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# Agriculture and Food

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

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- Photo by Pixabel <https://www.pexels.com/photo/cold-snow-red-countryside-39017/>

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## From the Executive Committee

Greetings from Trondheim, Norway and Ithaca, New York, US. In the past period the focus of the RC40 Executive Committee (EC) has been two main topics. First, how to increase activities between RC40 members and others engaged in agri-food questions in the regions across the globe, and second, organizing the presence of RC40 at two large conferences; ISA Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil and the IRSA world congress in Cairns, Australia. We do expect good attendance at both venues. At ISA Forum RC-40 has filled all available slots and will welcome over 90 papers to be presented during the Forum. We will also host a panel on Latin American challenges, some of these being expressed by regional representative and local RC40 host in Porto Alegre, Paulo Niederle, in this newsletter.

The RC40 EC aim to strengthen opportunities for regional networks to develop. A grant call has been launched and we do encourage applications by March 31 for such initiatives. You will find more information on this enclosed in this newsletter. In the forthcoming period we will follow up on initiatives on supporting young and early career RC40 researchers in publishing strategies and networking, across nationalities and language skills. Several ideas are on the block and will be elaborated.

For RC40 joint communication we still depending on input from our members. Our website (<https://www.isa-agrifood.com/>) allows for both posting news, calls and publications. It needs your input and readership to develop. Next in the pipeline is a RC-40 Twitter-account for posting and tagging news and debates of interest to our community. We do hope it will be a success!

By the end of 2019 very sad news on the passing away of Larry Busch, one of the founders of RC40 and a major contributor to agri-food studies in the US and across the world. Fine words in memory of his far-reaching personal and professional imprints are enclosed in this newsletter. We hear from Larry's students, and we hear from two of his contemporaries.

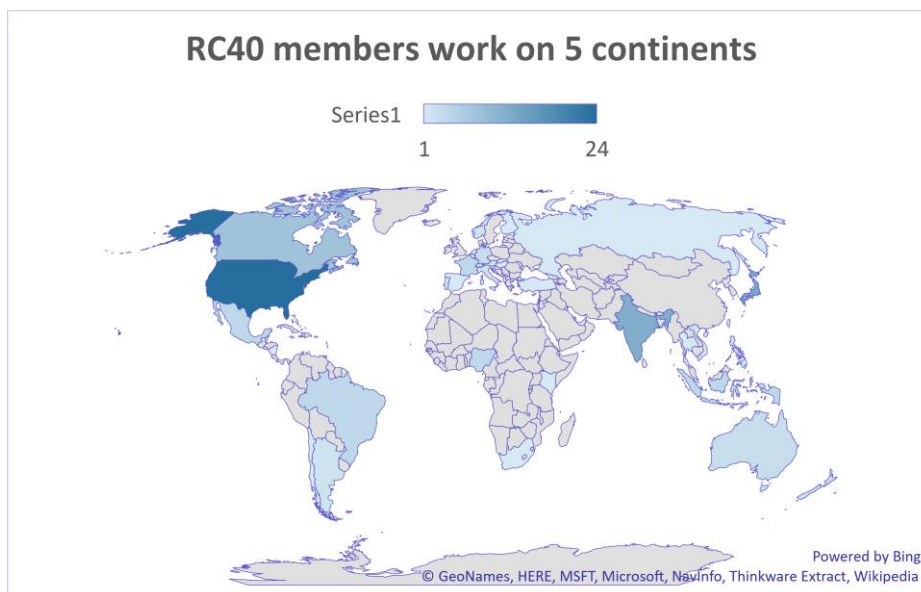
Regards,  
Hilde Bjørkhaug and Steven Wolf  
RC40 Secretary Treasurer and President

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## Status membership, finances and communications

### Membership

The number of members in the RC-40 has, for many years, been gradually increasing. By the end of 2019 the number of members is 116. The number of memberships is important due to allocation of activity funds, space and time at conferences, but not least engagement around RC40 scholarship and research.



The map shows how our current membership is located across the continents. There are potentials to strengthen our activities in many parts of the world.

Membership to the International Sociological Association (ISA) and RC40 covers a four-year period. Membership fees for RC40 is USD 40 for Category A countries, USD 20 for category B countries and USD 10 for Category C countries.

ISA membership registration form and additional information is available on <https://isa.enoah.com/Sign-In>.

**New and expired memberships are very welcome!**

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## **Finances**

RC-40 account. Balance per December 2019 is US\$7500 (account sits in Norway: NOK 70 818,28). Of these NOK 25 400 is royalty deposit earmarked IJSAF.

By application RC40 have been awarded an activity grant of EUR 1120 from ISA. Half of this remains at ISA upon documentation of activities.

