



Class dynamics in contract farming: the case of tobacco production in Mozambique

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Abstract

This paper examines the class relations emerging in a contract farming scheme in Mozambique. Debates in the literature about contract farming characterise this market arrangement as leading to farmers losing control over production at the hands of capital. By discussing both the drivers and impacts of changes in the division of property and labour, this paper reveals a complex class structure in which the pressure of merchant capital on farmers is internalized within households and transferred onto workers and sharecroppers. This challenges the pertinence of conventional policy that prescribes empowering contract farmers without considering their varied class positions and interests.

Introduction

Recent contributions to the study of global commodity chains (GCCs) have advanced our understanding of how these chains are shaped by the forms of labour organisation, exploitation and resistance they contain. Other contributions have called for a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of capitalist accumulation and competition among different types of capital in GCCs.¹ However, an important share of African agricultural producers integrated into GCCs are households that are *both* owners of the means of production *and* providers of labour power, ie households that combine elements of capital and labour. This is particularly the case in contract farming schemes, an expanding form of outsourced production wherein buyers place production orders directly with farmers instead of buying produce in open markets. In the broader context of the globalisation of African agriculture it is therefore necessary to analytically unpack the integration into commodity chains of these 'petty commodity producers': farming households which combine the ownership of the means of production and the class position of labour in the production of commodities for export.

In debates about contract farming this 'irregularity' is addressed using two different hermeneutical strategies. On the one hand, some scholars consider the autonomy that farmers have by virtue of their ownership of the means of production as ultimately illusory. Under the conditions imposed by contemporary contract farming, they argue, contract farmers should be considered 'disguised workers', a 'self-employed proletariat', 'quasi-employees', exploited along with other workers by segments of capital in GCCs.² An

alternative view, one that this paper endorses, calls instead for a class-analytical conceptualisation of these commodity-producing households in which a clear separation of capital and labour is not phenomenologically manifested.

‘Petty commodity production’(PCP) is the category that best describes the group of direct producers, most frequently households, who have become irreversibly integrated into markets and into commodity production. The distinguishing feature of PCP is the combination within a household of the class positions and functions of both capital and labour. However, these roles are not evenly distributed within households, giving rise to contradictions and conflicts around the division of labour, property, income and expenditure along gender and generational lines. Furthermore, PCP has been proposed as an intrinsically unstable class in capitalism: successful accumulation may transform producers into emergent capitalist farmers but the failure to reproduce their household on the basis of their own commodity production may in contrast force them into wage employment or petty trade, even when remaining in possession of farming land.³

The emergence of petty commodity production is rooted in the process of commodification and its specific sequence in most of colonial sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), where the development of labour markets – in the Mozambican case through forced labour and poll taxes – preceded the commodification of land and did not necessarily result in the dispossession of direct producers. This continued access to land by direct producers, coupled with demand for agricultural commodities, created the conditions for the emergence of petty commodity production.⁴

The slow commodification of land had other implications for commodity production. Access to land for outgrowers is a precondition for participation in contract farming. But, with land rights only partially commodified, many producers access land through structures of lineage, residency and inheritance rather than through markets. As a consequence, kinship and gender relations shape the trajectories of production and accumulation and inflect the process of class formation. The case of the Mozambican contract farming scheme included here illustrates this point. In areas in which lineage structures control access to land, the adoption of specialised commodity production may reinforce the centrality of households as sites of production and as sources of labour power, creating conditions favourable to the emergence of petty commodity production. In contrast, in areas where access to land does not require membership in kin-based groups, there is a greater scope for individual accumulation, which results in the more frequent emergence of small capitalist farmers and landlords who progressively become differentiated from other classes of labour.

This paper argues that the basis for, and conditions of, access to farming land shape the organisation of production, the mobilisation of labour and ultimately the process of class formation. Vaughan, and Guyer and Peters have recognised that in the context of the idiosyncratic sequencing of commodification in SSA, class formation has been inflected by social and cultural systems of property and power.⁵ Drawing from their contributions, this

paper analyses the trajectories of class formation in the tobacco boom of the past two decades in Mozambique, where pressure introduced by commodity production in a context of uneven control over land by lineage structures has given rise to socioeconomic differentiation and an array of new agrarian classes such as petty commodity producers, small capitalist farmers, landlords and a variety of classes of labour.

Scholars in the political economy tradition have observed the way contract farming tends to accelerate processes of socioeconomic differentiation and to transform gender relations, but few have followed through its implications in terms of class formation. A class-analytical perspective on contract farming reveals an emerging constellation of social relations and oppositions around production, reproduction and exchange shaping the way in which the pressures of producing commodities in global networks are absorbed, deflected and socialised in African agrarian formations. Awareness of these class oppositions and conflicts underscores the conceptual shortcomings of the usual policy prescriptions centred on empowering the (undifferentiated) contract farmers and on technical fixes such as crop substitution, improving governance in the tobacco chain, and strengthening institutional capacity.⁶

This study of social transformation during a period of agricultural boom attempts to raise awareness of the existence of a complex class structure within contract farming and interrogates different ways of approaching commodity-producing, land-owning households and their relations *vis-à-vis* labour and capital. This serves to illustrate the need to move from a conception of social differentiation understood as economic stratification to one based on the transformation of the division of labour and property relations, which are shown in our case study to be influenced by lineage and gender relations. The paper shows that gender, lineage and class relations are not so much intersecting, as co-producing each other. Given the growing footprint of contract farming in African export agriculture and the prominence within contract farming of commodity-producing households, understanding the co-production of class, gender and lineage relations is necessary in order to explain and address obstacles to raising labour productivity, accelerating the development of the forces of production and fostering extended reproduction by African farmers. However, understanding the class and gendered division of labour and property is no less important to chart the actual labour relations in African agriculture and the challenges facing the political mobilization of its fragmented classes of labour.

Capital and labour in contract farming

The number of contract farming schemes and the share of output produced under contract farming are on the rise in parts of SSA.⁷ Contract farming is the agricultural equivalent of outsourcing. It entails buyers or processors that place forward orders with farmers for the production of agricultural commodities and in many cases includes the interlocking of factor and product markets. Volume, conditions of production and quality standards are often specified in the contract. Tobacco produced under contract is delivered to the buyer without passing through open markets or auctions.

