



Call for papers

Rethinking Urban-rural Interactions in China's Agricultural Development: Beyond the Urban Bias?

9th European Conference on Agriculture and
Rural Development in China (ECARDC IX)

Friday 3 – Sunday 5 April 2009

Organiser: Department of East Asian Studies, University
of Leeds and National Institute of Chinese Studies, White
Rose East Asian Centre, UK

Hosted at the University of Leeds, Leeds, UK

Conference theme

China has witnessed remarkable economic growth, unprecedented industrialisation and urbanisation, and dramatic transformations of the urban and rural development landscape since the initiation of the market reforms three decades ago. The impact on the rest of the world has been huge, catching the attention of academics, development practitioners and policy makers worldwide. A large and still growing body of research has been devoted to investigate and understand China's phenomenal growth and its broader implications, while relatively less effort has been dedicated to critically analyse and reflect on the many dilemmas of rapid growth and drastic societal change, including particularly the ever widening urban-rural inequalities that have in many ways overlapped with inter- and intra-regional disparities, and separated urban and rural societies in all conceivable dimensions. The challenges that this poses to the realisation of the larger development vision – the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), at both the global and national

level – the promotion of human well-being and the widening of the choices and freedoms for all Chinese citizens, have yet to be fully confronted.

Following the 16th and 17th CCP National Congresses convened in 2002 and 2007 respectively, the current Chinese leadership has given high priority to effectively address the serious human development challenges. Official discourses have begun to de-emphasise the exclusive pursuit of GDP growth and now also attach importance to social security and welfare; equity, social justice and redistribution of resources between different sectors, regions and social groups; sustainability, and equal sharing of development benefits by the Chinese people; represented in such discourses and campaigns as ‘building a harmonious society’, ‘upholding the “scientific development view”’, ‘people-centred and balanced development’ and ‘industry subsidising agriculture’, and since 2006 the ‘construction of the new socialist countryside’ movement. New policy initiatives introduced in 2007 involve piloting in Chengdu and Chongqing of an urban-rural integrated development programme, and various social protection schemes for rural-urban migrants across the country. Yet we may only be able to glean the gravity of the problems and the daunting nature of the tasks of integrating urban-rural development from the provisional official timetable: full integration of urban and rural social welfare, for instance, is currently scheduled for 2020. Whether this timescale is realistic is probably less important than the longer-term effects of the new policies.

Against this backdrop and in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the historical turning point in China’s modern history – the 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th CCP Central Committee, ECARDC IX has launched the conference theme – **Rethinking urban-rural interactions in China’s agricultural development: Beyond the urban bias?** We invite Chinese indigenous academics and international scholars, development practitioners and those from diverse policy arenas to contribute thoughts, papers and panels around the broad theme as stated above. The wider aim and objectives of the conference involve not only a critical reflection on and rethink of China’s recent development trajectories entailing development strategies, policies and outcomes, but also, on a historical and contemporary basis to compare with developed and other developing countries and regions of the world, consider similarities and differences with regard to the urban-rural divide or integration, the lessons that China can learn from such a comparison, and what contributions that the Chinese experiences can make, theoretically, methodologically and empirically, to our understanding and knowledge of processes of development and change and what effects this can create on development policy and practice within China and beyond.

Topics under this broad conference theme may include the following:

- 1) Exploring theoretical and methodological approaches to understanding urban-rural relations and interactions, as well as their policy implications for urban-rural integration in China;
- 2) Historical experiences of agricultural and rural development in China and beyond;
- 3) Examining and comparing the differences and similarities of agricultural and rural development, industrialisation and urbanisation processes, and the dynamics of urban-rural interactions in the Chinese Mainland, Taiwan and Hong Kong, and the rest of the world and mutual lessons to be learned;
- 4) Charting and comparing the various aspects in respect of the complexities, diversity and dynamics of the urban-rural 'divide' or 'integration' across time and space in China drawing on empirical evidence;
- 5) Exploring the theoretical, methodological, empirical and policy relevance of a risk perspective on agricultural and rural development or urban-rural integration;
- 6) Globalisation and its impact on local processes in China's agricultural and rural development;
- 7) Examining the institutional and social contexts where urban-rural differences have been sustained, reproduced or reshaped in respect of resources and their (re)distribution, rights and entitlements, fiscal reforms, policies and practice; kinship, family, marriage and gender relations;
- 8) Livelihoods, rural-urban and rural-rural migration and linkages, rural entrepreneurship, social capital, and social networks and connections in China.

When addressing the above topics, you may wish to discuss their specific aspects, for example, the market (of commodities, labour, credit and finance, property rights, ownership,), the state (e.g. democratisation, civil society, governance, fiscal systems), society (e.g. poverty, inequality, social exclusion/inclusion, social support mechanisms, community organisation and participation), culture (e.g. changing values, norms and social practices, consumerism, discourse and power, shifting identities), technology (e.g. emerging forms of agriculture, including hi-tech farming, agro-industries, agro-businesses, skills development, scale, investment, extension and innovation, as well as commercial integration), environment (e.g. environmental degradation and the impact on farming practices, ecologically sustainable farming and diversified management, organic agriculture and green products), social risk (e.g., its social context and public policy relevance, risk regulation and management regimes, and perceptions of and responses to societal and environmental risks), and the impact of climate change.