The RC40 EC allocates money to the RC40 website, IJSAF, communications, travel grants, and networks. RC40 allocated NOK4500 to allow for a social lunch for all participants at ESRS RC40 preconference at ESRS in Trondheim. In this newsletter we seek grant applications for strengthening activities in the regional networks.

## **Communications**

The RC40 website ([www.isa-agrifood.com](http://www.isa-agrifood.com)) is where RC40 communications takes place. On this site, all members can post news, events or other information as they like. We are seeking stronger engagement with this forum. The forum is underutilized and we look for ways to increase members' engagement.

We will shortly set up our own Twitter account. Please look for it and tag relevant posts for the Twitter-using part of our RC40 community.

Report by

Hilde Bjørkhaug

RC40 Secretary/treasurer

## **Call for Regional Network Proposals**

The Research Committee on Agriculture and Food (RC40) of the International Sociological Association is asking for proposals for a small grant of \$2000 to support the establishment or development of professional networks related to the sociology of agriculture and food. These networks can be intended to include any or all of the following: researchers, activists, graduate students, educators, and any other group who works on issues related to agriculture and food, although we ask that there be a connection to sociological work. The purpose of the grant is to support the development of communities of people who are working on agriculture and food from a sociological perspective.

We ask interested participants to submit a proposal that outlines:

1. Details about the proposed initiative, including who will be organising the initiative, any logistical aspects, and estimated costs
2. Anticipated participants
3. How the proposed initiative would support the development of regional agri-food networks

We welcome proposals led by any agri-food scholars, but particularly support those with a connection to the RC40. This connection can be that those proposing the initiative are RC40 members, or that the proposal is led by, involves, or is supported by an RC40 regional representative. A list of representatives is available on the RC40 website under “Board” (<https://www.isa-agrifood.com/links>).

The proposals will be evaluated based primarily on the degree to which the initiative will support the development or expansion of agri-food scholarship and networks in the region. We especially encourage proposals from South America, Africa, Asia, and other underrepresented regions of the Research Committee.

Proposals should not exceed three pages in length. Proposals may be submitted in any language. The evaluators of the proposals speak English, French and Spanish, but will use translation software when a translator is not available for consultation. Proposals should be submitted to Katharine Legun ([Katharine.legun@gmail.com](mailto:Katharine.legun@gmail.com)) by **March 31, 2020**.

Please contact Katharine if you have any questions.

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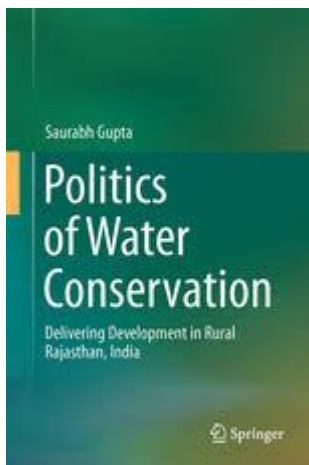
## Welcome new RC40 member!

**Saurabh Gupta** leads the Centre for Development Policy and Management at the Indian Institute of Management, Udaipur (IIMU). Prior to joining IIMU, he worked between 2011-17 at the Chair of Social and Institutional Change in Agricultural Development, University of Hohenheim, Germany. He has taught international development at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies



(SOAS) and London School of Economics (LSE). His research interests include sociology of food and agriculture, rural sociology, public policy, social transformation and politics of development, both global and local. He has conducted fieldwork in India on the issues related to watershed development, non-governmental development organizations, state-NGO relationships, grassroots mobilization against petty corruption, and effectiveness of welfare schemes related to food security. His current research focuses on governance and institutional challenges in biomass-based economic growth in Sub-

Saharan Africa, particularly in Ethiopia and Ghana. He is also involved in research supervision on the topic of sustainable *abaca* (natural fiber used for specialty paper) production in the Philippines. He is the author of *Politics of Water Conservation: Delivering Development in Rural Rajasthan* (Springer International, 2015), and has published articles in several reputed journals, including *Development and Change*, *Development Policy Review*, *Water Alternatives*, *Sustainability*, *Food Security* and *Journal of South Asian Development*.



Saurabh has a PhD in development studies from the University of London and a master's degree in Sociology from JNU, New Delhi.

