

FRIDAY

RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM

Conversations on society since 1960

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi

<http://sociology.du.ac.in/sociological-research-colloquium/>

FRIDAY, 23RD APRIL 2021 AT 3:00 PM

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PRATHAMA
BANERJEE



THE POLITICAL AFTER CRITIQUE

Abstract:

What does it mean to think the political after postcolonial and decolonial criticism? This is the question that animates my book *Elementary Aspects of the Political: Histories from the Global South*. In this talk, I offer a brief description of its main arguments, developed out of a historical study of the rise of modern politics in south Asia between mid-19th and mid-20th centuries, at the cusp of colonial modern, classical Indian, Indo-Persian and regional vernacular ideas. I suggest that one useful way of facing up to contemporary political challenges is for us to go back to the beginning, and ask afresh the question 'what is the political?', thus resetting our political compass. To do so, I argue, we must move ahead from the moment of critique of Eurocentrism and undertake the more positive and creative task of producing new political theory, inspired by the practices and archives of the non-European world.

The Speaker:

Prathama Banerjee is a historian at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi. She is the author of *Politics of Time: 'Primitives' and History-writing in a Colonial Society* (Oxford University Press, 2006) and *Elementary Aspects of the Political: Histories from the Global South* (Duke University Press and Orient Blackswan, 2020). She works at the cusp of history, philosophy, and literary studies. She is currently interested in a long history of political concepts across ancient, medieval and modern times as well as in the frontier questions of democracy in the contemporary digital-cum-viral age.