

# Agriculture and Food

*The E-Newsletter of the ISA Research Committee on Agriculture and Food*

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## *From the New President*

Gianluca Brunori  
President, RC-40  
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On behalf of the new RC-40 Executive Committee I would like to extend a warm welcome to our members. The recent ISA World Congress, held in Durban, has witnessed a strong interest from scholars of all over the world on the themes promoted by our research committee. Following the success of the Durban congress and of the initiatives developed in the former years, we are working with enthusiasm to consolidate the reputation of RC40 as a global network committed to advancing non-conventional views and research focused on agricultural and rural change. We wish to thank the past president and executive committee for the work they have done, and we hope to be on their height.

Agriculture, food systems and rural areas are undergoing a dramatic change in the world. A particular effort, in the coming years, will be to give renewed attention to the themes and issues emerging from regions that are underrepresented in RC40, like Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe. Themes and issues coming from these regions, in fact, challenge

consolidated categories and are of stimulus for social scientists to put their frameworks into close scrutiny.

With regard to organisational issues, one of the priorities for the next years will be to think of how to make our organisation evolve to respond to increasing internationalisation and to the availability of communication technologies, and in particular to stimulate members to animate the network by raising points of views, issues, research questions. We have a point of strength, *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food*, which has gained a strong reputation in the global editorial scene. We plan to integrate even more the activity of RC40 with the journal activity. Moreover, we plan to strengthen the RC40 identity by reconstructing a short history of the association. This will help to make new generations of researchers aware of the values and principles at the basis of the birth of our association. On this regard I would like to thank Bill Friedland for his availability to support this initiative.

Our next appointment is the European Rural Sociology Association congress which will be held in Wageningen on August 2007. In that occasion, RC40 will organise a mini-conference on the theme 'Sources and mechanisms of power in the food system and in rural areas: domination, resistance, alternatives'. Another outstanding appointment will be in Seoul, South Korea, where the International Rural Sociology Association congress will be held.

## ***Report from the past president of the RC40***

Manuel Belo Moreira

As the past-President of the RC40 I wanted to share my observations about the past four years with you. I am also hoping that this information may also help the new executive committee.

I am happy to report to you that during these last four years RC40 has gained more visibility, organized several joint sessions and mini-conferences and increased its membership. *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food* (see the IJSAF report) has an exciting new web site gaining quite a visibility and a lot of hits by interested researchers from all around the world.

Durban conference has attracted many of our colleagues, despite its distance and not so convenient setting. Many of our colleagues expressed their frustration with the setting and the programming problems and questioned if this was a reflection of a crisis within RC40.

I would agree that RC40 is going through a crisis, however I prefer to call this a growth crisis and if we want to have a comprehensive appraisal of its causes of some of the

problems we faced with programming and do not want to repeat these in the future we should take precautions in the future.

This visibility RC40 has gained gave us an opportunity to expand the attendance record to our sessions and to allow people from different countries and continents that do not usually come to our Congress sessions.

I personally think that the idea of organizing several mini-conferences in different places with the same theme is a very good way to strengthen our discussions on a focused way. My sole regret comes from the impossibility to find sufficient people willing to submit papers in order to publish a book or a special edition of the Journal from the past mini-conferences. Probably narrow focus of these mini-conferences would not attract the attention of our diverse membership. We need to find ways of expanding mini-conference themes so that more can have an opportunity to participate

This growth crisis also resulted in the expansion of the themes covered by the RC40 sessions, both in the IRSA Trondheim Congress as well as in the Durban Congress. We had significantly more paper presentations in Durban in comparison to previous congresses, with substantial increase in the numbers of African students and scholars.

On the negative side, I have to recognize that we were lacking larger sessions that would allow us to synthesize and offer broader analytical insights as it happened in the past in the RC40 meeting like in our Montreal conference, sessions and discussions that would give the opportunity to establish the boundaries of the RC40 research agenda for the next four years. Everybody who was present in the previous Congress certainly missed Bill Friedland and Larry Busch's interventions that greatly contributed for the success of those congresses. We had much more participants, but were divided into disciplinary sessions. Thus, we lacked the tying knot, a synthesis, a chance to reflect to the pieces we have seen.

