

## **Ethnographing Labour in Large-Scale Agriculture Renewed Social Histories, between Work, Migration and Daily Lives**

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The past decade was marked by a new and massive investment phenomenon targeting land. Even if not always successful, thousands of new land acquisitions by private companies, investment funds, states or local elite did take place, and have dramatically extended the area concerned by large-scale agriculture (Borras et al, 2014). Latin America, Africa, South-East Asia and Eastern Europe were the most affected regions, but in the meantime the agricultural models are experiencing rapid transformations (financialization, concentrations) in the Northern countries too (Purseigle et al, 2018).

These phenomena have been widely studied for what they signify concerning the reorganization of international supply chains, the role of states and institutions in the making of the deals, or for their strong impacts on the landscapes. That is to say, for their most spectacular, immediate, and intensively controverted consequences.

This panel aims rather at nurturing the comprehension of large-scale agriculture worldwide by reinserting it in the rural and popular histories. For that purpose, sociological, historical and ethnological insights are needed, as well as a focus on the people who make the big plantation: workers and managers (Peloso, 1999), agricultural engineers and advisers of every types (Brunier, 2016), families, traders, local judges and civil-servants.

Approaching these agricultural – industrial landscapes with the tools of social history and ethnography offers new scientific perspectives, as these spaces have often been studied as exceptional, as closed unities, enclaves. Refusing the enchanted narratives (the plantation as a harmonious community) as well as the miserabilistic ones (for which the relations of power are unilateral, and there is no daily life), we would like to address the coexistence of a variety of contractual forms (Arnoux, Béaur, Varet-Vitu, 2003), labor regimes (Murray Li, 2017) and power relations, gender and ethnic segmentations (Bourgois, 1989), and the diverse ways they are challenged and discussed (Conord, 2018; Burbank, 2004).

This panel aims therefore at documenting popular lives trajectories coming in and out of the estate, exploring the strong human connections between the later and far wider social spaces. The communications should focus on these pathways, but also daily work experiences and negotiations, and the ways of living and inhabiting in the area of the plantation, through wage-work but also petty trade, small-scale agriculture, services to the workers, etc.

This doing, we shall try to identify some common patterns between the experiences lived on different continents. Everywhere, large-scale agriculture forms a very specific, segregated sector among the modern, formal economy and employment market it claims to extend to rural spaces, with specific ways of mobilizing and stabilizing its workforce. It shall thus not be surprising to discover common ways of dealing with the constraints of living and working in these spaces, a result that could inspire further scientific developments.

The two young researchers organizing this panel are PhD students who've been investigating these topics in the recent years. Our interest is also in building a network of colleagues studying the same objects.

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