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Child labour, agency and Africa's colonial system: the case of Portuguese colonies, 1870-1975

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Abstract

The use and migration of labour in colonial Africa has been an issue of much debate. However, child labour literature focusing on a historical perspective in Sub-Saharan Africa is understudied and, consequently, the findings for the few studied cases are generalised for the continent at large. This work attempts to address this gap by looking to the case of Portuguese ex-colonies. Contrasting against competing theories, I argue that belonging to a minor empire counted less than belonging to a poorer territory, i.e. with fewer resources. In spite of figures such as forced or pawn labour, African adult male labour had sufficient agency to follow higher wages paid in Rhodesian and South African mines. Children, with comparatively less agency, were either used as auxiliary roles in the higher paying jobs or to replace adult labour in plantations and other activities abandoned by adults.

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Introduction

Transformations during colonial rule in Africa increased the needs of labour for production in an economy integrated in a world market. Taxation and forced labour were used as a means to deliver the needed labour force. At the same time, the high mobility of labour was both a means of resistance, but also of search for better labour conditions. Migration crossed empire borders and, therefore, this had redistributive implications in the labour endowments of colonial empires. These implications affected both the labour markets of origin and of destiny, including their use of child labour.

However, child labour literature focusing on a historical perspective is geographically unequal. An analysis of the seminal compilation of Hindman (2009a) reveals that the number of articles and pages on child labour history in developed countries is more than twice the number of contributions on developing countries (54 articles and 203 pages vs. 25 articles and 93 pages).[2] Particularly, child labour in Sub-Saharan Africa is understudied with only one general article and 5 country cases amounting to 23 pages (out of 296 pages) and none relates to the Portuguese ex-colonies. Accordingly, some authors refer to these children as "invisible workers" (Chirwa, 1993) or "invisible hands" (Grier, 1994).

The quest for providing a characterization for historical child labour in Sub-Saharan Africa has led often to generalize some of the findings for the studied cases to the continent at large and contributing to a misleading typical African child labour history. These accounts fail in that they do not differentiate local specificities and underplay the hierarchies of regions. This work provides insights into a presently far too aggregated story of child labour and education in Sub-Saharan Africa by looking to the

[2] Hindman's (2009a) gathers the existing world literature on child labour in a meticulous and exhaustive geographic compilation. Based on chapter titles, the volume comprises 961 pages of articles, but only 296 focus on a historical perspective. The number of articles in developing countries' child labour history is, actually, an upper bound as several of the articles were specially commissioned for the atlas and draw on a thinner literature.

Portuguese colonies.[3] The period under study covers the start of the intensification of the colonial settlements in Africa to the end of the Portuguese colonial period. The objective is to contrast the use of child labour against the overall labour needs and whether the relationships with other territories had a bearing on child labour.

The work conditions of children in the then Portuguese colonies had rarely received any attention by the regime and by the society. To colonial eyes, natives were alike and for long the particular needs of children were not recognised. This was exacerbated by the late economic and social development of mainland Portugal itself, particularly on childhood and child labour issues (Goulart and Bedi, 2015). To local and international critics of colonialism the appalling general situation of the colonial question dominated the concerns, and "specific" questions like children and women issues were left behind, or for later. In academia, probably resulting from the scarce attention and information on the topic, it has merely been mentioned as a side aspect of other topics or as related to labour conditions in other country cases, e.g. labour in South African mines, with a few exceptions.

With competing labour needs in different activities, the role of African agency has been recently under the spotlight. The traditional literature has often depicted a country's development as dependent on the initial resources or the colonial heritage. However, given the mobility of a key resource such as labour, a new narrative claims a larger role for African agency (Frankema et al., 2014; Andersson and Green, 2013). On children, there has been a strand of the literature emphasising their agency, although its historical representatives are fewer and not on Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. White, 2012).

Given the lack of direct sources, I derive information from sources focused on other purposes and from the sparse existing statistics. While not necessarily

[3] Another strand of the literature has made an important distinction about child labour in Sub-Saharan Africa by distinguishing child labour practices across different tribes. See for example Andvig (2001), Chirwa (1993), van Hear (1982). This paper does not do that.

representative for the whole Portuguese African colonial system, providing significant examples of Angola, Mozambique and São Tomé and Principe illustrates four type of regions with different roles: mining zones; highly profitable plantations; settler farms; and what was considered zones of labour reserves.

I survey the literature and compile existing data to argue that belonging to a minor empire counted less than belonging to a poorer territory. Fewer attractive resources such as minerals led to lower wages and more difficulties in attracting adult labour, which potentiate the use of alternative sources such as children. In spite of figures such as forced or pawn labour, African adult male labour had often sufficient agency to follow higher wages. This was in stark contrast with children which, with comparatively less agency, were often used in auxiliary roles in the higher paying jobs and to replace adult labour in plantations and other activities abandoned by adults.

This article is organised as follows. First, I discuss the complex country interplay in the colonial production and labour systems, highlight the labour supply in colonial Sub-Saharan Africa and introduce the specificities of the Portuguese colonial empire. Second, to provide a comparative scenario, I describe child labour in pre-colonial status to then discuss child labour in the colonial labour system, first for Colonial Africa in general and then for Portuguese Africa in particular.

The dynamics of labour supply in colonial Africa

The colonial production system and the labour market

To understand the use of child labour in Africa is fundamental to look at Africa's determinants of growth from four different perspectives. First, earlier theories focused on the existing type of resources. Contrary to the common believe that Africa had plenty of labour resources, these were in fact scarce relatively to the land available. In addition, the extraction of labour resources for slavery in the Americas could have long-lasting

effects.[4] In a context of scarce labour, how can one justify the insistence in the labour-intensive model? The ingrained view of "cheap labour" led to search labour further afield instead of introducing machinery (Myint, 1958).

Domar (1970) put forward the free land hypothesis to explain how land abundance presented a different challenge to landowners. It hypothesises that in labour-abundant territories wages will be affordable because of diminishing labour marginal productivity, but in land- and natural resources-abundant (/labour scarce) territories the going wage rate is too expensive for landowners. The latter may prompt solutions based on slavery or serfdom to ensure substantial returns. Being labour the scarce factor, the social rank of the landowner depended more "on the number of souls (registered male peasants) that he owned" than the extension of its land (Domar, 1970:26). With labour being expensive, only very lucrative activities would be able to afford it.[5]

While these theories dwell on the role of the quantity of resources on resource use, they neglect the importance of resource quality or its potential endogenous character. Engerman and Sokoloff (2012) develop their factor endowment theory to include quality issues such as type of land. Not all land is as productive and tropical land frequently present a higher 'forest rent' with land productivity after the first crop (Austin, 2008).

A second stream of authors have focused not on what, but on who and how these administered the resources. Given that Africa's colonisation had a particular large set of colonisers, it allows to contrast the current level of development of African countries according to colonisers. Therefore, New Institutionalists have stressed the importance of the colonial power in that development. According to this explanation,

[4] For example, Nunn (2007) develops a path dependence model to argue that if the extraction of resources is too high it may lead to a low production equilibrium, even in a context of secure property rights.

[5] Engerman and Margo (2010) explain the introduction of slavery exclusively in the South of United States because in the North the crops were less profitable.

