26th Annual Colloquium
Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems (CSRS)
International Geographical Union (IGU)

Infinite Rural Systems in a Finite Planet: Bridging Gaps towards Sustainability

Santiago—A Veiga—A Ulloa (Galicia), 16-21 July 2018

Over the last two decades, Rural Geography has internalised the issue of sustainability as a core concern of the discipline. However, the ongoing yearly discussions of the IGU CSRS underscore how inherent tensions and contradictions emerge in the challenging and intricate transition of rural systems towards sustainability. In this context, the 26th CSRS Colloquium is specifically intended to focus on bridging some of the gaps raised in the academic debates by offering a consistent set of questions around six selected broad themes. The debates regarding sustainability acknowledge that the Earth is finite, but the existing gaps can be addressed, and examined, through infinite rural systems. We welcome discussion in this respect in Galicia in July 2018.

Despite "system" being a contested term in the social sciences, it frames a body of research that takes into account internal and external interrelationships, embracing social, cultural, political (including planning), environmental and economic issues. Reconciling these broad, but often contradictory themes, is part of the aim of bridging the gaps for the purposes of this CSRS Colloquium. Furthermore, identified gaps to be considered are related to geographical scales; for instance between the global arena (globalisation, world trade arrangements, global and climate change, etc.) and regional and local spaces of adaptation, or contestation. The regulatory spaces of nation-states (with or without devolved institutions) and supra-national structures such as the European Union (EU) interact at multiple scales, resulting in a complex web of inter-relationships. Local engagement appears to be a basic feature in rural societies; doubtless most of the presentations at the 26th CSRS Colloquium will be devoted to interrogating the local scale. This will not detract attention from the other interrelated scales in order to comply with the overall endeavour of bridging the gaps towards sustainability.

This Colloquium particularly welcomes contributions from and about Africa and Latin America, world regions underrepresented by ongoing activities of the IGU CSRS. We welcome presentations and papers in Portuguese and Spanish, which, together with the IGU official languages (English and French), should encourage researchers from across the planet to take part in the sessions to be held in July 2018. Parallel sessions will be designed taking into account the languages and the thematic orientations.

Galicia is a suitable laboratory for bridging the gaps regarding sustainability. Its countryside is highly-innovative and has technologically advanced farming systems, such as the horticultural and dairy industries. These industries have a considerable impact on the environment and must constantly be adapted to the EU's variable Common Agricultural Policy framework. Emerging

food alternative networks co-exist in the same areas as conventional farming, posing constant questions about compatibility and competition. In parallel, significant EU investments have been devoted to the growth of the rural tourism sector, but the economic sustainability of this peak industry is constantly questioned. In spatial terms, many areas are pressured by a significant global touristic flux, such as the Way of Saint James, with hundreds of thousands pilgrims every year. These areas are near to remote and depressed areas where depopulation, ageing and an absence of significant economic activity challenges rural sustainability. The planned fieldwork component of the conference will encompass representative rural systems within Galicia, where ongoing discussions on sustainability will be facilitated.

This information will be available at www.26ruralcolloquium.eu

Six thematic sessions will be held, as follows:

1. Bridging gaps between agri-food networks

Dubois (2010) and Robinson (2004) have commented on how production, distribution, retailing and consumption are structured across the world, proposing the notion of agri-food networks. There is wide consensus that these networks are intricate connections on a global scale, dominated by oligopolies and trans-national companies. In fact, Nestle's (2007) analysis shows the power of the food industry by being able to frame nutrition and health discussions in the United States, which is globally influential. According to Dubois (2010) and Robinson (2004), in the Global South vast areas and many farmers are disconnected from the global agri-food networks, sometimes by systems of subsistence interrelated with the persistence of human hunger. In any case, the domination of these networks by strong and coercive processes such as land grabbing is pervasive. These are particularly relevant in Africa and Latin America (Liberti, 2011); for example, violent dispossession, a case in point being Colombia (Reyes, 2016).

Since the early 2000s academics have identified the emergence of alternative agri-food networks, embracing a wide range of possibilities in production, distribution and consumption: farmers' markets, social farming, organic farming, direct sales, fair trade, protected designations of origin, etc. The commonalities of these networks are that they offer an alternative to the dominant industrial, conventional and bulk agri-food systems (Paül and Haslam McKenzie, 2013). The development of alternative agri-food networks is leading towards profound changes in community self-reliance and natural resource management, reinforcing peasant organisations and challenging the dominant food industry regionally (Altieri and Toledo, 2011). The idea of 'alternativeness' itself is controversial because in most countries what is considered "alternative" it is not new at all. Furthermore, big retailers offer 'alternativeness' in their stores by engaging with organic and fair trade food, amongst other possibilities. In addition, 'alternativeness' is often linked to short supply chains (as opposed to long supply chains dominant in the global arena) but in reality many of these alternative food networks are globalised. In this sense, Morgan (2010) has provoked a discussion on the schism existing between alternative food practices considered (i) "local and green", based on the promotion of agri-food sustainability by reducing carbon emissions related to production and transport; and (ii) "global and fair", promoting an ethical commitment to social justice with regard to poor farmers in the Global South.

