DOES COFFEE MATTER?:
WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT IN RWANDA

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by
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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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ABSTRACT

In the 21st century, coffee is one of the world’s most important globally traded commodities. In 2016, it is Rwanda’s greatest export crop that involves more than 450,000 small-holder farmers, most who own less than one hectare of land. Dozens of scholarly books and hundreds of articles in the social sciences have been devoted to exploring a variety of themes with coffee as either the focus, or that use coffee, coffee farmers, or coffee production as a case study. Previous studies that use coffee as a lens to explore human development focus on the international political economy of the global coffee trade, but few focus on the geopolitics of the coffee world. This thesis argues that the state is always involved in managing coffee markets, and takes this argument farther to show that such policies impact women at all points of a complex global supply chain. This thesis builds and extends upon literature in political science, international studies, and women's studies, by featuring a gender and development lens largely ignored in literature coffee. The thesis provides an overview of the history of coffee production in Rwanda, the impact of the tragic events of 1993 and 1994 and their impact on the coffee sector, and the economic recovery and renewed development of Rwanda in the 21st century. Two case studies, based on field work and interviews with leaders and members from two coffee cooperatives BufCoffee and Kopakama Cooperative in Rwanda, provide field level support for insights about women and development in the coffee sector.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis has been brewing since my first trip to East Africa in 1994. I spent that summer in Kenya and Uganda, and it was from there that I learned about the wars in Burundi and Rwanda – as they were not yet declared “genocide.” I returned home to southern California, recovered from a second bout of malaria, and, the next year, starting working at Starbucks, where, for three years (1996-1999), I was a barista and supervisor, who, most of all, enjoyed selling and talking about the coffee beans, especially those from Kenya and Ethiopia. At that time, no beans were imported or roasted from Rwanda or Uganda as single origin coffees, at Starbucks or anywhere else in southern California. That has now changed, and in all the U.S. cities where I have lived or where I travel regularly—Los Angeles, San Diego, Washington, DC, Seattle, Boston—I can find beans prominently labelled “Rwanda.” When I first started noticing this about five years ago, I had just moved to Boston and started this second master’s degree in Political Science.

Since then, many conversations and connections represented in this thesis took place during two Specialty Coffee Association of America conferences (Seattle 2015; Atlanta 2016), as well as the Southern Political Science Association conference (Puerto Rico 2016). This travel was only possible thanks to the support from the Department of Political Science’s former chair, Mitchell Orenstein; current chair, John Portz; and graduate director, Denis Sullivan, as well as the International Affairs Program’s director Valetine Moghadam. Sincere thanks to the Center for Resilience Studies, led by Steven E. Flynn, and the Brudnick Center on Violence and Conflict, led by Gordana Rabrevnoic, for their intellectual and
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To be so deeply immersed with studying the politics and economics of one crop has been consistently enlightening. That I embarked upon coffee as an intellectual project in the first place is due to the initial encouragement of Denise Garcia. She is the first and continued inspiration for this research, for which she holds my profound gratitude. Sections of this thesis draw upon coursework with Northeastern professors Lori Gardiner, William F.S. Miles, and Kathrin Zippel, and especially Natalie Bormann. For timely conversations and devoted support of this thesis and my work in coffee, I thank Susan Corso, Jamie Bergeron, Becca Berkey, Prisca Cataynar, Amy Killeen, Shaya Gregory Poku, Daniel Faber, Kate Luongo, Sara Minard, and Thomas Vicino.

Most of all, I sound my barbaric yawp over Renaissance Park to my thesis advisors, Christopher Bosso and Amílcar Antonio Barreto. From the beginning of my coursework to the completion of this thesis, they have shaped my thinking and inspired my goals. They are both gentlemen, and scholars, who hold my sincere gratitude and my highest regard.
DEDICATION

To my mother, Valerie Jean Carlson Koss,
who read poetry and took me to the library as a child,

and to my father, Merrill Martin Koss,
who taught me to play basketball, chess, and laser tag—your love
and influence infuses every page of this thesis—even though

neither of you have been to Africa,

nor drink coffee.
“The fight is never about grapes or lettuce. It is always about people.”

~Cesar Chavez
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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE GLOBAL COFFEE TRADE

This thesis draws from and contributes to the fields of political science, international studies, feminist studies, and public policy by providing an analysis of women and development in Rwanda’s coffee sector. Coffee is now Rwanda’s greatest export crop and involves more than 450,000 small-holder farmers in Rwanda. Since the devastating genocide of 1994, Rwanda’s coffee industry has made revolutionary progress due to the Rwandan government’s creation and implementation of an aggressive strategy that engaged with international partners. The government did – and continues – to focus on its development in the specialty coffee market in the U.S. and Europe. By offering an historical, political summary through a feminist lens, this thesis will demonstrate why foreign aid and state support has been essential for this progress, especially due to the rapid expansion from two non-working coffee washing stations before the year 2000, to 245 in less than 15 years, and why this matters to the development of rural women and coffee-farming families in Rwanda. Such growth is particularly remarkable in the context of the 1994 genocide, officially labelled as the “genocide against the Tutsis.” After 2002, coffee was, and continues to be, a means for Rwandan citizens to move forward and work together toward the economic growth and a reimagined narrative for the “Land of One Thousand Hills.”

Coffee is one of the largest globally traded agricultural commodities of the 21st century, but it is more than that: it has become a ubiquitous part of the lives of many Americans (FAO, 2015). According to legend, the bean was first discovered in Ethiopia, before the 10th century, by a young herdsman who lost his goats. He later found them
dancing and bleating after eating an unfamiliar red berry—which turned out to be what we now call a coffee cherry, and contains the coffee “bean.” Centuries later, the movement of coffee to the west is a story all its own, rife with human rights violations, labor revolts, and political revolutions.

Once regarded as the “devil’s brew,” coffee production now provides some kind of livelihood for more than 125 million human beings, and remains a key source of income for 25 million farmers in the Global South (ICWA). It is estimated that approximately 70% of this number comprises smaller holder farmers who own less than ten hectares of land (Oxfam 2001, 2002a; FAO 2015); in Rwanda, most small-holder farmers own less than one hectare of land ("Agriculture Gender Strategy," 2010: 6). The FAO's 2015 Statistical Coffee Pocketbook notes that, “since 2008, the value of coffee production has grown at over 3.5 percent per year, which is faster than 2.5 percent overall growth in agriculture” (8).

The Americas supply the majority of the world's coffee, with Brazil as the world’s dominant producer for more than 150 years. It is, by far, the world's most advanced and industrialized coffee producing country, which still provides at least one-third of the global supply in 2015. Overall world coffee production is projected to increase in the upcoming 2016/2017 year with the world production leaders as Brazil (more than 45 million 60-kg bags and 34% of the market share); Vietnam (27.5 million 60-kg bags); Indonesia (11.7 million 60-kg bags); and Columbia (11 million 60-kg bags). African beans comprise about 12.8% of the total market, led by Ethiopia, who exported 6.6 million 60-kg bags (4.5% of the market share). In 1990, African beans made up 20% of the global supply of coffee; in 2014, it hovered around 11% (George 2014; USDA June 2016).
The collapse of the global coffee cartel in 1989 and the game-changing "coffee crisis" of 1999 led to the trade policies that exist now in 2016 between the United States and the East African Community (EAC), a regional economic intergovernmental organization that has established a free trade area and a customs union. The East African Community currently comprises the countries of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi, with a combined population of 141.1 million according the EAC website. All five are members of World Trade Organization coalitions such as the African Group (42 total members) and the G-90. Except for Kenya, these countries are all among the UN-designated “least developed countries.” All five members of the EAC share a common trade commodity in coffee; in fact, except for Kenya, coffee accounts for their top export to the United States. Although these countries are not the greatest producers of coffee in terms of volume of beans or dollars worldwide, they are dependent on coffee for its exports, and most of the coffee is produced by small-holder farmers who depend on coffee as a cash crop and own less than ten hectares of land. In Rwanda, most farmers own one hectare ("Agricultural Gender Report" 2010).

The United States remains the world’s largest single buyer for coffee with about 83% of adults as consumers. The retail value for the U.S. coffee market is estimated at $48 billion total; specialty coffee comprises approximately 55% value share (SCAA/ICO). The beverage is consumed by one-third of the world, and increasing into the 21st century. The five leading importer countries are France, Germany, Italy, the United States, and Japan, but the highest per capita per capita consumption takes place in Scandinavia, with Norway as the world’s highest (SCAA/ICO). In the last five market years (2010-2015), the European
Union and United States combined both import and consume the majority of the world’s green coffee supply, approximately 45,000 million bags (thousand 60-kg) for the former, which is 40% of the world’s production, and 24,000 million bags for the former (USDA, 2016).

As a colonial cash crop, the politics of the global coffee trade are deeply entrenched; legacies of inequity continue through the coffee lands. While governments alone do not hold all of the answers, they are inextricably linked to the global coffee trade, perhaps more than other commodity crops, since coffee is so heavily regulated. However, more research is required to demonstrate that the root causes faced in the global coffee trade remain in the arena of state actors: international law, public policy, and trade agreements. This argument has been shown through the scholarship of political scientist Robert H. Bates and sociologist John M. Talbot particularly in their two books, respectively, Open-Economy Politics: The Political Economy of the World Coffee Trade (1997) and Grounds for Agreement: The Political Economy of the Coffee Commodity Chain (2004). More recently, it is Gavin Fridell who labels the issue as “coffee statecraft” in his book Coffee (2014). All three scholars agree that the state is a core actor in an unjust system, one that will remain so until or unless state policies and initiatives change. While their proposed solutions may differ, all three recognize that the coffee market and state policies are linked, which will be expanded upon in the literature review in chapter two.

This thesis also considers the political structures and effects of the global coffee supply chain. However, unlike Talbot, Bates, and Fridell, this thesis focuses on the 21st century and adopts a feminist perspective that applies to specifically to Rwanda to show
that creative structural, gender-empowering solutions will be required if coffee farmers will have a sustainable future in coffee production. Government-led initiatives are vital, especially since Rwanda’s coffee sector has relied so heavily on aid, especially from the United States. While available evidence shows that such aid is now paying off, the current challenges for Rwanda’s coffee sector are representative of the worldwide concerns for all producer countries: climate change, coffee diseases, overproduced land, soil erosion, gender inequity, youth migration, and aging coffee farmers.