British colonial possessions ended up more developed for its more helpful rule (North, 1989). Since then, others have refuted this argument on the basis that British had selected the most hospitable regions (Acemoglu et al., 2001) or taken the most endowed regions (Engerman and Sokoloff, 2012).[6]

Third, another stream of authors have instead privileged how the different territories and administration interacted. For Dependency theorists (particularly Marxist historians), the unequal land grabbing and the thereafter established relationships reflected the role of hierarchy and power relations between colonial empires. The strength and development of colonial powers were considerably different with a reflection in the standards of living, as depicted in Table 1 by comparing infant mortality rates in Colonial Africa. By 1940, metropolitan Portugal had an infant mortality rate level more than the triple of the white South Rhodesians, almost the triple of white South Africans but almost the same as black South Africans. Only after the 1960s did the Portuguese metropolitan infant mortality rate distinguished significantly from the one of black South Africans. Blacks living in the Portuguese colonies had considerable higher infant mortality rates than in the metropolis reflecting being the periphery of the periphery.[7]

[Table 1 about here]

Following these disparities of power and development of the colonial powers, possessions of less powerful colonial powers such as Portugal would be hierarchically dependent on territories from more powerful nations. Strong hierarchical relationships

[6] An alternative institutional version has stressed the role of pre-colonial structures and particularly the positive impact of the degree of centralization (Gennaioli and Rainer, 2007). Others have mixed these taxonomies. For example, Heldring and Robinson (2012) when evaluating counterfactuals distinguish between three different types of territories: with a pre-colonial centralized state, white settlements and "the rest".

[7] Portuguese colonies lagged behind the metropolis and the neighbouring colonies in most accounts. Preliminary estimates calculated by the author using official data for 1970 set infant mortality rates at 70 to 95 per 1000 live births in the Portuguese colonies. The regular disclaimer on official colonial data and on the potential non-coverage of natives applies.

tied the territories creating core and periphery in the colonial system with some concentrating capital and others supplying necessary inputs (Clarence-Smith, 1985). Examples of such dependence include migrations from the French colonial authorities of Upper Volta to the neighbouring British gold Coast (Cordell and Gregory, 1982) or from Mozambique to South African mines. In addition to labour, European powers required an improvement of infrastructure for the extraction of resources. The railways and the Maputo port were expanded to channel products from Rhodesia and from the mines of Witwatersrand (O'Laughlin, 2002a).

In spite of this attempt to streamline an explanation of the relationships between territories, other literature suggests a more nuanced view that emphasises complexity. A first strand acknowledges that, while some territories are hierarchically dependent on others, this does not necessarily coincide with empire hierarchies. Some English territories drained resources from Portuguese colonies as some Portuguese plantations used labour from English territories (Newitt, 1984). This complex weave of economic relations shaped fundamentally labour demand and child labour needs.

A second strand applies development theories that see these interactions between territories in a more benign way. Myint (1958) suggested that a natural resource rich African economy (and particularly its remote areas) benefited from trade by integrating world/colonial trade through selling its idle or underused resources (including labour).[8] This vent for surplus theory can be traced back to Adam Smith although he predicted a rise in productivity through specialization and not through the use of underused resources. For Ghana, empirical results of this vent for surplus theory are, however, mixed (Ingham, 1979; Austin 2014). Austin (2014) argues that instead of a use of previously idle resources, cocoa in Ghana is a story of a reallocation of resources from food crops and other activities to cash-crops.

[8] Vent for surplus applies to peasant export sectors but not to mines or plantations due to their exploitative nature and the destruction of the traditional society (Myint, 1958).

Finally, another stream emphasises the dynamics of abundance and its uncertainty as key to understand African development. Barbier (2011) reviewing Guido di Tella's contribution stresses the importance of the discovery or conquest of new resources (land, mines) or technology. Much of this can be promoted and searched although some may be considered a beggar-thy-neighbour policy, e.g. conquest.

Though all these streams provide interesting views on the determinants of growth in Africa, they do not pay much attention to the mobility of resources. Capital and labour movements are characteristic of many frontier developments, and a key aspect influencing the resource intensity of the technology used. Its mobility raises uncertainty that may be curbed but not made disappear. Focusing on labour, Frankema et al. (2014) and Andersson and Green (2013) pave new avenues by discussing the extent of native agency. While labour mobility may reflect top-down public policy design, these are rarely deterministic, presenting a case for native agency, even if limited.

Colonisation and Labour Needs in Sub-Saharan Africa

With the advent of colonisation, the structure of production diverged. The penetration of colonialism across the continent aimed at a rich source of primary (mining and agricultural) commodities. However, because Africa was resource abundant, but not resource rich, the use of its resources was considerably conditioned. For example, thin soils and tse-tse flies impeded agricultural development, while the dry season made difficult the use of certain resources (Austin, 2008). In addition, replanted land would lose the productivity from the initial tropical deforestation for agriculture, in what was coined as 'forest rent' (Austin, 2008:599). Functioning markets in pre-colonial West-Africa explain the low level of use of some of these resources (Ronnback, 2014). These limitations to intensive use of land led to use extensive cultivation and/or to recur to labour intensive technologies.

The creation of primary sector economic enclaves or the settlement of colonists in African colonies is intensified after 1870 (Barbier, 2011). The spread of colonisation was only possible with a revolution in intercontinental transports to make markets accessible, and prominently with the introduction of the railways and of the lorry for intra-African transport (Austin, 2008).

The areas with larger European settlements would increasingly introduce capitalist forms of organisation in contrast with traditional peasant Africa. "Under-utilised" land and labour would be mobilised for the growing export and urban markets. In Ghana, the area allocated for cocoa increased more than 300 times from 1901–36 (Austin, 2014). Colonial regimes across Africa transferred land rights to European companies and settlers across the continent, promoting large monocrop plantations and small-medium sized settler farms.

With the expansion of colonial control over resources, demand for labour skyrocketed, but the labour supply could not follow. As plantations expanded, more and more labour was needed: for example, in Ghana, cocoa production increased 328 times from 1900 to 1920 (van Hear, 1982; Austin, 2014). From 1945 to 1960, white settlers tripled in Southern Rhodesia (Andersson and Green, 2013). While African population was actually growing more than previous estimates (Frankema and Jerven, 2014), this was not enough to meet the explosion in demand. In addition, the seasonal overlapping of labour needs between the commercial farms and the traditional African planting seasons created at times labour shortages (Chirwa, 1993). In Swaziland, a farmer complained:

> "More than half my gardens are lying idle today. Why? Just because I can not get the labour to carry on." (quoted in Simelane, 1998:583).

Several factors explain this lack of responsiveness of labour supply. As the slave trade decreased, by 1850s the accumulated excess labour was diverted to increasing plantations (Newitt, 1981), but it was not enough. Africa's high mortality rate took away

many workers, long before the mortality decline in the demographic transition. In addition, the traditional survival economy made Africans resistant to waged labour, certainly reinforced by the exploitative working conditions offered.

Primary commodities prices varied considerably, affecting labour demand. During the Second World War the increase in prices of certain commodities led to an increased demand for labour. For example, the increase in rubber plantations required recruitment from farther populations (Fenske, 2014).[9] After World War II labour shortages would continue also as native labour turned to subsistence production for example during the famine of 1949 in Nyasaland (Chirwa, 1993).

