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Roads from Calabria: The Arrighian approach to agrarian political economy

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Abstract

Scholars of agrarian change have long debated the nature of capitalist transition in the countryside, including whether the deepened interlinking of local, national, and transnational economic activities make past trajectories of agrarian transformation unlikely to reoccur in the present. This essay makes the case that Giovanni Arrighi's work has much to add to our understanding of the agrarian question in global historical perspective. We focus in particular on Arrighi's research on trajectories of change in the Calabrian region of southern Italy, and his essay "Capitalist Development in Hostile Environments." In this piece, Arrighi and co-author Fortunata Piselli develop two key insights. The first is that the pathways to capitalism are diverse, non-linear, and historically contingent such that within one country—or, in the case of Italy, a single subnational region—multiple trajectories can be found. The second is that the outcomes of capitalist transition vary based on a country's position in the international hierarchy of wealth, meaning that agrarian transformation is compatible with both economic development and underdevelopment. We describe the three methodological principles that enabled Arrighi to develop his analysis of capitalist transition and explain how the papers collected in this special issue reflect and extend the Arrighian approach to agrarian political economy.

KEYWORDS

agrarian question, capitalist transition, development, Giovanni Arrighi, peripheralization

1 | INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to ask the “agrarian question” in the 21st century? In an era of transnational land grabs, agro-industrial booms and busts, and the displacement of rural communities by state and capital, one can be sceptical about the possibility of an agrarian-based capitalism that not only generates economic growth, but also provides some semblance of sustainable social reproduction in the countryside. Previous debates on the historical role of rural producers in urban industrialization and national economic development—as a “stage” in the transition towards capitalism and perhaps beyond—have largely been replaced by sober examinations of the crises of social reproduction experienced by agrarian communities across the world (Levien, Watts, & Hairong, 2018). Just as the capitalist world-economy cannot absorb the output of its own productive capacity (Brenner, 2006), neither can it seemingly absorb the people that are cast out of rural communities as redundant, precarious, or pauperized labour (Bernstein, 2009; Breman, 2019). Scholars have stressed that where capital accumulation does occur in today’s countryside, it frequently takes the form of accumulation by dispossession whereby growth arises through the expulsion of rural producers from the circuits of capital, rather than through the exploitation of their labour (Harvey, 2003; Levien, 2018; Li, 2011).

Scholars of agrarian political economy have investigated these topics at length, including in the pages of the *Journal of Agrarian Change*. Henry Bernstein (2010) has argued that there are two agrarian questions worth exploring today, not one. The first question is in respect to capital. Here, the relevant question is whether the configurations of social relations of production that have historically led to capitalist forms of agriculture are possible in the present. The second question is in respect to labour. It asks what happens to rural households when they are not incorporated *en masse* into circuits of rural wage-labour or commodity production sufficient to reproduce their own livelihoods.

Both questions, however, tend to be rooted in the idea that prior agrarian transitions occurred within local or national territorial units. The implication is that the scale and dynamics of these *previous* instances of agrarian change can be contrasted with the ones that are unfolding *today* in the context of a resolutely global capitalism. To be sure, as Terence Byres (2016) has insisted, the possibility of socially inclusive forms of agrarian transformation remains an empirical question that should not be foreclosed (p. 448). Yet, Bernstein’s (2009) formulation of the difference between agrarian questions “then and now” suggests that the deepened interlinking of local, national, and transnational economic activities that constitute contemporary processes of globalization alter the conditions of agrarian transformation. Insofar as the present era is more hostile to successful transitions, past trajectories of agrarian change may be unlikely to reoccur in the present.

As we examine the contemporary world economy either for evidence of successful ongoing transformations or empirical proof of their impossibility, however, how do we know what we are looking for? In their sweeping 2010 review of the agrarian question past and present, Haroon Akram-Lodhi and Cristobal Kay (2010a, 2010b) weave together numerous critiques of the perspective that rural transformation has taken one, universal path across the capitalist world-economy. Instead of affirming a single archetype of agrarian capitalist development, English style, Akram-Lodhi and Kay pulled on a winding thread across both classical and contemporary treatments of the agrarian question that emphasize the diversity of rural transformations under capitalism. As their review demonstrates, Marx, Lenin, and Kautsky all noticed that patterns of differentiation within peasant classes varied across historical period and geographical region. Instead of a single path with a common set of characteristics, the mechanisms of rural accumulation of capital and the transformations of agrarian social structures differ across time and space.

When organizing this diversity into a typology, Akram-Lodhi and Kay identify no less than six paths of capitalist agrarian transition. These include the English, Prussian, and American paths discussed by Lenin, the French path analysed by Robert Brenner, and the Japanese and Taiwanese paths highlighted by Terence Byres (Akram-Lodi & Kay, 2010b, Table 1). The implication for agrarian studies, the authors argue, is that detailed attention to empirical variation is necessary “to understand the diverse and uneven ways in which rural production processes and agrarian accumulation are or are not being transformed by the capitalist mode of production, and the way in which relations between and within class forces impact upon such transformation” (2010b, p. 266).

Given the analytical breadth and conceptual rigour employed by these two authors in their review article, it is surprising that Giovanni Arrighi is not mentioned once across some sixty pages of text and references. Arrighi's 1960s fieldwork and subsequent publications on the coercive path of rural transformation in Southern Africa (1970, 1979) are often cited in Africanist scholarship as one of the original explanations of how property regimes under colonial rule were "fundamentally different, both as economic institutions and as political institutions, from the property regimes that were established in the colonial metropole" (Boone, 2013, p. 307).

Arrighi's Italian fieldwork in the 1970s complemented and extended his critique of the prevailing notion that capitalist economic growth and rural social transformation took shape along a singular, intertwined path. Arrighi observed that agrarian social structures associated with rapid capitalist growth in some locations have been associated elsewhere with stagnation and even decreasing relevance to centres of capital accumulation. Thus, for Arrighi, social-structural change within local relations of production cannot alone explain patterns of capitalist growth or economic development, whether it be 16th century England, 19th century Italy, or 20th century Zimbabwe. In this sense, Arrighi's fine-grained studies of agrarian transformation collectively form a compelling critique of both unilinear theories of capitalist development as well as rigid explanatory approaches that privilege one scale of analysis over others. More broadly, Arrighi's wide-ranging work explores questions at the heart of ongoing debates in agrarian studies. What is meant by a successful pathway or agrarian transition? At which spatial or temporal scale should these processes be observed and explained? And what is the relationship between the well-being of rural communities and the various forms that agrarian transformation can take?

