



Agriculture and Food

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

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From the President

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With this address to our newsletter I wish, first of all, a happy 2009 for all our members.

In 2008 food and agriculture have gained centrality into the public debate. After two decades of liberalization and privatization, there is a general agreement that there is a need to revert this trend. Food and agriculture are too important matters to be left to market forces alone. The sequence of events that have characterised the world during this year - oil crisis, food crisis, financial crisis, economic crisis - , and the increasing evidence showing the urgency of measures of adaptation and mitigation of the incumbent global environmental crisis, show that there is a very high degree of interdependence among present global problems. Sectorial or localistic approaches won't be able to face the problems in an appropriate way.

Vulnerability and resilience of the food systems will be the key objects of debate of next years. Global crises, in fact, can have

differential impacts on local systems, and the increased concern on securing local resilience (by national governments as well as local leaders) will multiply conflicts and will increase inequalities in the world. Only multilateral agreements, backed by a strong commitment of leading governments, scientific evidence and a robust civil society, can avoid this.

Sociology of food and agriculture can do a lot on this regard. Most of the tragic errors made in these years by governments are linked to misrecognition of the social drivers of change and of social impacts of policies, technologies and economic strategies. Sociology of agriculture and food can provide both scientific evidence to support appropriate intervention measure and arguments to feed public opinion and civil society with a critical understanding of the existing rules and structures of power.

[Insights around the Globe]

***Mini-Consensus Conference on Food Nanotechnology
– NanoTRI in Japan –***

Masashi Tachikawa, Ibaraki University, Japan

Nanotechnology is an emerging technology which could be applied to almost all kinds of field from electronics to construction. Agriculture and food are no exception, and it is being rapidly attract attentions from various risk management bodies. However, it is still difficult how to deal with this emerging nanotechnology in agriculture or food in terms of risk management or risk governance. Researchers of RC40 has begun??

I would like to share my experience and observation of a mini-consensus conference on food nanotechnology which was held in Sapporo, Japan in October 2008 . The project was funded by the Japanese Society of Promotion of Science (JSPS), and supported by the Co-STEP, Hokkaido University, through which a number of researchers including rural sociologist, environmental sociologist and STS scholars were involved in. This consensus conference on food nanotechnology had not implemented with a full scale, but rather it was organized in a shortened time-frame and smaller number of participants, that is, panel of ten citizens and 4 experts, mainly because of budget limitation. However, this smaller size of panel, along with highly motivated people's participation, has created a very communicative atmosphere and active interaction with experts. To our surprise, the quality of the final report that citizens came up with from the consensus conference was much more than we have expected, articulating their opinion of the technologies.

The following is some excerpts from the Citizen's Proposal on Food nanotechnology

- Labeling in terms of nutrient substance, manufacturing process, purpose of usage (e.g., improvement of absorption) is desirable for nanofood. Since consumer's perception for the safety of these product is still minimal, please take measures to avoid such

situation as people consume these products without knowing as such. If products show physiologically different pattern within the body, it should be required to label to make caution to consumers. Uniform labeling standard would need to be introduced for nanofood in order to show its contents or rating of nanomaterial, such as Japan Agricultural Standard (JAS), and Michelin.

- Taking advantage of nanotechnology, we wish to enrich our daily life with these nanofoods. It is necessary to investigate human digestive system more thoroughly, and as the system is understood more clearly, the scopes and methods of nanofood processing would be settled and justified. At that time, nanotechnology will be employed to enhance "enjoyment of eating" and helping "consumption/absorption." Applications against or beyond these objectives would not be pursued, we hope.

(Source) *Citizen's Proposal from Consensus Conference*, NANOTRI, October 5, 2008

We still do not know how Japanese public would react to nanotechnology applications in food and agriculture at this point, however, the mini-consensus conference has given me a sense that citizens had the mixed feelings about it, while acknowledging its potential. Considering the fact that food occupies a very special position within our daily life and this specialty tends to call for precautionary position regarding the application of novel technologies to food. In particular, citizen panel clearly oppose the situation where people intake nanofood without knowing the presence of it. This recognition leads to their call for labeling system to products related to nanofood.

While some NGOs, such Friends of the Earth, are also calling for various risk

management measures to protect health and environmental risks associated with food nanotechnology, regulatory bodies tend to have a wait and see attitude toward the outcome of risk assessment research, such as done by FAO/WHO, and EFSA. This “regulatory inaction” could be justifiable from the viewpoint of regulatory bodies, since no clear negative incidents have been reported so far regarding food nanotechnology. However, such inaction might create further frustrations among citizens who witness that more and more nano- products are being placed on the market. Gaps between technological advancements on the one hand, and regulatory

inaction on the other hand can be seen in various other technological development, and citizens tend to perceive this situation more and more problematic. Here we need a new type of governance system which takes into account various stakeholders’ expectations and conditions. The issue here is how we can incorporate citizen’s value into such governance system through negotiation with private entities. I think there are room for us sociologists of food and agriculture to make contribution to explore a new way of governing technologies by way of facilitating the dialogue among citizen, innovators, and regulatory bodies.

