

BICAS conference 2015

The political economy of global and regional agro-food system change

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BICAS research agenda

1. Changes in the BRICS countries:

What are key similarities/differences between the agrarian structures of Brazil, China and South Africa? What are the dynamics of change within these BRICS countries, in relation to the production, circulation and consumption of agricultural commodities?

2. BRICS and MICs in their regions:

What agrarian transformations are underway in Latin America, Southeast Asia and Southern Africa? What is the character of investment and trade relations between BRICS countries and MICs located within these regions, and what kinds of food systems are emerging at the regional level?

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3. Dynamics in the agro-food system:

What are the dynamics of change in patterns of production, circulation and consumption of food, at national, regional and global levels? Is concentration of ownership and control taking place in these value chains, with what effects on investment, production, labour regimes and accumulation?

4. BRICS and MICs in relation to the old hubs of global capital:

What is the role of BRICS and MICs countries in global agro-food systems, and how is this changing? What new sites of contestation are opening up in relation to food production, circulation, consumption, and forms of accumulation in the agro-food sector, and with what possibilities for alternative systems to emerge?

Some wider debates

- Changing relations between global and regional hegemonies, and thus the character of 'imperialism' at present
 - Empire and capital
 - Accumulation by dispossession
 - Characterizing China's rise and trajectory
- The character, causes and consequences of the current global recession (also characterized as a severe 'accumulation crisis' within capitalism)
- Capitalism as ecological regime: the role of primary commodities (including agricultural products) and resource frontiers in processes of capital accumulation and territorial expansion, both past and present.