

Sustained Poverty for Economic Development and Regeneration of Community-Based Resources

Lessons from FUKUSHIMA and Genetically Modified Organisms

"I personally have no wish to eat anything produced by genetic modification, nor do I knowingly offer this sort of produce to my family or guests. There is increasing evidence that a great many people feel the same way. But if this is becoming a widely-held view, we cannot put our principles into practice until there is effective segregation of genetically modified products, backed by a comprehensive labelling scheme based on progress through the food chain."

The Prince of Wales, Charles, "The Seeds of Disaster,"
The Daily Telegraph, June 7, 1998.

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Summary

- (1) Our society has a system which needs a certain volume of the poor as a sacrifice to economic development (*sustained poverty*). I would like to point out it by referring the cases of nuclear power plants accidents in Fukushima and genetically modified organisms problems as illustrations.
- (2) In these cases, a vested interest group often cuts off the social networks among the poor. It means it not only gains monopolistic profits but deprives the poor of the social ties among themselves which are indispensable for the increase in their well-being.
- (3) If we build the society which does not need sustained poverty, therefore, we need to regenerate the segmented social ties among the poor.
- (4) We can learn more lessons from the experiences in the diffusion process of organic agriculture in the Philippines and Japan.

Introduction: Social Network as a Source of Happiness

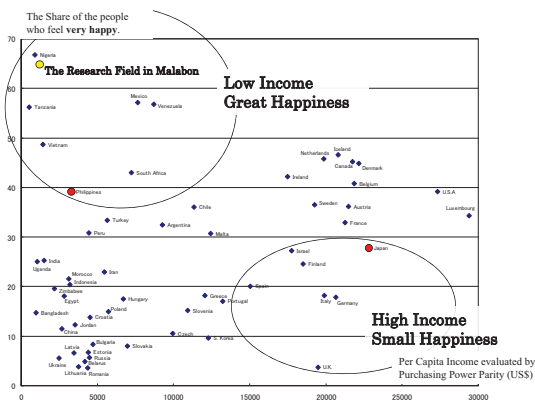
- (1) It can *not* be said that the richer "the poor" are, the happier they are.
- (2) The inter-personal relations among the poor have more significant value for their happiness, after their standard of living is above the subsistence level.
- (3) The behaviors of the informal settlers in Malabon I have studied since 1985 and those of the victims in Fukushima Nuclear Power Plants Accidents in 2011 illustrate this proposition.

Introduction: Social Network as a Source of Happiness

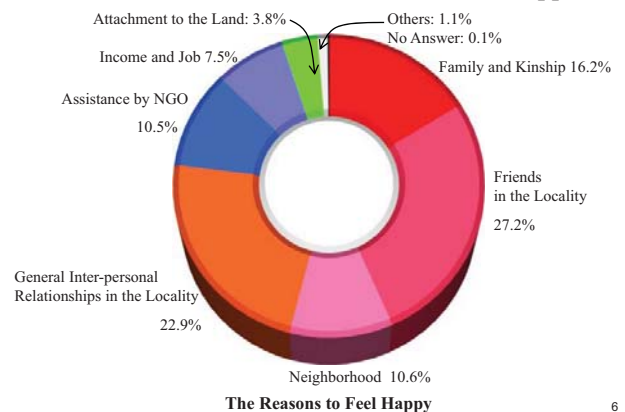
Happy Planet Index

	HPI	HDI	GDP per capita	
1	Costa Rica	76.12	0.85	10,180
2	Dominican Republic	71.78	0.78	8,217
3	Jamaica	70.09	0.74	4,291
4	Guatemala	68.37	0.69	4,568
5	Vietnam	66.52	0.73	3,071
6	Colombia	66.10	0.79	7,304
7	Cuba	65.68	0.84	6,000
8	El Salvador	61.46	0.74	5,235
9	Brazil	61.01	0.80	8,402
10	Honduras	60.99	0.70	3,430
11	Nicaragua	60.54	0.71	3,674
12	Egypt	60.32	0.71	4,337
13	Saudi Arabia	59.70	0.81	15,711
14	Philippines	59.02	0.77	5,137
...				
70	France	43.86	0.95	30,280
71	Georgia	43.60	0.75	3,365
72	Slovakia	43.52	0.86	15,871
73	United Kingdom	43.31	0.95	33,238
74	Japan	43.25	0.95	31,267
75	Spain	43.19	0.95	27,169
...				
112	United States of America	30.75	0.95	41,890

