciprocal determination. Consider, for instance, the trajectory of these two products in these two spaces (see table 1).

Table 1. Five-year averages of sugar and coffee exports, 1821–1860 (metric tons)⁸

	Sugar		Coffee	
	Brazil	Cuba	Brazil	Cuba
1821–1825	41,400	63,100	14,060	10,900
1826–1830	54,800	84,130	25,680	19,340
1831–1835	69,600	101,400	53,320	22,400
1836–1840	81,600	129,800	71,020	21,180
1841–1845	88,600	170,400	88,260	15,020
1846–1850	117,800	253,400	12,900	8,680
1851–1855	123,800	389,600	153,800	6,180
1856–1860	105,800	435,200	168,500	4,200

If the quantities of sugar and coffee sold by Brazil and Cuba in the world market were relatively equivalent at the beginning of this period, the discrepancy was evident at the end of it. In the period 1856–1860, the volume of Cuban sugar exports amounted to 25

7 Slave trade data: www.slavevoyages.org. Sugar data: M. M. Friginals, *O engenho: complexo sócio-econômico açucareiro cubano* (transl.) São Paulo 1989, vol. 2, p. 355; J. J. de A. Arruda, *A produção econômica*, in: M. B. N. da Silva (ed.), *Nova História da Expansão Portuguesa. O Império Luso-Brasileiro (1750–1822)*, Lisbon 1986, p. 234. Coffee data: Marquese, *Capitalismo, Escravidão e a Economia Cafeeira*, pp. 297–298.

8 Sources: M. M. Friginals, *O engenho: complexo sócio-econômico açucareiro cubano* (transl.) São Paulo 1989, vol. 2, pp. 355–357; *Estatísticas Históricas do Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro 1987, p. 342; M. Samper/R. Fernando, *Historical statistics of coffee production and trade from 1700 to 1960* in: W. G. Clarence-Smith/S. Topik (eds.), *The Global Coffee Economy in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, 1500–1980*, Cambridge 2003, pp. 428–433. Approximate numbers.

per cent of world production (cane and beet sugar added); in that same period, Brazilian coffee exports accounted for 52 per cent of the world market supply. What stands out, however, is the tendency of stagnation of Brazilian sugar exports in the period 1840–1860, when Cuban exports of sugar more than tripled. Something similar, but in an opposite way, occurred with coffee: the volume of Brazilian exports more than doubled between 1840 and 1860, whereas Cuban exports shrunk (in 1860, Cuban coffee exports were less than half of what they were in 1820).

One important question is whether these movements were interrelated – indeed, they were. In an international regime of free competition, the capacity of Cuban planters to face the adverse conditions of the world market by offering a product at a lower cost changed the operating conditions of its rivals. Despite growing between 1820 and 1860, Brazilian sugar production was unable to keep pace with that of Cuba. Without the aid of the transatlantic slave trade, which finally came to an end in 1850, Brazilian sugar production decreased; old sugar-producing areas such as the west of São Paulo witnessed the spread of coffee production. The other side of the coin was that the advance of coffee production in Brazil became a key factor in the crisis of coffee production in Cuba. In 1830, coffee and sugar plantations in Cuba employed an equivalent number of slaves: approximately 50,000 in each sector. Owing to the inefficiency of Cuban coffee production compared to the productivity of its Brazilian counterpart, there was a massive movement of slaves in Cuba from the coffee plantations to the cane fields in the 1830s and 1840s – a movement that was important for the sugar boom on the island and, consequently, to the stagnation of sugar production in Brazil.⁹

One of the reasons for the divergent, but mutually conditioned, paths of Brazil and Cuba concerns the geographic and ecological conditions for production, that is to say the different altitudes, climates, and soils that made each area more suitable for coffee or sugar. However, before Western Cuba and the Paraíba Valley fully realized their respective potential for coffee or sugar production, a considerable period of experimentation was necessary – an experimentation that led to a spatial reconfiguration of their slave plantations. In other words, the rise of Brazilian and Cuban coffee and sugar production was largely dependent on the new production plant that only appeared by the 1830s and 1840s. Supported by the massive importation of enslaved Africans and the opening of hitherto uninhabited – or occupied by squatters and smallholders whose traditional ways of life were swept away by the strength of capital – commodity frontier areas, this new plant for coffee and sugar production clearly departed from the previously prevailing standards in the British and French Caribbean.¹⁰

9 R. Marquese/D. Tomich, *O Vale do Paraíba escravista e a formação do mercado mundial do café no século XIX* in: K. Grinberg/R. Salles (eds.), *O Brasil Imperial*, vol. II: 1831–1870, Rio de Janeiro 2009, pp. 339–383.

10 R. Funes/D. Tomich, *Naturaleza, tecnología y esclavitud en Cuba: Frontera azucarera y Revolución industrial, 1815–1870* in: J. A. Piqueras (ed.), *Trabajo libre y trabajo coactivo en sociedades de plantación*, Madrid 2009, pp. 75–117; J. A. Piqueras, *Reordenando el universo azucarero. Del emporio de Saint-Domingue a la segunda esclavitud*, in: J. A. Piqueras (ed.), *Historia Comparada de las Antillas*, Madrid: 2014, pp. 171–186; R. de B. Marquese, *Espacio y poder en la caficultura esclavista de las Américas: el Valle del Paraíba en perspectiva comparada*,

Being much larger and employing more capital and slaves per unit, the Paraíba Valley's *fazendas de café* (coffee plantations) and Western Cuba's *ingenios de azúcar* (sugar plantations) promoted a substantial concentration of slave ownership and land tenure. The spatial configuration of these new plantations was developed in the new context of struggles not only between masters and slaves but also between slavery and anti-slavery forces at the local and global levels. Facing strong diplomatic pressure from Britain, the massive introduction of enslaved Africans in Cuba and Brazil took place in an environment of lawlessness considering that the transatlantic slave trade had been formally prohibited in both countries since 1820 and 1831, respectively. The profound changes in the demographics of the Cuban countryside put the Spanish colony under the constant risk of slave revolts on a large scale. Western Cuba saw multiple collective slave activities of resistance between 1825 and 1844. Although not with the same intensity, Brazilian slave owners dealt with a similar problem in the 1830s and 1840s.¹¹

Therefore, slave resistance should be considered a structural element of the formation of these two new slave zones and their respective production units. The question arose how to increase the exploitation of slave labour in *ingenios de azúcar* and *fazendas de café* in an unprecedented scale without putting at risk the whole structure of the Cuban and Brazilian slave societies? The remainder of this article will argue that part of the answer can be found in the new mechanisms of the slave master's eye – the new visibility of slavery.

III.

Between March 1855 and February 1857, the Havana-based publisher Louis Marquier (a French émigré who had been residing for ten years in Cuba) published what is certainly the most amazing series of lithographs on the slave plantations of the New World. Prepared by Eduardo Laplante (another Frenchman who had moved to Cuba in the late 1840s as a representative of the sugar machinery firm Derosne & Cail and who shortly afterwards began working also as a lithographer for the local tobacco industry), with detailed explanatory texts written by Justo Cantero (a powerful planter from Trinidad, a town on the south coast of the island, who got his physician's degree in the United States), this series was composed of 28 prints in colour, each of them lithographed; 4 architectural plans of sugar plantations; and 4 plans of mills, boilers, and centrifuges machinery. For the production of this material, Laplante and Cantero visited 25 *ingenios* in Western Cuba, most of them situated in the plains of the Matanzas-Cárdenas-Colón zone. The selection followed a specific criterion: with one or two exceptions, these slave plantations were the most advanced at that time, allowing the reader to get a sense of the

17501850, in: Piqueras (ed.), *Trabajo libre y trabajo coactivo*, pp. 215–252.

11 R. Marqueses/T. Parron/M. Berbel, *Slavery and Politics. Brazil and Cuba, c.1790–1850* (transl.) Albuquerque 2016; M. B. Paz, *Seeds of Insurrection: Domination and Resistance in Western Cuban Plantations, 1808–1848*, Baton Rouge 2008; K. Grinberg/M. F. Borges/R. Salles, *Rebeliões escravas antes da extinção do tráfico*, in: K. Grinberg/R. Salles, *O Brasil Imperial*, vol. I: 1808–1831, Rio de Janeiro 2009, pp. 235–270.

diversity of technical solutions adopted by Cuban sugar mills. Designed as a vehicle for the construction of the class identity of the Cuban sugar masters in the critical conjuncture of the 1850s, this expensive editorial project represented the slave economy of the island at its highest point of productive and technological development.¹²

One of the sugar plantations visited by Laplante and Cantero was Purísima Concepción, located at Banagüises, north of Colón (see figure 1).

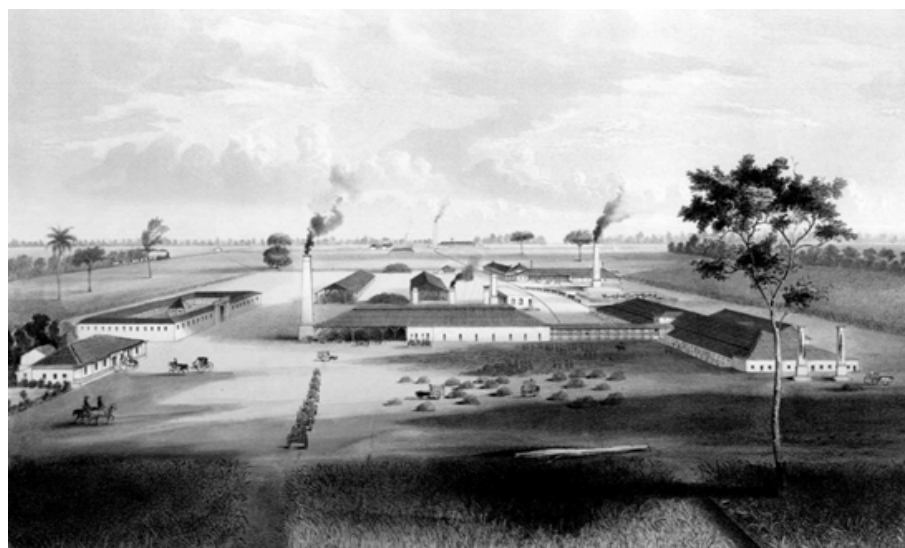


Fig. 1. *Ingenio Purísima Concepción* (a) Echeverría, G. Cantero (texto), E. Laplante (láminas dibujadas del natural y litografiadas), Los Ingenios. Colección de vistas de los principales ingenios de azúcar de la Isla de Cuba, ed. L. M. García Mora and A. Santamaría García, Madrid 2006, p. 236.

Founded in 1847, this sugar plantation entered began full operation after 1851. When this lithography was prepared, the plantation's total dimensions were 91 caballerías of land (3,017 acres) – of which 40 (1,326 acres) had sugar cane planted. In 1855, 362 slaves and 50 Asian indentured workers were living on the plantation. The estimated crop was 117,000 arrobas (1 arroba equals 11.52 kilogrammes) of sugar. The sugar factory had six Jamaican trains and their corresponding clarifiers; therefore, it was a semi-mechanized unit combining steam mills for crushing the cane with open boilers. One of the most innovative elements of this plantation was its integration through internal rails with another sugar unit, San Martín.

12 There is an excellent critical edition: J. G. Cantero (texto), E. Laplante (láminas dibujadas del natural y litografiadas), Los Ingenios. Colección de vistas de los principales ingenios de azúcar de la Isla de Cuba, ed. L. M. García Mora and A. Santamaría García, Madrid 2006.

In the lithography, this second sugar plantation is at the vanishing point of the visual composition; at the centre of the image are the tracks that connected the grinding mill/boiler house of Purísima Concepción with the *batey* of its sister unit (*batey* is a term for the plantation headquarters in Cuban *ingenios*, with all production facilities and housing for enslaved workers). The plan of San Martín's *batey* prepared by Laplante (see figure 2) shows how the tracks directly connected the two plants (the extension to the right connected the mill to the extension of the railway linking Banagüises to the Bay of Cárdenas; this is in the same railroad represented to the left of the Purísima Concepción lithograph). The scale of San Martín was imposing: fully mechanized, that is to say with steam iron mills for crushing the cane, vacuum pans and centrifuges, a labour force comprised of 452 enslaved workers and 125 "Asian" labourers, and of a total area of 222 caballerías (7,358 acres), 55 caballerías (1,823 acres) planted with cane. The crop for 1855 would be 273,000 arrobas of sugar.

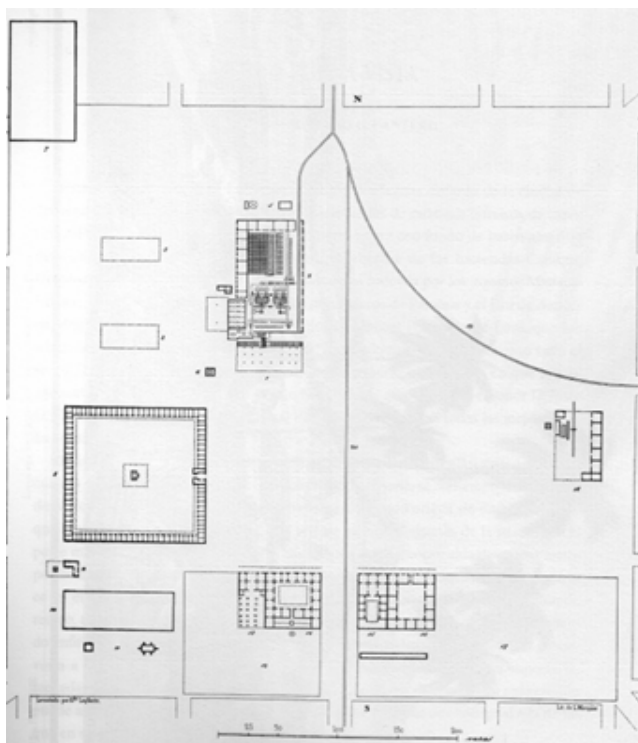


Fig. 2. Eduardo Laplante (lit.), detail of the *Plano de las fábricas del ingenio San Martín*, G. Cantero (texto), E. Laplante (láminas dibujadas del natural y litografiadas), Los Ingenios. Colección de vistas de los principales ingenios de azúcar de la Isla de Cuba, ed. L. M. García Mora and A. Santamaría García, Madrid 2006, p. 199.

Therefore, the complex, composed of the two units, accounted for a total of 100 caballerías (3,316 acres) planted with sugar cane and 989 workers capable of producing 390,000 arrobas of sugar. A quick comparison of the relation of the area planted with sugar cane to the amount of labourers or an evaluation of the sugar output per slave shows how Cuba had departed from the previously existing patterns of the Caribbean. In Jamaica and Saint-Domingue at the turn of the nineteenth century, the proportion of acres planted with sugar cane per resident worker on the plantation was around 1:20 to 1:50; in the 25 units visited by Laplante and Cantero, this proportion was 3:85. As for the production of sugar by slaves, the rate in Cuba in the 1850s was three times that of its Caribbean rivals in the 1790s.¹³ The merging of two plantations with the respective sizes of Purísima Concepción and San Martín into a unified complex, linked by internal rails, was still unusual in the 1850s. Fully mechanized sugar plantations – such as San Martín – were neither the rule: in 1860, they were only 4.86 per cent of the sugar units of Cuba, responsible for 14.80 per cent of the total sugar production of the island that same year. The dominant profile of the Cuban sugar plantation was closer to Purísima Concepción, with semi-mechanized units encompassing 67.45 per cent of the island's plantations and accounting for 76.62 per cent of the total sugar production in 1860.¹⁴ A basic question arises from these data: considering the human and spatial scale of Cuban sugar plantations, how could they be managed effectively? The demands of the labour and production processes of New World sugar plantations placed them at the forefront of management practices of the capitalist world economy.¹⁵ However, the new size of Cuban sugar plantations – with their hundreds of slaves (mostly African), forced to comply with an unprecedented workload in a situation of growing conflicts not only between slaves and masters but also between Spain and its imperial rivals – called for new management solutions.

