



Agriculture and Food

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

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From the RC40 leadership

Greetings on behalf of the new RC40 leadership and Executive Council (EC), which is dedicated to supporting our shared interests in research and action applied to agriculture and food. As we look ahead to the next 4 years (all members of this leadership group serve a 4 year term), we want to recognize the contributions of colleagues that served in the previous EC. Allison Loconto, Maki Hatanaka, and this past EC made concrete progress with regard to membership, finances, communications, the International Journal of Sociology of Agrifood (IJSAF the journal of RC40), revitalization of our Regional Representative network, and providing structure to facilitate intellectual exchanges and research products. Lots of momentum on which to build. Of all of these achievements, the launch of our website (special thanks to Paulo Niederle) - <https://www.isa-agrifood.com/> - holds the most promise for strengthening our group and extending our impact.

In the summer of 2019 RC40 will play a visible role in the European Society of Rural Sociology meetings in Trondheim, Norway. All members are encouraged to consider participating. Abstract are due 1/31 - <https://esrs2019.no/calls/call-for-abstracts/>. In the summer of 2020, RC40 will play a prominent role on the program of the ISA Forum in Porto Allegre, Brazil and in the International Rural Sociology Association meetings in Cairns, Australia. These two 2020 events represent important foci of our current planning efforts.

Beyond these international conferences, it is important to recognize the potential for RC40 to play a supportive role in the work you seek to advance. RC40 is a platform for dialogue and collaboration. As a professional network, all members should feel comfortable posting information, questions, provocations, and opportunities to the website, and we should work together to enhance interaction and mutual support. RC40 is a membership driven organization, and the leadership welcomes ideas regarding programs and how to mobilize our collective resources, most specifically our shared engagement with social problems associated with agrifood.

As we scan the agrifood horizon, there is no shortage of debate or urgency. The EAT-Lancet Commission report - <https://eatforum.org/eat-lancet-commission/> - released in January 2019 presents opportunities for follow-on research and perhaps social change. This research and outreach effort of a team of experts in planetary health and human health produced dietary guidelines that aim to reduce the ecological footprint of agrifood and to address the dual public health problems of “Stuffed and Starved”. The structure of this interdisciplinary collaboration and the explicit strategy mobilized to link the research to policy and popular impact merit attention. The reactions to the report from the meat industry, for example, highlight connections between knowledge controversies and political economic relations. The report draws connections across scales (individual bodies and the planet), across policy domains (public health and environmental management) and, of course, between production and consumption. As a meta-analysis and as call for social change, this very public effort highlights the stakes and opportunities attached to our work.

In closing, we want to welcome Midori Hiraga to the RC40 EC. Midori won the recent election for the newly created Junior Scholar seat, which was created to ensure that RC40 programming and governance enjoy strong links to graduate students and early career researchers. As you read the newsletter, whether you are early career or not, please look for opportunities to participate and to lead. RC40 is what we make of it.

Best, Steven Wolf and Hilde Bjørkhaug

Report from regional representative **Tuija Mononen** **Northern Europe**

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Food futures in a complex world

In the early 2000s, in Western agri-food research literature, the focus of social sciences was mainly on the alternative food production methods, locality and high quality of food. In contrast to these positive food-related discourses, researchers talked about threats and fears about the biological quality and safety of food. These included mad cow disease, salmonella, bird flu, and many other food-borne risks. At that time, it was already clear that the health risks of food and diseases caused by food or farm animals, zoonoses, do not respect the borders, laws or regulations of states. Therefore, it is difficult to control them and to prevent them from spreading. Nowadays, the focus of the debate has shifted towards the big issues relating to the functioning of global agri-food system, such as climate change. Neither it respects the boundaries, nor can it be controlled by legislation. However, it can be mitigated and attempted to adapt. It is clear, that climate change, food production and the governance of the whole agri-food system will be closely intertwined in the future.

As the global agri-food system is very complex, multi-scaled and multi-level, the solutions to problems in the future are complex as well. Everyone can influence the future of the global agri-food system and many of its threats by purchasing decisions for example by acting locally, by buying local food, if wanting so. Jessica Duncan and Megan Bailey have stated, that there are multiple solutions and need for space for these solutions. The future pathways must allow us to imagine, define, and build possible food secure futures that are just, sustainable and multiple. They, however, note that *“it does not matter how sustainable something is, or is not, if people are not willing to implement it.”* Solutions to complex problems of contemporary agri-food system are not only to be found in new scientific discoveries. They are being developed and implemented by people responding to challenges in their communities and in their countries. (Duncan & Bailey 2017: 2, 211.)