This thesis will review the literature of international development, political economy, and women’s studies, in order to underscore some challenges and successes for women in Rwanda’s coffee sector. My study will examine Rwanda’s history with coffee before the 1994 genocide, and explain the importance of foreign aid in the creation of coffee washing stations. I will then showcase two specific examples from women who are members of coffee cooperatives with coffee washing stations in Rwanda, based on interviews and fieldwork from 2016: Buf Coffee (Bufundo Coffee) in southern Rwanda and the Kopakama Cooperative in western Rwanda.

**Coffee: An Overview**

All the coffee in the world is grown between Earth’s imaginary lines of latitude, the Tropic of Cancer (23.5 North) and the Tropic of Capricorn (23.5 South), known as the “Bean Belt.”

There are currently 129 species of coffee identified – most of them indigenous to Madagascar – but most debates about coffee refer to one of two “types” of coffee: Arabica
(coffea arabica) or Robusta (coffea canephora), which originates from Africa and is literally a “parent” of coffea arabica. Lower-quality Robusta coffee comprises about 40% of the world’s coffee, and it is relatively cheaper to produce (Hoffman, 2014: 12). Robusta can thrive in lower altitudes and can be more resistant to disease. Robusta boasts twice the caffeine content of arabica, and most of it becomes instant insoluble coffee in manufacturing plants.

Arabica likely began in south Sudan, but only flourished after arriving to Ethiopia where it was then first consumed by humans. Because arabica coffee is higher quality, it can therefore sell for higher prices on the global market, but it requires a higher altitude and is not as resistant to disease. Most beans produced in the EAC and Ethiopia are arabica, except in Uganda, which is the highest producer of robusta beans in Africa. Rwanda produces only arabica beans. One type of arabica coffee is native to Rwanda, called “bourbon,” and it is this kind of arabica bean that both cooperatives featured in chapter 4, BufCoffee and Kopakama, harvest, process, and export.

Processing Coffee

Coffee production takes much time and many hands, and quality is an issue at every step in the process. After a coffee tree is planted, it will take at least three years to fruit properly. A full explanation of the complex, multi-layered chain of coffee production from bean to cup is beyond the scope of this thesis, but there are a few aspects of coffee processing that are relevant to understanding the impact for agricultural women and economic development.
There are several ways to process coffee cherries after they have been harvested (i.e. picked from the trees). This is usually done by hand, often by women, when it comes to coffee produce in the EAC. Both the method and timing will have dramatic effects on the green bean price, as well as the final cup of coffee. For farmers to obtain the most competitive price for their beans, usually the highest quality "wet processing methods" for the cherry will result in higher quality beans that can later obtain a higher price, in contrast to the traditional method (“dry process”). It is therefore vital for coffee farmers not only to have access to a washing station and/or wet mill – whether small and individualized equipment on a family farm, or a large industrialized processing plant – but also to be skilled in its best practices and maintenance, in order to bring the coffee cherry to its highest possible quality. A low-quality cherry, even if fully washed, will still result in a low quality bean. In other words, a skilled producer can manipulate the process at several moments of coffee production in order to result in a higher quality cup of coffee. Except for the minimal amounts of Rwandan coffee (less than 1%) kept for local consumption, most Rwandan beans will be hulled, shipped, bagged, and ultimately, shipped again out of the port of Mombasa or Dar Es Salem to its top three buyers: Switzerland (42.5%), the United States (21%), or the United Kingdom (12%) (NAEB newsletter, Jan. 2016; Festival, July 2016).

**Commercial Coffee**

The coffee industry is divided into two main markets: commercial vs. specialty. Commercial coffee is driven by the production of coffee in larger countries, especially Brazil. Historically, only a few companies have held a majority of the share of the world’s
coffee; for example, in the 1970s, Maxwell House (product of General Foods) held 24% of US market share and Folgers (Proctor and Gamble) held 20% (Pendergrast, 2010; Fridell 2007). Now in the 21st century, several mergers and acquisitions have led to three global food and beverage companies which dominate the purchasing and roasting of the world’s green beans. Nestle, who created Nescafe in 1938 and Nespresso in 1986, boasts to be the world’s global leader in coffee, claiming that “one fifth of the 30,000 cups of coffee served each second around the world today are cups of Nescafé” (Nescafé 2015). Second, the J.P. Smucker Company, which acquired Folgers (in 2008 from Proctor and Gamble) and also owns Dunkin’ Donuts, Millstone Coffee; as a result, “is the market leader in this $9 billion category, with a 27 percent dollar share” (Smucker, 2015: 7). Lastly, The Kraft Foods Group, launched in 2012 as a public, independent company of the Kraft Heinz Company, now owns the brands Maxwell House, Gevalia, Yuban, Sanka, and the new Café Collection; and holds the majority of the world’s market share (Kraft).

Specialty Coffee

This thesis focuses on the specialty market, because it is there that East Africa is growing in prominence as quality grows, and therefore may emerge as a stronger player in the coming years that could lead the EAC to meet its development goals, especially in Rwanda. Coffee was introduced as a cash crop under colonialization, which led to much exploitation, slavery, and injustice for farmers, both harvesters and producers. Historically, most Rwandans drink tea, not coffee, a practice the current government desires to change. Rwanda’s coffee history, even in the area of coffee-drinking, is political, and is filled with political and human conflict, especially due to the 1994 genocide. However, Rwanda is an
emerging leader in the specialty coffee market. In 2014, specialty coffee comprises 15% of the market in the U.S. but 40% of the revenues, and by investing in the specialty market, the Rwandan government rightly considers that price fluctuations will be less likely to affect its farmers and their families (Passikoff).

No matter the region of the world, specialty, or “premium,” coffee has several essential qualities. One of the key factors is that this coffee must be washed and score at least 80 points on a quality scale. This score is impacted by some factors outside of any coffee producer’s control – such as climate-related coffee diseases, or climate-driven hazards (Steiman, 2013: 102-6). Most notably for Rwanda, such challenges include too much heat, not enough rain at some parts of the harvest year, and too little rain at other parts (the 2016 coffee harvest, for example, started late this year because of too much heat and not enough rain). But several factors are in the control of coffee producers—if they have the knowledge and incentive to do so—which include picking only ripe cherries; shortening the amount of time between picking and processing; sorting cherries and parchment coffee for defects; and access to washing stations.

Meticulous knowledge and care must be given to coffee from bean to cup in order to score above 80 points, but such attention can lead to increased profits for farmers. In 2014 with 70,336 of Rwanda’s exports of green coffee, the country surpassed its pre-genocide numbers, which were 67,123 in 1990 and tanked to 17,402 in 2000 (FAO, 2015: 147).

Conclusion

Governments are essential for human and state security to thrive, and the attention to global food security is growing. Among the two billion people who live on less than $2 a
day, about 65% of these work in agriculture (Ki-moon). When government-led agricultural boards are managing trade, they must give particular consideration to its largest and most lucrative crops in order for its citizens to be able to economically sustain their livelihoods and compete in the global market. For Sub-Saharan Africa, this remains a challenge since 64% of its population is rural, and since even in 2005, the United Nations stated that more than 46% of the population in Africa lived on less than $1 per day (Pinstup-Andersen, 2010: 132), a percentage that the World Bank notes is higher in rural than urban areas. The FAO says that 60% of economically active poor derives its livelihood from agriculture (2006b), and that 1/3 of people in Sub-Saharan Africa are food insecure or "undernourished" (FAO 2008b). This is especially challenging for women who produce more than 50% of the world's food yet own less than 2% of the land (ICWA). Rwanda’s 2010 “Agriculture Gender Strategy,” from the office of the Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources, reports that agriculture accounts for 39% of Rwanda’s gross domestic policy, 63% of its foreign exchange earnings, and 70% of its export revenues—yet contributes less than 40% to Rwanda’s GDP. More than 80% of Rwanda’s population works in agriculture, 86% of that number comprises women, 23% of whom are illiterate (4-8). For all these reasons, Cesar Chavez summarizes the spirit of this thesis, because it is not really about the coffee, it's about the people.

The next chapter’s literature review will expand upon these statistics and showcase why this thesis focuses primarily on the relationship between "coffee statecraft" in Rwanda with a focus on women and development since women comprise the majority of Rwanda’s current population at 51.8% in 2012 and 53% more recently (NISR).
Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Coffee and Social Science Scholarship

In the social sciences, dozens of scholarly books and hundreds of articles have been devoted to exploring a variety of themes with coffee as either the focus, or that use coffee, coffee farmers, or coffee production as a case study. Previous studies that use coffee as a lens to explore human development focus on the international political economy of the global coffee trade, but only three scholars focus on the geopolitics of the coffee world.

Core to the foundations of this thesis have been the scholarship of political scientist Robert H. Bates and sociologist John M. Talbot. particularly in their books on coffee, respectively, *Open-Economy Politics: The Political Economy of the World Coffee Trade* (1997) and *Grounds for Agreement: The Political Economy of the Coffee Commodity Chain* (2004), as well as Gavin Fridell, whose three books tackle the subject of coffee and trade. Within the literature on women and development, this literature will highlight some of the extensive research has been conducted on women in development. However, there is no book to date with a sharp focus on women in East African coffee. Therefore this thesis will contribute to the literature by connecting "coffee statecraft" in Rwanda with a focus on women and development.

Perhaps the first text written in English to study the global political economy of coffee was Robert H. Bates's *Open-Economy Politics*. This 1997 book was foundational because it offered a comprehensive analysis of the ways in which states shaped the international coffee market through market regulations such as the International Coffee
Agreement (ICA), which will be discussed in chapter 3 of this thesis. The overall tone of Open-Economy Politics approaches the state as a benign actor that merely responds to the economic rollercoaster of coffee rather than of an active instigator or initiator of these trends.