This special issue invites readers to revisit the relevance of Giovanni Arrighi's work for grappling with the agrarian questions posed by scholars such as Bernstein, Byres, Akram-Lodhi, and Kay. In particular, Arrighi's historical and ethnographic fieldwork on the Southern Italian countryside contains key methodological lessons for how to approach the study of agrarian political economy. Arrighi argued that, even for seemingly isolated rural communities in southern Italy before the consolidation of the national Italian state, understanding the differing outcomes of agrarian transformation required attending to processes at local, national, and global scales. Social relations of production in one locale, Arrighi noted, could engender a quite different outcome for capitalist accumulation than the same set of social relations of production in a different locale, or even in the same locale at a different time. What was the determining factor in paving or blocking the road to agrarian transition? Why were some environments "hostile" to capitalist accumulation?

Arrighi was particularly attentive to the relationship between agrarian change in situ and the macrostructural dynamics of the world economy. He observed that transformations in the social relations of production in the countryside were not necessarily sufficient to secure sustainable growth and development. In this sense, what makes a transition "successful" is not the presence or absence of particular forms, such as commercial agriculture or wage labour, but rather the degree to which these forms generate economic growth and social development. In short, Arrighi's work sought to understand why forms of social relations of production that had led to sustained capitalist transition in some cases did not produce the same outcomes when they emerged in other times and spaces.

In developing an answer to this question, Arrighi argued for a *via media* between two approaches to political economy that used contrasting scales of analysis. The first, often associated with Immanuel Wallerstein and world-systems analysis, contended that world market development creates advantages and disadvantages among different locales according to geography, ecology, and the pre-existing social organization of communities in these environments. Profit-maximizing producers for the market take advantage of these uneven opportunities, and their actions produce differing local social structures and differing levels of surplus accrued from participation in the world-economy. The other position, often associated with Robert Brenner, held that local social-property relations "were not the dependent but the independent variable, so to speak" (Arrighi & Piselli, 1987, p. 679). The dynamics of local social relations of production, including class struggle over the local surplus, determined where profit-maximizing producers for the market emerged, and "the action of profit-maximizers, in turn, reshapes economic geography and ecology" (p. 679).

Arrighi remained an agnostic in the debate, both due to his own empirical observations of diverse agrarian locales as well as his resistance to privileging a singular explanatory factor or a single scale of analysis for understanding the

development of capitalism as a historical system.¹ In “Capitalist Development in Hostile Environments,” the article that motivates this issue of *Journal of Agrarian Change*, Arrighi and his co-author Fortunata Piselli made clear that, in analysing the process of agrarian change in the southern Italian region of Calabria, their purpose was not to debate the relative merits of these “two positions with reference to the wider issues of the transition from feudalism to capitalism and of contemporary processes of development and underdevelopment as a whole” (p. 680). For Arrighi, such a debate was premised on an overly stylized dichotomy between an account of capitalist development driven by what Brenner (1977) described as ecology and geography (the world-system approach) versus one privileging sociology and history (the agrarian class relations approach). As Arrighi and Piselli observed, the problem with this formulation is that “[w]hen dealing with agrarian environments, it may make little sense to counterpose sociology to ecology and geography to history” (p. 680).

Arrighi and Piselli differentiate their view from both of these positions by developing a strikingly original and complex account of agrarian change in the southern Italian region of Calabria. In so doing, they also clarify what is at stake in this debate, suggesting an important distinction between the two “wider issues” in question: “the transition from feudalism to capitalism” and “contemporary processes of development and underdevelopment as a whole.” As we elaborate below, their article offers two main insights: first, that the paths to capitalism are diverse, non-linear, and historically contingent such that within one country—or, in the case of Italy, a single subnational region—multiple trajectories can be found. But the second key insight to emerge from Arrighi and Piselli, and one that is particularly relevant for the agrarian question today, is that capitalist transition is compatible with both economic development and underdevelopment, both social stability and crisis. Just as there are multiple pathways to capitalism, so too is agrarian transformation compatible with multiple outcomes.

In this sense, Arrighi and Piselli offer a variation on the agrarian question that prefigures Bernstein's proposition that one must separate the agrarian question of capital (what set of social relations of production sustains accumulation) from that of labour (how rural communities and agrarian producers are affected by changing social relations of production). At least for individual countries and their sub-regions, Arrighi argued, “social change and economic progress must be treated as separate processes ... [with] their interrelations subjected to empirical investigation rather than assumed away by definition” (Arrighi & Piselli, 1987, p. 735). The consequences of agrarian change are determined not only by the type of activities occurring in a given locale, but also by the returns that these activities secure for the locale, given its position in the global division of labour. Because such returns are unevenly distributed, “some actors or locales that participate directly or indirectly in the world division of labor [are] progressively deprived of the benefits of such participation, to the advantage of other actors or locales” (Arrighi & Piselli, 1987, p. 687). This process of relative deprivation Arrighi and Piselli call peripheralization. Locales that are subject to peripheralization are “hostile environments” in the sense that agrarian transitions are less likely to yield economic progress and/or improved social welfare.

Although not an exact repetition, discussions of the agrarian question today still rhyme in remarkable ways with the set of questions orienting Arrighi's work, even if the debate has become both less polarized and less conclusive. For example, both Henry Bernstein (2016) and Terence Byres (2016) agree that empirical investigation, across different spatial scales as well as across global regions, is needed before sweeping proclamations are made about the possibilities of self-sustaining capital accumulation in poorer countries. It is in this context that we suggest the merit of revisiting Arrighi's work on agrarian change. We find his research in Calabria particularly valuable, not only because it resonates with current discussions about what makes for a “successful” agrarian transition, but also because it exemplifies three methodological tenets for the study of rural transformation. Taken together, we propose, these tenets constitute an Arrighian approach to agrarian political economy that remains relevant today.

¹As an advocate of a world-historical approach to understanding capitalism, Arrighi is often associated with Wallerstein's side in this debate. However, Arrighi sought to articulate a less polarized position, one that acknowledged the strengths of Brenner's critique of Wallerstein's world-systemic explanation for the origins of capitalism. Arrighi argued that overly stylized positions led to calcified discussions—“nondebates,” as he called them—which tended to obscure significant differences among scholars adopting the same broad (in this case, world-systems) perspective (see Arrighi, 1998).

