

# Chapter 2

## No Food Security Without Food Sovereignty

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**Abstract** While efforts are made to forge a balance between food security and food safety, due attention should be given to food sovereignty in the first place. Without attributing a central position to the values implied in food sovereignty, a balance between food security and food safety would result in policy development based on a false conceptual compromise which would not adequately address the challenges of the twenty-first century.

**Keywords** Food security • Sovereignty • Buddhist economics

### 2.1 Introduction

The major question explored in this paper is how a policy development framework for Asia and the Pacific can be conceived that would pave the way for empowerment of emerging independent small-scale farmers' networks that adhere to food sovereignty, in order to enable these networks to match the enormous influence that the mainstream business sector and nation-states exert on agriculture and food distribution policies. The paper argues that without this threefold 'balance of power', full food security and full food safety cannot be achieved.

As the quest for such a policy development framework is undertaken in the context of the Asia-Pacific region, and the paper is written from a Thai perspective, a contemporary view on the ethical construct of 'Buddhist economics' will be elaborated, within the limitations of initial explorations undertaken by the School for Wellbeing Studies and Research. The School for Wellbeing was established as a small-scale independent think tank and action-research platform in 2009 by three organisations: Chulalongkorn University and the Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation, both based in Thailand, and the Centre for Bhutan Studies, Thimphu, Bhutan.

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## 2.2 Organisation Development in Thai Context: Green Market Network

The Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation (SNF) was established by Thai social activist and critic Sulak Sivaraksa in 1968. From the SNF foundation a cluster of independent organisations emerged: the Spirit in Education Movement (SEM), Ashram Wongsanit, the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) as well as a social enterprise named Suan Nguen Mee Ma in 2001. The social enterprise was an initiative that resulted from the *Alternatives to Consumerism* international conference and festival convened by Sulak Sivaraksa in Buddhamonthon – the centre of Thai Buddhism – near Bangkok, 1997, shortly after he received the Right Livelihood Award. One of the activities of the Suan Nguen Mee Ma social enterprise is the *Green Market Network*. The social enterprise also takes care of the secretariat of the School for Wellbeing.

The *Green Market Network* facilitates intensive networking between producers of organic food, responsible traders and ethical consumers, including ‘green hospitals’. It supports consumer awareness with campaigns, training, publications and media relations.

The paradigm shift that pro-organic advocates seek to promote is that organic products are not in fact too expensive, but that conventional food is too cheap because of ‘externalities’ and hidden government subsidies that enable non-organic food to be sold at lower prices. (van Willenswaard; in: Pierre Jacquet Ed., 2012)

The *Green Market Network* advocates that social return on preventive-health investments in organic food-producing rural and peri-urban communities, by means of guaranteed purchase by ‘green hospitals’ that also benefit from the healthy food supply for patients in the curative context, would be considerable. The savings by cost reduction on environmental degradation, deterioration of public health due to the hazards of industrial food production as well as often contaminated, low-quality, industrial food for consumption – and including mental health caused by lack of social cohesion and by work-related stress due to excessive urbanisation – would liberate resources to support ‘*organic food for all*’ (poster presentation, IUHPE conference *Best Investments for Health*, Pattaya 2013). This would address in a largely uncharted way the growing incidence of non-communicable – or food- and lifestyle-related – diseases (WHO 2013).

In 2010 Vandana Shiva, ecological activist and advisor of the School for Wellbeing, advocated that the work pioneered by the *Green Market Network* should be upscaled to an international level. Her advice resulted in the *Towards Organic Asia* (TOA) programme administered by the School for Wellbeing. The TOA programme initiated the Young Organic Farmers’ (YOF) movement in the Mekong region + Bhutan, initiated an action research and organised the international forum on *Innovating Alternative Markets* with Asia- and Pacific-wide participation (School for Wellbeing Report 2013).

## 2.3 Food Security, Food Safety and Food Sovereignty

*Food security*, as defined by FAO, ‘exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life’ (World Food Summit 1996).

*Food safety* encompasses actions aimed at ensuring that all food is as safe as possible. Food safety policies and actions need to cover the entire food chain, from production to consumption, according to the WHO. Contradictions between the aims of security and safety occur within the conceptual framework of food security.