Laplante's images help us understand the solution found by Cuban enslavers, starting with the pattern of slave housing. In the landscape of the *ingenio* Purísima Concepción, to the left of the grinding mill/boiler house, there is a large rectangular building with one entrance and small barred windows. The architectural set-up of this building is more evident if we look at its equivalent at San Martín: the large square building to the left, the largest one in the *batey*, again with a single entry, with all its hundred cubicles facing the internal, enclosed courtyard. This is the infamous *barracón* – a model of slave quarters that was designed in the mid-1820s as a response of the Cuban slaveholding powers to the slave uprisings that dotted the western part of the island at the time. The *barracón*

13 Data on areas/slaves: B. W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807–1834*, Mona 1995, p. 163; N. Bonnet, *L'organisation du travail servile sur la sucrerie dominicaine au XVIII^e siècle*, in: P. Hrodes (ed.), *L'esclave et les plantations de l'établissement de la servitude à son abolition. Hommage à Pierre Pluchon*, Rennes 2008, p. 127; L. M. García Mora/A. Santamaría García, *Donde cristaliza la esperanza: lectura de Los Ingenios*, in: Cantero (texto), Laplante (láminas dibujadas del natural y litografiadas), *Los Ingenios*, p. 44. Data on sugar output/slave: Piqueras, *Reordenando el universo azucarero*, p. 179, fig. 5.

14 Piqueras, *Reordenando el universo azucarero*, p. 180, Cuadro 5.

15 Marquese, *Feitores do Corpo, Missionários da Mente*, pp. 71–80, 162–165, 377–379.

became very popular in large semi-mechanized sugar plantations in the early 1840s in the immediate context of repressing the wide slave uprising plot involving several plantations in the area of Matanzas-Cardenas-Colón – what was called the “Conspiracy of the La Escalera”.¹⁶

The immediate goal of the *barracón* was to ensure the strict confinement of slaves at night, thus preventing them from contacting their enslaved partners in the neighbouring plantations. Besides the purpose of spatial control (due to the need for permanent observation of the slaves), another aim was implementing the production process of the Cuban sugar plantations. As is well known, the production of sugar requires close coordination between the agricultural and manufacture spheres: after being cut, the cane must be crushed within 24 hours, or its juice will not crystallize. The more productive the manufacture is and the larger the planted area is, the greater the problems become regarding the coordination of the two spheres – and therefore the coordination of collective labour.

The *barracón*, with its prison-like and militarized character, was an important instrument to closely control workers, combined with visibility protocols that brutally restricted slave autonomy, their break time, and the regimentation of labour gangs for the different tasks of the production cycle.¹⁷ The need for control also helps explain the division of the complex Purísima Concepción/San Martín into two separate but interlinked units. Internal rails allowed the quick transfer of raw material (the sugar cane before the crushing process, the sugar to be purged, etc.) from one unit to another, thus accelerating the output of the production process. Integrating them into a single *batey* would result in great problems for controlling the labour (e.g. the confinement of a thousand slaves or the coordination of slave gangs) and for the production processes (e.g. the excessive time it took for slaves to move from the *barracones* to the cane fields or the very large volume of raw material to be processed).

This brings us back to the problem regarding the scale of the sugar plantations. The dimensions of the cane-growing area were determined by the processing capacity of the manufacture. The increasing mechanization of Cuban sugar mills required expanding cultivated fields, with the consequent expansion of the labour force (the new machinery freed up labour, thus allowing the relocation of more slaves to the field, which was nonetheless not enough). Semi-mechanized and fully mechanized mills thus had to deal with the challenge of managing increasingly vast sugar cane fields and, in particular, the acceleration of the cutting pace to keep the new machinery at optimum levels of operation.¹⁸ This sense of continuous movement was in fact part of the visual organization of Laplante’s lithography: the movement of the cane carts and the trains, both of them

16 R. de B. Marquese, Moradia escrava na era do tráfico ilegal: senzalas rurais no Brasil e em Cuba, c. 1830–1860 in: Anais do Museu Paulista. História e Cultura Material 13 (2005) 2, pp. 165–188.

17 Marquese, Feitores do Corpo, pp. 314–327; D. W. Tomich, The Invention of the Cuban Sugar Mill: Space, Time, and Labour Management, in: M. D. González-Ripoll/I. Á. Cuartero (eds.), Francisco Arango y la Invención de la Cuba Azucarera, Salamanca 2009, pp. 133–150.

18 Tomich, The Invention of the Cuban Sugar Mill, pp. 136–138.

modulated by the diagonal axis of the image's vanishing point; the movement of mills and boilers (noted by the operation of the chimneys of the steam engines); and the movement of slaves providing wood for the furnaces.

Moreover, it is also in this sense of movement that we can find another feature of the new visibility of slave management. Historically, slave labour in sugar production was organized according to the so-called gang system, in which teams of slaves worked collectively under the unified command of an overseer.¹⁹ In Cuba, a system of work gangs, known as *cuadrillas*, was used. With the demands resulting from the new spatial scale of the Cuban *ingenios*, however, some modifications were required to be made to the system previously employed in English and French sugar plantations. In the lithography of the *ingenio* Santa Teresa – a completely mechanized unit founded in the late 1840s in Colón, with 60 caballerías (1989 acres) in cane and a total labour force of 380 slaves – Laplante shows what was the new Cuban standard for organizing *cuadrillas* (see figure 3). The French artist expresses here the close connection between the *cuadros* (plots) of sugar cane, the *guardarrayas* (the paths to the ox-carts, which also separate the *cuadros* of cane), and the *carretones* (ox-carts). On the right side, we see a *cuadrilla* with 25 slaves cutting cane under the *contramayoral* (slave driver) on a horse – possibly accompanied by a *mayoral* (overseer), also on a horse. The *guardarrayas* are on the diagonal axis on the left that connects the field to the *batey*. A closer look at the *carretones* (and at the seven carts that can be seen entering the *batey* of Purísima Concepción) shows the uniformity of these vehicles, which were constructed to carry 100 arrobas of cane each.²⁰



Fig. 3. Eduardo Laplante (lit.), detail of the *Ingenio Santa Teresa* (a) Agüica, G. Cantero (texto), E. Laplante (láminas dibujadas del natural y litografiadas), *Los Ingenios. Colección de vistas de los principales ingenios de azúcar de la Isla de Cuba*, ed. L. M. García Mora and A. Santamaría García, Madrid 2006, p.129.

The flat topography of the Matanzas-Cárdenas-Colón zone facilitated the implementation of a new pattern of labour to the *cuadrilla* system, with the establishment of a strict

19 P.D. Morgan, Task and Gang Systems. The Organization of Labor on New World Plantations, in: S. Innes (ed.), *Work and Labor in Early America*, Chapel Hill 1988, pp. 189–220; Marquese, *Feitores do Corpo*, pp. 71–75.

20 A. de Zayas, Observaciones sobre los ingenios de esta isla, in: *Memorias de la Real Sociedad Patriótica de la Habana* 12 (1836) 3, pp. 174–183; Moreno Friginals, *O Engenho*, vol. 1, p. 244, n. 27.

regulation of cane fields, roads, and carts in a geometrized landscape. Sugar processing in the factory required a precise control of the amount of raw material: hence the importance of the standardization of the carts and the amount of cane in each one. But, without an exact visual representation of the field, there would be no use for this regulation. The composition of maps became central to the operations of sugar plantations while Cuban agronomic manuals presented models for their preparation.²¹

We have a good example of this cartographic practice in the map of the *ingenio* Merced, drawn in 1863 (see figure 4). This semi-mechanized sugar plantation was founded in 1856 in the Colón region. In 1860, only 22 of its 50 caballerías were planted with cane; according to the agricultural census of 1877, its dimensions were then expanded to a total of 70 caballerías, of which 40 were planted with cane, with a labour force of 283 slaves and 83 “Asians”.²² As can be seen in its material and visual display, the map was clearly composed in order to better control the labour process. Inserted into a ledger, it allowed a quick visualization of the entire space of the sugar plantation (*batey*, *guardarrayas*, *cuadros*, pastures, etc.) The plan of the *ingenio* closely follows the recommendations that can be found in contemporary agronomic literature concerning symmetry, with the *batey* located exactly at the centre of the property.²³

The novelty of the Cuban system of *cuadrillas* is inscribed in the spatial arrangement represented by this map. Unlike sugar plantations in the British and French Caribbean, where slave gangs were organized according to the strength of the labourers, the Cuban *cuadrillas* were structured around the *carretones*: time and movement were the key elements of this new system of teamwork.²⁴ Each *cuadrilla* was composed of a given ratio of *macheteros* (cane cutters), strong men; *alzadores* (cane carriers), usually women; and the *carreteros* (drivers of the *carretones*). If the cane *cuadros* (the numbered rectangular plots that can be seen in the Merced map) were close to the *batey*, the ratio of cutters to carriers would be 2:2 for each driver; 2 *cuadrillas* (each one with approximately 35 labourers and 7 carts) would be enough to cut and transport the cane to the mills.

21 See in particular the model presented in the anonymous *Cartilla Practica del Manejo de Ingenios ó Fincas Destinadas á Producir Azúcar*, escrita por un Montuno, Irún, Spain 1862.

22 See, respectively, Apéndice I, 314; Apéndice II, 380, in: *Estados relativos a la producción azucarera de la isla de Cuba*, formados competentemente y con autorización de la Intendencia de Ejército y Hacienda, por Carlos Rebello, Habana, Octubre, 1860; *Noticia de los ingenios o fincas azucareras que en estado de producción existen actualmente en toda la isla*, (...) por la Dirección General de Hacienda de la Isla de Cuba, La Habana, 1877, in: Cantero/Laplante, *Los Ingenios*.

23 See, e.g., the prescription of the *Cartilla Practica del Manejo de Ingenios*, p. 18: “The sugar plantation *batey* should be placed in the centre of 49 acres of land that have been designed from the outset to cane fields, unless you had an accident that prevented it, in order to shorten as much as possible the distances, a matter of great importance to make the cane to circulate with the easily possible brevity and economy.” The *ingenio* Merced appears to have closely followed the proportions recommended in this manual: 40 caballerías of cane (4 more to *guardarrayas/batey*, and 5 for the production of foodstuff), labour force with about 320 workers, steam milling with 5 Jamaican trains, capable of producing 117,300 arrobas of sugar.

24 Here I follow the interpretation of Tomich, *The Invention of the Cuban Sugar Mill*, pp. 142–146.



Fig. 4. *Plano del batey y cañaverales del ingenio Merced*. Fondo Serafín Sánchez Govín, Fundación Antonio Núñez Jiménez de la Naturaleza y el Hombre, Habana, Cuba.

For distant *cuadros*, which required more carts, the ratio of cutters to carriers to drivers would be 20:20:14 drivers, thus modifying the numerical composition of the *cuadrillas* and the amount of vehicles employed in the task. These proportions, however, were not fixed because they varied according to the area of each *cuadro*, its distance from the *batey*, and the development of the crop season. It was expected that the daily average per cutter would be 500 arrobas of cane, or 5 cartloads.²⁵

The lithography of Purísima Concepción (see figure 1) represents a *cuadrilla* of carts comprising seven units entering the plantation *batey*; another *cuadrilla* can be found on the path to the fields. With this management system, which was able to extract a huge workload from the slaves through a close coordination of collective labour in time and space, the Cuban sugar masters managed to enlarge the acreage of cane at an astonishing rate. However, without a precise knowledge of the space of the sugar plantation, made possible by the exact visualization of it, such a scheme for the exploitation of slave labour would not work.

This was the main goal behind the creation of maps such as that of Merced. With the numbering of the *cuadros* of cane (118 in total, each equivalent to one cutting day), the map allowed accurate calculations of the quantity of cane to be cut and, therefore, of slave management in the sugar production process. The map's relationship with the labour and production processes was straightforward. The mathematical proportional-

25 A. de Landa, *El administrador del ingenio*, Habana 1866, p. 48.

ity of manufacture was projected upon the field, ordering the progress of the collective labour of slaves. A careful calculation of the amount of cane to be taken to the mills was added to the map; based on the daily reports of the *capataz de las carretas* (ox-cart overseer), the general manager would be in charge of the weekly quantification of such data.²⁶ After visiting the *ingenio* Unión, a fully mechanized sugar plantation with 498 slaves, Cantero wrote:

*45 is the total number of cultivated caballerías, with the distinction that all cuadros are perfectly regular forming cuadrilongos of a third of a caballería, an equality that greatly facilitates operations. This fact alone, sufficient in itself to demonstrate the intelligence of the owners, coincides with another that we cannot fail to mention fulfilling a duty to do justice. They showed us a book in which they plot with scrupulous accuracy each harvest, the total figure of land cultivated with corresponding subdivisions of caballerías, the number of carts of cane each one produce, how much sugar they produce, the time which one was planted, all of that distinguished from others by the numbering, etc. With the help of such a well-organized and helpful plan at just one glance, it is possible to be aware of the comparative products of the years of existence of the plantation, and always have before our eyes the state in which it is at present.*²⁷

With the map in a ledger and with “just one glance”, the sugar master would know everything that was happening in his sugar plantation: this is a clear expression of the visual regime of the second slavery, a key variable for the success of Cuban sugar production in the nineteenth-century world economy.

IV.

Between the 1870s and the first half of the 1880s, the Italian artist Nicolau Antonio Facchinetti, resident at the court of Rio de Janeiro since 1849, was asked by some planter families of the Paraíba Valley to paint landscapes of their properties. Completed in April 1875, the oil on wood of the *fazenda* Flores do Paraíso, located in the county of Valença, Rio de Janeiro (present-day Rio das Flores), is perhaps the best result of this series (see figure 5). The painting was commissioned by Domingos Custódio Guimarães Filho. Having received the title of second baron of Rio Preto in 1874 and having inherited a coffee plantation from his mother a year earlier, Domingos Filho wanted to have a painting on the wall of his residence (in the capital of the Brazilian Empire) from the brush of one of the most acclaimed artists of the time, showing the property that brought fame to his family.²⁸

26 See the control models provided by Landa, *El administrador*, pp. 60–61.

27 J. Cantero, *Ingenio Unión*, in: Cantero/Laplante, *Los Ingenios*, p. 184.

28 R. de B. Marquese, *A paisagem da cafeicultura na crise da escravidão: as pinturas de Nicolau Facchinetti e Georg Grimm*, in: *Revista do Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros* 44 (2007), pp. 55–76.



Fig. 5. Nicolau Antonio Facchinetti, *Fazenda Flores do Paraíso*, 1875, óleo sobre madeira, Coleção Particular, in: C. Martins/V. Piccoli (eds.), *Facchinetti*, Rio de Janeiro 2004, p. 16.

The land of the plantation had been acquired in 1843 by his father, Custódio Guimarães, the first baron (1854) and later (1867) viscount of Rio Preto. In the second half of the 1840s, Domingos's father invested heavily in the acquisition of African slaves (purchased in the illegal transatlantic slave trade), in planting coffee trees, and in the construction of a luxurious big house for his plantation. In 1868 (the year Domingos's father died), Flores do Paraíso became the centre of a complex of proprieties that encompassed six other large and contiguous plantations and had more than a thousand slaves. The *fazenda* Flores do Paraíso stood out both for its architectural arrangement (a two-story big house in neoclassical style and a headquarters in the shape of a U, as prescribed by the established model of the Palladian villa) and, in particular, for its technical advances. During the early 1860s, the plantation was one of the first in the Paraíba Valley to replace the old *engenho de pilões* (a mechanism used since the late 1820s to separate the parchment and the pulp from the bean, inspired by mills originally used in the processing of rice) with the modern Lidgerwood machinery for coffee processing.²⁹

Unlike sugar production, coffee production is economically viable in both small and large properties. Given the great variation in the structure of slave ownership and in the size of plantation lands, it is impossible to describe the "typical" production unit of the Paraíba Valley. In this region, there were indeed a substantial number of properties (with or without slaves) that operated on a small scale. The bulk of its coffee production, however, came from plantations that had large tracts of land and a great number of slaves. According to studies on the counties of Vassouras (Rio de Janeiro) and Bananal

29 Inventário – Visconde do Rio Preto, 1869, Cartório do 1º Ofício de Valença, Museu da Justiça do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (RJ).