First, agrarian political economy requires studying labour supplies and the wage-labour relation in historical and comparative perspective, without presuming or privileging a particular form as the *sine qua non* of capitalist transition.² This approach enabled Arrighi to show that different types of property regimes and labour structures exist across agrarian communities, even within the same macro-region. The combination of fully proletarianized wage-labour and fully profit-maximizing farming is only one of multiple pathways towards capitalist growth. Moreover, this orientation challenged the notion that full proletarianization should be viewed as an indicator of a successful agrarian transition. In Calabria, such an indicator marked a highly contentious path that actively undermined its own sources of growth over time. In other words, scholars of agrarian transformation should analyse empirically the extent to which varied local social-property relations become consistent with the ongoing process of capital accumulation and the consolidation of capitalist social relations.

Second, agrarian political economy requires expanding the unit of analysis beyond the scale of the local. To be sure, Arrighi's work rests upon a careful analysis of local and national-level factors that shape the agrarian dynamics of particular communities. However, the trajectories of these communities cannot be explained solely with reference to developments internal to the community itself. The macro-historical context in which a given instance of agrarian change unfolds affects the prospects for that locale experiencing what has commonly been viewed as a "successful" transition—that is, one that brings both economic progress and broad improvements in welfare. Although global dynamics are widely understood to shape agrarian trajectories today, Arrighi's work shows that shifting global dynamics were present and constitutive of agrarian social relations even in the "classic" cases of transition (see his account of the rise of English capitalism in Arrighi, 1994, pp. 179–218). In this sense, Arrighi's research on agrarian transitions in Calabria is an example of what Philip McMichael would later elaborate as the method of incorporated comparison. Arrighi and Piselli treat their three Calabrian sub-regions not as independent cases but as "differentiated outcomes or moments of an historically integrated process" that interweaves structures, processes, and events at the local/regional, national, and global level (McMichael, 1990, p. 392).³

Third, agrarian political economy requires careful attention to the institutional bases for transformations in the welfare and livelihoods of rural communities. For Arrighi, these included the role of social conflict and the bargaining power of labouring classes, the characteristics of migratory flows, and the policies of states—metropolitan, colonial, and postcolonial—that often attempted to generate "free" labour for the purpose of capitalist economic development. Social struggles and institutions of political and social exchange in a locale influence how a given level of economic surplus is distributed within that terrain. For Southern Italy, the post-War incorporation of Calabrian labour flows into the jurisdictional borders of protected European markets created a context in which Italian workers from peripheral locales were able to leverage labour protests into improved livelihoods. As Arrighi noted, not all areas have equal access to, or can generate claims on, the economic surpluses of wealthier parts of the world economy, as could Italian migrants (Arrighi & Piselli, 1987, p. 734). Nevertheless, the well-being of agrarian communities is affected by the struggles waged by rural labour and by other social actors, and by the state's response to such struggles.⁴

Having identified the core components of an Arrighian approach to political economy, we now turn to a discussion of Arrighi and Piselli's essay on agrarian change in Calabria, "Capitalist Development in Hostile Environments."

²We are not suggesting that this is a position unique to Arrighi. Numerous scholars of agrarian change have pointed out that capitalism can accommodate multiple forms of labour exploitation (see Banaji, 1977 for a classical treatment of this question and Bernstein, 2013 for a discussion of Banaji that positions his work vis-a-vis the Wallerstein-Brenner debate). We thank Liam Campling for reminding us that Arrighi and Piselli's essay appeared around the same time as a raft of articles debating the role of petty commodity production in capitalism (for example, Goodman & Redclift, 1985; Bernstein, 1988).

³McMichael (1990) differentiates the method of incorporated comparison from both traditional comparative methods in which cases are treated as self-contained units, and "encompassing comparison" in which macrostructural dynamics fully determine local outcomes.

⁴This line of inquiry extended throughout Arrighi's career, from his work on rural labour in Africa to his analysis of accumulation without dispossession in parts of the Chinese countryside. In one of his final articles, Arrighi forcefully pointed out how social instability and declining improvements in economic productivity could be engendered by the complete proletarianization of agrarian labour and by state policies that prioritized economic growth over well-being (Arrighi, Aschoff, & Scully, 2010). See Jacobs (2018) for a follow-up study, which highlights how the land question has returned to the fore of urban struggles in South Africa as a result of the collapse of the apartheid developmental model.

Specifically, we explain how each of the essay's main sections develops one of the methods that together constitute Arrighi's approach to analysing agrarian change. We conclude our introductory essay with a discussion of the eight articles gathered in this special issue.⁵ In addition to briefly summarizing each, we focus on highlighting how they engage and extend the Arrighian approach. We draw connections between these articles and insights from Arrighi's later work on the developmental consequences of hegemonic cycles in the world economy and the possibility of accumulation without dispossession as a pathway of rural transformation. We conclude by summarizing the collective contribution that this special issue makes in terms of highlighting the myriad lines of inquiry comprising the agrarian question today.

2 | ARRIGHI ON THE AGRARIAN QUESTION: CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT IN HOSTILE ENVIRONMENTS

"Capitalist Development in Hostile Environments" threads together Arrighi's earlier writing on labour supplies in Southern Africa with the analysis of macro-historical dynamics of the capitalist world economy developed in *The Long Twentieth Century* and *Chaos and Governance in the Modern World-System*. Though this essay was not published until the late 1980s, the research on which it was based began more than a decade earlier. In 1974, following several years in Trento and Turin where he (along with Romano Madera and Luisa Passerini) formed the autonomist Marxist collective *Gruppo Gramsci*, Arrighi took a position at the University of Calabria in the underdeveloped southern region of Italy. For the next 5 years he directed a research team that coupled the social-anthropological methods he learned from his Manchester School colleagues in sub-Saharan Africa with his experiences and insights from *Gruppo Gramsci* to study patterns of class formation, proletarianization, and migration in Calabria. During this time, Arrighi and his colleagues collected and analysed ethnographic and archival data on patterns of household production and class reproduction, social conflict, land use and labour market dynamics, migration flows, state practices, social welfare, and other dynamics of capitalist development in three rural sub-regions of Calabria.

