

COMMENT

Suggestions and Debates: *The World of Sugar* and the Commodity Frontiers Initiative

The World of Sugar and Its Implications for Agrarian and Environmental Justice

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Abstract

The World of Sugar, Ulbe Bosma's compelling historical narrative on how sugar became a global commodity, and the accompanying introductory article in the *International Review of Social History* raise many fascinating points for further reflection and debate. In this commentary, I wish to highlight several points that resonate strongly with my own work at the Transnational Institute (TNI), a global think tank based in Amsterdam that connects social movements with academics and policymakers. These points of reflection are informed by TNI's mission and practice of "scholar-activism": the fact that we seek not only to interpret the world, but also to change it for the better, in particular for those exploited and oppressed classes and social groups. As my work principally involves collaboration with transnational agrarian movements, I pay particular attention to areas of Bosma's analysis that carry implications for rural working people and for agrarian and environmental justice. This includes the role of sugar in the global land rush, the rise of sugar cane as a "flex crop and commodity", and the ways in which "rural sugars" can be supported in peasant- and smallholder-based economies and livelihood strategies.

Sugar and the Global Land Rush

The World of Sugar brings together, in a single history, the rise of sugar as a global commodity spurred on by technological innovation, human entrepreneurialism, the shaping of consumer culture, and the capture for profit-making opportunities. It also documents the costs that have gone hand in hand with this rise, with sugar implicated in land theft and displacement, labour exploitation, environmental devastation, and human rights violations, sometimes on a vast scale. These are not things of the past: sugar frontiers are still expanding, adapting, and being recast under conditions of contemporary, increasingly financialized global capitalism.

These evolving sugar frontiers are one example of how the workings of sugar capitalism connect distant places, people, and markets. These dynamics can be illustrated by two cases that the Transnational Institute (TNI) has investigated within the context

of our work unpacking the global land rush,¹ that is, the wave of renewed state and corporate interest in land under conditions of converging crises.²

In Cambodia, TNI, working with the non-governmental organization (NGO) coalition Hands Off the Land, has raised awareness of how the rapid expansion of the sugar industry has been accompanied by serious and systemic human rights violations as economic land concessions (ELCs) are granted by the state to private investors for large-scale agro-industrial purposes, including sugar cane.³ A number of large ELCs connected to the Thai sugar conglomerates KSL Sugar and Mity Phol, as well as a Cambodian business tycoon, have been involved in forced evictions alongside the destruction of rice fields, community forests, and village homes as land is cleared for sugar cane plantations. This has resulted in a loss of access to land, water, and livelihoods and an escalation of land-related conflict. The destruction of the modest but resilient small farmer- and peasant-based agrarian economy has not been compensated for by the limited and precarious employment on sugar cane plantations. Jobs may only last from two to six months per year, with workers being paid around US\$3 a day. Even small delays in harvest times brought about, for example, by poor weather conditions can cause workers to suffer from food insecurity and hunger.

One of the more startling dynamics is that while sugar is currently one of the driving forces of land expulsions in Cambodia, industrial sugar production for export purposes did not exist on any significant scale until recently. Domestic traditional sugar production mostly centred on sugar from palm trees, often integrated in rice fields in mixed farming systems.⁴ A crucial cause of the explosion in Cambodian sugar exports has been international trade policy, in particular the European Union's "Everything but Arms" initiative, which grants duty-free and quota-free access to the European market for least developed countries (LDCs). In 2009, market access for sugar was fully liberalized, which generated a significant incentive for sugar exports from LDCs as, at the time, EU minimum sugar price guarantees were higher than the world market price. Thus, while in 2006 sugar cane holdings in Cambodia were negligible, by 2014, around 100,000 hectares of land were under agro-industrial sugar cane production. The EU market emerged as the most important destination of Cambodian sugar exports, rising from a mere 6.5 per cent of total sugar exports in 2006 to 100 per cent in 2012.

This shows how (localized) sugar commodity regimes can change quickly in response to new signals. These can take the form of new market openings (long-distance trade) and/or new commercial uses for sugar-derived products. One growth pole, for example, is the use of sugar cane as an agrofuel to replace fossil fuels in the

¹For more on TNI's mission and work, see <https://www.tni.org/en/about>.