Contact:

**Dr. Saurabh Gupta**

**Centre for Development Policy and Management (CDPM), Indian Institute of Management, Udaipur (IIMU), Balicha, Udaipur- 313001, India. E-mail: [saurabh.gupta@iimu.ac.in](mailto:saurabh.gupta@iimu.ac.in)**

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## Sociology of Agriculture and food in Latin America

By Paulo Niederle

In Latin America, 2019 ended with sociologists trying to understand the meaning of the "Chilean Spring", the anti-liberal massive public demonstrations that, during almost a month, completely paralyzed the country and forced the government to discuss with people about a referendum to replace the still in vogue Pinochet's authoritarian constitution. The force of these movements has somehow brought hope for those trying to face the huge ecological, social, political, and economic changes affecting the region after the global conservative wave has also arrived there. The same hope that comes from the democratic resistance in countries like Mexico, Argentina, and Uruguay, where institutions have not been completely disrupted by the processes that pushed Brazil, Bolivia, Venezuela, Honduras, and Paraguay to dangerous political and economic instabilities. A synthesis of this context can be found in the documents of the XXXII Congress of the Latin American Sociological Association (ALAS), which occurred last December in Peru, and which also suggests that, in 2020, Latin American sociologists will once again be engaged in defending not only democracy but also science from the new global obscurantisms, mainly the climate change denialism and the flat-earth and anti-vaccine movements.

Concerning our social field, agriculture and food, most contemporary concerns in Latin America are related to the expansion of deforestation as a result of land grabbing, the increasing violence against indigenous and traditional communities, the augmentation of food insecurity levels, and even the return of hunger in countries that had almost eliminated this social calamity. The main expressions of this new moment of Latin American social sciences are evident in the most important events the region will host this year, mainly in the central theme of the IV ISA Forum of Sociology, which also demonstrates that all these problems are not continent-specific: "Challenges of the 21st Century: Democracy, Environment, Inequalities, Intersectionality" (Porto Alegre, July 14-18 , 2020).

In the same perspective, other interesting regional events to those interested in understanding what is going on in the region are the XIII Ibero-Latin American Congress of Rural Studies (CIER), organized by the Latin American Rural Sociology Association (ALASRU) in the Chilean city of Valdivia (October 14-16); and the VIII Latin American Congress of Agroecology, organized by the Latin American Scientific Society of Agroecology (SOCLA) in Montevideo, Uruguay (November 25-27, 2020).

About the conference: <https://www.alasperu2019.pe/>

Declaration: [https://www.alasperu2019.pe/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/ALAS\\_declaracion\\_lima\\_2020.docx](https://www.alasperu2019.pe/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/ALAS_declaracion_lima_2020.docx)

Contact:

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## Tribute to Larry Busch (1945-2019)

By Keiko Tanaka, Gerad Middendorf, Elizabeth Ransom, and Maki Hatanaka

After a decade long battle with kidney disease and other related illnesses, Lawrence (Larry) Michael Busch, surrounded by his family members, peacefully passed away on December 28, 2019. He was 74 years old. To most readers of this newsletter, Larry was a distinguished scholar, teacher, mentor, colleague, and friend. In every dimension of existence, he was a giant who shaped our mental, intellectual, and physical space.

After having served 3.5 years in the Peace Corps in West Africa, where he met Karen or his wife of 53 years, Larry worked as a Vista Supervisor in North Carolina. Then, they moved to Ithaca so that Larry could obtain his master's and doctoral degrees in Development Sociology from Cornell University. He worked at the University of Kentucky between 1974 and 1989, and then moved to Michigan State University where he retired in 2017.

Larry Busch was one of the most prolific and distinguished rural sociologists with publication of 16 books, 95 journal articles, 62 book chapters, hundreds of invited paper and conference presentations, and millions of grant funding. Larry was one of the key sociologists who built the Sociology of Agriculture as a vibrant field within Sociology. With other colleagues, he contributed to establishing the "Research Committee 40: Sociology of Agriculture and Food (RC40)" within the International Sociological Association; the "Sociology of Agriculture and Food Research Interest Group (SAFRIG)" within the Rural Sociological Society; and Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society. He encouraged graduate students, junior faculty members, and scholars from all over the world to stay active in these organizations and to create an intellectual space that welcomes diverse theoretical ideas and methodological approaches.

At the Celebration of Lawrence (Larry) Busch's life in Ann Arbor on January 26, 2020, Craig Harris from Michigan State University and Bill Lacy from UC Davis – two of Larry's long-time colleagues and friends – pointed out that Larry built bridges and linked people, ideas, disciplines, and fields which would otherwise have not intersected without him. His scholarship centered around the critical analysis of capitalist agriculture. Over four decades of his career, he examined what he used to call, "the rules of the game," or mechanisms of capitalism, that propel and transform how markets are created and operated. He was constantly a pioneer in the sociological analysis of those topics which were often overlooked, such as food security, agricultural research systems, new agricultural scientific innovations, grades and standards, and third-party certification systems. Through numerous travels across the world, his work often introduced theoretical perspectives and methodological

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approaches from Europe that had been relatively unknown to North American sociologists of agriculture and food, and vice versa. He constantly encouraged his colleagues and graduate students to expand beyond the cannon and think outside the box.

