

MSc thesis topic announcement

Policy context of agroecology in Brandenburg

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Background and problem:

Agroecology is commonly understood as a science, a practice and a movement (Wezel et al., 2009). While it has been used in science since the 1930's and in particular in Latin America as a social movement since the 1960's (FAO, 2019), the term is not yet widely used for farming practices and social networks in Germany (Brumer et al., 2023). To better understand the policy and market context of agroecology in Brandenburg (e.g., implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy at the state level) we would like to understand which terms are commonly used by farmers, policymakers, and networks related to agroecology in Brandenburg and how have they evolved over time (since the 1990s).

In the context of the Agroecology4Climate project, this Master project will collect information and analyse the development of the public policy how it has supported or limited an agroecological transformation in Brandenburg. This master thesis will be embedded in ongoing project work (e.g., field trips to farms in Brandenburg) and contribute to at least one scientific publication within the project.

Objectives and research questions:

The Agroecology4Climate project aims to promote the transition to agroecology. To do this, we first need to understand what the transition to agroecology looks like in Brandenburg. The political and market context is a crucial starting point, especially since understanding past developments are important to understanding the current context. While the master thesis will focus on the policy (and market context), we will simultaneously work on understanding current agroecological practices and networks in Brandenburg.

Research questions (might be narrowed or adapted according to the research process):

1. What does the agroecology policy (and market context) of Brandenburg look like? How has it evolved over time?
2. How is agroecology understood in the policy (and market context) of Brandenburg over time? What are the dominant terms, ideological assumptions and power structures?
3. What are supporting and limiting factors of the policy (and market context) for the transition to agroecology?

Methods:

1. Literature review on Brandenburg's public policy (and market context) to explore the use of agroecology and similar terms and define the scope of the analysis
2. Collection and analysis of policy documents and other relevant grey literature with a focus on the greening sections of the Common Agricultural Policy and according to results from the literature review
3. *Optional: Design interview guide and conduct interviews with private sector, farmers, and relevant organizations in Brandenburg on which major market considerations occurred in parallel to policy changes*
4. Qualitative data analysis with content and/or discourse analysis

Expected outcome and time plan:

This work will constitute a MSc thesis and contribute to one scientific publication.

Task	Month					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Literature review and definition of scope	■	■				
Data collection		■	■			
Data analysis				■	■	
Write thesis						■

Relevant literature:Agroecology in Germany and Brandenburg

Brumer, A., Wezel, A., Dauber, J., Breland, T. A., & Grard, B. (2023). Development of agroecology in Austria and Germany. *Open Research Europe*, 3, 25. <https://doi.org/10.12688/openreseurope.15431.1>

Klimke, M., Plieninger, T., & Zengerling, C. (2024). Allowing for the multifunctionality of agroforestry systems – lessons from a legal perspective with a focus on Germany. *Earth System Governance*, 22, 100223. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esg.2024.100223>

Simin, M. T., Milić, D. D., Petrović, M., Glavaš-Trbić, D., Komaromi, B., & Đurić, K. (2023). Institutional Development of Organic Farming in the EU. *Problemy Ekorozwoju*, 18(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.35784/pe.2023.1.12>

Tsonkova, P., Mirck, J., Böhm, C., & Fütz, B. (2018). Addressing farmer-perceptions and legal constraints to promote agroforestry in Germany. *Agroforestry Systems*, 92(4), 1091–1103. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10457-018-0228-4>

Agroecological transitions

Anderson, C. R., Bruil, J., Chappell, M. J., Kiss, C., & Pimbert, M. P. (2021). *Agroecology Now!: Transformations Towards More Just and Sustainable Food Systems*. Springer Nature. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61315-0>

Eija, S. C., & Coe, R. (2023). Agroecological transitions in the mind. *Elementa*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1525/elementa.2022.00026>

Gliessman, S. (2016). Transforming food systems with agroecology. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, 40(3), 187–189. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2015.1130765>

Wezel, A., Bellon, S., Doré, T., Francis, C., Vallod, D., & David, C. (2009). Agroecology as a science, a movement and a practice. A review. *Agronomy for Sustainable Development*, 29(4), 503–515. <https://doi.org/10.1051/agro/2009004>

Qualitative data analysis

Alejandro, A., & Zhao, L. (2024). Multi-Method Qualitative Text and Discourse Analysis: A Methodological Framework. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 30(6), 461–473. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778004231184421>

Glynos, J., Howarth, D., Norval, A., & Speed, E. (o. J.). *ESRC National Centre for Research Methods Review paper*.

Runhaar, H., Dieperink, C., & Driessen, P. (2006). Policy analysis for sustainable development. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 7(1), 34–56. <https://doi.org/10.1108/14676370610639236>

van Hulst, M., Metze, T., Dewulf, A., de Vries, J., van Bommel, S., & van Ostaijen, M. (o. J.). Discourse, framing and narrative: Three ways of doing critical, interpretive policy analysis. *Critical Policy Studies*, 0(0), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2024.2326936>

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FAO. (2019). *Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation (TAPE)—Test version*. FAO; <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ca7407en>

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For more information and/or submitting your application in either German or English, as one PDF file, send an email to: maria.kernecker@zalf.de.