

Patrick Bottazzi, Lise Landrin, Joan Bastide
Patrick.bottazzi@unibe.ch
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Title:

(Re)territorialising food systems towards agroecology: reflexive and practical issues based on transformative research in Senegal

Abstract:

Agroecological reterritorialisation is presented as a means of strengthening the resilience of global food systems (Duru and Therond 2015, Wezel, Brives et al. 2016, Giraldo and Rosset 2018, Levidow, Sansolo et al. 2019). Our intervention proposes a reflexive framing of the role of transformative research in this process, based on the experience of the ARTS project (L'Agroécologie pour la Résilience des Territoires au Sénégal), an action research initiative funded by the SOR4D programme (2023-2026).

Critical geography in the 1980s defined 'reterritorialisation' as a reconfiguration of relations between society, space and time, based on 'projections of intentions onto space' by various actors (Raffestin 1980). Our approach is based on one of these projections, co-constructed by NGOs and research bodies, exploring what a food system based on the principles of agroecology would entail, taking into account technical and political criteria, as well as reproductive, social and cultural issues. This exercise in 'ideotyping' (Belmin Raphaël, Ouedraogo Rahim et al. 2023) the territory is proving to be a natural starting point in the rationalising thinking of researchers.

In contrast, the 'living lab' approach plunges us into a phenomenology of experience, contrasting the methodological ambition defined in the laboratory with the vagaries of iterative processes in the field, illustrating the unpredictability of 'real life' (Fèche, Nous et al. 2021). Transformative research involves a combination of actors from research, development, civil society, village communities, and even the theatre, each of whom is continually staging himself or herself in spaces that are

virtual or physical, with modes of operation, interests and timeframes that are often divergent or even contradictory. Researchers are actors among others, influenced by their social position, which shapes their specific spatial representations and projections.

Far from limiting ourselves to a chaotic vision of transformative research, our presentation will attempt to give an inside view of these experiences, using reflexivity and drawing general lessons to highlight the synergies. What research approach should be adopted to identify and exploit these synergies? What epistemological or paradigmatic innovations are relevant in relation to 'project-based' science, which is often framed, distanced and disconnected from reality? This presentation explores these questions, offering perspectives for more effective research.

"Integrated and transformative", to quote the key words of the calls for tender.
international.

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