

Identifying and integrating basic ethical values of organic agriculture in the development of the EU-Regulation:
The role of ecological justice

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Overview

- Placing this work in context
- The Organic Revision project
- The globalisation of organic agriculture
- What is ecological justice?
- How to meet the challenges of globalisation
- Implementing ecological justice in organic trade

Placing this work in context

IFOAM has proposed four Principles of Organic Agriculture: the principles of health, ecology, fairness and care.

The *principle of fairness* is mainly concerned with issues of ecological justice, and this work is a detailed analysis of what 'fairness' and 'ecological justice' is about.

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- *Organic Revision*: an EU-financed research project.
- *Objective*: to provide recommendations for development of the EU regulation for organic agriculture.
- The project will identify the basic ethical *values* and value differences in organic agriculture and develop a procedure for balancing and integrating the basic values in revisions of the EU regulation (WP2).
- It will also establish an organic *standards database* that enables comparison of national and international organic standards with the EU regulation, and analyse the exposed differences (WP3).
- The project will provide specific recommendations on the derogations of the use of conventional *feed* (WP4) *and seed* (WP5) in the EU regulation.

The present success of organic agriculture

Globalisation and 'conventionalisation' are important factors in the recent growth of organic productions and markets:

- Large-scale efficient productions, incorporating modern technologies
 - Trade of feed, seed and other inputs through conventional companies
 - Global trade with organic feed and food products
 - Processing and marketing through large conventional food companies
 - Sale through supermarkets, sometimes using supermarket brands
- May lead to unwanted social and environmental impacts.
- Puts pressure on the integrity of the organic systems.

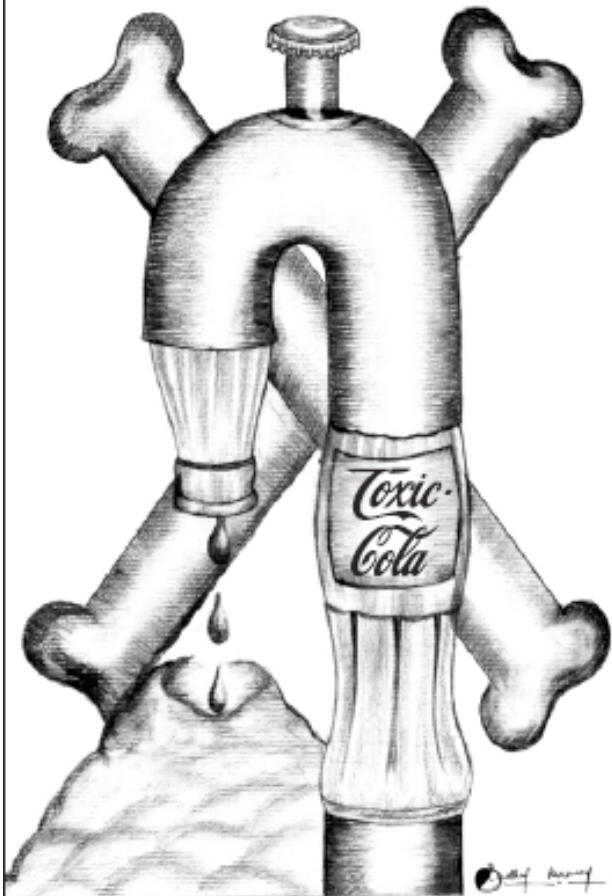
The global spread of organic agriculture

- Global support and adaption of the organic ideas (*on a small scale*)
 - Global trade of organic inputs, feed and food products
 - Global principles, standards and certification structures
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- A wish for harmonisation of rules in order to enable free trade.
 - A problem with how to address regional differences.
 - A conflict between free trade (*bulk trade, origin hidden*) and authenticity and transparency (*knowledge of the process behind the products*).

What is ecological justice?

- A key part of the proposed Principle of fairness
- Ecological justice is about fairness to others with regard to the environment (Low & Gleeson 1998)
 - More consideration of things that affect the environment of others, and thereby their life opportunities.
- There are plenty of examples of ecological *injustice* (also in relation to agriculture) (e.g., Byrne et al. 2002)
 - Use of fossil energy and climate change
 - Pollution and destruction of local environments by large industries
 - Use of land and resources in less developed areas by imports

