

IRSA - CONGRESSO MUNDIAL DE SOCIOLOGIA RURAL (01/10/2025 A
20/01/2026) - IRSA 34 - DIVERSE TRANSITIONS OF FARMING AND
PEASANTRIES

**REPATTERNING FARMING AND PEASANTRIES: DIGITALIZATION,
AGROECOLOGY, AND RURAL CHANGE IN SOUTHERN ITALY**

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This paper investigates contemporary transitions of farming and peasantries in Southern Italy, focusing on the coexistence and tension between digitalized agribusiness models and agroecological forms of agriculture. Situating the analysis within broader global debates on agricultural modernization, climate change, and rural transformation, the study examines how different farming logics combine with distinct processes of value creation and social reproduction, by digital and agroecological transition.

The research draws on long-term empirical fieldwork conducted in the agrifood districts of Apulia (i.e. Foggia), complemented by more recent observations of wheat, fruit and vegetable production in Sicily supported by agroecological

practices and collective water-management projects developed in response to increasing climatic and environmental pressures. The methodology integrates participant observation, in-depth interviews with farmers, migrant workers, technicians, researchers, trade unionists, and public officials, as well as policy analysis and critical literature, allowing for a historically grounded and politically informed interpretation of ongoing agrarian changes.

The findings reveal the emergence of plural and hybrid agrarian trajectories. Digitalization and industrialized agriculture concentrate capital and knowledge, reshape labor practices, and integrate farms into global value chains. Agroecological and peasant-based practices, by contrast, sustain local livelihoods, preserve communal and ecological knowledge, and experiment with alternative economic arrangements, yet remain exposed to market pressures, environmental stress, and internal community tensions.

These coexisting logics do not produce a uniform trajectory but a repatterning of rural life, where diverse models of production, labor, and value creation interact, conflict, and occasionally reinforce each other. While some trajectories reproduce new forms of green agrarian extractivism, others open fragile yet meaningful possibilities for more resilient, equitable, and environmentally sustainable rural futures.

Palavras-chave: transitions of farming; peasantries; digital agriculture; agroecology; rural transformation.