Larry was a gregarious person who loved to tell terrible jokes and sing silly songs (and sometimes dance awfully). He enjoyed making people laugh because laughter builds friendship. Let us cherish all those bridges and friendships Larry Busch had built across the world over the four decades of his career. That will be the best tribute we can make to him.

Larry Busch is survived by his beloved wife Karen, his beautiful daughters Lisa (Ryan) McCamy and Rachel (David) Weisberger, and his four wonderful grandchildren Grace and Zoe McCamy, and Niko and Lilu Weisberger. To honor his legacy, his family wishes us to send your contributions to: Rural Sociological Society Lawrence Busch Graduate Student Research Award (<https://www.ruralsociology.org/>); or American Society of Nephrology (<https://www.asn-online.org/foundation/>).

Keiko Tanaka, University of Kentucky  
Gerad Middendorf, Kansas State University  
Elizabeth Ransom, Pennsylvania State University  
Maki Hatanaka, Sam Houston State University



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## Larry (Lawrence Michael) Busch 1945-2019, in Memoriam

By Manuel Belo Moreira

I first met Larry at the World Congress of Sociology held in New Delhi, India, in August 1986. Larry was the program coordinator of the newly created ISA Ad Hoc Group on “Sociology of Agriculture.” The Ad Hoc was originally established at the 1982 ISA World Congress of Sociology held in Mexico City and a few years later evolved into RC-40. At the time and as a newcomer, I was struck by Larry’s knowledge, vision and organizational ability that were fundamental for the transformation of the Ad Hoc group into the currently well-established Research Committee on Sociology of Agriculture and Food.

Larry’s efforts were accompanied by the path breaking work and leadership of Bill Friedland. Together, they shaped the lives and work of all those many colleagues and students that they collaborated with and taught. The benefits that I received from their leadership, collaboration and friendship are countless. I also witnessed the magnificent way in which Larry mentored all those students at the University of Kentucky, Michigan State and, frankly, around the world who now constitute the core of RC-40.

It is unquestionable that Larry’s legacy is deep. Substantive areas such as the politics of science and research, globalization, technology, world food standards and, more recently neoliberalism – through works such “The Eclipse of Morality: Science, State and Market” -- are now better understood because of Larry’s work and that of his associates including Bill Lacy.

These accomplishments and his international stature made my proposal to award him an Honoris Cause Degree by the Technical University of Lisbon now University of Lisbon a simple task. Larry’s work, intellectuality and leadership will be missed along with his fine humor and creativity. They always added a characteristic light touch to RC-40 gatherings.

Goodbye, Dr. Lawrence M. Busch, we will all miss you.

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## In memory of Larry Busch

By Reidar Almås,

On behalf of the colleagues of Larry Busch at Ruralis, The Institute for Rural and Regional Research

On behalf of the colleagues of Larry Busch at Ruralis, the former Center for Rural Research in Trondheim, Norway, I wish to express my deepest sorrow and compassion in connection with Larry Busch's death. We had the pleasure and honor during the years 1994 to 1997 and again from 2000 to 2005 to have Larry as a visiting professor at the Centre for Rural Research. His role as mentor and teacher served as an inspiration for a whole generation of Norwegian social scientists within the field of rural and agricultural studies. We remember his many visits to Trondheim (1996, 2000, 2004) with great pleasure. Larry had a wonderful sense of humor and had an eminent ear for language.

Larry Busch was one of the 'giants' of rural sociology. He was one of the most active and respected scholars within the fields of rural sociology and sociology of scientific knowledge. He published widely and trained a whole generation of rural sociology scholars in the US and abroad. Larry Busch worked with social scientists from all continents and travelled widely as visiting scholar and invited keynote speaker to conferences, which is a proof of his standing as an international celebrity in his field. He was an inspiration for a whole generation of rural sociologists, not least in Norway and Europe.

Larry Busch made a significant contribution to the Center for Rural Research, now Ruralis, and many colleagues have good memories of this long-lasting collaboration.

We feel for Karen and her family these days and give her our warm condolences.

Photo taken during the conference "Restructuring the agro-food system: Global processes and national responses", Trondheim 2.-5. May 1994.

From the left: Neil Ward, Larry Busch, Phillip McMichael, Torben Bager, Reidar Almås, Harriet Friedman, Bill Friedland, Sarah Whatmore and David Goodman.

