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Sociology of
Agriculture and Food

Call for Papers

ISA RC40 Mini-Conference

Leipzig, Germany
October 20-21, 2022

The Food System in the (Post-)Pandemic World: Disruptions, Vulnerability, Resilience, and Alternatives

The COVID-19 pandemic has once again illuminated multiple flaws in our food system. Food supplies largely rely on long-distance food chains, many of which have been disrupted due to lockdowns and trade restrictions. The pandemic has left millions of people temporarily or permanently more food insecure, as they have lost income sources and are suffering from a pandemic-induced global recession. COVID-19 has sharply exposed the vulnerabilities of capitalist-industrial agri-food relations, and has significantly intensified them. At the same time, we have also seen that agri-food relations can be resilient, as people have experienced new forms of solidarity. The scope, depth, and intensity of current agri-food related problems - as well as the continuous search for alternatives - require us to reconsider the major themes of the sociology of agriculture and food: the globalization of agri-food; the reconfiguration of socio-ecological linkages between agri-food and nature; the politics of agriculture and food; and the methodological and theoretical ways we make sense of these within agri-food scholarship.

This RC40 mini-conference aims to revisit these themes with a specific focus on what the pandemic has revealed about them. The mini-conference welcomes contributions that engage with, but are not limited to, the following questions:

- How has the pandemic affected agri-food relationships, what kinds of disruptions have we observed, and what are the implications for power relations and existing inequalities? How has the pandemic affected people's access to food, agricultural working environments, agricultural production, or climatic and ecological conditions across different contexts?
- What vulnerabilities have emerged during the pandemic, for example, due to various COVID-19 restrictions and political measures, different forms of pandemic governance, changing power balances between food system actors, or financial and economic, and social stresses? How have people tried to cope with these vulnerabilities?

- What new forms of resiliency have been emerging out of the pandemic situation? What creative solutions have people developed in the face of the pandemic, and what forms of resistance has the pandemic spurred? What can we learn from these resiliencies and resistances for working towards alternative food systems, and the imagination of different agri-food relationships in a (post-)pandemic world?
- How can we make sense of the complexity of agri-food relationships during the pandemic? What methodological and theoretical challenges have we encountered, what new concepts and methods have emerged, and how can we address and integrate these within the sociology of agriculture and food and critical agri-food studies?

Format:

The conference will take place at the Research Center Global Dynamics at Leipzig University in Leipzig, Germany, from 20-21 October 2022.

We are planning to organize the mini-conference as an intellectually stimulating in-person two-day event. In the tradition of RC40, ample time will be dedicated to discussion and debate allowing us to integrate varied theoretical frames, problem definitions, and empirical observations across scales and geographies. The organizing committee aims for diversity in terms of research areas, subjects, geographical focus, and participant profiles. We plan to publish the conference results as an edited book or a Special Issue of a scientific journal.

There is no conference fee, but registration is required. The organizers will provide coffee breaks and lunch during the conference days, and a conference dinner for all participants. Depending on needs, we can also support travel costs and accommodation. In order to allocate our limited funds in a meaningful way, please fill in the submission form below.

Please submit your abstract of no more than 300 words here: <https://forms.gle/iy3srE1GmyRrBMQLA>

Key Dates:

- 1 May 2022 : Deadline for abstract submissions
- 30 May 2022 : Announcement of accepted abstracts
- 15 June 2022 : Deadline for confirmation of attendance
- 1 July 2022 : Announcement of the Mini-Conference programme
- 20-21 October 2022: Mini-Conference Days

Organizing Committee Members (in alphabetical order): Hilde Bjørkhaug, Atakan Büke, Moritz Dolinga, José Duarte Ribeiro, Sarah Ruth Sippel. For further questions, please send an email to one of the following email addresses: atakan.bueke@uni-leipzig.de, moritz.dolinga@uni-leipzig.de, jribeiro@ankara.edu.tr

The Research Committee on Sociology of Agriculture and Food (RC40) of the International Sociological Association - <https://www.isa-agrifood.com/> - has been working towards generating and stimulating scientific and public debate on the social

organization of agriculture and the food system since 1978. As a collective informed by diverse critical schools of thought and theoretical frameworks, RC40 tries to create spaces of sustained scholarly dialogue and critical engagements in relation to the intensifying social and ecological problems and challenges shaping the field of agriculture and food. The RC40 “mini-conference” tradition is among the most important of those collaborative spaces of intellectual and scholarly engagement, which has made significant contributions to the sociology of agriculture and food reflected in the edited books as well as special issues and journal articles that came out of the previous mini-conferences. For more information on RC40 and membership please see: <https://www.isa-agrifood.com>

This mini-conference is financially supported by Academics in Solidarity (at Freie Universität Berlin, sponsored by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research), Research Center Global Dynamics and SFB 1199 (Leipzig University), and within the framework of the Philipp Schwartz Initiative of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, funded by the Federal Foreign Office and private foundations. This conference presents opinions of different scholars and does not necessarily reflect the views of Academics in Solidarity, Freie Universität Berlin, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), Research Center Global Dynamics, SFB 1199 or Philipp Schwartz Initiative.