

Agroecological Research: Conforming - or Transforming the Dominant Agro-Food Regime?

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Abstract

Abstract – Agroecology involves various approaches to solve actual challenges of agricultural production. Though agroecology initially dealt primarily with crop production and protection aspects, in recent decades new dimensions such as environmental, social, economic, ethical and development issues are becoming relevant. Today, the term ‘agroecology’ means either a scientific discipline, agricultural practice, or political or social movement. Here we study the different meanings of agroecology. For that we analyse the historical development of agroecology. We present examples from USA, Brazil, Germany, and France. We study and discuss the evolution of different meanings agroecology. The use of the term agroecology can be traced back to the 1930s. Until the 1960s agroecology referred only as a purely scientific discipline. Then, different branches of agroecology developed. Following environmental movements in the 1960s that went against industrial agriculture, agroecology evolved and fostered agroecological movements in the 1990s. Agroecology as an agricultural practice emerged in the 1980s, and was often intertwined with movements. Further, the scales and dimensions of agroecological investigations changed over the past 80 years from the plot and field scales to the farm and agroecosystem scales. Actually three approaches persist: (1) investigations at plot and field scales, (2) investigations at the agroecosystem and farm scales, and (3) investigations covering the whole food system. These different approaches of agroecological science can be explained by the history

of nations. In France, agroecology was mainly understood as a farming practice and to certain extent as a movement, whereas the corresponding scientific discipline was agronomy. In Germany, agroecology has a long tradition as a scientific discipline. In the USA and in Brazil all three interpretations of agroecology occur, albeit with a predominance of agroecology as a science in the USA and a stronger emphasis on movement and agricultural practice in Brazil. These varied meanings of the term agroecology cause confusion among scientists and the public, and we recommend that those who publish using this term be explicit in their interpretation

Biography

Huang Wei Ling, born in Taiwan, raised and graduated in medicine in Brazil, specialist in infectious and parasitic diseases, a General Practitioner and Parenteral and Enteral Medical Nutrition Therapist. Once in charge of the Hospital Infection Control Service of the City of Franca's General Hospital, she was responsible for the control of all prescribed antimicrobial medication and received an award for the best paper presented at the Brazilian Hospital Infection Control Congress in 1998. Since 1997, she works with the approach and treatment of all chronic diseases in a holistic way, with treatment guided through the teachings of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Hippocrates. Researcher in the University of São Paulo, in the Ophthalmology department from 2012 to 2013. Author of the theory Constitutional Homeopathy of the Five Elements Based on Traditional Chinese Medicine

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