



SCIENTIFIC FINAL REPORT

Two- and three-year projects and postdoctoral projects

Registration number, Östersjöstiftelsen: 2019-0008

Project manager: Susanne Wengle

Project title: *Post-Soviet Harvests; understanding uneven rural recovery in the post-Soviet region*

1. The three most important results of the project and what conclusions can be drawn from them

- a) The post-Soviet trajectories showed that rural *reforms that widely disbursed farm ownership*, helped to create small farms, or carved out special protections for small farms, have had significant and positive effects for rural development.
- b) The covid pandemic and the disruptions caused by the war in Ukraine showed that *resilience*, along with rural development, is an important aspect of post-Soviet farm recovery over the last twenty years.
- c) At the same time, *governments in the region have often privileged investment in farm efficiency and export-oriented farming*, despite the positive contribution by small (and less efficient) farms to resilience and rural household incomes.

2. The project's contribution to the international research frontline

- a) *Russia's war in Ukraine and the Black Sea blockade* has created enormous demand for background information on Ukrainian and Russian agriculture. Due to the research conducted with the support of the Östersjöstiftelsen, I was able to contribute to research on the role of agriculture for Ukrainian and Russian economies and societies. Our papers on Ukraine were the first to document the historic conditions that led to Ukraine's remarkable corn boom, and how the war has affected Ukraine's rural producers. Results published in Mamonova, N., Wengle, S. and Dankevych, V. (2023) Queen of the fields in wartime: what can Ukrainian corn tell us about the resilience of the global food system. *Journal of Peasant Studies*. 50:7; as well as in several policy papers.
- b) Post-Soviet agricultural production varies across the region, which offers opportunities for cross-regional comparisons. One way in which rural recoveries varied is how agricultural producers adapted to *changing climate risks*. My research has produced a new typology of firm-level resource-use strategies – intensification, adaptation and retreat, and suggest a concept – that of the coping range, from the literature on climate adaptation to institutional political economy, to debates in institutional political economy. A paper on demonstrated this through an analysis of crop-choice strategies by farms in Ukraine, Russia and Kazakhstan after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Wengle,



S. Farms, firms and green institutional political economy; evidence from Eurasian grain producers (*under review with Post-Soviet Affairs*).

- c) Although Central Asia has experienced a remarkable recovery of potato and vegetable production – important elements of quotidian diets in the region, as well as export commodities – there has been very little research documenting the conditions and nature of this recovery. Our paper on Kyrgyzstan is the first to closely document the key features of the Kyrgyz potato economy and demonstrate its value for rural development and food security.

Results published in: Wengle, S., Musabaeva S., Greenwood-Sanchez, D. (2024). Second Bread: Potato Cultivation and Food Security in Kyrgyzstan. *Journal of Development Studies*.

3. The contribution of the research to the knowledge of the Baltic Sea Region and Eastern Europe

See point 2.

4. New research questions that the project has led to

- a) Role of grain and agricultural land markets in the war: Wengle, S., Mamonova, N., Dankevych, V. (2024). Farming the Black Earth: The history and politics of Ukraine's Agricultural Land Market before, during and after Russia's war. *Land Tenure Journal*.
- b) Future of Russian and Eurasian agriculture in a changing climate: Javeline, D., Orttung, R., Robertson, G., Arnold, R., Barnes, A., Henry, L., Holland, E., Omelicheva, M., Rutland, P., Schatz, E., Schenk, C., Semenov, A., Sperling, V., McIntosh Sundstrom, L., Troitskiy, M., Twigg, J., & Wengle, S. (2023). Russia in a changing climate. *WIREs Climate Change*.
- c) The new Geopolitics of Eurasian grain (book project in progress)

5. Dissemination of the results of the project within and outside the research community

Peer-reviewed publications:

Wengle, S., Musabaeva S., Greenwood-Sanchez, D. (2024). Second Bread: Potato Cultivation and Food Security in Kyrgyzstan. *Journal of Development Studies*. (Open access).

