

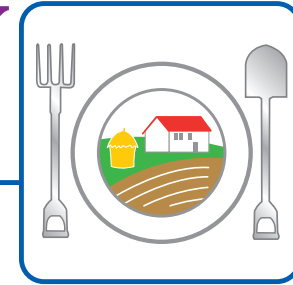


EATING CITY

INTERNATIONAL SUMMER CAMPUS



LA BERGERIE DE VILLARCEAUX
FRANCE - 5 - 11 SEPTEMBER 2023



Food, the Earth, Our Future: A Narrative of Three Bulls

Villarceaux, September 2023



Giuseppe Mastruzzo

The common good is dying out

the notion of the environment as a raw resource that can be plundered for one's own advantage

the idea that schools should not educate citizens to think but should impart knowledge aimed at making them productive

the tendency for health to become a profitable business rather than a service owed to people

the dismantling of the public sector in favour of lucrative privatisation

i.e.: the primacy of private profit over the general interest



Ambassadors: Take up a side!

today, two incompatible notions are on a violent collision course

on the one hand, the right of all individuals or corporations to place their own gains above all else, in the name of their full and absolute ownership of the property they have inherited or purchased

on the other hand, the need that individual wishes must be tempered and limited by concern for the public interest



Ambassadors: Cultivate the future!

on one side the short-sighted outlook of those who believe it legitimate to use and abuse the world in any way they see fit
on the other the far-sighted viewpoint of those who are aware that they have received a legacy which they must pass on, and indeed enhance