Here, in the North, for most of the people, serious food crises seem distant. They happen elsewhere. Consumers think our food security is quite stable, and food is of high quality, safe and healthy. There is enough food for all. Buying and utilizing is easy and effortless. There is everything available one can imagine, no matter whether you need it or not. It is said that consumers appreciate Nordic food. Still, the amount of imported food is high, and is increasing in some locations.

But the Nordic agri-food system is vulnerable. As a result of climate change, it is possible, that in the future food crises due to environmental and water pollution or extreme weather phenomena will increase. These can lead to problems in the production and supply of food. All we need is one or two summer with extreme weather, dry and hot or rainy and cold. As a consequence, yield losses and shortage of fodder in some farms will increase. Our dependency of global agri-food system will actualize and become visible and real as well.

Reference: Duncan Jessica & Megan Bailey (eds. 2017). Sustainable food futures. Multidisciplinary solutions. Routledge studies in food, society and the environment.



From IJSAF Chief Editor

Raymond A. Jussaume Jr.

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It has been one year since I assumed the role of Editor-in-Chief of the *International Journal of the Sociology of Agriculture and Food*. I have been admirably assisted in my work by Associate Editors Katerina Psarikidou and Claire Marris. Our primary editorial goal has been and continues to be maintaining a high standard of scholarship for the journal while increasing the number of published issues. Our goal is to achieve a steady publication record of 4 issues per year for the journal.

Over the course of the past 12 months, the journal received 24 original manuscript submissions. Of these, nine manuscripts were sent out for review. Of these nine manuscripts, one was rejected outright, three others were rejected but the authors were encouraged to re-submit a significantly improved version of their manuscript, three are currently being reviewed, and three have been accepted and will be published in the January 2019 issue of the journal.

Clearly, the journal needs more high quality submissions. All members of RC-40 are highly encouraged to submit a manuscript to IJSAF. In addition, we need more support from RC-40 members in the form of reviewing manuscripts. Last year, we sent out a survey asking RC-40 members, as well as individuals who had previously published in IJSAF, to complete a survey on their research interests. This was done so that we could more properly identify appropriate reviewers for submitted manuscripts. So far, we have received only 32 completed questionnaires. A follow-up survey will be sent out within the next month. Please do fill out and return the survey to us if you have not already done so.

In addition to encouraging more submissions, a major goal for 2019 is to create a new Editorial Board for the journal. Allison Laconto is working with the editorial team to identify a diverse and active Board. We look forward to sharing the names of the new Board in the next RC-40 newsletter.

Respectfully Submitted by
Raymond A. Jussaume Jr.
(Editor-in-Chief)



Status on membership, finances and statutes

Reported by Hilde Bjørkhaug
Secretary/treasurer

Membership

The number of members in the RC-40 is gradually increasing. By the end of 2018, the number of members were 119. The positive membership development allow us a higher re-fund from ISA, greater amount of money for ISA grants and more sessions at the upcoming ISA events/conferences. A higher membership also give us great opportunity for engagement and exchange at the RC-40 web forum. Expired memberships will be encouraged to renew.

Our membership is divided between Asia 32%, North America 32%, Central and South-America 16%, Europe 18%, Africa 6% and Oceania 6%.

Membership fee

Membership to the International Sociological Association (ISA) and RC40 covers a four-year period. ISA membership registration form is available on <https://isa.enoah.com/Sign-In>

Finances

RC-40 account. Balance December 2018.

Starting balance per July 2018 **US\$ 1358**

Affiliation fees kept at the ISA Secretariat US\$ 3510 (Not arrived to account)

Contribution by LISIS US\$ 3500 (Not arrived to account)

Grants available to RC-40 from ISA

A research committee's activities grant of EUR 1120 is available to RC-40 for 2019-2022. A grant application will be submitted by deadline 30 January 2019.

Statutes changes

Two amendments to RC-40 statutes were agreed at the Toronto business meeting July 16, 2018.