John Talbot's important book builds upon Bates, but draws upon a global value chain approach. He uses economic theories to make his core argument: that capitalist motivations underline the entire global coffee industry, and that when it comes to coffee, a regulated market (during the years of the ICA) is ultimately better for farmers and producers than an unregulated one (after the collapse to today). Talbot focuses on economic impact. He does not believe that the members of coffee's complex supply chain are, or can be, independent from one another; in fact, it is this dependence of the chain that causes such a monopoly for a few companies and challenges for the smallholder coffee farmer/producer.

When it comes to scholarly output in the social sciences, Gavin Fridell's contribution to the literature is unique. An associate professor in International Development Studies at St. Mary's University in Halifax, Canada, he has written three books that center upon coffee: Fair Trade Coffee: The Prospects and Pitfalls of Market-Drive Social Justice (2007), Alternative Trade: Legacies for the Future (2013), and Coffee (2014). His works reflect his growing criticisms with the current international methods of trade, arguing that real free trade does not exist, nor does it make any significant or positive contribution to society's well-being.
Fair trade, as both an alternative market structure as well as a social movement, continues to inspire controversy, a subject that is far beyond the scope of this thesis. Several social scientists have focused fair trade research specifically on coffee, since this commodity was the first fair trade product, but Fridell’s devotion to the subject is singular. The same year that Fridell’s book was published, sociologist Daniel Jaffe published *Brewing Justice: Fair Trade Coffee, Sustainability, and Survival* (2007), where he uses a large analytical lens as well as a close-up case study to explore the "benefits, limits, and contradictions of fair trade, both the model and the movement" (XV). Jaffe’s case study was based on a survey with 51 coffee farming families in two villages, Yagavila and Teotlasco, both in Oaxaca, Mexico, in order to "observe fair trade in action" (5). Ultimately his study asks if fair trade can be a viable model for all trade, a question that Fridell also investigates.

Fridell’s 2013 work draws more deeply upon Talbot when he compares the ICA with other trade agreements (such as the Canadian Wheat Board and the European-Caribbean banana regime) to expose the gaps between all the rhetoric and promises of free trade. Instead, although he is extremely critical of fair trade, he acknowledges its possibilities and considers it the best available mechanism at present.

However, his clearest argument comes forward in the 2014 book *Coffee*, where he argues that until solutions are both articulated and implemented, the small holder farmer will likely continue to struggle because “coffee statecraft has forge[d] [such] deep structural roots” (148).¹ There he intentionally builds on the works of both Bates and Talbot, but he takes a stronger stance than Bates on the role of the state on coffee, arguing that "the state is always involved in managing coffee markets, under both 'regulated' and
ostensibly 'free trade' regimes (7). The state, therefore, is much more than just "one player among others fighting for its share of the wealth" but is actually the "central [actor] in creating and reproducing the very social relations that underpin the entire global coffee chain" (8).

For this reason, Fridell draws from Peter Gowan’s term "economic statecraft" to create the term "coffee statecraft," in order to synthesize his point that global governance, political institutions, public policy, and economic factors, which weave a complex web for all members of the coffee supply chain. Fridell doesn’t doubt the importance of Talbot’s economic arguments, but he does state that they are overemphasized, because his view is that the "state is central" to all existing policies. Fridell posits that any economic argument must include an analysis of coffee exporting countries and its national coffee sectors, which provide revenue to the state through a number of factors such as tariffs, employment, and social stability (9). In addition, the state drives many other areas that impact a country’s coffee trade: it enforces private property, provides rules on legal contracts and foreign exchange, builds and maintains infrastructure (such as roads or water systems), and contributes to family and labor laws.

The work of these three scholars is foundational to my understanding and research in the global coffee trade. However, the weakness of all three books is that none of them give any focus to women’s role in coffee, or offer any kind of feminist framing or lens. In addition, the cases represented in their books, and most of the examples, reflect coffee producing countries in Latin America or Asia, rather than East Africa. I surmise that such exclusion is due to the tumultuous history of East African states, as well as the challenge for
data collection in coffee growing regions, most of which comprise remote, small-holder farms. Still, considering the importance of coffee for East Africa’s foreign direct investment, and considering that women comprise more than half of the agricultural work force, these are a remarkable omissions.

**Women’s Role in Economic Development**

Such omissions were also present when the pioneering economic analysis *Women’s Role in Economic Development*, was published in 1970. There, the Danish economist Ester Boserup challenged a dominant assumption: that women’s role in household, agricultural, or industrial labor did not contribute to the national economy and was therefore irrelevant for national development. Her book provided the intellectual underpinning for the “Women in Development” movement, and is perhaps the most influential book on the impact of development on and for women, as well as the role of women in the process of development. She documented the “invisible” work burden, born by women, on food gathering, including water and fuel, and showed the negative impacts such long hours have on a woman’s health, nutrition, and care for her children. Boserup’s comprehensive focus on women in agriculture and industry were, at the time, marginally considered in economic and politics. That she provided an empirical review of women’s role in global supply chains in agriculture and industry was unique for the 1970s, especially since she considered “female farming systems” in Africa (mostly South Africa and Senegal) and rightly predicted that despite women’s increased role in agriculture, they remain on the margins due to low wages and lack of leadership or decision-making power. The agricultural hierarchies,
although often considered “natural,” were shown by Boserup's research to be socially constructed.

Despite the groundbreaking nature of Boserup’s research, neither Bates nor Talbot, neither Fridell nor Jaffe, even mention her or her work, nor is her research listed in any of their bibliographies. That such an oversight was made by four social scientists indicates the research gaps on the subject of women and development in coffee. Fridell’s book *Fair Trade Coffee* has a few pages that reference challenges for women in coffee, but they are brief and utilize references from works that focus on Central or Latin America, not East Africa.² Briefly he mentions the “double-burden” that female coffee laborers bear as responsible for both (non-paid) household labour and underpaid wage labour, both which may come with sexual harassment and oppressive working conditions, but he cites the work of Oxfam reports and some peer-reviewed articles, not his own data collection (“Fair Trade” 2007: 132-33).

In contrast, Boserup’s data collection and analysis focuses on subsistence agriculture in Africa and Asia. While her work understandably does not focus on coffee (since it was a traditional *cash* crop), her research nevertheless underpins my thesis. After all, even though coffee is not a food *per se*, as a vital beverage crop for the global south its fruit, quite literally, can provide the capability for women and their families to thrive. In this regard, much work in gender and development in the coffeelands is taking place, much of it organized by the Coffee Quality Institute, the Specialty Coffee Association of America, and/or the International Women’s Coffee Alliance. These are valuable and international organizations, but they are not, at present, regularly rooted in social science research
practices. The exception, however, is in one area of growing popularity: the Gender Action Learning System, a methodology that is being taught and utilized in coffee producing countries such as Brazil, Indonesia, Columbia, and Uganda. In Rwanda, the method was introduced last year to Kopakama Cooperative, which this thesis highlights in chapter 4.

My thesis builds and extends upon all this literature by featuring a lens only provided previously only by developmental or activist organizations (such as the Oxfam Reports listed in the references, or the International Women’s Coffee Alliance). Research on gender and development exists, but there is no scholarly book written to date that offers an analytical or empirical collection of scholarly writing that focus on women and development through coffee. The books on coffee that do exist focus primarily on Latin American or Asian coffee countries, and even these have few references to African coffee. The one exception is the edited volume by William Gervase Clarence-Smith and Steven Topik, The Global Coffee Economy in Africa, Asia, and Latin America 1500-1989, which provides a useful overview that includes some data and history of African coffee. However, the examples are cursory and often without depth. This book was inspired by the first international coffee conference “to examine the history of the social and developmental impact of coffee world-wide” convened in 1998 with more than 25 interdisciplinary social scientists in Oxford, England, heralding from more twelve countries. The disciplinary focus of the volume is unmistakably in the field of economics and provides an overview of the world challenges of the coffee market, yet also considers history, political science, anthropology, and sociology as well. While the book focuses primarily on coffee in Latin
American countries, a few chapters highlight countries in Africa (Madagascar, Cameroon, and the once-lucrative Bukoba District of Tanzania) and Asia (Java and Ceylon [Sri Lanka]).

Aside from the literature reviewed in this chapter, most published work on coffee are works of journalism—the best of which is Mark Predegrast’s aptly named 2010 book, *Uncommon Grounds: The History of Coffee and How It Changed the World*—or how-to-manuals for brewing or purchasing coffee that read as a memoir, travel narrative, or restaurant guide. Even among all these, women in coffee is not the focus, and Rwanda is barely, if ever, mentioned. In these ways, my thesis hopes to contribute to the discussion of “coffee statecraft” in East Africa and its impact for women small-holder coffee farmers.

**“Women” and their “First” and “Third” Worlds**

Central to my understanding of the complexities of colonialism has been historian Frederick Cooper’s work, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (2005). Like Bosreup, although he does not focus on coffee, he questions “how can one study colonial societies, keeping in mind—but not being paralyzed by—the fact that tools of analysis we use emerged from the history we are trying to examine?” (4). After all, the histories of both the colonizer and the colonized are deeply entwined (which manifests itself even through a coffee cup as this thesis hopes to demonstrate)—a reality that makes my own study of the global coffee trade even more complex. In Cooper’s historical analysis of the words “identity,” “globalization,” and “modernity,” he acknowledges, as I do, that these words are also concepts employed in politics and culture that “need to be understood in the often conflicting ways in which they are deployed” (7).
One such term, “third world women,” has been contested by feminists such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty through in her *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (2003). Her poignantly, oft-quoted criticisms of the reductive western assumptions of “average Third World Woman” might be most well-known from her article “Under Western Eyes”:

This average Third World woman leads an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender (read: sexually constrained) and her being “Third World” (read: ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family-oriented, victimized, etc.). This, I suggest, is in contrast to the (implicit) self-representation of Western women as educated, as modern, as having control over their own bodies and sexualities and the freedom to make their own decisions. (42)

It can be pernicious to both men and women to conflate – as is done with the case of women – “the biological and the psychological with the discursive and the ideological” (Mohanty, 2003: 113). Such reductive rhetoric will hardly improve the lives of women and children anywhere for a sustainable future. It may be that the rhetoric of empowerment not only reinforces the binary divisions between men and women, but also perhaps more deeply, between the “global north” and the “global south.” While these terms weren’t used yet, Edward Said’s argument holds: “words such as ‘Orient’ and ‘Occident’ correspond to no stable reality that exists as natural fact” (1978: 331).