Given that the labour intensive colonial system needed labour, two main mechanisms were used to boost labour supply. First, the introduction and subsequent increases of taxation by colonial regimes forced in practice the integration of Africans in the labour market to earn currency (Levine, 2009; Frankema, 2010).[10] As the Commissioner of the Colonial Office put it in 1904: 'you must pay your taxes, if you have no money to pay your taxes, then you can always go and work to obtain it' (19 November, 1904, cited in Chirwa, 1993:667). Second, colonisation built on the existing structures (slave and debt-servant labour) to supply the peasant cash crop production or public works with the much needed labour (Grier, 2009a; Frankema and van Waijenburg, 2014). Britain abolished Atlantic slave trade in 1807, but this was only later extended to its colonies: South Ghana in 1874, North Ghana in 1908, all colonies in 1914 (Bezemer, Bolt and Lensink, 2014). The implementation of these laws could take even longer (Austin, 2008). The non-enforcement of anti-domestic slavery or pawning laws was

[9] Military conscription also contributed to labour shortages during World War II (Cordell and Gregory, 1982).

[10] In British Zimbabwe, tax increases were enormous. "The Native Tax Ordinance of 1904 replaced the hut tax of 10 shillings with a head tax of 20 shillings, payable by every 'adult' African male" (Grier, 1994:37). Frankema and van Waijenburg, (2014) suggest that British and French rule in Africa were similar regarding taxation, once one compares similar contexts.

justified by colonial officers as these were "African customs that would die a natural death with the advance of 'civilization'" (Grier, 2004:7).[11]

Planters themselves lobbied for colonial administration to directly coerce labourers through forced labour, labour laws, penalties for desertion, pass laws, or immigration (Grier, 1994). For example, this was briefly the case in Nyasaland in 1898 and 1904 (Chirwa, 1993), but even these attempts were unsuccessful in supplying the full amount of labour needed. While settlers depended on colonial policies for success, governments were not always forthcoming to their interests (Frankema et al., 2014). Conflicting interests between colonial departments − e.g. Agriculture vs. Forestry department (Fenske, 2014), between public and private needs of labour (Cordell and Gregory, 1982), and particularly the limitation of colonial control − established limits on the capacity to mobilise many workers at artificially very low wages.

> "So far as labour is concerned, it is getting scarce, there is no doubt about it. We can not keep our complement of natives. As a matter of fact, I was reproached the other day for having raised wages. Well, I had to raise wages in order to keep my natives from going elsewhere." (Farmer in 1938 Swaziland, quoted in Simelane, 1998:583).

The lack of the needed labour can be explained by workers moving places to avoid colonial imposition or simply by following higher wages (Cordell and Gregory, 1982). Unsurprisingly, low wages or harsh working conditions were leaving certain areas of colonial Africa with systematic labour shortages. In addition, in the zones with more settlers, Africans were being expelled to farther, less productive and small-sized lands, in a way that their survival would depend on migrant wage labour (Austin, 2008). The expelled natives concentrated in 'reserves' in South Africa or Kenya (Levine, 2009;

[11] In the meantime, this type of labour arrangement took its toll. For example, the construction of the Congo-Océan railway (1921-1934) used 127.000 forced African labourers of which more than 16 percent died (Frankema and van Waijenburg, 2014). Labour arrangements would change. Slave labour was the first to disappear and, eventually, pawn labour would follow. Britain signed the ILO treaties in the 1930s to halt forced labour but delayed the implementation, while French would not even sign it (Frankema and van Waijenburg, 2014). By the end of World War II, British West Africa banned pawn labour and contributed to its decline together with the appearance of other loan mechanisms and events.

Moradi, 2008).[12] Therefore, land deprival, taxation and low wages led to the weakening of the traditional structures, which further promoted the emigration by black Africans. Unsurprisingly, Ward (1950: 130) finds that 23 percent of a local population in Togo migrated and of these almost one third were under the age of 15.

Through migration, black workers gained access to higher earnings and potentially a basis for accumulation. In a colonial world of white legislation and supremacy, migration was vehicle for black agency:

> A month ago I had eight natives working, of these one has left, two have given notice to leave, and two have indicated a desire to do the same. Perhaps, now probably, the three will want to go. The result is that I can not plough all my fields (Farmer in 1943 Swaziland quoted in Simelane, 1998:584).

Gold mines in South Africa and South Ghana were major sources of labour attraction as their more profitable activities paid higher wages. Half to three-quarters of Southern Rhodesian mines' workers came from Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique (Grier, 1994). Gold mines and cocoa production in South Ghana relied initially in the migrants from Northern Ghana but by 1910 French territories and Togoland would also become source regions (van Hear, 1982).[13] Money came, however, at a price and these migrant workers had often high mortality rates (Chirwa, 1993).

Once again, this gave rise to a complex hierarchy of regions. While some locations got prioritised, other regions became labour reserves. The provincial commissioner of the Central Province in Nyasaland registers the prevalence of internal migration flows with 'nearly every young unmarried man' leaving to work in South Nyasaland (Chirwa, 1993:672). Much of the migrations crossed borders of regions or

[12] Nonetheless, there is evidence of successful black African farmers in colonial Ghana (Austin, 2014) and colonial Zimbabwe (Andersson and Green, 2013). Frankema et al. (2014) study the cases of cocoa (colonial Ghana and Ivory Coast), coffee (colonial Kenya and Tanzania) and tobacco farming (colonial Malawi and Zimbabwe) where African small farmers out-competed white farmers with exception of colonial Zimbabwe.

[13] In Ghana, cash crop cocoa production relied on Black African producers, but was increasingly brought under the White population control.

empires, perhaps surprisingly, as labour could travel long distances at a time of greater transport impairment. For example, Ugandan African farms in cash crop regions benefited from the influx of workers of poorer neighbouring regions (de Haas, 2014), but Nyasalanders could go as far as to South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Belgian Congo and Tanganyika (Chirwa, 1993). If British colonies in average gained labour from other colonies (Frankema and van Waijenburg (2014), this was not the case for all sub-regions, and it is at this scale that the analysis must focus.

As demand for labour increased, private recruiting and competition between firms led to abuses and cheating workers such as in Nyasaland in 1897 (Chirwa, 1993). In response, government intervened but compulsory labour measures failed or proved insufficient and coping alternatives needed to emerge. In Swaziland, different tenancy arrangements were introduced.[14] In Colonial Zimbabwe, the introduction of new technologies such as chemical fertilisers and tractors from 1923 to 1955 doubled worker productivity and decreased labour needs (Andersson and Green, 2013).

Colonisation and Labour Needs in the Portuguese colonies

The process of colonisation of Portuguese African colonies was slower and, only at the end of 19th century, did it accelerate. São Tomé and Príncipe started earlier because of its integration in the world economy, similarly to the rest of West Africa (Frankema and Jerven, 2014). The development of its colonisation accompanied coffee and particularly cocoa export plantations with their growing labour needs. Consequently, immigration increased and population is estimated to have grown 62 percent in just 10 years: from 42,000 in 1900 to 68,000 black workers in 1909 (Mantero, 1954). This gives an average annual growth rate of 6,9% compared to a 0,3% for the African continent (Frankema and Jerven, 2014). In Mozambique, incapable of exploiting it and pressured

[14] In most cases, the tenants had to work for free for the landlord for a specific number of months. In Southern Swaziland this was often six months. In other cases, the landlord would have preference over the tenants but contracted them at the prevailing wage rate, or would receive a monetary rent for the use of land (Simelane, 1998).

by the other colonial powers, Portugal rented out significant parts of the country to English, French and German capital.[15] Labour intensive monoculture plantations of cotton, sugar, rice, tea and copra were established with the objective of exporting the crops (Mosca, 2005).

