

ASIAN RURAL SOCIOLOGY IV

*“The Multidimensionality of Economy,
Energy and Environmental Crises and
their Implications for Rural Livelihoods”*



Asian Rural Sociology Association
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“The Multidimensionality of Economy, Energy and Environmental Crises and their Implications for Rural Livelihoods”

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FOREWORD

The Asian Rural Sociology Association (ARSA) was formed in 1992 by a group of Asian who participated in the World Congress of International Rural Sociology Association (IRSA). The formation of ARSA was deemed necessary to cultivate the development of rural sociology as a science; extend the possible application of results of scientific inquiry to the improvement of the quality of rural life; and, exchange and generate meaningful scientific founding for the rural development of Asia.

ARSA regularly holds its International Conferences to provide a forum for its members and other interested individuals to share recent developments in rural sociology, and tackle issues and concerns that revolved around rural sociology in Asia. ARSA has already organized three International Conferences. The 1st International Conference was held in Kasetsart University, Thailand in 1999 with the theme “Globalization and Rural Social Change”. The 2nd International Conference was organized with the theme “Prospects of Asian Rural Sociology for the 21st Century” and was held in Indonesia in 2004. The 3rd International Conference was held in Sanhe, China in 2007 with the theme “Competitiveness and Human Insecurity in Rural Asia”.

For the fourth time, ARSA organized the International Conference on September 7-10, 2010 at the Bicol University, Legapzi City, Philippines with the theme “The Multidimensionality of Economy, Energy and Environmental Crises and their Implications to the Rural Livelihoods”. The 4th International Conference served as a forum to: a) share experiences in implementing innovative rural development programs in response to the energy, economic and environmental crises in Asia; b) discuss the role of rural sociology in the energy, economy and environmental discourses; and, c) discuss the climate change issues and their impacts to the rural livelihoods.

The Conference was organized into plenary/keynote presentation, and parallel/simultaneous paper presentations that revolved around the subthemes, namely: innovative rural development programs in response to energy, economic and environmental crises; locating rural sociology in energy, economic and environmental discourses; and climate change issues and their impacts to rural livelihoods.

The keynote and parallel presentations indicated that the Asian rural society has to deal with social, economic, political and cultural issues brought about by modernization towards the 21st century. While some developed countries in Asia, such as Japan and Korea, have resolved the agrarian-related issues and concerns, their rural societies are now confronted with aging and declining population. These issues bring us to the questioning of the reproducibility of rural society under the project of modernity, on the one hand, and the beginning of a new life under the post-modern period, on the other. Thus, the recent developments now are along the areas of retirement farming, citizen farming, the birth of a producer, among others.

Meanwhile, the other Asian rural societies which have yet to resolve the agrarian-related issues, focused their initiatives towards achieving economic development either through the conventional methods of production and enhancement of market integration, or pursuing sustainable development endeavors.

The Asian rural society used to be organized along the many variants of social capital. However, these have diminished because of the transformation or shift from the traditional approach to more modern ways of life. Social capital in its modern variant could be tapped to solve conflicts, prevent a disease, enhance the adoption of sustainable agriculture and organic farming, manage natural resources, and many more. Several papers in this conference dwelled along these areas.

Today, the Asian rural society is confronted with a new set of socially-constructed problems such as climate change, disasters, and natural resources management. Relative to these, we have to understand how our consumptive behavior affects our renewable and non-renewable resources to ensure sustainable development. But at the same time, we begin to reconsider the idea that after all, there are relationships between humanity's actions and natural phenomena. This highlights the blurring of boundaries of the physical, biological and social sciences today. Many papers presented in the 4th International Conference attest to this reality.

We hope that this Conference Proceedings will serve as a vehicle to help build the body of knowledge of rural sociology in Asia. May this also inspire not only the rural sociologists, but also other development-oriented individuals to continue the quest for sustainable development in Asian rural societies.

THE EDITORS

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