- 1) Make and fill a junior seat on the RC40 Executive Committee
- 2) Add a EC representative to the IJSaF Editorial Team

The changes were ratified by a Survey Monkey ballot to regular members. 100% accepted the changes. 29 attended the ballot.

Find statutes at <https://www.isa-sociology.org/en/research-networks/research-committees/rc40-agriculture-and-food/rc40-statutes>

Web and communication strategy & new listserv

The new RC40 Website and listserv has been launched at <https://www.isa-agrifood.com>.

With the new listserv, the yahoo groups listserv is now no longer active. The RC40 website (www.isa-agrifood.com) is part of the new RC40 communications strategy and will serve as a 'one stop shop' center of information from RC40 members about news, events, publications, etc. of interest to RC40 members and members of the listserv.

This website also holds the archives for RC40's flagship journal: the International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food (IJSAF). The submission site for IJSAF has also been updated and is now re-established on the original website of the journal: www.ij saf.org

The new website offers us the possibility of communicating with members in two ways. Through 'shout outs' to all subscribers of the website. This method will be used exclusively by the RC40 Secretary (Hilde Bjørkhaug) to send member related information to members (e.g., voting or member-only materials)

Through the RC40 Listserv Forum, which is where the public news and information will be posted. This forum is interactive and will allow all members to post information and to personalize how you would like to receive your information.

Our shift to the forum function means that the RC40 Secretary will no longer be sending out one way messages with news and events, but that all members can send out their information when they want to. The hope is that we can revitalize listserv to become more interactive and build not just our awareness about all of the exciting events, publications and activities across the RC40 regions, but also engage each other in scientific debates through the forum.

For this to work, we need all members of this listerv to sign up to become a member of the webpage: <https://www.isa-agrifood.com/forum>. We look forward to seeing your news online.

If you no longer want to receive emails from the RC40 listserv, please send an email to Hilde Bjørkhaug (hilde.bjorkhaug@ntnu.no) so that your name can be removed from our list.



Sociology of
Agriculture and Food

Upcoming events



The XXVIII ESRS Congress will be held in **Trondheim, Norway, June 25-28 2019**. The overall topic of the conference is “Rural futures in a complex world”. 32 Working groups have been launched for the conference. In addition to these, RC-40 will convene a pre-conference session at the opening day of the conference (June 25) on Financialisation of agri-food systems – urgent and future challenges. The session is listed in the call for abstracts and open for abstracts submissions alongside the other working groups (**Deadline January 31**).

RC-40 pre-conference session: Tuesday 25th June 10.00-15.00

Convenors: Hilde Bjørkhaug: hilde.bjorkhaug@ruralis.no, Reidar Almås, Ruralis- Institute for rural and regional research, Steven Wolf, Cornell University and Andre Magnan, University of Regina. Financialization is the increased influence of financial actors and logics on social and economic life, and is one of the key drivers transforming food systems and rural economies around the world. Actions of financial actors, and their financial logics, are transforming agri-food systems in profound ways. It is shown that although financialization is a powerful dynamic, some recent developments suggest that the rollout of financialization is contradictory and uneven in different spaces and markets.

A recent book^[1] revealed that financialized economic activities are not only being deployed by financial institutions, but also by national and private investment funds (SWFs) and state-backed organizations, for commercial purposes, for development, and for aid, among a host of other purposes. The 2008 food crisis changed agri-food policy rhetoric, turning what was previously considered ‘hidden’ protectionist policies of some Northern states into ‘food security’ discourse, where attempts were made to ensure a secure food supply in the face of global uncertainties. Some states have actively appropriated farmland abroad, while countries with food surpluses have supported financialization – within neoliberal globalization – as a mechanism to sell greater volumes of food in the global marketplace. Either way, the farming and food sectors have remained very attractive sites for investment.

Financialization of the agri-food system raises many ethical and moral questions. When nation states help to facilitate financialization it is important that they weigh up impacts upon small and medium scale farms and food businesses and those who occupy lands (either legally or illegally). The poor and least powerful can readily become more marginalized as financialization proceeds.

The proposed RC-40 mini-conference/pre-conference session invites scholars to give short presentations of current financialisation research. The planned presentation format will be combined with generous time dedicated to open discussions on 1) the contours and impacts of the current, financialized, global agri-food system 2) urgent challenges and 3) future research needs.