Plantations were one of the major demanders of labour. The profitable cocoa plantations in São Tomé and Príncipe initially attracted migrant workers from the nearby West Africa (Mantero, 1954), but by 1909 the sources of labour were the Portuguese African colonies such as Angola (Keese, 2013) and even including the farther Mozambique (Mantero, 1954). Almost half of the workers were from Angola's hinterland but Cape Verde had also relevant migrant flows despite its smaller population. Each provenience provided different qualified personnel filling in the different ranks of the plantation workforce: from the more 'civilised' Cape Verde, urban Mozambique and Cabinda to the less 'civilised' Angola's and Mozambique's hinterlands and Guinea-Bissau (Mantero, 1954).

Some Mozambican plantations were also attracting migrants. Sena Sugar States in Tete was an example, hiring from different labour sources due to an extremely hierarchical production process. The company was financed by England and had considered to plant opium, but dedicated itself to sugar plantation and factory production (Head, 1980). The production process was organised in the following manner: English and South Africans were employed in administrative and technical roles, while Portuguese were at an intermediary level. Factory specialised workers came from Mauritius, while in the fields there were Mozambicans and migrants from neighbouring

[15] Until then, the most important role for Mozambique had been supporting the route to India and Portuguese's interest had resumed to gold, ivory and slave trade. The penetration into the inland was slow and most administration and army personnel had Indian origin.

regions (Mosca, 2005), with 15 to 25 percent of its labour coming from Nyasaland (Chirwa, 1993).[16]

Nevertheless, the profitable South African mines were the most attractive with up to 24 percent of the registered Mozambican labour force, in spite of the grim conditions (Mosca, 2005). While its impact was larger in the south of the country (Isaacman, 1992), it drained Mozambican labour reserves to the point of affecting northern and central plantations. Even the supply of other Portuguese colonies labour needs such as cocoa farming in São Tomé and Príncipe was said to be affected (Mantero, 1954).

This is not to say that all plantations payed low wages. São Tomé and Príncipe generated the double of tax per capita than mainland Portugal due to its plantations (Mantero, 1954). Their farm wages were also higher than in other colonies as illustrated by Table 2. House, food and clothing was provided by the employer on top of the wage, but half of the salary was only paid upon return to their homes (Mantero, 1954).

[Table 2 about here]

Part of the higher wages compensated the higher intensity and detrimental effects of work. Slavery had been abolished in 1879 (O'Laughlin, 2002b), but forced labour continued to be used. The exact conditions on these plantations were under much scrutiny and received considerable criticism. The harshness of plantation labour conditions and whether slave labour was used in cocoa plantations in São Tomé and Principe and Angola became famous during the Cadbury's controversy. While

[16] Colonial Portugal was also a complex weave of hierarchy and race. Building upon the white-black basic segregation, the empire was stratified in a multi-layered production functions. First, Portugal restricted the access of non-whites to intermediary positions across the empire. Administration or commerce positions were only available to upper-middle classes from Cape Vert and India. This was also applicable to the design of the empire, with India as the colonial head office of Mozambique until 1752. Second, a minority of the local population who had 'assimilated' the Portuguese ways had been co-opted for the Portuguese administration, such as local leaders, policemen and others. In the end of the colonial era, these *assimilados* amounted to no more than 1 percent of the population (Mosca, 2005). Finally, many white settlers were illiterate and unskilled, coming from rural Portugal, being poor "even by the standards of colonial Africa" (Mahoney, 2003). These were themselves condemned to lower hierarchical positions.

Portuguese 1903 labour laws were not immediately implemented, labour scarcity had led to alleged better work conditions by improving workers' bargaining power (Higgs, 2012).

Mantero (1954), a plantation owner himself, argues that standards for the working conditions and the hiring of firms were higher for the Portuguese plantations of São Tomé and Príncipe than the ones enforced in South African mines or in the Portuguese farming itself. Reports, for example, on the work schedule are however not definitive. While a farmer in Continental Portugal worked between 10-12 hours, reports of schedules for plantations in São Tomé and Principe ranged between nine and a half (Mantero, 1954) to eleven and a half-hours workdays (Júdice Biker in Higgs, 2012:21).

The rise of Salazar and *Estado Novo* would bring changes. Colonial primary commodities were redirected to supply Portuguese industries with cheap raw materials. Main exports were cotton, cashew, tea, copra and sisal in the case of Mozambique (Mosca, 2005) and coffee, sisal and diamonds in the case of Angola (Valério e Fontoura, 1994). Peanuts cultivated in the south of Mozambique grew threefold from 1925 to 1936 (Isaacman, 1992). Therefore, problems of labour supply continued or were even aggravated.

In addition, colonial Portugal was also historically a source of labour for more attractive activities in neighbouring countries as labour moved to earn two to ten times more, particularly from Mozambique. Northern Mozambicans migrated mostly to work in sisal plantations in Tanzania (Mosca, 2005) or to Nyasaland (Chirwa, 1993), while Southern Mozambicans migrated to South Rhodesian or Swaziland farms (Simelane, 1998), but the majority continued to go to the mines of South-Africa. Gold mine wages were attractive to the workers but also indirectly to the Portuguese colonial

administration.[17] From 1931 to 1970, Mozambican miners varied between 24 and 35 percent of workers in South African mines (Mosca, 2005).

As a response to these labour needs, Portugal followed other colonial techniques of promoting integration of black Africans in the labour market such as the obligation of tax payments in cash. Similarly to Colonial Britain, the integration of native labour in the colonial economy was a priority and that was stamped in the law:

> "All natives of the overseas provinces are subject to the moral and legal obligation to seek and acquire work in order to obtain the means that they lack, for their subsistence and improvement of their social condition." (*Regulamento do Trabalho dos Indígenas*, 1899, article 1; read in Havik 2013:174)

The tax system evolved from a hut to head and later to personal taxes, although in some cases these were in force at the same time. In addition to give an incentive to work, taxes were aimed at funding the colonial budget and varied between regions and "income groups". Capitation tax was charged from 16 years old onwards but women were exempted from native tax until the 1950s (Havik, 2013). Only in 1961 was an universal tax system implemented for all inhabitants.

The colonial state had further measures to foster labour to be forthcoming such as the passing of forced labour laws for adult males (what some called labour tax). The Colonial Act of 1933 legislated that forced labour only applied for public works even if ample evidence suggests it continued elsewhere (Havik 2013). In Mozambique, the colonial period was marked first by the construction of a railroad and later of roads, a dam and urban expansion in view of a policy with an urban and industrial bias (Mosca, 2005).[18] Forced labour was used even in an urban setting like the Port of Maputo:

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[17] The sallaries of the mine workers paid in gold constituted the territory major source of income and balancing the commercial and capital account (Mosca, 2005).

[18] In the meantime, a consumption industry had developed in textile, soap, tobacco, cereal, furniture, brewery and typography to produce for the internal market but also extractive and cement industries (Fortuna, 1971; Mosca, 2005). However, most exports were still of vegetable origin (69%) and since World War II there was a strong concentration in fewer commodities, which in Angola meant coffee (Fortuna, 1971). In industry, labour intensive technologies had dominated, but by the 1960's following the metropolis example and with the support of foreign capital labour saving technologies were introduced.

> "Forced labourers, recruited in rural areas, were brought into the port for a six-months period. Paid only for the days that they worked, they were nonetheless held constantly available, fed and housed in hostels." (O'Laughlin, 2002a:12).

