



Master Agriculture, Ecology & Societies

Proposal for an Interdisciplinary Project

Title	The Political Economy and Governance of Agroecology: the case of heterogeneous seed populations
Who is proposing the project?	Supervisors Section/Faculty: 11 1. Maria Finckh and Odette Weedon, Section of Ecological Plant Protection 2. Andreas Thiel, International Agricultural Policy and Environmental Governance
	AGES student(s) Semester: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.
	Practice partner(s):

<p>Thematic focus</p>	<p>Use of heterogeneous populations bears multiple overlapping advantages and challenges for farmers, value chains and the larger food system they are embedded in. From the perspective of institutional economics they therefore trigger a multitude of transactions of ecosystem services between farmers, breeders, other actors in the value and supply chains and the broader public at different scales of societal organization. For example, they reduce or even eliminate the need to synthetic plant protection, they can be considered more adaptable to different contexts while providing a better guarantee of yields independent from particular growing conditions and they cater to better agro-biodiversity and biodiversity in general. At the same time, they imply innovative modes of organizing the breeding of heterogeneous populations (open source), they challenge perceptions of farmers as much as producers as regards particular qualities and the appearance of produce and fields. Further, they challenge the existing organization and political economy as well as technical and process-related structure of the value and supply chains up- and downstream of farmers' cropping patterns. The project aims to develop an in-depth case specific transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary understanding of the agronomic aspects of heterogenous populations and answer to particular questions in their regard. Further, it aims to couple this understanding with an investigation of governance of such heterogeneous populations. Thus, it will address rules and regulations that affect use of heterogeneous populations in the food system, its political economy in terms of who fears to lose and who hopes to gain from their usage as well how these concerns are organized and negotiated among stakeholders and in political processes. Further, perceptions of stakeholders as regards to heterogeneous populations can be taken into account, for example concerning their behavior in the field, their marketability etc. The role of heterogeneous populations is dependent on its specific social-ecological context. In order to cover the topic as widely as possible and respond to the interests of the student body the topic of the project will be addressed in two contexts. On the one hand Germany will be addressed. Second, a country of the global South will be addressed. These will serve as illustrative examples for governance issues concerning the introduction of heterogeneous populations more generally. The project group will need to decide through the first 2 weeks on its exact focus. This process will also be guided by project supervisors. Subsequently, work is to be developed throughout a process of division of labor.</p>
<p>Inter-/trans-disciplinarity</p>	<p>The project builds on interdisciplinary collaboration between the fields of plant sciences and protection, political economy and governance. It is associated to ongoing projects with farmers, processors and retailers in relation to heterogenous cereal populations. It aims to identify obstacles for producers, processors and retailers for relying on heterogenous populations. Thus, research questions are to emerge from and serve practice partners in the field. It is expected that their answering requires knowledge of plant sciences protection as well as primary and secondary data gathering to relate to fields of political economy and governance. Thus, the project considers itself trans- and interdisciplinary. A special dimension will concern an assessment of these obstacles for particular countries in the global South.</p>

Proposed methods and/or outputs	<p>Group discussion, division of labor in the group, engagement with ongoing project, engagement with stakeholders, focus groups, analysis of qualitative data guided by theory.</p> <p>Report documenting the process of work and policy and transformation brief.</p>
Funding requested	Excursion(s): depends on choice of focus, potentially “virtual” excursions.
	Guest speaker(s): Carl Vollenweiderm Dottenfelderhof
	Material/literature:
Additional comments	