This research spawned a number of publications, much of it in Italian and written by his co-investigators. Arrighi's own comprehensive analysis from his decade of research in Calabria was completed as a book manuscript in 1979, but was unfortunately stolen from a car while *en route* to his publisher in Rome. Shortly thereafter, Arrighi settled into a new position at the State University of New York at Binghamton and the project remained largely on hiatus until 1987, when Arrighi and co-author Fortunata Piselli crystalized their key findings in a 100-page manuscript published in *Review: Fernand Braudel Center*. The article, "Capitalist Development in Hostile Environments: Feuds, Class Struggles, and Migrations in a Peripheral Region of Southern Italy," was published in the midst of a flurry of research coming out of SUNY-Binghamton at the time, and was largely overshadowed by Arrighi's work that culminated in *The Long Twentieth Century* a few years later.

Although their study initially sought to explore the causes of outmigration from Calabria, Arrighi and Piselli's article grew to address the core concerns comprising agrarian studies, including changing social relations in the countryside, transformations in rural livelihoods, and the emergence of sustained accumulation. Empirically, "Capitalist Development in Hostile Environments" analyses varied historical patterns of capitalist development and social change in three sub-regions of Calabria: the Cosentino, the Plain of Gioia Tauro, and the Crotonese. From their early origins as peasant latifundia in the 19th century, these areas diverged along distinct sub-regional paths during the first half of the 20th century, before eventually converging towards fully-fledged capitalist forms of production

⁵These papers were originally presented at a conference marking the 30th anniversary of the publication of Arrighi and Piselli's article, held at the University of Calabria on June 6–8, 2017. We thank the Department of Humanities and the Department of Political Science at the University of Calabria as well as The Arrighi Center for Global Studies at The Johns Hopkins University for organizing the conference. We also thank the participants (including Fortunata Piselli herself) for reflections and conversations about Arrighi's Calabrian project, from which we learned a great deal.

rooted in proletarianized labour arrangements by the 1970s and 1980s. The brilliance of Arrighi and Piselli's work lies not only in the depth of their understanding of the historical patterns of development within each locale, but also in their ability to connect these contingent regional patterns to larger macro-historical structures and processes, including the rise and consolidation of the Italian bureaucratic state, the geopolitics of the post-War decades, and the changing contours of the world economy.

Arrighi and Piselli's article is divided into three sections, each of which develops a key insight about the development of capitalism in Calabria, and in so doing, illustrates what we describe above as the Arrighian approach to agrarian political economy. In the first part of the article, Arrighi and Piselli examine the formation of a wage-labour force in the three Calabrian sub-regions. In the Crotonese, the peasantry evolved into a sharply stratified social structure consisting, on the one hand, of capitalist enterprises engaged in large-scale commodity production, and, on the other, a set of landless or land-poor households whose members sold their labour. Among the three regions studied by Arrighi and Piselli, this was the only one where the emergence of a wage labour force took the form of proletarianization. If the Crotonese's path approximated the classic "Prussian/Junker road" of development, Arrighi and Piselli found that Gioia Tauro's trajectory more closely resembled the "American/farmer" pattern of small-scale commodity production. Meanwhile, the third region's trajectory did not resemble either of these ideal types. Instead, Arrighi and Piselli found that the Consentino had followed a "Swiss/migrant-peasant" road, characterized by a combination of subsistence-oriented production and emigration.

This analysis of Calabria extended Arrighi's earlier work on the development of wage labour in southern Africa, which challenged the assumption that full proletarianization was necessary for self-sustaining capital accumulation. Similarly, and in contrast to accounts of agrarian transition that privileged a singular or sequential path to capitalism, Arrighi and Piselli showed that "systems of production that are often construed as successive stages in the development of capitalism (subsistence production, small-scale commodity production, and large-scale commodity production) developed in Calabria next to each other and at about the same historical time" (Arrighi & Piselli, 1987, p. 655). The first methodological tenet of the Arrighian approach to agrarian political economy derives from this careful analysis of three roads to wage labour in Calabria: Studying labour supplies in historical perspective illuminates multiple social structures consistent with accumulation and the consolidation of capitalism.

If the first section of "Capitalist Development in Hostile Environments" challenges a necessary relationship between capitalism and proletarianization, part two of the article calls into question the relationship between capitalism and development. Neither the Junker nor the American nor the Swiss road led Calabria to an improved position in a stratified world economy. Though the different social structures that emerged out of the peasant latifundia during the second half of the 19th century "had important implications for the welfare of the people involved and for the patterns of social conflict and cohesion that became dominant" in the three areas, they were nevertheless "all associated with economic underdevelopment/peripheralization" (pp. 654–655). To explain this outcome requires expanding the unit of analysis beyond these sub-regions of Calabria to encompass "their interrelationships with the dynamics of the world-economy and of the nation-state" (p. 677).

Economic activities, forms of production, and social structures that had been associated with paths to a "core-like" position for other locales of the world economy did not generate this kind of mobility for Calabria within the international hierarchy of wealth. Transformations in situ—such as the full proletarianization of the local workforce or the adoption of fully-rationalized production systems—are not sufficient to secure development, just as peripheralization cannot be attributed to the presence of peasant forms of subsistence production. Instead, as Arrighi elaborated (Arrighi & Drangel, 1986), a locale's position in the world economy is determined by the ability of local actors to capture monopoly forms of wealth, which are, in turn, used to continually innovate their economic activities. Through such innovations, actors in the core are able to retain a relatively monopolistic position within the commodity chains that comprise the world economy, thus shifting competitive market pressures onto peripheral actors. The distinguishing feature of the periphery, in turn, is the inability of local economic actors to generate and capture the gains from such innovations, leaving them subject to the full weight of market competition. The broader point to emerge from this section of "Capitalist Development in Hostile Environments," consistent with Arrighi's second

methodological tenet, is that explaining the causes and consequences of change in rural communities requires looking beyond local social relations. Agrarian political economy must include analysis of the world market forces and geopolitical dynamics that shape development trajectories.

When the differentiation of the Calabrian peasantry began in the 19th century, the region was underdeveloped relative to core wealthy locales. A half century later, this continued to be the case. But although Arrighi and Piselli found that changing microstructures of production and reproduction in Calabria did not generate mobility up the world hierarchy of wealth, these local microstructures were important nevertheless—not for determining *whether* peripheralization occurred, but rather the *form* that it took in each sub-region, and the resulting outcomes for rural livelihoods and well-being. Specifically, the local organization of production and reproduction shaped the social conflicts, political stability, and general welfare experienced by Calabria's rural population. Moreover, these changes had the opposite impact expected by modernization theorists; fully proletarianized class formation processes did not lead to “successful transitions” but rather were detrimental to local social welfare, whereas peasant forms of production and reproduction were associated with greater welfare and less social conflict.

