



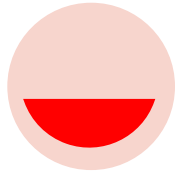
Illustration - Chloé Mauyt



Revisiting the “Technichal” European Green Deal and the Agri-Food system through the relational approach. An Ontological, Epistemological, and Legal Exploration.

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Presentation outline

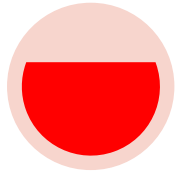


Context: Dualism and Epistocracy in (agricultural) policies

- Technicization of agrifood practices and its political justification
- Depoliticization of issues
 - Example: European Green Deal (EGD), Farm to Fork (F2F), and Biodiversity Strategy
- Western naturalistic approach, presented as neutral and objective

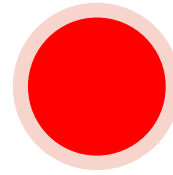


(Following) illustrations Via Campesina

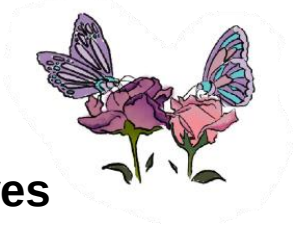


Interdisciplinary methodology

- Interdisciplinary approach bridging discursive analyses and political philosophy.
 - Narrative Policy Framework: Analysis of public narratives and their roles in policy justification.
 - Political Philosophy: post-human, decolonial, and radical political theories (Castoriadis, Latour, Mouffe, Stengers).
- Relational approaches to redefine politics beyond dualism.



Research questions/objectives



- RQ1: To what extent do technical/scientific narratives in EU policies contribute to epistocratic and dualistic depoliticization?
 - H1: Technical/scientific narratives are depoliticizing tools employing dualistic and epistocratic rhetoric.
- RQ2: How can definitions of politics be reconstructed according to relational theories?
 - H2: Relational approaches can holistically rethink definitions of politics, avoiding dualism and depoliticization by technical narratives.

Context: Dualism and Epistocracy in (agricultural) policies

Dualism and Epistocracy in (agricultural) policies

Analysis of Narratives and Justifications in EU Agri-Food Policies

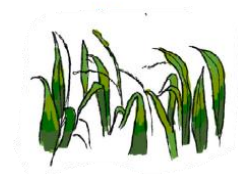
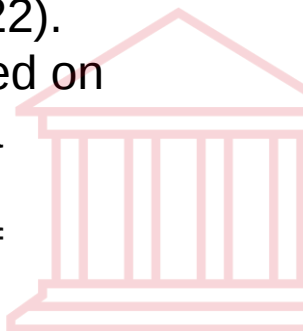
- Traditional lens: Exceptionalism and post-exceptionalism (Daugbjerg and Feindt 2017).
- *luxta*: Identification of technical/scientific narratives as depoliticizing tools.
- Conflicting types of legitimacy (worlds): civic, industrial, etc.

Defining the Technical/Scientific Narrative

- Prioritizes technical expertise and scientific knowledge.
- Constructs legitimacy on neutral and objective elements.
- Avoids subjective and political justifications.
- Governance: independent and competent institution and experts, evaluated by technical indicators
- Refers to "science" understood in a universal, ahistorical and non-cultural sense
 - *This is an approach situated in the Western context.*

Political implications

- *Epistocratic justifications* : Claiming scientific approaches, neutrality and objectivity as a basis of legitimacy in political debates (Viala 2022).
 - Policies are no longer positioned based on the classic right/left spectrum but as a rationality.
- *Post-Political System*: Citizens deprived of political choice, forced to approve rational measures by experts (Mouffe 2018).
- *Technicist approach to agriculture*: politically imposed technical solutions, neglecting local and holistic knowledge systems.



Technical/Scientific Narrative within the EGD narrative

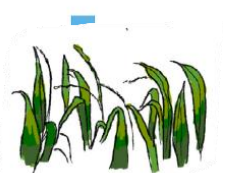
- **EGD and the F2F strategy:**
 - “new technologies” as “crucial to achieves the [EGD] objectives” like sustainable use of food systems, particularly in addressing the challenges of climate change changes (EGD, 9).
 - Legitimacy based on natural and environmental sciences
- **CAP Reform**
 - Reliance on technical and objective arguments, and effort to keep discussions “without public.”
 - Impact assessment and a series of workshops “to gather evidence/knowledge from experts on CAP-related issues” and “to advance in the formulation of the key conclusions”.
 - CAP justified through technical and scientific reasoning:
 - “A smarter, modernised and more sustainable CAP needs to embrace research and innovation in order to serve the multi-functionality of Union agriculture” (CAP, Recital 23).
- **NGT proposal**
 - Justified as a technical alignment of the European market with new (science-based) techniques, while neglecting certain societal concerns (such as seed ownership, contamination risks, etc.).
 - “The existing framework [...] does not really correspond to the *biology* of these techniques. [...] There are (biological) differences with GMOs, as NGTs do not insert DNA from another organism. [...] The proposal is based on EFSA's scientific opinion, but not only”(COM 2023).