Still, such gendered language is often expressed “as natural fact” in key development texts – from the United Nation’s Human Development Reports and the World Bank’s World
Development Reports—that I could spend this entire thesis quoting examples. Nevertheless, one vivid example can suffice, from the only World Development Report (2012) that focused on the economics of gender and development, aptly titled, “Gender Equity and Development,” which argued that patterns of gender inequality matter:

... for two reasons. First, gender equality matters intrinsically, because the ability to live the life of one’s own choosing and be spared from absolute deprivation is a basic human right and should be equal for everyone, independent of whether one is male or female. Second, gender equality matters instrumentally, because greater gender equality contributes to economic efficiency and the achievement of other key development outcomes. (3)

Much can be said about this paragraph’s intersection with questions about gender and social policy issues—not the least which is binary assumed between “male or female” only. But while this WDR first utilizes an intrinsic human rights framework, the report focuses its more-than 200 pages on the second outcome—the instrumental—which is linked to “economic efficiency” and “the achievement of other key development outcomes” (3), itself historically dated since the focus then was on achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

If such outcomes were created and supported by developing nations themselves, this might not be so egregious. But when the argument toward “economic efficiency” becomes the primary one used, especially in the debates about how women can be “empowered,” then the Orientalist discourse employed actually strips agency from women
and merely makes her a member of yet another “imagined political community” (Anderson 1983, 6).

To think of any woman as a “third” world woman suggest that there is such a thing as a “first” or “second” woman with whom she is therefore competing at best and inherently less than at worst. All such distinctions are ontological fictions and discourses of power (Said 1978, 328). To desire to “empower” a woman, especially if one has not asked her what she needs, wants, or desires, continues an imperialist agenda of Orientalism.

**Women in/and Development**

After all, “women” are not a stable category of analysis, especially if one takes the view of Nandita Dogra that the term “describes not a ‘real’ but a political subject” (333). However, development theory and political texts often perpetuate a language that constitutes “women” as a coherent, monolithic group. Among the problems of such use of rhetoric is that “sexual difference becomes coterminous with female subordination and power is automatically defined in binary terms: people who have it (read: men) and people who do not (read: women). Men exploit, women are exploited” (Mohanty 2003: 31).

In the 1960-70s, the “Women and Development” movement, inspired by Boserup’s research, focused on women as central to the economic productivity of any nation. However, a narrative of “woman as victim” emerged, based on female oppression from governments, war, men, sexual violence, childbirth, labor, illness, and suffering. A new story needed to be told: that women were “agents of change,” not merely “objects of services” (Snyder 2006: 28). The UN’s development strategy in the 1970s supported the
trickle-down effect, in which industrialization and modernization would improve the lives of all men and women. For the first time, the phrase “the integration of women in development” — created by Gloria Scott of Jamaica in 1969 — was used and, according to Margaret Synder, a revolution began regarding women, development, and the United Nations (2006: 28-9) that ultimately led to several world conferences, declarations, and covenants.

Snyder’s definition of feminism is broad: “to embrace women’s search for social and economic justice wherever injustice is found” (2006: 25). Myra Marx Ferree distinguishes between women’s movements and feminism – move to a short page on the move from “feminism” to “feminisms” but only used (it seems) when applied to “global feminism” (2006). While British and American women’s movements have focused on legal and political equity, as well as reproductive and work-place rights, it is often assumed that these are the goals of women in the EAC, an assumption challenged by Boserup and Mohanty. As Eyben and Napier-Moore note, “most frequently, empowerment is about choice, decision making, realizing opportunities and potential, and community action. Choice evokes agency and individualism, often connected to women’s sexual and reproductive lives” (2009: 291). Cheryl Johnson-Odim’s essay “Common Themes, Different Contexts: Third World Women and Feminism” demonstrates that not only do feminists in the ‘first world’ focus on separating feminism from politics – a bifurcation impossible for African women, for example – but also are the structures of society themselves very different. Often, the issue is about creating opportunity itself for men and women, rather than mere equality between women and men.
Women's Rights are Human Rights

Although Chandra Mohanty rightly claims that “claiming universality of gender oppression is not the same as arguing for the universal rights of women based on the particularities of our experiences” (107), in 1945, there was need for an international statement that would defend human rights. The Universal Declaration for Human Rights, created in 1945, asserts the fundamental value of all men and women around the globe, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEAFDW) in 1979 were two important documents toward equality of women all around the world. While the now over-used term “globalization,” did not yet exist in 1945, the declaration and convention perhaps foreshadowed a future people more motivated to consider what it means to be a “global citizen” as perhaps more fundamental to a human rights agenda than anyone’s nationalist agendas (Snyder and Tadesse, 1995).

Watershed moments in the past 50 years included the first UN World Conference on Women in Mexico City in 1975 (which gathered 7,000), but especially the United Nations 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing, the largest U.N. gathering in its history, where more than 40,000 women gathered, including 7,000 U.S. women. The Beijing Platform for Action became the legislative mouthpiece and an important moment in the history of global women’s rights. Statements such as “governments must not only refrain from violating the human rights of all women, but must work actively to promote and protect these rights” (215) are rife throughout the Platform for Action. While the creation of the Gender Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) enabled policy makers and scholars to focus to compare the data between women to men.
Intersectionality and Development

Mohanty observes that the paradigm shifts in 1970s Western feminist theory had drawn upon the decolonization movements around the world in the ways that it has looked at power, identity, social transformation, and racism (2003: 106). In so doing, she emphasizes that “historicizing and locating political agency is a necessary alternative to formulations of the ‘universality’ of gendered oppression and struggles” (2003: 107). One development in this area took place when Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the term ‘intersectionality’ in 1989, in reference originally to the “triple oppression” in the United States for black women who suffer from the notion of a “triple oppression” as “Blacks, women and members of the working class” (Yuval-Davis, 2006: 193-4). Although Yuval-Davis rightly notes that “each social division has a different ontological basis” and is therefore “always constructed and intermeshed in other social divisions” (2006: 195), the term became popularly utilized in many United Nations (UN) and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) forums.

Development theory and human rights discourse often utilizes an intersectional approach although this term is not often used. For example, the Fourth World Conference on Women urged governments, through the Beijing Declaration to “intensify efforts” that will “ensure equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all women and girls who face multiple barriers to their empowerment and advancement because of such factors as their race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion or disability or because they are indigenous people” (articles 22-24). Another such example occurs in the World Development Report from 2012, when it rightly claims in reference to gender inequalities
that “disparities persist when multiple reinforcing constraints combine to block progress” (13).

Intersectionality is one useful way to combat “single-axis thinking,” since marginalized groups do not experience oppression because of only one part of one’s identity or circumstance (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall 2013). After all, an individual’s multiple identities overlap and shape one’s experiences (Yuval-Davis 2006), especially for “multiply-marginalized people, especially women of color” (Choo & Ferree 2003).

Such marginalization is experience by an individual as a member of a variety of groups, and the larger group may also experience oppression. This can be applied particularly to women in agriculture, who may also be challenged by systems of power when it comes to rural vs. urban. Challenges for agricultural workers in general and coffee producers in particular should not be viewed as hegemonic. The treatment of women in developing countries often connects to structural-level inequality that can manifest itself in injustices because of race, class, or sexual orientation – but more often than not, the issue is simply one of poverty or a dearth of opportunity or education. Intersectionality can be useful when it emphasizes forces and processes rather than categories. I do not attempt here to establish what the experiences of east African women – as multiply marginalized women – are, but I do wish to point out that when Occident prescribes its own narrative upon the Orient, it continues to shape a narrative that doesn’t empower “the third world woman.” This thesis is mindful of all such layers of complexity and challenge.

International Development
The challenges facing the “third world” – now more regularly called the “global south” – can seem insurmountable. In the last three decades, extraordinary amounts of resources – both human and financial – have been invested both in research toward problems and in projected strategies for solutions. Paul Collier, Jeffrey Sachs, and William Easterly have invested their energies in researching both. Embedded in the titles of their recent books, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It* (2008), *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time* (2005), and *The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s Efforts to Aid the Rest have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good* (2006), is a veiled sense of optimism where each writer believes he has the most reliable solution for enduring transformation.

That such transformation is both necessary and possible are two points of agreement between all three writers. They all concur that current policies and strategies are either failing completely, or at least were not working quickly enough ever to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. However, these may be the only fundamental points of convergence.

Jeffrey Sachs argues that “eliminating poverty at the global scale is a global responsibility that will have global benefits” with the idea that the MDGs can underpin this effort with some success (2005: 327). Collier applauds Sachs’s “passionate call to action,” but in *The Bottom Billion*, Collier – although perhaps not as vehemently as Easterly – believes that Sachs “has overplayed the importance of aid” to the group of people around the world that Collier identifies as the “bottom billion.” A fundamental difference between
the presuppositions of Collier and Easterly is that Collier believes that the “west” merely needs different policies (2008: 191).

However, Africa received an increase of policies and aid in the 21st century. President Obama funded three Presidential initiatives that include resources for Rwanda’s and Uganda’s coffee sectors: Feed the Future, the Global Health Initiative, and the Global Climate Change Initiative. President Bush offered much more aid and money – with more focus and resources – for prevention of malaria and diarrhea than President Clinton. Under Secretary of States Rice and Hilary Clinton, greater focus was also given to Africa, particularly regarding women and education.

As a continent, Africa is undoubtedly the “largest recipient of MCC development assistance; fifteen of the MCC’s 26 signed contracts are with African nations. Twenty-three of MCC’s smaller-scale threshold programs are with African countries, with a total of $160 million dollars in aid,” a number that includes Rwanda. For its neighbor Uganda, the total grant value alone exceeded $10.4 million from March 2007-December 2009 (MCC).