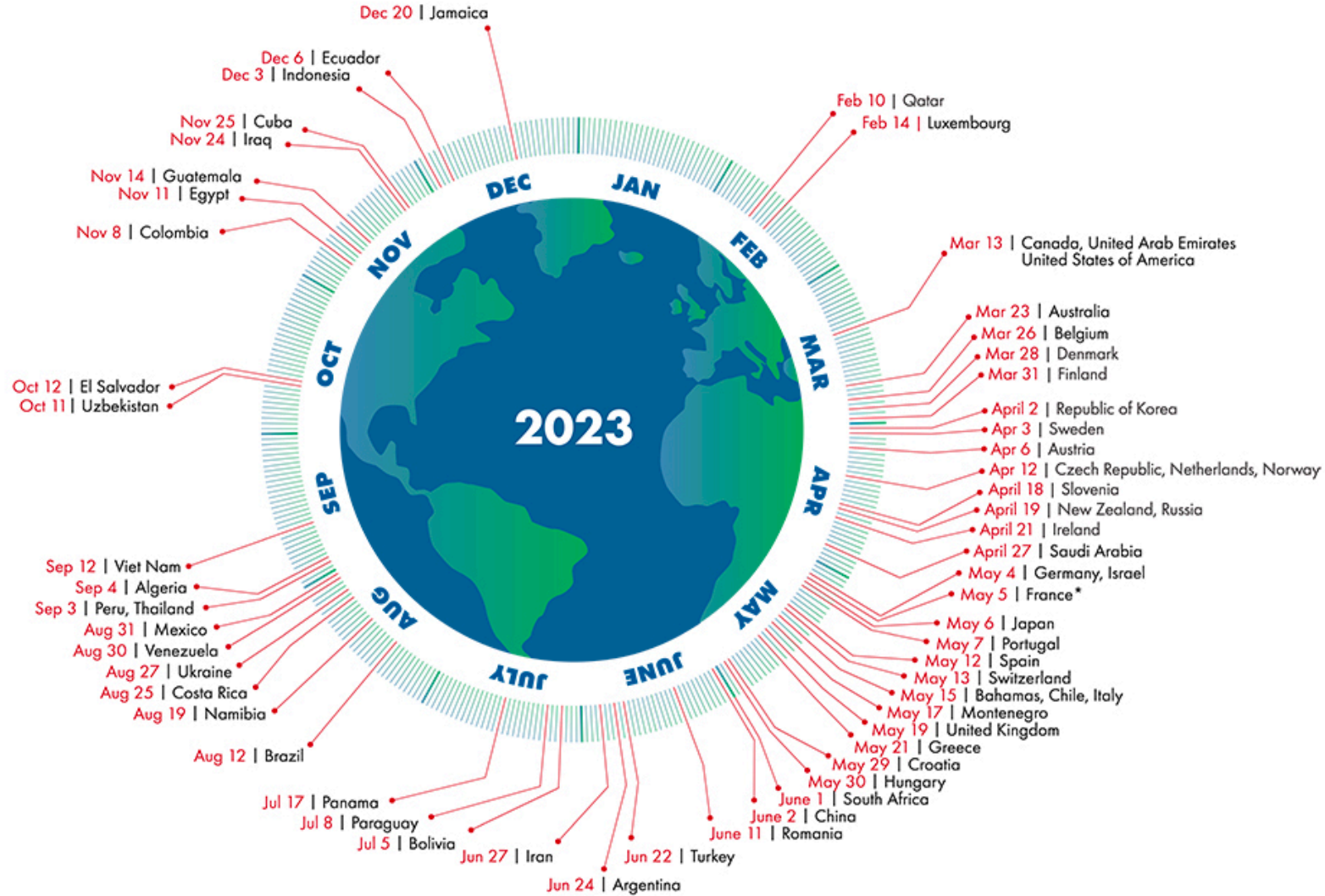
Earth Ambassadors & Earth overshoot day



- Earth Overshoot Day marks the date in the year when we have used more resources from nature than ecosystems can regenerate
- In 2023, Earth Overshoot Day came on July 27: this year we are using well over one and a half Earths through over-harvesting, overfishing, and polluting more than Earth can absorb

Country Overshoot Days 2023

When would Earth Overshoot Day land if the world's population lived like...



For a full list of countries, visit overshootday.org/country-overshoot-days.
*French Overshoot Day based on nowcasted data. See overshootday.org/france.

Source: National Footprint and Biocapacity Accounts, 2022 Edition
data.footprintnetwork.org

From China to the Amazons



- 800 million pigs slaughtered yearly
- 8 million hectares of soy monoculture
- 80 million tons of Amazon soy to produce Chinese pork

