



AGRARIAN SOUTH STUDY GROUP 2021

Social Formations, Past and Present

March–November 2021

Introduction

The Agrarian South Network (ASN) will convene a Study Group on the theme of ‘Social Formations, Past and Present’, to be held from March to November 2021, in fifteen online sessions. The study group will provide a space for collective reflection and learning among postgraduate students, political activists, researchers, and academic faculty members on fundamental issues in the social sciences at this crucial juncture of world crisis. The theme will bring focus to the transitions to capitalism in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and to the ongoing transformations in peripheral societies today.

Objectives

The objective is to gain historical perspective and conceptual rigour on the current crisis and illuminate the alternatives for the South and for world development. Special attention will be given to the systemic mechanisms of imperialism and to the evolving contradictions pertaining to centre-periphery relations, class, race, caste, gender, and ecology. The method of historical materialism will guide this collective reflection with an interest in advancing contemporary thought and practice in the Marxist traditions of the Third World. Current debates within the Agrarian South Network will also be discussed and assessed.

Study method

The language medium will be English. The sessions will take place on Zoom, fortnightly on Wednesdays. The time of the sessions will be UTC 13:00, with adjustments for daylight savings where applicable. The basic readings (and some complementary) will be provided in electronic form. The sessions will entail a brief presentation of readings by designated participants, followed by discussion. Every session will include a reflection on prior sessions to consolidate a cumulative learning process. The allocation of presentations will be defined in advance on an equitable basis. The dates of the sessions may be subject to minor adjustments.

Organization and participation

The collaborating organizations of this ASN initiative include The Sam Moyo African Institute for Agrarian Studies (SMAIAS) in Harare, the Centre for Agrarian Research and Education for South (CARES) in New Delhi, and Coletivo Novo Bandung in São Paulo. Participation in the study group will be by invitation only and by recommendation of the collaborating organizations. There will be a limited number of 30 places available. An even distribution among the three continents will be pursued. Further information may be obtained by email at: agrariansouth@gmail.com.

TOPICS & DATES

	<u>Dates</u>
Introduction and organization.....	17/03
I. Social formations in the transition to capitalism (March-May)	
1. Modes of production and social formations: concepts and methods.....	31/03
2. Slavery, race and caste in capitalist transitions.....	14/04
3. Labour reserves and unequal exchange in the world economy.....	28/04
4. Gender, production and social reproduction.....	12/05
5. The dialectics of nature.....	26/05
II. Colonial transitions and primitive accumulation (June-August)	
6. Extractivist, settler and plantation economies of the Americas.....	23/06
7. Semi-feudal transitions in Asia: caste, communities and patterns of accumulation.....	07/07
8. Peasant, settler and extractivist economies of Africa.....	21/07
9. Liberation struggles and the theory of contradictions.....	04/08
10. The question of culture and its revival.....	18/08
III. Neo-colonialism and semi-proletarianization (September-November)	
11. Agrarian and national questions today.....	15/09
12. The expansion and segmentation of labour reserves.....	29/09
13. The semi-proletarianization thesis revisited.....	13/09
14. Gender, land and labour: trends and struggles today.....	27/10
15. Global ecological crisis and the periphery.....	10/11

TIME ZONES (UTC 13:00)

Ciudad de Mexico 07–09:00 · Kingston 08–10:00 · São Paulo 10–12:00 · Accra 13–15:00 · Tunis 14–16:00
· Harare 15–17:00 · Dar es Salaam 16–18:00 · New Delhi 18:30–20:30 · Hanoi 20-22:00 · Beijing 21–23:00

