



Agriculture and Food

The E-Newsletter of the ISA Research Committee on Agriculture and Food (RC40)

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From the President

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Wow, what a year this has been! Two big RC40 meetings (Vienna in July and Toronto in August), five big mergers (ChemChina – Syngenta; Dupont-Dow Chemical; PotashCorp. – Agrium; Bayer-Monsanto; and Sinochem and ChemChina), corruption at the highest level of political power has been revealed across the world, Fidel Castro has passed away (¡ viva la revolución!) and the rise of what seems to be a new (or perhaps quite old) rural populism. What these latter two events will mean for food and agriculture will only begin to play out in the next few years, but at least we can talk about some of the things that RC40 members have been up to this year.

First I want to thank and congratulate all of the RC40 members who presented their research and attended the summer meetings. 2016 marks the first time that RC40 officially participated in the ISA's Forum for Research Committees. We had a full set of 12 sessions with 54 papers accepted for presentation. Because this was an ISA organized even, we were able to offer registration grants to 9 RC40 members, which facilitated their participation in the conference.

On the administrative side, the RC40 Leadership participated in some ISA administrative meetings where we learned that there will be an attempt to loosen the restrictions on the number of times a person's name can appear in the ISA World Congress program. It seems that this restriction was mostly due to the original unautomated system of conference organization, but has largely been fixed by the automated system. So please look out for the new rules about appearances once the calls for session proposals and paper proposals come out early in 2017.

On the social side, we want to thank Valentin Fiala, Bernhard Freyer and the rest of their group for organizing the RC40 dinner at Zum Gschupftn Ferdl. We had a really special experience tasting local, organic Brettljäusn at a very reasonable reasonable price!

At the IRSA meetings in Toronto in August, RC40 was very well represented – not just with the 50 papers included in the RC40 Mini-Conference – but throughout the program. Here too the social events were also to be remembered and I want to thank again all of the hard work of Mustafa Koç and Maki Hatanaka in organizing the lovely dinner for us at Adegá. We also had a great time at the joint RSS-RC40 meet and great whereby RC40 and RSS members got a chance to know each other a bit better and hopefully to reinforce our future collaborations – thanks go to Jessica Goldberger and Dara Bloom for making this happen. Finally, a special shout out goes to Sara Bowen for organizing a visit for members of the RC40 Board to a local Mezcal Bar in celebration of the publication of her book on Tequila and Mezcal. These are definitely the types of 'learning-by-doing' experiences that we try to encourage in RC40.

In Toronto we held our bi-annual business meeting and we were pleased to be able to connect with Bill Friedland – one of the founding fathers of RC40 – via Skype. Moustafa said it best – we would not be here if it weren't for Bill and the other founding members who saw the need for an association like RC40 at the international level. Indeed, there are currently 89 RC40 members, which represents and increased since Yokohama – but also leaves room for improvement!

This brings me to some of the clear outcomes of our business meeting for those who weren't there (the full minutes are included in the newsletter). At our business meeting it was decided to renew and expand our regional representatives network at RC40. During the business meeting we realized that we had no regional representative for the Middle East nor did we have one for Africa. Steven Wolf has taken on the role of revitalizing the regional representatives and each regional group of RC40 members is in the process of nominating a new representative. We should have a new list for our next newsletter and we will also share some more information about some new roles and opportunities for regional representatives.

A second and important outcome of the business meeting was a decision to conduct a survey on the state of RC40's Journal – the IJSAF. In the months following the meeting we held an online survey to gauge how RC40 members judge their experience with the journal and what future they see for the journal (if you want to see the full results of the survey, please contact the RC40 Secretary/Treasurer, Maki Hatanaka). Overall, there is a desire for IJSAF to remain in existence and to actually move toward becoming a highly ranked professionalized journal for research on food and agriculture. This means that we face a number of challenges ahead that will allow us to make that transition. The first of which will be to renew the editorial structure and team and focus on a clearer vision for the journal. We will be putting out a call for Editors in the first quarter of 2017 and we encourage those RC40 members who are dedicated to making the IJSAF 'great again' to apply to the call. This renewal will be done with the idea of stimulating an exciting new era in the sociology of agriculture and food studies that will ensure the pertinence of our unique sociological voice in broader debates about the future of food and agriculture.