(São Paulo), about half of their slaves lived on plantations, with more than 100 enslaved labourers each, in units that comprised from 100 alqueires (1,195 acres) to 300 alqueires (3,585 acres) of land.³⁰

Flores do Paraíso was similar to the great coffee plantations that dominated the Paraíba Valley landscape. When Facchinetti created his oil, it had 316 alqueires (3,776 acres), of which 130 alqueires (1,553 acres) was planted with 601,000 coffee trees, and a total labour force of 454 slaves.³¹ The geomorphology of the region and the agronomic practices employed, however, precluded the implementation of a regular geometry of the coffee fields, as had been the case in the cane fields of Cuba. As noted in Facchinetti's oil, the Paraíba Valley landscape was characterized by extremely irregular fields, starting with the topography of the so-called seas of hills. On the slopes of the *morros de meia-laranja* (half-orange hills), coffee trees of different ages and levels of productivity intermingled with depleted lands, pastures, livestock, and virgin forests. Given the extensive patterns of coffee cultivation, which is deeply wasteful of natural resources, this landscape went through big changes in relatively short periods of time, thus making the use of cartography for plantation management completely pointless.³² In other words, contrary to what happened in Cuba, maps were never used to control slave labour in the Paraíba Valley. However, the visualization mechanisms used for the management of slaves in both spaces act as important points of contact, starting with the slave quarters.



Fig. 6. Detail of figure 5.

In this detail of Facchinetti's oil (see figure 6), we can see a large quadrangular building on the left of the headquarters complex, connected to the two yards for drying coffee beans (the first with compacted earth, and the second covered with macadam) by a construction that has a small steeple on the second floor, with a bell clock on it; on

30 R. Salles, *E o Vale era o Escravo*, Vassouras, século XIX. Senhores e escravos no coração do Império, Rio de Janeiro 2008; R. de O. Ribas, *Tropeirismo e escravidão: um estudo das tropas de café das lavours de Vassouras, 1840–1888*, Dissertação de Mestrado em História. Curitiba, UFPR 1989, pp. 49–50; B. Moreno, *Demografia e trabalho escravo nas propriedades rurais cafezeiras de Bananal, 1830–1860*, Dissertação de Mestrado em História Social, São Paulo, USP 2013, pp. 180–207.

31 Inventário – Barão do Rio Preto, 1876, Cartório do 1º Ofício de Valença, Museu da Justiça do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (RJ).

32 R. Marquese, *African Diaspora, Slavery, and the Paraíba Valley Coffee Plantation Landscape: Nineteenth Century Brazil*, in: *Review* 31 (2008) 2, pp. 195–216.

the ground level, there is a passage (separated by a gate) of the inner courtyard of the square building to the coffee yards. This is the *senzala em quadra*, a housing arrangement remarkably similar to the Cuban *barracón* with a single entrance, all cubicles facing an internal courtyard, and the absence of external windows. In the case of the *fazenda* Flores do Paraíso slave quarters, the external windows seen in Facchinetti's painting were false. It was a trompe l'oeil feature painted onto the very building that sought to give visual and stylistic uniformity to the architecture of the plantation headquarters.³³ The origins of this housing arrangement was also similar to the Cuban *barracões* – that is to say, within the context of examining the Brazilian slave order in the 1830s and 1840s, precisely when big coffee plantations were expanding based on the massive importations of illegally enslaved Africans. Even if they were not built of masonry (and usually attached to the body of the monumental villa house), the slave quarters in the Paraíba Valley followed the same dictates of slave control of Cuban *barracões*, based as they were on strict confinement procedures. And, as in Cuban sugar plantations, these ordinances of space control explain why mega coffee planters such as the Custódio Guimarães family assembled multiple contiguous plantations instead of merging them into a single unit.³⁴ Although the processing of coffee beans does not demand an integration of field and factory as in the case of sugar, the *senzala em quadra* model for the slave quarters played an important role in the coordination of slave labour in time and space. The remarkable series of photographs taken by Marc Ferrez in the last decade of slavery in Brazil makes this very clear. Seeking to reach the foreign public that visited Brazil and that were eager for souvenir photos of the tropical world, Ferrez recorded multiple situations between 1880 and 1885 that portrayed slave labour in the Paraíba Valley coffee plantations, a world that all contemporaries – including the coffee planters – knew was doomed to disappear in the medium or short term. As a historian of this series has recently noted, Ferrez's visual intention was clearly influenced by the goal of making slavery “monumentalized” by equating “human power to the built environment”.³⁵

33 The parietal painting technique in trompe l'oeil of the external façade of the slave quarters can still be seen today in a former coffee plantation nearby Flores do Paraíso, *fazenda Santa Clara* (Santa Rita do Jacutinga, Minas Gerais). For its images, see Marquese, *Feitores do Corpo*, images 11 to 13.

34 Marquese, *Moradia escrava na era do tráfico ilegal*, pp. 175–185.

35 M. Muaze, *Violência apaziguada: escravidão e cultivo do café nas fotografias de Marc Ferrez (1882–1885)*, in: *Revista Brasileira de História* 74 (2017), pp. 1–20.



Fig. 7. Marc Ferrez, *Départ pour la cuillette du café*, 1880. Acervo do Museu Afro-Brasil, São Paulo/SP.

It is exactly this “monumental” character of Ferrez’s visual project that makes it particularly useful to the argument presented here. In this picture (see figure 7), for example, his goal was to represent the close connection between the courtyard of the slave quarters and the coffee-drying yard, both comprising one single space and determining a pattern of labour that was strictly ordered in time and space. The place of residence of the enslaved labourers was also the main location for the processing of coffee: the yards for drying coffee, the buildings with the machinery for the separation of the pulp and the parchment from the beans, and the *tulhas* (storehouse) for the processed beans were all distributed around the slave quarters – or attached to it. As I have pointed out elsewhere, the enclosed slave quarters met both the objective of controlling the mobility of slaves at night and directing their collective labour. The architectonic programme of the *senzala em quadra* facilitated the coordination of numerous groups of slaves with the daily repetition of spatial procedures, one of which we can see in Ferrez’s picture: the grouping of slaves in the courtyard of the slave quarters shortly after sunrise for the inspection and distribution of the tasks of the day and then the repetitive job of rotating coffee beans for drying in the sun at this same place.³⁶

36 R. Marquese, *O Vale do Paraíba cafeeiro e o regime visual da segunda escravidão: o caso da fazenda Resgate*, in: *Anais do Museu Paulista. História e Cultura Material* 18 (2010), pp. 83–128.

In the agricultural sphere, the Brazilian coffee economy surpassed its rivals in the Caribbean (Jamaica and Cuba) and in the Indian Ocean (Java and Ceylon) by increasing the rate of exploitation of slaves, measured by the proportion of coffee trees allocated to each enslaved adult labourer. In nineteenth-century records, much qualitative evidence can be found regarding this point. More recently, the dissertation by Breno Moreno quantitatively demonstrates this trend by examining a large series of post-mortem inventories from Bananal between the 1830s and 1860.

How was it possible to impose this growing number of coffee trees upon the slaves? Once again, the new visual mechanisms of slave labour control help us to understand the issue. The coffee trees are capital goods: once in full production (which takes five years to occur after the initial planting), they produce fruits for another twenty years, demanding only two to three annual prunings as agronomic tradition. In the Brazilian coffee economy, this activity was organized with the classic gang system, that is to say collective labour under the unified command of the overseer: each slave was responsible for a row between two vertical lines of coffee trees, and all the gang – supervised by an overseer or foreman – should work in unison following the fastest slaves, who were placed at the extreme tips of the horizontal axis.

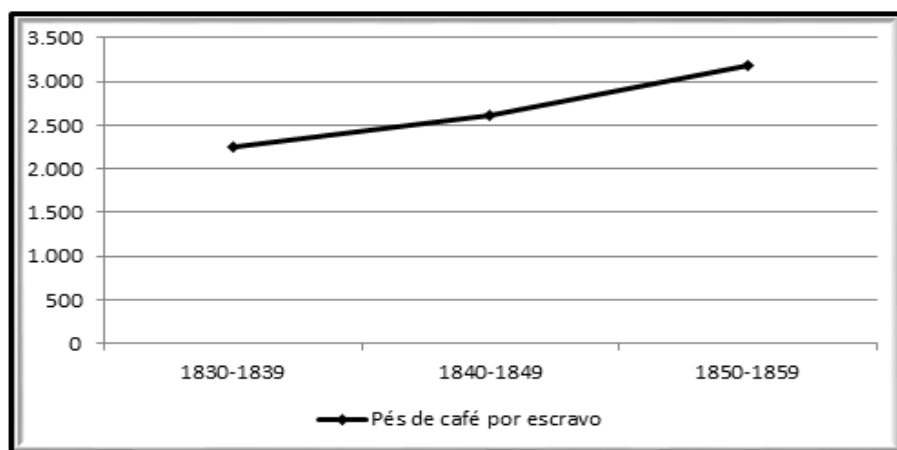


Fig. 8. Evolution of Labour Exploitation (Coffee Trees per Adult Slave), Bananal, 1830–1859³⁷

The novelty of the Brazilian system was the arrangement of the coffee trees, with its row planting from the base to the top of the *morros de meia-laranja* and the large spacing between the rows. In this planting system, there was a much smaller amount of coffee plants

37 Source: B. Moreno, *Demografia e trabalho escravo nas propriedades rurais cafeeiras de Bananal, 1830–1860*, Dissertação de Mestrado em História Social, São Paulo 2013, p. 223.

per area than, for example, in the Caribbean. The consequent waste of land in Brazil was compensated by the fact that the overseer, with this system, could more easily watch the gangs of slaves from the bottom of the hill and, consequently, distribute a greater number of coffee trees per worker.³⁸

The lens of Ferrez beautifully captures this technique. In the photo below (see figure 9), the slaves are concentrated in a few lines for reasons of photographic composition, but what we see is a group of labourers in a typical coffee field in the Paraíba Valley, a field that is open enough to allow its immediate observation by those who were not at the *morros de meia-laranja*.



Fig. 9. Marc Ferrez, *Escravos na colheita de café*, 1882 (Acervo Instituto Moreira Salles)

The activity in which the slaves were involved at the time they were photographed by Ferrez was not pruning but harvesting: the leafless coffee trees show it well. Here I come

38 Marquese, *African Diaspora*, pp. 199–203; Id., *O Vale do Paraíba cafeeiro*, pp. 104–109.

to the final point of my analysis. More coffee trees per worker meant more beans to be harvested by slaves during harvest time – the Brazilian coffee plantations incidentally also stood out for their higher productivity. However, due to the biannual variation of crops in Brazil (something common when the trees are planted in full sun without shading), it was impossible for the plantation management to have prior knowledge of the volume to be harvested. In bad years, the labour force available on the plantation could easily accomplish the harvest, but in good years, the pressure on enslaved workers increased. The solution adopted in the Paraíba Valley was very similar to the practices in the US South, that is to say a system of individualized quotas that varied according to the evaluation of the progress of the harvest and the ability of each labourer as well as that compelled them to reap the greatest possible amount of product at the risk of being punished physically if he/she did not fulfil the minimum quota stipulated for the day – eventually receiving rewards for extra amounts when he/she exceeded it.³⁹

What all this meant in terms of overwork for slaves was well noted by the British journalist G. A. Crüwell, who came to Brazil in the 1870s at the behest of Ceylon planters in order to discover the secrets of the enormous efficiency of the Brazilian production. According to him,

*[t]he work demanded and performed by the slaves is enormous. It is beyond the utmost of what human beings are capable of performing without derangement to the physical resources of the individual. In Brazil a slave is made to pick twelve bushels of coffee a day, in crop season, when in Ceylon two bushels is the coolie's task while for anything beyond extra pay is given, and although he may bring in one or two bushels more, and the picking of only the ripe berries be a more difficult labour in Ceylon, than a sweeping off the ground, including earth and stones, and an indiscriminate picking of the berries in Brazil plantations, four bushels in Ceylon is what an able coolie or coolly woman can do and no more, and to do this the whole time.*⁴⁰

In other words, it was impossible for Ceylon coolies to compete with the amount of labour extracted from slaves in Brazil, which was obtained by a management system based on the strict visualization of slaves in the fields, in the headquarters, and in the yards. And, as in Cuba, this new visuality is crucial for understanding the dominant role that the Paraíba Valley had played in the world coffee market during the era of the second slavery.

39 The best coeval description of this system is in E. de Andrade, *O Vale do Paraíba*, Rio de Janeiro 1989, pp. 108–111. On the Cotton South, see E. B. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told. Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*, New York 2014, pp. 111–144.

40 G. A. Crüwell/A. Scott Blacklaw, *Brazil as a Coffee Growing Country: its Capabilities, the Mode of Cultivation, and Prospects of Extension*, Described in a Series of Letters, Colombo 1876, pp. 18–19.

REZENSIONEN | REVIEWS

**Sven Beckert / Dominic Sachsenmaier
(eds.): Global History, Globally.
Research and Practice around the
World, London / New York:
Bloomsbury Academic 2018, 306 pp.**

Reviewed by
Matthias Middell, Leipzig

The accusation that universal and world history are Eurocentric and thus privilege a particular perspective has long been part of the repertoire of critical voices that want to point to problems of a certain way of doing world history or to quite fundamental problems of historiography in general. One can make this accusation in different ways. The ones claim that the history of Europe receives above-average attention, and the history of the other, much larger part of the world degenerates into a quantité négligable. World historians have long countered this objection with detailed chapters proving that history takes place everywhere on the planet and that interesting insights can be derived from the parallelism of events. The second level of reproach addresses the expertise and research-based nature of statements about

non-European developments. Here, the rise of area studies often offers a remedy, and there is no doubt that in the course of the 20th century, the level of knowledge about the history of Africa, Asia, or Latin America, or the history of the oceans, has improved as exponentially as it has for Europe and North America. Recent world histories have profited extensively from this, as we have demonstrated in detail in the columns of this journal analysing the Cambridge World History.¹ But this does not automatically avert the third dimension of the charge, which asks for a plurality of voices in the representation of the history of the world and subliminally includes an argument about authenticity. The World Social Science Report, which has been renewed again and again for more than a decade, points to the serious inequality in published knowledge production between the continents and cites numerous institutional reasons why this is not changing in the short term.² The World Humanities Report, currently in preparation, will certainly argue along the same lines and, even as it is being written, shows the enormous disparities in the possibilities of gaining an overview of knowledge production in Africa or the United States. The most radical variant of the Eurocentrism accusation against the world historians, however, is undoubtedly the

argument that world history in itself is the real problem and is an instrument to perfidiously perpetuate Western dominance and to justify it methodically and theoretically over and over again. Even the nasty word of epistemicide is making the rounds and arouses demands for its avoidance.³

The present volume, which emerged from a series of conferences held with the support of the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University and the Duke Transcultural Humanities Committee, and later also the Volkswagen Foundation and the German Research Foundation since 2008, focuses primarily on the third dimension and aims to mitigate the inequalities resulting from the ignorance of original ideas and authors from non-European (or rather non-Anglo-Saxon) areas of the world. To this end, the essays, which have been fine-tuned and supplemented with missing aspects over the course of successive conferences, have been confined to authors from all continents and assigned to three sections.

The first is entitled *Regions* and provides a profound overview of global history in northwestern Europe (penned by Gareth Austin, an economic historian of Africa who teaches at Cambridge), in East Asia (by Q. Edward Wang, who teaches in the US at the University at Rowan and in Beijing), in Latin America and the Caribbean (by Rafel Marquese and João Paulo Pimenta of São Paulo), and in North America (by Jerry Bentley, the central figure of the World History movement in the US who taught and edited the *Journal of World History* in Hawai until his premature death). They all point to focal themes, central locations, and important publications, creating a kind of collective biography of each

regional community of global historians. The assumption that guides these essays is that of a shared scholarly-political context and a shared historical path dependency that results in the selection of preferred topics. In this respect, it is consistent to include in this section the contributions by Selcuk Esenbel and Meltem Toksöz from Istanbul on imperial and national narratives in Turkey and the Arab Middle East, and by Omar Gueye from Dakar on the relationship between African and global history, even if, strictly speaking, they are only partially about global history. But at least they place regional historical culture and historiography in relation to the interest in global contexts that is stronger elsewhere.