During the World Summit on Food Security, November 2009, organised by FAO, the High-Level Expert Forum on How to Feed the World in 2050 was established. It concluded:

(And) while agriculture will be forced to compete for land and water with sprawling urban settlements, it will also be required to serve on other major fronts: adapting to and contributing to the mitigation of climate change, helping preserve natural habitats, protecting endangered species and maintaining a high level of biodiversity. As though this were not challenging enough, in most regions fewer people will be living in rural areas and even fewer will be farmers. They will need new technologies to grow more from less land, with fewer hands.

Food security seems to be defined here in a context of an unchallenged sociopolitical system (continued economic growth defined by GDP, overall inequality), emphasis on ‘resources’ rather than on the farmers’ population, prices determined by uncontrolled market mechanisms, irreversible rural-urban migration, unspecified technology needed for increase of production (not excluding genetic engineering, owned and protected by big corporations and the hidden agenda in the statement), in order to match unlimited consumption including biofuel and industrial use and a resulting research agenda prioritised by these policy assumptions.

The concept of *food sovereignty* has been formulated in the Nyéléni Declaration (Mali 2007):

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers and users. Food sovereignty prioritizes local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal – fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability. Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just incomes to all peoples as well as the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition. It ensures that the rights to use and manage lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those of us who produce food. Food sovereignty

implies new social relations free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social and economic classes and generations.

Food sovereignty is guaranteed if producers have unobstructed access to their rights, including land rights; they can work together at human-to-human level and primarily at local and national scale: among producers' communities and with participating consumers in a context of intergenerational responsibility. Technology is appropriate and is generated among the producers with access to research facilities and fair influence on the research agenda. 'Food sovereignty' drives a global movement of small-scale farmers.

## 2.4 The Organic Agriculture Movement and La Via Campesina

Is it possible to integrate food security, food safety and food sovereignty in one policy framework? To a high extent that is what the *organic movement* stands for. Drawing on centuries of tradition and contemporary innovation, it formally manifested itself as the *International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements* (IFOAM), established in Versailles, France, in 1972. After a 'romantic' pioneering stage, IFOAM gained recognition as a worldwide organisation guarding organic standards and regulating certification practices. The global market for organic food was estimated in 2012 at 44.5 billion euros (Organic agriculture worldwide. FiBL 2012).

The total organic area in *Asia* is nearly 2.9 million hectares. This constitutes 9 % of the world's organic agricultural land. Two hundred thirty thousand producers were reported. The leading countries are China (1.6 million hectares) and India (1 million hectares). *Oceania/Pacific* includes Australia, New Zealand and island states. Altogether, there are 7,222 producers, managing almost 12.1 million hectares. This constitutes 2.6 % of the agricultural land in the area and 38 % of the world's organic land (Organic agriculture worldwide. FiBL 2012). Asia, apparently, is characterised by small holders while the average farm size in Australia and New Zealand is much bigger.

Interestingly, in the last decade IFOAM moved from a primarily regulatory ('third-party' certification) towards a more value-driven global network. The growing application of Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) is based on self-organisation, often including producers and consumers alike, matching the needs of small-scale farmers (School for Wellbeing, TOA *Innovating Alternative Markets Report 2013*).

The four basic principles of IFOAM are:

- Health
- Ecology
- Fairness
- Care

Although food sovereignty became also a major concern of IFOAM and had been from the beginning, the need for economic viability in an alien economic landscape forced much of the organic movement into mainstream business models that sometimes contradict its principles. Therefore, the birth of La Via Campesina, ‘the International Peasant’s Movement’, in 1993 was a welcome addition to self-organised institution building. More than IFOAM, La Via Campesina took an activist position, including a strong profile during the series of World Social Forum gatherings which started in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2001.