To this, Paul Collier would convincingly assert that the layers of the poverty traps have propelled the world’s least economically developed countries (LEDCs) to be so “stuck” (191) that they can’t ever hope to recover without more aid – a view shared by Sachs. However, Easterly’s contention is to have no policy at all but to allow, what he calls, the “Searchers” to explore and pursue their own solutions for their own countries’ problems. His call throughout the book is clearly to the “Planners”: “give more power and funds to the many Searchers who are already working in development” (2006: 29). He urges the West to adopt the policy “first do no harm” (2006: 30), but fails to mention that the
Planners – and perhaps many other NGOs and INGOs, don’t believe that they are doing harm. He doesn’t want his readers to “expect a Big Plan to reform foreign aid” and emphatically asserts that the “only Big Answer is that there is no Big Answer” (2006: 30).

Nowhere are more answers offered than on the subject of global food security, a topic of continued concern that led this year to the passing of the Global Food Security Act of 2016, which claims to aid the global south in reaching its Sustainable Development Goals. But before that the 2010 edited volume by Per Pinstrup-Andersen titled *The African Food System and Its Interaction with Human Health and Nutrition*, offered an overview of interdisciplinary research in Africa that aims to empower both health and agricultural sectors to work together (13). In the volume, conceptual and empirical frameworks are analyzed and applied to various topics such as pest management and farmer incomes; animals as the source of human disease; or food safety. Labor productivity is affected in every sector when HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other infectious diseases are not controlled but this can be even more pernicious when such diseases are promulgated due to poor water management or zoonotic diseases, as is sometimes the case in African food systems (Torrey 2010).

However well-meaning, the MDGs were and the Sustainable Development Goals of 2016 will continue to be problematic especially for countries in east Africa that—to use Collier’s framework—experience all of the poverty traps: repercussions from civil wars (“the conflict trap”) of its own or its neighbors (landlocked Rwanda has multiple bad neighbors); “bad governance in a small country”; or the “natural resource trap.” Fundamentally, Collier agrees with Sachs because of his belief that aid is essential to relieve
the developing world of its traps, and that the “Developed” world possesses power to do what Easterly believes: that any “solution” will only come from the creative imagination and formidable determination of those who experience war and poverty first-hand. As the debate goes on, the divide between rich and poor continues to widen throughout third world, and the coffee of the global south fuels the wealth of the global north.

The next chapter provides an overview of the history of coffee production in Rwanda, the impact of the tragic events of 1993 and 1994 and their impact on the coffee sector, and the economic recovery and renewed development of the 21st century. By providing such an overview of the country’s history for its most vital agricultural cash crop, this study’s uniqueness and contributions to the field can be highlighted, since there has been so little focus in the literature that links women and development in Rwanda In the global coffee trade.
Chapter 3: GENOCIDE AND COFFEE PRODUCTION IN RWANDA

On January 20, 1961, in Washington, DC, John F. Kennedy, in his inaugural address, offered Latin America countries “a special pledge—to convert our good words into good deeds—in a new alliance for progress—to assist free men and free governments in casting off the chains of poverty” (28 September 1962). This “alliance for progress” was perhaps one of the first presidential initiatives to squarely address the injustices of the developing world and the responsibility of the United States to lead in areas of peace and justice; the U.S. would ultimately loan more than $20 billion dollars to be used for all kinds of projects from schools to hospitals, from land loans to building homes in several Latin American countries. At the time, it was the largest aid program ever, premised on the notion of passing the torch “to a new generation of Americans—born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace [...]—and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which [...] we are committed today at home and around the world” (28 September 1962).

That same month across the ocean, in a small east African territory called Ruanda-Urundi (one nation from 1890-1962), 80% of the population voted to end the decades-long Tutsi monarchy. This move opened the door toward independence both for Rwanda and Burundi in 1962. From this side of the “angel of history,” to use Benjamin’s phrase, one can look back to see that this “slow undoing of human rights” led not only to the Rwandan genocide of 1994 but also several other massacres and migrations in the region that served as prologue (Kennedy 28 September 1962).
The story that I tell here begins with President Kennedy, because the International Coffee Agreement (ICA) he led was “a first fulfillment” of this very Alliance for Progress. The ICA was, by most accounts, a success, but when it collapsed in 1989, coffee prices tanked, leading to an ever greater poverty for coffee farmers worldwide. For Rwanda, this collapse of the global coffee market became one of many causal factors of the 1994 genocide itself, since the country was so dependent on the cash crop for its export earnings.

The history of coffee production in Rwanda is filled with human rights abuses and political manipulation. For Rwanda, coffee possesses a particularly dark history due to the economic impact leading up to and as a result of the 1994 genocide. I am persuaded, along with political scientist Isaac A. Kamola, lawyer Karol Boudreaux, and economist Michael Chossudovsky, that the collapse of the international coffee agreement in 1989 is part of the untold story of what made the 1994 genocide possible. From this point of view, genocide had as much to do with economic crisis, rural poverty, and food insecurity than with “ethnic” conflict or tribal hatreds. In a variety of publications, these three scholars all point to the collapse of international coffee prices as the key 20th-century economic crisis for east Africa in general and Rwanda in particular. Yet in the past several years until now in 2016, Rwandans are rewriting the narrative with the partnership of many U.S. businesses, non-profit organizations, and government agencies. However ‘hard and bitter the peace’, “the Land of a Thousand Hills” has become one way for the nation to rebuild and focus on healing, reconciliation, and even forgiveness (McLaughlin, Nkunzimana, Tobias, Boudreaux).
Rwanda’s History: Coffee and Politics

A land-locked country in east Africa, Rwanda is geographically the size of Maryland, and the most densely populated country in Africa that relies on agriculture in every sense for its almost 10 million people employed in agriculture, out of 12 million total (FAO, 2015, 147). Rwanda has always possessed the perfect requirements for excellent coffee: volcanic soil, the necessary elevation, and an ideal climate. Coffee would eventually become the country’s major export and primary source of foreign currency (de Graaff 1986). However, the real history of coffee in Rwanda cannot be told without narrating its history of colonial rule, ethnic partitioning, and governmental policies. This all began in 1885, in negotiations between European powers at the Conference of Berlin, when Rwanda was given to the Germans as part of its empire. Rwanda was incorporated into German East Africa in 1899, and soon after, German missionaries brought the first coffee plant to Rwanda in 1905.

Coffee was first introduced as a cash crop in Rwanda in 1913, just before the outbreak of World War I in 1914, but it took until 1917 for Rwanda to have enough coffee produced to produce in order to begin exporting the bean. After the war, under the Treaty of Versailles, Rwanda was designated a protectorate of the League of Nations and would be governed by Belgium, which it indirectly ruled through Tutsi kings (Rittner 2004: 142), one reason why historically most Rwandan coffee was exported to Belgium. By the 1920s, with Brazil’s dominance over the world coffee market secured, colonizers exerted even more pressure on coffee production in African countries. In Rwanda, extensive coffee planting had been ordered and enforced by its German colonizers, and as a result of the land’s fertility, tax began to be collected in cash rather than agricultural commodities.
These heavy taxes, later re-enforced, by Belgium colonizers, led to a high volume/low quality/low price trap for Rwandan farmers (such challenges similarly affected Belgium-ruled Burundi). By 1931, these policies had particularly unjust effects on Hutu farmers, since the colonial powers encouraged Tutsi chiefs to force the cultivation of coffee for exports, which led to the enforced labor of Hutus on private plantations owned by Tutsi chiefs. Simultaneously, these farmers were forced to pay taxes while state implemented harsher requirements for coffee’s production, such as specific pruning, spraying, and mulching techniques (Kamola 2007; 578). Despite all these regulations, the coffee produced was of the lowest quality, often used merely as a blend with commercial coffees, mostly exported to Belgium.

In 1933, the Belgium government organized an official consensus, classifying all Rwandans as Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa. The identity cards issued to specify each person’s “ethnicity” only crystallized the creation of “ethnic difference” that highlighted the class segregation between a Tutsi “aristocracy” who were eligible for government jobs, education, and clergy and the Hutu “farm workers,” who were the laborers of coffee. Before this time, “Hutu and Tutsi existed not as ‘ethnic’ markers but as delineations of social status, with the latter referring to those within the king’s inner circle, and therefore possessing considerable status and wealth. Hutu came to denote, by contrast, everyone else” (Kamola, 2008; 63). It took until 1949 for such forced labor to become officially abolished, yet the tax system that replaced it proved equally pernicious both for Hutus who owned small farms or who worked on the coffee plantations of Tutsi chiefs.
In 1962, Rwanda proclaimed its independence, and Gregoire Kayibanda of the Parmehutu party was declared the first president. As a result, he also became the head of a coffee cooperative (TRAFIPRO) designed originally to shield Hutu coffee farmers from coercive government restrictions. As President, he eventually used his influence and transformed TRAFIPRO into a state controlled marketing coffee board that favored southern Hutu businessman and excluded Tutsis and northern Hutus (Kamola, 2008: 65)

Coffee’s role in Rwanda’s political corruption, maneuverings, and injustice during this period is a complex story (which could be a thesis unto itself). However, at this same moment in history, Brazil, then and now in 2016 the world’s largest producer of coffee, “held stockpiles totaling more than 200 percent of annual harvests” in a “unilateral price-stabilizing effort” that was ultimately ineffective. The crisis worsened as several African countries began to grow greater amounts of coffee, and as a result, many countries, including the world’s top coffee producers at the time, Brazil and Columbia, begged the U.S. and Europe to intervene by regulating the price of coffee (Kamola, 2008, 59).

**JFK and the International Coffee Agreement**

When President Kennedy created his Alliance for Progress, he was, for geopolitical reasons, more focused on Latin American states as he particularly feared that low coffee prices would be exploited by Cuba. However, he “was swayed by the requests made by newly independent African countries to stabilize the commodity market as a path to national development” (Kamola, 2007: n41, 590). But when he gave his inaugural speech, little did he realize that one enduring economic global effect of his short presidency would
be the successful negotiation of the International Coffee Agreement, which would so deeply impact two thirds of the world’s countries, including many in east Africa.