Another instrument was forced cultivation schemes such as cotton in the north of Mozambique to supply the Portuguese industry. The implementation of a Colonial Cotton Board led one third of the adult population to be cultivating cotton by the early 1940s.

In spite of a larger public control of the different resources than in previous decades, some private companies continued to have wide power or even rule in some parts of Portuguese Africa. First, given that in case of tax non-payment or vagrancy/delinquency one could also be included in the scheme, this opened scope for some private companies to offer low-paid contracts in exchange for escaping official unpaid state labour (Keese, 2013). Second, after the world crisis in the 1930s, some private actors were responsible for advancing the tax to the public administration and collect the tax from natives (Havik 2013). Third, Diamang, the largest diamond mining company, almost dictated the law in Angola. Focusing its activity in Northeast Angola, the company became the largest revenue private operator of Angola and extremely powerful. Among other issues, Diamang legally became a monopsonist in the labour market and even controlled labour movement within their concessionary areas. The power of companies was such that it could overrun traditional chiefs, conscripting their family members or be at odds with colonial laws (Cleveland, 2010).

Once again, the unequal power relations led generally to harsh coercive measures and bad working conditions, and left African populations in distress. In northern Mozambique, forced cotton cultivation meant an impediment to cultivate less risky crops such as food crops, or less labour demanding and more profitable crops such as peanuts (Isaacman, 1992). Because the requirements of labour peaked between January and March, labour input insufficiency led to lower production and mal-nourishment

(Isaacman, 1992). In Angola and under Diamang control, the vast mobilisation of labourers required an inexistent reliability of support activities that led often to shortage of supplies in the early years. Conditions were so hard that Diamang's farms were known as "the hell of the blacks" (Cleveland, 2010:102).[19] If official conditions were grim, common illegal practices regarding working hours, wages, food and lodging worsened the picture (Mosca, 2005). Reports denounce the occasional complete fraud by employers by not paying anything at all or even that enforcement could be lethal to resisting labourers (Keese, 2013).

These harsh conditions led to different types of resistance. The initial hut tax led to discontentment or even rebellion (Havik 2013). Soon, the unbalanced forces would force natives to submit or flee. Submission did not mean to be silent and, faced with the violence of payment and enforcement of taxes, some natives resisted through culture, songs and humour.[20] Others fled.

Impelled by higher taxes than neighbouring colonies (Maciel, 2007), by the forced cultivation (Isaacman, 1992), by violent enforcement or attracted by higher wages, many natives migrated to nearby posts or districts, to inaccessible areas as forests or across the border (Keese, 2013). In 1930s, the migration meant a decrease of huts in 50 per cent in some Mozambican posts and local colonial officials warned that "either we change this policy or we run the risk of having these regions quite deserted" (Pinto Correia quoted in Maciel, 2007:11). Later, in 1948, an administrator in Angola reported that he "found the small villages devoid of able-bodied men, as the majority is on contract and the rest fled"

[19] Nonetheless, some conditions were better than elsewhere. A South African consultant complained that "colonial legislation in Angola only allows six workers per compartment or housing unit. In South Africa (…) it's unlimited, but de facto, forty-eight." (Cleveland, 2010:104).

[20] Hugh Tracey collected Chopi folksongs in the 1940's and one was as follows:

> "It is time to pay taxes to the Portuguese,
> The Portuguese who eats eggs
> And chicken!!
> Change that English pound!" (In Vail and White, 1983:888)

The last sentence was a reference to another "tax" as the workers returning from the South African mines had to exchange their pounds at the border (with a ten percent discount).

(colonial administrator in Malange District read in Keese, 2013:248). However, mobility was high but decreasing as the Portuguese state spread its control (Keese, 2013), namely through the use of ID cards after 1929 to control migrants (Havik 2013).

Decisive in the implementation was the coincidental interests of colonial administrations and private companies versus the natives. For example, "local directors of the Companhia Angolana de Agricultura (CADA) insisted that the recruitment of labourers had to continue by force, as the 'voluntary workers' had no scruples about leaving the workplace without authorisation." (Keese, 2013:250). Sometimes, native guards/enforcers acted as recruiters for European farms even if by their individual initiative (Keese, 2013).

However, some colonial administrators raised concerns regarding public and private practices and their consequences (e.g. Maciel, 2007). The growing separation between the actions of local administrators and private operators in the 1930's (Keese, 2013) may perhaps be explained by the consolidation of the state's colonial identity and also its increased labour needs. In 1961, some of the previous coercive methods, namely the forced labour, were relaxed because of the start of the independence war, international pressures and as a pre-requirement for entrance in ILO, even if forced penal labour continued (Keese, 2013; O'Laughlin, 2002a).

Eventually settlers were sent to solidify the Portuguese claims over Mozambique and as a way of reducing insurgents' power. These settlers were given small pieces of land and by law relied only on family labour. The intensification of the colonisation process meant that by 1970 Portuguese settlers were the main owners in the South of Mozambique, while the plantations dominated central Mozambique. The low population density allowed large agricultural yields, which was enhanced by the introduction of low labour-intensive crops such as maize and cassava (Newitt, 1981).

Table 3 presents a summary of the roles of the different regions of Portuguese colonial Africa.

[Table 3 about here]

Child labour in the colonial production system

Pre-colonial vs. colonial child labour

> "It is no uncommon thing to see men, women and children at work (…) men, women and children engage in field labour"
> (David Livingstone quoted in Chirwa, 1993:664)

Children in pre-colonial Africa were an important part of the work force as Livingstone's impressions indicate while 'exploring' Nyasaland. Pre-colonial Africa was characterised by a generalised family/kin based production system, and children contributed across sectors and ranks of mostly family activities. Family heads deployed work of the other members of the household. Boys weeded, harvested, fished, fixed the nets, herded and hunted, while girls pounded, carried water and wood, and did other domestic tasks (Chirwa, 1993). With differences across pastoralists and agrarian or patriarchal and matriarchal societies, children's contribution is reported across the continent. However, the European desire to access African resources and fertile land would bring changes.

The colonial system impacted greatly on the definition, location and type of the work activity of children. First, the colonial administration had difficulties in certifying the age of African workers. To regulate child labour, the South African Mines and Works Act of 1911 gave a legal definition of "apparent age of 16". Second, there was a shift of children from the subsistence economy to formal employment as the colonial export-crop economy relied on large quantities of children as they were cheaper, more docile and available than adult labour. Particularly, male children were more integrated in the colonial labour division from agriculture to domestic services (Chirwa, 1993; Simelane, 1998).

Whether total child labour increased or not is not clear. While child labour was already in practice, colonisation probably intensified the effort and worsened the conditions of work, but in peasant Africa children were rather busy with activities often under the supervision of the household. Vail and White (1983) report an increase of child labour in the southern Mozambican Chopi Society as a coping device between the need to work in the colonial economy and keep the traditional economy as a safety net. However, probably children after 5 years old would matter for agricultural work under settlers or kinship rule alike.[21]

But child labour in Africa was very much a story of coercion and control. In traditional Africa there was a strong focus on the praise of work, effort, obedience and community, *e.g.* in traditional Nigeria (Odukoya, 2009). Within family labour, parents continued working side by side with children and those could control and discipline the children and its income. Traditional/kinship leaders also had a saying on the use of labour. A more extreme situation concerned slavery and pawning to which part of the labour force was subjected, with children constituting the majority of its domestic amount (Grier, 2004). Therefore, much before of the colonial use of slave or forced labour, coercion was already a key strategy.

