

Workshop

# **Representing the Countryside in Africa and Europe: Politics, Imaginations, Contestations**

27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2024

UNICOM, Mary-Somerville-Strasse 7, Room 7.2210

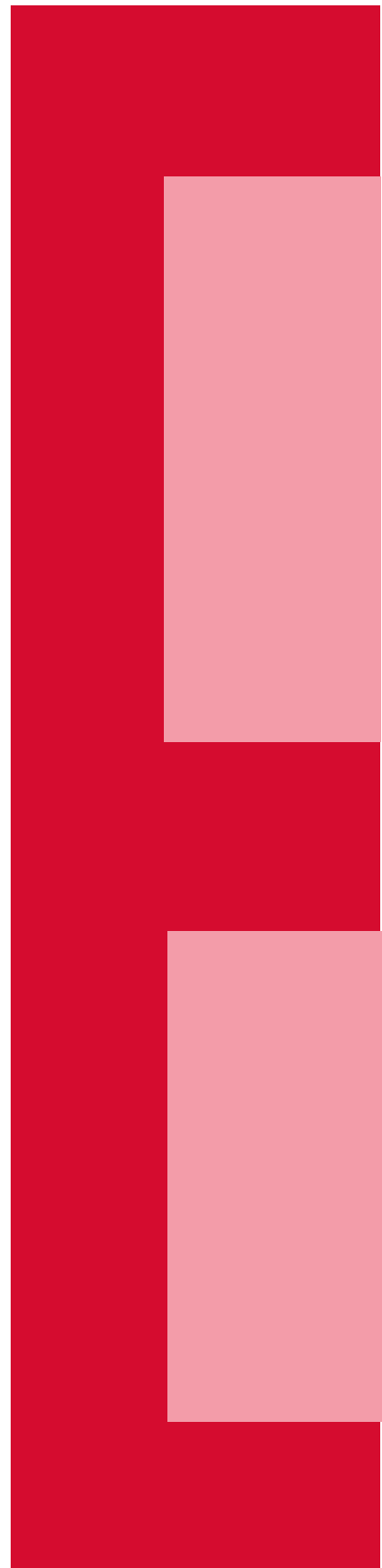
## **Workshop Abstract**

Who speaks for the countryside? How are rural populations, farmers and peasants represented and their interests organized in contemporary politics? Recent outbreaks of farmers' protests and the general perception of rural discontent with agricultural, environmental and rural development policies hint at a certain inability of existing political and social institutions to channel the variety of rural concerns in a satisfactory manner. The capacity to speak for and to represent the countryside and its people is currently changing, as we observe growing rural and agrarian contestation of existing policy frameworks and of the institutions through which urban-rural conflicts are usually mediated. This dynamic cuts across the Global South and North. In many African countries, rural discontent has for a long time been linked to a combination of weak agrarian sectors and stark urban-rural social divides. Across Europe and North America, there is a growing sense of unruly rural populations, which do reject the notion of urban elites making crucial decisions negatively affecting their livelihoods and whose resentment has been quickly channeled into votes for populist right parties.

New market opportunities result from intensified capitalist transformations of landscapes, peasant lives and agricultural markets. New politics of food, pressures to adapt and upgrade agricultural production have seriously affected the life chances of farmers, peasants, workers and rural communities, in general. Agricultural producers are differentially equipped to respond to new profit opportunities in international markets and to new societal and political demands for change. While some manage this drive to upgrade and upscale, the majority of them face seemingly irreconcilable pressures of adapting to market signals, of responding to new food and ecology standards and of stabilizing rural social infrastructures. As in earlier transformations of agrarian economies, observers and experts usually highlight the positive opportunities of change while not addressing the dangers they pose to established forms of rural society. For the majority, in fact, this constitutes an existential crisis, in particular by those who are left with nothing but the exit option and who have to leave their landed property, their homes and the agrarian lives that is part and parcel of their identity.