By December 1961, a draft of the agreement existed, and President Kennedy was hopeful that coffee prices would stabilize. Because of the volatility of the coffee price and the impact on climate-related problems on coffee harvests, it became necessary for international regulations to exist after World War II (between 1955 and 1962, the price of coffee fell from $0.79 cents a pound to $0.34 cents). The International Coffee Organization (ICO) was born as a result of several short-term international agreements that were drafted, all based on a quota system. This ultimately led to long-term International Coffee Agreement (ICA), an international treaty agreed to by Member Governments for a set period of time, which was first entered into force in 1962 at the United Nations headquarters in New York, and a moment of pride for President Kennedy (Presidential Papers, 13 March 1962). Thirty-two exporting and twenty-two importing countries signed this first agreement, and after it ended, subsequent treaties followed in 1968, 1976, 1983, 1994, 2001, and 2007. In each case, the President and world leaders were supportive. For example, in 1968 President Lyndon B. Johnson told Congress that the ICA diminished the volatility of the world coffee market, leading to an increase in fairness of coffee import prices “almost 25 percent lower than the average price between 1953 and 1962, and 10 percent higher than during the world coffee slump of 1962” and providing “coffee consumers and roasters have been assured steady supplies at predictable and stable prices” (Johnson, 1968). Later, the International Coffee Organization (ICO) was created to administer the ICA and fix quotas based on the indicator coffee price. The ICO publishes its
daily, monthly, and yearly indicator prices, including a composite price. This “C-price” for commodity coffee is priced per pound in weight in U.S. dollars being traded on the New York Stock Exchange.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to narrate the history of the ICA’s strengths and weaknesses, nor is it possible to detail the politics that led to its collapse in 1989, which are fully narrated in the works of Talbot and Pendergrast, and the World Bank’s subsequent role in Rwanda and other “fragile states.” However, James Hoffman provides an accurate summary:

This [ICA] agreement lasted until 1989, when it broke down after Brazil refused to accept a reduction in its quota. [..] The result of the breakdown of the ICA was an unregulated market, and prices dropped dramatically over the following five years, resulting in the coffee crisis that would inspire the Fair Trade movement within coffee production (2014: 183).

**Pernicious Effects in Rwanda after the ICA Collapse**

Understanding some of the history of the ICA and its eventual collapse is vital to a fuller picture of what led to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and what has led to Rwanda’s entrance and success in the specialty coffee market. Despite the fact that several east African countries including Rwanda produce little coffee in terms of world production, Rwanda has been and continues to be "dependent on coffee for most of its export earnings" (Talbot, 2004; 177). Neither Adam Jones, in his anthology *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, nor Samantha Power, in her bestselling book ‘*A Problem from Hell*: America and the Age of Genocide, consider the economic history, especially with coffee, as causing
the conditions for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. To read their books is to read a consistent narrative that the genocide stemmed from ethnic conflict, ethnic strife, and a desire for revenge that is “unimaginable” and unique. Yet there is also alongside that narrative another story of rapid globalization, colonial rule, and economic injustice that involves a myriad of complex actors. My own views on coffee’s role in this genocide are especially influenced by political scientist Isaac A. Kamola, who places “Rwanda’s century-long integration into the coffee economy at the centre of [his] analysis” because he argues “the manipulation of ethnicity by increasingly desperate political elites were [were not] enough to bring about a genocide” (Kamola, 2008; 69) and because “ethnicity and class can be understood as over-determined registers which overlap” (Kamola, 2007, 572).

Such overlapping registers are evident during the years of Belgian rule in Rwanda, as both Tutsis and Hutus commonly experienced forced labor and beatings from colonial rulers who required them to farm only export crops, primarily coffee, instead of subsistence or food crops. Such policies ultimately extended the amount of arable land, leading to difficulties in the production of food crops. In these times, diversification of crops was unlawful, and fertilizer was only permitted for use of coffee or tea (not for food crops).

Fast forward to 1973, when Major-General Juvenal Habyarimana (a Hutu) took power from President Kayibanda in a coup d’etat and declared the beginning of a Second Republic. His reforms included the use “of the coffee industry as a tool of political control. It stacked the state-run coffee agency with relatives and supporters, set an official price for coffee, restricted which firms could purchase coffee, and prohibited coffee farmers from
uprooting their coffee plantations and diversifying to other crops” (Easterly, 2010). The state controlled most of the stages of coffee production. Many in rural populations became landless, and intercropping was outlawed. Karol Boudreaux argues, “through compulsory production, export taxes, and a monopsony export control agency [called Rwandex], the [pre-genocide governments] captured the profits of mostly poor coffee farmers and used these funds to maintain political power” (Boudreaux, 2010). All the while, President Habyarimana’s turn toward foreign investment and development aid, as well as a number of privatization measures, led “Rwanda [to become] one of the largest per capita receivers of foreign development aid and capital investment” (Kamola, 2008: 66). The international price of coffee climbed, and the “Second Republic” government prioritized coffee production as a pillar of economic growth.

By 1990, coffee was Rwanda’s most valuable export, even though Rwanda’s yearly coffee prices were falling (Hoffman, 2014: 143). More than 90% of all Rwandans were engaged in agriculture, with about 70% dependent on coffee for survival and “accounted for about 80% of Rwanda’s export earnings and state revenues” that supplied much of its foreign currency (Talbot, 2004: 118). By the summer of 1992, when the ICO indicator price fell below 50 cents and “the price of coffee was lower than it had been since the 1930s” globally (Talbot, 2004: 116), unemployment in Rwanda soared—“many who would be trained into the paramilitary groups responsible for most of the killing during the genocide” (Kamola, 2007: 64).
“Never Again”: Again, But Different

It is too strong to argue that the genocide happened because of falling coffee prices and the ICA collapse. But because it takes coffee trees 3-5 years to flourish, the full effect of the 1989 ICA collapse was not really felt until 1993 in Rwanda after such a prolonged period of low prices for coffee and therefore “created the conditions for genocide” (Kamola, 2008: 62, 67).

The 1994 genocide in Rwanda was organized, deliberate, and well-planned, a fact repeated by UN Major General Romeo Dallaire at the time and a panoply of scholars since. Political leaders mobilized ethnic divisions during a time when “Rwanda’s state and society were in severe crisis” (Newbury, 1999). The invasion of the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front from Uganda in 1990; the acquisition by Hutu militia of almost 600,000 machetes; and the oft-overlooked October 1993 genocide in Burundi, where more than 150,000 Tutsis were slaughtered, were warning signs for those paying attention. Certainly the plane crash on April 6, 1994, that killed both the moderate Hutu president of Rwanda, Juvenal Habyarimana and Hutu president of Burundi, Cyprian Ntayamira, was a trigger for the genocide, but it was hardly the beginning. Notably, they were returning together from peace talks in Tanzania to try to end the ethnic conflicts between Rwanda and Burundi. But the effect of thirty years of colonial rule, thirty years of economic hardship, and thirty years of forced labor – all grounded upon coffee – fueled the anger, violence, and hatred that from April to June 1994, led to the death of more than 800,000 people, most of them Tutsis, but some Twa and Hutus as well.
In a mere 90 days, some reports consider the death toll to have reached more than one million. As many as two million people became refugees, many to Burundi. After the killing spree ended, so many Rwandans were dead, exiled, injured, widowed, or orphaned, that the country was demolished. The soil was decimated by decades of misuse; thousands of men were either dead or imprisoned; thousands of widows either lacked resources or knowledge required to run coffee farms they had inherited. Hundreds of genocide orphans were growing up without knowledge of coffee production, without access to education – and with even less hope. Overall it was a picture reminiscent of what literary critic Walter Benjamin names as the “angel of history,” a reference to Klee’s painting “Angelus Novus”:

His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing in from Paradise […] The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress. (257)

Moving Forward

Such progress has led to Rwanda’s designation as one of Africa’s “best-run, most orderly, least corrupt, and safest states,” and as such, the Land of a Thousand Hills is praised as a development success story. In a 2014 Foreign Affairs interview, President Kagame confirmed the achievability of a formerly expressed goal: that Rwanda will become a middle income country by 2020 – what he calls Vision 2020 – and to become a knowledge-based country that no longer depends on aid (Kagame, 2014). This may be
achievable: after all, Rwanda’s GDP is growing by an average of eight percent, and per capita income in Rwanda has more the tripled since the year 2000 (Hunt, 2014). Rwanda has achieved extraordinary access to primary and secondary education, despite its switch from France to English as the official language of instruction in 2008. Rwanda’s “Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy” outlines accelerated progress including sustained GDP growth of 11.5% and the reeducation of poverty to less than 30% of its population by 2018.

In 2014, when the National Bank of Rwanda set to create new francs, they included coffee beans appeared on one side of its 2000-franc note, which was approved after a presidential decree. Now one side bears the image of coffee beans, the other, an image of a satellite. Perhaps this was as a nod to the country’s 450,000 small holder coffee farmers that year, since President Paul Kagame regularly attributes Rwanda’s success to coffee. The next year, he asserted that “the one million people lifted out of poverty in five years” was “because of the effort [his government] put into agriculture,” primarily, coffee (Kagame 2014). During a visit to University of Pennsylvania, when asked how he accomplished such a surprising reduction in poverty thus far, he responded:

...by transforming what we already have [...] We started with agriculture, which employs the majority of Rwandans [...] We also looked at coffee. Some of the best coffee in the world is produced by Rwanda. We have worked to make this industry more productive and beneficial to citizens, who had previously given up on growing coffee because there wasn’t much coming
from it. Now they’re involved in growing coffee and they add value by washing the coffee before exporting it. (Kagame 2015)

For post-genocide Rwanda to enter this market so aggressively is nothing short of miraculous. Before the genocide, Rwandan coffee was not competing on the world’s commercial market, let alone the U.S. specialty market. Coffee still comprises more than 50% of the total export value for Rwanda, such investments and the attention from government have been vital to the reimagining of the sector. Since specialty coffee comprises 15% of the U.S. Coffee market but 40% of the revenues (SCAA), the Rwandan government rightly considers that investment in this sector will help shield its citizens from coffee’s volatile price fluctuations.

**Rwanda Ikawa: A Second Sunrise**

The export board named this period of growth of coffee (“ikawa” in Kinyarwanda) as its “second sunrise,” when the Rwandan government developed its National Coffee Strategy in 2002 and the liberalized its coffee industry. GDP per capita is now up, much higher than pre-genocide amounts: $856 in 1990 to $1426 in 2014 (FAO, 2015).