Arrighi and Piselli found that where proletarianization was most pronounced, in the Crotonese, the landlord capitalist class was able to shift the costs of peripheralization onto the rural labour force. Yet, the Crotonese's highly polarized class structure later gave rise to class conflict, and eventually to land reforms that, to some degree, undermined the power of the landed class. In contrast, the stratified class structure of the Plain of Gioia formed the backdrop to the emergence of feuds and mafia activity that first helped stabilize regional social relations, only to undermine them when these feuds become politicized under the fascist state. The greatest degree of social stability arose in the Cosentino, where local peasant families subsidized their petty household production through remittances sent from emigrants. These remittances eventually dried up, however, as emigrants became fully proletarianized and more deeply integrated into industrial urban hubs in the Italian north.

The third section of “Capitalist Development in Hostile Environments” explains these regionally variegated outcomes, focusing on the redistributive struggles that unfolded in Calabria during the middle third of the 20th century, and especially in the post-World War II period, when the trajectories of the three sub-regions once again converged. The Italian state plays a key role in this part of the analysis, expanding its presence and influence in each locale, albeit in different ways. In the Crotonese, a government agency responsible for carrying out land reform in the wake of that sub-region's agrarian unrest virtually eliminated the traditional latifundia and undermined the local influence of Communists and Socialists; over time, this agency came to bind the peasantry, via patronage networks, to the ruling party. In Gioia Tauro, the fall of the Fascist regime introduced a new scramble for power in which pre-existing feuds between rival kinship groups and mafia factions became overlaid with new forms of clientelism. Access to the resources made available through these patronage relations came to play an ever more important role in sustaining rural producers. Although the state also built patronage relations in the Consentino, it did so by making use of extended kinship networks that had long been central to the sub-region's migratory flows.

In concert with the Italian state, development trajectories during this period were also profoundly shaped by mass migration from the south to the north of the country. Arrighi and Piselli trace three waves of migration affecting each Calabrian sub-region, albeit to varying degrees. During the first two waves—stretching from the late 1940s to the early 1960s—migration was associated with improved livelihood opportunities fuelled by remittances to the sending regions. The economic downturn that began with the recession of 1963–1966 marked the end of this pattern, however. The third wave of migrants, who travelled north following the recession, found fewer opportunities than those who came before them. These disappointed migrants from Calabria played an outsized role in the labour conflicts that erupted in Northern industries in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Relatedly, unrest was also rife in the South—a pattern that reflected “complementary responses to the contradictions of mass migration, which relied upon and simultaneously undermined the viability of commodity and subsistence production in the areas of emigration” (Arrighi & Piselli, 1987, p. 732).

Arrighi and Piselli's analysis in this third part of “Capitalist Development in Hostile Environments” represents the third tenet of Arrighian agrarian political economy—that is, careful analysis of the institutions that shape the well-

being of agrarian communities. Social conflict features prominently in Arrighi and Piselli's account here, though so do two other factors: migration, as a process that can substitute for conflict, and the Italian state, as a key actor capable of mediating, mitigating, and sometimes catalysing conflict. In underscoring the institutional bases of rural welfare and livelihoods, Arrighi and Piselli seek also to highlight the importance of distinguishing between two dimensions of development: economic progress, as an increase in the "absolute and relative command over economic resources" and social change, as the "organization of economic life" (p. 735). In the case of Calabria, Arrighi and Piselli conclude that although agrarian change failed to bring economic progress to any of the Calabrian sub-regions, the type of social change and forms of conflict that arose in the Consentino enabled rural producers to fare better than their counterparts in the Crotonese. This variation in outcomes underscores the importance of change in social institutions and patterns of struggle, which do not determine a territory's command over economic resources, but do "determine the distribution of such command *within* the territory, and therefore the welfare of its population" (p. 736).

3 | EXTENDING THE ARRIGHIAN APPROACH TO AGRARIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY

The papers included in this special issue of the *Journal of Agrarian Change* address a broad range of pressing social crises experienced by rural communities in the Global South. These include the emergence of surplus populations with increasingly precarious ties to rural land; lack of access to stable wage employment; the inability to establish new livelihoods in urban centres; the rise of new forms of authoritarian state practices and paramilitary violence that reproduce social exclusions and inequalities despite formal democratization; and, the failure of development policy to generate either economic growth or substantial improvements in social welfare. To understand these realities, each author adopts an Arrighian approach that recasts contemporary agrarian dynamics in broader historical perspective. Doing so draws attention to the importance of colonial and postcolonial institutions, patterns of insertion and accumulation associated with world commodity markets, political revolutions and waves of social unrest, geopolitical dynamics of interstate warfare, and world hegemonic transitions in order to explain diverse trajectories of development and the prospects of rural inhabitants for sustained livelihoods.

Moreover, whereas each of the papers focuses on trajectories of agrarian change at the national or regional level, they all expand their analytical focus well beyond these locales. Following Arrighi's attention to how the dynamics of particular rural communities interact with those of the world market and nation-state, the authors highlight the interaction of local workers, elites, state agencies, and households with national political institutions, geopolitical actors, transnational corporations, financial institutions, and other global market forces. Following Arrighi's footsteps, specific attention is paid to the role of rural-urban and transnational migration; labour unrest and social conflict; state development policy; and regional processes of market, class, and state formation in shaping both historical as well as contemporary dynamics of agrarian transformation. Finally, each paper is also attuned to the agency of rural actors and the critical role of local institutions in shaping prospects for development, stability, and social welfare.

Collectively, this special issue paints a picture of the multiplicity and highly variegated nature of patterns of agrarian transformation and capitalist development. It also highlights some recurrent, common trends across the regions studied. Scully and Britwum, for example, examine the role of the historic labour-reserve regions of Northern Ghana and the Eastern Cape of South Africa in processes of capitalist development. As regions that supplied vast amounts of cheap labour to foster the growth of urban industrial, extractive, and export-oriented agricultural sectors via circulatory patterns of migration, these authors ask, what is the contemporary relevance of these rural areas, especially as their leading sectors have decreased in importance as centres of capitalist growth, development, and employment?