Twenty years after its establishment, recognition of La Via Campesina followed:

Today, during a meeting between La Via Campesina and FAO’s Director general Jose Graziano da Silva an agreement of cooperation was formalized which acknowledged the essential role played by small holder food producers. Their role was recognised as most important in the eradication of world hunger. The cooperation will focus on various key areas: strengthening peasant based agro-ecological food production, protecting small holders’ rights to access land and water, as well as improving farmers rights over seeds in accordance with international and national seed laws. This cooperation’s framework will lay special emphasis on the key role played by youth and women in food production as well as the need to improve their access to land and other productive resources. (FAO, Rome, 4 October 2013)

## 2.5 A Policy Development Framework Inspired by Gross National Happiness

A policy framework for sustainable development, with agriculture at its heart, cannot only be constructed by values and value systems. *Food ethics* require that relations between values regarding food production and consumption, and social structures must be clarified in order to operationalise improvement. This is why Helena Norberg-Hodge, author of *Bringing the Food Economy Home* (Norberg Hodge 2002), promotes localization:

Localizing turns out to be fundamentally in the opposite direction to what the governments are currently promoting, which is the globalization. The latter has certain systemic characteristics. First of all, it is about separating producers and consumers and separating investors from what they invest in. That is already very dangerous. The investor over here doesn’t even have any idea about how the money is affecting over here. That alone means structurally that you can’t have a good ethical practice.

Shortening the distances, so that you see the impact of what you do, both as a producer and as a consumer, and you know what has happened and what you are. Then you can be more ethical. What also happens in the shorter distances, is that businesses become more visible and accountable to society. And what starts to happen is that culture and ecological value can shape business, rather than businesses do now, shaping culture and ecology and shaping government. (Interview with Helena Norberg-Hodge, ISHES)

In the interview Helena Norberg-Hodge not only refers to the challenges of the tension between localization and globalisation. She distinguishes business, culture,

government and ecology as four interacting societal systems, competing for influence.

Here we may turn to the ‘four pillars’ underpinning Gross National Happiness, a leading philosophy brought about in Bhutan. Gross National Happiness (GNH) was coined by the King of Bhutan in 1974 and later included in the first constitution of Bhutan, 2008. It was shaped as a monitoring instrument for government policies. Communication on GNH with the world beyond Bhutan was supported by a series of international conferences (‘GNH3’ was organised in Thailand in 2007 and resulted later in for the *School for Wellbeing initiative*). This resulted ultimately in an academic and policymaker’s dialogue in the framework of the United Nations on ‘Wellbeing and Happiness: Defining a New Economic Paradigm’ (Royal Government of Bhutan, <http://www.2apr.gov.bt/>).

The four pillars of GNH are (paraphrased):

1. Cultural integrity
2. Good governance
3. Equitable economic development
4. Environmental preservation

## 2.6 Threefold Development in Historic and Contemporary Perspectives

The four pillars of GNH have been compared (while observing due respect) with, at one hand, the Three Jewels of Buddhism (Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha) and at the other hand with the values of the French Revolution: freedom, equality and fraternity. Both have to be understood, from a twenty-first century perspective, within the all-encompassing challenge to actively care for nature (van Willenswaard, *Critical Holism* 2008). A justification for a search for resonance between these two foundations for a contemporary ethical framework can be found in the works of Dr. Ambedkar (1891–1956), who drafted the constitution of independent India, adopted in 1949. Dr. Ambedkar however makes clear that it was not the French Revolution that influenced him, but he recognised Buddhist insights in the core values freedom, equality and fraternity:

Let no one however say that I have borrowed my philosophy from the French Revolution.

I have not. I have derived them from the teachings of my master, the Buddha. I found that his teaching was democratic to the core. (Quoted in: Lionel WIJESIRI *BUDDHA DHAMMA: Liberty, equality, fraternity and Buddhism*)

More recently the principle of a threefold dynamics of values has been made understood by Philippine philosopher and activist Nicanor Perlas as a new balance of power between the state, the business sector and the civil society (Perlas 2000). And: School for Wellbeing Report, International Exchange Platform on *Re-thinking*

*Property. Pathway to a Wellbeing Society scenario?* at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok (2011).

The combined perspectives offered by Buddhist philosophy, the values of the French Revolution, the four pillars of Gross National Happiness and the ‘triselector’ foundation of a ‘wellbeing society’ are explored here tentatively as a possible contribution towards an ethical framework enabling to match the challenge to guaranteeing ‘organic food for all’ in the twenty-first century in the Asia-Pacific.

