



Mapping agroecology in europe. New developments and applications

Alexander Wezel, Stephane Bellon

► To cite this version:

Alexander Wezel, Stephane Bellon. Mapping agroecology in europe. New developments and applications. Sustainability, 2018, 10 (8), 10.3390/su10082751 . hal-02618542

HAL Id: hal-02618542

<https://hal.inrae.fr/hal-02618542>

Submitted on 25 May 2020

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



Distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

Editorial

Mapping Agroecology in Europe. New Developments and Applications

Alexander Wezel ^{1,*}  and Stéphane Bellon ²

¹ ISARA, Department of Agroecology and Environment, 23 rue Jean Baldassini, 69364 Lyon, France

² Ecodéveloppement, INRA, 84914 Avignon, France; stephane.bellon@inra.fr

* Correspondence: awezel@isara.fr

Received: 30 July 2018; Accepted: 31 July 2018; Published: 3 August 2018



Agroecology has gradually developed in recent decades, but has only recently been more strongly promoted by different movements, organizations, institutions, farmer groups, and scholars. Its legitimacy increases both within each of the previous groups and through their interactions. Its development can also be interpreted with two other leg-based lenses: legacy and legality. Whereas the development of agroecology was very strong from the beginning in Latin America (Ref. [1] and other papers in a special issue of the journal *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*), not enough is known so far for the case of Europe. Interestingly, several pioneer contributors in agroecology originated from Europe (G. Azzi, B. Bensin, J. Papadakis . . .); these authors also had an international perspective and trajectory. The legacy of these pioneer works is a benchmark for this special issue. There are different evolutions in agroecology considered as a science, a movement, and a practice [2], but no substantial documentation exists regarding how these three aspects combine across different regions and countries in Europe. While acknowledging that agroecology is related with place, and considering the diversity of agri-cultures and agroecosystems in Europe, it might be difficult to identify the relevant scales to describe how agroecology practically unfolds. However, agroecology also acquires a legal identity in some countries. For example, since 2012, France has had a policy for developing agroecology [3] that relates to practice, research, and education. Other countries might have elements in their national policies, but they are not yet clearly defined. To date, there has been no clear E.U. strategy for agroecological practices and sustainable agriculture, and national action plans and political will on this topic still remain both marginal and varied. Thus, there exists also a lack of knowledge about these agroecology related policies. Likewise, more comprehensive analyses and studies on major research topics in agroecology dealt with in different universities and research centres in Europe are still lacking. The same applies for education and training in agroecology.

Initiatives arise to create a European space for agroecology. Among them, the association Agroecology Europe was launched in 2016. During autumn 2016, FAO organized a “Regional Symposium on Agroecology for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems in Europe and Central Asia” in Budapest. Another important event was the Agroecology Europe Forum held in France [4]. Fostering synergies among science, practitioners, and social movements was a central objective. The Forum allowed gathering, sharing, and discussing among the actors who animate the agroecology movement to build a common understanding for the future of food and agriculture in Europe and in the world. Over three-hundred participants (farmers, technicians, researchers, students, policy and decision-makers, representatives of national and European institutions, non-governmental organizations, social movements, and civil society) have created a participatory and in-depth discussion of multiple topics and shared their perspectives about the development and implementation of agroecology.

This special issue intends to provide new insights, developments, applications, and policies related to agroecology in different countries and regions in Europe to provide an enlarged and improved

view about the development of sustainable agriculture and agroecology in Europe. It aims at giving a picture of the diversity and dynamics of agroecology in different countries and regions in Europe.

Two papers give a broader overview about agroecology in Europe. Gallardo-López, Hernández-Chontal, Cisneros-Saguián, and Linares-Gabriel present a review on the development of the concept of agroecology in Europe [5]. They state that the concept of agroecology is mainly conceived as science; then as practice; and to a lesser degree, as a social movement. In a second paper, Wezel, Goette, Lagneaux, Passuello, Reisman, Rodier, and Turpin document and provide a mapping of the development of European agroecology in looking at research, education, collective action networks, and alternative food systems [6].

A further two papers provide insights about agroecology in different regions in Europe. Migliorini, Gkisakis, Gonzalez, and Bàrberi show the genesis, state, and perspectives of agroecology in Mediterranean Europe, looking specifically at Spain, Italy, and Greece [7]. For Eastern Europe, Moudrý, Bernas, Moudrý, Konvalina, Ujj, Manolov, Stoeva, Rembalkowska, Stalenga, Toncea, Fitiu, Bucur, Lacko-Bartošová, and Macák illustrate and discuss the development of agroecology in Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia [8]. For both cases, agroecology is historically strongly linked to the development of organic agriculture, but new evolutions have taken place in research, education, and policy.

In two country specific papers, Belgium and France situations were analysed. Stassart, Crivits, Hermesse, Tessier, Van Damme, and Dessein present the generative tensions within Belgium agroecology [9]. Bellon and Ollivier investigate and show the development and the institutionalization of agroecology in France [10].