To answer this question, Scully and Britwum adopt an analytical strategy that mirrors Arrighi and Piselli in comparing multiple locales (northern Ghana and South Africa) across three periods, with a focus on the role of migrant labour, the elite-dominated structures of rural politics, and the forms of resistance and conflict precipitated by rural

hardship. Rather than analyse the ways that labour reserves facilitated the development of capitalism in the countryside, they flip the traditional agrarian question on its head and instead focus on how the development of mining, industry, and commercial agriculture shaped and was shaped by the social reproduction strategies of rural migrants. In doing so, they highlight how access to steady wage work had previously been used by migrants to accumulate savings and invest in agricultural or farm-income generation in their rural communities. In this sense, the authors argue that Ghana and South Africa represent a “stunted version of the migrant peasant road.” However, the declining economic vitality of these productive activities, and their inability to provide migrants with stable access to wages, has undermined the economic stability of rural communities. In other words, in contrast to those who argue that the urban-industrial sectors were subsidized by the traditional agricultural sector, they argue that the development and reproduction of both were mutually-constitutive, and their fates intimately connected.

This has important implications for the capacity of rural communities in these regions to forge new forms of social welfare and well-being. Scully and Britwum observe that although these regions display patterns of circular migration and experiences of semi-proletarianization that resemble forms of social reproduction associated with the period of labour reserves that Arrighi described in his study of Rhodesia (1970), migratory workers today “are more tangential to the direct needs of urban and extractive capital.” To be sure, these permanently uprooted populations of surplus workers may now enjoy formal democratic rights that no longer tie them to the countryside. However, they lack access to stable employment. This combination of economic precarity and political enfranchisement, they argue, has now “brought the contradictions and politics of the rural areas onto the urban and national stage.”

Levenson's article starts from the problem described by Scully and Britwum regarding the new forms of resistance and conflict precipitated by rural hardship. More directly focused on the urban side of the equation, Levenson asks how the South African government has responded to the contemporary crisis of rural migrants seeking access to housing in the country's urban centres. To answer this question, he conducts an ethnographic study of land occupations in Cape Town and the responses they engender from the government housing bureaucracy. Consistent with the Arrighian approach to political economy, Levenson situates the state's management of this acute housing crisis within the broader historical transformation of South Africa's racialized political economy. During the Apartheid era, municipal governments could forcibly restrict the movement of Black South Africans, using repression to indiscriminately remove them from urban areas and return them to the countryside. This cheapened their labour in ways that facilitated the growth and development of key capitalist industries. As was analysed by Scully and Britwum however, movement restrictions also facilitated the continued economic vitality of rural settlements themselves.

Today, however, these restrictions on urban resettlement have been lifted in the context of democratic political institutions that extend formal citizenship rights to previously disenfranchised Blacks. Freedom of movement in the absence of agrarian redevelopment or commitment to rural industrialization has created mass migration from rural areas to cities in post-apartheid South Africa. At the same time, the state has adopted neoliberal economic policies that have made wage labour more precarious and less available. The result is a daunting paradox for the South African government. On the one hand, the country's constitution promises social rights, including a right to housing, which cannot be realized, given the scale of need and the inadequacy of available resources. On the other hand, the government faces a legitimacy crisis if it uses outright repression and coercion against urban newcomers seeking access to a livelihood in the cities.

Levenson develops the concept of “selective dispossession” to explain how the state manages this conflict between democratization and agrarian neoliberalism. Specifically, his ethnographic data reveals that housing officials deploy a moralizing rhetoric that distinguishes residents who patiently wait for housing from those who occupy urban land and make immediate demands on the state for formal titles. By stigmatizing the latter group as opportunistic, and therefore a threat to the technocratic vision of democracy as an orderly distributive project, the state legitimates its use of dispossession to evict homeless citizens in the name of defending democracy itself.

While the backdrop of Levenson's analysis of selective dispossession is the ongoing livelihood crisis in rural South Africa, which drives migrants from the countryside to the cities in search of work and housing, Zhan's

contribution focuses instead on changing livelihood strategies in rural China and the very different migratory patterns fuelling capitalist development there. Following Hart (2006) and Arrighi et al. (2010), he distinguishes between two modes of accumulation: "Accumulation by dispossession" found in places like South Africa, where rural inhabitants are completely cut off from access to the means of rural livelihood, and "accumulation without dispossession" that has taken in parts of rural China. Zhan defines the latter as a form of "accumulation [that] ... occurs without (completely) depriving peasants of the right to income-generating assets and benefits." To make sense of these differences, Zhan develops a typology of varieties of dispossession, based on (a) whether producer land is expropriated and (b) whether rural families are able to derive a livelihood from income-generating assets.

Drawing upon this two-fold understanding of dispossession, Zhan identifies historical periods of Chinese development that are rooted in distinct patterns of rural accumulation. Between 1978 and 1996, various forms of accumulation without dispossession took hold in rural China. Rural land was not expropriated, but instead converted into sites of village enterprises, whereas villagers themselves were granted proprietary rights and jobs. The conversion of their land into useful assets shifted in the 1990s, as local governments began to privatize rural collective enterprises. At the time, many households undergoing dispossession were able to use accumulated assets to mitigate this period of transition. However, as their livelihoods became more dependent upon secure access to wages, and as their access to stable and adequate employment dried up, the risk of dispossession increased, driving an upsurge in unrest, both across the countryside and among peasant migrants in Export Processing Zones. In response to this discontent, the Chinese Communist Party proposed a set of rural reforms in 2006 intended to reinvest in the economic livelihoods of rural communities, though it remains to be seen if these will be sufficient to halt the trend towards accumulation by dispossession since the late 1990s.

The upshot of Zhan's analysis is that contemporary discussions of agrarian change in China overstate the degree to which growth has been premised on dispossession, and fail to recognize the diversity that exists in terms of land use trajectories. Like Arrighi and Piselli, then, Zhan points out that the welfare of rural inhabitants is by no means over-determined by macro processes of capitalist development. Rather, by looking at the institutional bases of social change, Zhan finds that the question of rural welfare is largely shaped by the outcome of local conflicts over land and livelihoods.

Similar to Zhan, Harris and Kalb examine the convertibility of land as an asset that can be used to generate social mobility and economic well-being. Rather than analyse, as Zhan does, how landholding can enable livelihood transitions for particular rural households, Harris and Kalb examine the transfer of landholding over time. They argue, following Arrighi, that the welfare effects of land reforms need to be separated from their consequences for economic growth. In the case of Iran, two separate land reforms were carried out by the state over the course of the 20th century. The social revolution of 1979, which is often associated with a high degree of state-sponsored social mobility, occurred between these two episodes of land reform. Rather than viewing the Iranian revolution as a "year zero," with the new state shaping the social order without historical precedent, Harris and Kalb examine the intergenerational impact of Pahlavi-era land reforms on the social mobility of urban migrant families from the countryside after the 1979 revolution and into the Islamic Republic.