With the addition of colonial employers, the competition for (child) labour became fierce but not everything changed. Pre-colonial structures of control over children and youths remained through labour tenancies, where children of tenant families were generally included in the agreement with the landlord as the rest of the household. In British Africa, the Masters and Servants Act of 1899 conceded that parents could include children as dependent wage earners or apprentices (Simelane, 1998). While initially there was an attempt of conciliating colonial needs with tradition power, soon

[21] Part of the discussion whether colonisation increased child labour or worsened its conditions resembles the literature for developed countries about the effects of industrialization (e.g. Stearns, 2009).

there was often a conflict between colonial employers, traditional leaders and parents about who held the power over children's labour force.

The entrance of children in the formal labour market was facilitated as native adult male migration intensified. The tradition of migrations, strengthened by the colonial demands for labour and the deterioration of traditional ways, provided an impetus to migration.[22] With adult males gone, the subsequent labour shortage meant extra work for women and children (Grier 2009b). Accordingly, children progressively passed from non-paid family work to paid labour, increasing somewhat their autonomy. By 1936 employers tried to push a law to force children to be attached to an employer and avoid the parents as middlemen. Even if this was not put in practice, the increasing autonomy of children was threatening traditional power and by 1944 the native Swazi authority threatened with punishment whoever worked without the chief's authorisation.[23] But change was on the way and traditionalists would lose to the colonial labour market and to limited agency of children.

Children were now increasingly being hired individually as piecework or casual labourers. For example, Chirwa (1993) reports that children below 16 years old were 20 to 25 percent of the labour force in Nyasaland throughout the 1926-1953 period. However, given the unequal colonial and tribal relationships, much of the propelled 'agency' of native but also child workers was implemented through their feet: by moving somewhere else. Even children, in spite of the propelled docility, would resist most commonly by fleeing, *e.g.* from pawning in western Nigeria where desertion had become so common that creditors found children too risky as a collateral (Grier, 2004), or from

[22] The colonial period led to the loss of land and cattle by the older household heads which meant a loss of leverage over their unmarried sons (Grier, 1994). In addition, in South Africa young men without access to property until marriage left for waged labour or on their own.

[23] "No Swazi male under the first payment of tax [18 years] and no female child shall undertake employment with any person unless such youth/female child had first obtained a written permission from the chief under whom he or she lives. If any person disobeys this order they may be punished if taken before a native court." (King Sobhuza II, quoted in Simelane, 1998:591).

farms in Zimbabwe (Simelane, 1998). By 1930, 14 to 18 percent of immigrant workers in Southern Rhodesia were boys younger than 14 years old (Grier, 1994). For children, emigration was also a way of having some kind of independence, not always possible in an age stratified African household (Grier 2009b).

However, while these labour migrations in search for better conditions presented some features of a vibrant market economy, it meant instability in labour supply which was not agreeable for the needed reliability of an export-based colonial economy. Accordingly, colonial states decided to have a major role in securing and controlling labour in general and child labour in particular. The desertion without consequences threatened a labour-intensive production system and in Swaziland, for example, "[f]armers were definitely promised that the administration would see that the necessary labour would be forthcoming" (Simelane, 1998:583).

Different measures were implemented to secure labour. In 1901, Zimbabwe approved the pass system which meant adults and apprentices who deserted their employers could be punished with fine or imprisonment, which did not apply to children under 14. Only with the Native Juveniles Employment Act in 1926 was established the obligation of children under 14 to have a pass and the 'right' of making a labour contract, without the intermediation of parents (Grier, 1994). Non-observance of the rules led to fines or corporal punishments such as whipping. These were justified as

> "these juveniles are quite young and one of the objects of this Bill is to inculcate in them the observance of their word. They must be taught they have to obey." (Attorney General, South Rhodesia as quoted in Grier, 1994:50)

Eventually, dissent in colonial policies became evident. First, progressive forces such as "missionaries and liberals" voiced concerns with ample diffusion in the press (Grier, 1994:47). Later, even the colonial administration started distancing itself from the focus on providing labour to colonial employers. In 1937, Malcolm MacDonald, Secretary of State for the Colonies, tried to enforce international ILO regulations. The

opposition was fierce in Nyasaland and local lobbies were able to tailor made the law to their needs, with a similar process in Swaziland in 1939 (Chirwa, 1993; Simelane, 1998). As the Second World War further accentuated labour needs, the debate was delayed but not forgotten. Particularly, wrongful labour conditions and practices were progressively difficult to sustain.

Child labour in colonial Africa

The colonial production system was constituted by the extraction of different commodities and it was developed in three main types of units: mining, plantations and settler farms. Each organised labour in different manners with implications for child labour.

From Ghana and Kenya to South Africa, mining provided European colonial empires with key resources such as gold, and child labour constituted a relevant part of its labour force. The job positions ranged from mine work itself to domestic servants for adult miners. In South Africa, migrant children were called 'piccanins' or 'piccaninnies' and benefited from their small size: "low grade and depths of the mines required narrow stopes in which children could work more efficiently than adults" (Harries, 1994: 201).[24] More important than the old argument of 'quickness of eye and agility of hand', while gold mines attracted the majority of adult labour through higher wages, other mines ended up with children and older men that were cheaper. In gold mines, more than 2,000 piccanins worked in South Africa by 1902 (Harries, 1994), while in the other South African mines, half of the workers were children (Levine, 2009).

Mines required a considerable amount of labour and progressively relied on sources of labour farther away. Until 1906 boys and adults were brought from around Southern Rhodesia. After that, piccaninnies and adults were hired from farther colonies such as Malawi (Nyasaland), Mozambique and Zambia (Northern Rhodesia).

[24] From the free online dictionary: "(offensive) a small Black or Aboriginal child (perhaps from Portuguese *pequenino*, tiny one)".

Unscrupulous recruiters were key for firms to meet their labour needs and often deceived labourers and particularly children, for example, when hiring migrant children in the early 1930's for mines and farms in South Ghana (van Hear, 1982).

Children earned less than adult workers but wages were still attractive. As early as 1898, South Rhodesian mines announced wages for the different tasks performed by piccaninnies (Grier, 1994).[25] In Zimbabwean and South African mica and asbestos mines, estimates suggest piccaninnies earned around half (Grier 2009b) to one fifth (Grier 1994:39) of the rate of adult African wages. Mantero (1954) suggests that picannins earned half to one third of the wages of non-experienced and experienced workers, respectively.

Large monocrop plantations were also a cornerstone of colonial development and child labour in these was abundant as in tobacco and tea plantations in Nyasaland. In African plantations as in European factories nimble fingers were an asset and children were, therefore, ideal for tea, tobacco and cotton harvests. In the early 1950s, 20 percent of the labour force in regular private sector employment, mostly tea and tobacco plantations, was below 16 years old.[26] In Nyasaland, most workers were registered at the Southern province, where tea, tobacco and tung estates relied on 20, 30 and 40 percent of child workers, respectively (Chirwa, 1993). With tea prices declining in the early 1950s, plantation owners turned to cheap labour with a reinforcement of Mozambican immigrants, women, but particularly children.

Plantations often used pre-colonial labour specialisation, so children performed tasks they used to do while working in their family/kinship environment. Often youngsters worked "under the care of elder employees" such as in Benin rubber plantations (Fenske, 2014:1029). In addition, the division of labour had age and gender in

[25] The posts were 'surface boys', 'engine boys', 'drill boys', 'smiths' or 'boss boys' (Grier, 1994:39).

