



Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

The Jacques Loeb Centre for the History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences

Agroecology as a Vehicle for Contributive Justice

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(Developed with Georges F. Félix, Farming Systems Ecology, Wageningen University)

Which food production paradigm - conventional agriculture or agroecological farming - is better suited to guarantee food security globally is something that is deeply contested. This dimension of the debate will be set aside in order to focus on another facet of agriculture: the advantages of agroecology for farmers beyond food, especially in regard to the provision of meaningful work. Building on the notion of contributive justice we will explore which capabilities and types of social relationships are sustainably promoted and reinforced by agroecological farming practices.

Conventional agriculture strongly relies on high agro-industrial inputs and standardized technological solutions in the form of marketable products. The agroecological farmer respects the balances within ecosystems by exploring low external input alternatives in bio-diverse and dynamic landscapes.

Agroecology offers a set of characteristics not shared with conventional farming. First, creative solutions are not allowed to disrupt the farm's ecosystem. Second, standardized solutions cannot be implemented since these may not be suitable for local conditions. Finally, agroecology does not offer detailed recipes, rather focusing on management principles. This demands a much more attentive farmer, someone who is ready to adjust her behaviour according to observations and is able to develop alternatives with peers.

In the category of skilled workers, the farmer becomes someone who is valued for her experiential knowledge. Generalized ecological studies recognize the significance of the farmer's observations on natural resource management. This type of work contributes to the development of a number of capabilities and leads to more bargaining power, facilitating self-determination.

June 18th (Wednesday), Building 74 ([map](#)), Room 350, 16:00

The Jacques Loeb Centre seminars provide an interdisciplinary forum, in which historians and philosophers of science, as well as scientists, present and discuss new research related to science with a special focus on the life sciences. Case studies and surveys examine the impact of political, socio-economic and personal factors on the conduct of science, the ethics of research, and the causes of progress and setbacks.

Faculty and students from all disciplines are invited!

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