Coffee Shops and Cash Crops: Gritty Origins of the World’s Favorite Beverage

Jessica Wright, University of Central Arkansas
Steven Zeltmann, University of Central Arkansas
Ken Griffin, University of Central Arkansas

ABSTRACT

The demand for coffee ranks it as one of the highest-trade commodities in the world, second only to petroleum, and provides opportunities for work for struggling families in tropical climates in which coffee thrives. The coffee industry has produced two strikingly different paths of life – one of struggle for those that grow and harvest the crop to make a living and one of convenience and socialization for those that consume the product. However, there has been a push in the coffee culture of developed countries to bridge such discrepancies in quality of life between producers and consumer, evident in the dozens of variations of labels like fair trade and ethical sourcing.

Keywords: Fair Trade, Ethical Sourcing, Oromia Coffee Union, Direct Trade