The second section promises the discussion of *Central themes in global history*, and with the assumption of a centrality of some kind, one naturally enters complicated terrain, for here it must be made clear for whom these themes are central or have become central (again). Andreas Eckert from Berlin and Marcel van der Linden from Amsterdam have it comparatively easy with global labor history, because it has been renewed on so many corners and ends of the planet that one can actually speak of a globally shared interest. This, however, is what the authors of this essay themselves deserve credit for, not only by restlessly weaving threads between sites (and now drawing expertise from that experience for their overview), but also by proposing a new kind of synthesis that exemplifies how the global perspective can breathe entirely new life into a field that has long been explored already under different paradigms. Kenneth Pomeranz (Irvine) follows up here

with a profound problematization of the relationship between regional studies and global economic history. The latter in particular has been repeatedly described as an experimental field of the pioneers of global history, but in the process, impulses from an economic science that still has a strong universalist bent enter into a theoretically and methodologically mixture with inspirations from area studies that is not always entirely free from contradictions.

Global migration history, for which Amit Kumar Mishrat from Hyderabad is responsible, could be an object par excellence for global re-perspectivizations and has also produced an almost unmanageable literature and numerous innovations (from the paradigm of the transnational to the study of entanglements) in the last two to three decades, but interestingly, a coherent synthesis is not so easy to conceive. Dominic Sachsenmaier (first Durham, now Göttingen) and Andrew Sartori (New York) make clear that this is also true for global intellectual history. This is true if only because local/national traditions (the authors distinguish this only vaguely) continue to be pursued and remain much stronger than the effects of undoubtedly increasing international contacts and collaborations. The term entanglement can obviously also mean a conversation between deaf-mutes who mutually ignore each other intellectually, but fiercely emphasize their affinity on the basis of belonging to the same group. Here flashes a very fundamental challenge to the demand for “global history, globally” that is also hinted at in many other contributions, but perhaps not so clearly addressed. The large umbrella of global history allows many to congregate and, in doing so, to further their own schooling

without the need to clearly delineate their own conception from others. This creates the illusion of a large, more powerful unified movement, which in fact, on closer inspection, breaks up into many groups and differentiates itself according to differently privileged axes of vision. The minimal consensus that is often to hear according to which global history is characterized by a common decision of its proponents for a global perspective turns out to be both an advantage and a disadvantage. This unitary identity has undoubtedly fostered the fabulously rapid rise, like a phoenix out of ashes, from the complete damnation of grand theory, meta récit, and master narrative since the 1980s. But at the same time, debates on theory have failed to materialize, which could possibly hinder further expansion, because while tremendous work has been done in empirical investigation, which even the most adamant opponents of global history cannot deny, arguments for the why of a global history have not been sufficiently sharpened. In any case, “there is no alternative” is not a sufficiently convincing argument.

The remaining four essays are grouped under the heading *Problems in the Practice of Global History* and give further weight to the context of historiography. David Simo from Yaoundé underlines the (also materially explicable) marginality of African voices in the concert of global historians; Jie-Hyun Lim from Seoul recalls the continuing hegemony of national-historical narratives in East Asia (and elsewhere), which have skillfully integrated transnational perspectives without relinquishing their claim to dominance. In the process, a methodological nationalism cultivated in much of Marxist historiography does

not fare well, either, and stands in glaring contradiction to the original internationalist impulse of that political camp. Marnie Hughes-Warrington from Canberra brings the question of the weight of indigenous conceptions of the world to bear on the historiography of former Anglo-Saxon settler colonies, and Shigeru Akita from Osaka reflects on the progress but also the contradictory stance of Japanese research when it comes to Eurocentric paradigms in global history. Each of these contributions makes clear that we are far from a unified landscape of global history, however much it has followed the North American model in some countries, nurturing an undergraduate course designed to make up for the worst failures of school teaching in the subject of world knowledge.

That it is precisely in this diversity that the appeal of a globally conceived global history lies becomes abundantly clear when reading the volume, but did not really play an explicit role in the initial ascendancy of global history.

Thus, the present volume is also (still) carried by a tone of optimism throughout that, if efforts that are well on their way continue, the goal of a global history for all as the basis for a renewed ecumenism of historians and a school curriculum that moderates conflict is achievable. As a normative idea, both visions - that of a worldwide community of all historians oriented toward global challenges and that of a school curriculum that no longer incites hatred and discord with historical arguments - can only be welcomed. Historians, even as experts on the past and seemingly closed periods, can indeed do something to make the present and the future friendlier.

This volume demonstrates the intellectual power and competence with which global historians from all continents think their way into other cultures and thus build bridges to a global cohesion that is necessary in view of the new dynamics generated by accelerated climate change, shrinking biodiversity, pandemics that negate all borders, and the historically evolved inequality of resources. Global history, globally, however, does not necessarily mean a unified view of history, but can also mean the mobilization of diversity for a more complete picture. With this volume, the editors have presented an impressive record of how both can go together: the vision of a common cause and the recognition of plurality, without which this common cause would quickly take on totalitarian features.

Notes

- 1 Matthias Middell and Katja Castryck-Naumann (eds), *Narrating World History after the Global Turn: The Cambridge World History* (2015) (=Comparativ 29 (2019), 6).
- 2 <https://en.unesco.org/wssr2010>.
- 3 B. de Sousa Santos, *Epistemologies of the South. Justice Against Epistemicide*, London 2015.

Pim de Zwart / Jan Luiten van Zanden: *The Origins of Globalization. World Trade in the Making of the Global Economy, 1500–1800*, Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press 2018, 338 S.

Rezensiert von
Klaus Weber, Frankfurt/Oder

Der besprochene Band bietet einen sehr gelungenen Überblick zu den wirtschaftlichen Verflechtungen verschiedener Weltregionen und ihrer zunehmenden Verdichtung seit dem Einsetzen der Europäischen Expansion. Die Autoren nehmen insbesondere interkontinentale Waren- und Migrationsströme in den Blick, um an ihnen zu messen, inwieweit eine frühe Globalisierung tatsächlich stattgefunden hat. Damit antworten sie auf Wirtschaftshistoriker und Ökonomen wie Kevin O'Rourke und Jeffrey Williamson, die messbare Globalisierungseffekte erst im Verlauf des 19. Jh.s sehen, mit dem Aufkommen von Dampfschiff und Eisenbahn. In ihrer Replik verwenden die Autoren in breitem Umfang quantitative Daten, die in den letzten Jahren aus verschiedenen internationalen Forschungsprojekten akkumuliert und teils auch digital zugänglich gemacht worden sind. Neben den absoluten Volumina des Handels nehmen Jan Luiten van Zanden und Pim de Zwart auch Parameter wie Preiskonvergenz, Reallöhne, Steuerlast und Sozialprodukt pro Kopf, Bevölkerungsdichte, Urbanisierungsraten, Zinshöhen und weltweite Edelmetallströme in den Blick. Allein mit der Preiskonvergenz

bei ausgewählten Gütern – als Indikator für die Integration von räumlich weit auseinanderliegenden Märkten – weisen sie schon für das 16. und 17. Jh. sehr deutliche Globalisierungseffekte nach.

Die zentralen quantitativen Argumente sind eingebunden in Darstellungen zum Verlauf der Globalisierung, aufgegliedert nach verschiedenen Weltregionen: Lateinamerika, Nordamerika, Afrika, Südasien, Südostasien, Ostasien und Europa, das freilich wegen seiner ab 1500 weltumspannenden Schifffahrt auch in allen übrigen Regionen zunehmend Einfluss ausübte. Durch diesen Aufbau kommt es immer wieder zu Redundanzen, doch das wird dadurch aufgewogen, dass die einzelnen Kapitel unabhängig voneinander gelesen werden können und zugleich durch rote Fäden verbunden sind. Die Kapitel sind durchweg verständlich geschrieben; allerdings sind ökonomische Grundkenntnisse hilfreich.

Die Gliederung des Buchs erlaubt es zudem, die je nach Region sehr unterschiedlichen Folgen der frühen Globalisierung differenziert zu beschreiben: die vor allem von Krankheiten aus der „Alten Welt“ ausgelöste demografische Katastrophe in den Amerikas; die Wirkungen des dort unter spanischer Herrschaft geförderten Silbers, das es den Europäern erst ermöglichte, seit dem Altertum begehrte asiatische Luxusgüter wie Gewürze, Baumwolle, Seide oder Porzellan massenhaft zu importieren; die Folgen des erheblichen Lohngefälles, das sich von den Amerikas über Europa nach Asien erstreckte usw. De Zwart und van Zanden heben auch hervor, dass Portugiesen, Niederländer und Briten bis ins 18. Jh. hinein in Asien und Afrika keine großen Territorien kontrollieren konnten.

Sie mussten vielmehr die von den örtlichen Kaufleuten vorgegebenen „terms of trade“ akzeptieren – oder blieben gar über längere Zeiträume ausgesperrt, wie in China, Korea und Japan sowie an manchen Abschnitten der westafrikanischen Küste. Diese Einsicht hat sich seit Andre Gunder Franks „ReOrient“ und Kenneth Pomeranz’ „Great Divergence“ in der Forschung zunehmend etabliert.¹ Das trotzdem weiterhin gängige Stereotyp von einer immer und überall gegebenen europäischen Omnipotenz traf allenfalls im atlantischen Raum zu, wo der interkontinentale Handel auch mengenmäßig bedeutender war als in asiatischen Gewässern. Indem die Autoren den oft übersehenen Asienhandel ausführlich einbeziehen und indem sie die Jahrhunderte vor 1800 untersuchen, können sie dieses Stereotyp anhand vieler spezifischer Beispiele widerlegen.

Die Autoren bringen immer wieder Wesentliches auf den Punkt, etwa dass es neben Europa keine andere Weltregion gab (außer vielleicht Afrika), in der die Konsumenten so sehr exotische Güter begehrten, und dass diese Begierden die Globalisierung vorantrieben. Es war also kein Unvermögen, maritimen Fernhandel zu betreiben, das Inder, Chinesen oder Japaner davon abhielt, selbst nach Westen vorzudringen. Es war vielmehr Desinteresse an den Erzeugnissen des technisch-zivilisatorisch noch unterlegenen Westens. Im Mittelalter waren chinesische Seehändler bereits bis nach Ostafrika gesegelt, aber als China sich im 15. Jh. einer innerasiatischen Siedlungsexpansion zuwandte, wurde maritimer Fernhandel strikt untersagt. Als um 1500 Portugiesen und bald auch andere Europäer in asiatischen Gewässern auftauchten, konnten sie zunächst trotz

des Einsatzes von Gewalt nur Handelsstützpunkte an den Küsten aufbauen. Sie fügten sich dort in die Strukturen eines intensiven Seehandels ein, der bereits vor ihrer Ankunft zwischen Arabien, Indien, Indonesien und Ostasien boomte. So waren sie in asiatischen Gewässern unter anderem als Transport- und Finanzdienstleister für einheimische Kaufleute erfolgreich – auch wegen Chinas Rückzugs von den Meeren. Die Niederländer verschifften etwa große Mengen indischer Baumwollgewebe in den indonesischen Archipel, um sie dort gegen Gewürze zu tauschen. Dies belegt zugleich die Attraktivität der indischen Stoffe, nicht nur in Europa, sondern auch in Asien, im arabischen Raum und in Afrika.

Weil es in ganz Asien kaum Edelmetallvorkommen gab, waren Silber und Gold dort die einzigen heißbegehrten westlichen Produkte (danach allenfalls Feuerwaffen). Deshalb betonten die Autoren immer wieder die Funktion des amerikanischen Silbers als Treibstoff des frühmodernen Welthandels. Es erlaubte nicht nur die enormen Importe Europas aus Asien, sondern begünstigte auch Monetarisierung und Modernisierungen des Steuerwesens asiatischer Staaten. Tatsächlich korrelierte der Silberausstoß peruanischer und mexikanischer Minen – „in a way, the heart of the early modern world economy“ (S. 60) – langfristig mit den Konjunkturverläufen im Asienhandel. Die Bedeutung der Silberförderung für die spanische Krone spiegelte sich auch in hohen Löhnen im Bergbau. Entgegen dem Stereotyp von Sklaverei und Fron an diesen Orten waren die meisten Bergleute freie Arbeiter, deren Reallöhne im 18. Jh. den Löhnen in Lon-

don nahekamen und etwa beim Doppelten vergleichbarer Löhne in Leipzig lagen. West-Ost-Vergleiche zeigen auch, dass der Anbau bestimmter „cash crops“ nicht notwendigerweise mit Sklaverei einherging. Chinesische Investoren beschäftigten auf ihren Zuckerplantagen in Südostasien vor allem freie Arbeiter, darunter auch chinesische Migranten. Ausschlaggebend war das Angebot des Produktionsfaktors Arbeit, das auf relativ dicht bevölkerten Inseln wie Java gut war – anders als auf den Plantagen der Karibik oder Brasiliens, wo vor allem Sklaven arbeiteten. Auch auf Sumatra war der Anbau von Pfeffer in der Hand freier Bauern; auf dem viel dünner besiedelten Borneo setzte man dafür Sklaven ein.

Auf den transatlantischen Sklavenhandel und die Bedeutung der Sklaverei in den Amerikas geht das Buch ausführlich ein. Auch dabei differenzieren die Autoren und benennen Profiteure und Verlierer der Globalisierung. Wo es um den Konsum als wichtigem Treiber der Globalisierung geht, steht allerdings Jan de Vries' Konzept der „Industrious Revolution“ im Vordergrund: Demnach sind die Europäer aufgrund ihrer Konsumwünsche fleißiger geworden – weil sie mit einem so gestiegenen Einkommen modische Baumwollstoffe und exotische Genussmittel kaufen wollten.² Dass dies zugleich eine Verfleißigung durch Zwang – die Sklaverei – voraussetzte, bleibt beim Aspekt des Konsums ganz ausgeblendet (so ist es ja auch meist beim Blick auf den heutigen Konsum). Auch die unübersehbaren Mengen von Konsumgütern, die im Tausch gegen Sklaven in Westafrika ankamen, bleiben in den entsprechenden Abschnitten unerwähnt (S. 106–111, 275–276). Der Nexus zwischen Konsumsteigerung und erzwun-

gener Arbeit wäre durch die Analyse von Güterketten deutlicher geworden, so wie es etwa Sven Beckert an der Baumwolle demonstriert hat.³

Das Literaturverzeichnis mit Autor/innen auch aus Indien, China, Japan und Afrika ist beeindruckend, und dicht gesetzte Verweise erlauben immer die Zuordnung der Titel. Angesichts der enormen Breite sind Lücken unvermeidlich. Angemerkt sei aber, dass auch in diesem Buch die Arbeiten zur Verflechtung Zentral- und Osteuropas mit dem Welthandel wenig berücksichtigt sind.⁴

Ungeachtet dieser Kritik: Das Buch von de Zwart und van Zanden ist unverzichtbar für alle Lehrenden und Studierenden mit einem Interesse an Globalgeschichte. Sein Wert als Einführung in dieses Feld liegt auch darin, dass es immer wieder auf den Verlauf der relevanten Forschungsdebatten verweist. Dabei ziehen die Autoren auch eigene Schlüsse: „There is not much doubt that the net effect of globalization on global well-being – particularly when we include the effects of warfare and conquest – was strongly negative.“ (S. 278)

Anmerkungen

- 1 A. G. Frank, *ReORIENT: Global Economy in the Asian Age*, Berkeley 1998; K. Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence. China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World*, Princeton 2000.
- 2 J. de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behavior and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present*, New York 2008.
- 3 S. Beckert, *Empire of Cotton. A Global History*, New York 2015; S. Topik/C. Marichal/F. Zephir (eds.), *From Silver to Cocaine. Latin American Commodity Chains and the Building of the World Economy, 1500–2000*, Durham 2006.
- 4 W. von Stromer, *Die Gründung der Baumwollindustrie in Mitteleuropa: Wirtschaftspolitik im Spätmittelalter*, Stuttgart 1978; M. Malowist, *Western Europe, Eastern Europe*

and World Development, 13th–18th Centuries: Collection of Essays of Marian Malowist, ed. Jean Batou/Henryk Szlajfer, Leiden 2009; F. Brahm/Eve Rosenhaft (Hrsg.), *Slavery Hinterland: Transatlantic Slavery and Continental Europe, 1680–1850*, Woodbridge 2016.

