



**Title:** Can modernity accommodate african 'peasants'?

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**Abstract:** This paper interprets 'modernity' in Africa today as the consequences of historically specific patterns of capitalist development, or 'actually existing capitalism', with special reference to African 'peasants'. Their social conditions of existence are fundamentally, if not exclusively, those of capitalist class relations and dynamics, internalised in the functioning of 'household' farming. Many, perhaps the majority, of Africans with a rural base are better considered as 'classes of labour' than as 'peasants'.

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What role does ritual play in the everyday lives of modern Africans? How are so-called "traditional" cultural forms deployed by people seeking empowerment in a world where "modernity" has failed to deliver on its promises? Some of the essays in *Modernity and Its Malcontents* address familiar anthropological issues—like witchcraft, myth, and the politics of reproduction—but treat them in fresh ways, situating them amidst the polyphonies of contemporary Africa. Others explore distinctly nontraditional subjects—among them the Nigerian popular press and soul-eating in Nigeria, the Peasant Revival. Economic theory posits the disappearance of peasants as a consequence of the law of rising productivity, reinforced by the low-income elasticity of demand for food, predicting that farm populations decline in relative and absolute terms. Unexamined here are assumptions about the conditions and consequences of rising agricultural productivity. The newly enlivened field of Peasant Studies interrogates all forms of self-provisioning, from villages in Africa, family farms in Europe, to Community Supported Agriculture enterprises (CSA) from France to Japan. Previous descriptions of the peasant lifestyle has usually highlighted its social, political and cultural dimensions rather than its daily activity: of artisanal farming. The great dichotomy between African traditional thought and modernization with a view of looking critically at the eroding African values. African traditional thought and modernization: a philosophical appraisal. By. Esan Oluwatobi David.

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