Report from the Editors of The INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD (IJSAF)

1. Location and management of the journal

The journal is currently located in the School of City and Regional Planning, Cardiff University (UK). Day-to-day operations are managed by Joek Roex who has had considerable experience in journal editing and production. The web address for the journal is <http://ijsaf.org>

2. Current editors

The current editors of the IJSAF are Dr Vaughan Higgins (Monash University, Australia), Professor Farshad Araghi (Florida Atlantic University, USA), and Dr Mara Miele (Cardiff University, UK).

3. Numbers of Issues since the last RC-40 Newsletter

Since the last newsletter there have been limited submissions, resulting in no issues being published. However, the next ordinary issue is planned for publication in February. This will be followed in March or April by a special issue edited by Gianluca Brunori and Alberto Arce.

4. Visibility and Impact of the Journal

While the number of articles submitted continues to improve, many of these are deemed unsuitable leading to a high rejection rate. While this is good for journal quality, the quantity of articles accepted and published per year continues to represent a major problem in ensuring the production of regular issues and thereby improving the journal’s impact. Apart from running annual special issues, the editorial team lack the resources to fund advertising for the journal.

5. Proposed Special Issues

Future planned future special issues may include:

- Climate change challenges to the agri-food sector.
- The global food crisis.
- Global restructuring in the dairy industry
- Neoliberalism, de-peasantisation and peasant mobilisation.
- NGOs and corporate social responsibility.
- Labour processes in the global agri-food system.

The editors would be pleased to hear from anyone interested in guest editing these proposed special issues as well as any other issues that accord with the general aims and scope of the journal.

Vaughan Higgins
Farshad Araghi
Mara Miele

Provisional (as of January 30) Theme of the RC40-organized session
World Agriculture and Food in Search of New Paradigms
XVII ISA World Congress of Sociology
(July 11th -17th, 2010, Gothenburg, Sweden)

There is a growing consensus, among international institutions, that the present mechanisms that regulate the way food is produced, distributed, consumed are unsustainable and uneven. Global drivers such as climate change and resource exhaustion give further motivation to the search for alternatives. However, if one moves from diagnosis to the solution, it is evident that the consensus is much lower on the alternatives to the present state of matter. It is this clear that, beyond the apparent consensus over a set of catchphrases such as sustainability, equity, resilience, there are deep conflicts over the ways these concepts are put into practice.

While alternative coalitions try to capitalize the increasing audience - gained in the public opinion and among international institutions - by

consolidating a space into policy networks and looking for coherence between theory, politics and practice, dominant coalitions reposition their discourse and adapt their paradigms to maintain their power. In the war between paradigms, large 'grey areas' (contradictions, trade offs, constraints) and knowledge gaps emerge, that need to be addressed.

The workshops organized by RC40 will focus on these issues, developing theoretical reflection and bringing empirical evidence from a broad range of countries and contexts.

NOTE: Formal Call for Papers with deadline information will be distributed later. We will greatly appreciate your suggestions on this theme or speakers.

**Report of the Business Meeting of the last RC40 meeting
IRSA 2008, Goyang, Korea**

Minutes of Business Meeting

16:10--17:20 July 11, 2008
KINTEX 210A, Goyang City, Korea

Participants: 14 members

1. Secretary/Treasurer reported past activities and budget situation of RC40 based on the report prepared (see below).

2. Discussion on RC40 activities, including IJSAF
* How to increase the visibility of the journal

- * Need clarification of shifting host institute of the IJSAF
- * Problems related to Special Issue causing low numbers of general submission
- * Need to find a way to publish general submission papers in a timely way
- * Lengthy process of publication mixed with low submission rate
- * Editorial Board may need to set up
- * Ways to increase submission papers
- * In sum:
 - Need more transparency in terms of procedures, such as movement of host institutes
 - More effort to improve the image/visibility of the IJSAF need to be made.
 - using newsletter to encourage people to submit papers to the IJSAF

3. RC40 mission and Future Activities
- * remarks on the RC40 mission/features
 - * Themes in the future meetings are discussed.

