

Proceedings of
Special International Symposium (Online)
- Western Europe-

Theme: Rural Areas in Transition

May 28, 2021

Edited by
Committee of International Affairs
Association of Rural Planning, Japan

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Association of Rural Planning, Japan

Special International Symposium (Online) – Western Europe –

Rural Areas in Transition



Illustrated by Satoshi Asano

May 28, 2021

Concept and Agenda

Symposium Theme: Rural Areas in Transition

1. Concept

In recent years, the world, including rural areas, has been in a transitional period. COVID-19 is said to have accelerated or directed the change. What is happening in rural areas of Western Europe now? The Symposium invites three key speakers from countries that have faced serious challenges and struggled to solve them ahead of time, in order to examine the changing paradigm and look at a new world beyond the change.

2. Date and Agenda

(1) Date: May 28, 2021 (Fri)

(2) Time table

GMT (UK)	CET (Italy & Netherland)	JST (Japan)	(Time) contents
9:30	10:30	17:30	(15 min) Opening (ARP president's opening speech, and introduction of concepts and speakers)
9:45	10:45	17:45	(30 min) Prof. Francesco Di Iacovo, University of Pisa, Italy
10:15	11:15	18:15	(30 min) Prof. Bettina Bock, University of Wageningen & Groningen University, Netherland
10:45	11:45	18:45	(30 min) Prof. Jeremy Phillipson, Centre for Rural Economy, Newcastle University, UK
11:15	12:15	19:15	15 min. break
11:30	12:30	19:30	(60 min) Discussion & Q/A session <ul style="list-style-type: none">Coordinator: Prof. Mikitaro Shobayashi, Gakushuin Women's College, JapanPanelists: All speakers
12:30	13:30	20:30	Closing

Speakers and Coordinator

Speakers

■ Prof. Francesco Di Iacovo, University of Pisa, Italy

Francesco Di Iacovo is Professor of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development at the University of Pisa, Department of Veterinary Sciences, Italy where he is also Director. His research interests are on the multifunctional agriculture and social farming, social innovation and governance, sustainable local development and nature based solutions. He has been involved in action researches with plural actors in rural-urban contexts, facilitating participatory processes in rural development, supporting rural policy development and transitions in multifunctional agriculture and social farming, developing social innovation paths. Scientific Coordinator and member for several National, EU, and international research projects on Social Farming, such as SoFar, COST Action Project on Green Care, on Ecosystem services (Contract 4.0) and on Smart cities (Inhabit).

■ Prof. Bettina B. Bock, Wageningen University, University of Groningen, NL

Bettina B. Bock is Professor of Inclusive Rural Development Wageningen University and professor for population decline and quality of rural life, Groningen University, NL. She is involved in research on the differentiation of the countryside, reflected in counterurbanisation and gentrification as well as population decline and marginalization. She is also interested in the (cultural) urbanisation of rural areas and the changing values around agricultural production as particularly reflected in discussions on animal husbandry and animal welfare.

■ Prof. Jeremy Phillipson, Newcastle University, CRE (Centre for Rural Economy), UK

Jeremy Phillipson is Professor of Rural Development at the Centre for Rural Economy (CRE) at Newcastle University, UK, and Director of the National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise. He has research interests on the development needs of rural economies and fishing communities, processes of expertise exchange within rural development, and on the integration of social and natural sciences in resource management.

Coordinator

■ Prof. Mikitaro Shobayashi, Gakushuin Women's College, Japan

Mikitaro Shobayashi is Professor at Gakushuin Women's College, Japan. With his 25-year working experiences in working for a wide range of public organizations including Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan, the World Bank, and OECD before he joined Gakushuin Women's College in 2007, he is interested in contributing to policy making on efficient allocation of natural and agricultural resources as well as rural development. His professional interests range from multifunctionality of agriculture and its policy and trade implications, agri-environmental policies, agricultural water resources policies, global warming and agriculture, agriculture in emission trading, rural development policy, and agricultural policy system. He was the main author of OECD's reports on multifunctionality of agriculture and its policy implications. After quitting from MAFF in 2007, he has been a member of several governmental committees, including the Planning Committee for Rebuilding the Area Affected by the Earthquake and Tsunami on March 11, 2011, which was established by the Prime Minister.