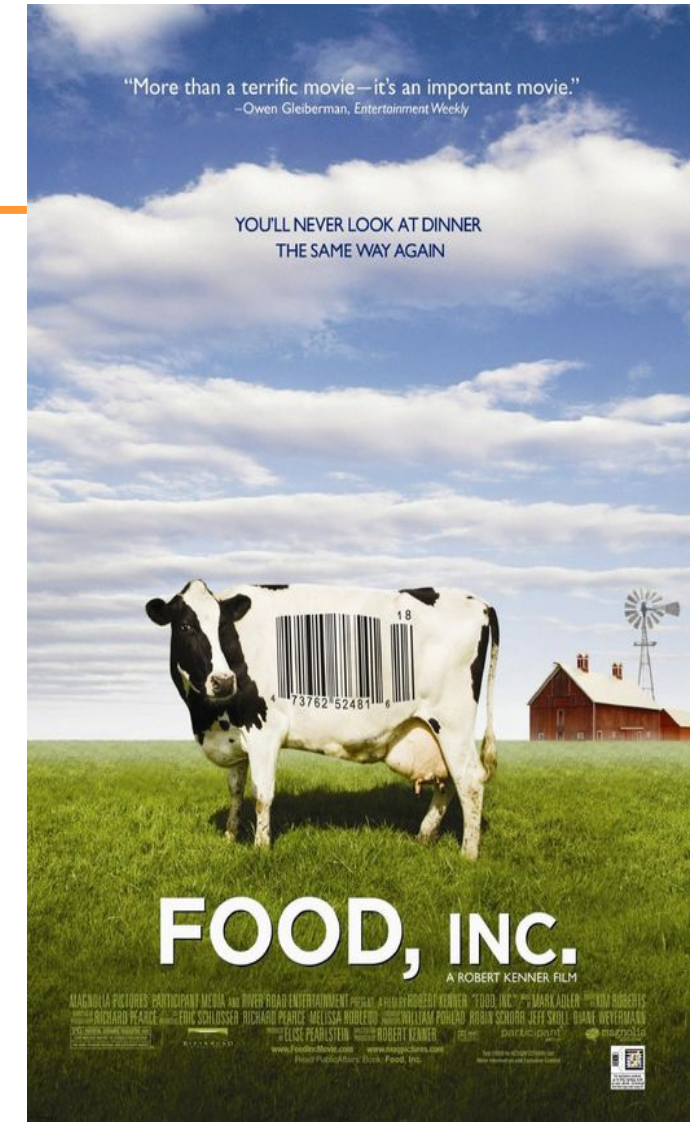
The locust corporation



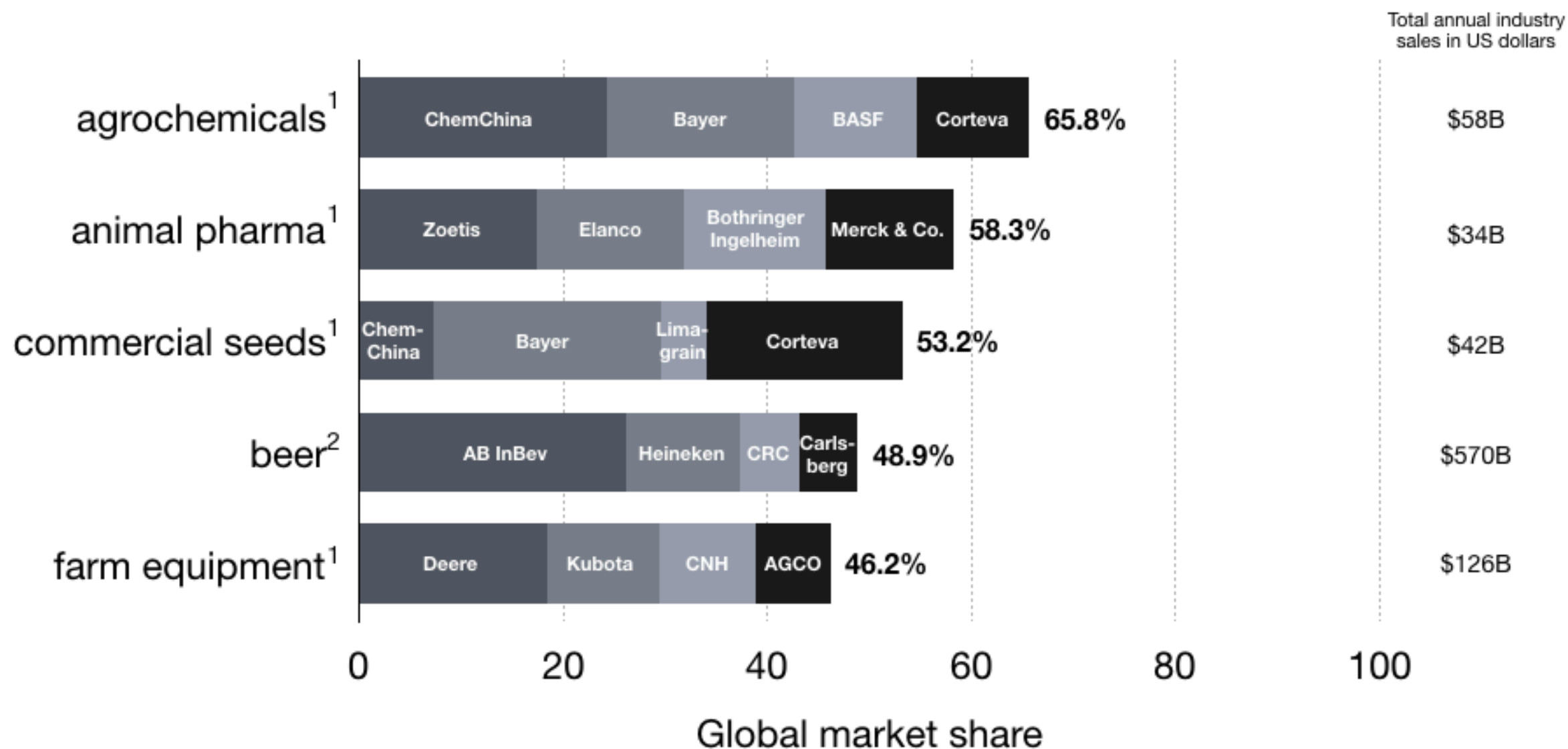
- financial powers jump to follow soy and pigs
- in 2008, Goldman Sachs diverts assets from derivatives to food chains, buying 25% of Shuanghui, which in 2013 buys Smithfield Foods, the world largest pig and pork producer

TINA: a single narrative

Multinational corporations have stripped poor countries of their natural resources and left environmental devastation; banks have burdened poor countries (and now rich countries) with unsustainable debt. No other belief is allowed, and any other belief is understood as “unrealistic”