[26] However, the employment of children in the public departments of Agriculture and Forestry was even higher (Chirwa, 1993).

perspective with women and younger children often used in auxiliary roles for production. Accordingly, children earned half the adult pay by early 1930's in Nyasaland, while for piecework it varied (Chirwa, 1993). Children were less paid than adults in Tanzanian plantations under German (1891–1919) and British (thereafter) rule alike, suggesting which colonial power was in charge did not make a difference in this case (Porter, 2009).

Children's contribution was also crucial for the smaller undercapitalised settler farms (Okia, 2009). The three main sources of labour were tenancy agreements, living nearby reserves and migrant workers (Grier, 1994). Whole families were frequently recruited. However, because settler farming was in the end of the colonial production hierarchy, farmers were often unable to secure adult labour and recurred to child labour. In Swaziland, until the early 1930's the majority of child labour was unpaid labour of the children of tenants. After 1932 paid child labour increased as farms were becoming more commercially oriented and employers even announced the wages rates of children to interest children (Simelane, 1998). In Kenya, the use of child labour would become systematic by the 1940's (Okia, 2009). Forthcoming labour was seen as key and the colonial administration official advertisements announced the young age Africans started to work as a promise of labourers to attract new European settlers (Grier 2009b):

> "Wages are low and the natives begin to be useful from childhood, when they are engaged in light work, herding or carrying messages" (Beira & Mashonaland & Rhodesia Railways 1924:192 in Grier, 2004:9).

In Swaziland, farmers were often pastoralists and, therefore, children were frequently in charge of cattle herding, with younger boys taking care of calves. Boys also did considerable domestic work in the houses of landlords. In the 1940s the deepening of the crisis of agricultural production in the native reserves forced women and children to be recruited by farms in Swaziland (Simelane, 1998). Even then, farmers complained about lack of available labour: "I am about 30 to 40 boys short." (Farmer in 1938

Swaziland, quoted in Simelane, 1998:583). Afrikaner raiders took matters into their hands and they captured children for their use in farms from before 1900 upto 1950 in the now Swaziland and Zimbabwe (Grier, 2004).

Other activities also proliferated in Colonial Africa. As urbanisation grew, the role of children as domestic servants increased to become a widespread practice. While most of workers outside the household were male, females did the work within the household. That was even more so in urban areas where children were older and gender roles were more distinguished. In Zimbabwe, similarly to other activities, there was an effort to promote external domestic service among girls in the early 1900's (Grier, 1994:42). In urban areas, children were also prominently said to be involved in the informal sector and petty crime.[27] A significant number of migrant boys were convicted of theft in Blantyre, Nyasaland (Chirwa, 1993). Accordingly, this promoted further arguments for instituting measures to control the African youth.

While some of the literature has focused in stressing the agency of children and youths in opposition to the often concept of powerless victims (Grier, 2004), the effective degree of agency was rather limited. Flight was often the reaction to perceived harsh or unfair conditions. Non-payment or short-payment of wages led children to react against their employers and for that boys were often whipped:

> "When the landlord heard of the incident, he kicked me twice with his boot and proceeded to give me ten strokes on my buttocks" (11 years old child in Swaziland, quoted in Simelane, 1998:579).

Child labour in the Portuguese Colonies

The descriptions of pre-colonial or of the adjacent African societies contemporaneous of the Portuguese colonial empire are not particularly different of the views on the general African colonies. Africans practiced agriculture mostly for survival, with the majority of agricultural production for their own consumption and not to be sold in the market

[27] Later on, children would also join liberation movements such as the Zambian and Mozambican ones by working in refugee and military camps (Grier 2009b).

(Mosca, 2005). Child labour was often integrated in the overall family contribution and, therefore, depended on the family head's main activity or auxiliary positions. For example, reports of children as shepherds were very common, e.g. in Angola's hinterland (Mantero, 1954).

Under the colonial system, children were incorporated as contributors to production efforts, and the contrast between the childhood of white and black Portuguese colonial citizens was stark, although with exceptions. While laws were concerned and eventually began protecting children in the Portuguese colonies, employers and recruiters were more interested in production capacity. Given that chronological age was often not well recorded, physical robustness or even armpit hair was used as a proxy for age (Cleveland, 2010). These gave rise to imprecision, but mostly to ambiguity used often against children by unscrupulous recruiters or law enforcers to fulfil the high labour needs in different sectors.

Mines were major recruiters of children. Emigrating to South African mines was an answer to the need to pay a large wedding dowry and the partial promotion of emigration by the Portuguese colonial authorities. It also became some kind of ritual process to adulthood particularly in southern Mozambique. "The boy has to eat much to be able to work in South Africa", or "only who went to the mines is a grown-up man." (Mosca, 2005:51). Around 1930, boys younger than 14 years old were often more than 20 percent of the Mozambicans migrants to Southern Rhodesia.

In Angola, Cleveland (2010) reports a generalised practice of child labour in Diamang. Facing a large demand for workers, the company recurred to forced labour of adults who led many children to accompany them and eventually to work. Other children were conscripted because showed signs of "maturity" (as discussed above) that augmented its perceived age. By 1961, its workforce was constituted of around 10 percent of 16 year olds and younger (Cleveland, 2010). However, companies

underrecorded children labour because it was illegal, auxiliary work or because children toggled around their parents.

From eight years old onwards, children could work on the mines, where they were mostly employed in the washing and selection stations where the ratio adult to child could be lower than 4 to 1. The preferred age group was 10 to 12 year olds because children of that age were able to do the task but were less likely to steal the precious rocks. Others worked pushing wagons with gravel and in prospecting teams. The most dangerous sectors were the washing section and pushing wagons, with accidents that also affected minors.

However, children most often worked in auxiliary roles in support activities to mining throughout the Diamang "territory", such as in agricultural or domestic service tasks. Errand boys worked as porters or assistants and often took food to workers, among other tasks. Other supporting activity was growing the food for the other workers. In the fields, children replaced the highly demanded adult labour and received in kind, particularly girls. Finally, many children performed domestic service such as cooking and cleaning, just as picannins in South Africa mines. The main difference is that often adults had their families with them and part of the endured service was the traditional domestic work within the household, such as the time consuming fetching water. All these posts were connected as often children could pass from one activity to other.

Conditions in the mining sector were harsh which led to high separation/ turnover rate of workers and, therefore, children's docility was a feature appreciated by the management. Nonetheless, the private company Diamang had a high-level of measures to secure and discipline labour, including passes to control movement and punishments. Children, just like adults, could generally suffer corporal punishment if they did not comply or complied badly with assignments (Cleveland, 2010).

Nonetheless, the colonial Portugal economy was mostly agrarian, with most commercial land tenure divided in plantations and settler farms. São Tomé and Principe plantations throve with cocoa and the early integration of West Africa in the world primary commodities economy. In Mozambique, plantations were older than colonization as Portuguese rulers preferred to rent it out to foreign companies than leave it unoccupied. However, children also migrated to work in plantations as suggested by the story of Musi, a 12 year old native coming from Portuguese East Africa to work in a tea plantation in Colonial Zimbabwe (Grier, 2004).

Plantations operated basically on labour-intensive technology. Only with the development of other economic activities after 1950, competing also regularly for labour, did the plantations introduced mechanisation. Until then, the major need was during the harvest, as other supporting areas had mostly become mechanised (Mosca, 2005). However, in Zambezia, women and children were also forced to work in the tea plantations in the 1940's and 1950's due to the lack of men (Cross, 1994). Normally workers would take a post according to their capabilities. In São Tomé and Principe, eleven to fourteen year olds "were only employed in picking fruit, guarding the harvest or the animals (Mantero, 1954:81).