Part of this problem was structural. The room we were allocated would not allow us to have such big sessions. But it was also an organizational. I like to take part of the responsibility for failing to manage an effective dialogue with the local arrangements committee and the program organizers. Probably I was not sufficiently explicit in my suggestions concerning the program with Tessa Marcus by assuming her familiarity with the RC40 history.

In the future we need to save at least a full day to organize the discussion of the most relevant themes involving RC40's "core business", a full day with some papers and discussions that may be organized on the last day of the conference. We should also need to bring into these final discussions a kind of a synthetic report of the other sessions, to be prepared by their conveners. This last session needs to be held in a large room in order to allow people from different sessions to gather. This has to be negotiated with the ISA ahead of time.

I also like to express my frustration with the Congress organizers. Many of our members who paid their registration fee and presented a paper were not listed in the

Program and, furthermore, all the RC40 abstracts were missing from the compilation of abstracts. Despite our achievements we left Durban with discomfort. I hope that our new executive committee will consider these problems and will take necessary precautions to avoid them in the future.

I like to thank you to the members of the old executive committee and IJSAF board for their energy and commitment, and express my best wishes to the new executive committee. I have great faith in RC40's ability to deal with its growing pains. We have many good lessons to learn from our past.

***Report from the Editorial Committee of  
The INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY OF AGRICULTURE  
AND FOOD (IJSAF)***

REPORT TABLED AT THE RC-40 BUSINESS MEETING, ISA WORLD  
CONGRESS OF SOCIOLOGY, DURBAN, 25 JULY, 2006

1. Location and management of the journal

The International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food (IJSAF) is an official publication of the Research Committee on Sociology of Agriculture and Food (RC-40) of the International Sociological Association (ISA). Since early 2005, the journal has been published electronically under the auspices of the Centre for the Study of Agriculture, Food and Environment (CSAFE), School of Social Sciences, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand.

The journal publishes theoretical and empirical papers in the general area of the sociology of agriculture and food. This includes the study of labour, production, market, policy, technology, and global and local change. Manuscripts are subject to blind external review before a final judgement on publication is made by the editors. The IJSAF publishes original works. Back issues of the IJSAF are available by using the search options at the top of the page and the journal is freely available to users.

2. Current editors and board

The current editors of the IJSAF are Dr Vaughan Higgins (Monash University, Australia), Professor Farshad Araghi (Florida Atlantic University, USA), and Professor David Burch (Griffith University, Australia). Professor Burch stepped down as co-editor on 30 July. And now Dr. Mara Miele (University of Cardiff, UK) has been appointed as a new co-editor of the IJSAF. {rewritten --OK?}

Production of the IJSAF would not be possible without editorial assistance. We are very fortunate to have a highly dedicated and capable editorial assistant – Scott Willis – who is completing his PhD through CSAFE. Scott has been with the journal since early 2006 and has overseen significant changes including a new website (see below) and promotional materials for this conference. The editors would also like to thank previous editorial assistants for their excellent work in ensuring the smooth

day-to-day running of the journal – Amy Cutter-McKenzie, who served until the end of 2004; and Stephen Horton, who served during 2005.

### 3. Costs Associated with Production

CSAFE currently bears all costs associated with the production of the IJSAF. This includes website design and maintenance, and the labour costs of the editorial assistant. In order to recognise these costs, there is a link to CSAFE on the IJSAF website. Subsidisation of the journal by CSAFE will continue until the RC-40 meeting in 2008, when funding will be reviewed.

### 4. Numbers of Issues in last two years

Since the World Congress of Rural Sociology in Trondheim in 2004, and not including the forthcoming 2006 issues, there have been three other issues of the IJSAF: one in 2004 and two in 2005.