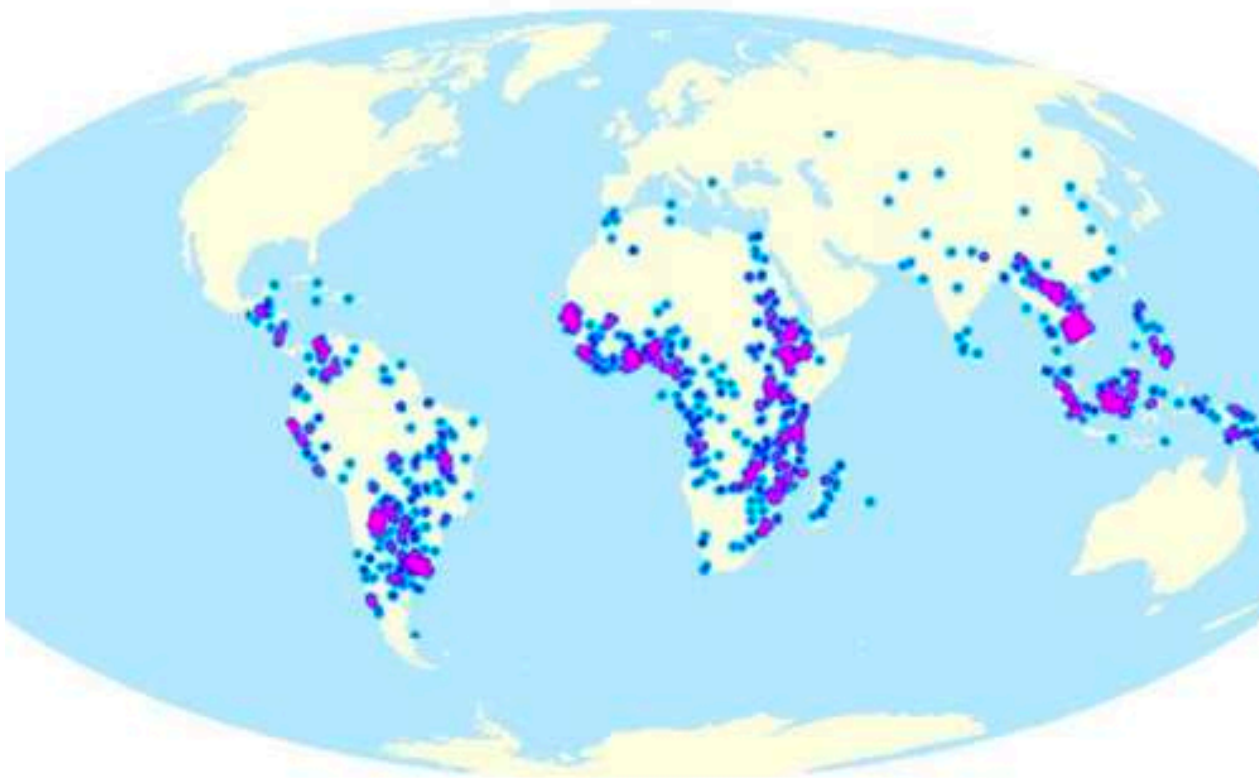


Concentration in key global food and agricultural industries



Data: ¹Shand & Wetter 2019; ²Euromonitor 2019

Heatmap of large-scale agricultural acquisitions



Source: Mollweide
Data source: The Land Matrix, 2020, <https://landmatrix.org>.



Global market rules that reward corporations

Structural adjustment and trade agreements have opened markets of the global South to unfair competition from artificially cheap food products from abroad...



...while OECD countries have increased subsidies to agriculture in real terms and protected their markets

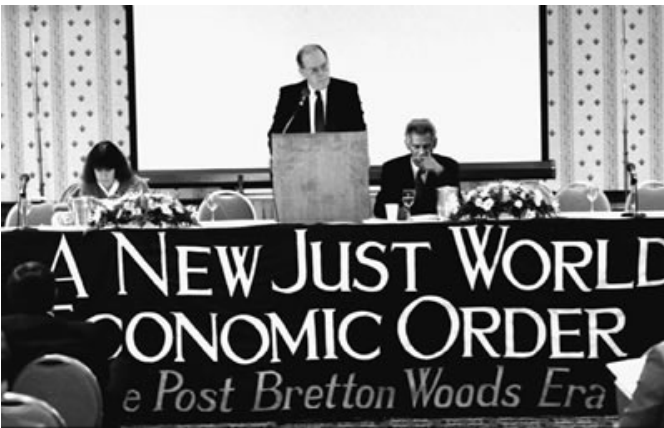
The ethos of homo oeconomicus



economic activity is separate from moral values

individuals naturally and rationally seek to maximise **profit**

this jungle attitude & maximising behaviour eventually increases the welfare of the community





Is food a private good only?

- markets regards food as a mere product, but food as “just a private good” makes hunger still triumph in a world of lavishness
- Eating City Ambassadors know that food is part of a complex balance between culture, agriculture, environmental health and human health

Finance and hunger



- in 2008, the price of all 25 main raw materials increased at the same time; while usually some prices rise and others fall, this increase in unison is unique in history
- no particular natural event took place in 2008: no floods or droughts that triggered that increase in the price of rice or wheat
- the cause was the huge mass of capital fleeing from the subprime mortgage collapse

Eating City: the embassy of critique

- financial crisis as an inherent critique of the ethos of homo oeconomicus
- resounding collapse of the paradigm of profit maximisation
- beyond the failure of economic science, social and moral collapse of an entire model of economy



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Figures of financial immorality

- more money flows in the financial markets in five days than in the “real economy” in a whole year
- over 98% of capital circulation is not linked to the real production or trade in goods and services: it is just money chasing money to make more money