Mamonova, N., Wengle, S. and Dankevych, V. (2023) Queen of the fields in wartime: what can Ukrainian corn tell us about the resilience of the global food system. *Journal of Peasant Studies*. 50:7. (Open access).

Wengle, S. Farms, firms and green institutional political economy (still under review).



Policy papers:

We have published several policy papers based on the research conducted in Ukraine:
Wengle, S. (2023) “Russia’s War on Ukrainian Farms: the Black Sea Theater” *Russian Analytical Digest* #304. November 2023. (Open access).

Wengle, S. and Vitalii Dankevych (2022) “Black Sea Blackmail,” *PONARS Policy Memo*; #813. November 2022. (Open access).

Wengle, S. and Vitalii Dankevych (2022) “Russia’s War on Ukrainian Farms” *PONARS Policy Memo* #786, July 2022. (Open access).

Conferences:

CEECON Conference, “The political economy of Ukrainian Agriculture; before, during and after the War” *Freie Universität Berlin*, October 2024.

Invited talk, “Russia’s War on Ukrainian Farms” *Yale Russian Studies Kruzhok*, February 2024.

Invited talk, “Russia’s War on Ukrainian Farms” *SLU/Swedish Agricultural University*, January 2024.

Invited talk, “Russia’s War on Ukrainian Farms” *Kings’ College Russia Institute*, October 2023.

“Ukrainian Land Reform; war-time threats and post-war reconstruction” *Annual Conference, Aleksanteri Institute, University of Helsinki, Finland*, Oct.2023.

“A Tale of Two Transitions” with Roberto Veneziani and Daniele Girardi, *Midwest Political Science Association*, Chicago, April 2023.

“Russia’s War on Ukrainian Farms” with V. Dankevych, *Annual Conference, Aleksanteri Institute, University of Helsinki, Finland*, Oct.2022.

“Climate Smart Political Economy: what do we learn from Eurasian grain recoveries about climate- vs. institutional risks?” *Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA)*, 2022, April, 2022; *American Political Science Association (APSA)*, Sept. 2022, and *Association for East European and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES)*, November 2022.

Invited talk, *Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies*, UW Madison, “Black Earth, White Bread: A Techno-Political History of Russian Agriculture and Food,” February 10, 2022.

Media, Videos and Podcasts

Video:

Ponars Academy Video: Russia’s War Economy; <https://www.ponarseurasia.org/online-academy/>

Ponars Academy Video: Eurasian Grain; <https://www.ponarseurasia.org/online-academy/>

Podcasts:



New Books Podcast: April 15, 2022: <https://newbooksnetwork.com/black-earth-white-bread>

Partisan Gardens: March 31, 2022, <https://wfhb.org/news-public-affairs/march-2022-the-grain-problem-russian-agriculture-and-the-impact-of-war/>

SCAS Talk; Episode 29, 2022: Susanne A. Wengle: “Black earth, white bread: a technopolitical history of Russian agriculture and food”,
<https://scastalks.podbean.com/e/scas-talks-episode-29-%e2%80%93-susanne-a-wengle-black-earth-white-bread-a-technopolitical-history-of-russian-agriculture-and-food/>

Media:

Wengle, S. and Dankevych, V. (2023) “Kakhovka Dam breach in Ukraine caused economic, agricultural and ecological devastation that will last for years,” *The Conversation*, July 7, 2023.

Wengle, S. and Dankevych, V. (2022) “Ukrainian farms feed Europe and China. Russia wants to end that” *The Washington Post*. Sept. 1, 2022.

Wengle, S. (2022) Ordinary Russians were already worried about rising food prices. Then came war and sanctions. *The Washington Post*. March 4, 2022.

Wengle, S. “Black Sea Blackmail” *The Russia Post*, July 26, 2023
<https://russiapost.info/politics/blackmail>

Additionally: several interviews with New York times, AP, AFP, Forbes, etc.