I want to finally end my editorial on this note about the importance of RC40 member's particular point of view – particularly given the current state of political affairs. A group of RC40 scholars participated in the Committee for World Food Security (CFS) discussions on 'connecting smallholders to markets' – particularly in support of the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) and their efforts to provide evidence that 'territorial' markets are just as important, if not more so, than 'modern' or export markets. RC40 made contributions to the official draft texts and provided peer review of the CSM's report on the topic (<http://www.csm4cfs.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/CONNECTING-SMALLHOLDERS-TO-MARKET.compressed.pdf>).

For those of us who participated, this experience was very rewarding because of the ability to bridge the gap between theory and practice. I think that these types of participatory research is an important aspect of what makes RC40 scholars unique; it is also a way to begin to implement Bill Friedland's vision of 'alternative agrifood researchers without borders'. Activities such as these are at the core of what it means to be part of RC40 and we would like to encourage all RC40 members to share their experiences through the rc40 listserv in order to strengthen our capacity to be more engaged.

Happy Holidays to all!

Wake Up Call (Do Not Hit Snooze)

Steven Wolf

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The recent U.S. election suggests an unravelling. There is a risk of attaching too much significance to recent, localized events. Nonetheless, applied to RC-40 and our shared interest in analyzing and engaging processes of socioecological change applied to agrifood, I think we must reflect. Applied to teaching, research, and public sociology, we may have just received an important wake up call. Of course, it is possible that I was the only one sleeping.

Conventional norms of behavior, speech, and evidence have seemingly collapsed. The world (dis)order that emerged from WW II is potentially being remapped. Boundaries between public and private, and the notion of duty that individuals and nations have toward others, are being redrawn. The openness we now confront sometimes makes me nostalgic for the inertia of a few weeks ago.

Whatever is happening is multidimensional. Popular dissatisfaction with economic globalization as expressed in contemporary capitalism is implicated, but the appointment of a billionaire investor to lead the US Treasury does not conform to my understanding of that kind of class war. Anxiety about energy, food, and climate futures are implicated, but economic growth is being reasserted as both the end and the means. Nativist expressions are everywhere, and the fusing of racism with terror has enabled a potent and potentially unaccountable surveillance mechanism under the banner of Homeland Security.

The situation defies simple characterization, let alone explanation. One common thread I identify is a decrease in tolerance for ambiguity. Problem definitions, solutions, social categories, and bases of authority are being asserted in ways that ignore and deny nuance. In fact, there seems to be a war on nuance, and this is one area where I think we have a role. As social scientists we are positioned to engage with variance and with grounded, situated practice. Our work contributes to appreciation of the co-constitution of the social and technical, the social and natural, the discursive and material, and the private and the political. Further, our critical approach to research and to making public knowledge claims are squarely premised on commitments to reflexivity. It is true that we have been too self-referential and insufficiently public, but now seem like a good time to redouble our efforts in this regard.

Change is not linear, and the relevant processes are indeterminate. The opening up we are experiencing is part of a larger dynamic. While short term prospects look bleak from perspectives of justice, sustainability, and rationality, we were in a rut. Recent events provide evidence that big changes are possible in short time steps. While this opening has served to make it possible for leaders to make public, regressive and explicitly threatening statements about minorities, women, and dissenters that were not possible a few months ago, this provides hope that in some future we can have public commitments to economic fairness, ecological values, and deliberative democracy. We have a role to play in creating this future, and our association with one another is a key resource. Let's put it to work.

Who are we and what we want to address? Reflecting on RC-40

Raymond Jussaume

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One of the highlights of the recent World Congress of Rural Sociology was the Keynote Plenary on “Fifty Years of Debate on the Peasantries 1966-2016.” The panel featured presentations by Henry Bernstein, Jan Douwe Van Der Ploeg, Teodor Shanin, Harriet Friedman and Ben White. I enjoyed this plenary in part because I remember reading these panelists when I was a graduate student in the 1980s. It is intriguing that discussions of how one might define “peasantry” continue to have relevance for 21st Century scholars.