²The "global land rush" or the "global land grab" is associated with the transfer of large tracts of land, and associated resources such as water, forests, and minerals, into the hands of investors, including those from new hubs of capital and from the worlds of finance and asset management. The politics, trajectories, and implications of these land deals vary greatly. See Transnational Institute, *The Global Land Grab: A Primer* (Amsterdam, 2013).

³FIAN Germany for the Hands Off the Land Alliance, *Case Dossier: Cambodia. Sugar Cane Plantations, Human Rights Violations and EU's "Everything but Arms" Initiative* (Heidelberg, 2014).

⁴Kimlong Ro, "Kampong Speu: Palm Sugar and a Cambodian Tradition", Focus Cambodia, 24 May 2021. Available at: <https://focus-cambodia.com/article/kampong-speu-palm-sugar-and-a-cambodian-tradition/>; last accessed 17 February 2025.

transport sector and in other industrial products. This has been significantly boosted by government targets and subsidies that form part of a “global biofuels assemblage” tying together states, corporations, growers, technologies, urban consumers, and rural communities and landscapes.⁵ While agrofuels are presented as a “win-win-win” for climate, rural development, and energy security, subsequent literature has problematized this narrative.⁶ In the worst instances, agrofuel expansion can lead to “green grabbing”, that is, the appropriation of land and resources for environmental ends.⁷

The example of ProCana in Mozambique, which several TNI research fellows have investigated, is an emblematic case in point.⁸ It originally involved an announced US\$510 million investment by the Central African Mining and Exploration Company (CAMEC), a London-based company, in 30,000 hectares of land under a fifty-year lease arrangement in southern Mozambique to grow industrial sugar cane to produce “sustainable” fuel for the transport industry as well as other bioethanol-based commercial products such as “green plastics”. However, the project was a spectacular failure. Following the signing of the contract in 2007, in October 2009 CAMEC announced its withdrawal from the project, followed two months later by a statement from the Mozambican government that it was stopping the operation of ProCana pending the solicitation of new investors. In 2017, the project failed for a second time, with the new investor, TSB, the third-largest sugar company in South Africa, proclaiming that it had been unable to raise the additional capital needed to make the project operational. The agrofuels project is currently shelved, having produced only limited conventional sweetener products and with the much-vaunted biorefineries – at one point advertised to be able to produce 500,000 tonnes of sugar and 240 million litres of ethanol per year, more than all other Mozambican sugar estates combined – never having got off the ground.

The hype and speculation, the rotating cast of investors, and the willingness of the state to override existing uses and meanings of land are all dimensions that align with some of the features of the global land rush. The fact that the ProCana project failed does not make it an outlier, nor does it mean that local populations have been shielded from negative consequences. Land has not been returned to the villagers who lost access to their extensive crop and livestock farming activities; rather, the land has become “state (land) reserve” awaiting potential new investors. In this way, the many so-called failed or non-operational land deals are part and parcel of global land deal-making.⁹ This is especially so given that there is a special interest in promoting large-scale, industrial sugar cane plantations in contexts marked by high degrees of rural inequality, poverty, and socio-political exclusion.

⁵Gail Hollander, “Power Is Sweet: Sugarcane in the Global Ethanol Assemblage”, *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 37:4 (2010), pp. 699–721.

⁶Saturnino M. Borras Jr et al., “The Politics of Biofuels, Land and Agrarian Change: Editors’ Introduction”, *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 37:4 (2010), pp. 575–592.

⁷James Fairhead et al., “Green Grabbing: A New Appropriation of Nature?”, *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 39:2 (2012), pp. 237–261.

⁸Saturnino M. Borras Jr. et al., “The Politics of Agrofuels and Mega-Land and Water Deals: Insights from the ProCana Case, Mozambique”, *Review of African Political Economy*, 38:128 (2011), pp. 215–234.

⁹Saturnino M. Borras Jr. et al., “The Value of So-Called ‘Failed’ Large-Scale Land Acquisitions”, *Land Use Policy*, 119 (2022). DOI: 10.1016/j.landusepol.2022.106199.

In sum, sugar is deeply intertwined with contemporary land and resource politics, with the different trajectories of projects and agrarian struggles reflective of the uneven incorporation of labour and nature into the global capitalist economy.

