

Summer School 7 – **From Theory to Method and Back in Forest and Environmental Policy Research**

Date: 12.09 - 15.09.2017

Location: Freiburg, Germany

Participation: limited to 20 participants

Target Group: This course is specifically developed for and targeted at PhD researchers pursuing studies on forest or environmental policy and governance. The summer school's contents are suitable for PhD researchers in various phases of their scientific work and academic studies. Exceptionally highly motivated Master students from the research field of forest and/or environmental policy and governance are welcome to apply as well.

Coordinator and Lecturer:

Coordinating team: Prof. Dr. Daniela Kleinschmit, Dr. Sylvia Kruse, Dr. Metodi Sotirov

Main Instructor: Prof. Dr. Margaret Shannon,

Further instructors: Prof. Dr. Daniela Kleinschmit, Dr. Sylvia Kruse, Dr. Sina Leipold, Dr. Sabine Reinecke, Dr. Tobias Schulz (WSL), Dr. Andy Selter, Dr. Metodi Sotirov, Dr. Roderich von Detten and others

Content:

Academic research on forest and environmental policy and governance can either start out from a theoretical or from an empirical puzzle. Connecting both starting points with each other in a stringent and meaningful way often proves to be a challenge for young researchers. Furthermore, research designs often demand a comprehensive understanding of both, the broader landscape of suitable theories as of the variety of available research methods to test or further develop these theories. For conducting research in reliable ways systematically connecting theory to methods and methods to theory is crucial.

This summer school on forest and environmental policy research aims to provide a platform for discussing the interlinkages between theory and method in the research process. In this endeavour the summer school combines instructive elements, like lectures from renowned scholars, with interactive approaches where the participating PhD and graduate students will present or discuss their own work in small groups, or in direct interaction with a mentor.

The course has the following learning aims:

The major aim of the summer school is to enable participants to better align their theoretical and methodological research design, justify their distinct research steps, streamline data collection and data analysis in a more stringent way, and learn to better situate their own research in the wider research landscape within and across disciplines.

The specific aims of the course are to:

- Become familiar with the key schools of thought and theories in policy research and locate the own research project within this landscape of forest and environmental policy research
- Learn how to identify research questions and methodology that match theories in a consistent way
- Practice how to enhance the interlinkage between theory and methods in PhD research in forest and environmental policy studies

Course structure

The summer school is a 3 day course. Before the course starts, participants will be asked to prepare a draft paper about their ongoing research covering their research question and the (intended) theoretical as well as methodological approach. During the course, this case report will be developed further based on the input and exchange during the course. On the final day, all participants will give a presentation of their final product.

This summer school will start with key insights from philosophy of science. Further on, five schools of thought: (i) institutionalism, (ii) rational choice (iii) interpretative theory, (iv) mixed approaches (e.g.) discursive institutionalism and (v) grounded theory will be presented. All participants will be asked to locate their own research approach into one of these frameworks. In small mentoring groups their theoretical perspective will be discussed. As a next step, the transition from theory to methods will be developed. Major differences of qualitative and quantitative methods will be presented and discussed concerning their appropriateness for operationalizing the different schools of thought. Based on this, the summer school will focus on identifying suitable methods (qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods) methods) and research approaches (inductive, deductive, abductive) that can be related to the schools of thoughts. In the last step, the participants will present their draft papers developed further during the summer school.

Program:

Day 1: Arrival at lunch time, welcome address, round of introduction, introduction into philosophy of science, dinner followed by a movie

Day 2: Focus on Theory

- Introducing the five schools of thought
- Work in small mentoring groups on theories used by participants,
- Different theories explaining one empirical case
- Further developing own draft paper

Day 3: Focus on Methodology

- From theory to research design and methods
- Two ways in policy research: qualitative and quantitative methods
- Group work on the linkages between theory and methods
- Further developing own draft paper

Day 4: Presentation

- Presentation of individual work with feedback,
- Concluding remarks, evaluation
- Departure after lunch

Practical information:

Costs: 280 Euro

Fees cover costs of meeting venue, accommodation (in shared bedrooms), meals and transport from/to Freiburg train station.

Contact for further information: Dr. Sylvia Kruse: sylvia.kruse@ifp.uni-freiburg.de

Application:

Please apply with a short motivation letter, indicating why you would like to take part in the summer school. Let us know in which phase of the scientific work of your PhD you are at the moment and which are your research focus, your theoretical anchorage and your selected method (if already decided). The motivation letter should not exceed 500 words.

Important dates:

Application with motivation letter: Deadline April 16th, 2017

Acceptance: May 8th, 2017

Registration: May 19th, 2017

Submitting Draft Paper: July 15th, 2017