

***Ideas, Politics, and Materialities:***  
***A Socio-Environmental History of Organic Farming in Andalusia***

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This thesis explores the origins and developments of organic farming in the southern Spanish region of Andalusia. Even though the region is one of the climatically driest and economically weakest in Europe, organic farming is now booming there (almost 50 percent of Spain's organic farmland).

On the one hand, the study addresses economic and social traditions by looking at the role of agriculture in Andalusia since the end of the nineteenth century. This raises the question of how and why organic farming was able to spread so widely in a region often described as backward and characterized by decades of farm worker protests. To this end, socio-economic explanations have been extended here by environmental historical approaches, providing a history of social protest and the genesis of environmental thinking in the agrarian society of Andalusia.

On the other hand, the project highlights the development of organic farming between the 1970s (the years of the Spanish transition to democracy) and the recent financial and economic crisis. Even though organic agriculture grew continuously throughout this period, a linear success story will not be told here. The focus is rather on the different political and economic actors and their often disparate ideas about what organic agriculture means in theory and in practice. It is thus a history of conflict revolving around perceptions, practices, and the political implementation of organic farming—all of which are closely linked to questions of materiality. Even the impetus for agroecological resistance to conventional farming is based on perceived negative shifts in value due to "things," such as pesticide residues, loss of humus due to artificial fertilizers, and the replacement of human labor with machines. Thus, it appears necessary to examine the role of materialities in shaping understandings and practices of organic agriculture, from the stages of production all the way to transportation.

By drawing on archival research and conducting interviews, my dissertation reveals through a regional lens the interweaving processes of democratization and Europeanization with the greening of agriculture in Andalusia.