### 5. Visibility and Impact of the Journal

The editors have devoted considerable time to this issue in the last six months. Currently the IJSAF is freely available online and is getting around 20,000 Hits by users per month (measured from April 2006) which translates into around 1,000 visits monthly of more than 30 seconds duration. 11.4 per cent of users add it to their 'favourites' list and visitors are from all the countries of the EU, the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Brazil, Turkey, Mexico, Malaysia, China and Norway. Articles from the journal are accessible through the Sociological Abstracts database, and the IJSAF can be accessed easily through the 'Google' internet search engine by typing 'agriculture' and/or 'food'.

However, while the journal is accessible, and the quality of submitted articles is high, the number of articles submitted and published per year represents a problem in improving the journal's impact. Steps have already been taken to improve further the profile of the journal such as (a) a new, user-friendly and more professional-looking website; and, (b) a statement at the top of each journal article which states that IJSAF adheres to a blind reviewing process (this includes the journal's ISSN number [to be viewable soon]). It is hoped that the profile and impact of the journal will be improved significantly through a series of 'special issues' in the next 2-3 years, commencing with the first issue on 'Fair Trade in Third World Commodities' in April 2007. The special issues will be advertised widely and have high profile researchers as guest editors (see below). This should increase the profile of the journal and help in increasing contributions to regular issues as well. It is anticipated that the introduction of special issues will double output from two to four issues per year (two special and two regular issues).

### 6. Proposed Issues for the Next Two Years

As noted above, a series of special issues are planned for the next 2-3 years. A call for papers for the first special issue has been made as part of the IJSAF promotional brochures, and a notice will be posted on the website in the near future. The guest editors for the special issue are Niels Fold (University of Copenhagen, Denmark) and Bill Pritchard (University of Sydney, Australia). Planned future special issues include:

- Politics of animal welfare in food systems.

- Concentration and consolidation in the agri-food supply chain.
- Neoliberalism, de-peasantisation and peasant mobilisation.
- NGOs and corporate social responsibility.
- Labour processes in the global agri-food system.

Guest editors for these proposed issues will be contacted later in the year.

Questions and comments will be directed to the editorial committee of the IJSAF.

Vaughan Higgins <vaughan.higgins@arts.monash.edu.au>

## Call for Papers

RC-40 Miniconference - Wageningen, August 19<sup>th</sup>

### **Sources and mechanisms of power in the global food system and in rural sites: domination, counter-domination and alternatives.**

Convenors:

- Alberto Arce ([alberto.arce@wur.nl](mailto:alberto.arce@wur.nl))
- Tomiko Yamaguci (yamaguc3@msn.com)

#### ***Call for papers***

In recent years institutions such as the state, multinationals, fair-trade organisations, and a diverse range of quality and social standards have led to the restructuring of socio-economic and ecological patterns in rural areas. This transformation has proceeded at an impressive pace; however, change has not taken an unidirectional path. Both de-peasantisation and re-peasantisation have occurred: new sites of production have been established and long food chains are increasingly 'challenged' by local food systems. Some areas undergo processes of specialisation and others follow a contrary trend towards diversification and de-skillisation. New patterns of domination – from forms of strict quality contracts to refined patterns of 'control at a distance' – have emerged while giving birth to new patterns of resistance: concerns about animal welfare, the politics of denial, and types of ambiguous food commodity consumption. In these processes new actors are becoming involved in food, rural politics and environmental concerns, while organisations and institutions are searching for innovative actions and alternatives. Diverse modes of 'ordering' and 'disordering' are affecting rural places, urban-rural patterns, food production and consumption seems to depend on combinations of markets, civil society and state occurring locally and on those emergent links they establish with the global 'realities' outside the consumption choices field.