Conditions in plantations were generally hard and children were not exempt. Perhaps following the Cadbury's controversy, there is interesting evidence on São Tomé and Principe plantations. The plantations were dependent on immigrants and during recruitment there was a need to ask for a movement certificate for each worker. The file collected several information about each worker, including a category "probable age" (Mantero, 1954:120). While Mantero (1954) describes labour conditions in these plantations, the discourse refers to mainly what it ought to be according to the law, but it is not clear whether it applied to the reality. Wages could be very low and children collecting cocoa beans into five-pound baskets were rewarded with biscuits (Higgs,

2012). Higgs (2012: 31) also reports high mortality of children in Mantero's plantation, with almost a quarter dying.

Settler farms came late in Portuguese colonization. In Mozambique, white settlers had been increasing considerably, accelerating after 1940 (Wuyts, 1980). They were very poor and coming from the underprivileged skirts of the colonial power. For example, of the white farmers who left the Limpopo colonates after independence in 1975, 55 percent were illiterate (Hermele, 1986). They were given lands, but for example, in Limpopo, they were not allowed to hire workers. The small and medium sized plots were family-based surviving units rather than capitalist enterprises. White children worked in their family lands in hard conditions in a mostly manual rice production. Sons worked as tractor conductors, while daughters with at least 12 years old had to work in the plants nursery, as domestic workers and maids (Hermele, 1986). In the 1960s, all settlers started to legally be able to hire workers and to use better inputs such as new seeds (Mosca, 2005). In Angola, a post administrator reported children doing unpaid work along with their families in settler farms during 1939 (Keese, 2013).

In northern Mozambique forced cultivation of cotton during the colonial period also transformed local ways. In the early 1940s, one third of the adult population in the north was enrolled in cotton family farming, which meant that their children were also involved in the process, particularly in weeding (Isaacman, 1992). In the south, with more than half of the male population gone in Lourenço Marques (the capital) or migrated to South Africa, cotton was left to cultivate to who remained − mostly women and eventually children. The redirection of workers to cotton led to the decrease in food crop production and to decreased intake and major famines.

In contrast, *machambeiros*, relatively wealthy farmers most of whom had been long years working in South Africa, used their savings and governmental for (i) buying cattle and machinery, (ii) marry a second and third wife to increase children and labour supply

or even (iii) hire poorer farmers as part-time labourers (Isaacman, 1992). These *machambeiros* would also hire children during peak periods. After Wold War II, increased demand for labour by plantations and settlers would also contribute to a feminization of cotton cultivation in the North, aided by "children, elders and the handicapped" (Isaacman, 1992:835). Given the labour shortages, with the rise of ownership in oxen and ploughs, women and children (sons) had a larger role using these for agricultural production.

Migration of teenagers running away from forced cultivation displeased both African elders and colonial officials. Among other things, youths runaway from bride service where youth worked for free for their future fathers-in-law. Alternatively, some started to cultivate on their own and conquered autonomy and wealth to marry without leaving their land (Isaacman, 1992).

Domestic work was often very burdensome, particularly in rural settings, for example the simple fetching of water. Children were also frequently porters: "Magalhães [a landowner in São Tomé] sent Burtt a large mule and a small boy who carried his luggage and walked behind him" (Higgs, 2012:26). However, the majority of domestic service happened in the growing urban centres. In 1940, the majority of *mainatos*, domestic servants in Lourenço Marques (Maputo) and other cities and towns of Mozambique, were boys between the ages of 10 and 15 (Penvenne, 1995).

Perhaps more troublesome was the impact of public policies on youth through public works and the penal system. As early as 1924, an envoy visiting Angola and Mozambique to report labour conditions to the League of Nations in Geneva warned against road building using rudimentary tools by forced labour, where children frequently contributed (Ross, 1925). In 1944, almost half of the Africans under correctional labour were under the age of 14 (Penvenne, 1995).

Concluding remarks

Contrasting theories contribute to understand a colonial production system geared towards labour intensive technology. While the availability of labour was fundamental, historical shocks and mobility conditioned its abundance. Given labour's scarcity, the regimes had three choices: leaving it to the market; intervening or drafting women and children. First, if the activity was lucrative enough, wages and advertising could be sufficient to attract neighbouring populations. Second, different degrees of coercion to secure labour were implemented given the perception of laziness of natives, their unwillingness to work or even intention to migrate. Third, government and the private sector recurred to persons outside the labour market or sub-employed, such as women and children.

Children were, however, not as reliable workers as expected. In spite of considerably constrained by their conditions of being a native in a colonial system and a child in age stratified societies, they reacted to (des)incentives such as bad working conditions or better wages. A crucial conditioning of their agency was the functional type of the territories they were coming from. The child labour process in Portuguese colonies resembled some of the processes across colonial Africa, but it distinguishes itself from the general narrative by being conditioned by mainly labour expelling territories. As a consequence, and perhaps reinforced by the authoritarian rule of *Estado Novo* or the delegation of power in all-mighty private corporations, harsh 'public' policies attempted to directly or indirectly secure labour sometimes successfully, sometimes not through unintended flight.

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Annexes

TABLE 1
Comparing Infant Mortality Rates in Colonial Africa

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(3)/(1)	(3)/(2)	(3)/(4)
	Zimbabwe	**South Africa**		**Portugal**	**Black South Africans compared to**		
	Whites	*whites*	*blacks*	*whites*	*Zimbabwe*	*South Africa*	*Portugal*
1940	41	50	157	131	3.8	3.1	1.2
1950	35	36	134	94	3.8	3.7	1.4
1960	19	30	129	85	6.8	4.3	1.5
1970	19	22	133	52	7.0	6.0	2.6

Note: Portugal's figures do not include data from the colonies.
Sources: Mitchell (2003); Baganha and Marques in Valério (2001).

TABLE 2
Farm wages in Portugal and the colonies

	White (in Portugal)		**Black (S. Tomé)**		**Angola**
	Male	***Female***	***Male***	***Female***	***Male***
1909	n.a.	n.a.	2,500	1,800	900

Notes: valued in 'reis' (the predecessor of Escudos, the predecessor of Euro); In Portugal agricultural wages for harvesting had a ratio male/female of 2,0 in 1920.
Source: Mantero (1954:75;174)

TABLE 3
Functional type of the different regions of colonial Portuguese Africa

Colony	Region	Activity	Colonial period
Attraction zones			
Angola	Northeast	Mining	1917-
Mozambique	Central	Plantations	1891-
Mozambique	North	Plantations (Niassa company)	1891-1929
São Tomé	n.a.	Plantations	*1860s-1950s*
Neutral			
Mozambique	South	White settlers	*1950s-*
Mozambique	North	Cotton forced cultivation	1938-1961
Labour reserves			
Cape Verde		Supply of middle colonial administration	n.a.
Angola	Hinterland	Labour reserve to São Tomé plantations	n.a.
Cape Verde		Labour reserve to São Tomé plantations	n.a.
Mozambique	South	Supply labour to South African mines	n.a.
Mozambique	Central & North	Labour reserve to Nyassaland, Tanganyika and Rhodesia	n.a.

Source: Author based on Isaacman (1992), Cleveland (2010), Castelo (2007).