At the core of the expanding literature on contract farming are debates about the drivers of its expansion in the period of agricultural liberalisation.⁸ Contracting extends the sourcing horizon of global agricultural processors and retailers, two segments in the tobacco commodity chain that have experienced rapid concentration in this period. Tobacco procurement via production contracts reduces the uncertainty and fluctuations in supply for leaf trading companies (ITCs), giving them control over the standards of product quality, as well as protection from climatic and political shocks. Contracting in tobacco frees merchant and processing capital from the onus of asset ownership and production management. In this respect contract farming is the most widespread form of non-equity production in agriculture and is fast becoming the dominant model in tobacco production worldwide.⁹ The spread of contract farming is linked in the literature to the introduction of product standardisation and differentiation, and it illustrates the growing power of corporate retail and processing in the new international division of labour. However, not much is known about the drivers of such expansion.¹⁰

In Southern Africa contract farming schemes have flourished in former labour reserves in which the falling demand for periodic long-distance migrant labour had created unemployment, and where producers with access to land were hit by the dissolution of marketing boards and state agencies that had previously provided financial, input and marketing support.¹¹ Here, contract farming appealed to large segments of the land-owning rural population who had lost access to remittances but were firmly locked into commodity relations: those who were, in Bernstein's formulation, neither dispossessed of *all* means of reproducing themselves, nor in possession of *sufficient* means to reproduce themselves.¹²

Scholarship drawing on new institutional economics defines contract farming as an arrangement that helps overcome market failures prevalent in African agricultural sectors.¹³ The interlocking of credit and produce markets in contract farming would allow contractors to provide credit at lower cost by using the payment for production as collateral.¹⁴ From this perspective contract farming would enable the management of risks and uncertainty that distort or discourage productive processes in export agriculture.¹⁵ At the same time contract farming would give smallholder farmers avenues for integration into export markets, access to credit, inputs and market outlets from which they are otherwise marginalised, as well as experience of quality-driven production.¹⁶

Early contributions to the study of contract farming from a political-economy perspective rejected the idea that contractors and subcontractors were equal partners by virtue of entering freely into the contracts. Political-economy research on contract farming has charted buyers' increasing control over producers and noted how contract farming has thrived in sectors and regions in which producers were undercapitalised and had fewer alternatives for income generation.¹⁷ Watts, in particular, rejects the independence that the ownership of the means of production gave producers in contract farming as 'illusory' and claimed that,

on the contrary, contracts made farmers functionally subordinate to capital – owners of the means of production without effective control over them and hence self-employed proletarians or hired hands working on their own land.¹⁸

The political-economy critique of contract farming unveiled the asymmetrical distribution of the costs and returns of production: thanks to the contract, farmers do gain access to finance and inputs, but this comes at the expense of any premium that could have been otherwise obtained in open market operations. In contract farming traders pay for the final product, regardless of the labour time incorporated. Meanwhile subcontractors use unpaid family labour that can work ‘above and beyond the normal wage contract’.¹⁹ Thus merchant capital avoids the costs linked to the reproduction of direct producers, which are passed on, along with the negative effects of fluctuations of demand and supply, to the subcontractors.

Both Wilson and Watts propose a class-analytical approach to contract farming. However, where Watts sees independent commodity producers being subordinated to capital through a distinct labour process, thereby becoming ‘wage labour equivalents’, and sees contract farming as a means for capital to gain further control over *production*, Wilson sees contract farming subordinating producers in the sphere of *exchange*.²⁰ For Wilson contract farmers are petty commodity producers who combine constitutive elements of capital and labour – they own the means of production and they are also workers. In this interpretation contract farming is an arrangement between two types of capital: merchant capital (in the form of leaf traders) and agricultural capital (tobacco farmers). Because it is the price of the commodities, not the wages, that mediates the relation between traders and subcontractors, Wilson’s model seems more adequate to explain the contradictions of contract farming. Furthermore, the thesis that contract farmers are wage workers in disguise, begets the antithesis: that they are capitalists who employ themselves.²¹ If, on the other hand, contract farmers can be understood as *also* occupying the class position of agrarian capital, then analysis of contract farming must examine labour exploitation and self-exploitation, as well as the law of value and the dynamics of competition between capitalists of different scale and different logics of valorisation, as proposed in Starosta’s effort to explain power differentials among firms in commodity chains; or, after Harriss-White, it must explore the distinction between primary and secondary surplus appropriation in production and exchange.²²

Wilson’s own explanation of the relationship between contract farmers in labour-intensive agriculture and oligopsonistic firms in capital-intensive agro-processing is that the latter reap the benefits of their position as monopoly capital, while contract farmers face the discipline of competition.²³ Starosta rejects this interpretation in favour of characterising traders and contract farmers as classes of capital governed by different logics of valorisation. As a production model PCP (Starosta’s ‘small capital’) competes with farms operated by hired workers and not bound by fixed labour inputs. Such farms can be more productive because they benefit from economies of scale and more intensive use of labour. In this context, petty commodity producers’ competitive advantage is their unique ability to control labour costs

by using unpaid household labour. Under pressure they can remain operative while accepting production prices that would not cover wages in farms using hired-in labour. PCP is a type of agricultural capital that can accept a lower rate of profit intrinsic in production prices that, at times, do not fully cover the equivalent wage costs of petty commodity producer households. The valorisation of leaf traders' capital (Starosta's 'normal capital') is ruled instead by the average rate of profit. Finally, the shortfall in the rate of profit accrued to petty commodity producers is appropriated by ITCs via production prices. The application of this approach to the study of contract farming has the advantage of avoiding the need to abstract the ownership of the means of production as ineffective or illusory in order to analyse the class position of farmers, while still being able to account for the causes of the asymmetric power relations between leaf merchants and contract farmers.

Some of the pressures introduced by the contract farming arrangement are not distinct to contract farming *per se*, but common to forms of specialised commodity production. What is distinct about contract farming is the common combination of monopsony, price-setting (often by means of collusion), interlocking markets and quality standards, which maximise the capacity of lead firms to appropriate surplus value from subcontractors. The rise of quality standards in contract farming, which has been explained as a strategy by lead firms to shape the division of labour and impose entry barriers to possible competitors,²⁴ could instead be conceptualised as a method deployed by merchant capital to appropriate greater surplus value from producers. In the non-mechanised production of tobacco, outgrowers experience quality standards as merely another way in which they are forced to mobilise more labour, as observed in the Mozambican case study.

Although the adoption of 'petty commodity producers' as a category of analysis is an improvement on those of 'smallholder farmers', 'peasants' and other descriptors with no grounding in the material relations of production, this should not obscure the fact that other classes of producers also emerge in contract farming. One problem common to the more restrictive political-economy definitions of class relations in contract farming in Africa is the tendency to neglect – or the inability to register – the existence of small *capitalist* farmers emerging among petty commodity producers. Capitalist farmers produce on the basis of work performed by hired workers and are bound by the imperative to compete.²⁵ While, in the case of petty commodity producers, capitalism's fundamental antagonism between labour and capital is contained within the farming household, in the case of capitalist farmers this opposition is vested in two separate groups, farmers and workers.