Recasting capital accumulation in this larger historical perspective, they argue that Iran's land reforms of the 1960s and 1970s contributed to a heterogeneous social differentiation of the Iranian peasantry. Following the 1979 revolution, educational reforms and expansion of higher education formed part of the post-revolutionary state's developmental project. The widening of access to credentials fostered by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's Islamic Republic laid the tracks by which peasants and rural households could convert landholding assets into new forms of social and cultural capital. The benefits of these transformational processes, however, fell disproportionately to the rural middle strata, not to the landless poor.

Using a unique survey dataset collected by the authors in Iran, Harris and Kalb argue that pre-1979 land reform in Iran did not favour those segments of the peasantry who remained in the countryside, but rather those who utilized these newly acquired landholdings as a means to transfer status and opportunities to their children after the 1979 revolution. Past rural struggles thus reappeared in the contemporary inequality of urban households. Harris and Kalb

argue that land reforms did not automatically produce welfare gains in Iran. Consistent with Arrighi's attention to the institutional factors shaping development trajectories, they argue that new forms of social status and prestige had to be put in place during the Islamic Republic's post-revolutionary era for land reform to contribute to a foundation for social mobility.

Bair's analysis of the historical trajectories of capitalist development in Mexico's henequen- and cotton-growing regions shares Harris and Kalb's emphasis on the importance of revolutions and social conflict on subsequent patterns of social welfare and growth. However, she applies a wider world-historical frame to attend to how these state interventions hold up in the face of changing world market dynamics. Bair pulls together two analytic threads of Arrighian political economy, as she links the core-periphery dynamics of commodity chains with the effects of labour unrest and social conflict on economic growth and welfare gains.

Bair traces the formation of regional monocultures in the context of a late 19th to early 20th century commodity boom. In the Yucatán, Mayan peasants cultivated henequen under a system of debt peonage, whereas in La Laguna owners of large cotton estates relied on the wage labour of both resident and migrant workers. By the 1930s, both regions experienced escalating struggles for control of land and labour that exploded in social unrest. The Mexican state responded by instituting agrarian reforms meant to quell unrest and bolster the regime's legitimacy vis-à-vis local actors by redistributing lands and establishing collective farming units (*ejidos*). Bair's analysis echoes Arrighi and Piselli in that she both centers social conflict as a factor explaining changes in rural welfare, and highlights the different patterns of conflict resulting from diverse trajectories of class formation. In La Laguna, a mobilized rural proletariat forced the government to carry out an agrarian reform "from below," whereas the division and redistribution of henequen estates in Yucatan was orchestrated "from above" by the government in order to disempower intransigent local elites.

Following the land reforms in Yucatán and La Laguna, the monoculture orientation of regional production was preserved, but in the decades following the creation of the *ejidos*, changes in the world markets for henequen and cotton undermined the economic viability of these commodity complexes. As rising costs and declining demand threatened rural livelihoods in the henequen and cotton zones, the Mexican government nevertheless sought to shore-up the *ejidos*, which had become central to the political patronage networks connecting rural communities to the state. Its solution was to create a new regime of state-controlled agriculture in which the state paid producers to work the *ejido* lands that were nominally theirs. Although this system managed to stabilize rural livelihoods for a time, it could not fully insulate these regional monocultures from the broader dynamics of the global henequen and cotton commodity chains in which producers were embedded, and which ultimately proved hostile environments for regional development.

Like Bair, Hough also recasts local labour regime dynamics in a broader Arrighian world historical perspective. Specifically, he analyses divergent patterns of labour control across Colombia's coffee, banana, and coca (cocaine) zones. He does so by situating these commodity-producing regions spatially within the dynamics of each respective global commodity market, as well as historically within the rise and decline of U.S. hegemonic power.

Following Arrighi and Piselli, Hough argues that fully proletarianized labour regimes are vulnerable to crises of labour control and labour unrest, and this is exacerbated when these regimes are situated within competitive, peripheral niches of the market. This conjuncture, which Hough terms "peripheral proletarianization," has created a hostile environment for domestic capital accumulation in Colombia, both for workers seeking a livelihood through wages and income, and for the state, which has actively supported commodity production for the market as a means of promoting economic growth, development, and bastions of political legitimacy in the countryside.

Hough's analysis also underscores the temporal dimension of Arrighi's form of incorporated comparison. He shows that geopolitical priorities and world market conditions intersect in shaping the degree to which commodity production enables sustained accumulation and improvements in the welfare of rural producers. After the Second World War, United States' support for the International Coffee Agreement fuelled the rise of a relatively prosperous and stable class of coffee farmers in Colombia. American hegemony proved less beneficial for producers in the banana and cattle regions; in the former, support for the National Front government shaped the despotic labour regime that developed on banana plantations, whereas the cattle ranching region has been wracked by cycles of

dispossession and violence exacerbated by the provision of U.S. military aid as part of the “War on Terror.” Hough argues that, as U.S. world hegemony unravels and the world market becomes an increasingly hostile environment, we should rethink the viability and desirability of proletarianization as an assumed mechanism of growth, capital accumulation, and social welfare.

Kumral and Karatasli similarly examine the impact of world hegemonic transitions and geopolitical conflict on local agrarian dynamics. They coin the term “hostile conjunctures” to explore this temporal dimension of hostile environments. Rather than focus as Bair and Hough do on labour regimes, Kumral and Karatasli examine the recurring violent processes of dispossession that have unfolded over three periods of Turkish state formation. In so doing, they draw on Arrighi’s concept of hegemonic cycles, underscoring the way in which macro-historical conjunctures shaped the actions of bourgeois elites who jockeyed for control of the state, and used the opportunities and obstacles provided by the world economy to consolidate domestic forms of territorial power.

