The European networks of research, education and training stakeholders in agroecology

Rose Nicot[ab], Stéphane Bellon[b], Allison Loconto[a], Guillaume Ollivier[b]

[a]LISIS, INRA, Marne La Vallée, France, allison-marie.loconto@inra.fr

[b]ECODEVELOPPEMENT, INRA, Avignon, France, stephane.bellon@inra.fr

Abstract: *In Europe, agroecology has become the center of many debates that animate political and professional arenas, particularly regarding the definition and scope of the concept itself. This paper attempts to understand the ways that the term agroecology is conceptualized by different actors and how these concepts circulate so to explore the interests at stake in the institutionalization of agroecology within the research and education institutions of Europe. We address the core research question of: what dynamics emerge in the networks of European stakeholders of agroecology? By combining different approaches of institutionalization based on network and discourse analyses, we study the dynamics of research, education and training organizations. We identify 10 different concepts of agroecology, distributed among 103 organizations. The significant difference that has been observed between the agroecological concepts in research and those in education/training emphasizes the gap between these two worlds. The latter support a more political, transdisciplinary and holistic view of agroecology when compared to the former. Moreover, collaboration among European agroecology stakeholders is limited in both research and education/training. We also found that in most cases, collaboration between scholars does not guarantee a shared notion of agroecology, and conversely, sharing the same notion of agroecology does not assure collaboration. This led us to question the feasibility of institutionalizing agroecology and the missing link between a shared vision and the collective mobilization of stakeholders around a strong agroecology programme.*

Keywords: Agroecology, networks, institutionalization, circulation