Both aspects of a research agenda on contract farming – the characterisation of farmers as occupying the class position of capital and the need to chart the range of class relations this elicits – warrant more detailed attention to class dynamics in contract farming. Furthermore, few analyses of contract farming in SSA explore the intersections of class formation with other hierarchies and identities.²⁶ Notable exceptions include the work on the cocoa boom and crisis in Ghana by Hill, and on Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire by

Chauveau and Richards; work on sharecropping in Malawi, Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire by Vaughan and Gastellu; and work on export horticulture in Kenya by Dolan.²⁷ What these approaches share is an economic sociology of class as a process that is moulded by pre-existing structures and relations of lineage, seniority, gender and conjugality. Class formation is manifested, then, not as income gradation or socioeconomic stratification but as the formation of social relations that enable the material conditions of production and reproduction and embody the struggles around the social division of labour.²⁸

This paper explores trajectories of class formation in contract farming and examines how different classes negotiate the demands of production within global commodity chains. The case study of a contract farming scheme producing tobacco in the Mozambican province of Tete illustrates the range of classes and class-based contradictions that emerge during an agricultural boom. It is based on nine months of field work conducted in 2011 and 2012 in the district of Angónia, which included archival work, interviews with state officials, with company representatives in the tobacco sector, individual farmers, community leaders and customary authorities, as well as a survey of 102 households in contract farming. The analysis revealed a complex structure of primary and secondary surplus extraction mediated by class, gender and kinship relations discussed in the following sections.

Mozambican farmers and the tobacco boom

International leaf trading companies (IITCs) source cured tobacco leaf from farmers around the world, which they then process and supply to cigarette manufacturers, who blend and market end products. Although demand for tobacco in traditional markets is diminishing, the global market for cigarettes grew by 10.5% between 2000 and 2012. Asian and African demand for cigarettes has been growing steadily and leaf sourcing is moving to low-cost producing countries.²⁹ In recent decades this industry has been characterised by rapid corporate and market concentration in both primary and secondary processing.³⁰ In Southern Africa large IITCs have historically bought leaf from Malawi and Zimbabwe, where auction floors and spot markets used to be the dominant marketing mechanisms. Since the mid-1990s – aided by agricultural liberalisation across the region – IITCs have expanded into Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique to diversify their source-base and increase the volumes of leaf sourced through contract farming.³¹ In aggregate terms contract farming allows leaf traders greater control over the conditions and volumes of production through the imposition of stringent quality codes and standards. As a latecomer to tobacco, all production in Mozambique is under contract with a local subsidiary of Universal Corp, the leading global IITC, which has obtained geographical monopsony concessions for tobacco across several provinces.³²

Mozambican farmers started growing tobacco under contract during the second half of the 1990s as the country was emerging from civil war (1977–92). The Frelimo government turned to agricultural liberalisation, dissolving state farms and marketing boards and phasing out financial and marketing services that state institutions once provided.³³ Undercapitalised

farmers started signing production contracts in which IITCs provided agricultural inputs on credit to be discounted against the purchase of cured leaf. The interlocking of factor and product markets and the creation of regional monopsony concessions succeeded in attracting thousands of farmers into tobacco agriculture. But competition and collusion among leaf traders and officials resulted in the consolidation of a monopsony of Mozambique leaf Tobacco (MIT), the local subsidiary of Universal Corp. By 2007 MIT had opened a processing plant and was the sole IITC procuring in Mozambique.³⁴

To this day MIT enjoys ultra-light regulation, a range of generous tax breaks and leverage in price-setting to a degree that would be unthinkable in neighbouring countries with more established tobacco sectors. Mozambican tobacco farmers contract directly with MIT and engage in rain-fed, non-mechanised cultivation mainly for the production and curing of burley, a type of tobacco leaf used as a cigarette filler. In the same period tobacco farming has become geographically concentrated in districts bordering Malawi. Tete, the province of the case study for this paper, accounts for 48% of the total production and, by 2011, Angónia, the district studied, was producing 42% of the tobacco in Tete.³⁵

Tobacco exports from Mozambique have grown rapidly over the past two decades. Mozambique is one of the world's main producers of burley and now accounts for some 2% of the tobacco traded globally.³⁶ Output increased from 2,700 tonnes in 1997 to a peak of 86,000 tonnes in 2010. The value of exports has grown tenfold in the same period, to reach US\$217 million in 2011. Roughly 130,000 Mozambican farmers grow tobacco, of whom roughly 23,000 are in Angónia, the largest producing district. Tobacco is now Mozambique's largest agricultural export and accounts for about 6% of the total value of exports.³⁷

In the absence of intervention from the state, of competition, intermediaries and other marketing mechanisms, MIT imposed prices and used quality standards to discipline producers. In the meantime tobacco production flourished in districts characterised by high population density and isolated location, suggesting that contract farming can prosper on the basis of producers' lack of alternative market outlets and sources of income. So far, this description of Mozambican contract farming seems to confirm Watts' insights about power asymmetry and the displacement of risk onto direct producers by IITCs. However, the remainder of this paper will show a more complex structure. Indeed, IITCs expanded tobacco production into regions where they could exert greater control over production, source more flexibly and impose prices without facing farmer desertion, but farmers did not passively accept the conditions they imposed. This study documents how commodity-producing households absorb and diffuse the costs and risks in contract farming and the range of classes that have emerged in Angónia as a consequence of participation in specialised commodity production.

The paper is based on a study conducted in two clusters of the Angónia district of Tete province in northwestern Mozambique. Angónia is the district of Mozambique most intensely engaged in tobacco agriculture.³⁸ For the purpose of the household survey I obtained a

sampling frame covering all farmers across four zone subdivisions (647). Preliminary analysis of these data revealed clear differentiation and concentration in the distribution of production: the 14% of producers with farms of one hectare or larger accounted for 46% of the tobacco produced. Farmers with more than two hectares in tobacco (4% of producers) accounted for 28% of output. The analysis of distribution revealed that the top quartile of producers accounted for 58% of total output, resulting in highly concentrated production, with a Gini Coefficient of 0.43. The analysis also concluded that all large producers were concentrated in clusters located in the southwestern fringe of the district, while the farms with less than one hectare under tobacco were typical of the clusters closer to the largest population settlements towards the northeast. The survey of tobacco producers traced socioeconomic differentiation, implications for the organisation of production and ways in which producers negotiated the demands of contract farming in response to varying configurations of capital and labour. My purpose was not to describe the phenomenological differences between smaller and larger producers, but to explain the emergence of a new class structure. A purposive sample was designed with roughly equal weighting of large and small producers, since a fully randomised sample of producers would have failed to reach the top 4% of producers who nonetheless account for almost a third of the tobacco produced.

Under the current conditions of production in Angónia, one tonne of air-cured burley tobacco per year is the approximate upper threshold of what a family relying on the work of two adults can produce. It is extremely difficult to produce more than this without substantial additional labour inputs, and field work revealed a distinctly different labour process between growers producing below and above this notional threshold. Those families producing a tonne or less relied predominantly or exclusively on their own labour power, and can best be described as petty commodity producers. In contrast, larger-scale producers hired labour and directed small agricultural enterprises that can be described as small capitalist businesses. A subgroup of these farmers sourced tobacco from sharecroppers.