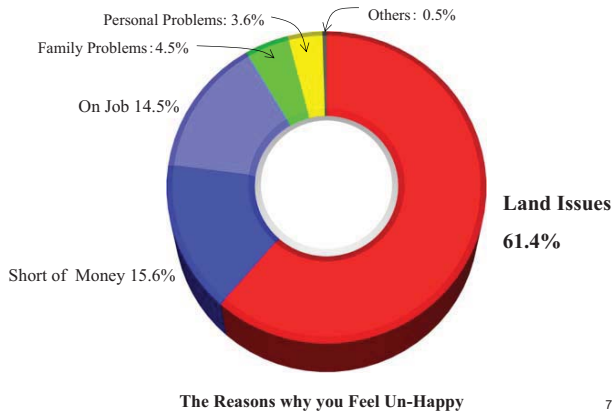
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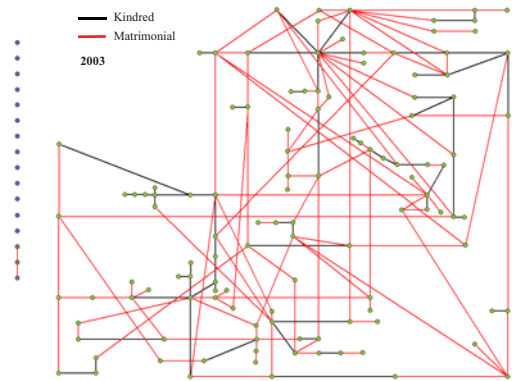


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Kinship and Matrimonial Networks among the Informal Settlers in Malabon



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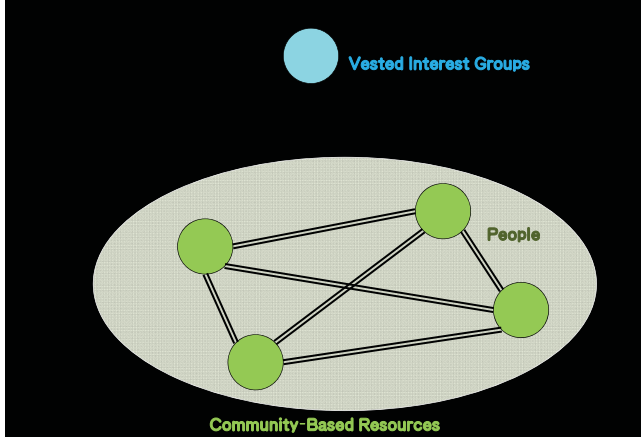
Kinship, Matrimonial and Compadre Networks among the Informal Settlers in Malabon



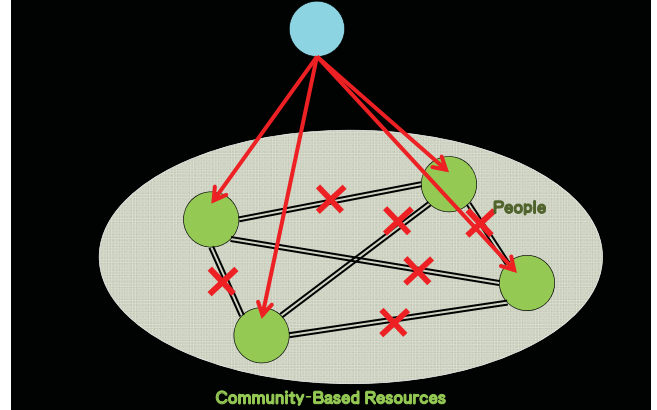
I. Hypothesis: Mechanism of Sustained Poverty

- (1) According to the logic of New Institutional Economics based on Neo-Liberalism, in my opinion, the reason why there are still poverty in the society is the fact that there is an incentives to maintain the poverty.
- (2) Our society needs a certain volume of the poor for economic development led by some vested interest groups.
- (3) The strategy of such groups to realize the sustainability of the poor is to prevent the collective behaviors of the poor , or to cut off the inter-personal social networks among the poor.
- (4) A logic found in sustained poverty can be seen in the developed countries as well as in the developing countries. Aside from issues in nuclear power plants and GMOs, we can find such systems in Okinawa US military base issues in Japan, military labor supply created by cumulative debt which came from repayments of scholarship or medical bills in USA.
- (5) Since the neo-liberalism swept all over the world, such a logic found in sustained poverty has been prominent.