## 2.7 The Wellbeing Society: Modes of Happiness and Property Regimes

Preliminary analysis in a research-development project of the School for Wellbeing Studies resulted in perceiving a distinction between three dimensions of happiness. Economic theory and practice are almost entirely based on happiness as *satisfaction* of needs, or ‘utility’ (Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice* 2009), while ‘contentment’ and ‘happiness for transformation’ remain largely unaddressed by economic dynamics. Directing economic activity towards the latter two dimensions of happiness: *contentment* and *altruism* – without neglecting the challenge to satisfy basic needs – would result in higher levels of happiness and wellbeing and lower levels of exploitation of human and natural resources than an economy driven by often artificially created surplus needs.

The School for Wellbeing Studies and Research also explored whether these three dimensions of happiness resonate with particular property regimes: is happiness as satisfaction corresponding with a preference for private property regimes? Are *contentment* and detachment from outer conditions, with collective or state ownership? And can one say that *happiness as fulfilment of meaning*, altruism (Matthieu Ricard *Happiness. A Guide to Developing Life’s Most Important Skill* 2006), corresponds with a preference for common property? (Figs. 2.1 and 2.2).

The neoliberal worldview promotes a private property regime favouring not only individuals but also corporations which are attributed the same rights as ‘free’ individuals (Bakan 2003). While in communist or socialist worldviews, public property (ownership by the state) is placed central to uphold its model of a government-driven ‘welfare state’. Global movements towards an alternative development path, in contrast to both regimes, promote increased recognition of the centrality of *common property*. A key presentation during the Bangkok *Re-thinking Property* exchange platform was made by Silke Helfrich of the *Commons Strategy Group*, a global network of ‘commons’ activists. She referred extensively to Elinor Ostrom, political economist, USA, and recipient of the 2009 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences (Ostrom 2006).

The aim of this exploration of *resonance* between various levels of human behaviour, governance structures and policy development determinants is to uncover the deeper ethical principles and intrinsic logic of possible future scenarios and to

**Fig. 2.1** Three basic dimensions of happiness, together constituting wellbeing

<b>Wellbeing</b>	<b>Satisfaction; utility</b>
	<b>Contentment</b>
	<b>Altruism, Happiness for transformation</b>

**Fig. 2.2** Three basic property regimes

<b>Property</b>	<b>Private property</b>
	<b>Public property</b>
	<b>Common property</b>

provoke articulating choices that can be made in public policy development in the Asia-Pacific.

## 2.8 An Alternative to Scenarios Driven by Economic Growth

None of the three property regimes can stand alone. However, in the present world economy, private property and public property regimes have merged into a *false compromise*: one interlocked system of ‘state capitalism’ (China) and ‘capitalism supported by the co-opted state’ (USA), which dominates the world. The system largely denies space for emerging civil society networks based on common property principles. Historically this space was prominent and well protected in traditional societies. An integrated approach to food security, food safety and food sovereignty requires that this space, enabling a civil society-driven economy, should be reclaimed and recreated, in order – not to replace them but – to keep private property and public property regimes in check: pushing them back within the boundaries of where they are meaningful and supporting sustainable development, poverty eradication and wellbeing of the planet. This could include a revival of the cooperative movement, detached from mainstream state-controlled or for-profit business models and

guided by community values, as signalled by Joel Magnuson in his book *Mindful Economics. How the US Economy Works, Why It Matters, and How It Could Be Different* – a timely message applicable to the Asia-Pacific.

To this end, the innovation of a civil society-driven ‘wellbeing society’ scenario would contribute to envisioning and realising an alternative development path. The effort would be similar to but different from attempts at various stages of modern history to formulating a ‘third way’ between state socialism and market fundamentalism. Most recently the ‘third-way’ approach was adopted by Tony Blair and Bill Clinton, advised by sociologist Anthony Giddens (1998, 2000). This attempt led to a takeover by neoliberal policies.

Earlier Thich Nhat Hanh searched for a ‘middle way’ between capitalism and communism (Ken Jones, INEB website).