The social embeddedness of contract farming

Contemporary tobacco contract farmers in Angónia are descended from Chewa and share core social and cultural practices such as matrilineal descent and inheritance, as well as uxori-local residence with groups across the border in southern Malawi.³⁹ A shift to ambilineal inheritance has been linked to invasions by patrilineal Ngoni groups in the late 19th century. Affiliation in Angónia is now best described as cognatic (traced both through father and mother) with a matrilineal emphasis.⁴⁰ Through uxori-local residence children live and grow up among their maternal relatives, but links to their paternal relatives are strong and sustained, even if the mother remarries. Matrilineal inheritance, though not exclusive, is the most prominent form of intergenerational asset transfer and is probably reinforced by uxori-local residence: 49% of all households interviewed live in compounds with the wife's relatives, 19% are viri-local (live with the husband's relatives) and the remainder did not gain access to land through kinship.

A new couple cohabits for a period of one to three years in the compound of the wife's parents. These uxori-local marriages are known as *chikamwini*. During this period the new husband contributes labour on land belonging to the family of the wife. Afterwards the couple moves to a separate house and the wife is allocated fields and gardens for farming. Scholars working on matrilineal systems have described this as a form of recruitment of men's labour in exchange for access to land.⁴¹

The typical family compound in rural Angónia consists of a *bele*, the matri-kin group descending from a common grandmother, her daughters and granddaughters, their husbands and all their unmarried children, and is headed by a maternal male relative whose role as guardian to his sisters and nieces gives him the right to virilocal residence. Villages are small and contain one or two *mabele*. Individual households live in close proximity and farm land allocated by the lineage, but production, consumption, investment and accumulation activities are performed separately, with few instances of kin-based work-groups. Each married woman owns a separate grain bin, and food exchanges between households strengthen sibling relations. Productive individualism and optional distributive communalism give independence to households in production and accumulation, although they rely on the lineage for access to the means of production (farming land). In such arrangements husbands and wives work and take decisions over production together, but each individual has separate control over the money he or she earns. Uxorilocal men are allowed space for individual accumulation (which Douglas called 'personal unascribed achievement'), lending flexibility to the system.⁴² This is best exemplified in Angónia by men's full ownership of an inheritable liquid estate (tools, equipment, vehicles). Couples tend to form and dissolve with a certain ease and most older people have been married more than once. When couples separate, men return to their village and farm with their parents or sisters until they remarry and regain access to land.

This model mostly holds true on the eastern side of the district, where most of the population of Angónia has historically been concentrated. Towards the southwest of the district a *miombo* forest marks the agricultural frontier. Settlements there are more dispersed and recent. Expansion into the forest has been fuelled by growing demand for land for tobacco. In these areas the control of land by lineage groups is more tenuous and dispensations other than marriage facilitate asset transfer.

Because access to land is the primary barrier to entry into contract farming, 'idioms' of land access shape property and production relations. In the low-productivity, non-mechanised agrarian-based economy of Angónia the character of the household's ownership of the means of production reflects the intersection between the dynamics of corporate kin group membership and relations of commodity production. It is argued here that both shape the process of class formation, albeit in different trajectories depending on local conditions. Table 1 shows that most farmers in the integrated zone are petty commodity producers and most of the small capitalist farmers and landlords are concentrated on the frontier. However, the

spatial relation is not invoked here as geographical determinism. In order to reconstruct the history of settlement and land relations in the district, petty commodity producers, capitalist farmers and landlords are categorised as such in terms of their position in the labour process, not by the scale and location of their farms.

Table 1. Classes of producers in the sample.

Classes and distinguishing features	Number of farmers and percentage by zone				Total
	Integrated zone		Frontier zone		
Landlords (In arrangements with sharecroppers)	0	(0%)	10	(15%)	10
Capitalist farmers (Hirers of seasonal migrant labour)	6	(18%)	37	(54%)	43
Petty commodity producers (Mainly relying on household labour)	27	(79%)	21	(31%)	48
<i>Of which...</i>					
<i>Net hire-in ganyu</i>	18	(53%)	17	(25%)	35
<i>Net hire-out ganyu</i>	9	(26%)	4	(6%)	13
Commercial farms (Hired manager and workers)	1	(3%)	0	(0%)	1
Number in the sample	34	(100%)	68	(100%)	102

The open agricultural frontier and the integrated zone allowed for the development of two variants of the same societal structure: in the integrated zone rooted matrilineal–uxorilocal practices effectively regulated access to land through inheritance – for women – and marriage – for men. The tobacco boom strengthened the bargaining position of women and secured the reproduction of a closed system based on kin relations. Evidence of this includes divorced women that arranged to transfer the tobacco contracts to their new husbands so that tobacco had continuity beyond the contingency of conjugality. The tobacco boom had different consequences for the demand for land on the agricultural frontier, where there was a higher ratio of land to population and where the lineages' control over land was loose. There, land availability and demand from newcomers led to the emergence of a dynamic vernacular market for land in which strangers buy land from the lineages, but no kinship relation – fictive or otherwise – arises.⁴³ The newcomers – Mozambicans, Malawians, farmers, workers and sharecroppers – may follow the cognatic lineage and the uxorilocal preference but, for most of these households, access to land has been mediated through the vernacular land market rather than through marriage. Here, men tend to be the sole owners of the land and market-based access to it strengthens their autonomy. Freed from the limitations and relative scarcity of land in the integrated zone, the scale of operations tends to be larger in the frontier, allowing for a greater capacity to absorb hired-in labour. Trajectories of individual accumulation are also different: a successful farmer in the integrated zones will own a motorcycle, one or two bicycles, some cattle or a wagon but, on the frontier, many large-scale farmers own cars and several motorcycles. Some have set up a mill in the village or built houses for rent in the district capital. While most of the landlords in the sample had houses with electricity, motorcycles and bank accounts, only a minority of petty commodity producers had these. In all cases petty capitalists and landlords own and farm more land than petty producers. Lastly, among respondents willing to report their annual revenue from tobacco, the average petty

commodity producer revenue was 15,269 meticais, against 40,891 among small capitalists and 107,285 among landlords.