Felix Wemheuer: Chinas große Umwälzung. Soziale Konflikte und Aufstieg im Weltsystem, Köln: PapyRossa 2019, 270 S.; Stefan Schmalz: Machtverschiebungen im Weltsystem. Der Aufstieg Chinas und die große Krise, Frankfurt am Main/New York: Campus 2018, 489 S.; Kai Strittmatter: Die Neuerfindung der Diktatur. Wie China den digitalen Überwachungsstaat aufbaut und uns damit herausfordert, 2. überarb. Aufl., München, Piper 2020 (1. Aufl. 2018), 329 S.

Rezensiert von
Thorben Pelzer, Leipzig

Wenn sich deutschsprachige Medien Fragen wie „Wie tickt China?“ (3sat) oder „Was will die neue Supermacht?“ (Der Spiegel) stellen, steht dahinter der Anspruch, eine Region, einen politischen Apparat und eine Gruppe heterogener Kulturen auf einen gemeinsamen Nenner herunterbrechen und „erklären“ zu können. Auf diese Weise soll der Komplex China, der seine Imagination und Faszination als das große „Andere“ bis heute nicht verloren hat, endlich verstanden werden. Das „Erklären“ Chinas ist eine langanhaltende europäische Tradition. Bekannt-

lich widmete sich schon Leibniz in seiner *Novissima Sinica* (1697) diesem Anliegen. Die Monografie des britischen Technokraten John Earl Baker trug das Unterfangen *Explaining China* (1927) direkt im Titel. China, gesellschaftlich wie geografisch eher ein Kontinent, bedarf natürlich eigentlich einer Vielzahl differenzierter Analysen, deren Ausarbeitung einen ganzen akademischen Zweig beschäftigt. Daher bringt das Unterfangen, die Frage nach der Entwicklung des Landes und seiner Stellung in der Welt verdaulich zu beantworten, unweigerlich Probleme mit sich. Beim Zusammenfassen komplexer Zusammenhänge ist eine Essentialisierung des „Chinesisch-Seins“, oft verbunden mit einer Überrepräsentation der Han-chinesischen Kultur, nur schwer vermeidbar. Dennoch verlangt die Öffentlichkeit nach Büchern, die sich große Fragen stellen und eine Gesamtanalyse anbieten. Deswegen ist es trotz aller Problematiken ausgesprochen begrüßenswert, wenn sich ausgewiesene Experten dieser Nachfrage annehmen und das Feld nicht fachfremden Publizist:innen überlassen. Diese Rezension beschäftigt sich mit drei China-Darstellungen, die in den letzten Jahren in deutscher Sprache erschienen sind. Mit der Wahl eines Historikers, eines Soziologen und eines sinologischen Politikjournalisten sollen dabei Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede, die sich aus den verschiedenen Herangehensweisen ergeben, aufgezeigt werden.

Felix Wemheuer untersucht in *Chinas große Umwälzung* den Wandel der gesellschaftlichen Ordnung in der Volksrepublik über den langen Zeitraum ihrer Ausrufung 1949 bis heute. Der Kölner Maoismus-Experte bedient sich in seiner Analyse marxistischer Theorien, etwa zu

Klassenkonflikten und zum Mehrwert, allerdings ohne sich analytisch von seinem Objekt vereinnahmen zu lassen. Das Buch ist in zwei Hälften aufgeteilt. Der erste Teil bietet einen globalhistorischen Überblick über die Dynamiken des Kalten Kriegs und der politischen und ökonomischen Neuorientierungen, die sich in dieser Zeit innerhalb der sozialistisch regierten Länder und innerhalb der sogenannten blockfreien Staaten abspielten. Wemheuer bedient sich dabei der Weltsystemtheorie des Soziologen Immanuel Wallerstein. Das Hauptaugenmerk des historischen Abrisses liegt auf dem Einfluss globaler Entwicklungen auf das politische System in China und weniger darauf, wie das Pekinger System bestehende Zentren und Peripherien umgeformt hat oder in Zukunft umformen könnte. Der Autor zeigt in seinen globalhistorischen Darstellungen, die die Forschungsregion China häufig über mehrere Seiten verlassen, wie sich internationale Entwicklungen, etwa der osteuropäische Marktsozialismus, die *Solidarność*-Bewegung in Polen, der Aufstieg der sogenannten Tigerstaaten in Ostasien oder der Zerfall der Sowjetunion, in politischen und wirtschaftlichen Entscheidungen in China widerspiegeln (S. 87–119). Durch so gelernte welthistorische Lektionen gelang es der Volksrepublik und ihrer Führung, aus globalen neoliberalen Dynamiken als Gewinner hervorzugehen. Die aufgezeigten Querverbindungen sind plausibel, es wird aber nicht angestrebt, eine direkte Verbindung oder Kausalität im Detail nachzuweisen.

In der zweiten Hälfte legt Wemheuer seinen Schwerpunkt auf die Gesellschaften innerhalb der Volksrepublik. Er differenziert dadurch die Bedeutung, die

der wirtschaftliche Aufstieg Chinas für einzelne Bevölkerungsgruppen, etwa für Kleinbäuer:innen, Frauen oder ethnonationale Minderheiten, hatte und hat. In der intersektionalen Analyse zeigt Wemheuer auf, dass im chinesischen Staat nie Gleichheit herrschte, sondern Unterschiede durch soziale Herkunft, gestatteter Niederlassung, Geschlecht, Ethnie und partei-bürokratischem Rang bereits in der maoistischen Zeit eine große Rolle spielten. Der Autor zeichnet durch seine Klassenanalyse den Werdegang vom maoistischen System, welches er als „semi-sozialistisch“ identifiziert, zum System der Reformzeit nach 1978, welches er als „staatskapitalistisch“ herausarbeitet, nach. Letztlich sind solche Kategoriefindungen immer zu einem Grad arbiträr, da die Zuordnung von der Definition der Begriffe abhängt. Dennoch liefert Wemheuer mit seiner Systematisierung eine kritische Diskussionsgrundlage, indem er feststellt, dass die Volksrepublik „heute keine sozialistische Gesellschaft“ ist (S. 220) – eine an sich naheliegende Feststellung, die aber im tagespolitischen Diskurs für und wider das angeblich kommunistische China häufig vergessen wird. Besonders erwähnenswert ist dabei seine Identifikation einer „Staatsklasse“ (insb. S. 227–229). Diese Gruppe aus studierten Technokraten und Intellektuellen habe sich in der Reformzeit an der Staatsspitze etablieren können und den staatlich erwirtschafteten Mehrwert auf legalem und illegalem Weg für sich vereinnahmt. Mit dieser Klasse erklärt Wemheuer einleuchtend, wie eine heterogene bürokratisch-politische Akteursgruppe den aktuellen chinesischen Staatskapitalismus kontrolliert und weshalb ihr zur eigenen Erhaltung so viel daran liegt, eine ideologi-

sche Legitimation der Partei, die institutionell immer weniger vom Staat abgegrenzt werden kann, aufrechtzuerhalten (S. 237–248). In der Konsequenz erscheint es plausibel, dass die Regierung Xi mit den sogenannten Antikorruptionskampagnen versucht, „sich selbst zu disziplinieren“ (S. 237), und dadurch ihre Macht nicht einbüßt, sondern ausbauen kann. Auch wenn der Autor durch seinen zugänglichen, erklärenden Schreibstil ein populärwissenschaftliches Publikum anspricht oder zumindest nicht ausschließen möchte, wären für die Statistiken direktere Quellen als die Wikipedia angemessen gewesen (S. 16n7, 41n41 98n133, 107n145). Dennoch stellt die erste Hälfte des Buchs eine empfehlenswerte globalhistorische Einführung in die Geschichte der Volksrepublik dar, während die zweite Hälfte eine auch für ein Fachpublikum wertvolle, fundierte Analyse der Widersprüche innerhalb der chinesischen Gesellschaft darstellt.

Auch das zweite rezensierte Werk bedient sich der Vorstellung von Weltsystemen. In Machtverschiebungen im Weltsystem analysiert der Jenaer Soziologe Stefan Schmalz, wie Krisen und Umbrüche der letzten Jahrzehnte eine Neuordnung internationaler Machtverhältnisse einleiten. Dabei liegt sein Schwerpunkt auf der Volksrepublik China, welche mehr als andere Staaten des globalen Südens von der Asienkrise 1997/98, der Weltfinanzkrise 2008/09 und der darauffolgenden EU-Schuldenkrise profitieren konnte und sich trotz eigener struktureller Schwächen bislang weitgehend ungehindert dem globalen Zentrum annähern konnte. Während Wemheuer die Volksrepublik als Gewinner einer neoliberalen Neuordnung der Welt ab den 1970er Jahren sieht, der von

den räumlich begrenzten Krisen jenes Systems zusätzlich profitiert, erkennt Schmalz also in den letzteren erst die eigentliche Ursache für den chinesischen Aufstieg. Schmalz geht zusätzlich davon aus, dass die Volksrepublik in den nächsten zwanzig Jahren nominal zu den USA aufschließen wird, aber existierende hegemoniale Strukturen und bestehendes Kapital noch über Jahrzehnte hinweg verhindern werden, dass sich das tatsächliche Weltsystem dieser Entwicklung angleicht (S. 396–400).

Die BIP-getriebene Quantifizierung des ökonomischen Denkens durchdringt das Forschungsvorhaben, welches antritt, den chinesischen „Umbruch zu vermessen“ (S. 8). Bisweilen kommt kaum ein Hauptsatz ohne die Nennung einer wirtschaftlichen Vermessung aus. Dabei werden die hundert akribisch gesammelten Statistiken mal mehr, mal weniger zusammenhängend in die Gesamtanalyse eingeflochten. Wie in der Forschung zu internationalen Beziehungen üblich, spielen Akteur:innen innerhalb der Staaten nur eine untergeordnete Rolle. Prozesse entwickeln sich hier stattdessen vor allem passiv und als Reaktion auf Marktentwicklungen. Allerdings kann die Quantifizierung der Forschung nicht darüber hinwegtäuschen, dass auch Schmalz einem intellektuellen Projekt verschrieben ist. Wiederholt auftauchende Bemerkungen, nach denen die EU „das imperiale Projekt“ sei (S. 284, 287, 293) und in denen die Annexion der Krim und das chinesische Militärgebarren im südostchinesischen Meer als defensive Reaktionen entschuldigt werden (S. 328–330, 408), hinterlassen in Abwesenheit von Herleitungen zumindest ein Fragezeichen. Problematisch wird dies, wenn im Gegensatz zur Kritik am imperialistischen

Westen die Volksrepublik China naiv als „Nationalstaat“ bezeichnet wird (S. 68), der seit zweitausend Jahren als ideologisch uniformer Beamtenstaat zentral regiert werde (S. 94, 395). Schlichtweg falsch wird es, wenn etwa behauptet wird, China habe sich mit der kommunistischen Regierungsübernahme aus der „kolonialen Bevormundung“ befreien können (S. 33, 58, 94) – eine Vorstellung, die die vorangegangenen zwanzig Jahre des nationalistischen Etatismus ausklammert und zugleich davon ablenkt, dass der Staat bis heute selbst koloniale Herrschaft über Westregionen ausübt. Ähnlich inakkurat ist die Vorstellung, Taiwan habe sich 1949 als amerikanischer „Vasallenstaat“ von der Volksrepublik losgelöst und für unabhängig erklärt (S. 70, 95). Auch wenn Chinaforschung nicht Sinolog:innen vorbehalten sein soll, begründen sich solch inhaltlich verknappte Darstellungen womöglich in der fehlenden Kenntnis der chinesischen Sprache und dem fehlenden Zugang zu chinesischsprachiger Primär- und Sekundärliteratur. Insgesamt ist das Buch vor allem eine beachtliche Enzyklopädie von Statistiken; doch nur eine Provinzialisierung des Forschungsgegenstands Chinas und eine stärkere Ausdifferenzierung von gesellschaftlichen und politischen Akteur:innen hätte die Bedeutung dieser Statistiken für die eigentlichen Bevölkerungen offenbaren können.

Mit eben jener Bedeutung des Aufstiegs der Volksrepublik für die hiesigen und chinesischen Bevölkerungen beschäftigt sich Kai Strittmatter in seiner Analyse der Neuerfindung der Diktatur. Strittmatter studierte Sinologie und arbeitete dann als Korrespondent für die Süddeutsche Zeitung, in der er sich kritisch gegenüber

seinem ehemaligen Studienfach äußerte und das „Schweigen der China-Kenner“ gegenüber festlandchinesischer Einflussnahme kritisierte. Strittmatter hat durch seine journalistische Profession den Vorteil, seine Aussagen zwar fundiert belegen zu können, sie aber nicht akademisch-nüchtern interpretieren zu müssen. Das Ergebnis ist ein nicht auf die akademische Welt beschränkter, sondern auch einem Allgemeinpublikum zugänglicher Brandbrief über die Konsequenzen, die ein Aufstieg der autoritären Regierung innerhalb und außerhalb territorialer Grenzen mit sich bringt. An einigen Stellen, etwa, wenn Strittmatter die alte Totalitarismus-Theorie bemüht (S. 23, 223) und NS-Vokabular wie „Gleichschaltung“ (S. 56, 87) und „Blitzkrieg“ (S. 69) auf die Volksrepublik anwendet, geht er mit den literarischen Ausschmückungen zwar zu weit. Auch die essentialisierenden Referenzen auf eine angeblich chinesische Tradition, in der Xi Jinpings autoritäres System vermeintlich antizipiert werde (S. 51, 205), dienen wohl eher der populärwissenschaftlichen Unterhaltung. Jedoch trübt dies in keiner Weise den Eindruck, dass hier ein ausgesprochener Kenner der politischen und gesellschaftlichen Entwicklungen der vergangenen Jahre sein wohlfundiertes Resümee zieht. Besonders erwähnenswert ist, wie viel Wert Strittmatter auf die Aktualität seiner Darstellung legt. Im Widerspruch zu Wemheuer, der eine im Kern kontinuierliche Reformperiode annimmt (S. 178), sieht Strittmatter einen wesentlichen, vor allem im radikalen Parteinationalismus sichtbar werdenden Umbruch durch die Ära Xi Jinping. Der Autor belegt nachvollziehbar, wie neue sprachliche, erzieherische und vor allem digital-

automatisierte Regierungstechniken seit 2012 zu einem gesellschaftlichen Umbau beitragen. Auf dem neuesten Stand informiert Strittmatter ganz konkret über aktuelle Überwachungs-Apps, -Algorithmen und -Systeme, erklärt die automatisierte Sammlung von Daten zum Aufbau von Sozialkreditsystemen und schildert in der neuen Auflage sogar bereits die staatliche Umdeutung der Ausbreitung und Eindämmung von Covid-19. Aufbauend auf zitierten Studien und persönlichen Erfahrungen schildert Strittmatter, wie eine Mischung aus dem „System der nationalistisch-militaristischen Erziehung“ (S. 94) und effektiver Zensur zu kollektivem Vergessen und Entpolitisierung führt. Er weist auf die Gefahr hin, die ein Verschmelzen von Partei, Staat und Nationalismus mit sich bringt und diskutiert das politische Potential des historischen Demütigungs-Narrativs damit deutlich kritischer als seine oben besprochenen Kollegen (insb. S. 145–154). Verfolgte und desillusionierte Bürgerrechtler:innen, Anwält:innen und Schriftsteller:innen werden nicht als Zahlen, sondern als Individuen behandelt, was weniger zu einer Emotionalisierung als zu einer Greifbarmachung der persönlichen Konsequenzen des autoritären Systems führt. Selbstredend soll Strittmatters journalistische Rhetorik lenken, doch sind seine Überspitzungen oftmals keine Hyperbeln, sondern spiegeln die absurde Realität der Regierungstechniken wider – etwa, wenn im chinesischen Internet die Eingabe des Namens „Xi Jinping“ zensiert wird, um Kritik am Präsidenten zu vermeiden (S. 77).

Im letzten Teil des Buchs warnt er zudem eindrücklich und anhand von Beispielen, wie diese Techniken auch außerhalb der

chinesischen Staatsgrenzen zur Anwendung gelangen und unseren akademischen, wirtschaftlichen und politischen Alltag beeinflussen. Dabei geht es etwa um vorauseilende Zensur ausländischer Verlage, um die Beeinflussung ausländischer Universitäten durch Konfuzius-Institute und chinesische Studierendenvereine, oder um wirtschaftliche Abhängigkeiten ausländischer Unternehmen, die das chinesische Überwachungssystem als Auftragnehmer teilweise mit aufgebaut haben. Insgesamt dient das Buch als hochaktueller Auffrischkurs über die globalen Konsequenzen der festlandchinesischen Gegenwart, von dem nicht nur das fachexterne, sondern auch das sinologische Publikum gewinnbringend profitieren kann.