Sugar as a “Flex Crop and Commodity” and the Surge of Sugar Ethanol Complexes

Bosma’s introduction spotlights “green capitalism” as a discourse and practice by which capitalism seeks to respond to the environmental and climate crisis, ushering in what Bosma posits could be a new era as capitalism seeks novel ways to transcend the ever-growing contradictions between expanding accumulation and the destruction of the natural resource base.

It is worth examining this thesis further, particularly with respect to the huge growth of sugar ethanol complexes. As noted in *The World of Sugar*, global acreage under sugar cane doubled between 1960 and 1985, with sugar frontiers expanding in Southern Africa, Brazil, China, and Southeast Asia, driven by staggering consumption as well as increasing demand for ethanol. It is particularly in the rise of sugar cane cultivation for ethanol that we can see the contradictions of “green capitalism” most at work.

TNI has analysed the rise of sugar cane for use as an agrofuel in the form of ethanol as part of a series on “flex crops and commodities”.¹⁰ Flex crops and commodities are those that have multiple uses (as food, feed, fuel, industrial material) that can be, or are thought to be, flexibly interchanged. These include, for example, soya (feed, food, biodiesel), sugar cane (food, ethanol), oil palm (food, biodiesel, commercial/industrial uses), and corn (food, feed, ethanol), all of which have seen a surge in area under production and scale and intensity of investment.

That crops, including sugar cane, have multiple uses is of course nothing new. What explains the rise of flex crops and commodities in the current context is the link to the growing financialization of the global economy; the promotion of the “bioeconomy” as a future-oriented vision that positions itself as a solution to multiple crises; and the willingness of the state to underwrite these developments and corporate strategies through favourable public policies. One can examine each of these dimensions with respect to Brazil, the world’s largest producer of sugar cane-based ethanol as well as the world’s largest sugar producer.

Flex crops, such as sugar cane, are attractive for financial investors because, by promoting flexibility of biomass feedstocks, including their sources, types, conversion processes, and end products, they have the potential to open up multiple revenue streams, mitigating risk while maximizing returns. As Ben McKay *et al.* explain, “depending on anticipated returns, many sugar cane mills in Brazil engage in arbitrage and ‘flex’ from one harvest to another, moving between a product mix based on 60 per cent sugar and 40 per cent ethanol, to a 40–60 split”.¹¹ The process of fine-tuning

¹⁰ Saturnino M. Borras Jr. *et al.*, “Towards Understanding the Politics of Flex Crops and Commodities: Implications for Research and Policy Advocacy”, *TNI Think Piece Series on Flex Crops and Commodities No. 1* (Amsterdam, 2014).

¹¹ Ben McKay *et al.*, “The Politics of Sugarcane Flexing in Brazil and Beyond”, *TNI Think Piece Series on Flex Crops and Commodities No. 4* (Amsterdam, 2014), p. 2.

and recalibration between food and non-food uses can allow sugar commodity regime actors to respond to increasing price volatility by exploring new markets and new technologies that enable diversification within a single crop sector.

Furthermore, flex crops are able to present themselves as solutions to various crises of capitalism that link across food, energy, and climate domains. The first generation of sugar cane ethanol complexes, for example, emerged in the 1970s in Brazil and Germany in efforts to secure greater energy independence as a response to the oil crisis brought about by the OPEC embargo. The current generation of ethanol is bolstered by concerns of fossil fuel-driven climate breakdown along with narratives of “peak oil”, with “sustainable” agro-energy projects optimistically presented as “green growth” strategies. Brazilian sugar mills have, for example, been able to acquire carbon credits through sugar cane bagasse projects registered under the UN Clean Development Mechanism.

Finally, one cannot overlook the ways in which sugar ethanol complexes have been supported by the state. In Brazil, this includes an array of policies including ethanol blend mandates; specifications on car manufacture; tax incentives; trade and tariff measures; and, in particular, extensive state credit granted by the Brazilian Social and Economic Development Bank (BNDES) for investment in refineries, bioeconomy, research and development, and infrastructure, for example, ethanol pipelines. The Brazilian state has also intervened to finance sugar ethanol operations abroad in countries such as Angola, Sudan, Ghana, Mozambique, Kenya, and South Africa.