While there are substantive differences between everyday agrarian and rural lives in Europe and Africa, what farmers, peasants, herders and workers share is a sense of being immediately affected by these new market logics taking over and replacing earlier forms of production, subsistence and connectedness to land, to soil and nature. Furthermore, what they share is a renewed sense of political distance to the sites and logics of agricultural and rural development policy making, which often comes with feelings of resentment to cosmopolitan urbanites determining the distribution of rural life chances without being able to legitimately speak for the countryside.

In this workshop, we want to address this side of rural politics and comparatively analyze the dynamics of rural representation in African and European countries. We understand representation in both senses of the term. On one side, we take a look at the formal and institutional side of interest politics: which organizations dominate in interest politics? What relations to farmers' and peasants' associations have with political parties, parliaments and governments? How many farmers do they represent, and what are the agrarian and rural development policy goals they strive for? On the other side, we investigate the dominant countryside and rural life imaginaries that are produced in the everyday politics of representation. Which competing visions of agriculture, rural community and human-nature relations exist and are used in political discourse? What potential of romanticization exists in the respective debates? Finally, which rural groups are represented in these diverse imaginaries, and which are not?



## **Day One – Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> September**

**9:00 Arrivals at Workshop Venue**

**9:15 Welcome and Introduction by the Organizers**

### **Session I: Imagining and Representing the Countryside**

**10:00 R. Karadag, S. Penteado, A. Wolkenhauer, K. Thyen, K. Schlichte  
InIIS, CRC 1342, University of Bremen  
The Dynamics of Representing the Countryside**

Discussant: Natalia Mamonova

**11:00 Christin Stühlen, University of Marburg  
Seeing Land like the European Union: The EU's external Land Politics**

Discussant: Sarah Penteado

**12:00 Lunch Break**

### **Session II: New Dynamics of Contestation**

**13:00 Boaventura Monjane, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town  
Rethinking Labor and Agrarian Anti-Capitalist Struggles in Southern Africa**

Discussant: Anna Wolkenhauer

**14:00 Natalia Mamonova, Rurális, Oslo  
Farmer protests and right-wing populism in Europe**

Discussant: Cleopas Sambo

**15:00 Coffee Break**

### **Session III: Representing from Below and Above**

**15:30 Kressen Thyen, CRC 1342, University of Bremen**  
**Between Representing and Co-opting the Countryside: The Politics of**  
**Communitarian Enterprises in Tunisia**

Discussant: Dhouha Djerbi

**16:30 Wrap-up of Day One**

19:00 Dinner

## **Day Two – Saturday, 28th September**

### **Session IV: Making New Claims in Agrarian and Land Politics**

**09:30 Yasmine Berriane, CNRS-CMH, Paris**  
**Collective Land Rights and Contested Belonging: The non-residents' claims in**  
**post-2019 Morocco**

Discussant: Kressen Thyen

**10:30 Thomas Fickel, Goethe University, Frankfurt a.M.**  
**Market, power and affect. An attempt to explain the contradictory agricultural**  
**protests in Germany**

Discussant: Klaus Schlichte

12:00 Lunch Break

### **Session V: Farmers, Laborers and Their Imaginations and Interests**

**13:00 Dhouha Djerbi, Geneva Graduate Institute**  
**Agrarian Labor Ethnography: Insights from and Strategies for the Study of**  
**Changing Agrarian Systems**

Discussant: Roy Karadag

**14:00 Michal Dudak, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw**  
**Polish farmers and the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy: between**  
**affirmation and rejection**

Discussant: Thomas Fickel

15:00 Coffee Break

## **Session VI: New Agrarian Imaginations from Above**

**15:30 Bontle Masilo, University of Botswana, Gaborone**  
**Contestation and Cooperation Between the Government of Botswana and Rural Communities in the Botswana Conservation Agenda**

Discussant: Yasmine Berriane

**16:30 Cleopas Sambo, Oslomet & University of Zambia, Lusaka**  
**Between Policy and Practice: The Dynamics of Transformations to Sustainability in Rural Zambia**