Although the period of British hegemony saw the integration of the Ottoman Empire into the world economy, the transition from British to U.S. hegemony saw the violent displacement of the non-Muslim bourgeoisie (Armenians, Greeks, and Jews) created in the earlier period. Though a new industrial capitalist class resulted from this appropriation of wealth, the wave of dispossession secured neither sustained capital accumulation nor widespread proletarianization. Kumral and Karatali observe that during the period of American hegemony, Turkish sub-national trajectories became more variegated. Although agrarian change followed the Junker/Prussian path in one region, most of the Anatolian countryside developed via the American/farmer path, with access to tractors (funded in large part by U.S. development aid intended to mechanize agriculture) driving the differentiation of the peasantry.

Kumral and Karatasli conclude by highlighting the possibility of increased interstate and intra-state violence during the current period of hegemonic transition. Secessionist conflicts between the Turkish state and Kurdish militias, as well as the war in Syria, are driving new migratory flows. In Turkey, as in a number of the other cases studied in this collection, the economic activities associated with capital accumulation are not sufficient to absorb the majority of these migrants. Instead, they represent a surplus population, outside circuits of capital, rather than a proletarianized labour force. Echoing Arrighi and Piselli on the importance of migration as a factor shaping agrarian trajectories, the authors conclude by underscoring the role of transnational and internal migration as both cause and effect of rural conflicts.

Finally, Martiniello’s paper follows Arrighi’s emphasis on rural social conflict as a constitutive factor shaping development trajectories over the *longue durée*. His comparative analysis ranges across space as well as time, examining trajectories of agrarian change in two Ugandan regions, Buganda and Acholi, in three periods: the colonial era, the independence period, and the neoliberal era. Like Scully and Britwum, he argues that the development of capitalist relations in the countryside were shaped by patterns of migration, colonial and post-colonial institutions, and the developmentalist politics of local chiefs.

Although Buganda and Acholi followed different trajectories during the colonial era—with the American path emerging in Buganda and the Swiss path in Acholi—each region was affected by the state’s effort to extend its control over the countryside in the post-independence period. Initially, this was achieved via the creation of marketing boards that integrated peasants into the national economy. Later, it took the form of various nationalization projects under Idi Amin, which had the effect of strengthening rural landlords and increasing peasant evictions. Although a new Land Law was passed in 1998 to strengthen customary ownership for peasant producers, its effect has been limited. For the most part, the neoliberal period has seen the proliferation of multiple land tenure regimes, though formal titling of private property dominates.

In recent years, Acholi has been affected by large-scale land grabs, targeting land held under customary regimes, as the stratified agrarian structure long present in Buganda develops there as well. Martiniello concludes by noting the rise of contract farming in recent decades, particularly in Buganda, which is driving increased differentiation among commercial farmers and increased struggle among different rural actors, including both subcontracted rural producers and workers at the agro-industrial plants processing agricultural commodities. Martiniello emphasizes that

Ugandan producers are increasingly affected by integration into global commodity chains as both suppliers and consumers (of seeds, credit, etc.), again underscoring the importance of world market dynamics for patterns of agrarian change and the well-being of rural communities.

Together, the articles collected for this special issue illustrate the methodological approach to studying agrarian political economy inspired by the original and overlooked work of Giovanni Arrighi on capitalist development in rural locales. Exploring dynamics of capitalist development across a broad array of “hostile” developmental geographies, including rural China, Colombia, Mexico, Iran, Ghana, South Africa, Turkey, and Uganda, these authors follow Arrighi and Piselli’s methodological impetus in offering grounded analyses of development *in situ* while also attending, in different ways, to the macro-historical contexts within which these events unfolded. Collectively, these authors extend the project that Arrighi and Piselli began in “Capitalist Development in Hostile Environments” to analyse the complex, contested and contingent relationship between economic growth and social welfare in the development process. Recognizing these distinct dimensions of development, and their relationship to capital accumulation in time and place is foundational to the always-historicizing approach of Arrighi himself, one which has not yet been integrated into mainstream approaches to development studies.

4 | CONCLUSION

In his last article, Arrighi revisited the Calabrian thesis that capitalist accumulation can take shape across multiple social forms (Arrighi et al., 2010). Comparing South Africa and China, Arrighi pondered the implications of different agrarian trajectories for developmental prospects in the 21st century. Arrighi disagreed with the view that the closer integration of global labour and product markets, including the “unlimited” supplies of labour newly available in China and India, was to blame for the failure of national development projects in the rest of the global South. He pointed out that development crises in most countries, South Africa being an extreme case, originated before the era of neo-liberal capitalism. In his view, they stemmed, at least in part, from the increasing constraints created by developing country governments themselves, insofar as they pursued development strategies that involved proletarianizing their rural populations in order to rapidly generate industrial growth. The gains to industrial economic activities could propel a sub-region, a city-state, and even a regional archipelago of states and production zones up the hierarchy of global wealth, as could be observed across East Asia. However, when all states attempt to emulate this path, the returns accrued to such activities are whittled down, leading to sustained peripheralization for most of the global South, even in the face of widespread industrialization (Arrighi, Silver, & Brewer, 2003).

Across the global South, then, most countries that pursued the proletarianization of rural labour as a means towards the end goal of industrialization-cum-development found that this pathway of agrarian change did not lead to the desired destination. In light of this, Arrighi reasoned, a sweeping reorientation of agrarian political economy was needed. In his final work, Arrighi invited us to “rethink classical notions of capitalist development, particularly the notion that accumulation by dispossession is a necessary precursor of successful capitalist development—a notion that continues to be advanced implicitly or explicitly by a broad array of scholars” (Arrighi et al., 2010, p. 436).

Rather than the preferential treatment of capital at the expense of labour, Arrighi concluded by calling for a “major rethinking of development policies and practices” that would put the improvement of general welfare and livelihoods first (p. 436). This verdict was not just rooted in his understanding that capitalist development in the countryside often fails to deliver benefits for rural labour. It also stemmed from his awareness, gleaned from careful study of agrarian transitions, that capital accumulation often fails on its own terms. The Arrighian perspective, then, enables a slightly different rendering of the agrarian question than Bernstein’s formulation of an agrarian question past and present might suggest. It is not so much that the question of capital is irrelevant today, as it is that the footloose and fickle characteristics of capital have always made the wager a risky bet. This is why Arrighi sought to identify alternative forms of social reproduction compatible with improved welfare. Such a radically different model of development, one which deepens and politicizes the distinction between the two agrarian questions, may seem farfetched today. Yet by rethinking the

foundations of developmental “success” through the empirical study of historical capitalism, Giovanni Arrighi provided a lens with which to ask old questions in a new way, and perhaps find new answers in the doing.

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