What are the implications of the rise of sugar ethanol complexes in terms of the shape and character of the sugar commodity regime? Firstly, the rise of sugar cane flexing has contributed to an enormous expansion of sugar and sugar-derived products worldwide: from 2005 to 2013, the total area of sugar cane cultivation worldwide increased by almost one million hectares per year. While not the sole driver, the performance of sugar cane as a flex crop is certainly one of the major factors behind this expansion. In Brazil, the market value of sugar cane ethanol outstrips that of sugar, with possibilities for continuous commodification as increasing non-fuel uses are being found for ethanol.¹² This expansion has altered commodity routes and led to a new sugar geography, with centres of sugar cane flexing emerging in Southern Africa and Southeast Asia and the ports and financial districts of Rotterdam and Singapore becoming major points of transit. Secondly, the technological and financial demands of flexing have given increasing power to non-agrarian elites in sugar commodity regimes, ousting many of the traditional plantation-owning families and cooperative milling groups in favour of publicly traded corporations funded by shareholder equity.

The rise of sugar cane ethanol complexes thus needs to be understood as a response to the multiple crises of capitalism and the ongoing reorganization of agriculture on a global scale as agricultural commodities, together with non-food sectors, are repositioned as part of the “bio” or “green economy”. That this form of “green capitalism” does not offer real solutions to these crises but rather generates new forms of social

¹²This is not predetermined, however, as the fortunes of Brazil’s ethanol industry are closely tied to fluctuations in oil and gasoline prices. Increasingly, the prices of sugar, corn, ethanol, and gasoline are becoming more tightly correlated in international markets.

and environmental harm should be a critical area of scholarly attention and activist mobilization.

Sugar Capitalism and Its Implications for Research and Advocacy by Scholar-Activists and Agrarian Movements

How should scholar-activists and agrarian movements respond to contemporary dynamics in sugar commodity regimes and the links between sugar capitalism and human rights, public health, and environmental protection? Without being prescriptive, a few lines of thought are offered.

As the rise of flex crops and commodities shows, the functional distinction between particular crop regimes, and even between agricultural resources and fossil fuel resources, is increasingly being eroded. This has implications for research and advocacy. A strict anti-biofuels campaign, for example, will likely prove ineffective if it simply means that those targeted can shift their priorities to other, possibly less attention-grabbing but not necessarily less harmful, end products. The limitation of conventional sectoral campaigning is thereby revealed. The invitation by Bosma to apply the concepts of commodity frontiers and commodity regimes to break out of silos and move towards a more integrated and comparative research agenda is thus very welcome in this regard. This is the strength of the Commodity Frontiers Initiative as it seeks to grapple with contemporary capitalist dynamics beyond a singular commodity chain approach.

Are transnational social movements (including agrarian, food, environmental, labour, and human rights movements) able to adjust their issue analysis and demand-making to capture the changing and fluid nature of contemporary commodity frontiers, including sugar frontiers? There are signs that social movements are taking up this call. The Nyéléni movement for food sovereignty, coordinated by the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) – a global platform of over 300 million small-scale food producers and rural workers – seeks to advance “food sovereignty” through cross-sectoral movement building.¹³ This is based on an understanding that today’s challenges require movements for global justice to be better linked than ever before. Under the banner of “intersectional convergence”, joint proposals for system change are being developed together with movements for climate justice, anti-racism, labour rights, feminism, public health, and the social and solidarity economy, marking an important effort to mobilize both “within and beyond” the food sovereignty movement.¹⁴ This convergence-building process is taking place through a series of consultations across Europe and Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, the Americas, and the Asia-Pacific region, feeding into the production of a Common Political Action Agenda to be discussed and validated at the third Nyéléni Global Forum, which is to take place in September 2025.

¹³Food sovereignty is defined by the 2007 International Declaration of the Nyéléni movement as “the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems”.

¹⁴International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty, *Nyéléni: Towards a Global Forum on Food Sovereignty and Justice* (Rome, 2024).