This thematic session welcomes contributions around these questions:

- Is there a possible compatibility between "conventional" and "alternative" agri-food networks? Is the discussion itself on this duality unnecessary and irrelevant, somewhat "black and white"?
- Why do the agri-food networks existing between the Global South and North remain unequal and uneven? How can they be managed?
- What are the connections, relations and contradictions between the agri-food networks and human hunger?
- Is there room for non-globalised spaces of production, distribution and consumption? To what extent is there room for innovation in these systems?
- Are alternative food networks really alternative? Who creates these networks and why? How can we assess their sustainability and performance? How can "contradictions" within

alternative food networks (e.g. non-organic protected designations of origin, farmers' markets selling overseas products) be conceptualised and managed?
- How can we bridge the gap between the two big alternative agri-food networks conceptualised by Morgan (2010)?
- Which policies can be implemented to promote sustainable agri-food networks?

2. Bridging gaps between rural (multifunctional?) activities

Multifunctionality is a central concept in rural studies across the world. Although originally somewhat restricted to the plurality of functions being provided by agriculture (Mather et al., 2006; Maier and Shobayashi, 2001), it has been increasingly applied to rural areas embracing all forms of rural activities in transition (Wilson, 2007; Holmes, 2006). Initially the term multifunctionality described the particular evolution experienced in the European Union (EU) context with regard to managing the gigantic Common Agricultural Policy over the last two decades. But analysis of this framework by Holmes (2006) in Australia, and in Brazil by Hoefle (2014), shows how it has been transferred to heterogeneous contexts both in the Global South and the Global North, leading towards contrasting scenarios. Currently, multifunctionality is a construct widely applied to the notion of consumption and commodification of the rural space, but also to the development of tourism and leisure activities and the emergence of environmental protection concerns, devices and policies.

However, multifunctionality has received strong criticism by a wide range of commentators. In the EU, for instance, tourism has been seen as a panacea for rural development under the multifunctional approach, including a model of farm tourism (agri-tourism) where tourism is seen to co-exist and enrich the farm enterprise. Its success remains in question, given that there is a substitution of agricultural activities by tourism. In some cases this includes mass tourism which is not particularly sensitive to the uniqueness of rural environments. See for instance, contributions by Potočnik-Slavič and Schmitz (2013). Similar conclusions arise in Brazil with regard to the conflict between fishing and tourism in coastal rural communities (Hoefle, 2014). As an overall reflection, Woods (2007) has questioned how multifunctionality is used as a smoke screen to conceal public policies which remain highly oriented to productivist farming in the EU.

This thematic session welcomes contributions around these questions:
- What are the connections between different activities in rural systems across the world under the multifunctionality umbrella? Are they compatible and/or do contradictions emerge?
- How can we bridge the gaps between the different rural activities, functions and values under the multifunctionality umbrella?
- What is the real contribution of tourism (in its various forms) to sustainable rural development?
- Is multifunctionality an academic, political and technocratic construction, or can it be observed and ratified in particular rural systems? What is its usefulness?

3. Bridging the gap between conflicting land-uses

Land-use and land-cover change (LULCC) in rural areas is a pivotal indicator of the change being experienced by rural systems. LULCC is both a cause and consequence of many biophysical and socioeconomic transformations: new technologies, changing human activities and values, population growth, planning decisions, climate change, natural hazards, etc. Specific LULCCs observed across the globe include, inter alia: forestation and deforestation, the conversion of farmlands into residential allotments, the abandonment of productive areas for conservation, the explosion of crops such as soybeans being used for biodiesel, and the implementation of wind and solar farms. The potential mismatch between these new and emerging land-uses and land-covers often leads towards social and political conflicts at several geographical scales. This thematic session proposes a focussed discussion on rural LULCC under sustainability lenses, especially when bridging the gap seems particularly needed.