READINGS

Basic & Complementary

- | 1. Modes of production and social formations: concepts and methods | <u>Pages</u> |
|---|---------------------|
| → MARX, K. (1972[1858]). The Method of Political Economy. <i>The Grundrisse</i> , ed. & trans. D. McLellan. New York: Harper and Row. | 33–43 |
| → AMIN, S. (1976). The Precapitalist Formations. <i>Unequal Development</i> . New York: Monthly Review Press. | 13–58 |
| → MUNSHI, S. (1991). Social Formation and the Problem of Change, <i>Science & Society</i> , 55(2). | 175–196 |
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| DOBB, M. (1946). <i>Studies in the Development of Capitalism</i> . London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. | |
| ENGELS, F. (1978[1884]). The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State. In R. Tucker (Ed.), <i>The Marx-Engels Reader</i> , 2 nd Edition (pp. 734–759). New York: W.W. Norton & Co. | |
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| JHA, P., P. YEROS & W. CHAMBATI (Eds.) (2020). <i>Rethinking the Social Sciences with Sam Moyo</i> . New Delhi: Tulika Books. | |
| KOSAMBI, D.D. (1994). Primitive Life and Prehistory (Ch. 2). <i>The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline</i> (pp. 24–48). Vikas. | |
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| MEILLASOUX, Claude (1973). The Social Organisation of the Peasantry: The Economic Basis of Kinship, <i>Journal of Peasant Studies</i> , 1(1), 81–90. | |
| MEILLASOUX, Claude (1981[1975]). <i>Maidens, Meal and Money: Capitalism and the Domestic Community</i> . Cambridge: CUP. | |
| SWEEZY, P. (1963[1950]). A Critique. In: <i>The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism: A Symposium</i> (pp. 1–20). New York: Science and Society. | |
| SWEEZY, P.M. (1986). Feudalism-to-Capitalism Revisited, <i>Science & Society</i> , 50(1), 81–84. | |
| 2. Slavery, race and caste in capitalist transitions | |
| → MARX, K. So-Called Primitive Accumulation, <i>Capital</i> , Vol. 1, Chs. 26-27. London: Penguin Books. | 873–895 |
| → WILLIAMS, E. (1944). The Origin of Negro Slavery. <i>Capitalism and Slavery</i> . Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. | 3–29 |
| → JAISWAL, S. (1998). Introduction (Ch. 1). <i>Caste: Origin, Function and Dimensions of Change</i> . New Delhi: Manohar. | 1–31 |

→ ABDO, N. (1992). Racism, Zionism and the Palestinian Working Class, 1920–1947, *Studies in Political Economy*, 37(1).

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- GIRVAN, N. (1975). Aspects of the Political Economy of Race in the Caribbean and the Americas, *Working Paper No. 7*, Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, 1–35.
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- SINGH, N.P. (2016). On Race, Violence and So-Called Primitive Accumulation. *Social Text*, 34(3), 27–50.

3. Labour reserves and unequal exchange in the world economy

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- PATNAIK, U. & PATNAIK, P. (2017). The Reserve Army of Labour in the Periphery (Ch. 4). *A Theory of Imperialism*. New York: Columbia University Press. **47–60**
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- VOGEL, L. (2013[1983]). Socialist Feminism. *Marxism and the Oppression of Women* (Part 1). Chicago: Haymarket Books. **13–39**
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- ENGELS, F. (1990[1883]). The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man (Ch. 9). *The Dialectics of Nature*. **1–9**

→ BURKETT, P. (1999). Nature and Historical Materialism. *Marx and Nature: A Red and Green Perspective*. New York: St. Martin's Press. 17–56

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MOORE, J.W. (2010). 'Amsterdam Is Standing on Norway', Part II: The Global North Atlantic in the Ecological Revolution of the Long Seventeenth Century, *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 10(2), 188–227.

6. Extractivist, settler and plantation economies of the Americas

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→ RODNEY, W. (1981). Plantation Society in Guyana, *Review (Fernand Braudel Ctr.)*, 4(4). 643–666

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7. Semi-feudal transitions in Asia: castes, communities and patterns of accumulation

→ MAO, T.-T. (2004[1926]). Analysis of the classes in Chinese society. *Selected works*, Vol. 1, www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_1.htm. 1–7

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9. Liberation struggles and the theory of contradictions

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