Program

May 28, 2021 (Fri)

Venue: Online (Zoom webinar)

1. Opening (15 minutes)

Opening speech

Dr. Tomohiro ICHINOSE, Professor, Keio University, President of Association of Rural Planning

Introduction of symposium concept and speakers

Moderator: Dr. Kako INOUE, Associate Professor, University of Miyazaki, Head of Committee of International Affairs, Association of Rural Planning

2. Keynote presentations (30 minutes each)

“Redesigning the farming system supporting local prosperity, the Italian experience”

Prof. Francesco Di Iacovo, University of Pisa, Italy

“Rural vitality and wellbeing – The Dutch case and the EU Long Term Vision for Rural Areas”

Prof. Bettina B. Bock, Wageningen University and University of Groningen, Netherland

“Enabling an Enterprising Countryside”

Prof. Jeremy Phillipson, Newcastle University, CRE (Centre for Rural Economy), UK

Break (15 minutes)

3. Discussion and Q&A session (60 minutes)

Coordinator:

Prof. Mikitaro Shobayashi, Gakushuin Women's College, Japan

Panelists (all speakers):

Prof. Francesco Di Iacovo, University of Pisa, Italy

Prof. Bettina B. Bock, Wageningen University and University of Groningen, Netherland

Prof. Jeremy Phillipson, Newcastle University, CRE (Centre for Rural Economy), UK

Closing

Abstract

■ Prof. Francesco Di Iacovo, University of Pisa, Italy

Title: Redesigning the farming system supporting local prosperity, the Italian experience

Abstract

We are experiencing challenging time where most of the traditional routines, way of thinking, mainframes and operational activities, are under discussion, both at global and local level. The farming system -as well as rural areas- is part of this process of change due to different constraints. The concept of farming system itself is under re-elaboration. Farming system links physical, human and cultural resources, main socio-economic trends, household organization into organizational solutions and management at farm level. From subsistence farm to commercial ones, today the farming system is incorporating new tensions named resiliency to stresses, social and environmental sustainability for both local and global society. On the one side, farming system it's still marketed oriented although the market is not always able to recognize all existing needs, challenges and scarcities, not only with regards to food production, but also in relation with environmental and societal issues. On the other side the capability to reorganize the farming system in the perspective of emerging new demands is calling for new – retro-innovative – solutions, alternative public-private-people collaboration, a reorganization of the private-public spheres, the organization of new common perspectives and operational routines. All aspects calling for the incorporation of farm management' choices into a new cultural and organizational envelop organized at local/national level. The presentation, starting from the Italian perspective, aims to reflect on opportunities and threats in redesigning the future farming system in the perspective of local prosperity.

Title: Rural vitality and wellbeing – The Dutch case and the EU Long Term Vision for Rural Areas

Abstract

The Netherlands presents a particular case for rural development, given its small size, high population density and level of urbanisation. However, in this particularity, it reflects a set of problems that many rural areas in other countries will probably face soon.

During the last decades, differentiation is a dominant trend in rural areas, reflected in the significant differences between rural areas in terms of economy and land use, population size and composition, and migration trends.

Population decline is a significant issue for the peripheral rural areas in the Netherlands in the East, North and South of the country. It is undermining the vitality of the rural regions as it often coincides with the closure of services. The effects pose a threat to our society's inclusivity with significantly lower welfare in the peripheral rural areas. In the Netherlands, we use a relatively new tool to measure and monitor broad welfare, including education, employment, health, housing, social cohesion and wellbeing, safety and access to nature. It resonates well among citizens and policymakers as it also recognises the strengths of rural areas, for instance, in terms of safety and social cohesion. The government developed a dashboard, which presents the strong and weak points of different regions and identifies entry points for policy.

At the moment, the government evaluates its policy for the vitalisation of areas struggling with population decline. In the past years, it was up to those regions to cope with the decline of population, ageing, and services closure. Social innovation and the support of citizen initiatives was an important policy measure. Currently, the central government is more ready to invest themselves, as reflected in the recently introduced region deals. The fact that the state depends on the rural areas to produce sustainable energy and mitigate climate change effects plays an important role. For both, access to land is a requirement, whereas land is already so scarce and expensive. This may change the bargaining position of peripheral areas that are less urbanised and have more space. COVID 19 may also play a role in re-evaluating rural areas as the possibility of more urban-to-rural migration is currently heavily debated.

Looking into the main messages of the recently formulated European long term vision of rural areas demonstrates that the Netherlands does, indeed, present an interesting case – which seems extraordinary at first sight, given its population density and level of urbanisation. Yet in many respects, rural development in the Netherlands reflects the potential and challenges of rural areas in Europe in general.

■ Prof. Jeremy Phillipson and Prof Matthew Gorton, Newcastle University, UK

(Centre for Rural Economy and National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise)

Title: Enabling an Enterprising Countryside

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic and government-led measures to mitigate its impact are having widespread effects on rural economies. The pandemic is affecting all aspects of rural society, both directly through its health impacts, but also because of social distancing and other restrictions in place to limit the spread of the disease. We discuss the impacts of the pandemic on rural economies in England, and consider the extent to which COVID-19 represents a strategic inflection point for rural business innovation and the role of rural areas within regional economic policy. Specifically, we consider whether the pandemic will spark a reassessment of the respective roles of large cities and rural areas within economic policy. Through the presentation we introduce the new National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise and its work in understanding and fostering an enterprising countryside.

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