A particular situation in conflicting land-uses and land-covers is related to environmental protection devices affecting previous, ongoing and/or new human activities. Dowie (2009) and Zimmerer (2000) have outlined the overall escalation of contentious political and social conflicts

because of the implementation of protection structures such as national parks, biosphere reserves and similar conservation mechanisms. Interestingly, protection devices such as natural parks and reserves can often become a major attractor for tourists, prompting urban development interest despite the limits set for the protection of the natural values. This process has been termed "naturbanisation" by Prados (2009). Analyses of protection devices with regard to LULCC are particularly welcome in this session.

This thematic session welcomes contributions around these questions:

- What rural LULCC monitoring methods have been utilised and what are the observed trends and patterns? How have they been measured? What are the driving forces prompting these changes?
- What are the socio-cultural, economic and environmental implications of rural LULCC?
- What conflicts arise when rural LULCC occurs?
- What are the political and policy responses for rural LULCC?
- What are the LULCCs experienced particularly in protected areas? How do these changes interact with environmental planning and management?

4. Bridging gaps between rural imageries, and the "grim reality"

As noted by Woods (2005: 11), consistent with Halfacree's (1993) essay on defining the rural space, there is a growing consensus that "an area does not become 'rural' because of its economy or population density or other structural characteristics — but because the people who live there or use it think of it as being 'rural'". This statement speaks to the pivotal importance given to representations, imageries and perceptions for understanding how rural systems work, especially in a society highly influenced by mass media. For instance, it has been repeatedly shown that suburbanisation, peri-urbanisation and/or counter-urbanisation as relevant socio-demographic processes experienced in rural areas across the world and which are commonly based on different types of rural idylls. However, often the "grim reality" contradicts these rural idylls and newcomers feel dissatisfied and even enter in conflict with previous rural residents.

Thus, quite frequently the material and immaterial realities do not match, causing a gap that can compromise rural sustainability. There are several cases in point, such as studies developed in Latin America and Africa through the lens of "conservation refugees" perspective as coined by Dowie (2009) which are particularly illustrative. This research has repeatedly observed a pattern by which rural communities consisting of native peoples or poor farmers are expelled because of the triumph of particular biocentric and urban-based ideologies that are converted into mainstream planning and conservation practices. In this sense, the idea of rurality as untouched nature frames the countryside, even if the countryside in itself is not (or has never been) pristine (Zimmerer, 2000). This is evident in very distant countries such as Brazil (Irving et al., 2013) and Spain (Ojeda et al., 2006).

This thematic session welcomes contributions around these questions:

- What are the planning and political implications of the rural idyll?
- How do representations, imageries, imaginations and perceptions of the rural contradict the "grim reality"?
- How can intangible, immaterial and tangible, material sides of rural systems be reconciled? To what extent can the concept of landscape be useful in this reconciliation?
- How can we bridge the gap between urban and rural representations of the rural?
- How can we bridge the gap between the rural understood as farming (productive) space, on the one hand, and as a pristine, natural environment, on the other?

5. Bridging gaps with rural remote, low-density and mountain areas

The specificity of the geographical analysis of rural areas focuses on its spatial dimension. Rural geography has repeatedly shown the heterogeneity of rural systems across the space. It is common that researchers describe a distinction between, on the one hand, rural areas experiencing positive dynamics (i.e. in economic and population terms) and, on the other hand, rural areas subjected to persistent problems. In the latter, for instance, rural flight is still observable, following a pattern that has been occurring across the world since the industrial revolution. In general terms areas from which people leave have been described as being in trouble for decades. Service levels and

infrastructure provision is regularly reported as significantly lower than that available in cities or in other rural areas, despite the development policies that have been applied. For this reason, this thematic session deals with the geography of those rural spaces lagging behind.

There are different ways to refer to these areas. For instance, in the European Union some of the geographical typologies developed by ESPON map precisely those regions considered remote, sparsely populated and mountainous. In bigger countries such as Australia or Canada there is a geographical concept, remoteness, which is generally correlated to low density, fragility, marginalisation and depopulation. In the case of France, Kayser (1990) compared the *campagne vivante* ("countryside alive") to those areas being depopulated and marginalised; more recently, the latter have been labelled as "the more fragile countryside" (Jean and Périgord, 2009) and "weak density areas" (Barthe and Millan, 2011).

This thematic session welcomes contributions around these questions:

- How can we demarcate low-density areas, mountainous areas, remote areas and rural marginal areas? To what extent does the tyranny of distance still apply? How do they overlap? What types of features distinguish them?
- How do we bridge the gap between the rural areas lagging behind and other rural and urban areas?
- What are the possibilities of rural-urban partnerships and governance?
- What are the policies (especially rural development policies) applied in these remote, low-density and/or mountainous areas and why are they commonly perceived as failures?