Die Bücher unterscheiden sich sowohl in der Herangehensweise als auch in ihrer untersuchten Zeitspanne und ergänzen sich dadurch gegenseitig. Während Wemheuer zur Erklärung des Aufstiegs Chinas eine globalhistorisch informierte Darstellung der inländischen gesellschaftlichen Transformationen vorlegt und dabei den längsten Zeitraum abdeckt, fokussiert sich Schmalz auf eine ökonomisch-monetäre Analyse der Reformzeit. Strittmatter engt den Zeitraum noch weiter ein und zeichnet dadurch ein besonders akutes gesellschaftlich-politisches Bild der Gegenwart. Alle drei Autoren, mit ihren unterschiedlichen Methoden, Analyseebenen und Überzeugungen weisen auf die Spannung hin, welche dem chinesischen System aufgrund ungelöster inländischer und internationaler Widersprüche innewohnt. In allen drei Werken erscheint das chinesische Modell als Gegenentwurf und Herausforderung. Vom Optimismus der frühen 1990er Jahre, als die Illusion einer konvergenten

Weltentwicklung in Fukuyamas postuliertem „Ende der Geschichte“ gipfelte, ist längst keine Spur mehr. Dass zumindest Schmalz und Strittmatter eine militärische Eskalation des chinesischen Aufstiegs explizit für möglich halten, sollte uns aufhorchen lassen.

Judith Devlin / Maria Falina / John Paul Newman (eds.): *World War I in Central and Eastern Europe. Politics, Conflict and Military Experience*, London / New York: I. B. Tauris 2018, xvi + 336 pp.

Reviewed by
Sabine Rutar, Regensburg

This collective volume is a welcome addition to the recent (centennial) literature on the First World War. It features chapters spanning from today's northeastern Italy, to Serbia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Russia. The editors gathered an impressive transnational team, joining scholars from Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Serbia, and the United Kingdom. With the Introduction (Judith Devlin) and the Conclusion (John Paul Newman and Maria Falina), the editors provide a fitting, if concise, frame to the chapters. These are grouped under two headings: "New Frontiers of War: State Treatment of Non-Combatants" and "Soldiers and Veterans: Experience, Understanding and Memory". The book's subtitle, "Politics,

Conflict and Military Experience", turns out to be a prioritizing order of words, placing the military second to politics targeting non-combatants, which include prisoners of war. The First World War was, as Judith Devlin underlines in her, a little too Russia-centric, introduction, the first war which "rapidly led to the erosion of the distinction between soldiers and civilians" (4). While hers is a generally existent perception, in reality the mass atrocities of the Balkan Wars of 1912/13 had already been a herald of such erosion.

John Paul Newman and Maria Falina, in their conclusion, rightly sum up that 'many of the chapters in this book have shown how institutional, imperial, local, and regional factors were likely more important to contemporary actors than retrospectively applied nationalism' (256). Given however that such "retrospectively applied nationalism" includes heavily nation-state-related historiographies, it makes sense to assess the volume also along these lines.

The three "Italian chapters" are a case in point. In Part I, Francesco Frizzera writes about "policies developed by both the Austrian Army and the Government to manage the refugee crisis" (60-61). He convincingly lays out how these policies of relocation ended up playing "a significant role in the process of disintegration of the Habsburg Empire" (71). They went beyond mere military considerations: the fact that people were shipped from the borderlands to the inner provinces reveals how much the Austrian authorities feared the population that lived near the frontline and spoke the same language as the enemy, such as Austro-Italians. Those who were relocated were confronted with a perpetuated, if implicit, accusation of disloyalty,

while at the same time their men and sons were fighting in the Austrian Army against Russia, Italy and Serbia.

Alessandro Salvador analyses the state of Italy's involvement with the Eastern Front. He focuses "on the efforts [...] to repatriate Italian prisoners in Russia efficiently" (74). At the centre stood those POWs who originated in the Habsburgian areas claimed by Italy. However, as Salvador proves, the POWs were often of a not-so-clear nationality. Similar to Frizzera's relocated civilians, they too posed an (alleged) threat to the Austrian state. For Italy, however, the captive soldiers were 'mostly passive subjects partially involved in the role that Italy was trying to play in the international context' (87). The brainchild of traditional (nationalist) historiography that Italy sought to "liberate" them from Austria in order to employ them at the front against their former homeland, is convincingly disproven.

Simone Bellezza's chapter on Italian POWs in Russia pertains to Part II. He focuses on soldiers from the Austrian region of Trentino, examining "how the national (and to some extent social) identity of these Italian POWs in Russia changed over time" (120). Rather than ethnic kinship or imperial loyalty, it was "solidarity with other men of the village" that were "the first reason people did not resist recruitment" (121). He, like Salvador, turns matters on their feet, stating that "the high number of defections from the Austro-Hungarian Army [...] can be considered more a failure of Habsburg patriotism than as a sign of the support for the Italian state" (123). And here is the link to Frizzera's chapter, too. All three chapters are excellent contri-

butions to the sociopolitical history of the war and to nationalism studies.

The seemingly at odds distribution of the "Italian" chapters over the two thematic parts of the volume does mirror its rationale of transnationalising the war experience. In Part I, Frizzera's research on relocation policies adds on nicely to the preceding chapter by Mark Lewis. He too shows how the empire's fear of its multinational subjects eventually led precisely to that which it sought to avoid: chaos and ultimately dissolution. Lewis analyses the Austrian political police's "desire to create a total information bureau to watch the population for suspicious activity" (38), a process that started long before the war. Especially Czechs, Serbs, pro-Yugoslav Croats, Ruthenes, and Galician Poles were suspect of undermining the state. In the war, emergency decrees made arrests, interrogations, and civilian court convictions easy. Lewis calls this extended "information bureaucracy" a symptom of the eroding empire rather than of a secret police created to terrify the population. Kathryn E. Densford completes this topical trias with another narration of inner-Austrian displacement, of the multiethnic crowd of refugees from the Eastern Front who ended up in Moravia.

Two chapters, in Part I, go beyond the ailing Austrian empire. Dmitar Tasić shows how Serbia had a loyalty problem, too. The territorial gains of the second Balkan War, which had ended a scarce year before, did not help Serbia's renewed war effort. A considerable number of the new citizens were Muslims, Turks, Albanians, or pro-Bulgarian Slavs, "who tried to avoid fighting on the Serbian side" (93). Beyond this remark, Tasić rather overlooks

the Balkan Wars. Had he interlinked them analytically, he might have been more cautious assessing the atrocities committed by Austro-Hungarian forces as happening in 'the first Serbian areas to experience the destructive nature of modern warfare' (89). The preceding Balkan Wars had really already been the first to be modern in this sense.

Jan Szkudliński scrutinises "the way German troops perceived the land, its inhabitants and the enemy in 1914" (101) when invading Poland, and compares it to 1939, when the Germans invaded again. Attitudes were not so different, the practices however were: in 1939, soldiers had been exposed to "the propaganda machine of a racist, totalitarian regime and by inflammatory orders issued by the Army command" (116). His observations of the horrific evolution of violence is analogous to Lewis', who points out how the inquisitive imperial police were a far way from the terror installed by later regimes.

Part II focuses on the military war experience and attempts to come to terms with it. Steven Balbirnie gathers British orientalist attitudes towards the Russian "Other" during their intervention in the civil war following the October Revolution. His chapter is complemented by Shannon Brady's interesting micro-study of the Anglo-Russian Hospital in St. Petersburg (Petrograd at the time). Georg Grote examines about fifty field postcards German-speaking South Tyrolean soldiers wrote home from the frontline – increasingly conscious that this faraway homeland was ceasing to exist. Andreas Agocs traces 'a common cultural consciousness that crossed national and ethnic lines' (180) among Jewish, German, Austrian,

and Hungarian witnesses to the Eastern Front, consisting of a waning monarchical symbolism and a transformation of patriarchal structures. His and Grote's chapters link to the "Austrian" chapters in Part I, and the lot amounts to a substantial contribution to the social history of Austria-Hungary's final (war) years.

Part II then moves on to veterans. Alexandre Sumpf writes on disabled ex-servicemen of the Tsarist Russian Army, illustrating how the newly created category of "invalids" was a "source of public action and patriotic mobilisation" (197). Isabelle Davion gives a fascinating overview of the monuments and the debates around the Unknown Soldier, and on what it meant to be a veteran in the newly-founded states of Central and Eastern Europe: It was hard to create war heroes in polities which engulfed both "winners" and "losers". In the final chapter, Joanna Urbanek's analysis of the rivalry and fragmentation of veterans' associations in Poland, in the aftermath of the First World War and the ensuing Polish-Soviet war, adds another important piece to the puzzle of divisive remembrance.

With an eye on present relevance, Newman and Falina conclude how "old wounds have not healed, but have rather been re-opened, as in the political 'trauma' of Hungary's Trianon, played to maximum effect by the country's nationalist right, or in Serbia and Bosnia, where figures such as Gavrilo Princip remain deeply divisive" (256). Nationalist frames continue to be a driving factor in the coming to terms with, or rather: instrumentalisation of, the events of the centennial Great War. Possibly, the editors arranged the chapters to thoroughly counteract such nationaliza-

tion and emphasize the transnationality of the war experience. After all, history has always been more complex than nationalists would have it.

Ang Cheng Guan: Southeast Asia's Cold War. An Interpretive History, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press 2018, 306 pp.

Reviewed by
Ragna Boden, Berlin

A concise political history of Southeast Asia during the Cold War provides orientation in a complex international setting. This is what Ang Cheng Guan achieves with his survey over 70 years (1919–1989), the “interpretive” elements being on the one hand the Asian perspective instead of US or European points of view (p. 1), on the other hand a focus on communist parties and leftist movements. Ang indicates that since the latter had turned out to be the “losers” of the Cold War, their perceptions might otherwise sink into oblivion (p. 194).

With some exceptions of US, British, and Australian archival documents, Ang Cheng Guan's book is based on published sources exclusively in English, including his own works on the war in Vietnam, on Singapore and Cambodia. Ang narrates the key political developments in mainly chronological order arguing that what might be regarded as a somewhat old-fashioned

treatment (p. 198) in fact serves as a basis for other, more recent research interests.

The six chapters vary with regard to time span, length and emphasis. To begin with, Ang defines a period of 30 years (1919–1949) as a pre-history to the classical Cold War period. He traces the antagonisms in the region and the rising of global communist forces. Somewhat schematically, Ang states that before World War II, communists did not pose a threat to European colonial powers (p. 36), and even the famous Calcutta conference in 1948 seems to him “a somewhat messy gathering” (p. 51), by which he indicates a lack of discernable guidance. Besides, communist China (PRC) is introduced as a new major political power.

The period dealt with in chapter two comprises the five years until the Vietnamese communists' Dien Bien Phu victory in 1954 with the overall focus on the PRC's influence in the region and the development of each regional state as well as global interconnections, touching upon Japan from a US point of view.

In chapter three, covering a mere two years (1954–1955), attention shifts to multinational agreements, organisations and movements such as the Geneva agreement on Indochina, the founding of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the global outreach of the non-alignment movement initiated at Bandung. These three events constitute quite different approaches to Southeast Asian development: the military victories of regional forces in Indochina against colonial powers, the establishment of a Western inspired organisation with just two South-east Asian members of the SEATO, Thai-

land and the Philippines, versus a decidedly anti-colonial movement.

Chapter four ("Antagonisms") concentrates on the ten years up to 1965. In reaction to the Sino-Soviet split most of the Southeast Asian communist parties opted for Beijing, some split, others manoeuvred. In terms of East-West confrontation, Indonesia's turn from socialist to Western ally, including the precursory murder of generals and the subsequent massacre against Indonesian leftists, re-balanced the regional zones of influence as well. Interpreting two highly controversial aspects, Ang follows the line that the attempted coup which affected the Indonesian military caught Washington by surprise (p. 121) and that the Communist Party of Indonesia was not the mastermind of the 1965 assassination of the generals (p. 124). In chapter five Ang narrates the next ten years with a focus on the war in Vietnam and the founding of yet another regional union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) with its shared "aversion to communism" (p. 140). Meanwhile the Burmese government tried to balance ties to Beijing and Washington (p. 132). Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia supported the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam war, while the "uneasy coalition" (p. 153) of the Communist Parties of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia led to another war in the region. It was directed against the Khmer Rouge regime and Vietnamese military action against it respectively, each side involving allies on a global scale.

This war is elaborated on in the last chapter, titled "Ending Cold War Chasm". It addresses the events during the last fifteen years. Here, Ang skilfully presents the complex imbrication of the Cambodia

conflict in the global Cold War. At this point Ang abandons his impartiality and dedication to give a balanced view (p. 7). He explicitly takes sides against communist ideas with regard to economy (pp. 192-193). Apart from that, he remains aloof throughout the book even of the many atrocities from all sides involved, communist, non- or anti-communist – so much so that reviewers hold a certain lack of empathy with his narration against him.¹ Indeed, Ang barely tells the stories of suffering. This is part of his concept of political history. Still, a historiography including the not-so-new history of emotions seems rather appropriate in such a study.

The brief conclusion (pp. 194–198) not only sums up each chapter, but also refers some more recent theses on the Cold War like the well-established idea of multiperspectivity. Interpreting the events in the region from within, Ang sees the various conflicts in Southeast Asia as being "no proxy wars" (p. 195), but as conflicts resulting partly also from inner-regional animosities and antagonisms. This is disputable at least in the case of the wars in Indochina.

Ang does not present new theories. He adds a coherent and convincing political perspective "from within" instead. His book stands out as a current, dense overview of English-language contributions, bridging the gap between a multitude of first-hand pure research books, articles and editions from new sources around the world, and a voluminous opus still to be written which would discuss details for every state, relevant group, influential personality and transnational institution separately. Such an extensive approach

would ideally include more ephemeral players like India, Japan, Australia, and the non-anglophone colonial powers in the region such as France and the Netherlands. It would examine economic, military and classical diplomatic topics as well as aspects of culture and society. Ang has paved the way for further studies in the field and for all those who appreciate a compact account of major events and positions in the region.

Note

- 1 See the Review by Kenton Clymer in H-Diplo Roundtable Review Volume XX, No 39, 20 May 2019, <http://www.tiny.cc/Roundtable-XX-39>).

Unternehmen Mammut. Ein Kommandoeinsatz der Wehrmacht im Nordirak 1943, hrsg. von Bernd Lemke und Pherset Rosbeiani (= Cognoscere Historias, Bd. 26, hrsg. von Ulrich van der Heyden), Bremen: Edition Falkenberg 2018, 224 S.

Rezensiert von
Uwe Pfullmann, Berlin

Die in der Reihe Cognoscere Historias von Bernd Lemke und Pherset Rosbeiani edierte und eingeleitete Aktenpublikation hat eine weithin unbekannte Episode des Zweiten Weltkriegs zum Inhalt. Bereits in der Einleitung (9–33) ziehen die Herausgeber folgendes Fazit: „Dies ist die Geschichte einer Unternehmung der Wehrmacht, die begonnen wurde, um den Irak und letztlich ganz Arabien dem britischen Empire zu entreißen und unter deutsche Kontrolle zu bringen. Der Kommando-

führer Johann Gottfried Müller hoffte, mit minimalem Aufwand maximale Wirkung zu erzielen. Mit nur wenigen Agenten sollten die Kurden im Nordirak zur Rebellion aufgestachelt werden, die dann um sich greifen und schließlich die britische Herrschaft zum Einsturz bringen sollte“ (9). Der Kommandotrupp, darunter ein kurdischer Student namens Ramzi al-Nafi, sprang im Juni 1943 im Nordirak ab. Detailliert schildern Lemke und Rosbeiani die Vorbereitung dieses Unternehmens und benennen dessen Protagonisten wie Werner Otto von Hentig und Oskar Ritter von Niedermayer. Kurz und präzise erfolgt eine Einordnung des Unternehmens Mammut in den historischen Kontext des Nahen und Mittleren Ostens, wobei auch auf die deutsch-freundliche Regierung des irakischen Ministerpräsidenten Raschid Ali al-Gailani eingegangen wird, der den Durchmarsch britisch-indischer Truppen durch den Irak verweigerte und militärischen Widerstand leistete. Nach dem militärischen Scheitern der wenigen deutschen Flugzeugstaffeln – eher eine symbolische Geste gegenüber dem Irak – konzentrierte sich die Wehrmachtsführung, insbesondere die sogenannte „Abwehr“, auf Sabotage- und Diversionsakte wie das Unternehmen Mammut. Eine prägnante Schilderung der Struktur der Abwehr und ihrer führenden Köpfe verdeutlicht die Planung und Vorbereitung des Unternehmens, offenbart aber auch bereits grundlegende strukturelle Mängel.