Living models of welfare states that exemplify an intermediate ‘social market economy’ are the Scandinavian countries, Germany and the Netherlands. However, from sustainable development perspective and since the crisis of 2008, the social market economy model is also under pressure. In the USA the conflict of interests between social security promotion and the protection of wealth has sharpened dramatically around the ongoing credit-ceiling negotiations.

It is generally agreed that the Scandinavian model is not directly achievable in developing economies, including Thailand. However, the Asian Development Bank urges Asian countries to invest their financial reserves in social safety nets (Rhee 2011). The investments could target small-scale farmers’ civil society networks. Providing social security beyond populism, and beyond income-focused poverty eradication drives that do not address systemic change, is extremely urgent in developing countries.

A possible uncharted impulse for this search for a *new* ‘third way’ would be the recognition of a change in paradigm from perceiving happiness as a *result* of economic growth to understanding and realising happiness as a *source*, a transformational force towards genuine progress: from satisfaction of needs to recognising happiness as ‘cultural venture capital’ creating altruism and the constitution of a meaningful society, within the boundaries of *sustainable development*. In this path common property would be the central mode of ownership, resonating with the ‘altruistic’ dimension of happiness. This is the quest for a *wellbeing society* scenario (School for Wellbeing Report 2012).

‘Balance’ in this context is understood as a dynamic process of ‘threefolding’ or ‘trisection cooperation’ engaging the market, the state and the civil society as equal partners in continuous negotiations: a process of consensus building leading to united care for the environment.

In summary: it makes well-founded sense to distinguish three scenarios – the state-driven, the business-driven and the civil society-driven society (Fig. 2.3).

In terms of ideology and economic theory, the three are connected with socialism, neoliberalism and the ‘new’ third way. Each approach has its own pathway to constructing social security: respectively, the welfare state, security by wealth and security by engagement with community.

**Fig. 2.3** Towards a new third way



Further action research, including multi-stakeholder dialogue, is needed: evidence-based foresight can be generated to support the design of scenarios for the future. Public dialogue can articulate ‘choices for life’, as Nicanor Perlas stipulated, to be made.

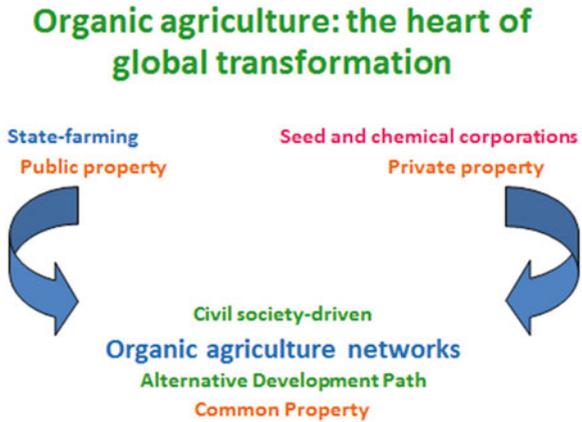
In the field of agriculture, the three scenarios can be worked out in this line:

1. Public property and state farming is typical for the state-driven scenario. Natural resources including seeds and land are state owned; or producers are dependent on state subsidies.
2. Corporations develop and protect, through intellectual property legislation, their laboratory-developed seeds in combination with patented chemicals: typical for the business-driven private property scenario.
3. In the civil society scenario, common property ethics tend to become central. ‘Networks of networks’ of small-scale farmers improve production by mutual exchanges (Fig. 2.4).

More reflection is needed on the questions on what influence property regimes exercise on economic, social and cultural systems and vice versa and how this relates to *food ethics*.

An important challenge for the emerging *happiness economics* partnership, in which the School for Wellbeing plays a modest co-creating role, is to build an ‘activist-academia bridge’ and to support training for consensus-building leadership between sectors and between the diversity of stakeholder and actor groups; between urban consumer initiatives, social entrepreneurs creating mindful markets, and rural producers (urban-rural divide); between generations (youth and wisdom teachers); and between the diversity of bodies of research and their interest groups (including dialogues between different points of view regarding genetic manipulation). However, dialogue will only be fruitful if stakeholders are provided with equal opportunities to gather evidence by research.

