



Introduction to the RAESTud 30th Anniversary Special Issue

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In 1984, the French journal *Cahiers d'Économie et Sociologie Rurales* (CESR) published its first issue on the theme of farmers and credit. The following issues did not appear on a regular basis until 1988, when four issues *per* year were published, as it is still the case today. The CESR also began to publish book reviews in 1993.

The journal's originality lies in its disciplinary editorial policy, publishing articles in both economics and sociology. While this can sometimes be challenging, it has been a success and gives the reader access to different points of view on certain topics.

Thirty years on, and the French journal is still here. We would like to take the opportunity of this 30th anniversary special issue to thank all the editors who established the journal and enabled it to survive, and in particular Carl Gaigné for giving it a new lease of life in 2008. We also express our sincere gratitude to the Economics and Sociology Division of INRA who consistently financially supported the journal and made various changes possible.

Among the various changes made to the journal over the 30 years, we should mention its internationalisation. The first article in English appeared in 1994, with David Colman addressing optimal levels of conservation land use. From then on, one or two articles in English were published in each issue. Since 2006, French authors have also begun to write in English. The CESR took a truly international turn in 2008. Under the instigation of the new editors-in-chief, Carl Gaigné and Anne Lhuissier, the journal was renamed the *Revue d'Études en Agriculture et Environnement* and translated into English as the *Review of Agricultural and Environmental Studies*, abbreviated to *RAEStud*. An international scientific committee was created. This year, to ensure its position in the international community, *RAEStud* aims exclusively to publish articles written in English.

The aim of this special issue was to reflect on the research development in the disciplines it covers, namely economics and sociology applied to agriculture, the environment, food and rural areas, since the journal was first

established. We asked several authors to write an article on the various themes, and we are proud to present this issue comprising four articles in sociology and four in economics. We would like to give our warm thanks to all our contributors for accepting the challenge and giving their thoughts on the research developments in their fields. We would particularly like to thank the authors who coordinated the articles in economics: Cathie Laroche Dupraz, Vincent Martinet, Louis-Georges Soler and Alban Thomas. We also thank our associate editors, Christophe Giraud, Xavier Irz and Céline Nauges, as well as Ronan Le Velly (book review editor) for their help in coordinating this issue.

The issue begins with four articles in sociology. In the first, Alan Warde gives a personal reflection on the development of the sociology of eating over the previous thirty years. He considers eating as a form of cultural consumption and discusses alternative approaches to its analysis. His article focuses on sociological explanations of continuity and change and the role of institutions, routines and practices. The next three articles differ slightly from Alan Warde's contribution - written in a less personal tone, their main objective is instead to give an account of what occurred more specifically in French sociology over the last 30 years, given that this also reflects debates at the international level. In the second article, Jacqueline Candau and Valérie Deldrève provide a retrospective of environmental sociology in France (1984-2014) and show how the research field's tentative emergence was followed by its gradual recognition and visibility from the early 2000s. They emphasise the shift that occurred in the sociological field in the 1980s and 90s, from relationships with nature to the advent of the notion of environment. In doing so, they give a reflective account of this process as well as highlighting the controversies and tensions that are still at stake. The third paper echoes Jacqueline Candau and Valérie Deldrève's contribution; Philippe Perrier-Cornet addresses the question of social science studies of rural areas and worlds. He starts by providing a brief summary of the main factual elements of the countryside's socioeconomic modifications. He then focuses on the shifts of paradigms in economics and sociology and for the latter, he emphasises the move away from "traditional" rural sociology with the integration of environmental issues and the revival of the sociology of rural worlds. The final article on sociological contributions in this special issue addresses the topic of agricultural worlds. Bertrand Hervieu and François Purseigle show that what could be called the French school of rural sociology has been structured around four themes over the last four decades: rural exodus, social change and innovation, working and living conditions and professions, and alternative agribusiness systems. The authors give an overview of the main studies and debates and analyse the principal changes that occurred in each of these topics. In their concluding section, they formulate perspectives to understand the splintering and coexistence of new forms of production organisation and agricultural trade in the context of globalisation.

The four remaining articles are in economics. In the first, Carl Gaigné, Cathie Laroche Dupraz and Alan Matthews reflect on the development of

research into international trade and food products. They suggest some future issues to tackle climate change, biofuel policies and food security. They point out that the availability of firm-level trade data provides new opportunities to improve our frameworks to analyse the causes and effects of international trade in agricultural and food products as well as trade policies. In the second article, Alain Carpentier, Alexandre Gohin, Paolo Sckokai and Alban Thomas explain the research developments in the economic modelling of agricultural production. They specifically focus on the role of markets and international trade, structural and dynamic aspects of production, environmental impacts of production decisions and risk issues. They recommend efforts to be made in terms of constructing databases with available, detailed and reliable data to accompany the methodological developments in this field. In the third article, Philippe Bontems, Vincent Martinet, Gilles Rotillon and Cees Withagen discuss the link between agricultural economics and environmental and natural resource economics, using the examples of the resource curse, sustainable development and the green paradox. The authors suggest that interactions between the two fields (agricultural economics and environmental and natural resource economics) are likely to increase in the future, one area of potentially fruitful interaction being the overexploitation of soil's productive capacity. In the fourth economics article, Xavier Irz, Mario Mazzocchi, Vincent Réquillart and Louis-Georges Soler present an overview of the evolution of research on food economics, focusing on the changes affecting the formation of retail food prices, the differentiation of goods exchanged on food markets, consumer trust and diet-related chronic diseases. The authors point out the large array of research opportunities that have been triggered by the availability of scanner data on household purchases and made possible by the development of hypothetical methods.

All eight articles highlight the strong contributions of European researchers in the advances of research in economics and sociology in the fields of agriculture, the environment, food and rural areas. They all expect challenging years ahead in terms of methodological developments and issues to address. A common thread running through almost all of the articles is the relationship between agriculture and the environment or nature. It has played a large part in research developments in the past and will be central to the future concerns that research will have to take into consideration.

We hope you enjoy this special issue. Long live *RAEStud*!