Trotz des Desasters von Stalingrad, das die Pläne für ein Vordringen in den Orient beendete, wurde Mitte Januar 1943 das Unternehmen in Gang gesetzt. „Müller hielt man aufgrund einer 1935/36 unternommenen Orientreise, die ihn bis in die

Gegend von Sulaimaniya geführt hatte, für ausreichend kompetent, dieses Unternehmen erfolgreich leiten zu können. [...] Der Hauptadressat war der kurdische Scheich Barzinji („Mammut“ als Verballhornung von „Mahmud“), der bis 1931 eine ganze Reihe von Aufständen gegen die britische Mandatsmacht verübt hatte, die zumindest zeitweise recht bedrohliche Ausmaße annahmen“ (12). Doch Barzinji (1878–1956) hatte sich bereits aus dem politischen Leben zurückgezogen und seine hochfliegenden Pläne aufgegeben, auf die näher einzugehen sicher angebracht gewesen wäre. Die Existenz anderer kurdischer Aufstandsführer wie Scheich Ahmad Barzani und Mustafa Barzani war den deutschen Diplomaten und Abwehr-Offizieren verborgen geblieben. Die Herausgeber erörtern desweiteren potentielle Verbindungen des Unternehmens zum operativen Arm der Abteilung II der Abwehr im Sonderverband z. b. V. 800 „Brandenburg“ und schildern unter dem Untertitel „Wehrmacht und Orientwissenschaften: Karl Hadank und Werner Caskel“ neben deren sehr unterschiedlicher Beteiligung an der Vorbereitung des Unternehmens ausführlich deren beruflichen Werdegang und die Auseinandersetzungen um die fachliche Orientierung der Orientwissenschaften im Deutschen Reich. Hadank als Protagonist der Kurden lehnte die staatsbürgerliche Integration der Türken strikt ab: „Für Hadank war damit die Erhebung der Kurden ein persönliches Anliegen und dies prädestinierte ihn dann zum Berater für Müller und sein Unternehmen Mammut [...] Damit verschmolzen indes Politik, persönliche Befindlichkeiten und Wissenschaft, dies vor dem Hintergrund der ohnehin schon

dünnen Informationslage. [...] Hadank ist ein Beispiel für einen eher theoretisch arbeitenden, gleichzeitig auch enttäuschten Gelehrten, der vielleicht hoffte, über einen Erfolg von Unternehmen wie Mammut persönliche Anerkennung zu finden“ (28). Die detaillierten Schilderungen zum Wirken Hadanks lassen erkennen, wie gering die Erfolgsaussichten des Kommandounternehmens von vornherein waren. In einer Bewertung der Quellen unterstreichen die Herausgeber: „Zum Verständnis der Dokumente, vor allem der Verhörprotokolle, ist stets zu berücksichtigen, dass hier Männer zu Wort kommen, die als Agenten verhaftet wurden und um ihr Leben fürchten“ (33). Die von Lemke und Rosbeiani erschlossenen Quellen (34–196) speisen sich unter dem Titel „Vorbereitung und Planung des Unternehmens“ (34–76) aus Akten des Bundesarchiv-Militärarchivs, das Kapitel „Scheitern des Unternehmens und Verhaftung der Agenten“ (77–84) aus britischen Archiven (The National Archives; KV 2). Die Verhörprotokolle der Mitglieder des Unternehmens basieren gleichfalls auf britischem Archivmaterial, das erst unlängst freigegeben wurde: Verhörprotokoll Johann Gottfried Müller (108–117), Verhörprotokoll Georg Heinrich Adelbert Konieczny (117–130), dasjenige von Friedrich Wilhelm Hoffmann (130–152) und das Verhörprotokoll Ramzi Nafi Raschid (152–178). Unter dem Titel „Verbleib und Schicksal der Agenten“ (178–196) kann der Leser nachvollziehen, wie staatliche irakische Stellen – der Irak ist seit 1932 ein unabhängiger Staat – und Geheimdienste um das Leben der Kommando-Angehörigen schachern; Ramzi Nafi Raschid (Agha) wurde zu lebenslanger Haft (20 Jahre) verurteilt, die

Abwehr-Angehörigen Müller, Konieczny und Hoffmann wurden schließlich offensichtlich als Militärangehörige und somit als Kriegsgefangene betrachtet. Die monatelangen Verhöre haben die Mitglieder des Kommandos zermürbt, so dass sie auch abfällige Aussagen übereinander tätigten: „Nach Koniecznys Meinung war Müller ein Aufschneider, der weniger mit der tatsächlichen Durchführbarkeit des Plans, als mit der Verbreitung von Geschichten darüber und über sich selbst bei leitenden Offizieren beschäftigt war“ (181 f.).

Die Archivalien sind chronologisch geordnet und werden umfassend erläutert und kommentiert. Der Anhang (197–202) enthält verschiedene Dokumente über die Vorbereitung, u. a. eine Auflistung irakischer Kurdenstämme mit Angaben über die Stärke der jeweiligen Stämme, ihre Oberhäupter und deren Wohnsitze und einen Nachweis der Quellen und der relevanten Literatur (203–214) zum Komplex Unternehmen Mammüt. Ein Register (215–223) ermöglicht die schnelle Suche nach Orts- und Personennamen. Über ihre Intentionen zu dieser Quellenedition sollen die Herausgeber selbst zu Wort kommen: „Die Edition trägt zur politisch-historischen Orientierung in Bezug auf das deutsch-kurdische Verhältnis bei, dies nicht zuletzt vor der in den letzten Jahren stark zugenommenen Wahrnehmung der Kurden in den Konflikten im Irak und in Syrien“ (Klappentext). Wünschenswert wäre eine Karte des Einsatzgebietes gewesen. Den Herausgebern gebührt Dank für diese akribische Aufarbeitung einer Begebenheit des Zweiten Weltkriegs, die sachlich und tiefgründig die Arbeit der Geheimdienste und ihre Vorgehensweise beleuchtet.

**Frank Bösch / Caroline Moine /
Stefanie Senger (Hrsg.): Internationale
Solidarität. Globales Engagement
in der Bundesrepublik und der DDR
(= Geschichte der Gegenwart, 18),
Göttingen: Wallstein 2018, 264 S.**

Rezensiert von
Immanuel Harisch, Wien

Der hier rezensierte Sammelband mit neun ausgewählten Fallstudien zur internationalen Solidarität, ausgehend von der Bundesrepublik und der DDR während der globalen Systemkonkurrenz des „heißen“ Kalten Krieges in der „Dritten Welt“, kann auf seinen knapp 270 Seiten mit einer großen Bandbreite methodischer Zugänge und einem diversen Quellenfundus für historische Forschung aufwarten. Thematisch tut es gerade zu einer Zeit, in der „Solidarität“ in vielen politischen Diskursen Europas heftig umstritten ist, Not, in die Vergangenheit einzutauchen, kann diese doch für Leser:innen zum Verständnis beitragen, wie die Gegenwart entstanden ist und was die Trends für die nahe Zukunft sein können.¹ Zur Illustration der im Band vertretenen Vielfalt des globalen Engagements von ost- wie westdeutschen Akteuren und Akteursgruppen in der „Dritten Welt“ und darüber hinaus greife ich sechs der neun Beiträge für meine Betrachtung heraus.

Wie der Mitherausgeber Frank Bösch in seiner souveränen Überblicksdarstellung, die den Band eröffnet, aufzeigt, konvergierten in westlichen Ländern die sozialis-

tischen, christlich-liberalen Verständnisse von „Solidarität“ – ein Begriff, der seit den 1860er Jahren vor allem in der internationalen Arbeiter:innenbewegung geprägt wurde, im Kampf gegen die Faschismen im 20. Jh. erstarkte und seit den 1960er Jahren dann zunehmend als „weltumspannende universalistische Pflicht“ (S. 11) wahrgenommen wurde. In der DDR formte Solidarität den Kern des politisch-ideologischen Selbstverständnisses, und die Unterstützung der „progressiven“ Regierungen und Befreiungsbewegungen gegen Kolonialismus und Imperialismus hatte Verfassungsrang. Während der Solidaritätsdiskurs im Westen stark „von unten“ durch die Studierendenproteste der 68er-Generation geprägt war, bewegte sie sich in der DDR stärker in institutionellen Bahnen „von oben“, etwa dem Solidaritätskomitee. Bemerkenswert in dem breiten Panorama, das Bösch in seinem Beitrag aufspannt, ist die kontextspezifische Aneignung des Solidaritätsdiskurses durch Akteure in „Ost“ wie „West“; Bösch zeigt u. a. auf, wie in den 1970er Jahren der Solidaritätsbegriff bei bürgerlichen Gruppen vor allem im Hinblick auf Verfolgte von kommunistischen Regimen in einem Gegendiskurs Anklang fand; Christdemokrat:innen traten Ende der 1970er Jahre vehement für die Aufnahme von vietnamesischen „Boat People“ ein (S. 20–21) und stilisierten die islamisch-jihadistischen Mudschaheddin als Opfer der sowjetischen Invasion in Afghanistan. Für flüchtende Menschen aus Afghanistan sammelten konservative Politiker:innen, Stiftungen und die BILD-Zeitung Millionen von D-Mark (S. 22).

Christian Helm untersucht in seinem Beitrag anhand von Archivmaterialien

und spannenden Einblicken aus Ego-Dokumenten involvierter Akteur:innen die Praktiken internationaler Solidaritätsbrigaden im seit 1979 von der *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* (FSLN) regierten Nicaragua, wo die ideologisch sehr heterogenen Aktivist:innengruppen aus der Bundesrepublik – neben anderen westeuropäischen Ländern und sozialistischen Staaten wie der DDR – einer „gemeinsam geteilten Utopie“ eines demokratischen Sozialismus nacheiferten (S. 35). Während der Beitrag von Mitherausgeberin Stefanie Senger im selben Band die Beziehungen von west- und ostdeutschen Gruppen im Nicaragua der 1980er Jahre hervorhebt – so kooperierten die Freundschaftsbrigaden der Freien Deutschen Jugend (FDJ) und ostdeutsches Krankenhauspersonal im nicaraguanischen Hospital Carlos Marx mit westdeutschen *internacionalistas* – und damit aufzeigt, wie sich in Mittelamerika die Grenzen der Blockzugehörigkeit verwischten (S. 90), fokussiert Helm auf die Gruppen der Bundesrepublik. Er erwähnt, dass sich die angehenden westdeutschen Brigadist:innen zu Vorbereitungsseminaren verpflichteten, bevor sie dann vor Ort in der Landwirtschaft oder in Infrastrukturprojekten arbeiteten; der zentrale Aspekt des Spracherwerbs für die Effektivität des Einsatzes und die Interaktion mit der nicaraguanischen Bevölkerung könnte in dem Beitrag jedoch schon früher und ausführlicher diskutiert werden. Bemerkenswert ist, dass die mehrheitlich jungen Menschen neben monotonem Essen und rustikaler Unterkunft auch die akute Gefährdung ihres Lebens durch die von den USA unterstützten Contras in Kauf nahmen (S. 46, 49, 51). Helm zeigt auf, dass die Nicaragua-Solidarität es vermochte,

transnationale Netzwerke – in denen die von Helm genutzten Reiseberichte eine wichtige Rolle einnehmen – zu etablieren, die den Austausch zwischen Nicaragua und der Bundesrepublik aufrechterhielten und so zur Langlebigkeit dieses Kapitels internationaler Solidarität beitrugen. Dass sich die westdeutsche Brigadekoordination vor Ort rühmte, sich den Regelungen der Abteilung für internationale Beziehungen der FSLN weitgehend zu entziehen, zeigt, dass sich auch in vom Solidaritätswillen geprägten Beziehungsgeflechten Machtasymmetrien etablierten (S. 45).

Eric Burtons Beitrag untersucht die Freundschaftsbrigaden der FDJ anhand von vier verschiedenen Einsatzzorten von Mitte der 1960er Jahre bis 1990. Die Vergleichsperspektive und der breite Quellenkorpus (u. a. Archivmaterial, Interviews und Ego-Dokumente) machen den Beitrag zu einer wichtigen Synthese der FDJ-Brigaden, die die Einsatzzkontexte beschreibt und auf konkrete Praktiken zoomt. Burtons größere Rahmung betont die zuerst stärker außenpolitischen (1960er) und dann vermehrt wirtschaftlichen Interessen (ab Mitte der 1970er) beim Einsatz der FDJ-Brigaden bis zur Hinwendung der Brigaden als „professionelle Dienstleister im globalen Feld der Entwicklungspolitik“ Ende der 1980er Jahre. In den Arrangements vor Ort skizziert der Autor die Brigadeleiter als Vermittler zwischen Vorortbefahrungen und dem Zentralrat der FDJ, mussten sie doch den Spagat zwischen Freundschaft und Produktivität vollbringen. Mit meinen eigenen Forschungsergebnissen zu den FDJ-Brigaden nicht in Einklang zu bringen sind vereinzelte Allgemeinplätze; so trafen die von Burton erwähnten „harten Auswahlkrite-

rien“ auf dem Papier (S. 162) für die FDJ-Brigaden in Angola z. B. in realiter häufig nicht zu, war der Auswahlprozess doch oftmals komplexer und von Widersprüchen geprägt. Auch scheint es mir fraglich, dass alle angehenden Brigadist:innen einen fünfmonatigen Lehrgang (S. 163) absolviert hatten; und abschließend gab es beispielsweise, was die FDJ-Brigaden in Angola betrifft, seit 1977 sicher ein halbes Dutzend sehr ausführliche Berichte im Neuen Deutschland, die interessierte Öffentlichkeit bekam also vor 1984 durchaus etwas von den Einsatzrealitäten der Brigaden mit. Ungeachtet dieser faktischen Beanstandungen hat Burton mit den vier Deutungsangeboten für die Erklärung von Erfolg und Scheitern ein schönes Destillat aus den Einsatzzkontexten hervorgebracht. Fruchtbar sind auch die Ausführungen zu den Paradoxien „Partnerschaft“ und „Produktivität“ sowie zur Absurdität des Kontaktverbots, das den Brigadist:innen auferlegt wurde – und das auch Senger in ihrem Beitrag als Hindernis zu einer stärkeren Ost-West-Süd-Integration deutet.

Der Beitrag von Sophie Lorenz nimmt die DDR-Solidaritätskampagne für die afroamerikanische Bürgerrechtsaktivistin Angela Davis in den Blick. Wie Lorenz aufzeigt, basierte die Kampagne für die „schwarze Schwester Angela“, die von 1970 bis 1972 lief, auf Gegenseitigkeit; anders als Black Power-Akteure wie Stokely Carmichael setzte Davis auf die DDR im Kampf gegen Rassismus und globale Ungleichheit. Davis, die aufgrund einer Anklage zu Mittäterschaft in einer missglückten Geiselnahme und Beihilfe zu Mord angeklagt, nach 16 Monaten in Untersuchungshaft aber von allen Anklagepunkten freigesprochen wurde, symbo-

lisierte eine „neue linke, dem orthodoxen Parteikommunismus der SED diametral entgegenstehende, antiautoritäre Radikalität“ (S. 210). Die Überwindung dieses Kontrasts erklärt Lorenz durch Bezugnahme auf das historische Bündnis eines rot-schwarzen Antirassismus, der als Fundament „rot-schwarzer Verbundenheitsvorstellungen“ diene. Dazu spürt die Autorin Begegnungen afroamerikanischer Akteure in der Sowjetunion der 1930er Jahre nach, deren transatlantische Verbindungen das geographische Feld des Bandes von den USA in die Sowjetunion erweitern. Die SED konnte ihrerseits bei Solidaritätskampagnen wie der für Davis an dieses politisch-ideologische Erbe und an personelle Verbindungen, die den Zweiten Weltkrieg überdauerten, anknüpfen.

