DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIC FARMING IN EUROPE AT THE CROSSROADS: LOOKING FOR THE WAY FORWARD THROUGH SYSTEM ARCHETYPES’ LENSES

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INTRODUCTION
Over the last several decades, policymakers and stakeholders in the European Union (EU) have put considerable effort into increasing the adoption of organic farming, with the overall objective of its sustainable development. However, the growth of the organic sector has come with many challenges that jeopardize its sustainability. The question then is how to move organic farming in Europe forward and at the same time capitalize on its potential contribution to sustainability?

Organic farming in the EU is a highly complex and dynamic food system and as such this question cannot be answered in isolation using a one-dimensional mind-set and tools of the past. In this paper we explored the usefulness of system archetypes to sharpen our ability (1) to analyze and anticipate difficulties in the development of organic farming in the EU and (2) to find effective ways to address these difficulties.

METHODOLOGY
System archetypes constitute a catalogue of ten generic system structures, accompanied by storylines, that involve two or more reinforcing (R) and/or balancing (B) feedback loops driving (1) intended actions (IA) and (2) unintended consequences (UC) often occurring with a delay (Figure 1). The system structures underlie archetypical behavior over time.

For each system archetype there are well-defined yet generic solutions that proved to be effective in resolving the undesirable archetypical behavior.

In this paper we used the catalogue of system archetypes as lenses for looking at the development of organic farming in the EU. An overview of our approach is presented in Figure 2.

RESULTS
Eroding Goals (Figure 4): How to reverse conventionalization of organic farming in the EU?

The Way Forward: It is important to continuously improve regulatory standards based on an external frame of reference, otherwise organic farming in the EU will continue on its trajectory towards conventionalization.

Shifting the Burden (Figure 5): How to balance supply of organic food with the rapidly growing demand for it?

CONCLUSIONS
Investigation of the development of organic farming by: Using the remaining system archetypes; Developing quantitative system dynamics models.

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