


Farmers' relational values shape autonomy in biodiversity conservation practice – a case study from Saxony, Germany



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Challenge

- Farmland biodiversity is continuously declining across Europe, despite political efforts.
- Designing measures that are successfully implemented and have positive impacts on biodiversity requires an in-depth understanding of the local contexts in which farmers work.
- Disentangling how values inherent to relationships shape farmers' conservation practices can provide insights to how biodiversity may be conserved.

Questions

- Which values do farmers attribute to their relationship with their land, landscape, and community?
- How do farmers' values shape their autonomy in biodiversity conservation measures?

Theoretical approach

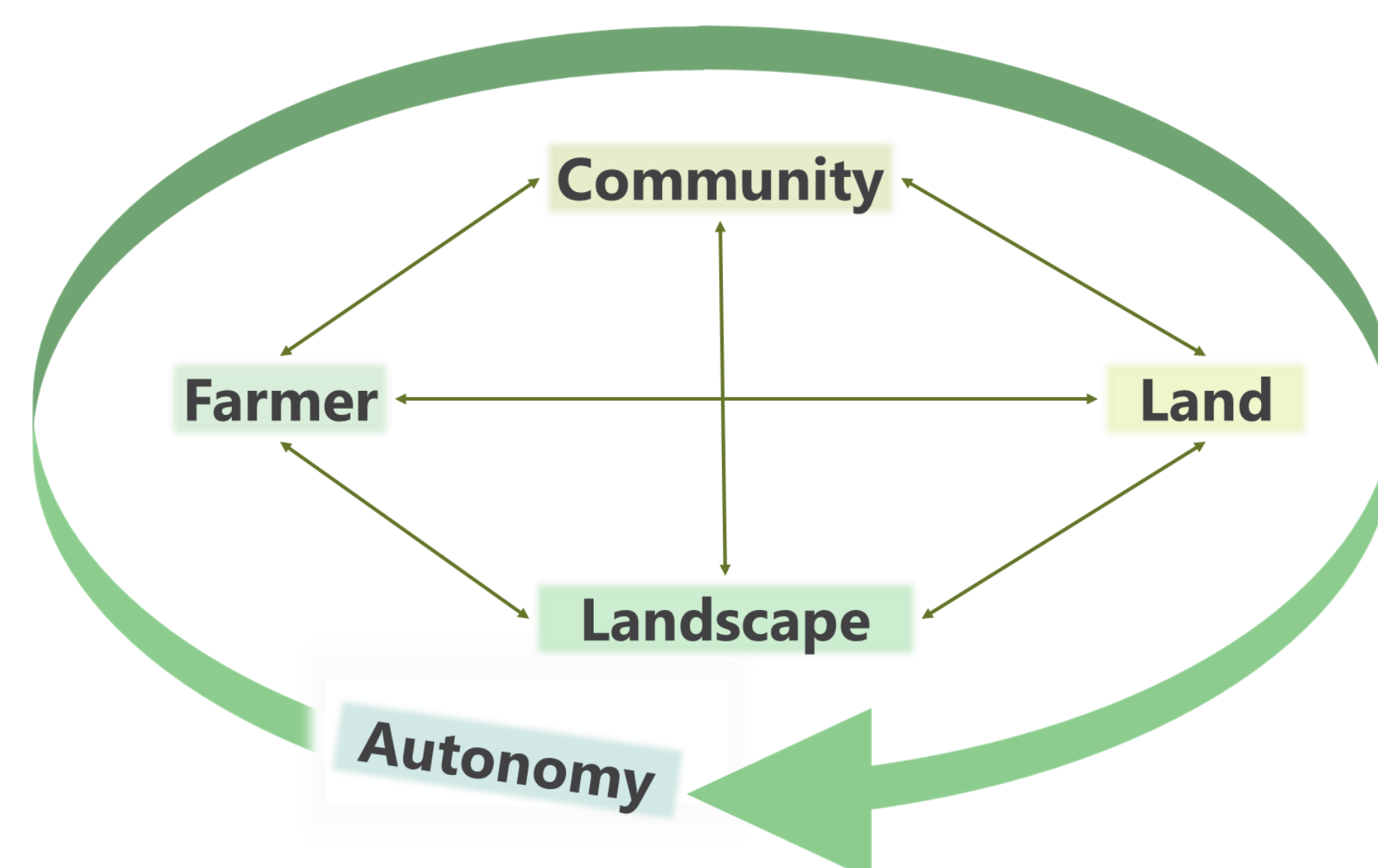


Fig. 1 Relationships are shaped by social processes and dialectically reinforce farmers' autonomy while they adapt to new practices. Relationship system adapted from Chapman et al., 2019. *Land Use Policy*

Methods

15 semi-structured interviews with farmers were conducted face-to-face. Qualitative Content Analysis was used to analyze the interview transcripts. Photovoice documented farmers' impressions of parts of their land where conservation and farming practice are integrated.