Discussant: Christin Stühlen

**17:30 Wrap-Up of Day Two**

19:00 Dinner

## **Day Three, Sunday, 29th September**

**10:00 Klaus Schlichte, University of Bremen, InIIS**  
**What we see in the Politics of Representing the Countryside in Africa and Europe**

**11:00 Anna Wolkenhauer, CRC 1342, University Bremen**  
**The Global Countryside and the Challenge of Comparing Africa and Europe**

12:00 Coffee Break

**12:30 Findings and Publications Prospects**

**13:30 End of Workshop**

## Practical Information

### Accommodation

#### 7Things

Universitätsallee 4, 28359 Bremen

Contact: +49 421 69677377 | info@7things-apartment.de

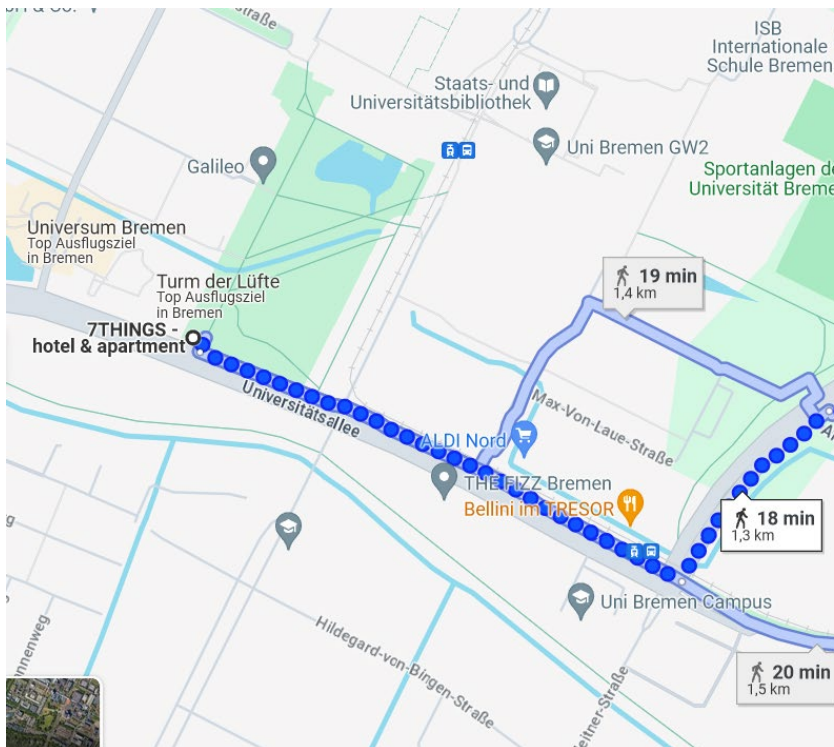
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### Workshop Venue

Mary-Somerville-Straße 7, 28359 Bremen

Entrance number 7, "Haus Wien", 2. Floor, InIIS, Room 7.2210

### Walking From Hotel to Workshop Venue



## Tram, Bike, Car – Commuting in Bremen

The best way to commute in Bremen between the city centre, airport, train station, and campus is via tram number six. To get to the Congress venue's, you get off at Universität Süd. To visit the city centre, get off at Domsheide. Tickets for the tram can be purchased online using BSAG application on your smartphone or at the vending machines in tram. Alternatively, you can buy tickets at the Domsheide stop.

### BSAG Website



### App Download



Bremen is a perfect city for biking, and you can easily rent a bike at one of the several WK-bike stations. Use the WK or Nextbike application to find the closest available bike in your surroundings. For holders of the Deutschlandticket, first 30 minutes of bike rental are free. The usual prices are 1€ per 15 minutes.

### Website WK Bike



If you come to the Congress venue by car, you can either use the parking facilities of the Atlantic Hotel (11€ / day) or one of the two parking facilities of the university (1€ / day), which are University car park Bibliothekstraße & University car park Universitätsallee . To get to the city centre, we recommend using the tram if possible, as parking there can be expensive. Nevertheless, there still are some car parks available in the centre in case public transport is not an option.