Provisional Conclusion

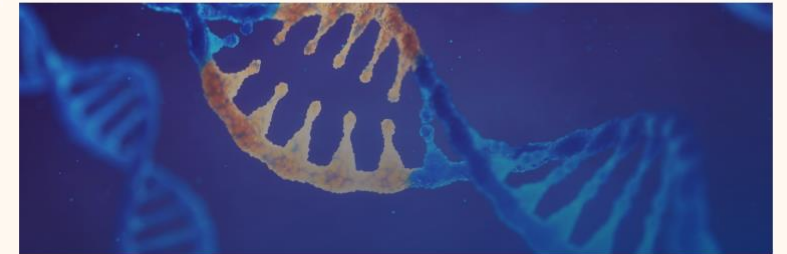
- Technical/scientific narratives indeed have depoliticizing effects (H1).
- Conflicting technical/scientific ?
 - Some Members of the European Parliament use science to justify or criticize Commission proposals
- Narratives that are non-political, inadequate for political questions and concerns:
 - Example, Farmers' protest against the EGD.
 - Science is used to argue for the EGD's environmental objectives.
- Beyond a purely scientific/technical approach, we argue to reconsider the issue politically or ontologically.

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 [#UkraineUnderAttack](#) will spur a [#FoodCrisis](#). Next Monday, EU's agri ministers will meet. Today, [#science](#) is calling for demand-side action: less animal products, less [#waste](#) & greening  agricultural policy. Read the statement of >180 scientists here: pik-potsdam.de/en/news/latest...

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Publication du rapport de l'ANSES: la France doit revoir sa position, et la commission sa copie



Christophe Clergeau, député européen socialiste

Communiqué de presse

Bruxelles, jeudi 7 mars 2024

Correspondence | [Published: 31 March 2023](#)

Science calls for ambitious European pesticide

... [Jeroen Candel](#) , [Guy Pe'er](#) & [Robert Finger](#) 

[Nature Food](#)



Guy Pe'er @GuyPeer3 · 13 jun.

3339 scientists signed an Open Letter, expressing our deep concern about the unjustified attack on the Sustainable Use Regulation and [#NatureRestorationLaw](#), based largely on [#misinformation](#). We urge policymakers to continue the legislative process. idiv.de/fileadmin/cont...

Scientists support the EU's Green Deal and reject the unjustified argumentation against the Sustainable Use Regulation and the Nature

**Toward a relationnal
approach to the
political?**

Relational Theories as a Tool for Redefining the Political

- **Research objective :**

- Looking beyond these technical/scientific narratives who depoliticize agricultural issues by separating science from politics.
- “Relational Theories” against a Western dualism (nature vs culture, science vs politics) in law, science and politics
- Exploring ways to protect virtuous relationships between humans and non-humans, considered holistically.
- Inspiration from Latour, Stengers, Castoriadis, and Mouffe

- **A definition of the relational approach to the political:**

- The relational approach to politics is an approach that seeks to emancipate itself from dualism and heteronomy (i);
- recognize a multiplicity of ontologies and links between humans and non-humans (existing, unexplored, or potential) (ii);
- by valuing the autonomy of the political community viewed holistically (iii);
- in such a way that political questions invoking specific ontologies or links between humans and non-humans cannot be discredited a priori by the application of technical or scientific knowledge (iv).