The need for stronger, better connected social movements is urgent in order to confront corporate power. As detailed in *The World of Sugar*, the rise of “corporate sugar” has gone hand in hand with human rights violations, labour abuses, land grabbing, and environmental harm, inspiring little confidence that the industry is interested in or capable of self-regulation. In fact, the flaws of these voluntary code of conduct approaches mean that they do little to enhance sustainability and may even directly impede pro-poor social justice outcomes.¹⁵

Confronting corporate sugar is challenging, however, in a context in which global sugar corporations are more geographically dispersed than ever before and the operations of the global sugar economy are shielded from view, routed through largely unknown global commodity traders based in tax havens such as Switzerland.¹⁶ Moreover, the array of transnational corporations implicated in the expansion of sugar frontiers can be daunting. An investigation of the sugar cane industry in Brazil noted the prominent role of oil companies such as Shell, Petrobras, and BP as well as agribusiness, food processing, and trading corporations including Cargill, ADM, and Bunge in opening up new regions for sugar cane.¹⁷

The role of states in supporting the rise of corporate sugar does offer some potential leverage points for social resistance and consumer advocacy. As Bosma notes, history has shown that the sugar industry is not capable of self-regulating. Naming and shaming tactics as well as legal action are therefore important tools to try to deliver justice. The Clean Sugar Campaign, for example, was launched by Cambodian and international NGOs in response to the wave of sugar-related land grabs in Cambodia which have negatively impacted around 12,000 locals. An importer and consumer awareness campaign to boycott “blood sugar” did impact trade volumes, with exports of Cambodian sugar to the EU dipping from €38,177,877 in 2013 to just €1,790,518.¹⁸ A legal complaint to the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand also resulted in the withdrawal of one of the major Thai sugar companies from the ELCs. However, substantive forms of redress have not been granted and villagers have not been able to return to their land. Pointedly, the EU also refused to acknowledge any connection between its Everything but Arms preferential trade policy and impacts on the ground in Cambodia despite its commitment and obligation to uphold human rights abroad.

A further challenge for human rights activists in seeking to address harms in the sugar industry lies in the less immediately visible ways in which regulation – or lack thereof – can impact change. As hands-on as the state has been, for example, in supporting the sugar cane ethanol industry in Brazil, it has been notably hands-off when it comes to the labour regime. The rise of sugar cane as a flex crop has, however, had

¹⁵J. Borras and J.C. Franco, “From Threat to Opportunity? Problems with the Idea of a ‘Code of Conduct’ for Land-Grabbing”, *Yale Human Rights & Development Law Journal*, 13:2 (2010), pp. 507–523.

¹⁶According to Public Eye, about 40 per cent of the world’s sugar trade runs through computers in Swiss offices. Thomas Braunschweig et al., *Agricultural Commodity Traders in Switzerland – Benefitting from Misery?* (Lausanne, 2019).

¹⁷Maria Luisa Mendonça et al., *The Sugarcane Industry and the Global Economic Crisis* (Amsterdam, 2013).

¹⁸Jack Davies, “Europe’s ‘Blood Sugar’”, *Politico*, 3 April 2017. Available at: <https://www.politico.eu/article/europe-blood-sugar-cambodia-human-rights-trade/>; last accessed 17 February 2025.

significant implications for sugar cane cutters. This includes the steady replacement of manual labour by combine harvesters as well as growing inequalities in the sugar value chain, with increasing profits being captured by activities linked to industrial processing as opposed to agricultural production.

While manual cane cutting on plantations remains a physically exhausting, dangerous, and often highly exploited form of labour, mechanization has brought with it new pressures. In a context of high rural unemployment, the dramatic reduction in the number of labourers required with the introduction of mechanization leaves those that remain competing for jobs, even as wages are cut and the amount of sugar cane they are required to cut increases.¹⁹ Mechanization has also led to the exploitation of machinery drivers and other workers employed in the industrial process. The focus that Bosma affords to the role of labour in *The World of Sugar* is thus well placed.

Towards Expanded Peasant Autonomy

Rather than supporting corporate sugar, public policies should be geared towards strengthening the position of the millions of small-scale sugar farmers and labourers around the world who depend on sugar for their livelihoods. As *The World of Sugar* details, peasant sugar production, which relies on unrefined forms of sugar-making such as panela in parts of Latin America or gur in South Asia, plays an important role in many local food cultures and economies. Their significance is not to be discounted: production of peasant sugar in Latin America is estimated at two million tons (or 1.8 million tonnes). Mostly, however, as Bosma notes, these traditional and artisanal forms of sugar production are not captured by statistics given their informal status. The true contribution of these “rural sugars” is thus likely to be undercounted.

