

The Value of Food : Toward Global Sustainable Agriculture

Alice Bardet (経済学部 4年)

指導教員 : Dr. Phil. Roger Batty

My thesis addresses the structural problems and challenges of the current global food system. It is currently unable to provide food that is healthy and in sufficient quantity for everybody, and is linked to widespread environmental pollution and the exhaustion of natural resources. It hinders the capacity of the global food system to face two major upcoming challenges : (1) provide enough food to feed around 9 billion people by 2050, and (2) do so without further destruction of the environment. The identification of those challenges serve as the starting point of my thesis. Throughout my thesis, I argue that the transition to sustainable agriculture is necessary to cope with those challenges. The United Nations define sustainable agriculture as *“To be sustainable, agriculture must meet the needs of present and future generations for its products and services, while ensuring profitability, environmental health, and social and economic equity. Sustainable agriculture would contribute to all four pillars of food security – availability, access, utilization and stability – in a manner that is environmentally, economically and socially responsible over time.”*. Hence sustainability aims to solve both environmental and social problems. Sustainability in agriculture is multi-dimensional, it fits agriculture because of its wide ranging impacts. I expose the multi dimensional aspects of sustainable agriculture through a thesis organized in three parts.

In the first chapter I argue that we need to recenter the current corporate-driven system on human concerns, in order to promote food security for all, better repartitions of resources and safer healthier food, a pillar of sustainable agriculture. I discuss human rights issues such as the right to food, food sovereignty and food assistance. I also tackle health problems linked to malnutrition, obesity and food production. In the second chapter I focus on climate change and ethical questions. I first talk about mitigating technics for climate change that can be implemented in agriculture. Then I discuss and make prescriptive ethical claims about animal welfare and rights, and natural rights and law, in order to argue that humans should redefine their relationship with the natural world to fight environmental destruction. Sustainability is not only about technicalities, but also about trying to reshape the current attitudes toward the environment. Finally in the last chapter, I discuss policy and technical options to promote sustainable consumption and production. I argue that traditional economics have failed to reduce inequality and to protect the environment, and thus reforming economics is an important aspect of sustainability. There are many options to create incentives for shifting toward sustainable agriculture, and I discuss the technical solutions farmers could implement to make their production process more sustainable. Changing societal and individual views on nature and sustainability is important to shift the current paradigm.

In conclusion actions must be taken at every level of the governance chain, from local to global, by creating incentives, connecting actors, and designing smart and adaptable policies and technics. Since agriculture encompasses all aspects of human life, there are real possibilities for improvement and action. My thesis provides a good, multi-disciplinary analysis of the issues, challenges and prospects of the global food system, and of sustainable agriculture as a competing production model.