

Transformation as a Process of Transdisciplinary Negotiation

PhD 04a: Transdisciplinary Sustainability Research

Local Real-world Experiments as Drivers of the Global Transformation towards Sustainable Food Systems (Working Title)

Research Question

How can local real-world experiments contribute to a sustainability transformation towards sustainable food systems worldwide? In other words, how can real-world experiments get conducted through transdisciplinary collaboration in order to enable and foster scaling and transfer of demonstrated sustainable local food systems and systems components worldwide?

Background / State of Research

Local real-world experiments, e.g., developing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and adapting sustainable local food systems solutions, require well-balanced collaborations between researchers and local practitioners (Wagner und Grunwald 2015, De Flander et al., 2014). Transdisciplinarity is a suitable guiding concept for such collaborations (Lang et al. 2012). In addition, there are promising concepts and initial applications on how to analyze and evaluate local real-world experiments (Forrest & Wiek, 2014, Wiek et al., in press; Lüderitz et al., in press). Research so far, however, has focused on design and evaluation of local real-world experiments. Studies on city-wide, regional, inter-regional, inter-national, or global scaling and transfer are still in a very early stage (Wigboldus et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2017; Murray et al., 2017).

Research Design

The research design is twofold. First, we analyze and evaluate existing local real-world experiments on sustainable food systems in Lüneburg, Germany, and Tempe, Arizona, regarding their scalability and transferability. Second, we develop and apply a concept to (re-)design such local real-world experiments in ways that enable and foster scaling and transfer of their results worldwide.

Expected Results

This doctoral research project is closely linked with the second doctoral research project in the domain “Transformation as a Process of Transdisciplinary Negotiation”. Both studies aim at further developing the concept of real-world experiments regarding their local to global impact. This thesis studies the global impact of local real-world experiments and laboratories, the other one investigates the potential of international/global real-world experiments as a sustainable opportunity for complementing local food systems.

Supervisor

Prof. Dr. Arnim Wiek

Institute for Ethics and Transdisciplinary Sustainability Research

arnim.wiek@leuphana.de