Relational Theories for a post-dualist politics

- Dualism and epistocracy:
 - Plato's Cave : science vs politics
 - Science as an argument of authority (Stengers)
- Dualism block the exercise of politics. Alternatives :
 - Cosmopolitics and Parliament of things.
 - Recognizing conflict as essential for democracy (Latour, Mouffe)

As Latour states: "the Old Climate Regime every conflict is prejudged by the simple application of the laws of 'nature,' while in the New Climate Regime there is no longer a sovereign arbiter; we have to fight point by point to discover – and no longer to apply – the reactions of the agents, one after another. In the first regime, objects are deanimated – only subjects have souls; in the second, we find ourselves truly in a state of war. In the first regime, Peace is given in advance; in the second, it has to be invented, through the establishment of a specific diplomacy." (Latour, 2018)

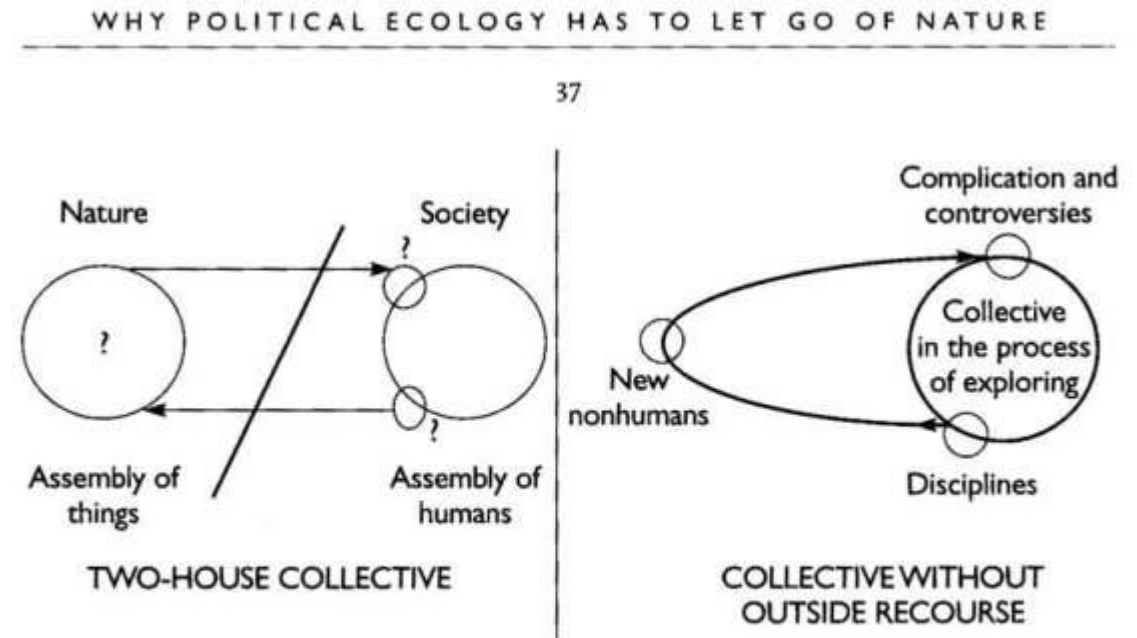


Figure 1.1 The political model with two houses, nature and society, is based on a double split. The model of the collective is based, conversely, on a simple extension of the human and nonhuman members. (Latour, 2004)



Castoriadis : an Outline of the Politics of the Imaginaries

- Castoriadis attention for **Autonomy** and **self-creation** at the source of political power
- The political activity as a *praxis* and not a *techné*:
 - Politics as autonomous self-institution, not reliant on theoretical knowledge
 - Different emergence of knowledge in *praxis* and *techné*



	Characteristics and values		Relation to Knowledge	
Techné	Distinction between aimed goals and appropriate means	Mastery of the object/subject and its mode of operation	Application of a limited know-how to the relevant domain	Expertise may be heard in politics, as advice and within its domain.
Praxis	Indissociability between ends and means;	Autonomy of subjects (as both means and ends); the ability to weave together.	Co-construction of fragmented and provisional knowledge;	Bringing forth discussions among autonomous subjects.

- Against Science or Expertise as an argument of authority, wisdom of “*Weaving together*” different viewpoints for inclusive deliberation.
- Instituting vs. Instituted : space for radical (and relational) political imaginaries?



Conclusion

- Technical/scientific narratives indeed have depoliticizing effects (H1).
 - Conflicting technical/scientific ?
 - Narratives that are non-political, inadequate for political questions and concerns,
- EU's reliance on technical/scientific narratives for legitimacy (H1).
 - Depoliticization, constraining democratic discourse, reinforcing Western ontologies.
 - A form of *Techné* ?

- Relational approaches to the political going beyond dualism and heteronomy of technical narratives (H2).
 - Politics as conflict/diplomacy, rejecting science/nature as ultimate arbitrators (Latour, Mouffe, Stengers).
 - Politics as praxis, valorizing autonomous self-institution of democratic society (Castoriadis).
- Autonomy as a source of a radical political imagination, capable of integrating (*weaving together*) the relational and different ontologies (H2).
- Weaving together within the EGD, not as *techné* or the application of rational and technical policy.

