

Special Session Proposal

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Socioeconomic and environmental impacts of biofuels: Evidence from developing nations

Economic activity and energy demand is expected to increase significantly over the next 50 years. However, fossil fuel combustion is being considered as the single most important driver of human-induced climate change, and fossil fuels' scarcity and uneven geographical distribution coupled with geopolitical factors can have significant effects on economic activity nationally and globally. It is no wonder that the concept of energy security keeps cropping up in policy discussions.

It seems crucial to develop copious amounts of renewable and environmentally sustainable energy. Perhaps, the most controversial such source is first generation biofuels from food crops. A significant body of literature highlights their negative impact on environment (such as deforestation, land degradation and water depletion) and food security (linked to the 2007-2008 food crisis). Conversely, certain biofuel practices have been shown to be net energy suppliers, environmentally sound and economically/socially beneficial. In fact whether biofuel production can have a negative or positive impact depends on a multitude of factors ranging from the feedstock used to the policies that are concerned with biofuel production and trade.

This special session will provide a forum for the discussion of the **positive and negative environmental and socioeconomic impacts of biofuels in developing nations**. The theme of this session is of great contemporary significance as it lies in the nexus of the debate on energy security, food security, economic development and environmental sustainability. These four interrelated issues affect, in one way or another, every country on the planet. In particular, the session will focus on developing nations and will examine various spatial scales given the organizers' conviction that developing nations will be the biggest winners (or losers) should there be a shift towards greater biofuel production.

The session will comprise of **long presentations** (approx. 15 min. each, on the basis of a full paper) and it is expected to provide insights that can shed more light on this controversial issue. It will offer a platform to expose and critically discuss the main trade-offs that are associated with biofuel production in developing nations as well as the potential policy implications nationally and internationally.

Organizer contact details

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