Abstract submissions by **January 31st 2019** at <https://esrs2019.no/calls/call-for-abstracts/>

[1] Bjørkhaug, H., A. Magnan & G. Lawrence (2018) The Financialization of Agri-Food Systems Contested Transformations. Routledge.

ISA FORUM 2020: Call for sessions open February 4 to March 15. Visit <https://www.isa-agrifood.com/forum.for updates>.

Fourth ISA Forum of Sociology

Porto Alegre, Brazil, July 14-18, 2020

ISA Forum of Sociology is designed as a mid-term meeting of Research Committees, Working Groups and Thematic Groups combined with the Business Meeting of the ISA Research Council.

The forthcoming Fourth ISA Forum of Sociology will be organized by Geoffrey Pleyers, current ISA Vice-President Research, in collaboration with the ISA Research Coordinating Committee and the Brazilian Local Organizing Committee, chaired by Hermilio Santos, Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul.

IRSA 2020: Further information to be released at <https://www.jcu.edu.au/irsa2020>



Rural sustainability in the urban century

XV World Congress of Rural Sociology, 8-12 July 2020,
Cairns, Australia

Minutes RC40 Business Meeting

July 16, 2018

XIX ISA World Congress of Sociology in Toronto
Recorded by Maki Hatanaka and Hilde Bjørkhaug

27 members participated

1. Welcome and State of the RC (Allison Loconto and Maki Hatanaka)
 - Membership and budget updates
 - Membership steadily growing. 110 active members in 2018.
 - Current balance: USD 1,701.21
 2. Update website and communication (Hilde Bjørkhaug)
 - The purpose of the webpage is flexible. It is a member-driven webpage. We are planning to incorporate the RC listserv, newsletter, and communication tools on our website. Members are requested to send necessary information to post on the website.
 3. Summer School update (Steven Wolf)
 - Aim: Cross-generational dialogues
 - Funded by INRA, Cornell, and University of Toronto this year
 - 99 applications, 15 selected
 - Experiences will be shared on the RC40 website
 - Future? Need sponsor and request to use RC40 as a label
 4. Journal (IJSAF) Editor's Report: Historical summary and where we are now (Ray Jussaume)
 - Introduction of the new editorial team (since January 1st, 2018)
 - Low number of manuscript submission
 - 13 manuscripts submitted since Jan 1, 2018
 - 10 were not sent out for reviews (irrelevant theme, re-received for already published manuscripts; lower standards than the journal expectation, etc.)
 - Low number of reviewers who responded to the call
 - In sum, not much commitment from the members
 - Need new editorial board
 - Need younger scholars
 5. Regional representatives network (Steven Wolf and Regional Representatives)
 - Every regional representative renewed. In addition, we added two new regions.
 - Ambition to increase activity level in regions.
 - Not much funds; we need more resource to reactivate and formalize the network
 - New representatives who are in the meeting self-introduce, and made announcements from their respective regions
 - Latin America
 - Potentially create some non-English sessions (e.g., Spanish) to attract more scholars to come to ISA meetings.
 6. Upcoming mid-term meetings
 - IRSA, XV World Congress of Rural Sociology (July 8-12, 2020, Cairns, Australia)
 - ISA Forum (July 14-16, 2020, Brazil)
 7. Statue change proposals
- A: Motion 1: (Proposal by RC40 EC):** A motion to create a dedicated junior scholar seat on the RC40 Executive Committee
- Definition of junior scholars?
 - ISA definition. Anybody under 40 is considered as 'junior'
 - At the starting term, s/he must be a graduate student and continue to serve for 4 years.
 - What is the responsibility for junior scholar committee members?
 - Same responsibilities as senior ones, or different kind of duties?
 - Concern: Grad students may change their research topic/interests, not long term commitment
 - Length of commitment can be shorter?
 - To attend the meetings will be financially challenging for graduate students
 - Associate statue? Different title? Not an EC board member?
 - Do we need a formalized position for young voice?
- 1st motion:** Making a dedicated seat for graduate students at the time of EC election for the term of 4 yrs. If his/her research topic changes to non-food and agriculture topics, we will replace with a new representative. (Out of 27: **Favor 20**; Against 2; Abstained 1)
- 2nd motion:** Fill a junior scholar seat by a special election to take place within 6 months (electronically). (Out of 27: **Favor 19**; Against 1; Abstained 0)
- B: Motion 2 (Proposed by RC40 EC):** EC liaison added as an associate editor in the IJSAF Editorial Team
- Do we need to formalize the EC liaison position?
 - For professionalization of journal purpose, perhaps beneficial.
 - Journal is accountable but independent.
 - Editors should be independent. Need to be separated from EC. They just need to be "supported" by the EC and members of RC.
- 1st motion:** Do you agree to create an EC liaison added as an associate editor in the IJSAF Editorial Team? (Favor: 2; **Against 15**; Abstained 5)
- 2nd motion:** Having an EC representative added as liaison to the IJSAF Editorial Team? (**Favor: 9**; Against 6; Abstained 7)
8. Incoming EC members: Self-introduction
 9. Recognition given to outgoing President, Secretary/Treasurer and EC members