Because – as seen in other cases of cash cropping in societies where matrilineal inheritance predominates – the fundamental bond within the household and between the lineage group and men who marry into it rests on permutations of additional labour power (of the husband) and land access (through the wife),⁴⁴ changes to the implicit value of land – ie changes to the strategic productive asset in cash cropping – introduce pressures that transform intra-household relations and husbands' position *vis-à-vis* the matrilineal lineage group. Agricultural booms such as the one experienced in tobacco farming in Angónia increase the demand for land, its relative scarcity and its strategic value.⁴⁵ Where matrilineal inheritance is a closed system that monopolises the granting of access to land, the bargaining position of women in the household can be strengthened, as was the case with the cotton boom in the lower Shire Valley (Malawi) studied by Mandala.⁴⁶ This was corroborated by women's labour contributions to cotton farming, their autonomous command of part of the cotton revenue and their increased participation in overall decision making about income and expenditure in the household: 'women gained a foothold in the new commercial economy which allowed them to maintain economic independence even in the absence of their husbands'.⁴⁷ As the comparison of petty commodity producer and capitalist farming households in the next section shows, this has not always been the case in Angónia.

To summarise, in the context of an agricultural boom in Angónia, the increasing value of land had different effects on intra-household relations, depending on the character of lineage relations and the relative abundance of land. Where land is limited and closely transferred through inheritance, the land and labour balances mediated by the lineage hold and tend to reinforce the matrilineality; where land is available and can be accessed without corporate membership in a matri-kin group, men experience fewer limits to accumulation. In both cases specialised commodity production and the attendant individualisation of economic life tends to weaken households' dependence on kin relations.

Class formation in contract farming

Petty commodity production in the tobacco boom

For 47% of producers in our purposive sample and for an estimated 86% of farmers in the total sampling frame, family labour was the main labour input used in commodity production. For the most part these households gained access to land inherited from their parents and, as with most other tobacco producers, contract farming was their main source of cash income. Tobacco cultivation requires the completion of certain tasks on a strict schedule. Most households hired task-based casual workers – known locally as *ganyu* – a few times during the year in order to meet peak demands for labour. However, the poorest households in the sample struggled to reproduce themselves solely on the basis of commodity production and did not produce enough income to pay for hired-in labour; instead, they needed to sell their labour power at various times during the year to

supplement their tobacco revenues. This variety of labour balances is typical of the inherent instability of PCP.⁴⁸

This group of petty commodity producers corresponds to the self-employed farmers that Watts identified at the core of outgrower schemes.⁴⁹ Out of a total of 48 households in the PCP group in our sample, 13 hired out their own labour, while 35 did not. In the Angónia contract farming scheme the labour effort of all the working members of the household was pooled to sustain tobacco farming and curing. On balance these petty commodity producers were net hirers of *ganyu* casual labour but did not have the liquidity to hire the costly seasonal migrant workers. For many of these producer households, the obstacle to hiring seasonal workers was not only a lack of funds to pay their wages, but not owning enough land to absorb the additional labour power.

In some cases marginal farmers sold their labour power in lean periods but in two observed cases husbands took over tasks related to tobacco, while wives worked for neighbours as *ganyu* on a casual basis.⁵⁰ All petty producer households reported growing maize – the regional staple – for consumption and for sale, depending on the time of the year, the price of maize and their level of liquidity. These were the poorest households in the sample in terms of their total tobacco output, annual revenue and ownership of the means of production. This was the subgroup that was most likely to become marginalised from tobacco production. Although these people are unlikely to lose their land, they may become ‘too poor to farm.’⁵¹

The tobacco output of these commodity producers was constrained by the scale and quality of the farmland they inherited and by the amount of labour available in the household. For most of the year a wife and her husband engaged in production, while supporting themselves and the household’s children and members of the *bele* who were too old to farm. Peters noted that in colonial zomba (southern Malawi) the otherwise powerful bargaining position of women within households was progressively undermined by the influence of religious institutions, state policy and the colonial mobilisation of migrant labour – all institutions that were oblivious to the specific workings of matrilineal descent and biased towards Western patrilineal norms.⁵²

In contemporary Angónia tobacco contracts were, with few exceptions, signed by husbands,⁵³ but in the case of petty commodity producers the contracts were mostly realised on land inherited at the time of the marriage and frequently owned by women. This is not necessarily a result of matrilineal descent, since up to 60% of all male respondents reported receiving land from their own lineage, but rather an effect of the uxorial residential norm: tobacco is the household’s most valuable and lootable crop and has a prolonged curing process, so it is deemed safer to grow it in the fields closest to the residential home and to build the curing barns within the residential compounds. The uxorial norm in these cases created a bias for farming tobacco on fields owned by the wife,

even if men had land of their own. The frequent occurrence of households in which wives were owners of the land and husbands managers of the tobacco contract led to forms of cooperation or acrimony.⁵⁴ This formal contradiction was exacerbated by the reliance of petty producer households on the mobilisation of the labour of the two spouses and the enormous pressure that time-sensitive tasks, such as weeding, harvesting, hanging the leaf to dry, classification, bundling and packaging in bales, placed on this constrained pool of labour power.⁵⁵ These pressures frequently coincided with climatic shocks or poor health to seriously undermine the viability of the household in PCP.

Furthermore, as discussed above, contract farming differs from tobacco production in open markets in that pricing is set by leaf traders and valuation depends on compliance with stringent quality standards.⁵⁶ At the household level quality standards translated simply into the imperative to invest more labour time tending to the crop and more effort in the curing process. This created extremely high labour demand for the production group in a petty commodity producing household. However, as Guyer and Peters observed, intra-household solidarity cannot be taken as a given.⁵⁷ The scope for personal accumulation by husbands on women's land, their managerial position as signatories of the contract, as well as other tensions internal to conjugal relationships, could make wives reluctant contributors towards the labour demands of tobacco. One woman whose husband had taken a second wife in another village withdrew her labour contribution, as a result of which the tobacco harvest failed. Another PCP farmer interviewed had enjoyed great success with tobacco, managing to expand production and reinvest profits in buying a motorcycle and other productive assets, but then his marriage ended and he lost access to land for farming. These cases illustrate how the pressures of specialised commodity production in contract farming are transferred onto the relations constitutive of the household.⁵⁸ The Mozambican case suggests that such pressures not only affect the capacity of households to reproduce themselves as commodity producers but also have important impacts on the continuity of households *per se*. The question of extended and simple reproduction in a PCP household is thus shown to depend not solely on its productive performance – as the PCP literature tends to have it. Because the internal tensions between capital and labour are embodied unevenly in the household, analysis of petty commodity production needs to incorporate intra- and inter-household relations with the process of socioeconomic differentiation and ultimately of class formation.

Tobacco entrepreneurs and landlords

Just as the integrated zone is characterised by the ubiquity of PCP households producing tobacco, the agrarian frontier had identifiable lineages and customary authorities. However, unlike those in the integrated zone, lineages in the frontier claimed ownership over vast tracts of land and forest. Historically these lands were thinly populated and sparsely farmed. However, the tobacco boom changed matters dramatically. Prospective farmers arrived from other regions seeking access to land in order to expand their production. Strangers started requesting larger areas and offering payment as a gesture of gratitude. Land thus acquired is

alienated indefinitely and can be sold and rented, so long as the village chief or the lineage head are notified.