Three other papers that are part of this special issue deal with more specific topics regarding the development of agroecology in Europe. Weißhuhn, Reckling, Stachow, and Wiggering show the importance of the integration of perennial polycultures into crop rotations to support ecosystem services provision, but also some potential trade-offs [11]. Cayre, Michaud, Theau, and Rigolot analyze the agroecological transition in cheese mountain livestock farming, and in which ways the coexistence of multiple worldviews drive the transition [12]. Third, the paper of Cuéllar-Padilla and Ganuza-Fernandez provides new insights about reasons and implications of participatory guarantee systems, something that might become more and more important for the valuation of agroecological processes or products [13].

A final paper closes the special issue, in which Wezel, Goris, Bruil, Félix, Peeters, Bàrberi, Bellon, and Migliorini summarize the challenges and actions points to amplify agroecology in Europe, as identified by a large group of different stakeholders [14].

Funding: The Association Agroecology Europe received support from the Fondation de France for this mapping initiative.

Acknowledgments: We are very grateful to the different authors for their various contributions to this special issue on Mapping Agroecology in Europe. We warmly thank all the reviewers who dedicated time and assisted in improving the manuscripts.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

1. Gliessman, S. A brief history of agroecology in Spain and Latin America. *Agroecol. Sustain. Food Syst.* **2017**, *41*, 229–230. [CrossRef]
2. Wezel, A.; Bellon, S.; Doré, T.; Francis, C.; Vallod, D.; David, C. Agroecology as a science, a movement or a practice. A review. *Agron. Sustain. Dev.* **2009**, *29*, 503–515. [CrossRef]
3. Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation. Le Projet Agro-Ecologique Pour la France. 2017. Available online: <http://agriculture.gouv.fr/le-projet-agro-ecologique-pour-la-france> (accessed on 15 January 2018).
4. Agroecology Europe. Agroecology Forum. 2017. Available online: <http://www.agroecology-europe.org/agroecology-forum-2017/> (accessed on 15 January 2018).

5. Felipe Gallardo-López, F.; Hernández-Chontal, M.A.; Cisneros-Saguilán, P.; Linares-Gabriel, A. Development of the Concept of Agroecology in Europe: A Review. *Sustainability* **2018**, *10*, 1210. [[CrossRef](#)]
6. Wezel, A.; Goette, J.; Lagneaux, E.; Passuello, G.; Reisman, E.; Rodier, C.; Turpin, G. Agroecology in Europe: Research, education, collective action networks, and alternative food systems. *Sustainability* **2018**, *10*, 1214. [[CrossRef](#)]
7. Migliorini, P.; Gkisakis, V.; Gonzalez, V.; Bàrberi, P. Agroecology in Mediterranean Europe: Genesis, state and perspectives. *Sustainability* **2018**, *10*, 2724. [[CrossRef](#)]
8. Moudrý, J., Jr.; Bernas, J.; Moudrý, J., Sr.; Konvalina, P.; Ujj, A.; Manolov, I.; Stoeva, A.; Rembialkowska, E.; Stalenga, J.; Toncea, I.; et al. Agroecology Development in Eastern Europe—Cases in Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia. *Sustainability* **2018**, *10*, 1311. [[CrossRef](#)]
9. Stassart, P.M.; Crivits, M.; Hermesse, J.; Tessier, L.; Van Damme, J.; Dessein, J. The Generative potential of tensions within Belgium agroecology. *Sustainability* **2018**, *10*, 2094. [[CrossRef](#)]
10. Bellon, S.; Ollivier, G. Institutionalizing agroecology in France: Social circulation changes the meaning of an idea. *Sustainability* **2018**, *10*, 1380. [[CrossRef](#)]
11. Weißhuhn, P.; Reckling, M.; Stachow, U.; Wiggering, H. Supporting agricultural ecosystem services through the integration of perennial polycultures into crop rotations. *Sustainability* **2017**, *9*, 2267. [[CrossRef](#)]
12. Cayre, P.; Michaud, A.; Theau, J.P.; Rigolot, C. The Coexistence of multiple worldviews in livestock farming drives agroecological transition. A case study in French Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) cheese mountain areas. *Sustainability* **2018**, *10*, 1097. [[CrossRef](#)]
13. Cuéllar-Padilla, M.; Ganuza-Fernandez, E. We don't want to be officially certified! Reasons and implications of the participatory guarantee systems. *Sustainability* **2018**, *10*, 1142. [[CrossRef](#)]
14. Wezel, A.; Goris, M.; Bruil, J.; Félix, G.F.; Peeters, A.; Bàrberi, P.; Bellon, S.; Migliorini, P. Challenges and actions points to amplify agroecology in Europe. *Sustainability* **2018**, *10*, 1598. [[CrossRef](#)]



© 2018 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).