## Sights, Souvenirs and Shopping – The City Centre

If you want to visit historical sites in Bremen, buy souvenirs for friends and family, or send a postcard, the city centre is where you get lucky. To reach the city centre from campus, hop on tram number six and get off at Domsheide. The ride takes about 20 minutes from there. Most places of interest are within a short walking distance.

The SCHNOOR QUARTER is one of Bremen's oldest parts, characterized by narrow streets, charming little craft shops, and artisanry. You can also find small restaurants and gift shops there.

Taking a walk along SCHLACHTE offers a beautiful view of the Weser River and some picturesque old ships along its bank.

For shopping opportunities, visit OBERNSTRASSE or the adjacent SÖGESTRASSE. Whether you're looking for clothes, souvenirs, or a supermarket, you'll find it all there.

## Bars, Cafés, Restaurants – The Viertel

Take a stroll through the VIERTEL ("the quarter"), one of the most lively and bohemian quarters of Bremen. You'll find bars and cafes, pubs, and restaurants with various cuisines. If the weather is good, it is also recommended to grab a drink from one of the little shops and take a stroll along the Weser, which is right around the corner. To get to the Viertel, take Tram line 6 to the central station and transfer to Tram number 10 in the direction of Sebaldsbrück. If you get off at Sielwall, you'll be right in the beating heart of Bremen's nightlife. Below you find a few recommendations for cafes, bars, and restaurants.

**THEATRO** Restaurant and café at the Goethe Theatre. The menu offers fresh Mediterranean cuisine from tapas to pizza as well as a few vegan options.

Goetheplatz 1-3  
28203 Bremen

**LITFASS** A nice and popular bar with places to sit outside. It is allowed to smoke inside.

Ostertorsteinweg 22  
28203 Bremen

**ENGEL WEINCAFÉ** Located in the rooms of an old pharmacy you can taste selected wines and enjoy Mediterranean dishes. Vegetarian options are available.

Ostertorsteinweg 31-33  
28203 Bremen

**LAGERHAUS** The Lagerhaus is a cultural centre in the heart of the VIERTEL. Its Bar is a popular place to meet for some drinks. A small menu is also offered.

Schildstraße 12-19  
28203 Bremen

**MEDOO** A nice little restaurant, which is known for its creative dishes for a good price. The daily changing menu ranges from soups, salads, crêpes to vegetarian/vegan as well as fish and meat dishes.

Friesenstraße 103  
28203 Bremen

**MÄRZ** The März is a small and nice bar where you can enjoy your drink and smoke inside.

Sielwall 29  
28203 Bremen

**FEHRFELD** A cozy café and bar with a separated smoking room and space to sit outside.

Fehrfeld 58-59  
28203 Bremen

## **List of Participants**

Berriane, Yasmine: CNRS-CMH, Paris

Djerbi, Dhouha: Geneva Graduate Institute

Dudak, Michal: Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw

Fickel, Thomas: Goethe University, Frankfurt a.M.

Karadag, Roy: InIIS, University Bremen

Mamonova, Natalia: Ruralis, Oslo

Masilo, Bontle: University of Botswana, Gaborone

Monjane, Boaventura: University of the Western Cape, Cape Town

Penteado, Sarah: InIIS, University Bremen

Sambo, Cleopas: Oslomet & University of Zambia, Lusaka

Schlichte, Klaus: InIIS, University of Bremen

Stühlen, Christin: University of Marburg

Thyen, Kressen: CRC 1342, University of Bremen

Wolkenhauer, Anna: CRC 1342, University of Bremen

**Universität Bremen**  
**Sonderforschungsbereich 1342**  
**Global Entwicklungsdynamiken von Sozialpolitik**  
**Fachbereich 08 | Sozialwissenschaften**

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[www.socialpolicydynamics.de](http://www.socialpolicydynamics.de)



# **Globale Entwicklungsdynamiken von Sozialpolitik SFB 1342**