The organisation of production and the combination of class and kin relations weighed differently on those households that gained access to land through purchases, or commanded enough inherited land to mobilise extra-household labour. Unlike in the case of petty commodity producers, most or all of the labour these farmers used in the production of tobacco came from outside the household, either from hired workers or sharecroppers. In larger operations this translated into very different production roles. Husbands adopted managerial roles, directing and monitoring the work of hired seasonal workers, while women – who were for the most part in the unusual situation of living separated from their matrikin, concentrated on their own vegetable garden or food preparation for seasonal workers. In small capitalist farming households, productive individualism was strongly vested in the husband, while women were comparatively marginalised from tobacco production. As a result, there was less agreement between intra-household and productive relations. The constitutive class opposition in these cases was that between capital, vested in the farmer's ownership of the means of production (unencumbered by kinship obligations and available as an inheritable estate), and proletarianised, informal and precarious seasonal migrant workers and migrant sharecroppers.

There were 43 farmers hiring seasonal workers in our sample. Migrant-hiring farmers controlled land and the conditions under which workers produced. In Angónia this control took specific forms adapted to the rigours of commodity production in the frontier where labour was scarce, in high demand and difficult to 'fix': for example, the workers hired were all long-distance migrants, predominantly from land-poor districts in Malawi, who were functionally separated from their own land by distance, as well as by the contractual conditions that operated as disciplinary measures. The practice of delaying payment of wages until the end of the agricultural period dissuaded migrant workers from changing employer mid-way through the production cycle. Small capitalists exploit hired-in workers whose work conditions and associational prospects are precarious: seasonal migrant workers whose low wages in meticais are boosted by an advantageous exchange rate of the Mozambican metical to the Malawian kwacha; pay is withheld until the end of the production cycle as a way of retaining the workers and a substantial part of the pay is in the form of food and accommodation during the growing season.

Land-rich farmers are a class characterised by recruiting sharecroppers. These sharecropping arrangements demand a different organisation of the productive process. There were 10 landlords in the sample, each with between two and 10 tenants. These landlords had gained access to large stretches of recently cleared land and were constrained by the labour scarcity characteristic of the frontier. The landlords themselves could grow tobacco on the side using hired-in seasonal workers, but most of their tobacco revenue came from production by sharecroppers who, similarly to the seasonal migrants, came from Malawi and were engaged for one season at a time. Sharecroppers, however, typically moved to Angónia as a family, since their tobacco production was based on mobilisation of family labour.

Sharecropping households were allocated between one and three hectares of land for tobacco and were provided with inputs and food on credit by the landlord. After the tobacco was dried and packed, the landlord bought bales of tobacco at an agreed rate from the sharecroppers and sold all the tobacco thus procured to the ITC. Outstanding debts from the provision of inputs and food advances to the sharecroppers were deducted and the remaining proceeds were split, with two-thirds going to the sharecropper and one-third to the landlord. Although it is uncommon for sharecroppers to hire-in *ganyu* labour during peak times, some cases of this were reported during fieldwork.

The relation between farmers and workers differs from that between landlords and sharecroppers in that the farmers extract surplus value through a labour relation, whereas landlords appropriate the surplus value contained in the commodity they purchase from sharecroppers. The incorporation of tenants – a rarity in Mozambique – is both a testament to the influence of the Malawian agrarian regime in Angónia, and a reflection of the technical limitations imposed by the lack of incentives to adopt labour-saving techniques in tobacco agriculture. Landlords in the sample had the highest average tobacco revenue per hectare among all producers. Indirectly the fact that the wealthiest tobacco producers were opting for sharecropping arrangements is a warning about the tendency of the integration of African commodity producers into global agricultural commodity chains to materialise in the expansion of forms of production characterised by low labour productivity and the exploitation of precarious and unremunerated labour, an intensification of production with little effect for productive accumulation.

One initial condition for the incorporation of hired-in workers is that farmers have access to enough land to absorb the additional labour input. The hiring of migrant workers and the engagement of sharecroppers comes with the responsibility to provide them with food and accommodation throughout the year. The tobacco enterprises in the frontier put in motion a staggered multi-year production strategy since, in order to support their tobacco production, they need to produce large volumes of maize. Tobacco farmers in the frontier zone are among the largest buyers and sellers of maize and it is common to see seasonal workers hired for producing tobacco performing tasks in maize production.

Conclusion

The examination of the different class relations proposed here is an attempt to understand the effects in the sphere of production (specialised commodity production under contract farming) of a transformation in the sphere of circulation (the integration of commodity producers into global commodity chains). In the past few decades concentration and centralisation in tobacco leaf trading has led to firms attempting to extend forms of leaf sourcing over which they exert more control, particularly in the form of contract farming.⁵⁹ Different explanations for this have been put forward. Some emphasise the role of traceability and quality control in contract farming as an exercise of the power of cigarette manufacturers over leaf merchants, or as a way of solving information asymmetry and of catering to changing consumer preferences.⁶⁰ Following Starosta's framework and the class-

analytical insights derived from the Mozambican case, an alternative explanation of IITs' interest in contract farming has been formulated here. In the context of specific balances of power between agrarian capital and labour, including *within* households, contract farming works as an arrangement in which merchant capital can capture a higher share of profit from agricultural capital in its various forms than is otherwise possible through open markets.⁶¹

For large sections of the rural population in the Mozambican hinterlands tobacco contracts are very attractive, despite the enormous demand for labour and its often slight margins in the context of advanced commodification of livelihoods and the dearth of alternative sources of inputs, credit and secure market outlets. The resilience of tobacco producers as small capital in global commodity chains (in the sense proposed by Starosta) is predicated on their capacity to produce quality cured tobacco at prices that do not always compensate for the labour costs of production. For petty commodity producers meeting this challenge entails substantial contributions of unpaid household labour and denotes self-exploitation. In contrast, for small capitalist farmers and landlords controlling labour costs is made possible by the mobilisation of workers and tenants in precarious work and contractual conditions. It is only by adopting *these* forms of surplus value extraction that *some* farmers in Angónia have managed to preserve their status as independent producers working on their own land and many have accumulated and reinvested. The contract farming scheme imposes entry barriers for farmers without enough land, liquidity, capacity to mobilise or to absorb labour force, or access to networks of support. Most households in Angónia have access to land. However, many are 'too poor to farm' commodities and are therefore forced to combine food production, casual wage employment or petty trading.