RC40 Status Report from
Secretary/Treasurer

1. Number of ISA Member:
Total ISA members in good standing in RC40, 2008 = 76
(as of May 22, 2008)
2. Number of RC40 e-list recipient:
Roughly 320 recipients
3. Past Activities of RC40

[Mini-Conferences]
In 2007, we have held two mini-conferences in May (Recife, Brazil) and August (Wageningen, The Netherlands). The first one is the mini-conference "Capital and Labor Mobility in Agriculture and Food in the Global Era," which was organized by Alessandro Bonanno and Josefa Salete Cavalcanti as a pre-conference to the XIII Brazilian Sociological Congress. The

second one "Sources and Mechanisms of Power in the Global Food System and in Rural Sites: Domination, Counter-domination and Alternatives" was held in Wageningen, as also a pre-conference of the European Society for Rural Sociology. Results and fruits of both conferences were reported in the previous newsletter (Vol.2-1), and we would like to express sincere appreciation for those who involved planning/paper presenting/participating these conferences.

Some of the papers, submitted the mini-conference, are now under review to incorporate into the IJSAF.

[IJSAF] (see section: "Report from the Editors")

Most visible activities of RC40 are our e-journal, IJSAF. As Vaughan describes the situation in each newsletter, IJSAF regularly publish their issue and we really appreciate this stable situation of the journal.

Also as Vaughan mentioned in the latest newsletter, the host institute of the IJSAF has moved from the University of Otago to the Cardiff University. This is mainly a financial reason since University of Otago's financial commitment to the journal was enabled by the special grants with limited period.

[Newsletters]
I have issued total 4 newsletters every 6 months. Newsletter is typically consist of president's foreword, special contribution, announcements of paper call, resource of interest, list of board members, By-Laws, and so on.

I would like to accept various inputs and contributions to the newsletter. Please contact secretary for timing and length of these contributions. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

[Other information provision]
Various type of information, such as call for papers, resources, events, and so on, is distributed via e-list of the RC40.

Such information exchange would be a key to sustain viabilities of this field and give various insights to people who are interested in this area of research.

4. RC40 Budget Situation (see the document distributed during the meeting)

5. Relations with the ISA

RC40 is one of the Research Committees of the ISA, and we have various relations with the ISA. Membership fee for the RC is allocated

through the ISA and ISA could provide research grant based on proposal from RC. RC40 has been provided this kind of grant. ISA also provide various opportunities of research meetings and projects. This year, ISA will have another international meeting called First ISA Forum of Sociology to be held in Spain in September 5-8. Also the ISA are planning to create e-dictionary of sociology called Sociopeia on the website. All RCs, including RC-40, are invited to make some kind of contribution to these ISA-related activities.



[Snapshots from IRSA 2008]

Upcoming Events

[2009]

- Joint 2009 Annual Meetings of the Agriculture, Food and Human Values Society (AFHVS) and the Association for the Study of Food and Society (ASFS)
May 28-31, 2009
Penn State Conference Center, Penn State University, State College, Pennsylvania, USA
<http://www.afhvs.org/2009mtg.html>
- Rural Sociological Society Annual Meeting (USA)
“Rural Sociology as Public Sociology: Past, Present, Future”
July 28-31, 2008
Radisson Hotel, Manchester, New Hampshire
<http://www.ruralsociology.org>
- XXIII European Society of Rural Sociology Congress
“Re-Inventing the Rural Between the Social and the Natural”
Vaasa, Finland, 17-21 August 2009
<http://www.esrs2009.fi/>
- Fifth ISA Worldwide Competition for Junior Sociologists
Submissions: May 1, 2009
<http://www.isa-sociology.org>
- ISA International Laboratory for Ph.D. Students in Sociology
Shonan Kokusai Village, Hayama, Japan
October 3 - 9, 2009
Submissions: May 31, 2009
<http://www.isa-sociology.org>

[2010]

- XVII World Congress of Sociology
“Sociology on the Move”

July 11th -17th, 2010, Gothenburg,
Sweden

[http://www.isa-sociology.org/congress
2010/](http://www.isa-sociology.org/congress2010/)

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	gbrunori@agr.unipi.it
Secretary/ Treasurer	Masashi Tachiakawa	Ibaraki University	Japan	mtachi@mx.ibaraki.ac.jp
Executive Council	Mónica Bendini	Universidad Nacional del Comahue	Argentina	mibendini@yahoo.com.ar
	Vaughan Higgins	Monash University	Australia	Vaughan.higgins@arts.monash.edu.au
	Elizabeth Ransom	University of Richmond	USA	eransom@richmond.edu
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	Wynne Wright	Michigan State University	USA	wrightwy@anr.msu.edu

RC-40 Regional Representatives, 2006-2010

Latin America	John Wilkinson	jwilkins@uol.com.br
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Northern Europe	Reidar Almås	reidar.almås@rural.no
Southern Europe	Maria Fonte	mfonte@unina.it

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.
- If you would like to join this e-list, please send an e-mail to the secretary: mtachi@mx.ibaraki.ac.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). Current RC-40 secretary do NOT accept **personal cheques** because of the banking system in Japan (due to the high cost for money transfer fee).

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