

plantations and their afterlives
2020

**plantations and their
afterlives**

materialities

durabilities

struggles

Symposium

September 16-18, 24, 25 2020

Instituto de Ciências Sociais (ICS)

Universidade de Lisboa

(via ZOOM)

organizer: The Colour of Labour: The Racialized Lives of Migrants,
PI Cristiana Bastos
convenors: Marta Macedo, Irene Peano, Colette Le Petitcorps

The Colour of Labour explores, through different disciplinary perspectives and a broad spectrum of empirical cases, the co-production of labour and racializations. Research within its scope has analysed the trajectories of labour into post-abolition plantations in the Caribbean and Hawaii, into the migrant mill towns of New England, the multiple displacements in and within the African West Coast, the entanglements of plantation work and domestic work in Mauritius, and the processes of segregation and differentiation of lowclass migrants in contemporary Italy.

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plantations and their afterlives

Plantations have been crucial institutions for the expansion of imperial and post-imperial projects. They function as racialised and gendered systems of land appropriation and of labour recruitment, control, extraction and reproduction, aiming at the intensive cultivation of cash crops for export. Such operations have also had political, sovereign dimensions. Furthermore, plantations have been central to the emergence and reproduction of the capitalist world system, which in turn heavily transformed eco-systems and landscapes, leading some scholars to coin the concept of 'Plantationocene'. However, plantations are not homogeneous forms: in the past as much as in the present, they have relied on a range of technologies, relations and patterns of circulation, extraction, and design - they depend on specific knowledges and practices shaping both environments and labour relations. This symposium will examine the materialities of plantations across multiple times and places, their mutations, durabilities and spectral survivals, taking into account the conflictual dimension of these processes.

Materialities

How have the specific requirements of the crops being grown translated into different disciplinary and spatial technologies for managing 'nature' and people? How did plantation objects, ideas, and living beings circulate and adapt? How have the different regimes of exploitation (slavery, indenture, wage labour) coexisted, evolved and transitioned across specific historical and geographical contexts? How can the various techno-scientific practices at play in plantations illuminate the racialised, gendered and sexualized dimension of capitalism? Furthermore, treating plantations as institutions whose internal relations have pervaded whole societies, we aim to debate these issues beyond the sole case of agricultural/agro-industrial production, by including

also the sites and types of labour and (re)production that have developed in the evolution and restructuring of plantation economies, such as those pertaining to tourism, heritage, domestic service, or construction work, but also to carceral institutions.

Durabilities

Considering plantation techniques and materialities, and their mutations and transpositions, also means to interrogate their afterlives, spectres and remnants. Are plantations “back”? Were they ever gone? And where, exactly, are they? The question concerns not only plantations’ geographical location, but also the forms in which they might be seen to endure in the present. Several scholars have addressed these issues, especially in relation to the legacies, durabilities and afterlives of American slave plantations, in many ways the locus classicus for the study of plantations. The dismantlement of plantation units and households in old plantation societies has been shown to lead to a repurposing of their techniques of management and extraction to new domains. On the one hand, we aim to broaden the spatiotemporal scope of this debate. At the same time, we encourage reflections on how these techniques were transposed to contexts that cannot be easily identified as directly related to plantation societies (the most classic example being the European factory), and which explore the subjective and affective dimensions of plantation hauntings.

Struggles

The role of conflicts and struggles in spurring change, and their subjective dimensions, is another key axis of interest. Transitions were not smoothly driven by capitalist rationality, or well oiled by the wholesale reproduction of the hierarchies created in the plantation. They were also the product of renewed conflictual relations between the working and landowning classes, which drew from the contradictions inherent in the process of (re)production of plantations. We especially look for grounded methodological proposals and empirical analyses that help grapple with the too often silenced forms of social conflict, protest and “petit marronnage”, built on a socialisation to resistance which may be specific to plantations and their afterlives.

programme

September, 16

14:00-15:15 (GMT+1)

1: Emerging plantation machines

Chair and Discussant: **Nicholas Miller**, Flagler College

David Abrampah, University of Ghana

"Archaeology of Danish plantation Agriculture in Dodowa, Ghana"

Elly Dezateux Robson, University of Cambridge

"Imagining Plantation Environments in early modern Britain and its Atlantic world"

Patrick T. Barker, Yale University

"Capitalism, Slavery, and Ecology in Trinidad, c. 1800"

15:30-16:30 (GMT+1)

2: Technologies, environments and labor

Chair and Discussant: **Marta Macedo**, ICS, Universidade de Lisboa

Rodrigo Bulamah, Universidade Federal de São Paulo

"Plantation as infrastructure: materiality and the possibility of a more-than-human history of the Anthropocene"

Tristan Stubbs, College of Charleston

"'[A] continual exercise of our Patience and Economy' - Plantation overseers and agricultural innovation in eighteenth-century North America"

September, 17

12:30-13:45 (GMT+1)