Nominees to the junior EC seat

We are excited about the very good response to our call for nominees to the junior scholar EC position. Eight highly qualified scholars accepted the nomination to stand for election to the position:

Clàudia Cerda Becker is a PhD scholar at the at Friedrich Schiller Universität, Jena on the topic “Precariousness in the agro-export sector in Chile and Brazil”. Becker has a background as psychologist, a master in Anthropology and Development and in Sociology and have worked as a public official and in NGO.

Matt Comi is a PhD student in sociology at the University of Kansas (KU). His research uses qualitative methods to explore social relationships between agricultural practitioners and materials. Comi has recently published “The right hybrid for every acre” (Sociologia Ruralis) and is an active participant in the scholarly community.

Renée van Dis is a PhD student at the Laboratory for Interdisciplinary Science, Innovation and Society (LISIS) in France, on interactive innovation for sustainable agriculture. She holds a MSc in agroecology a master in sociology. She coordinated the organisation of regional multi-actor conferences on agroecology, and coordinated and contributed to the FAO’s agroecology workplan. She has also been lead author of various reports of The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) for agriculture and food.

Midori Hiraga holds a fresh PhD in Economics from Kyoto University, Japan, and MSc in Food and Nutrition Policy from City University London, UK. Her research interests cover from Japan transforming vegetable oils into everyday foodstuff, to the developing trajectory of the global vegetable oil complex and its influence on today's world. Her recent works include publication of “Financialization in Japanese Agri-food Regimes: Uncovering the Role of Sogo-shosha in Global Soy Investment” (in Bjorkhaug et al. eds 2018), and award of David Burch Prize (Agri-Food Research Network in 2015). She is also active in civil society and has networks with food and agricultural movements in Japan.

Manka Sheila Ngoh is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology, School of Social Sciences, Faculty of Humanities, North-West University, Republic of South Africa. She is currently working on “Food and consumption patterns of selected communities in South Africa and Cameroon: A Sociological study”. Ngoh is passionate about research in the areas of the Sociology of Food, Social problems, Sociology of development and Sociology of gender and is a reviewer for the International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food (IJSAF).

Eleonora Noia is a PhD Scholar at the University of the Sacred Heart in Milan, Department of Sociology on the topic of farmer agriculture, studying in depth the system of practices, and the networks that are developing around these practices, linking life and work and re-meaning the relation between production and consumption. She has studied the participation in rural associations in terms of the social movements, with the hypothesis that the “back-to-the-land” phenomenon influences the social participation in the rural areas.

Rike Stotten holds a PhD in Sociology and is a postdoc researcher in the group of rural sociology and lecturer in rural sociology at the University of Innsbruck. Stotten. Stotten has been investigating landscape perceptions among Swiss farmers with reflexive photography methods and methods of visual sociology and qualitative social research. She is currently looking on issues of farm resilience, community resilience, landscape perception, values-based supply chains and visual sociology.

Anelyse Weiler is a PhD Candidate in Sociology at the University of Toronto and a 2015 Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation Scholar. Her research and teaching focus on the conditions under which food and agrarian livelihoods can bolster human and ecological thriving, with a particular emphasis on migrant farm worker programs. She has published in journals such as Antipode, International Migration, Journal of Agrarian Change, Journal of Latin American Studies, and Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development.

Votes were quite evenly distributed, however Midori Hiraga received most votes. We congratulate her on the result and welcome her the EC in the period 2019-2022.

RC40 Executive Council (2018-2020)

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