

# Values-based food chains – Recoupling man and Soil

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# The questions:

- To what extent do values-based food chains offer quality couplings between production and consumption?
- And the analytical question: Based on the 19 HealthyGrowth cases, what is important for successfully mediation of qualities and what is the impacts.



# A perspectival position

- An observation is always made from a certain perspective!
- Alrøe, Hugo F. and Egon Noe (2014) *Second-order science of interdisciplinary research: A polyocular framework for wicked problems*. *Constructivist Foundations* 10(1): 65–95.
- <http://hugo.alroe.dk/Work/Publications>



# Analytical Perspective: Quality as value relations (Pirsig: Lila)

- Quality is a value relation (here between actors and food items)
- It is not belonging to the item or the actor
- The analytical question: How are qualities mediated between the different actors of the chain?



# A range of values/qualities



# All actors of values-based food chains are important

- A single actor of the chain can decouple value-relations
- Mutual dependency and symmetry
  - Adjust strategy
  - Adjust handling



# Quality and Synchronisation of value relations

- Synchronisation of the different time-bindings and time-horizons between the different actors of the chain is a major issue (e.g. in the case of freshness and seasonality)
- It is value chains that are able to establish a shared long-term perspective that are the most successfully in mediation of qualities in combination with volume



# Place of production and trust

- Non generic products
- Includes quality-relations to place/mode of production
- Trust is linked to (potential) transparency mediated by the chain
  
- Reflection: Generic certification is a way to decouple producer and consumers

# Impact on sustainability

- The value-relation that could be actualised in the primary production is very much dependent on the chains ability to mediate these qualities.
- The relations to place/mode of production is important not only for the consumers trust but also for the possibilities for a sustainable development of farming praxis, E.g. Gram slot



# Conclusions, what can we see from this analytical perspective?

- These value-based food chains are able successfully to mediate value relations beyond the generic quality of organic products, and this has potentially a huge impact on the sustainability of primary production.
- It is important that the whole chain is included in this mediation, and based on mutual dependency
- Mediation of place of production is essential for mediating of value-relations and for building consumers trust
- Synchronisation of time horizons and time bindings is a central issue for success



# Stakeholder recommendations

- Explore what value-relations that can be established in relation to the place of primary production. (natural condition, ethical concerns, local livelihood, pluractivities etc.)
- Mobilise all actors of the food chain, new actors or existing actors in new ways
- Go for an organisation of the chain that supports a long time-horizon.
- Explore what it takes from the different actors to mediate these qualities
- Make sure that there is a forum (partnership) where the mutual dependency can be observed and discussed.
- In principle any actors of the chain can be a primary driver of a values-based food chain, but no one can do it alone, all links are important



# Policy recommendation

- It is not sufficient to look at the consumers as the primary drivers of sustainable food production and farming praxis. Actors of the food chain plays a very central role for the qualities and values that can be mediated.
- A market driven development of sustainable agriculture shall focus on how the actors of value chains can be supported:
  - Legislation that not only focus on generic industrial production
  - Production of knowledge and education programme for the actors and advisors of this alternative development
  - Better financial opportunities and support to new business models and non-generic production and processing

