

Analysis of transgenic rice development in China – a social shaping of technology perspective

Abstract

This presentation will discuss rice technology as a complex *socio-technical ensemble* specific to China's context. It looks retrospectively into the *Jinggeng Xizuo* (skill-oriented precision farming) mode of rice technology in the past and its "modern" version which has led to a heated debate about transgenic technology application. The Social Shaping of Technology (SST) perspective is adopted to analyse the socio-technical relationships among key stakeholders and the rice farmers' role in this "modern" version of the *Jinggeng Xizuo* system and the decision making mechanism. It argues that the application of gene technology to the development of rice variety is a part of the continue process of rice technology development in China. The disagreement/controversy surrounding transgenic rice development is merely a manifestation of the fundamental problem of developing a "modern" version of agricultural technology. *Jinggeng Xizuo* could be a suitable model for sustainable development, however only when the rice farmers are put back in the centre of rice technology innovation and the barriers facing key stakeholders are removed.