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Figures of financial immorality



cross-border trade (all the import-export of goods and services in the world) amounts to 36 trillion dollars this year

the currency market exceeds a volume of 7.5 trillion dollars a day

i.e.: more money flows in the financial markets in five days than in the “real economy” in a whole year

i.e.: over 98% of capital circulation is not directly linked to production or trade in goods and services: it is just money chasing money to make more money

More figures of immorality

the world's GDP (the total wealth produced by mankind in one year of agriculture, industry and services) is 110 trillion dollars

US banks hold derivatives (the most speculative financial instruments) with a notional value of around 180 trillion dollars

today there are no rules on speculating against food prices (and hunger!) or against gambling on the failure of entire nations



**STOP BARCLAYS
BETTING ON
HUNGER**

Casino-finance & catastrophe



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instability is the essence of casino finance, not just a side effect: speculators buy just to make prices go up and then sell at a higher price – the greater and quicker the increase, the more they will gain;
the greater the disaster, the more lucrative the game

What is finance?

finance is the “market of money”: if you want to buy some apples you’ll go to the market, i.e. the meeting place between apple farmers and consumers

similarly, financial markets should be the meeting place between those who have savings to invest and those (states and companies) that need to raise capital

finance should be a mere instrument at the service of the economy, while banks should only be the intermediaries between savers and borrowers

in this sense, finance and banks should serve the common interest



Today finance is an end in itself



this essential (and moral) role of finance as serving the economy and society has been lost, and finance today means making money out of money quickly

hence the hypertrophic growth of financial markets: Wall Street was as big as 15% of US GDP in the late 1940s; at the end of the 1980s it was up to 35%; before the subprime bubble burst in 2006 it exceeded 350%

i.e.: today a gigantic mass of purely speculative transactions has been constructed, and the expected profits largely exceed the real growth rates of GDP

Hunger!



since there are no rules on speculating against food prices (and hunger!) the food market, naturally subject to price fluctuations, becomes an ideal hunting ground

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The Wall Street Bull

- financial speculation has disastrous effects on the worldwide production of agro-goods
- a rational and fair production of food is a general concern to be protected by international law against private transnational interests



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Villarceaux: the Bull Ambassador

Today:

2 billion people around the world do not have access to clean and safe drinking water, and approximately 3.6 billion people – 46% of the world's population – lack adequate sanitation services (*2023 United Nations World Water Development Report*)

The scale of the current global hunger and malnutrition crisis is enormous, with more than 345 million people facing high levels of food insecurity in 2023 – more than twice the number in 2020 (*World Food Programme*)



Ambassadors of awareness

Ambassadors of responsibility



- world exploitation led by unlimited profit is no longer sustainable
- there is no such a thing as a “self-regulatory market”:
markets are defined by law; laws are informed by values;
prohibitions and incentives should be ethically informed
- the unethical short term of speculation is not sustainable

The ethos of the commons



- the “commons” are spaces, services and goods functional to the protection both of basic individual rights and vital public interests
- they are crucial for the free development of the individual as a human being

Global commons



- some commons go beyond a local perspective to reach a global dimension:
- natural commons such as great water reserves, a clean environment, climate stability, biodiversity, and the ozone shield
- human-made commons like transnational infrastructures (the internet)
- global policy objectives like peace, security, sustainability, monetary and financial stability

Pacha Mama: a common world

global commons are essential for a fair and “regenerative” world

they satisfy the need of the present generation without foreclosing options for the future ones

yet, they are under-provided, due to the lack of national and international regulation



Commons and constitutions



- the notion of “commons” has made its way into the new constitution of Ecuador in protecting nature and its rights
- the right to food is expressly protected in the Bolivian Constitution, while water is defined as a basic human right in the Constitutions of Bolivia and Uruguay

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Agro-ecology: a global common

