

Ulbe Bosma, *The Sugar Plantation in India and Indonesia; Industrial Production, 1770-2010* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013) 323 p. ISBN 978-1-107-03969-8.

For those who could afford the luxury, cane sugar has long been a preferred sweetener on the European market. It was imported from Caribbean plantations, where it was produced by slave labour. In the early 19th century it became a major global commodity. Changing consumption patterns of middle class Europeans demanded ever increasing quantities. Also because abolitionist campaigns hurt the image of Caribbean sugar, transferring production to Asian colonies was a serious option. Bosma describes the attempts of colonial powers to change local conditions in two Asian colonies in order to make these suitable for the industrial production of sugar.

The book is a result of renewed interest in sugar as a global commodity, signified by the publication of 'Sugarlandia revisited' in 2007. Sugarlandia intended to work out the connection between global processes and local histories. In 2013 two of its editors have published on the topic again. Bosma concentrates on a comparison between de trajectories of the sugar industry in India and Indonesia. A main point in this study is to challenge the nineteenth-century evolutionist model which assumed a fixed nexus between capitalism, technology and (free) labour. Servile labour was supposed to be an obstacle to technological advance. The author shows that colonial powers tried to change local social conditions to arrive at total control over the entire production process: land, labour, technology, and botany. This often resulted in introducing a plantation format, with (semi-) coerced labour. This model proved to be very resilient. Even after independence both countries returned to plantation-type sugar manufacturing. A successful sugar industry depended on the alliance of the management, the local landholding rural elites, and the state, plus a control over trading and banking infrastructure. Such a control was realized in 19th century Java. Initially by coerced labour and the obligation to cultivate cane on part of the land. Late in the nineteenth century by means of advance payments as well as pressure by the village heads, who could expect to be remunerated well for their efforts. After 1900 technology and botany increased yields to enable the industry to compete on the world market. In British-India on the other hand, the sugar industry was not successful in the 19th century. Bosma explains the different trajectory by showing that the local situation made the introduction of the plantation model more complicated. There were high import duties on East India sugar on the British market, because Caribbean planters had more influence in London than their competitors in India. In Java on the other hand, a creole planters aristocracy existed with good metropolitan relations. Peasants in India had an alternative market for their cane in the manufacturers of

traditional gur-sugar and the position of village heads was less dominant. Particularly in Bengal there was a fragmentation of land, complicating the task to get enough land close to the factory. It was not before the twentieth century that the control over production factors increased in India. The government stepped in with irrigation works and high duties on imported Java-sugar. In Java as well as in Bombay Deccan and Madras the plantation model resulted not in involution, but in less upward mobility and increasingly skewed distribution of land.

By comparing trajectories of Java and three regions in India, the author correctly stresses the role of place and space as an initial context and a process instead of a passive background. It is good to see maps in a social-history study. It is a pity therefore that names in the shaded regions of India cannot be read and several regions mentioned in the text are not shown. The maps of Java incorrectly locate Malang on top of the Semeru volcano, Yogyakarta on the coast, and western Tegal as not producing sugar. References to ecology are often vague, or serve as simple explanation for e.g. the lack of higher yields after irrigation works (p. 136). The argument that the factories needed to control the fields and labour is convincing. However, this argument is overstated by saying that making the most powerful local farmers their allies was the *only* way to achieve this (p. 213). Irrigation was not only a technological blessing. The advanced irrigation systems in the early 20th century gave government and manufacturers complete control over the distribution of water. In Java the population was under pressure to provide land at low prices because otherwise water could be withheld during (part of) the dry season. In spite of these remarks, this book should be read by anybody interested in the history of these colonies or the development of global commodities.

Arthur van Schaik

David W. Gutzke, *Women drinking out in Britain since the early twentieth century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014) 304 p. ISBN 978-0-7190-5264-4.

Although some useful articles have been written about women drinking in public places, this book by historian David Gutzke is a welcome addition to the rather limited historiography. His monograph forms a cultural history dealing with British women's thoughts and behaviour regarding alcoholic beverages, and the societal forces that influenced them. The story is familiar, yet remarkable. The cultural factors that played a role in the evolution of women's drinking habits are well known: the patriarchal values governing public life during most of the twentieth century, social Progressivism, the two World Wars that changed gender relations, first- and second-wave feminism, and the historical class segmentation of British society. Re-