A remarkable moment came in 2008 when Rwanda was the first country in Africa to win the prestigious “Cup of Excellence” award for outstanding quality coffee. This is a rigorous, international competition conducted over three weeks by qualified international judges, jurors, and experts. To win the Cup of Excellence leads to recognition and reward for the grower, which will lead to international relationships with importers, roasters, and buyers. The increased attention brings increased security and investment to the farm (COE website). Since that time, Rwandan coffee beans have been growing in demand world-wide,
but continues to export primarily to Switzerland, the United States, and the United Kingdom (NAEB, 2016; Festival 2016).

**U.S. AID Support: PEARL and SPREAD**

Since Rwanda’s only coffee harvest runs from March to July, the effects of 1994’s tragedies were felt for years since the land was ravished and the agricultural sector was decimated. As a result, the targeted aid from the last sixteen years has been vital to reform and reimagine the sector. One central strategy for the coffee sector has been the building of coffee washing stations, which made it possible for Rwandan beans to compete in the specialty market and bring in a higher price to its farmers. Before 2002, there were only two coffee washing stations in the whole country; in 2012, there were more than 200. As of July 2016, there are 245 total in the country (Festival 2016).

**USAID and Rwanda**

Such growth is in large part due to the $12 million dollars that USAID committed, between 2000-2012, toward the development of Rwanda’s specialty coffee industry. The US leaders of the project were Texas A&M professor Tim Schilling and Michigan State University professor Dan Clay and partners for the projects known as “PEARL” and “SPREAD,” collaborations between the U.S. Agency for International Development, Rwanda’s Ministry of Education, Texas A&M University, and Michigan State University. Named the Partnership for Enhancing Agriculture in Rwanda through Linkages (PEARL), Shilling has said that the average coffee-related incomes increased from $75 dollars per year in 2001 to $400 in 2006. By 2006, Rwandan coffee cherries “translated to a premium of 45 cents per pound over the New York C-Price,” which therefore placed “Rwandan fully washed coffee
firmly in the fine coffee and specialty price range.” At the Rwashoscco ten-year anniversary festival in July 2016, Shilling expressed his joy and amazement at the vast progress of the Rwandan coffee sector in only ten years, emphasizing that such success was only possible through partnerships, including the Rwandan government’s Ministry of Agriculture and the National Agriculture Export Board (NAEB), and the hard work of coffee producers (Festival 2016).

The high standards required for the specialty coffee market could not be met with previous methods and equipment – for example, premium coffee requires washing stations and other, better methods of harvesting and production, which Rwanda sorely lacked even before the genocide. As a result, PEARL and SPREAD, as two main aid and development projects, eventually resulted in Rwandan coffee’s entrance as a competitive player in the international high-quality specialty coffee market. Both program provided critical training and began to rebuild or build washing stations needed for coffee processing. Small holder coffee cooperatives were formed as a result, many who had been widowed as a result of the genocide. It started to train farmers in coffee cupping and quality-control management; some had never tasted their own coffee. After PEARL’s success, a new partnership continued its work – Sustaining Partnerships to Enhance Rural Enterprise and Agribusiness Development (SPREAD) – designed to commit to a deeper phase of development that could create quality-focused infrastructure and processes for each link in the supply chain, from harvesting to marketing. SPREAD also offered integrated population-health-environment (PHE) approaches, including HIV/AIDs education, family planning, and reproductive health services to coffee producers.
Both PEARL projects (there were two) focused exclusively on agriculture development; SPREAD added $1 million to focus on the health of coffee producers ($5 million remained devoted to agricultural development, especially coffee). Many positive stories can be told from individuals who were helped by such projects including two case studies featured in the next chapter.
Chapter 4: WOMEN IN COFFEE AND RWANDA: TWO CASE STUDIES

At the end of 2015, Foreign Affairs published an article titled “Food and the Transformation of Africa” written by Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General from 1997 to 2006, and Sam Dryden, now a senior fellow at Imperial College, who formerly led the agricultural development program at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. For the millions of small-holder farmers in Africa, Annan and Dryden call for a food system that is “as robust as possible” not only to “merely prevent starvation” but also to “fight poverty, disease, and malnutrition; create businesses and jobs; and boost the continent’s economics and improve its trade balances” (124). They argue that building such a robust system is “about more than producing calories; it is about changing society” and among the changes they summarize are to protect the environment, value the smallholder farmer, and empower women.

But for “economic empowerment” to be effective as “smart economics” – since according to the World Bank’s Gender Action Plan, nothing else will increase a nation’s GAP faster than women’s participation in the labor force (2006), then rural, agricultural women must be targeted. The emergence of Article 14 of the CEAFDW, as the only human rights treatise that addresses the rights and situation of rural women, was an important step, even as later when some international conferences began to recognize the contribution of rural women to the 21st century economy. This remains a subject for much deeper analysis since “2/3 of female labour force in developing economies are engaged in agricultural activities” (UN, 2008: 9) and since women outlive men in all regions around the world (WB, 2012).
In chapter 3, this thesis stated that by 1990, coffee was Rwanda’s most valuable export, even though Rwanda’s yearly coffee prices were falling. However, at that time, there was not a single coffee station in Rwanda. By the year 2000, there were two, but they were not working. Now in 2016, there are 245.

This rapid progress of increased coffee washing stations is important for rural Rwandans for many reasons—primarily because it allows even small-holder farmers to compete in a specialty global coffee trade, and therefore receive a higher premium, than they otherwise would not have the ability to access. The majority of coffee farmers in Rwanda own a plot of land that is less than one hectare. That plot of land must contain both subsistence crops for food, as well as cash crops, such as coffee.

The washing station’s technical purpose is to sort and remove the red skin of cherry through a machine called a “depulper,” as well as the mucilage that surrounds the “coffee bean.” Wet or dry fermentation may be utilized. After the red skin and mucilage is off, the “bean” will then be dried – called “parchment” coffee at this point -- and sorted again in order to prepare it to be hulled and exported. Many hands secure quality, even at a coffee washing station, and all members must be trained to look for quality at every step.

Washing stations require land and water, and must be close enough for farmers to bring the cherries swiftly after they are picked, as fermentation begins immediately after the coffee cherry is picked from the trees. Roads may not exist. Even those farmers who have motorcycles or bikes to haul the heavy coffee cherries to the nearest washing station will have long, windy, hilly roads to travel. Some farmers will carry baskets on their heads and walk many miles; some may have animals to assist. In order for small-holder farmers
to compete on the global market, they form cooperatives, usually with the washing station as the centerpiece, which then becomes a liaison to western importers, buyers, or roasters.

The value of coffee washing stations became even more important in Rwanda after 2006, when it the average prices gained by coffee washing stations increased the premium of 45 cents per pound over the New York C-price (NAEB). But they are expensive to create and require much land and water.

**BufCoffee Cooperative and Washing Stations**

This sets the stage to showcase the importance of Mrs. Epiphanie Mukashyaka, who has inspired many women in coffee in Rwanda. She is a widow who lost her husband, one child, and many extended family members in the genocide; afterwards, she was left with seven children to support. Although she had little education or knowledge about coffee, she took over her husband’s farm. After her other attempts to earn money failed to be profitable enough to care for her family, she decided to risk an investment of 100 coffee trees. She eventually found hope, in 2000, through the PEARL project after Dr. Tim Shilling became one of her mentors. He taught her about coffee quality, and she used that knowledge to train other farmers. After applying for and receiving a loan from the Rwandan Development Bank, she created her family company, BufCoffee, after the name of the region at that time, Bufundo. Because she that loan well, she applied for and received enough credit to create her dream: to build her own washing station in the Nyamagabe district of the southern province. This was built in 2003, and became so successful that she opened a second washing station in 2007, located in the Remera, which works in the Remera and Kibirizi sectors. Both of BufCoffee’s coffee washing stations are in the
Nyamagabe district, in the southern province of Rwanda. BufCoffee is one of six coffee cooperatives under the auspices of Rwashoscco, who is itself led by CEO Mrs. Angelique Karekezi (Rwashoscco/BufCoffee websites; Festival 2016).

Combined, both washing stations buy coffee cherries from approximately 7,000 small-holder farmers, and she employs upwards of 4,600 women. What surprised me during a series of conversations with women who were sorting both cherries and parchment was their happiness about the coffee and their lives. There were young adult women, as well as older women. The manager of coffee quality, who was sorting the parchment beans, started working at BufCoffee since 2001, and she stated that she is content and happy to work there. All the women with children acknowledged that their school-age children have all gone to school because of their wages at the washing station; they all have health insurance. And they requested that we buy their coffee, specifically so that we can bring them “happiness by supporting their lives” and so that they could “bring us happiness through the coffee.”

This became possible when creators and leaders of PEARL, Dan Clay, Michigan State professor and development specialist, and Tim Shilling, an agronomist at Texas A&M, led a team in 2003 of U.S. Buyers, importers, and roasters, some of whom were the most respected people in specialty coffee at the time, including buyer and roaster Geoff Watts, who was then with Thanksgiving Coffee, now with Intelligentsia Coffee based out of Chicago, and Phyllis Johnson, president of the coffee importer, BD Imports. The high quality coffee, and the relationships that Johnson built on that trip, led her company to
purchase the first available lot produced by Buf Coffee, who made it possible for the U.S.
market to taste this exceptional coffee.

As a result of such relationships, Epiphanie’s coffee has won so many awards –
beginning with the Golden Cup in 2007, and the Cup of Excellence in 2008, 2010, 2011, and
2013 – that she is now one of Rwanda’s most esteemed and prosperous women in coffee.
Now in 2016, she is the biggest employer in the areas of both washing stations and often
pays higher than the government wage, and she hopes to build a roastery and warehouse in
order to expand her markets. Now her children are all adults, who all pursued the highest
amount of higher education that they each desired. One of her sons, Samuel Muhirwa,
continues the family legacy by working as BufCoffee’s managing director.