6. Bridging gaps between urban expansion, and agriculture and open spaces preservation

According to some social scientists, May 23, 2007 marked the date when the proportion of urban population on Earth surpassed rural dwellers, while the UN certified this happened sometime in 2008. One of the obvious consequences of this shift is the need for more physical space for cities, causing urban encroachment where once there were fields, forests and other types of open spaces. Around the world there is a widespread concern about the sustainability of urban expansion as it affects food-producing farmlands, forestry industries and ecosystem services provision by non-urbanised areas. There are particular geographical hotspots, namely in China (Lichtenberg and Ding, 2008).

Peri-urban agriculture is as old as cities, but its promotion and preservation has gained momentum in the last decades in response to new concerns related to the sustainability of food production, and also in regional planning (e.g. green infrastructure provision, open spaces conservation, ecosystem services). Bengston et al. (2004) summarised some of the farmland management tools available in the United States, outlining more than 30 mechanisms for "managing urban growth" or "protecting open-space", connoting them as "two sides of the same coin" (Bengston et al., 2004: 273). In Europe devices such as "agri-parks" or "agricultural parks", absent in other continents, have been developed (Yacamán and Zazo, 2015), echoing the protection mechanisms for natural areas, from national/natural parks to agriculture in peri-urban and non-peri-urban areas. However, it remains questionable to what extent these tools have been effective in avoiding urban intrusion and promoting agriculture and/or forest preservation given the intensity of urban dynamics and pressures. In particular, it seems difficult to guarantee the sustainability of urban areas while, at the same time, maintaining its farmlands and open spaces nearby.

This thematic session welcomes contributions around these questions:

- Is reconciliation possible between urban/metropolitan/spatial/city-region planning and farmlands and rural areas?
- How can agri-ecological infrastructures and frameworks be planned and designed at urban/metropolitan/spatial/city-region scale?
- What organisational tools and partnerships for urban-rural joint policies, ventures and projects have been developed and what is their performance?
- Is environmental protection in peri-urban areas compatible with farmland and rural preservation?

- How can we bridge the gap between the peri-urban farmlands understood as farming (productive) areas, on the one hand, and as green infrastructure/open space conservation, on the other?

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Publications

Authors are invited to submit paper titles and extended abstracts under the themes of the colloquium. They should be submitted to 26ruralcolloquium@gmail.com

All the accepted extended abstracts will be published in a peer-reviewed book that will be available to participants at the beginning of the conference, and for download from the conference website and other relevant websites.

There will be guidelines for the presentation of these extended abstracts, as follows:

- They should be adapted to the template provided by the Organising Committee, available in November 2017 on the website.
- They will not exceed 3,000 words (including references).
- They will contain the following sections: introduction (clearly stating the problem/objective of the paper), theoretical insights, methodology, findings/results, discussion/conclusion and list of references.
- References should be formatted using the Harvard-style within the text.
- Footnotes should be avoided.
- They should include a maximum of four figures (including maps).
- They should be written in one of the following four languages: English, French, Spanish and Portuguese (including the Galician standard). When written in Spanish and Portuguese, they have to include a short abstract (maximum 200 words) in English, adhering to the correct English expression conventions.

With regard to the oral presentations during the colloquium, please take into account that if you use Spanish or Portuguese in your presentations, then you should show your presentation slides in one of the IGU official languages.

In some of the thematic sessions, there is the possibility that papers could be selected for inclusion in special issues of journals listed in SCOPUS/SSCI. Two special issues have already been convened by interested editors. These papers will be peer-reviewed according to the respective journals' guidelines after the conference.

Deadlines

- 15 January 2018: Extended abstracts should be sent, together with the registration form (containing the wish to participate in the fieldtrip and to be eligible for scholarship, if applicable).
- 20 February 2018: Communication of the decision of acceptance, after peer-review. (Decisions can be: accepted, accepted with changes, rejected). Registration payment details will be sent to accepted participants.
- 5 March 2018: Deadline for resending the extended abstracts which peer-reviewers have required editing (accepted with changes).
- 20 March 2018: Communication of the decision of acceptance, after second peer-reviewing. Registration payment details will be sent to accepted participants.
- 30 March 2018: Early bird registration closes (only for those who have their paper accepted). Inclusion of an abstract in the peer-reviewed book of proceedings is dependent upon receipt of the registration fee by 30 March 2018. Fieldtrip participants will need to pay the fee in the early bird registration.
- 1 April 2018: Payment details will be available for late registration. Late registrants are invited to attend the conference but, depending on the program, papers may not be accepted and, if papers are presented, they will not be published.
- 29 June 2018: Late registration closes.