In 2015, the UN Committee on World Food Security initiated a policy process on “Connecting Smallholders to Markets”.²⁰ The set of policy recommendations that resulted from this process – adopted by member states and negotiated with the involvement of representatives of small-scale food producer, civil society, and indigenous peoples’ organizations – recognized the importance of “local, national and regional markets and food systems” for global food security and nutrition. It called for better data collection on these markets to develop policies that create an enabling market environment for smallholders through timely access to market information, fair and transparent prices, the development of short food supply chains, improved procurement procedures, and strengthening the organizational capacity of smallholders as well as their access to and control over productive assets.

Trade policies have an important role to play here. According to Fairtrade – the global certification body that aims to secure better trading arrangements to benefit producers in developing countries – there are 101 producer organizations representing more than 62,700 small-scale sugar cane farmers in nineteen countries that are

¹⁹ In Brazil, it has been estimated that one combine can substitute for around 120 manual cutters.

²⁰ Committee on World Food Security, *Connecting Smallholders to Markets: Policy Recommendations* (Rome, 2016).

engaged in Fairtrade. This involves supporting decent livelihoods through the operation of a Fairtrade Premium of US\$60 per tonne of sugar (US\$80 per tonne for certified organic sugar) in addition to the negotiated price. Interestingly, unlike other Fairtrade products, there is no Fairtrade Minimum Price for sugar cane because, as described by Fairtrade, “price-setting mechanisms are highly complex and often distorted” in the global sugar market.²¹ Ultimately, despite the laudable aims of Fairtrade arrangements, as Bosma notes, it remains very much a niche market in comparison with the volumes of sugar traded globally. A true fair trade system would require a structural revision of the protectionist sugar policies in Europe and the United States to confront the unequal terms of economic and ecological exchange that characterize the global trade in sugar.

In the final analysis, as the cases of Cambodia, Brazil, and Mozambique discussed here illustrate, the expansion of sugar frontiers is intimately connected to contested notions of “development”. In Cambodia, a country with no sugar plantations until a few decades ago, sugar-driven land grabs are part of the pattern of large-scale capital-based production expanding at the expense of peasant farming and local food systems. Using the incentive of tariff-free access to the European market, sugar was presented as a fast-track vehicle for an export-oriented, commodity-led growth strategy. No value was placed on the community land, ancestral forests, homes and villages, and forms of mixed farming systems that integrated sugar palms within rice fields that were destroyed in the process.

In Brazil, discourses of modernization, energy security, and green growth have underpinned the continued evolution of the country’s vast sugar ethanol complex, with increasing non-food uses of sugar being developed through industrial policy in the transition to a bioeconomy. This complex has been backed by extraordinary state support and bankrolled by enormous financial, social, and environmental debt. Furthermore, as politically important as those areas in which the state does intervene are those in which it does not. This includes principally the labour regime, with the disciplining effects of mechanization continuing the systemic exploitation of sugar cane workers.

In Mozambique, sugar has been implicated as part of a renewed global land rush whereby large-scale land deals are presented as bringing much needed investment into impoverished rural areas with “available” land. When these land grabs “fail”, as in the ProCana deal, land is simply redirected towards other ends – without, however, justice being served for the impacted communities. These non-operational land deals are justified as simply part of the risk of doing business under (sugar) capitalism.

All this calls into question prevailing paradigms of development. Asking critical questions around “development for what?” and “development for whom?” can help us to conceive of approaches that expand the scope for peasant autonomy; strengthen territorial markets linked to local, national, and regional food systems and cultures; support fair trade arrangements; and hold corporations and states accountable for human rights violations and environmental harm. As with other flex crops and commodities, the answer lies ironically in perhaps decentring sugar from the analysis of how sugar frontiers operate and expand. Bosma’s invitation to “overcome the current

²¹Fairtrade International, *Sugar*. Available at: https://www.fairtrade.net/en/products/Fairtrade_products/sugar.html; last accessed 17 February 2025.

fragmented, often single-commodity approach and move towards a truly comparative way of doing research that would at the same time do justice to the agency of the workers at the commodity frontiers in the Global South as well as make consumers aware of their role in sustaining unethical and irresponsible commodity chains” is thus more welcome and urgent than ever.