PEOPLE'S FORUM AGAINST COCA-COLA



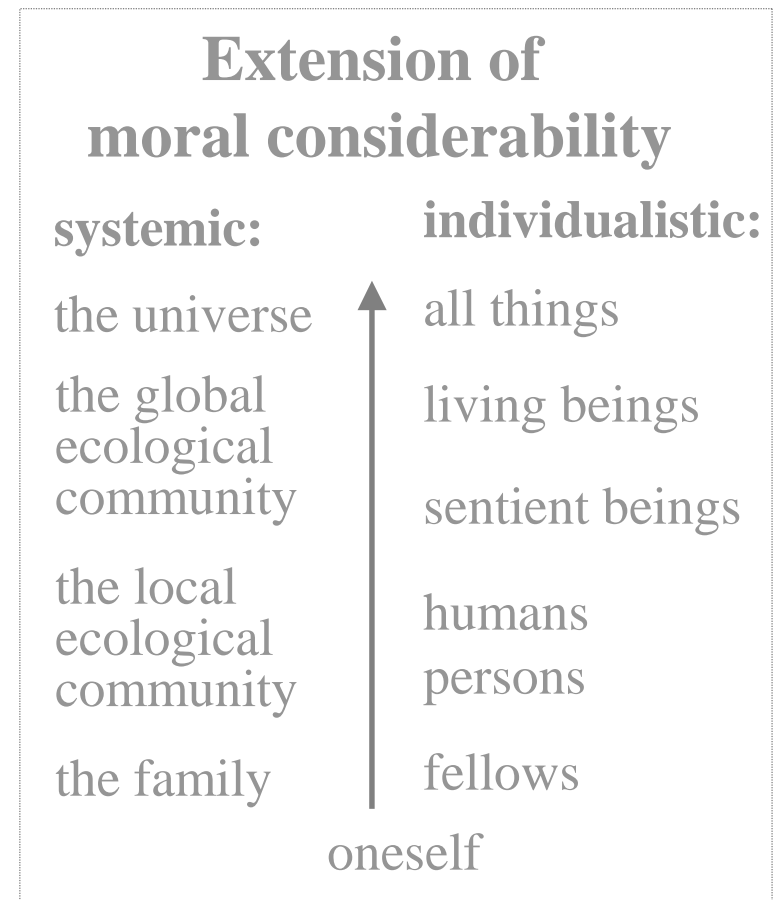
www.IndiaResource.org



photos: Melanie Alfonso

What is *ecological* justice?

- More than *environmental* justice (justice for humans)
- Ecological justice: justice for animals, living beings and living ecological systems as well as humans (Low & Gleeson 1998)
 - In accordance with the ecologist views of organic agriculture
 - Ecological justice does *not* entail ecocentric fascism
 - There is a space for liberal ecologism (Bell 2003)



(Alrøe & Kristensen 2003)

What is ecological *justice*?

- Ecological justice is more than the *fair distribution* of environmental goods and bads (Schlosberg 2003)
 - Justice as *recognition*
 - Equal recognition of rights and (common) ownership
 - Recognition of heterogeneity and connections between community and place/environment
 - Justice as *participation*
 - Democratic procedures for participation and representation

How to meet the challenges by implementing ecological justice

1. In general

- Work towards international institutions, agreements and regulations

2. In non-certified organic farming / sustainable agriculture

- Situated support by way of ethical ideas, extension and research
- Development of local participatory guarantee systems

3. In certified organic production systems

- Inclusion of ecological justice issues in certification and assessment procedures

4. In organic trade

- Free trade (*removal of unfair barriers for low-income countries*)
- Fair/ecological trade (*fair prices, internalisation of costs, transparency*)

Aspects of ecological justice in *organic trade*

1. Certification and trade with other 'regions' with different natural, cultural and economic conditions
 - Uniform versus regional organic rules.
2. Impacts spread between different regions
 - Export of cash crops instead of local supply of products.
 - Conflicts over usage of land, resources, environments ...
3. Transport across (and within) regions
 - Resource use, environmental impacts.
 - Loss of knowledge of contexts and production processes; loss of producer-consumer connections.
 - Involvement of corporate business dealers and middlemen.

Implementing ecological justice in organic trade

(preliminary suggestions)

1. Different rules for different regions (based on common principles).
2. Extra product declaration of issues connected to the transport
 - Traders responsible for informing about ecological justice issues not covered by the organic certification.
 - Should include information about the origin of the products.
 - Perhaps only required when trading across regional borders.
3. Extension of the certification to include ecological justice issues
 - Combine organic and (aspects of) fair trade certification plus more based on ecological justice.



Ecological Trade

More information

This presentation is based on a draft research paper:

*Globalisation, sustainable development and organic agriculture:
the role of ecological justice*

John Byrne, Hugo Alrøe, Leigh Glover.

“This paper investigates the role that ecological justice may have in relation to the present challenges of organic agriculture in a global perspective. The investigation has two interacting elements, a philosophical analysis of ecological justice in relation to other relevant concepts and a discussion of how the key concepts can be put into practice to meet the challenges.”

Please email [**hugo.alroe@agrsci.dk**](mailto:hugo.alroe@agrsci.dk) to request a copy of the paper.