Fig. 2.4 Organic agriculture



## 2.9 The Joseph E. Stiglitz Analysis of the 2008 Crisis: Urban-Rural Divide in the 1930s

Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz, who spoke in Bangkok at the invitation of the School for Wellbeing, observed that migration of farmers and rural workers to the cities ultimately led to the Great Depression in the USA:

At the beginning of the Depression, more than a fifth of all Americans worked on farms. Between 1929 and 1932, these people saw their incomes cut by somewhere between one-third and two-thirds, compounding problems that farmers had faced for years. Agriculture had been a victim of its own success. In 1900, it took a large portion of the U.S. population to produce enough food for the country as a whole. Then came a revolution in agriculture that would gain pace throughout the century – better seeds, better fertilizer, better farming practices, along with widespread mechanization. Today, 2 percent of Americans produce more food than we can consume. (Stiglitz 2012)

From the mainstream economics point of view, this reduction of manpower is seen as an enormous achievement towards efficiency. Industrial employment in cities is experienced as of higher standard than rural employment. This will remain so if policymakers do not make significant efforts to upgrade rural quality of life to prevent migration to the cities.

Higher productivity supported by government-corporate stimuli and based on a modern scientific/industrial paradigm leads on the long term to a fundamental disconnection between rural producers and urban consumers with unexpected side effects.

**For the first time in human history, the number of overweight people rivals the number of underweight people....** While the world’s underfed population has declined slightly since 1980 to 1.1 billion, the number of overweight people has surged to 1.1 billion.

... the population of overweight people has expanded rapidly in recent decades, more than offsetting the health gains from the modest decline in hunger. In the United States, 55 percent of adults are overweight by international standards. A whopping 23 percent of American adults are considered obese. And the trend is spreading to children as well, with

one in five American kids now classified as overweight.... [O]besity cost the United States 12 percent of the national health care budget in the late 1990s, \$118 billion, more than double the \$47 billion attributable to smoking. (Global Issues 2010)

The shift from a rural economy to an urban manufacturing economy ultimately led to the collapse of the banks.

What this transition meant, however, is that jobs and livelihoods on the farm were being destroyed. Because of accelerating productivity, output was increasing faster than demand, and prices fell sharply. It was this, more than anything else, that led to rapidly declining incomes. Farmers then (like workers now) borrowed heavily to sustain living standards and production.

The underlying cause was a structural change in the real economy: the widespread decline in agricultural prices and incomes, caused by what is ordinarily a ‘good thing’ – greater productivity.

The trauma we’re experiencing right now resembles the trauma we experienced 80 years ago, during the Great Depression, and it has been brought on by an analogous set of circumstances. Then, as now, we faced a breakdown of the banking system. But then, as now, the breakdown of the banking system was in part a consequence of deeper problems. Even if we correctly respond to the trauma – the failures of the financial sector – it will take a decade or more to achieve full recovery.

(...) the inability of the monetary expansion to counteract this current recession should forever lay to rest the idea that monetary policy was the prime culprit in the 1930s. The problem today, as it was then, is something else. The problem today is the so-called real economy. It’s a problem rooted in the kinds of jobs we have, the kind we need, and the kind we’re losing, and rooted as well in the kind of workers we want and the kind we don’t know what to do with.

The parallels between the story of the origin of the Great Depression and that of our (present) Long Slump are strong. Back then we were moving from agriculture to manufacturing. Today we are moving from manufacturing to a service economy. (Stiglitz 2012)

In Stiglitz’s analysis there is ‘no way back to manufacturing’. And significant investment in agriculture is even considered as a lesser contribution to healing the economy. There only seems to be a way forward: stimulus and investment towards a new era of a hard-selling service economy.

## 2.10 From Linear ‘Development’ to Cyclical Complexity

Whether such a linear development scenario, largely ignoring *agriculture as a possible area of wellbeing creation* (health, jobs, volunteerism, education, landscapes, ecovillages), would prove its benefits for the USA and economic recovery will have to be awaited. For developing countries it definitely should not be the major direction of investment. According to the chapter of the *UNEP Green Economy Report on Greening Agriculture* (edited by Hans Herren who received the Right Livelihood Award 2013):

Agriculture (...) has tremendous potential to alleviate poverty. A large proportion of the rural population and labour force in developing countries is employed in agriculture. On

average, the contribution of agriculture to raising the incomes of the poorest is estimated to be at least 2.5 times higher than that of non-agriculture sectors in developing countries.