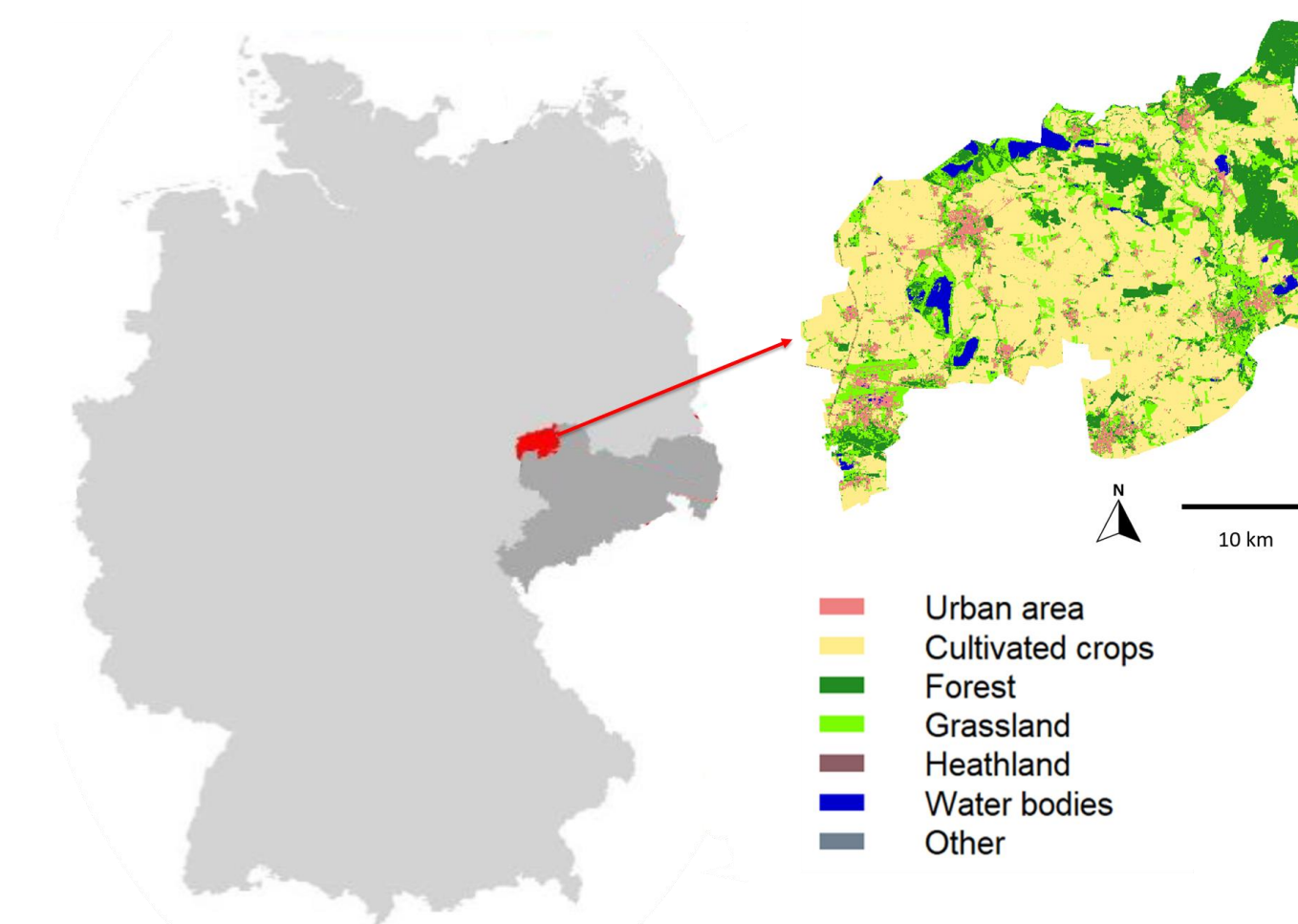


Fig. 2 Study region, the Vereingte Mulde, in Saxony, Germany (map by Lisanne Hölting)

Preliminary results

Relationship	Value(s)	Effects on autonomy in conservation	Sample quotes
Farmer-land	Connection to nature, adaptability, sufficiency, soil care, succession	Compatibility of practices that are inherently conserving biodiversity, support experimentation	F1: „I think it's the essential part of a farm that you work with your environment, give and take.“
Farmer-landscape	Stewardship, belonging	Opens possibility to collaborate for landscape-wide measures	F8: „I have the feeling that I am helping to shape the landscape...I have the feeling that [wiped-out areas] are now slowly recovering after 20 years,“
Farmer-community	Responsibility for others	Limits experimentation with new measures due to financial risk	F5: “[Conservation and production] must also be right in the end, because I have 30 families who have to live from the farm.“
Land-landscape	Providing diversity and habitat	Readiness for established and new farming or conservation measures.	F4: “We have a diverse crop rotation, we have many things that we use [for biodiversity conservation]”
Community-land	Communication, sustenance	Social pressure for farms to become explicit with their conservation measures	F9: “We have planted trees, symbolically, for our bees, but also for the villagers.“
Community-landscape	Holism	Expectations that the community supports conservation.	F2: „So it's not just the landscape, it's also the people.“