I also enjoyed discussing the observations made during the Plenary and other World Congress panels with RC-40 members. As someone who has been involved with RC-40 for most of its history (I became active in RC-40 in 1992), I became aware that I have become one of the older members of RC-40. This is humbling from a human mortality perspective, but it was exciting to see so many young and engaged scholars who are interested in food and agricultural issues around the world.

As a result of these experiences, I have been asked to contribute a short note to this newsletter celebrating the work that has been done by RC-40 members during its first quarter century. I had intended to attempt to summarize some of RC-40’s history, with an emphasis on the very exciting movement to go beyond developing theoretical perspectives on the processes of change across agro-food systems around the globe to finding solutions to the various social, political, economic and environmental problems associated with those systems. Many of these, at least for the moment, appear to be focused on bottom-up approaches. But, upon reflection, I thought it might be best to try to inspire a discussion about the next 25 years rather than share some insights about the last 25 years.

To do so, I would like to go to a manuscript that was published in the same year (1990) that RC-40 was recognized as a formal Research Committee of ISA. Buttel, Larson and Gillespie surveyed ninety years of research on the Sociology of Agriculture in the United States. At the end of that manuscript, the authors laid out what they saw as six major gaps in then current Sociology of Agriculture research. I would like to share these here. I am not suggesting that these are the same gaps that we have today. We have global interests, and many of you are working on problems that have emerged over the past 25 years. However, I think a review of these six gaps could be an interesting point of departure for a discussion of where, some of us at least, have (and have not) been intellectually. More importantly, I hope that such a discussion would encourage us to share ideas as what we perceive to be the current research/outreach gaps that need to be addressed.

So, please think of these as a call to talk about what are current challenges are. Please send me (Jussaume@msu.edu) your comments regarding which of these gaps a) are no longer relevant, b) have been addressed, and c) remain relevant. And, please feel free to suggest d) any new major gaps that we need to address. I will summarize those comments and share them with you all in the next newsletter!

Gap #1: While there has been growing attention paid to agricultural policy, little progress has been made toward understanding agricultural policy from the vantage point of comprehensive theories of the state.

Gap #2: There is a growing trickle of interest in credit, finance capital, and agriculture – topics that deserve farm more interest than they have received.

Gap #3: While there has been some exemplary work on agrarian crises, there is a need to better understand the relationships between the contemporary farm crisis and both the crisis of accumulation in the world economy as a whole and its current restructuring process.

Gap #4: There is a need to better understand the agriculture-environment nexus, particularly in terms of the socioeconomic significance of the environmental contradictions of agriculture and of how environmental mobilization may affect agricultural structures and policies.

Gap #5: There has been a lack of systemic comparative cross-national research in the sociology of agriculture.

Gap #6: There is a need for more critical ethnographic field-research in the sociology of agriculture.

REFERENCE

Buttel, Frederick H., Olaf F. Larson and Gilbert W. Gillespie Jr. 1990. The Sociology of Agriculture. New York: Greenwood Press.



XIV World Congress of Rural Sociology 2016

Sustainable and just rural transitions: connections and complexities

August 10–14, 2016
Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada
www.ryerson.ca/irsa2016

RC40 Business Meeting Minutes

/ August 12, 2016

XIV World Congress of Rural Sociology in Toronto

Recorded by Maki Hatanaka

Approximately 50 Attendees

Membership

- Current membership: 86 members from 29 countries
- 10 new members in 2016

Report back from ISA Vienna

- Higher than expected forum participation in general
- Membership participation
 - 54 accepted papers, 9 registration grants
- RC Business Meeting
 - Voted and changed the number of appearances allowed in the program: 2 papers and 2 other appearances. However, no restrictions on the number of session organizers/program chairs (up to the RCs)
- The call for session proposals for Toronto 2018 deadline is Jan 17, 2017
 - Highly suggested to do joint sessions with other RCs.