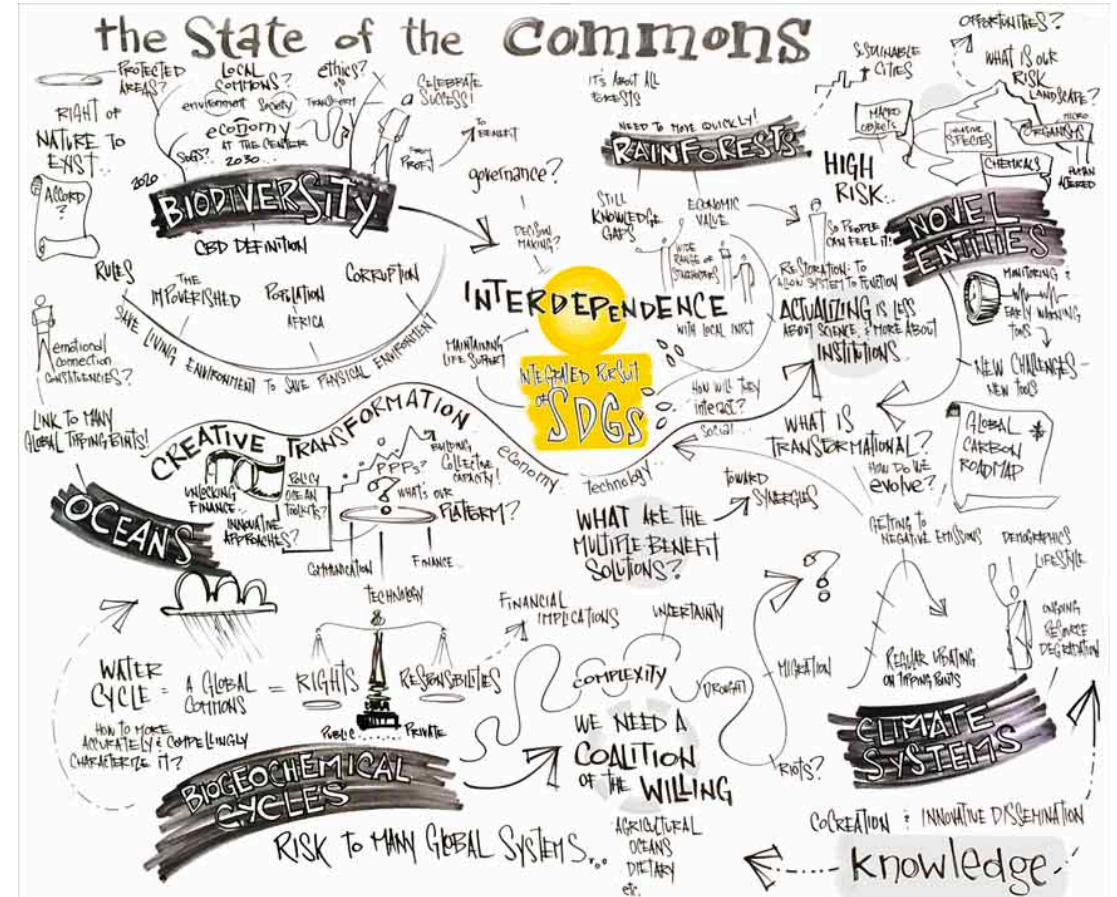
universal access to healthy food
concerns global issues

the right to food and the shared
knowledge about its
regenerative production are
commons that go beyond the
State (and States)



A world of commons

- great migrations of capital, goods and people challenge the distinction between national and international issues
- issues like labour exploitation, inequality, food scarcity, and climate change enlarge beyond state borders your duties, making you Earth Ambassadors
- global commons should be enjoyed in an inclusive and non-rival way, while their situation is critical for depletion & lack of legal safeguards



The Eating City Ambassadors: Food is a human right



food is a basic human right crucial for peace and security, humanitarian assistance, innovative sources of financing for development, monetary and financial stability

UN (2003), *Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development, Final text*

UN (2008), *Doha Declaration on Financing for Development*



The Eating City Ambassadors: Food is heritage

- the notion of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) gives international law perspective to the nexus between food and traditional knowledge
- article 2.1 of the 2003 UNESCO Convention defines ICH as the “practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills [...] that communities and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage”

