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Note from the editor

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Note from the editor

Dear reader,

This issue of the *Newsletter* opens up a non-European and non-US approach to Economic Sociology: Brazilian economic sociology. What is all the fuss about Brazil the reader may ask. The answer lies in the five papers that make up the central section of the *Newsletter*.

Economic sociology is very well represented in Brazil through a large number of universities offering lectures courses on these topics. Of course, large universities in big cities in the center of the country are very active in this respect: we could name the University of São Paulo, the Foundation Getulho Vargas in São Paulo and various universities in Rio de Janeiro. Beyond this, there are also lecture courses on this topic in other universities such as the University of Belo Horizonte, the federal University of São Carlos or the Florianopolis' Federal University of Santa Catarina. Here in May 2009 Cécile Raud-Mattedi organized the first Brazilian meeting directed to Economic Sociology (Primeiro Seminário Nacional de Sociologia Econômica). The meeting was a runaway success, with more than seventy presentations, which is a clear indication of the strength of the interest and scholarship in the country.

In the present issue the reader will find a selection of papers written by some leading Brazilian scholars. Ricardo Abramovay and his colleagues from the University of São Paulo consider how social movements and Non Governmental Organizations are shaping unusual market mechanisms, where stakeholders play an important role when corporate social-environmental responsibility is at issue in sectors such as soy, bio-fuel, beef-cattle production, and forestry. John Wilkinson from the Rural Federal University of Rio de Janeiro also considers the agrifood sector, laying emphasis on the role of social movements, social networks and (economic) conventions. Roberto Grün, from the University of São Carlos deals with the relation between financial markets and the government in a period during which important changes at the level of the federal government – President Lula's left-wing government – highlights what he calls "meta-political cultural disputes" over the role played by financial markets in the economy. Glauco Arbix examines in detail the making of laws which aim at promoting innovation in a country which is seeking to promote development as a way out of poverty. Finally, development policies are considered in a paper by Flavio Comin and Maria Cristina Vasconcelos Oliveira, in which they consider how big cities – particularly São Paulo – have a positive effect on economic development, thanks to the concentration of resources but at the expense of large geo-economic inequalities and social backlash (traffic jam, pollution, etc.). In this present issue an overview of the past, present and future of Brazilian economic sociology is missing: Cécile Raud-Mattedi had taken up the idea of writing a paper on this topic, but her untimely and tragic death prevented us from benefiting from her views. Obviously, this set of papers does not pretend to cover all the topics studied by our Brazilian colleagues – issues such as unemployment, migration and social economy will follow in the next issue. We cannot, alas, bring to the reader the flavor of the famous carnival of Rio de Janeiro. But maybe you will get some feeling for the country through the following studies on the functioning of Brazilian economic institutions, and through the innovative and illuminating research on Economic sociology produced by our colleagues.

This issue of the *Newsletter* also follows up on previous numbers. Ken Zimmerman offers a comment on Neil Fligstein's view on the financial crisis, followed by a response from the author, and Antonio Mutti emphasizes the role played by trust in the present turmoil. Then, there is a presentation of a new French journal of interest to socio-economists. Finally, as usual, the reader will find some information on recent PhDs in the domain, and three reviews of recent books.

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