Outreach

- Committee on World Food Security
 - RC40 members collectively engaged with the research with CFS
- SAFRIG (RSS)
 - RC40 representatives gave presentation at the SAFRIG Business Meeting
 - Proposal to do a mini-conference at the 2017 RSS meeting at Ohio State Univ.

Regional Representatives

- Roles and duties: Announcements for, and reports of, multiple regional conferences to RC40 members
- Some regional representatives requested to exit. Nominations for new representatives?
- Need Middle Eastern and African Regional Representatives?
 - Nigerian rural sociological association as a viable association.
 - ISA membership fee is a real challenge
 - But can/will ask whether they are interested in becoming a regional representative

Skype with Bill Friedland

- Significance of the AAWRE work
 - Description and history
 - Bill's paper
- Discussion: Something needs to be done to bring AAWRE back to life
- Thank Bill for all his work and leadership

International Journal of the Sociology of Agriculture and Food (RC40 journal)

- Update on the status of the journal
 - Lack of quality papers submitted
 - Not many papers in the pipeline
 - Farshad not being able to participate in editorial work and this burdens Mara
 - No formalized editorial work in place and thus, ad-hoc arrangements
 - Little marketing
 - Lack of resources
 - Increased competition among other food and ag related journals
- Update on the status of the journal professionalization initiative
- The proposal from the Board Committee to the RC40 members:
 - We propose to conduct survey of RC40 membership to determine where to go with the journal and think about the future
 - Directions to move forward need to be identified:
 - Potential other venues?
 - Different niches?
 - More practical options?
- Open discussion:
 - Annual book series through big publishers (e.g., Routledge)
 - Need to enroll grad students
 - When doing survey, make sure to include grad students and their interests
 - From junior scholar's perspective, established senior scholars, who are already tenured, should take the lead and publish in IJSAF. Junior scholars must prioritize tenure.
 - To have a professional journal, strong support from the RC40 society is indispensable.
 - Scholarly journals require lots of commitments (not easy)
 - Members respect for our journal? Simply reading and citing are not necessarily sufficient.

Future of RC40

- Need to develop strategies for greater engagement (membership)?
- Summer school proposal
 - 30 years of the RC on the Sociology of Food and Ag
 - If we are to do this, we need fundraising
- Other venues such as CFS? It would be useful to have some RC40 societal engagements where RC40 members can engage collectively.
- Potentially 30 years of RC40 history as a special issue of the IJSAF?

**XIV World Congress
of Rural Sociology**
Sustainable and Just Rural
Transitions: Connections
and Complexities



Announcement from the Asian Rural Sociology Association (ARSA)

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1. What is ARSA (Asian Rural Sociology Association)?

The Asian Rural Sociology Association was formed by a group of Asians scholars who participated in the World Congress of International Rural Sociology Association (IRSA) in 1992. Its formation was thought to be necessary to cultivate the development of rural sociology as a science; exchange scientific findings and extend them for rural development and improvement of the quality of life in Asia.

ARSA holds its International Conferences regularly to provide a forum for its members and other interested individuals to share recent developments in rural sociology and tackle issues and concerns that revolve around Asian rural society. It has organized five International Conferences thus far; 1st Conference in Thailand (Kasetsart University, 1999); 2nd Conference in Indonesia (University of Mataram, 2004); 3rd Conference in China (Sanhe city, 2007); 4th Conference in Philippines (Bicol University, 2010); and 5th Conference in Laos (National University of Laos, 2016). All these International Conferences have published proceedings. Previous proceedings can be retrieved from the ARSA website, which is currently under reconstruction.

Current ARSA President is Dr. Lutgarda Tolentino (Philippines) and Vice Presidents are Prof. Motoki Akitsu (Japan) and Prof. Saleh Ali (Indonesia).

2. Pre-Announcement of 6th ARSA Conference:

The Asian Rural Sociology Association will have its 6th Conference in August 2018. This is the pre-announcement for the coming conference. Further details will be provided in the next newsletter.

