



Editorial Office: c/o International Development Studies Program
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Call for papers

A workshop on

Biofuels, Land and Agrarian Change

The Journal of Peasant Studies (*JPS*), in collaboration with the International Development Studies (IDS) Program at Saint Mary's University, is organizing a global academic workshop on '**Biofuels, Land and Agrarian Change**', to be held 16-17 October 2009 at Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

The recent convergence of food, fuel, finance and environmental crises has far-reaching implications for the lives and livelihoods of poor people in the countryside of the global South and North. It has aggravated, and will aggravate, the already precarious conditions of the rural poor and the problematic condition of the agriculture sector. By 2008, three out of four poor people are rural poor. To date, there are a billion people living in hunger, despite technological advancement in food production and dramatic increases in the volume of global food trade. At the height of the recent food price crisis, the FAO announced that in order to meet the growing global food need, food production would need to double by 2050. Much of this needed increase would have to happen in developing countries where majority of the world's rural poor live and where 95 per cent of the estimated population increase during this period is expected to occur. One-third of the total carbon emission in the world comes from the (industrial) agriculture sector.

Despite numerous workshops and conferences on the food crisis in particular, which also in some ways address the issue of biofuels, we feel there is a need for a distinct 'energy crisis/biofuels-focused' academic workshop. It is our belief that the energy crisis and the question of biofuels is a strategic issue that, while linked to the issue of food, has its distinct importance in the context of peasants and agrarian change. We are not alone in this assumption. There are several research initiatives today that attempt to deepen understanding of the energy crisis and biofuels and their implications for the peasantry and agrarian change worldwide. Many of the earliest research initiatives and studies have come from agrarian and environment-oriented research think tanks, NGOs and social movements, whose efforts have been crucial in offering a critical perspective on the biofuels boom. By contrast, that section of the academic community working on critical perspectives has been relatively slow to respond on this research front, but it is catching up. Scientific research initiatives are underway and initial academic write-ups and publications are starting to come out.

It is at this juncture and in particular context that ***The Journal of Peasant Studies*** and the IDS Program of Saint Mary's University are joining forces to organize a workshop on: '**Biofuels, Land and Agrarian Change**'. The main purpose of the workshop is to provide an academic venue to bring together scholars and researchers who have completed or are completing theoretical, policy-oriented and/or empirical studies on the *politics* of biofuels, land and agrarian change. By doing so, we hope to be able to contribute to ongoing theoretical, policy-oriented and political discussions about biofuels and its implications for peasants and agrarian change by deepening and sharpening the debates, stretching the boundaries of our knowledge on the issue, and identifying further research frontiers.

The particular focus of the workshop will be on the *politics* of biofuels, land and agrarian change. Papers to be presented at the workshop will cover topics including: biofuels and land use change, biofuels and land (re)distribution and (re)allocation change, biofuels and land property rights change, biofuels/land use/allocation/property rights changes and their impact on peasant production/food/subsistence/livelihoods, politics of policymaking around biofuels and land/peasant production, struggles around biofuels/land by communities/social movements, among others.

In deciding to invite or accept papers, we will use the main objectives of ***The Journal of Peasant Studies*** as a general guide:

The Journal of Peasant Studies will provoke and promote critical thinking about social structures, institutions, actors and processes of change in and in relation to the rural world. It will encourage inquiry into how agrarian power relations between classes and other social groups are created, understood, contested and transformed. ***The Journal*** pays special attention to questions of 'agency' of marginalized groups in agrarian societies, particularly their autonomy and capacity to interpret – and change – their conditions. ***The Journal*** promotes theoretical and empirical contributions that question mainstream prescriptions or interrogate orthodoxies in radical thinking.

We will invite or accept papers that offer rigorous analysis of the identified issues from various critical perspectives including agrarian political economy, political sociology and political ecology. We encourage systematic comparative studies. We also encourage analytical 'state of the art' survey articles on the key themes identified.

The deadline for the Call for Papers is 31 July 2009. Please submit abstracts to jpsworkshop@gmail.com. We will be able to provide travel and accommodation fund support only to a handful keynote speakers.

Some papers presented at the workshop will be selected and considered for publication in ***The Journal of Peasant Studies***.

Organizers:

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For further information, or for submitting abstracts, please email: jpsworkshop@gmail.com.