In this context, power is embodied within social relations, knowledge and organisational

legitimacy. This raises the question of whether it is possible to start from an analysis of power to understand the new rural trends and patterns? Are vertical control power and horizontal incorporation of actions and knowledge incompatible? What are the sources of power in specific food systems and rural areas? Who are the actors involved and how are power conflicts are manifested? What types of power (for example, 'soft' and 'hard' power) prevail and how are they combined? How are types of centralised power turned into other types of power, like consumer preferences for quality and safety? How are mechanisms of domination reproduced or changed? What are the modern 'weapons' or 'poetry' of the weak? How can dominance and resistance be detected and measured by agro-food researchers? Is it possible to re-conceptualise the space and place of food and rural sites?

The RC-40 mini-conference will explore these issues, giving particular attention to the 'context specificity' of trends, patterns and outcomes, while looking with particular attention to the implications for agricultural, rural livelihoods and social development policies. Scholars are encouraged to submit papers on this encompassing topic both from theoretical and empirical perspectives.

Abstract should be sent to: Masashi TACHIKAWA (tachi@affrc.go.jp)

Deadline for submission of abstract: 15 january 2007

Communication of acceptation of abstracts: 15 february 2007

Deadline for submission of papers: 15 may 2007

## Upcoming Events

[2006]

- **ASOCIACION LATINOAMERICANA DE SOCIOLOGIA RURAL VII CONGRESO LATINOAMERICANO DE SOCIOLOGÍA RURAL**  
FLACSO, QUITO, ECUADOR  
20 al 24 de noviembre del 2006  
Information: Henrique de Barros [dbarros@fundaj.gov.br](mailto:dbarros@fundaj.gov.br)  
Sitio web del VII Congreso <http://www.alasru.org/inscri/alasru2006.htm>
- **2006 ANNUAL MEETING of the AGRI-FOOD RESEARCH NETWORK (Agri-Food XIII)**  
27 – 30 November 2006, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand  
Website: <http://www.csafe.org.nz/>

[2007]

- **XXII Congress of the European Society for Rural Sociology**  
20-24 August 2007, Wageningen, The Netherlands  
Website: <http://www.esrs2007.nl/>

- **3rd Meeting of the Asian Rural Sociological Association**  
August 8-10, 2007, Beijing, China  
Website: <http://www.ARSA2007China.com/>
- **Annual Meeting of the Rural Sociological Society (USA)**  
August 2-5, 2007, Santa Clara, CA  
Website: <http://www.ruralsociology.org/>

## By-Laws of the RC-40

### I. MEMBERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

I.A. Members are those who pay RC-40 dues and participate in the scientific activities of the committee. Dues are set by the Executive Committee of RC-40.

I.B. Members of RC-40 have the right to

I.B.1. Run for office

I.B.2. Vote in all RC-40 elections

I.B.3. Participate in RC-40 business meetings

I.B.3.a. To participate in the quadrennial business meetings, individuals must be members of the International Sociological Association

I.B.4. Have priority status for participation in any of the scientific activities of the committee

I.C. Members are strongly urged to maintain membership in good standing in the International Sociological Association

I.D. Officers of the RC-40 are

I.D.1. The President

I.D.2. The Secretary

I.D.3. The Executive Committee, which consists of

I.D.3.a. The current president and secretary-treasurer

I.D.3.b. The immediate past president and secretary-treasurer

I.D.3.c. Four elected representatives

I.E. Officers are elected in the year prior to the quadrennial World Congress and take office at that Congress

I.E.1. Officers can not succeed themselves

I.E.2. All Officers must be members in good standing in the International Sociological Association

I.F. Duties of the President

I.F.1. The president has executive authority to organize the scientific and administrative work of the committee in consultation with the secretary-treasurer and members of the executive committee

I.F.2. The president convenes and organizes the quadrennial business meeting as well as any meetings of the executive committee

I.F.3. The president appoints the editorial committee of the International Journal of the Sociology of Agriculture and Food

I.F.4. The president, with the assistance of the secretary, organizes the publication and distribution of the semi-annual newsletter

#### **I.G. Duties of the Secretary-Treasurer**

I.G.1. The secretary assists the president in the coordination of the scientific and business activities of RC-40