About ECARDC

ECARDC was established in 1989 by concerned European scholars and development practitioners to create a forum for exchanging research findings on agriculture and rural development in China, which was by then rapidly changing on a scale unprecedented in history. With currently over 150 members from China, other Asian countries, the various European Union member states, the USA, Australia and other developed and developing countries, ECARDC can rightfully be termed an influential world scholarly event as well as a major academic community and network focusing on China's development in general, and agricultural and rural development in particular. Successful and well-attended ECARDC conferences were held in Aarhus (Denmark), Leiden (The Netherlands), Manchester (UK), Paris (France), Giessen (Germany), Greenwich (UK) and Yiwu (China). The next ECARDC will be hosted by the University of Leeds/National Institute of Chinese Studies, White Rose East Asian Centre in the UK. We hope to welcome and meet you all in Leeds in April 2009!

Panel and/or paper proposals

It is possible to present an individual paper, or to propose a panel with several participants. We welcome any paper or panel proposal that touches on the theme of ECARDC IX: **Urban-rural integration** (in brief) dealing with one or more of the above topics.

Confirmed keynote speakers

Prof. Norman Long, Wageningen University, The Netherlands (Author of *Development Sociology. Actor Perspectives*, Routledge, London and New York, 2001; *Anthropology, Development and Modernities: Exploring Discourses, Counter-Tendencies and Violence*, Routledge, London and New York, 2000; *Battlefields of Knowledge: The Interlocking of Theory and Practice in Social Research and Development*, London and New York: Routledge, 1992, among many other influential works).

Prof. Kuo-Ching Lin, Department of Agricultural Economics, National Taiwan University, Taiwan (Author of *Future Challenges of Sustainable Land Use in Taiwan, New Visions and Directions of Taiwanese Agriculture and Agricultural Policy, Agricultural Land Policy Reform in Taiwan*, among many other publications).

Registration

Participants who wish to present a paper and/or organise a panel must submit a paper and/or panel abstract (max. 300 words) **by 1 July 2008**. Participants will be notified of acceptance **by 15 July 2008**, and must confirm participation **by 20 August 2008** to the **conference coordinator** (see the **Organising Committee** below for contact details). **Participants who want to take part in the conference, but do not wish to present a paper** are also kindly asked to register **by 1 July 2008**. For registration, fill the form which is downloadable from the ECARDC website (www.ecardc.org), and send it back to the **conference coordinator** by e-mail.

Full conference papers and presentations

The full papers must be submitted to the conference organiser by **1 January 2009** so they can be made available for the discussants and other participants in good time. Those who cannot meet this deadline are kindly asked to bring sufficient copies of their papers to distribute to the other participants at the conference. Each individual *presentation* of a paper will be allotted *30 minutes (20 minutes presentation+10 minutes discussion and debate)*.

Publication

ECARDC IX aims to publish a selection of high quality papers as an edited volume or a special issue of a quality refereed journal. *In addition, conference proceedings will be published in Chinese by a reputable publisher in China.* Former conferences have resulted in several edited volumes or special journal issues of selected papers that are well-received in scholarly circles.

Registration and costs

The conference fee is **£70 (appr. €95.00 or RMB1,000.00) per participant and £25 (appr. €35.00 or RMB360.00) student/concession rate**, which includes three lunches and a conference dinner. As funds for ECARDC are limited, participants are expected to cover their expenses themselves. A small number of bursaries are available for paper presenters who come from developing countries or are PhD candidates. Those who are eligible must apply to the conference organiser. We will try to find low-cost hotels for all participants and provide relevant websites and information on accommodation and travel in due course.

Membership and mailing list

You can become a member of ECARDC by emailing to info@ecardc.org with necessary information, e.g. your name, title, institutional affiliation, country and contact details. Your name will then be included in the mailing list, after which you will be automatically updated with the latest news on ECARDC activities, including its biannual conferences, job openings and PhD scholarships, etc.

Organising Committee

Core Contact: Ms. Jenni Rauch, **ECARDC IX Coordinator**, White Rose East Asian Centre, Leeds, UK, Email: j.s.rauch@leeds.ac.uk; Tel: +44 (0)113 343 6774; fax: +44 (0)113 343 6808. **NOTE:** to facilitate organisation of the conference, prospective participants are expected to **write** in the **subject** area of any *email correspondence* to the conference coordinator **ecardc9** followed by the specific nature of your email, e.g. **ecardc9 – panel proposal**, or **ecardc9 – registration**, etc.

Dr Heather Zhang, Department of East Asian Studies, University of Leeds/White Rose East Asian Centre, Leeds, UK

Prof Flemming Christiansen, Department of East Asian Studies, University of Leeds/White Rose East Asian Centre, Leeds, UK

NOTE: Please do **NOT** email any correspondence about ECARDC IX to the ECARDC Secretariat based in University of Groningen, The Netherlands.

Support and funding

ECARDC is supported by the International Institute of Asian Studies (IIAS) of Leiden University, The Netherlands.

Further details about the ECARDC network, including a registration form can be found on its website at www.ecardc.org