

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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*<http://organic-revision.org>*

## 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.

Funded in part by DARCOF for the knowledge synthesis "Organic Agriculture in a Global Perspective", <http://ecowiki.org/GlobalPerspective> and in part by the Organic Revision project, <http://organic-revision.org>.

- *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.

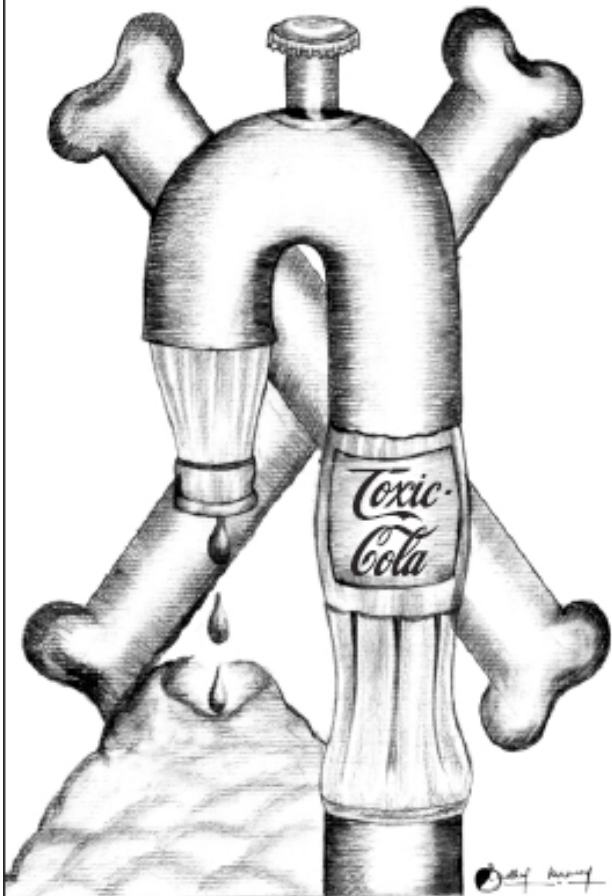
## The global spread of organic agriculture

- 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



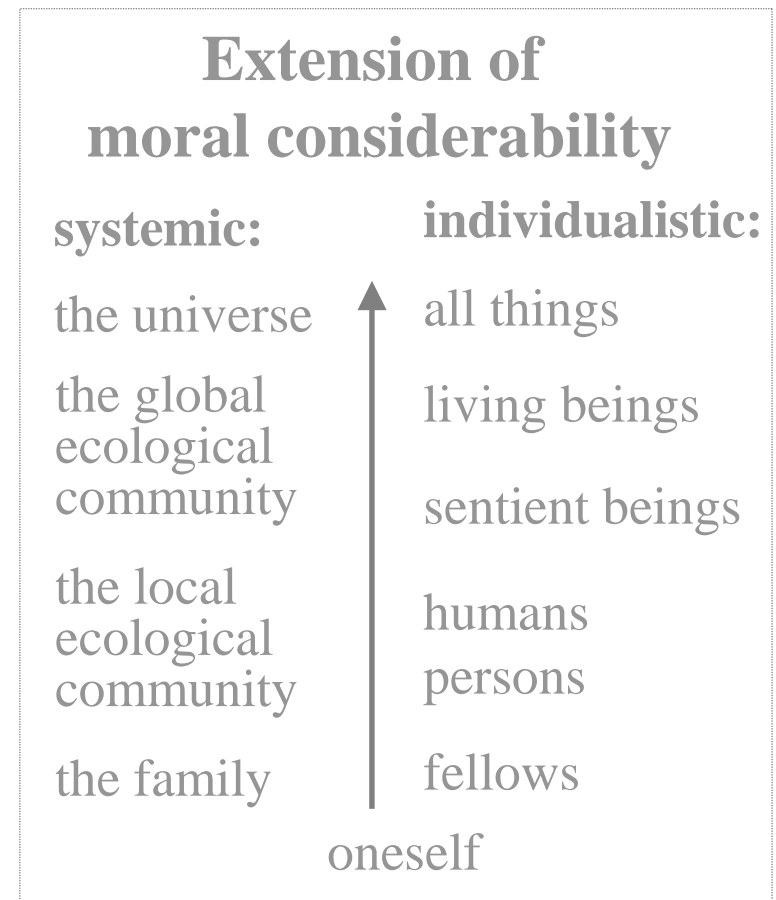
[www.IndiaResource.org](http://www.IndiaResource.org)



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.