

Wir haben es satt:
The emergence of a new agrarian opposition or a rebirth of the previous?

Wiebke Nowack

The physical and mental distance of most consumers to the places and processes of food production has grown and production chains have become complex and transnational. One outcome of this development is that consumers' knowledge and understanding about their food and its origin has become marginal. At the same time, some serious agri-food scandals as well as increasing environmental concerns have reawakened a strong interest in food and its production. This can be observed in various movements and initiatives, which attempt to raise awareness for environmental problems, re-connect producers and consumers, create new value-chains, try new (or reintroduce old) production methods and/or boycott certain products or producers. For a long time, German farmers have taken a relatively passive role in the public discourse on agri-food topics while (mass) media as well as marketing agencies of food processors have become major communicators about agricultural topics and constructed a biased and often nostalgic imagination of agriculture among (German) consumers.

For my master thesis, I am going to analyse the current societal discourse concerning the German agri-food sector with a special focus on questions and issues originating from the *Agrarwende* policy, which was declared after the BSE-crisis in 2001. In order to do so, a case study of *Wir haben es satt* will be utilised to disentangle existing positions, societal demands, contradictions within and among stated claims and different roles taken by the participants of *Wir haben es satt*.

The latter is a young association of various organizations; all committed towards a comprehensive implementation of the *Agrarwende*, especially small-scale agriculture (*Bäuerliche Landwirtschaft*), regional value-chains (*Regionale Wertschöpfungsketten*) and ecological sound production methods.

I argue that the initiatives' positions and claims contain central arguments and beliefs that are part of the societal discourse, which has begun with the proclamation of the *Agrarwende*. The fact that the initiative is joined by numerous, diverse organisations indicates that many different groups of the society are represented.

For my thesis, I raise the question whether the *Wir haben es satt* initiative can be understood as a re-organized form of the agrarian opposition (mainly referring to the then existing *Dachverband der Deutschen Agraropposition, DDA*), which entered the public arena in 2000/2001 when the BSE-crisis fundamentally put into question the (German) agri-food system.

In order to arrange the introduction of the *Agrarwende* and the emergence of *Wir haben es satt* in a broader context, I am going to apply Ulrich Beck's concept of a *risk society* to the agri-food sector and use his insights to make sense of the concerns, which have been emerging within the (German) society.

The BSE-crisis as well as the proclamation of the *Agrarwende* will be introduced as the moment in which the ('previous') agrarian opposition entered public stage. To explain how and under which conditions political agendas change as it happened in 2000/2001, John W. Kingdon's *Multiple Stream Framework* will be used.

As statements published by *Wir haben es satt* contain reasonable concerns regarding environmental issues as well as very general criticism towards liberalised markets and power relations, an important part of my thesis will be conducting and evaluating semi-structured interviews. By directly getting in contact with involved actors and interviewing them, shared beliefs, lines of argumentation, objectives and the self-conception of *Wir haben es satt* shall be identified.

Finally, I aim to set *Wir haben es satt* in the context of the political development since the turning point in German agricultural policy in 2000/2001 and find out whether it is an initiative, which can be clearly distinguished from the 'previous' agrarian opposition or whether it can be first of all understood as a reorganized form of previously existing resistance.

Studiengang – Study programme	M.Sc. Agricultural Economics
Laufzeit – Lifetime	04/2016 - 10/2016
Supervisor	Dr Cinzia Piatti
Erst-Prüferin – First examiner	Prof Dr Claudia Bieling
Zweit-Prüferin – Second examiner	Prof Dr Harald Grethe