Doch Lorenz unterstreicht auch Konfliktlinien der kommunistischen Orthodoxie mit der neuen, radikaleren Linken aus den USA, die das Primat der Arbeiterklasse als revolutionäres Segment in Frage stellten und „von links“ Kritik übten (S. 229). Dass James Jackson als Funktionär der KPUSA Davis' Wirken gegenüber SED-Funktionär:innen im Jahr 1970 als „rassenübergreifende internationale Bündnistradition“ (S. 230) darstellte, trug maßgeblich zu der breit gefächerten Solidaritätsaktion für Davis in der DDR bei. Spannend ist, wie Lorenz Benedict Andersons Konzept der *imagined community* auf das von der DDR entworfene Bild eines „anderen Amerikas“ appliziert. Die internationale Solidarität „als politisch-ideologischer Leitbegriff des sozialistischen Antirassismus“ diene der DDR auch zur doppelten Abgrenzung von der Bundesrepublik und der Nazi-Vergangenheit Deutschlands. Für die DDR war Davis als

agile Protagonistin eines „anderen Amerikas“ Wasser auf die Mühlen der antirassistischen Solidarität und Außenlegitimation.

Den gut platzierten Abschluss des Sammelbandes bildet Kim Christaens' Reflexion über „Europa als ‚Dritte Welt‘“, übersetzt aus dem Englischen von Jakob Saß. Darin zeigt Christaens, dass die drei Welten – kapitalistische „Erste Welt“ des Westens, kommunistische „Zweite Welt“ des Ostens und die blockfreie „Dritte Welt“ des Globalen Südens zugespitzt gesagt – durch eine Reihe von aktivistischen Bewegungen miteinander verknüpft und in Beziehung gesetzt wurden. Während, wie der Autor betont, die meisten Forschungsarbeiten zum „globalen Aktivismus“ eine „diachrone und vergleichende Perspektive“ (S. 236) vermissen lassen, setzt Christaens auf eine ebensolche anhand von ausgewählten Schauplätzen transnationaler Solidarität, u. a.: Vietnam-Krieg, Pinochet-Regime in Chile, Apartheid in Südafrika und die autoritären Regime in Portugal, Spanien und Griechenland. Seit Mitte der 1960er Jahre wurde in Gesamteuropa die „Dritte Welt“ für Solidaritäts- und Friedensbewegungen bedeutend. Während die Solidarität mit Vietnam im Westen stark von Studierendengruppen getragen wurde, bildete die Solidarität gegen den US-Imperialismus ebendort das politische Fundament kommunistischer Regime im Osten. Interessant sind die Dialoge über den Eisernen Vorhang hinweg, die Christaens u. a. in Form von Konferenzen des Weltfriedensrates hervorhebt; der Dialog und die Zusammenarbeit – häufig auch von grenzüberschreitenden Akteur:innen aus der „Dritten Welt“ gefordert – dienten als Stimulus für die Idee eines weltweiten

Solidaritätsbewusstseins. Christaens' Betrachtung, die auf der Synthese von Sekundärliteratur in acht Sprachen beruht, gelingt es im Hinblick auf die komplexen Beziehungsgeflechte zwischen „erster“, „zweiter“ und „dritter“ Welt das westliche „Narrativ eines einheitlichen, globalen anti-totalitären Kampfs, inspiriert und unterstützt durch den Westen“ (S. 261) als Chimäre zu entlarven.

Mit der vergleichenden Perspektive, dem in-den-Blick-Nehmen von Gruppen und einzelnen personalen Akteur:innen – z. B. die lokalen, nationalen und internationalen Bezüge des westdeutschen Pfarrers Helmut Frenz in der Solidaritätsbewegung mit Chile in Caroline Moines Beitrag – sowie einer globalgeschichtlichen Ausrichtung auf Transfers und Beziehungsgeflechte zwischen den drei Welten bzw. anhand der Nord-Süd-Achse gelingt es den Autor:innen, komplexe Geschichten der internationalen Solidarität mit Bezügen zur Bundesrepublik und der DDR in einer hohen Qualität zu Tage zu fördern; Geschichten, anhand derer uns die Autor:innen in Erinnerung rufen, dass internationale Solidarität eine bedeutende Triebfeder in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts symbolisierte.

Anmerkung

- 1 W. Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Washington 1981 [1972], vii.

Stephen A. Emerson / Hussein Solomon: *African Security in the Twenty-First Century. Challenges and Opportunities*, Manchester: Manchester University Press 2018, xii & 291 pp.

Reviewed by
Ulf Engel, Leipzig

The understanding of what “security” means in an African context has evolved over time and, as many other key terms, is changing every 20 years or so. One of the major recent shifts in this respect was the change from a notion of “regime security” to one of “human security” in the 1990s. In their monograph on “African security in the twenty-first century” Stephen A. Emerson and Hussein Solomon stay within the human security paradigm, but try to sketch the shifting dimensions of “African security” at a time when conflict increasingly transcends national and sub-regional borders between parts of the continent which traditionally are addressed separately by African Studies and Middle East Studies, i.e. North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. Accordingly, the new quality of African security lies in the increasing entanglements between different zones of conflict and emerging transregional conflicts theatres on the one hand, and the emergence of “non-traditional” security threats on the other. In this sense, the author’s analysis reflects perceptions of African futures as described by the US National

Intelligence Council (NIC) in its Global Trends 2025 scenario report (2018).

The authors are extremely well-placed to address the topic. Emerson is the former chair of Security Studies at the Africa Centre for Strategic Studies in Washington DC, United States; he has been a political-military analyst with the US Department of Defense, Security, and also headed the Africa regional studies programme at the US Naval War College. His regional field of expertise is Southern Africa. Among others, he authored *The Battle for Mozambique* (Helion & Company 2014), a thorough military history of the fight between Frelimo and Renamo. Solomon is senior professor in the Department of Political Studies and Governance at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, South Africa. Among his publications is *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in Africa* (Palgrave Macmillan 2015). Within the research community on African security they represent the geo-strategic, “neo-neo-realist” faction. Both share a strong interest in terrorism and counter-terrorism.

The book is divided into eleven chapters, from “Understanding the security environment” (chapter 1) and “Thinking about security” (chapter 2) to a discussion of the causes of violent conflict (“identity conflicts” with examples from Nigeria, Chad and Somalia, and “failing states” with a case study on Somalia, chapters 3–4). The authors then zoom in into different types of conflict, including “Terrorism and extremism” (chapter 5), “Trafficking in drugs and small arms” (chapter 6), “Health and disease” (chapter 7) as well as “Resource conflict and the environment” (chapter 8). The remaining chapters are dedicated to discussing responses to vio-

lent conflict (Africa in chapter 9, and the international community in chapter 10). This is followed by reflections on the future of African security (chapter 11).

At the heart of this book is what the African Union and other actors have described as a proliferation of “non-traditional security threats” on the continent. This includes increasingly internationalised forms of “terrorism”. Here the authors focus on Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin, splinter groups of al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in the Sahelo-Saharan space as well as al-Shabaab in Somalia. In addition, the trafficking of drugs, weapons, counterfeit medicine, people etc. has become of one the major threats to human security in Africa, affecting not only West Africa and the Sahelo-Saharan region, but also Southern Africa (though this region is less covered in this book). Since the Ebola outbreak in West Africa in 2013–2016, epidemics and pandemics are treated as severe challenges to human security (the current Covid-19 pandemic only proves this point). The authors focus on HIV/Aids, malaria and tuberculosis. Finally, they highlight “demographic and environmental pressures” which lead to increasing numbers of internally displaced persons and refugee movements across regions. In combination these non-traditional security threats add tremendously to the complexity and diversity of conflict on the African continent.

In terms of conflict management and resolution the authors are critical of state-centric approaches which in the past heavily depended on centralised traditional security organs such as the military. Rather they call for “a broader based, bottom-up approach with an emphasis on improving governance, development and strength-

ening civil society” (p. 9). While this is convincing in terms of substance, in this respect the author’s argument seems to be slightly flawed with conceptual Eurocentrism. Because on the one hand they buy into debates about “failed” or “failing” states in Africa (although they claim to be more interested in the consequences of this phenomenon, and not so much in the nuances of the theoretical debate, see p. 63). This debate is based on normative assumptions about the state, it refers to universalist conceptions which historically are grounded in European experiences of the 18th and 19th century which later on got universalised (e.g. states should provide public goods such as security). They are convinced that “the state” is in decline, yet at the same time it will remain the dominant power on the continent. And on the other hand, the authors suggest bottom-up peace-building initiatives which will still require some form of stateness. The very notion of “civil society” is another of these concepts that carry lots of normative load. With a view to the practical dimension of the author’s suggestions it is at least debatable whether this particular conceptual apparatus is really needed (see, for instance, p. 195 where a fairly pragmatic notion of “state” is discussed).

In the final part of the book conflict interventions are at the fore. In this context the policies of the African Union (AU) and the regional economic communities (RECs) – the “AU’s workhorse” (p. 202) – are assessed quite positively, however briefly. In terms of conflict management and resolution emphasis, again, is on local grassroots security initiatives with examples coming from the areas of conflict mediation and peacebuilding, small arms

proliferation, health care and food security, respectively. The highly problematic disconnect between these layers, however, is not addressed and it remains an open question how the Union, the RECs or member states in practice can support bottom-up initiatives, and how the latter could relate more meaningfully to the former. And with regard to international responses to violent conflict in Africa, this book still banks on the existence of a system of collective global security and the fruits of multilateral arrangements materialising across many fields – though already sensing that with the election of a new US President in 2016 dark clouds were gathering on the horizon.

Despite these few critical remarks, this is a comprehensive and important analysis of the African continent’s security predicament during the first two decades of the 21st century. The authors proffer a well-written account, often based on in-depth empirical research. Their engagement, though, with the academic debate is selective at times. In any case, this is a welcome overview which introduces a number of fresh insights and arguments to the debate. The volume adds considerable knowledge to and goes beyond the sated accounts produced in recent years by Paul D. Williams (*War & Conflict in Africa*, Polity Press 2011), William Reno (*Warfare in Independent Africa*, Cambridge University Press 2011) or Scott Straus (*Making and Unmaking Nations*, Cornell University Press 2015), to name but a few.

Maria Jalava / Stefan Nygård / Johan Strang: Decentering European Intellectual Space, Leiden: Brill Publisher 2018, 297 pp.

Reviewed by
Alessandro De Arcangelis, London

Traditionally bound to methodological nationalism and conventionally concerned with the history of western political thought, the practice of intellectual history has significantly benefited, in recent years, from the proliferation of transnational and global historiographic approaches. Contributions to this scholarship have dramatically shifted intellectual historians' attention towards previously neglected contexts, authors and texts, while placing issues of border-crossing, entanglements, circulation, reception and hybridisation front and centre of their agenda. Yet, as the editors of this informative and thought-provoking volume underline, the need to "go global" can sometimes result in uncritical depictions of intellectual spaces, and the consequent failure to place adequate emphasis on their inherently hierarchical dimension, which predicates on historically-situated power asymmetries and mental hierarchies.

This volume therefore invites a reflection on the spatio-temporal dynamics that shape the construction and encounter of "centres" and "peripheries" in the context of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe. This ambitious endeavour is at the core of what the editors call a "kaleido-

scopic exercise": a methodological call for a greater sense of historical positionality in the definition intellectual spaces. The adoption of a transnational approach to the history of European ideas, this book ultimately argues, must hinge on the accurate reconstruction of perceptions of centrality and marginality, and of the ways in which these have historically shaped intra-European intellectual encounters and exchanges.

Decentering European Intellectual Space thus makes a powerful and much-needed intervention in the growing historiographic debate on centres and peripheries, while making a very convincing case for a transnational approach to intellectual history. As such, this book feels especially timely, bold and compelling. More importantly, the overall thesis of this volume is well-supported by an illuminating range of case studies, grouped in three, chronologically ordered, main sections.

The first part of the book, *Reconsidering Intellectual Space*, examines the intellectual strategies through which European intellectuals disrupted, sometimes consciously, conventional notions of "centre" and "periphery". Crucially, these authors operated both within the liminal spaces of the continent and in response to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century experiences of globalisation. Among these chapters, one also encounters an inspiring range of methodological insights: David Cottington's chapter, for instance, skilfully amalgamates the resources of cultural and intellectual history to reflect on the emergence of a transnational aesthetic semantics able to embody a polycentric experience of modernity. Moreover, Tommaso Giordani's outstanding analysis of the circula-

tion of Marxist ideas among Italy, France and Germany, makes a highly persuasive case for a multi-directional reconstruction of intellectual flows between cores and margins, able critically to undermine traditional conceptualisations of the links between the local and the transnational.

Section two is then entitled *Negotiating the Center* and analyses the re-construction of Europe's intellectual geography following the de-construction of the continent's political map caused by the First World War. For example, Diana Mishkova's chapter, which is arguably the true jewel in the crown of this collection, investigates how Central and Eastern European intellectuals negotiated political identities through a complex interplay of regional, national and transnational concepts. Her analysis also employs a markedly Koselleckian viewpoint that feels genuinely reinvigorating for the practice of intellectual history and that cleverly informs her critical revision of the concept of "marginality", while exploring broader issues pertaining to historical agency and spatialisation. Moreover, part two is also where the volume begins to enlarge its focus so as to link up the contestations of Europe's intellectual space with the experience of globality of the interwar years. Emilia Palonen's chapter on Hungarian intellectuals, in this respect, embraces a post-foundational perspective able to demonstrate how, rather than representing a well-defined conceptual framework that one can take for granted, Europe's intellectual space was imagined and articulated while developing linkages among the local, the national and, more importantly, the global.

Finally, the third section of this volume, *Cold War Dynamics*, surveys the construc-

tion of a European intellectual space after World War Two. In this context, Manolis Patiniotis' chapter is especially informative and considers the ways in which Greek intellectuals constructed the historical narrative of the "Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment" as a means of negotiating a vantage point within the intellectual boundaries of modern Europe. Doing so enables the author to raise urgent questions concerned with the importance of the production and consumption of history in the context of these conceptual contestations. It is especially at the so-called "peripheries", the author concludes, that history writing must be understood primarily as political thought.

This insightful volume ultimately speaks to the plasticity and malleability of spatial historical concepts, calling into question their traditional characterisations. In addition, as the title *Decentering European Intellectual Space* suggests, it highlights how their definition rests on the ongoing contestations of notions of cores and peripheries. Despite these markedly spatial preoccupations, this volume also succeeds, albeit not always consistently throughout its near-300 pages, in linking the construction of these mental geographies to the experience of shifting temporal structures, in ways that draw the reader's attention to broader issues linked with the temporalisation of spatial asymmetries. At present, this is a field to which intellectual and conceptual historians working in the wake of Reinhart Koselleck's "Begriffsgeschichte", as well as scholars of postcolonial theory, are increasingly drawn.

The editors' introduction also indicates that one of the book's purposes is to survey how "a broad variety of scales and spatial

dynamics”, consisting of often overlapping “social fields” that “transgress national boundaries” led European intellectuals to “mobilise internationality to undermine locally dominant positions” (p. 8). As famously argued by Sebastian Conrad, intra-European intellectual, social, economic and cultural mechanisms also reflected the experience of specific conditions of globality: in this respect, the volume’s analysis of the links among the regional, the national and the transnational would have occasionally been made more incisive by a closer engagement with a global perspective able to illuminate how the process of “decentering” detailed in this book also rested on a series of historical questions on Europe’s relation to the wider world.

These minor shortcomings, however, do not undermine the overall effectiveness and originality of a truly excellent collection of essays, which makes substantial contributions to not only the field of transnational studies, but also to intellectual and cultural history broadly conceived. This book ultimately makes a very persuasive case for a nuanced, fluid and malleable understanding of Europe’s intellectual space, while convincingly deconstructing traditional verdicts that advance monolithic and uncritical representations of these historical spaces. This is an intuition that historians should welcome with open arms.

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