Schedule and Fieldtrip

- 15 July — recommended arrival to Santiago.
- 16 July
    - Morning: Registration. Opening session. Coffee-break. Thematic sessions in parallel. Welcome reception.

- Afternoon: Thematic sessions in parallel (including coffee-break). Walking tour in Santiago (old quarter). Official dinner.

- 17 July
  - Morning: Thematic sessions in parallel (including coffee-break). Round table-homage to Prof Roser Majoral. Closing remarks. Lunch.
  - Afternoon: Fieldwork to areas nearby Santiago, three alternatives being:
    - Herbón (traditional Galician chilly pepper) greenhouses and aquaculture beds.
    - CIAM Mabegondo and Fundación Juana de Vega/Galician School of Landscape (San Pedro de Nós).
    - O Salnés winescapes and wine cellars.
- 18 July
  - Morning: Trip to A Veiga by bus. Stops in Allariz and A Limia. Light lunch en route.
  - Afternoon: Arrival to A Veiga. Thematic sessions in parallel. Short walk around A Veiga before dinner. Dinner.
- 19 July
  - Morning: Walk to the highlands of Galicia (glacier lakes), of medium difficulty. Alternatively, visit by bus to pine forest plantations in O Eixe Range, restored housing and honey development centre. Reception by the Mayor of A Veiga. Light lunch.
  - Afternoon: Thematic sessions in parallel. Dinner.
  - If the night is fine, observation of stars — A Veiga is a ®Starlight Tourist Destination.
- 20 July
  - Morning: Trip to Palas de Rei by bus. Stop in As Ermidas. Stop in Amandi wine producing area (core zone of the Ribera Sacra protected designation of origin). Light lunch.
  - Afternoon: Visit to conventional dairy farming and massive eggs factory, and organic farming producers in A Ulloa district. Dinner.
- 21 July
  - Morning: Walking the Way of Saint James (Camino/Caminho) from Palas to Melide, track of easy difficulty. Alternatively, by bus visit to organic farmers, rural accommodation and Castelo do Pambre heritage building. Light lunch.
  - Afternoon: Trip to Santiago by bus. Stop in some relevant Jacobean milestones en route to Santiago.

The fieldtrip will have a restricted number of participants. Fieldtrip participants will need to confirm in the early bird registration. In the moment of submitting the extended abstract before 15 January 2018, please do express the wish to participate in the fieldtrip and we will make our best to accommodate all the expressions of interest. In any case, acceptance to the fieldtrip will be expressively notified.

Fees

(in €)	Early bird (until 30 March 2018)	Late registration (until 29 June 2018)
Standard	250	350
Standard for students	200	300
Standard including the fieldtrip	600	-
Basic* including the fieldtrip	500	-
Accompanying person for the fieldtrip (sharing standard accommodation)	350	-

The standard fee includes the opportunity to participate in the first two days of the conference, the conference materials, coffee breaks, welcome reception, lunches and dinner listed in the first two days programme, and includes one of the fieldwork options available for the 17th of July. It does not include accommodation.

The fee inclusive of the fieldtrip includes the above mentioned standard fee items, accommodation for 3 nights (18, 19 and 20 of July, including breakfast), plus all the meals and transport for 4 days, as listed in the programme.

* 'Basic' means backpacker-style accommodation, with shared rooms, during the fieldtrip.

Santiago offers a wide list of accommodation options, with more than 120 hotels, ranging from small charming hotels in the historical quarter to new hotels belonging to well-known chains. A full list of accommodation is available at http://www.santiagoturismo.com/aloxamentos-santiagoturismo

The CSRS Chairs offer two scholarships to PhD students of the Global South (UN developing countries) to cover the fees. In addition, accommodation in Santiago (15, 16, 17 and 21 of July) will be included for these two selected PhD candidates. For eligible PhD candidates, when submitting your extended abstract (before 15 January 2018), please express your wish to be considered for one of these scholarships. The Organising and Scientific Committees will assess who is granted the scholarship depending on the quality of their submitted extended abstract.

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Prof TAKENAKA, Katsuyuki |愛知県立大学 = Aichi Prefectural University
Prof THISSEN, Frans | Universiteit van Amsterdam
Ass/Prof TORT, Joan | Universitat de Barcelona
Prof TULLA, Antoni | Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Dr ZAZO, Ana | Universidad del Bío-Bío

Organisation

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