

XIV World Congress of Rural Sociology

Sustainable and Just Rural
Transitions:
Connections and Complexities



Toronto, Canada

August 10-14, 2016

Global environmental changes, shifting resource scarcities, deepening social inequalities, both innovation and crisis in urban centers, and new patterns of voluntary and involuntary migrations are among the conditions and dynamics now shaping the futures of rural places and people. Intensifying and intertwining forces of commodification, industrialization, neoliberalization and globalization over the last several decades have produced uneven and arguably illusory gains, given evidence of the increasingly precarious position of labor and livelihoods throughout the rural world and the widespread distribution of environmental harm and ecological degradation. Within these general patterns and trends, circumstances can vary greatly across rural contexts within and between continents.

Rigorous analysis of the interconnected challenges now experienced by rural people and places, as well as comprehensive assessment of the proposed solutions and diverse experiments now underway will increase our understanding of the pathways which may be open, blocked or yet to be created for movement towards more sustainable and just rural futures. Sociologists and other social scientists addressing rural concerns play indispensable roles in identifying, analyzing and assessing the forms and consequences—both intended and unintended—of the diverse transition aspirations and experiences of rural people and places.



We invite session submissions that invoke the overarching theme of the XIV World Congress of Rural Sociology: **the connections and complexities shaping the prospects for sustainable and just rural transitions in the present era of crisis and change.** Submissions drawing on one or more of the following sub-themes and linked to the overarching theme are encouraged.



The program committee will consider other thematic proposals, in light of potential links to the broad Congress theme of sustainable and just rural transitions.

- Peasantries in a changing world
- Food & nutrition security
- Seed systems and intellectual property
- Neo-productivism in agriculture
- Concentration in the agrifood sector
- Land grabs and concentration of land
- The new face of multi-functionality
- Alternative and civic agrifood networks
- Challenges & potential of family-farming
- Water security & politics
- Climate change impacts & responses
- Contested Sustainability Discourses
- Indigenous knowledge and innovation
- The “new enclosures”
- Rural health disparities and solutions
- Changing rural mobilities & immobilities
- Food justice & food sovereignty movements
- Youth marginalization and empowerment
- Challenges and opportunities in the bio-economy
- Collaborative consumption & “new economies”
- Digital & virtual rural communities & networks
- Financialization & patterns of rural economic crisis
- Rural disaster planning, impacts & resilience
- Rural social movements, politics and organizing
- Gendered dimensions of farming and food
- Rural labor, livelihoods and labor markets
- Transition initiatives & impacts at multiple scales
- Original people, resistance and transitions
- Rural gentrification & countryside consumption
- Extractive economies and energy transitions
- Rural aging & the “graying” of rural spaces
- Multiple scale governance, politics & well-being

The XIV World Congress of Rural Sociology encourages interdisciplinary dialogue, exchange and collaboration in order to enhance the contributions and applications of sociological inquiry for understanding and improving the life conditions and experiences of people located in, identified with, and concerned about, rural places and communities worldwide. The program for the Congress will include keynote lectures by invited speakers who will provide fresh, integrative insights and challenges for rural sociological inquiry and practice. It will also include varied opportunities and venues for participants to present results of their research and engage with other scholars and practitioners from around the world, within traditional paper sessions, thematic panel discussions or debates, roundtables, workshops or performances.

XIV WCRS Program Committee

Clare Hinrichs and Phil Mount, Co-Chairs; Colin Anderson; Carmen Bain; Hilde Bjørkhaug; Doug Constance; Maria Fonte; Vaughan Higgins; Diego Piñeiro