3: Labor reproduction and hierarchies

Chair and Discussant: **Colette Le Petitcorps**, ICS, Universidade de Lisboa

Mariana de Aguiar Ferreira Muaze, Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro

"Inside the Household: Enslaved Domestic Servants in Comparative Perspective, Vassouras (Brazil) and Natchez (USA)"

Emmanuel Osewe Akubor, Obafemi Awolowo University

"Plantation farming and the creation of capitalist classed system in Oto-Esan of Benin Province, Southwest Nigeria"

Jayaseelan Raj, Centre for Development Studies, Kerala

"Sources of Social Reproduction: Labour in the Indian Tea Plantations"

14:00-15:00 (GMT+1)

Keynote Lecture

Chair: **Cristiana Bastos**, ICS, Universidade de Lisboa

Deborah Thomas, University of Pennsylvania

"Epochal Shifts: The death of the west and the future of us all"

September, 18

14:00-15:15 (GMT+1)

4: From plantation to corporation

Chair and Discussant: **Nuno Domingos**, ICS, Universidade de Lisboa

Patrick Neveling, University of Bergen

"Plantations to sweatshops - lineages of the postcolonial state in Mauritian and global export-oriented industrialization since the early 1800s"

Mathieu Claveyrolas, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique

"Reconsidering the pervasiveness of plantation in Mauritius through ethnographic data"

Rebekah McCallum, McGill University

"Business Practice and Company Presence on South Asian Tea Plantations in the 20th Century"

15:30-16:45 (GMT+1)

5: Ruins and Sovereignty

Chair and Discussant **Irene Peano**, ICS, Universidade de Lisboa

Marie Aureille, EHESS

"Living with Ghosts: People, Weeds and Ideals of a 'Better Life' in a former Citrus Plantation in Socialist Cuba"

Tiago Saraiva, Drexel University

"Statistics and Emancipation in the Plantationocene: Moving Sampling Techniques from New Deal America to Colonial Guinea-Bissau"

Nile A. Davies, Columbia University

"Life and "the time of Chinese": Magbass, 1980-1995"

September, 24

14:00-15:15 (GMT+1)

6: Disciplining through race and crime

Chair and Discussant: **Cristiana Bastos**, ICS, Universidade de Lisboa

Martino Sacchi, Lorenzo Ravano, Paris X Nanterre

"The police rurale in Haiti (1791-1806): labor perspectives through the plantation complex"

Travis K. Bost, University of Toronto

"On the Margins of Plantation: Race-Class Ambiguity among the Canary Islanders of Bayou Terre-aux-Boeuf"

Leniqueca Welcome, University of Pennsylvania

"Surviving the Legacy of the Plantation: The Making of Criminal Life in Trinidad"

15:30-16:45 (GMT+1)

7: Everyday Resistances

Chair and Discussant: **André Novoa**, ICS, Universidade de Lisboa

Sophie Sapp Moore, University of Wisconsin-Madison

"Cacos and Cotton: Unmaking Imperial Geographies on Haiti's Central Plateau"

Sarah Franzen, University of Pennsylvania

"Embodied Resistance: Farm Work as a Revolutionary Act"

David Pretel, Pompeu Fabra University (Barcelona), MPIWG

"Green Gold Struggles: Henequen Plantations and the Materiality of Maya Resistance"

September, 25

9:00-10:15 (GMT+1)

8: Subverting plantation memories

Chair and Discussant: **Inês Ponte**, ICS, Universidade de Lisboa

Adiva Lawrence, University of Hull

"The Museum as Plantation Archive and Curatorial Dismantling"

Hilary Emmett, Clare Corbould, University of East Anglia,

Deakin University

"We identify as Sugar Slaves": Remembering the Queensland
Sugar Plantations"

Sophie Chao, University of Sydney

The Beetle or the Bug: Multispecies Biopolitics in a West Papuan
Oil Palm Plantation

12:00-13:15 (GMT+1)

9: Subjectivities within and beyond the plantation

Chair and Discussant: **Pedro Figueiredo Neto**, ICS,

Universidade de Lisboa

Carla Gomes, ICS, Universidade de Lisboa

"Owner's land: contracts of 'reciprocal recognition' in the
renewed plantations of post-colonial Mozambique"

Rana Behal, University of New Delhi

"Transforming agrarian communities into 'Coolies': Indentured
Labour Regime in Tea Plantations in Colonial Assam"

Serena Sein, Princeton University

Sobra: Toxicities of Belonging on New Plantations in northern
Mozambique

September, 25

14:00-15:15 (GMT+1)

10: Erupting rebellions

Chair and Discussant: **Ricardo Roque**, ICS, Universidade de Lisboa

Jacqueline Mercier Allain, Duke University

"Gender and Plantation Labor Militancy in Post-Emancipation Martinique"

Camden R. Elliott, Harvard University

"The Environmental History of an Early American Slave Rebellion"

Rogério Brittes Pires, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais

"Making it Saamaka: Names and gifts among Suriname Maroons"