I.G.2. The secretary-treasurer shall maintain a record of all committee business and executive meetings, and maintain the financial records

I.G.3. The secretary shall make a yearly financial accounting to the executive committee and a quadrennial financial accounting to the membership at the quadrennial business meeting

I.G.4. The secretary shall be responsible for conducting the elections of new officers

#### **I.H. Duties of the Members of the Executive Committee**

I.H.1. Advise the President and Secretary on all scientific and business matters pertaining to the activities of the Research Committee

I.H.2. Review the secretary's annual financial report

### **II. SCIENTIFIC WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

II.A. To promote and encourage scientific analysis of the social organization of agriculture and food systems

II.B. Organization of the substantive content of the RC-40 session of the quadrennial meetings of the World Congress of Sociology

II.C. Organization of additional international meetings, including those that are held in conjunction with the World Congress and other scientific meetings

### **III. ORGANIZATION OF THE JOURNAL**

III.A. The International Journal of the Sociology of Agriculture and Food is the official scientific journal of RC-40

III.B. The editor(s) are appointed by the president in conjunction with the executive committee transmit a complete record of journal finances to the secretary of RC-40, who shall add those records to the yearly financial report that is to be submitted to the executive committee and the quadrennial report submitted to the business meeting

III.D. The president of RC-40, in consultation with the editor and the members of the executive committee, shall appoint the members of the editorial board

III.E. The content of the journal shall reflect the scientific interests of the Research Committee, which is the sociological study of agriculture and food

### **IV. AMENDMENTS TO THE BY-LAWS**

IV.A. Amendments to the by-laws can be submitted by any member in good standing of the Research Committee.

IV.B. Amendments must be initially approved at RC-40 business meetings

IV.C. Amendments must then be ratified by mail ballot of members by a majority of those voting

## RC-40 Executive Council, 2006-2010

Office	Officer	Organizational Affiliation	Country	E-mail
President	Gianluca Brunori	University of Pisa	Italy	<a href="mailto:gbrunori@agr.unipi.it">gbrunori@agr.unipi.it</a>
Secretary/ Treasurer	Masashi Tachiakawa	Policy Research Institute, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries (PRIMAFF)	Japan	<a href="mailto:tachi@affrc.go.jp">tachi@affrc.go.jp</a>
Executive Council	Monica Bendini	Universidad Nacional del Comahue	Argentina	<a href="mailto:mibendini@yahoo.com.ar">mibendini@yahoo.com.ar</a>
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	Elizabeth Ransom	University of Richmond	USA	<a href="mailto:eransom@richmond.edu">eransom@richmond.edu</a>
	Marie-Christine Renard	Universidad Autónoma Chapingo,	México	<a href="mailto:mcrenard@gmail.com">mcrenard@gmail.com</a>
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	Manuel Belo Moreira	Universidade Técnica de Lisboa	Portugal	<a href="mailto:mbelomoreira@isa.utl.pt">mbelomoreira@isa.utl.pt</a>
	Wynne Wright	Michigan State University	USA	<a href="mailto:wrightwy@anr.msu.edu">wrightwy@anr.msu.edu</a>

## From the Secretary

### [1] About the electric Mailing List of the RC-40:

- You can post information which could be shared among the members of the RC40 via the mailing list: [isaRC40@ml.affrc.go.jp](mailto:isaRC40@ml.affrc.go.jp).
- If you would like to joint this e-list, please send an e-mail to the secretary: [tachi@affrc.go.jp](mailto:tachi@affrc.go.jp).

### [2] About the membership fee:

Every member shall pay their fee for every 4 years. Please refer to the amount of the fee at the website of the ISA ([http://www.ucm.es/info/isa/memb\\_i/index.htm](http://www.ucm.es/info/isa/memb_i/index.htm)). Current RC-40 secretary do NOT accept personal cheques because of the banking system in Japan (due to the high cost for transaction).

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