Date: August 27-30, 2018

Venue: Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia

Provisional Deadlines:

- Call for sessions/panels: October 15, 2017
- Deadline of abstract submission: November 15, 2017
- Announcement of acceptance of abstract: January 15, 2018
- Deadline of submission of full paper: March 15, 2018

Main Theme: "Building Sustainable Food Systems in Asia: Multiple Rural-Urban Linkages in a Globalizing World"

3. Announcement of NEW JOURNAL: Journal of Asian Rural Studies (JARS)

Journal of Asian Rural Studies (J. Asian Rural Stud. - JARS) is a peer-reviewed journal published by Hasanuddin University (UNHAS) in collaboration with the Asian Rural Sociology Association (ARSA) twice a year in January and July.

This journal is international, academic, citation indexed and blind peer reviewed. It includes original research articles, short notes and communications, reviews (including books), concepts, commentaries, and letters on diverse topics related to rural studies in Asia.

The aim of this journal is to provide a venue for academicians, researchers and practitioners to share/discuss theories, views, and research results on issues related to economics, culture, communication, technology, ecology, administration and power relations in rural of Asia.

For further details: <http://pasca.unhas.ac.id/ojs/index.php/jars/index>

4. Contact: ARSA Secretary: Masashi Tachikawa (Ibaraki University, Japan)

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BOOKS Recently Published by RC40 Members

Anderson, Colin R., Jennifer Brady, and Charles Z. Levkoe. Eds. 2016. Conversations in Food Studies. Manitoba, Canada: University of Manitoba Press.

Few things are as important as the food we eat. Conversations in Food Studies demonstrates the value of interdisciplinary research through the cross-pollination of disciplinary, epistemological, and methodological perspectives. Widely diverse essays, ranging from the meaning of milk, to the bring-your-own-wine movement, to urban household waste, are the product of collaborating teams of interdisciplinary authors. Readers are invited to engage and reflect on the theories and practices underlying some of the most important issues facing the emerging field of food studies today.

Conversations in Food Studies brings to the table thirteen original contributions organized around the themes of representation, governance, disciplinary boundaries, and, finally, learning through food. This collection offers an important and groundbreaking approach to food studies as it examines and reworks the boundaries that have traditionally structured the academy and that underlie much of food studies literature.



Busch, Lawrence. 2016. *Real Myths = False Truths: Securing America's Future*. Version ____ . East Lansing, MI. Available Free at: <http://www.lawrencebusch.net/index.php/real-myths-false-truths-securing-america-future/>

All societies including ours have a set of myths which tell us how to act in certain situations. However, many of our major myths are now threadbare. They are used across the political spectrum in an almost kneejerk way, but their pursuit is leading us further into the abyss. For example, politicians, pundits and most of the general public believe that markets and competitions promote efficiency and lead to fair outcomes. But the creation of markets and competitions create new bureaucracies. Moreover, fair outcomes depend largely on the initial conditions established when the market or competition is created, not on the workings of supply and demand. In short, the growth in bureaucracy as well as inequalities in income and wealth are largely the result of the 'false truth' that markets and competitions are always desirable.

Other myths are also discussed such as the myth of small government (which merely gives other less democratic sources of power the ability to govern) and the myth of the individual (whereas are most deeply held beliefs and understandings are given to us by others). The book concludes with a detailed set of suggestions for how we might extricate ourselves from the situation we have created through the real myths we take for granted.

Hopewell, Kristen. 2016. *Breaking the WTO: How Emerging Powers Disrupted the Neoliberal Project*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

The world economic order has been upended by the rise of the BRICS nations and the attendant decline of the United States' international influence. In *Breaking the WTO*, Kristen Hopewell provides a groundbreaking analysis of how these power shifts have played out in one of the most important theaters of global governance: the World Trade Organization. Hopewell argues that the collapse of the Doha Round negotiations signals a crisis in the American-led project of neoliberal globalization. The U.S. has historically pressured other countries to open their markets, while maintaining its own protectionist policies. Over the course of the Doha negotiations, however, China, India, and Brazil challenged American hypocrisy in the realm of trade. They did so not because they rejected the multilateral trading system, but because they embraced neoliberal rhetoric and sought to lay claim to its benefits. By demanding that members of the WTO live up to the principles of "free trade," these developing states caused the negotiations to collapse under their own contradictions. *Breaking the WTO* probes the tensions between the WTO's liberal principles and the underlying reality of power politics, exploring what the Doha conflict tells us about the current and coming balance of power in the global economy.