Socioeconomic differentiation in contract farming is explained in the existing literature as an effect of the squeeze on direct producers by the ITCs. In contrast, we have attempted to show how the pressures of specialised commodity production interact with existing structures of kinship, residence, property and production to produce at least three classes of producers: petty commodity producers, landlords and small capitalists. In the integrated zones where access to land is still regulated by inheritance, the large majority of farmers (79%) are petty commodity producers, use household labour and engage in simple reproduction. In some cases, such producers do well, accumulate and reinvest, and become small capitalist. In other cases they struggle, become indebted and are unable to continue producing under contract, but for the most part they produce tobacco on land that has been inherited and use mainly the labour that is available in the household. In contrast, in frontier zones with fewer limits on land acquisition, accumulation by landlords and capitalists (respectively, 15% and 54% of all farmers in the zone) is enabled by the surplus value produced by migrant workers and sharecroppers and can support processes of expanded reproduction. We propose that pressures of contract farming are transmitted differently in the case of petty commodity producers and capitalist farmers, since each exemplifies different expressions of the struggle between capital and labour and constitutes a different facet of the co-production of class, gender and kinship structures. The combination of new pressures on existing structures gives rise to new agrarian classes (with class antagonisms

taking place within the household or between employers and workers) and different forms of organising production.

Common to the prospects of survival or expansion for all three types of producers, however, is the imperative to control their costs of production, since their profit is constrained by prices fixed unilaterally by the ITC and their compliance with quality standards enforced through grading and classification. Costs, prices and quality may result in farmers failing to reproduce themselves as tobacco growers. This tension is reflected in struggles between capital and labour in all three cases.

GCC analysis and some political-economy scholarship have characterised contract farming as a system of exploitation, by merchants and processors, of African smallholder farmers, who gain access to international commodity markets but lose control over production, in the end carrying a disproportional share of the costs and risks of agriculture. In order to redress the asymmetries associated with contract farming it has been proposed to 'empower contract farmers'. For different authors 'empowerment' may take different forms, including improving chain governance, stepping up regulations, liberalising the sector or supporting farmers' collective action.

This paper has argued that the unbalances associated with contract farming are rooted instead in the class contradictions of commodity production under capitalism; in dynamics of competition between different types of capital and capitalists of different size, as well as in recursive structures of labour exploitation within farming households and between farmers and workers. There is therefore scope for empirically grounded research into the obstacles to raising labour productivity and for the development of the productive forces. Class analysis is the missing component of research into dynamics of contemporary specialised commodity production in sub-Saharan Africa.

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Notes

1. See Selwyn, "Beyond Firm-centrism"; Bonacich and Wilson, *Getting the Goods*; Starosta, "Global Commodity Chains"; and Campling, "The Tuna Commodity Frontier."
2. Mbilinyi, "Agribusiness and Women Peasants"; Watts, "life under Contract"; and Reardon and Barrett, "Agroindustrialization, Globalization and International Development."
3. Bernstein, "Capitalism and Petty Commodity"; Bernstein, "Farewells to the Peasantry"; Gibbon and Neocosmos, "Some Problems"; and Harriss-White, "Capitalism and the Common Man."
4. In contrast, in some regions of the settler colonies like South Africa and Rhodesia, as well as in the case of some European transitions, a process of – frequently coercive – separation of producers from the means of production enabled the mobilisation of labour. Bernstein, "Rural livelihoods and Agrarian Change," 101; and Vaughan, "Household Units," 37.
5. Vaughan, "Household Units"; and Guyer and Peters, "Introduction."
6. See Goger et al., *The Tobacco Global Value Chain*; and Geist et al., "Tobacco Growers at the Crossroads."
7. Contract farming is certainly not a new form of organising production. In Africa contract farming goes back to the Gezira Irrigation Scheme in Sudan in the 1920s and the Kenya Tea Development Authority established in the 1960s. See Ochieng, "The

Political economy of Contract Farming.” Moreover, forms of tobacco contract farming were practised in North American colonies starting from the 18th century. Hanssen, “Monopsony Abuse or efficient Purchasing?” Because of the sheer heterogeneity of arrangements, quantifying the advance of contract farming is challenging. However, it has been observed that contract farming now covers a wide range of commodities and is responsible for a substantial share of agricultural output in Africa. UNCTAD, *World Investment Report*; and Oya, “Contract Farming in Sub-Saharan Africa.”

8. Oya, “Contract Farming in Sub-Saharan Africa”; Smalley, *Plantations, Contract Farming*; and Prowse, *Contract Farming in Developing Countries*.

9. UNCTAD, *World Investment Report*; Geist et al., “Tobacco Growers at the Crossroads”; and Goger et al., *The Tobacco Global Value Chain*.

10. Gibbon and Ponte, *Trading Down*.

11. Oya, “Contract Farming in Sub-Saharan Africa.”

12. Bernstein, *Class Dynamics of Agrarian Change*.

13. Grosh, “Contract Farming in Africa”; Minot, *Contract Farming in Developing Countries*; and Benfica, “An Analysis of Income Poverty effects.”

14. Dorward, “The effects of Transaction Costs”; Dorward et al., “Institutions, Markets and economic Co-ordination”; World Bank, *Mozambique*; and Bijman, *Contract Farming in Developing Countries*.

15. Grosh, “Contract Farming in Africa”; Poulton et al., “The Revival of Smallholder Cash Crops”; Boughton et al., “Cotton Sector Policies”; and Prowse, *Contract Farming in Developing Countries*.

16. Porter and Phillips-Howards, “Comparing Contracts”; and UNCTAD, *World Investment Report*.

17. See, *inter alia*, Wilson, “The Political economy of Contract Farming”; Watts, “life under Contract”; Little and Watts, *Living under Contract*; Sachikonye, *State and Agribusiness in Zimbabwe*; Dolan, “Benevolent Intent?”; and Ochieng, “The Political economy of Contract Farming.”

18. Watts, “life under Contract,” 64.

19. Wilson, “The Political economy of Contract Farming.”

20. For a discussion of the differences, see Harriss-White, “Another Awkward Class.”

21. Harriss-White, “Capitalism and the Common Man”; and Gibbon and Neocosmos, “Some Problems,” 177.

22. Starosta, “Global Commodity Chains”; and Harriss-White, “Another Awkward Class.”

23. Wilson, “The Political economy of Contract Farming.” The point was raised earlier by Gibbon and Neocosmos: ‘either peasants are employed as a form of wage labour and are subject to capitalist exploitation in the form of surplus value extraction based on the commodity status of labour power; or they may be regulated as one type of capitalist enterprise by another type of capitalist enterprise with the effect of a particular allocation of the general distribution of total surplus value.’ Gibbon and Neocosmos, “Some Problems,” 163.

24. Gibbon and Ponte, *Trading Down*.

25. Bernstein, “Farewells to the Peasantry,” 7.

26. Carney, “Struggles over Crop Rights”; Mbilinyi, “Agribusiness and Women Peasants”; and von Bülow and Sørensen, “Gender and Contract Farming” all study the political economy

of contract farming in intersection with gender and lineage relations – in the Gambia, Tanzania and Kenya, respectively – but not employing a class-analytical approach.

