

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The idea to prepare an edited book on labor relations in agri-food finds its origins in the long standing tradition of labor studies in the sociology of agriculture and food and the neglect that this theme has received in contemporary research and debates. Broadly speaking, the loss of centrality of this theme is part of that post-modern turn that has shaped the evolution of sociology (and the social sciences and humanities in general) since the 1980s. To be sure, the sociology of agri-food community has not been influenced by post-modern sensitivities as much as other intellectual communities. Yet, it has adopted that general attention to esthetics, image, and personal interpretations that are integral parts of post-modernity. Often not referring to these post-modern roots, the development of analyses that emphasize consumption processes, personal taste and the individual experience of workers and other actors in the increasingly complex agri-food system became dominant. Even structuralist works, such as those associated with the now classical World System Theory and Food Regimes, appear to have been influenced by this intellectual current. It is because of these contributions and the many friends and colleagues that so aptly and generously produced and debated them that we felt that we should pay attention to labor relations. The chapters contained in this volume were originally presented at the XIII World Congress of Rural Sociology that was held in Lisbon, Portugal in July 2012. The sessions on “Labor Relations in Agri-Food,” where the original versions of these chapters were read, were made possible by the work of the Congress organizing and academic committees under the skillful direction of Manuel Belo Moreira. We would like to thank all of those who contributed to the organization of these sessions and, later, to the development of this volume. For a number of reasons, some of the original papers did not appear in the volume while others, that were not part of the original conference, were included. We would like to thank all the authors of these papers for their work and intellectual interaction that ultimately generated the book. We are also thankful to those colleagues who commented on individual chapters and the volume as a whole. In particular, our appreciation goes to Terry Marsden for his insightful comments on the original idea of the book. Terry’s leadership

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