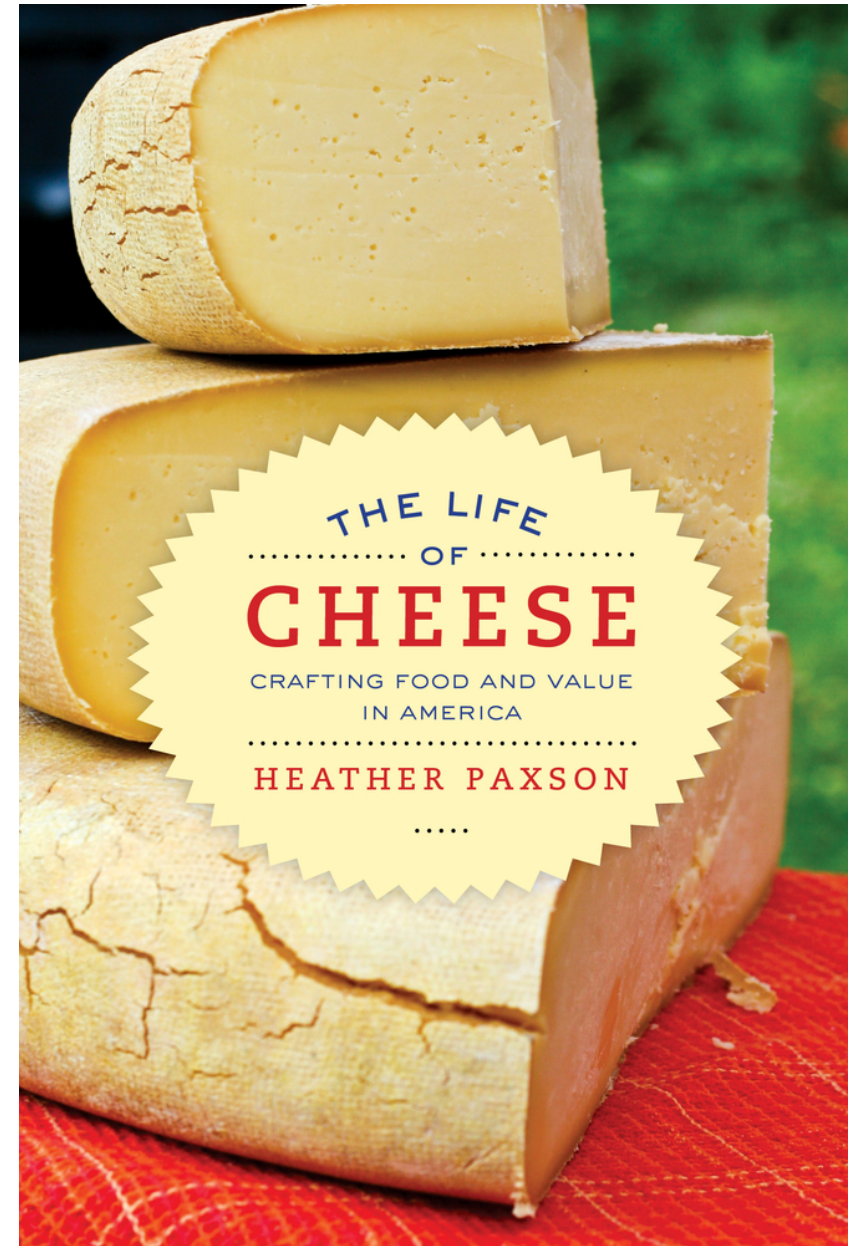


Where is the place of future?

- local diets can be a basis for a regenerative policy on agriculture and food
- they protect local products and labour
- they promote the knowledge of the local environment and the culture of the territory, and provide the basis for their collective protection

Ambassadors, communities, and unfinished commodities

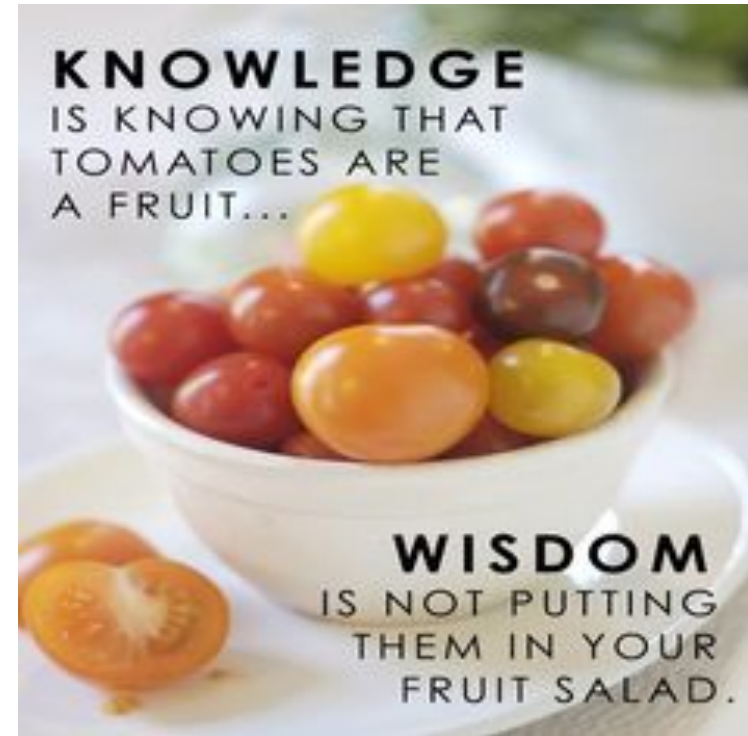
artisanal food is an “unfinished commodity” as defined by Heather Paxson, Professor at MIT, in her book *The Life of Cheese: Crafting Food and Value in America*



The Eating City Ambassadors: Food is global knowledge

food produces various utilities
both as a cultural good and as a
material good generated by
(agri)cultural techniques

a shared knowledge about food
production and preparation that
guarantees the ecological cycle
of life is a global commons



Beyond us, the Earth!



global interdependence with migrations of capital, goods and people challenge the distinction between local and international issues

