



SMAIAS/ASN SUMMER SCHOOL 2019

CONCEPT NOTE AND CALL FOR PAPERS

THEME:

Social Policy in the Global South: The Challenge of Socio-economic Justice and Agro-ecological Development

21-25 January 2019, Harare, Zimbabwe

The main focus of the forthcoming Summer School in January 2019 will be on social policy in the Global South, with particular reference to socio-economic justice and agro-ecological development. According to the UN Statistics Division, living conditions in the Global South worsened after the impacts of the 2008 world financial crisis, and despite partial recovery thereafter, there is urgent need for renewed and reinforced social policies to alleviate poverty and empower marginalized groups and communities in a sustainable manner.

The stagnation of economic growth, connected to the spread of labor-saving techniques in both manufacturing and agriculture has reinforced structural unemployment generally. Global competition in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors has resulted in increased dependence and deindustrialization of many developing countries, accompanied by the expansion of service sectors and informal and precarious employment. Criminality rates, drug trafficking, and mass incarceration have also been aggravated under such conditions, in addition to an intensifying flow of migrants within and across borders. The ecological, energy, and food crises which have been escalating over recent decades have also brought into sharp relief the imperative of transforming the global industrial and agro-food systems towards more autonomous forms of production, distribution, and consumption.

Social policy is a fundamental responsibility of modern states. Under current conditions, social policy must adapt and advance towards more integrated and transformative approaches capable of addressing a wide array of interconnected issues that affect both rural and urban areas, and movements and linkages between them. Accelerated and disorderly urbanization is intimately related to declining agricultural employment, loss of agricultural land, forests, and biodiversity, erosion of soils, pollution of water resources, and climate change, which affect regions and continents unevenly. These trends are affecting especially those living in rural areas and those for whom family agriculture is the main source of income, especially rural women and youth, and indigenous and other marginalized communities.

It is imperative to develop a new generation of social policies for the twenty-first century, which requires at this juncture taking stock and reevaluating past experiences. Such a re-evaluation must consider the

programmes that have in recent years been responsible for attacking hunger and improving the well-being of the poor, especially of women and children. In this regard, a number of experiences have registered success, despite their limited resources and even contradictions. Such programmes have included conditional income transfers, land reform, expansion of urban housing, public procurement connected to school feeding, as well as support for agro-ecological production.

An important dimension of the demands of civil society for socio-economic justice in recent years has been precisely support for agro-ecological farming. The concept and practice of agro-ecology has been gaining social and institutional recognition given its potential to transform the current food and agrarian system, with positive consequences for the socio-economic, food, and nutritional conditions of urban and rural populations alike.

The field of agroecology has evolved rapidly beyond technical issues related to the connections between ecology and agronomy, to incorporate core socio-economic demands related to gender, racial, and regional inequalities, which are also linked to the negative consequences of a globalized corporate food production system. Agroecology today is not a mere set of techniques, for it strives to provide solutions to socio-economic and ecological problems which are most relevant to the Global South, and in which women, youth and marginalized communities are at heart of the transformation process.

Agro-ecology has become a field of contestation, posing questions with direct impact on rural-urban relations, control over natural and energy resources, production and employment, nutrition, and autonomous research and knowledge production. Institutions at the local, national, and global levels are themselves being challenged to act. The FAO has recently pointed out that social and institutional innovations at all levels will play a key role in encouraging agro-ecological practices. Responsible and democratic government (transparent, accountable and inclusive governance mechanisms) is now needed to support the transition to agro-ecological systems. Some examples of agro-ecological public policies are precisely the public procurement and school-feeding programs, plus market regulations allowing for the branding of differentiated agro-ecological products, and subsidies and incentives for sustainable ecosystems services.

The 2019 Summer School will focus on the recent experiences of social policies in the Global South and look ahead towards more integrated and transformative programmes capable of connecting socio-economic justice with agro-ecological development. Scholars and activists interested in participating are encouraged to examine a diverse set of issues and theoretical challenges. Possible topics may include theoretical, conceptual, or empirical approaches on any of the following issues:

- Integrated and transformative social policy in the Global South
- Experiences of conditional income transfers
- Experiences of public procurement programmes
- Gender, agro-ecology and social transformation
- Work, agro-ecology and social reproduction
- Land, tenure and agrarian reform
- The rights of indigenous and marginalized communities
- Rural-urban migration and social policy
- Agro-ecological production and sustainability
- Cooperative production and social transformation
- Food and nutritional security
- Civil society, agro-ecology and socio-economic justice

- Land grabbing and financialization of agriculture and natural resources
- Contract farming trends and policy alternatives
- Climate change, agro-ecology and socio-economic justice
- Global environmental change and alternative consumption patterns

In sum, all these issues, to be deliberated in the proposed Summer School would seek to reflect on some of the major challenges and key concerns associated with social policy in the contemporary Global South. As always, it will bring together leading as well as young scholars from diverse disciplines, as well as civil society activists from Africa, Latin America, and Asia in order to engage with the complexities of the issues.

Interested scholars and activists are invited to submit paper proposals or abstracts (not more than 300 words) no later than 30 July 2018. Authors of selected papers will be requested to develop their full papers by 30 September, and will be invited to participate at the 2019 Summer School in Harare (funds permitting). Some of the articles may also be selected for publication in *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy*, subject to normal peer review process.

Paper proposals should be submitted to Walter Chambati: walter@aiatrust.org and copy to Professor Paris Yeros: parisyeros@gmail.com