

## Call for papers

### « Geopolitic of the Rice Boom »

*Les Cahiers d'Outre-Mer*, a journal of the University of Bordeaux

The french journal *Les Cahiers d'Outre-Mer* is launching a call for papers to edit a special issue on the « geopolitic of the rice boom ». The purpose is to explore the patterns of rice through its reconfigurations, its new dynamics and the new issues carried out by the rice sector in the world.

#### Argumentation

Since 1945 the world is going through a period of deep and plural changes at an accelerating pace. As such, the disruption of the rice map is an interesting case study situated at an intersection of many great dynamics. Rice, the most cultivated cereal around the world, is considered as one of the key elements of the food security. However, the 2008 price surge showed the limit of the current system to fulfill this role, leading to interrogation about strategic as productive issues of the green plant in the world. It also led a plurality of actors to multiply initiatives at the core of a « rice boom » we are focusing on at a every analytical scale.

Several transversal entry points are possible (non exhaustive list):

- **Governance on hunger**

Rice is a central part of the construction of technological solutions to the hunger issue, an issue problematised by international institutions after the Second World War. The « Green Revolution » enrolls the dependency of rice culture from the southern countries by the industries of the North. Cereal with the smallest genome, rice is subject to an intense production of improved, hybrids or GMO varieties. Combined with the massive use of agrochemicals, the mecanisation and the spreading of irrigation technology, those varieties could nowadays reach extremely high yields about 10 tons per hectare. However, the adoption of the protocol of the « Green Revolution » is inequal and a deep technological inequality is worsening between countries. Today, the yields are stagnating in the American, European and Asian production areas. The spreading of this technological package meets up with financial issues and availability of natural ressources as in Sub-Saharan Africa. Then what are the perspectives in the future of the « Green Revolution », a technosciences symbol running out of steam in traditionnal rice grower countries and facing deep challenges in the ones aiming to become one ? What are the power issues for the technological control of food production in modern states ? Facing the environmental damages due to intensive agriculture, how does the discourse and narratives of the « Green Revolution » oppose the rising agroecological ones, a worldwide alternative currently gaining support within international institutions ?

- **Back to the hydro-agricultural schemes ?**

Irrigation, a technology controlling water and significantly increasing yield, seems to be back to the forefront particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, in Asia this widely spread technology does not have important margin for growth in particular because of depletion of hydraulic resources and of a steadily increasing pressure on land. In America, countries import rice mainly from the USA, Brazil or Argentina but in much less proportion than African nations import Asian rice. For all, food sovereignty seems to become (again) a national issue. Water for production projects are sources of conflicts linked to divergent interests: conflict of usage, conflict of access to natural resources, power issues at several scales especially when development projects are part of a state spatialization strategy, etc. At a local scale, when the infrastructures are enforced to the users for public use, introducing new technologies such as irrigation within agrarian societies which are not prepared for it encounters inevitably huge obstacles. New peasant strategies emerge from those forced implementations. Which dynamics result from the confrontation between schemes planning and peasantries ? Which kind of governance is emerging on those new territories ?

- **Reshaping the global rice economy**

Thus some states choose to put national production back at the core of an agricultural strategy in order to reduce the dependency generated by the period of structural adjustment plans. In Asia, despite the openness of the main rice exporters economies to international trade, rice production remains a tool of political economy to maintain social peace before being a national specialization considered as a comparative advantage. This indirectly calls for questioning the dominant ideology of liberalism and illustrates debates opposing its partisans and the ones considering the global market unable to secure the food of the poorest countries. The liberalization of economies also comes along with integration to international market of the rural and peasant households of even the poorest countries. Those families become subjects of new global dynamics such as land or production grabbing, dynamics going along with the development of the outgrowing agriculture, the enclosing processes or the globalization of the food and climate risks. Then it is legitimate to question about the impacts, positive as negative, that can cause this new configuration of rice production on populations and environments.

## **Bibliography**

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### **Procedure for paper submission**

Full article (50 000 signs max.) or abstract (3000 words max.) are expected before the 1rst of June 2016.

Full article of the selected abstracts are expected before the 1rst of October 2016.

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