The World Bank (2010) reported that an increase in overall GDP derived from agricultural labour productivity was, on average, 2.9 times more effective in raising the incomes of the poorest quintile in developing countries than an equivalent increase in GDP derived from nonagricultural labour productivity (The Green Economy Report, UNEP 2011).

Increase in productivity driven by a reductionist, mechanistic, industrial paradigm may lead to the same effects induced by the agribusiness productivity boost in the USA of the 1930s that resulted from the Great Depression. Development experts often are not aware that their policy development theories are deeply biased by the expectation that developing countries will follow the same Western pattern of *inevitable rural dehumanisation*. This bias risks to becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy indeed.

By contrast, 'holistic' productivity growth should include: human-scale rural and permanent education, intelligent application of organic agriculture practices, decentralised and participatory research facilities, propagation of local seeds and biodiversity, community-supported public health services, care for the environment and landscapes (rewarded as paid environmental services) and ecovillage development combined with cross-cultural exchanges strengthening community resilience. Food security (quantity and quality) for urban consumers and development services towards 'greening' urban centres will result. Rural-wisdom-based social enterprises and rural-urban cooperatives will drive the economic trend.

As far as the concept 'organic agriculture' is being perceived to be too narrow to host this social-innovation movement, *agro-ecology* may be appreciated as a more suitable concept (Altieri 1995).

The linear trend of development inherent in the Stiglitz recommendation is prominent in modern thinking: there are only two desired directions of development: growth ('up') and moving forwards. Critical comments on reductionist growth scenarios easily lead to the reaction: does one want 'go back to Stone Age'? Does one reject science and technology? Does one want to move around in a circle without making progress?

Contemporary *cyclical development* combines *extreme complexity* (Peter Hershock, paper presented at Chulaongkorn University) with *extreme simplicity* of the circle.

Developed or industrialised countries, trying to overcome the present multiple crisis, discover 'developing countries' and 'new poverty' within their own boundaries. And developing countries are now largely governed from urban-industrial centres of power and guided by a seemingly inevitable techno-modernization bias: sucking rural masses to big cities and industrialising agriculture in order to make 'production more efficient'.

The new *service economy* can only be successful if it picks up the values, wisdom, human-scale economy and social resilience characteristic for organic rural communities of *agro-ecology* as a way of life. The service economy will be only

successful when it will be based not on a hard-selling urban-industrial growth paradigm where finance industry-driven service substitutes manufacturing, resulting in accumulation of wealth for the rich ‘1 %’ (leaving ‘We the 99 % behind’), but on a healthy agricultural foundation, on equitable socioeconomic development. All effects of the industrialization and corporatisation of the rural sector should be addressed at their causes: an unsustainable economic paradigm with maximising satisfaction of utility guiding its ethical orientation, instead of care, altruism and *genuine* service.

This is not ‘going back’ to the near-feudal rural culture of the 1920s or to the primitive ‘jungle’ as disregarded by Aristotle but going forwards to a transformed rural civilization which fully appreciates technology as long as it is sustainable and respects the integrity of nature. This is also no longer the ‘forest’ idealised by Tagore but a culture which integrates natural wisdom and modern science within an ethical framework typical for the wellbeing society. In this scenario not only agriculture but the development of meaningful ICT is crucial: connecting people and empowering their service-mindedness as well as strengthening their participatory role in democratic governance.

According to the UNEP *Green Economy Report* chapter on Agriculture, 87 % of small farms – defined as less than 2 ha – are based in Asia; in Africa they provide nearly all food production:

These small farmers in the developing world produce the majority of staple crops needed to feed the planet’s population (Altieri 2008). Their highest share is in Africa where about 90 per cent of all agricultural production is estimated to be derived from small farms, (Spencer 2002). In many instances their contribution is growing at the national level. While the issue is contested, there is substantial evidence that smaller farms have higher yields than large farms. (Green Economy Report, UNEP 2011)

In the agro-ecology approach, and the wellbeing society scenario, productivity will be increased by building ‘networks of networks’ of small farmers, who are connected by means of fair trade pacts with networks of networks of small-scale urban consumers’ associations and medium-sized institutional consumers like hospitals, schools, offices, etc. *Social entrepreneurship* and *meaningful ICT* will be essential to make this cyclical complexity of agro-ecology interconnections work.