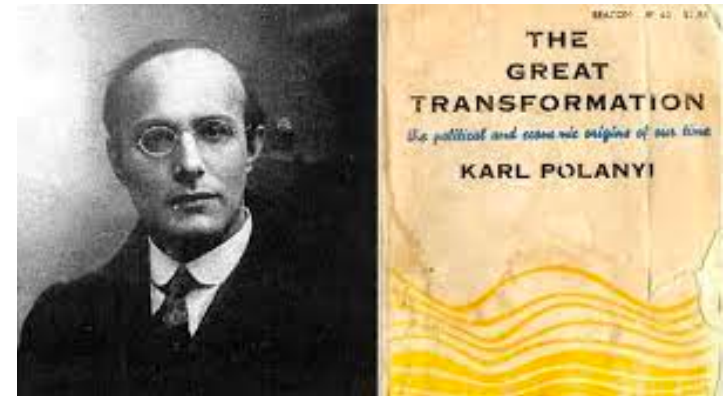
global issues like poverty, inequality, humanitarian crises and climate change enlarge beyond national and continental borders the legal, political and moral responsibilities of nations and their governments, making them transnational
the Earth needs Ambassadors to point out these problems

Polanyi's *Great Transformation* (1944)

Polanyi anticipates the current contradictions of globalization

self-adjusting markets are “a stark utopia”: no such institution can exist for any length of time without annihilating the human substance of society

moderating the disruptive effects of unregulated markets will prevent society from revolting in self-defense against the market system



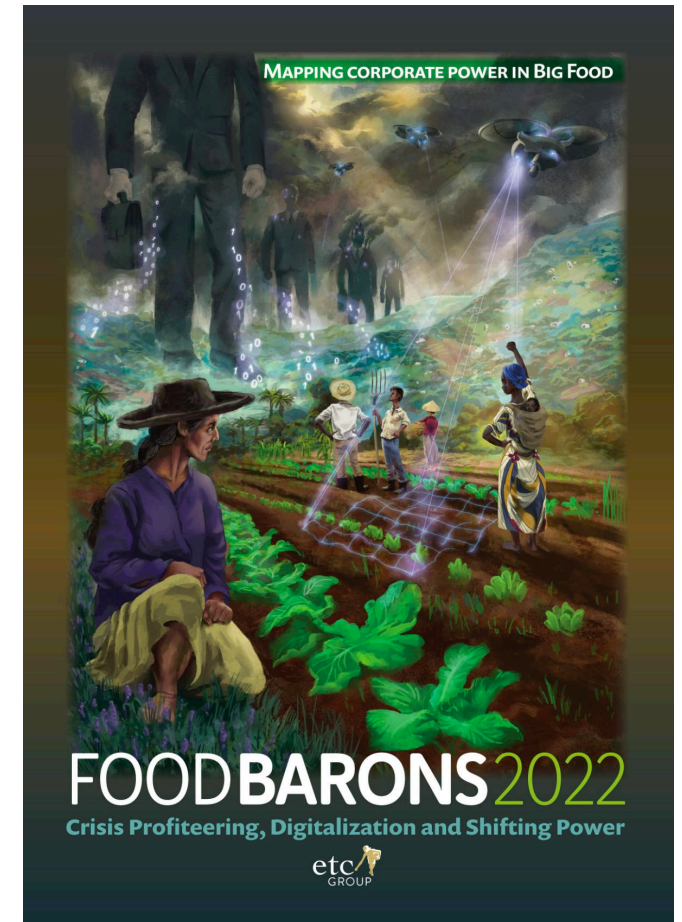
Connecting the dots for a change of paradigm

Polanyi: the only alternative to the disintegration of the world market system between the two world wars was the establishment of an international order endowed with an organised power that transcended national sovereignty however, for Polanyi this was entirely beyond the horizons of the time: **will the 21st-century Eating City Ambassadors connect the dots of a new possible horizon?**



Food Barons 2022: Crisis Profiteering, Digitalisation, and Shifting Power

The report found that digitalisation of the food chain and technology have driven the market towards large corporations, which are investing heavily in the digital ecosystem to expand their base. Several companies are making use of drone technology, the report said. For instance, Bayer, Corteva AgriScience, and BASF are collaborating with manufacturers to promote the use of drone-based agriculture



“Reflection on the term ‘**innovation**’ is useful in understanding how today its meaning hides the capitalist system that seeks to transform food production from a communal, social act respectful of natural cycles into a commercial business for few.”
Schola Campesina



A plural future unified by a common ethos of regulation/responsibility

a thick ideological apparatus today proclaims its faith in technological innovation as a condition sufficient for survival

technological innovation may be necessary but it is certainly not sufficient

there is no long term future outside of a radical ethical shift

a future can be gained only harvesting all cultural inputs available out there

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