27. Hill, *The Migrant Cocoa-farmers*; Chauveau and Richards, “West African Insurgencies”; Vaughan, “Household Units”; Gastellu, “Matrilineages, economic Groups and Differentiation”; and Dolan, “Benevolent Intent?”

28. Kitching, *Class and Economic Change*.

29. Goger et al., *The Tobacco Global Value Chain*.

30. As is the case with many other semi-perishable commodities, the segments of the tobacco chain are highly dispersed geographically. However, through the merger in 2005 of Dimon Inc. and Standard Co., the sector’s second and third largest merchants, global leaf trading has become a highly concentrated oligopsony. Goger et al., *The Tobacco Global Value Chain*.

31. The trend towards contract farming taking over spot and auction markets is taking place in all tobacco-producing regions and has unfolded in the period in which tobacco leaf procurement has shifted to low-income countries. See Hanssen, “Monopsony Abuse or efficient Purchasing?”; and Goger et al., *The Tobacco Global Value Chain*.

32. With 28,000 employees, operations in 40 countries and revenue of US\$2.6 billion in 2011, Universal Corporation claims to process 35%–45% of tobacco produced in Africa. Goger et al., *The Tobacco Global Value Chain*; and Pérez Niño, “Post-conflict Agrarian Change.”

33. Wuyts, “The Agrarian Question.”

34. There are a couple of smaller local traders who sourced for MLT. See also Riggins and Palos, “Tobacco Company Penalties”; Pérez Niño, “Post-conflict Agrarian Change”; and Benfica, “An Analysis of Income Poverty effects.”

35. DPA, *Relatório de Produção*.

36. Ippan et al., *Tobacco Control and Tobacco Farming*. Mozambique has the world’s fastest growing tobacco sector. See also Eriksen, *Tobacco Atlas*.

37. World Bank, “World Development Indicators.”

38. It was estimated that 23,222 farmers in Angónia would have production contracts by 2014 and roughly one in every three households in the district has a tobacco contract. The study included descriptive analysis of production data for selected clusters in the district; the implementation of a household survey of 102 tobacco-producing households and in-depth interviews with a selection of respondents. Fieldwork was conducted over eight months in 2012 and 2013. Pérez Niño, “Post-conflict Agrarian Change.”

39. Uxorilocal residence is the system in which married couples live with the wife’s lineage.

40. Englund, *From War to Peace*.

41. Douglas, “Is Matriliney Doomed?”; Vaughan, “Household Units”; and Peters, “Against the Odds.”

42. Douglas, “Is Matriliney Doomed?”

43. Vernacular land markets are forms of market-based access to land within the sphere of customary land tenure in Africa. The authors demonstrate that these markets are of growing importance and represent a *de facto* commodification of land. See Chimhowu and Woodhouse, “Customary vs. Private Property Rights.” Compare with the creation of fictive kinship ties and the recreation of matrilineal groups among Malawian tobacco tenants in the Shire Highlands in the 1930s, in Vaughan, “Household Units.”

44. Vaughan, "Household Units."
45. These effects are not particular to matrilineal societies. For example, Dolan describes the tensions introduced by contract farming in horticulture in Meru (Kenya), where women lost usufruct rights to land owned by men and gendered struggles around the division of labour and the control of income ensued. Dolan, "Benevolent Intent?"
46. Vaughan, "Household Units."
47. *Ibid.*, 43 There is a telling contrast with sites in which contract farming resulted in the encroachment on women's rights to land and to autonomy over their labour time, as was the case with an irrigated rice scheme in the Gambia in Carney, "Struggles over Crop Rights", and with tea farmers in Kericho (Kenya) in von Bülow and Sørensen, "Gender and Contract Farming."
48. Bernstein, "Capitalism and Petty Commodity Production"; Gibbon and Neocosmos, "Some Problems"; and Harriss-White, "Capitalism and the Common Man." Petty commodity producers are farmers irreversibly integrated into markets who combine within their households the class positions and functions of capital and labour. These roles are not evenly distributed within households, giving rise to contradictions and conflict around the gendered division of labour, property and income. expenditure creates contradictions between production and reproduction. As a class in contemporary capitalism, petty commodity producers are particularly unstable: as they accumulate, they become emergent capitalist farmers but when they are not able to reproduce their household on the basis of their own labour, they may be forced into wage employment and petty trade, even if they remain in possession of the means of production. Bernstein, *Class Dynamics of Agrarian Change*.
49. Watts, "life under Contract."
50. This need not be a cooperative move. In the Rungwe case study with tea outgrowers in Tanzania women's off-farm casual employment was a form of protest against men's unwillingness to redistribute the proceeds from the tea contracts. Mbilinyi, "Agribusiness and Women Peasants."
51. Bernstein, "Considering Africa's Agrarian Questions."
52. Peters, "Introduction."
53. This is a common practice in contract farming schemes across SSA but it receives far less attention than, for example, gender inequality in land titling. It should be noted that contracts are entry points for credit, agronomical assistance and economic and political visibility, from which women are excluded when contracts are signed exclusively by men. Von Bülow and Sørensen, "Gender and Contract Farming."
54. However, the sense of women's ownership over tobacco, participation in decision making and proceeds from tobacco in Angónia stand in stark contrast to the gender politics of contract tea in Kenya, where land is owned by men and women's labour contribution is seen as an obligation to their husbands. See von Bülow and Sørensen, "Gender and Contract Farming."
55. Mbilinyi linked contract farming specifically with the simultaneous commodification and casualisation of women's labour in Tanzania. Mbilinyi, "Agribusiness and Women Peasants." Conjugal tension around labour shortages among PCP outgrowers in Kericho was not solely attributable to the labour shortfall in the household, but also to the sheer

competition for hired-in casual labour in peak-labour periods. See von Bülow and Sørensen, “Gender and Contract Farming.”

56. Hanssen, “Monopsony Abuse or efficient Purchasing?”

57. Guyer and Peters, “Introduction”; Dolan, “Benevolent Intent?”; Carney, “Struggles over Crop Rights”; and von Bülow and Sørensen, “Gender and Contract Farming” provide empirical examples for Tanzania and Kenya of women withdrawing their labour contribution to household farming as a reaction to increased demands on their time in contract farming.

58. Friedmann, “Patriarchal Commodity Production”; Bernstein, “Farewells to the Peasantry”; and Harriss-White, “Capitalism and the Common Man.”

59. The expansion of contract farming is, however, not exclusive to tobacco or to African agriculture. Oya, “Contract Farming in Sub-Saharan Africa.”

60. Moyer-lee, “Agricultural Global Value Chains”; and Hanssen, “Monopsony Abuse or efficient Purchasing.”

61. 61. Starosta, “Global Commodity Chains.”

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