The scenario contrasting with this vision, representing mainstream development, is that small farmers will be bought out and their small holdings transformed into big plantations run by mega corporations who control the complete supply chain, including land ownership, seeds, fertilisers, wholesale and retail, supported by direct and indirect government subsidies. See the so-called *New Vision for Agriculture* a ‘near-cartel’ of chemical fertiliser, pesticide and seed companies, wholesale and retail giants established within the World Economic Forum and partnering with international agencies.

## 2.11 Buddhist Economics

In 1952, U Nu, Prime Minister of Burma, organised the Pyidawtha ('Happy Land') conference and the *Pyidawtha Plan* was published in 1954. It was in this framework of hoped-for construction of an independent, democratic Burma that E.F. Schumacher (1911–1977) was hired, in 1955, to advise the government of Burma as a UN consultant. The essay in which he reflected on his experiences – he had started to take Buddhist meditation courses – was titled *Buddhist Economics* (Wint 1966).

'Right Livelihood' is one of the requirements of the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path. It is clear, therefore, that there must be such a thing as Buddhist economics. Buddhist countries have often stated that they wish to remain faithful to their heritage (...).

All the same, such countries invariably assume that they can model their economic development plans in accordance with modern economics, and they call upon modern economists from so-called advanced countries to advise them, to formulate the policies to be pursued, and to construct the grand design for development, the Five-Year Plan or whatever it may be called. No one seems to think that a Buddhist way of life would call for Buddhist economics, just as the modern materialist way of life has brought forth modern economics.

In the same period of the ultimate publication of E.F. Schumacher's book *Small is Beautiful. Economics as if People Mattered* in 1973 (including the earlier *Buddhist Economics* article), the young King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, upon his ascendance to the throne at the age of 17 – following the early death of his father – expressed his strong reservations towards modern western economics with the saying '*For the people of Bhutan Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross National Product*'. Simultaneously in Europe the Club of Rome launched its research report *The Limits to Growth*. The book of E.F. Schumacher has been translated into 27 different languages and in 1995 was named by the London Times Literary Supplement as one of the hundred most influential books written after World War II.

Remarkably, E.F. Schumacher was the President of the Soil Association in UK from 1970 to 1977 and emphasised the importance of organic agriculture as a central factor in an alternative approach to economics. From this perspective he actively supported the establishment of the *International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements* (IFOAM) in 1972 in Versailles, France.

Earlier Thich Nhat Hanh strived in Vietnam 'to create a third way of creative nonviolence beyond communism and capitalism'. He coined the term 'engaged Buddhism'. The International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), founded by Sulak Sivaraksa in Thailand, plays an active role in shaping an alternative development path. Sulak Sivaraksa is a staunch supporter of the Assembly of the Poor, Thailand, a pioneering member of La Via Campesina. INEB partners with like-minded groups with roots in diverse traditions in a common effort to shape 'engaged spirituality' towards sustainable development.

## 2.12 Conclusions

- Food security should not only address ‘health’ in general but in particular non-communicable (lifestyle- and food-related) diseases and their causes.
- Engaged spirituality and Buddhist economics: are ‘ethics-driven’ movements that address the root causes of poverty, inequality and injustice.
- From this insight, resonating with contemporary social analysis, global development efforts need a ‘new’ *third-way* perspective.
- Policy development negotiations between the state and the business sector to compromise food safety in order to achieve food security are a *false compromise*. Food sovereignty should be seen as the central issue to safeguard food security and food safety in an ultimate framework of human security.
- ‘(...) in most regions fewer people will be living in rural areas and even fewer will be farmers. They will need new technologies to grow more from less land, with fewer hands.’ This statement should not be taken as an inevitable trend determining the priorities of the research agenda. The creation of meaningful rural employment and strengthening of community spirit guided by food sovereignty should be the leading goal.

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