Sekine, Kae and Alessandro Bonanno. 2016. *The Contradictions of Neoliberal Agri-Food: Corporations, Resistance and Disasters in Japan*. Morgantown: West Virginia University Press.

Employing original fieldwork, historical analysis, an extensive review of pertinent literature, and sociological theory, *The Contradictions of Neoliberal Agri-Food: Corporations, Resistance and Disasters in Japan* probes how Japan's agri-food sector has been shaped by the global push toward privatization and corporate power typical of neoliberalism. The book also examines changes that have occurred after the triple disaster of March 2011 (the earthquake, tsunami and meltdown of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear reactor), noting that the adopted reconstruction policy has favored deregulation and the reduction of social welfare. The book main thesis stresses the incompatibility of the requirements of neoliberalism with the structural and cultural conditions of Japanese agri-food. Local farmers' and fishermen's emphasis on the collective management of natural resources as a community clashes with neoliberalism's focus on individualism and competitiveness. The book concludes by pointing out the resulting fundamental contradiction: The lack of recognition of this incompatibility allows the continuous implementation of market solutions to problems that originate in these very market mechanisms and supporting ideology.

Upcoming Events

Agriculture, Food & Human Values Society

Migrating Food Cultures: Engaging Pacific Perspectives on Food and Agriculture

June 14-21, 2017

Pasadena, California, USA

<https://afhvs.wildapricot.org/page-18163>

Abstract Submission Due: January 31, 2017

23rd Annual Conference of the International Sustainable Development Research Society (ISDRS)

Inclusive sustainability for development: How to engage academy, government, communities and business

June 14th-16th, 2017

Bogota, Colombia

<http://www.isdrsconference.org/page/54/home/>

Abstract Submission Due: December 31, 2016

The XXVII European Society for Rural Sociology Congress

Uneven Processes of Rural Change: On Diversity, Knowledge and Justice

July 24-27, 2017

Krakow, Poland

<http://www.esrs2017.confer.uj.edu.pl/start>

Abstract Submission Due: December, 20, 2016 (possible extension: 05 January 2017)

Rural Sociological Society

Rural Peoples in a Volatile World: Disruptive Agents and Adaptive Strategies

July 27-30, 2017

Columbus, OH, USA

<http://www.ruralsociology.us/>

Abstract Submission Due: TBD

XIX ISA World Congress of Sociology

Power, Violence and Justice: Reflections, Responses and Responsibilities

July 15-21, 2018

Toronto, Canada

<http://www.isa-sociology.org/en/conferences/world-congress/toronto-2018/>

Session Proposals Due: January 15, 2017

RC40 Executive Council (2014-2018)

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RC 40 Regional Representatives

From the Secretary

Maki Hatanaka (maki.hatanaka@shsu.edu)

[1] About the Listserv of the RC-40:

Beginning fall 2014, RC40 has established its listserv using the Yahoo Groups. We hope to use this listserv to enhance communication and interaction among the RC40 members.

List Logistics:

- To join the RC40 listserv, send your message to: rc40_food_and_ag_soc_subscribe@yahoogroups.com.
- To post messages to the list membership, send your message to: rc40_food_and_ag_soc@yahoogroups.com.

[2] About the membership fee:

Membership to the International Sociological Association (ISA) and RC40 covers a four year period. To apply for membership and see the fee structure, please go to http://www.isa-sociology.org/memb_i/index.htm

[3] About the IRSA in 2016 (Toronto):

The call for session proposals at IRSA is due January 15, 2015. If you are interested in making the sessions RC40 labelled, please contact me.

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