

Beyond the Crossroads Knowing What, By Whom?

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Strong diagnoses, weak cures, no zest to deal with inequity & power

e.g. UK Foresight project, 2011

- ‘the food system is failing humanity’
- But no model of change e.g ‘a stronger constituency for hunger reduction needs to be built’
- Living in the happy uplands of rational policy-making, technological breakthroughs, win-win solutions

Business as usual in the knowledge business?

- Mainstream science confirms key IAASTD science content but still ignores proven alternatives to industrial farming

No convergence of understanding among knowledges

- Framing the problem foreshadows the solutions: a struggle for power to define what is at stake

Insight into systemic risks of Business as Usual largely ignored

Ex: Brazil: 75% of its power comes from hydro; 150 dams planned or built on the Amazon; China buys 50% of the soy crop: China's food security thus depends on rainfall over the Amazon....

And getting it wrong

In Africa,

- Donor focus on increasing the productivity of a few value chain crops, e.g.
 - Senegal: irrigated & rainfed rice [rice highly susceptible to minimum night-time temperature $>23^{\circ}\text{C}$]
 - Crop intensification: maize-based cropping for food & biomass fuel [air temperatures above 30°C in 4yrs out of 10, by 2025, in E & S Africa]
- CGIAR focus on ideotypes & increasing N,P, K use [what about SRI principles, farmer-led options, fossil energy price futures, P shortages, N effects on environment, the 'land grab'...?]

Problem	Core Response	Avoided issues: e.g.
Obesity	Public education Voluntary corporate codes of practice	Legal responsibility for causes & consequences Paying for the consequences
Water	Pricing Technology	Conserving water for ecosystem functioning Who speaks for water's interests
Food waste	Efficiency measures along food chain Changing household food management	Changing the behaviour of corporate actors
Hunger	Safety nets	Paying for food stocks , defining the needy

Do we have adequate institutional understanding to create sustainable futures?

Example: Intellectual property regimes in food & farming serve to:

- Privatised knowledge
- Extend monopoly privilege
- Protect investments
- Create private taxation by large corporations

i.e. They no longer support transformative innovation or the public good

Countervailing trends

- China's emerging 2-track strategy:
 - Closed list of crops & products eligible for patents & breeders' rights
 - Geographic Indications
 - Participatory Plant Breeding
 - changes to DUS criteria
- Asian region's proposed access & benefit sharing arrangements based on procedural law
- Peru's Community Biocultural Protocols

Other countervailing instances

- Public procurement
 - Cornwall Food Trust
 - Zero Hunger, Brazil
- Sustainable Food Societies – 20 local governments, Baltic region
- Walmart's LCA-based sustainability index, enforced on 100,000 suppliers worldwide
- International Food & Beverage Alliance – 5 commitments to deliver 2004 WHO global strategy on obesity

Countervailing instances (cont.)

- Costa Rica – tax on consumption of all crude oil derivatives
- Denmark – proposed ‘fat tax’
- & even Australia – a carbon tax on 500 corporates!

What do we need to know?

What we need

- Better understanding of how to progress sustainable, equitable, transformative changes
- Expressed in ways that politicians & decision makers at all levels & scales can work with
- And more information about the operational tools & strategies that work
- And credible economic & market theories: cannot be the case that economic goods & services have a higher value than the functioning of the agro-ecosystems from which they are derived