**Kopakama Coffee Cooperative**

Toward the western part of Rwanda located in the Mabanza area toward Lake Kivu,
another coffee cooperative comprises men and women who are thriving in coffee.
Kopakama Cooperative was founded in 1998 with only 47 members; in 2016 there are 775
members: 474 men and 301 women. Kopakama is an ambitious Fair Trade certified
cooperative with a coffee washing station that is working toward certification with
Rainforest Alliance. Last year, their coffee’s quality scores ranged between 86-90, but they
have the goal to work harder. With TWIN Trading, they are part of the “MAANDA project,”
which focuses on marketing, good governance and management of the cooperative, coffee
quality, and coffee trainings. Their goals include the creation of a coffee cupping lab
(required to assess quality) and to conquer all the difficulties it will require produce
organic coffee.
Most exceptional, Kopakama focuses on training in gender to promote Sustainable Agriculture through utilizing the Gender Action Learning System for its men and women. GALS is used in order to increase the visibility of female farmers along the coffee value chain and to enhance women's decision making power. The method’s results improve women’s control over assets and ensure equal access to income.

This method was co-developed by Linda Mayoux, inspired by Participatory Action Learning Systems (Mayoux). It is based on a theory of change strategy, using visual representations to help even illiterate farmers consider planning tools, budgeting, and articulating goals. The method begins with a female coffee farmer, who then utilizes some of the method with her husband, and they begin to create a “vision journey” for their future together. The method teaches that these “maps” can help farmers articulate their goals by clarifying their current situation. The method begins with the “vision journey,” and then moves to the “social empowerment map,” the “gender balance tree,” the "multi-lane highway," and the “challenge action plan.” The method also promotes community led empowerment, because some of the methods are done in community groups. The question then becomes how each members’ individual and household “visions” can contribute to the community’s goals.

During their presentation to an international delegation of buyers, roasters, academics, and specialty coffee leaders, one woman, Theresa, is a “GALS champion.” A mother of three children who was not able to attend secondary school, she stood up in a hall of more than 100 men and women to share her individual and household vision statements, as well as her household budget. She also presented her community vision of
all the women in the training. Many of the goals articulated pertained to achieving electricity, constructing bathrooms, and improving coffee quality through mulching or pesticides to achieve greater coffee quality and therefore more income. The growing impact of climate change was a regular topic, and consideration of the ways that better farming practices can promote resilience. But several of the goals considered family relationships and improving communication with their husbands; for example, one woman stated that before GALS, her husband would not allow her to bring their cherries to the washing station to receive money, but now they bring the cherries together, to receive the money, together. As with BufCoffee, the women of Kopakama expressed that their successful coffee crops paid for their children’s school uniforms (required for Rwanda) and secondary school fees (primary school no longer has a fee).

In an interview with Kevin Jean de Dieu Nkunzimana, the managing director of the Misozi Coffee Company LTD, who works with Kopakama Cooperative and dozens of other coffee washing stations and thousands of coffee farmers, I asked about the history of the cooperative’s formation in 1998, and if it was difficult for people to come together to create Kopakama, post-genocide. I asked him, as I asked many others: Did coffee provide the means for gender empowerment and community healing, and if so, how? While the spirit of his response is something I heard dozens of men and women in the coffee supply chain articulate in private conversations, he allowed me to share his voice:

Our country came into a minus because of the genocide, but after, coffee became a way for unity and reconciliation. We have some widows because their husbands were either killed in the genocide, or are in prison because they committed genocide. It was not easy to build this country [back together]. Before the coffee cooperatives formed, there was no trust.
Everyone was alone and not working together. But because of the coffee, now, even if one woman’s husband was killed and another woman’s husband was in prison, they are working together, they can invite each other into their own homes and work together through the coffee. If there were not the coffee, there would not be so much cooperation.

Conclusion

Repeatedly at both coffee cooperatives, as well as others, women expressed their happiness about the coffee. For us, they sang coffee songs, danced coffee dances, and prayed coffee prayers, with great desire articulated that we buy, drink, and enjoy their coffee. One coffee farmer and mother best told me that Kopakama has a special coffee association within the other groups that comprises both genocide widows and other widows. She declared to me with a smile: “But you can see that all these women are smiling now, and they can give you the testimony that it is because of you, who are buying and drinking our coffee. If you don’t drink the coffee, then we are not smiling, because we aren’t the best drinkers of coffee.”

In their internationally bestselling book *Half the Sky*, Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn note that if the moral challenge of the 19th century was slavery, and if the 20th century’s was the battle against totalitarianism, then the 21st century “moral challenge will be the struggle for gender equality around the world” (xvii). While such equality remains a challenge around the world, Buf Coffee and Kopakama Coffee provide two case studies suggesting that, for women in coffee, both development and empowerment are possible.
Chapter 5: CONCLUSION

On International Coffee Day, October 1, 2015, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) announced another $1.8 million partnership with Michigan State University to help the African Great Lakes region maintain its international position in the coffee market. This partnership launches the Feed the Future African Great Lakes Region Coffee Support Program that will help coffee farmers in Rwanda support their families. In addition, in July 2016, the EU granted its largest aid package to the sustained growth of Rwanda’s agricultural sector.

Despite Rwanda’s Vision 2020 to wean itself off aid, all this investment shows that coffee does matter – to both consuming and producing nations. The Rwandan government plans to continue its investment in its promises of its National Coffee Strategy (Festival 2016; NAEB 2016), but can only successfully accomplish all this if the U.S. continues to export items duty-free and encourage trade through the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

While all this aid and investment continues, it will be vital for integrated solutions to be utilized that address farmers priorities and invite women as part of the decision making process. Improved gender equity and investment in women leads a more resilient supply chain for both producing and consuming countries. However, as reviewed from the literature in chapter 2, “women” are not a monolithic category and so intersectional approaches and methods are likely to possess greater accuracy in the data as well as effective policies. The two case studies presented in this thesis need to become the rule rather than exception. Agricultural women can empower and speak for themselves, as
shown from the examples of Epiphanie and Theresa. I have tried to show how they have “resisted, challenged, and subverted” the coffee production process, as Mohanty advises (2003: 32). They know what they want, what they need, and they are seeking creative solutions to combat challenges that are in their control (such as economic inequity) and out of it (such as climate change). Continued and more specific research on the impact of “coffee statecraft” is required, especially with data that disaggregates women’s from men’s roles at every stage of the coffee supply chain. Too little empirical data exists that proves the correlations between state policy and its impact on agricultural women’s lives—especially in the beverage crops of coffee and tea (which are so often combined in statistical reports).

It was not the purpose of this thesis to narrate the list of challenges that exist for women in coffee around the world, which are deeply rooted in the very political and economic that Bates, Talbot, and Fridell analyze. Reductive western approaches, as articulated by Chandra Mohanty, must be avoided in future research and policy prescriptions. After all, what may work for one coffee producing country may not work for all of them. Not all women equate economic prosperity with empowerment.

Ester Boserup’s research on land law and unequal societal structures for women was groundbreaking for its time. Her 1970 methods, while somewhat dated now due to our capabilities for access to information in the 21st century, can still be applied to the beverage crops, and may benefit women most when an intersectional approach is employed. Further research could employ her methodology for coffee in particular, and look for intersectional policy actions for women in the coffeelands, which may also impact other women in
agricultural crops. Another area of further research might be the impact of Rwanda’s land law on women, in order to consider if and how this might benefit women in other coffee-producing countries.

Much good work exists in the specialty coffee industry on the subject of gender development. In 2014, the Coffee Quality Institute founded a “Partnership for Gender Equity.” The International Women’s Coffee Alliance is a non-profit foundational advocacy organization founded in 2003 that organizes women at coffee origin around four pillars: operations & development; community improvement; coffee training & education; and coffee capital/construction development. These are vital, important efforts, but their impact will have greater sustainability when they can engage with the international and national political structures that form the very nature of the coffee trade for the 21st century.

President Paul Kagame might agree with President Kennedy: “For we all know that no matter what contribution the United States may make, the ultimate responsibility for success lies within the developing nation itself” (13 March 1962). I would take that a step farther to say in developing the women in agriculture for the nation. The explosion of Rwanda into the U.S. specialty coffee market demonstrates the power of international partnerships, the importance of government strategy and implementation, and a gender strategy with the support to be implemented. In the inextricable complexity of the history of colonization and our era of globalization, it will require both consuming and producing countries to work together to forge a new alliance around coffee. We must work together to consider who benefits and who suffers from this global coffee trade, especially as so
many in both the global north and the global south desire its endurance. There is no magic bullet that will bring justice to the coffee chain for all its actors. But this can only happen when some of the current political and economic structures are transformed, and when these consider the voices and desires of women in agriculture. If Walter Benjamin is right, if “our image of happiness is indissolubly bound up with the image of redemption” (1940: 254), then let us consider ways to transform the powerful hands of state actors so that women—especially those in the most vulnerable yet foundational parts of the coffee supply chain—can pursue happiness and achieve redemption.
References


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---. Presidential Papers. President’s Office Files. Speech Files. Address on the first anniversary of the Alliance for Progress, 13 March 1962.


ENDNOTES

1 A comprehensive 21st century analysis of politics and global governance of coffee is lacking in the specialty coffee industry at present, but this thesis hopes to contribute to that emerging discussion.

2 For example, on one sentence from page 125-6, he acknowledges that women are exploited as seasons laborers, but he references an article by Heather Fowler-Salamini, whose work focuses on the coffee sector in Mexico.

3 Michaele Weissman’s 2008 book, God in a Cup: The Obsessive Quest for the Perfect Coffee, mentions Rwanda from the perspective of mid-life travel reporter/journalist who admittedly “fell in love with coffee on a sunny October morning in 2005” and primarily focuses in American men in specialty coffee. There are also several errors in the book; for example, she states that the genocide began in 1995 and that Dan Clay and his family “fled for their lives,” a claim that doesn’t make sense considering the genocide was directed toward Rwandans.

4 While this volume rarely mentions coffee except for a few endnotes, the volume contributed to my own thinking about intersectionality and its application to women in coffee.

5 World arabica and world robusta included; all prices are based on U.S. cents per pound of coffee beans.

6 All French was removed from the currency, which is now in English and Kinyarwanda.