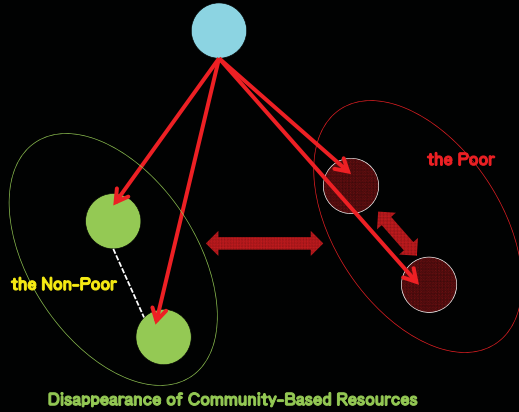
The Situation before Neo-Liberalism



The Divide-and-Rule Strategy by Power during the Penetration of Neo-Liberalism



The Emergence of the Sustained Poverty after the Penetration of Neo-Liberalism



II. A Case of Nuclear Power Plants

- (1) The nuclear power plants in Japan have created many vested interest groups in many fields by the support of **Fully Distributed Cost (FDC) method**. The power company can always get certain premium margin to *any* production cost. It means the more the cost increases, the more the profit the company gets.
- (2) The residents near the site of the power plants are often persuaded to allow the construction of the plants by pecuniary compensation. This situation often has cut off the relations among the residents.
- (3) Even mass media in Japan has always intentionally hidden the important information on the nuclear power plants.
- (4) A nuclear power plant needs washing the inside of the radiator at least once a year by many laborers. It needs a stable supply of such laborers who suffer from being contaminated by a massive dose of radiation. These laborers always have belonged to the poor.
- (5) While many laborers have died because of being contaminated by a massive dose of radiation, it is almost impossible for the bereaved family to take legal action. It is difficult to scientifically prove the causal relationships between his death and the contamination. The company can easily muzzle the bereaved family by pecuniary compensation not to reveal the accident.

Fukushima Nuclear Power Plants Accidents



Fukushima Nuclear Power Plants Accidents



III-1. A Case of GMOs

- (1) Genetically modified (GM) technologies have created many vested interest groups by various protectionist policies.
- (2) The rich can prevent from ingesting GM foods since they have much information and money. The biotechnology companies have tried, therefore, to penetrate the market for the poor by the dumping strategy supported by government subsidies. In the developing countries, such a penetration often begins as an assistance for the poor. Stable demands for GM foods need the poor.
- (3) While it is often pointed out that GM foods have a certain risk of negative effects on living things over the generations, no scientific researches get clear-cut results on this matter. It is almost impossible for the victims, therefore, to take legal action if GM foods give them health troubles. The biotechnology companies can easily muzzle the victims by pecuniary compensation not to reveal the accident.

III-2. A Case of GMOs

- (4) When the biotechnology company gains intellectual property rights on GM crops, home seed-raising and exchanges of seeds by the peasants are prohibited. The peasants have to buy the seeds every season. This situation will weaken the inter-personal relationships among the peasants.
- (5) Since the biotechnology companies monopolize the technical knowledge on GM crops, the exchange of knowledge among the peasants will have no meanings. Monoculture system for a GM crop has been often applied in the large farm by using the stylized techniques.
- (6) The penetration of GM crops will weaken, therefore, community-based resources and biodiversity.
- (7) In the Philippines, at least commercial cultivation of 19 GM crops are legalized. The cultivation area of the Bt-corn has been amounted to almost 30% of the total area, while **Golden Rice** is now waiting to be legalized.

UC Department Torn Over Corn Research

Angel Brewer

Faculty in the Department of Plant and Microbial Biology are organizing to destroy the reputation of one of their own, says UC Berkeley Associate Professor Miguel Altieri.

Last week the high-profile *Nature* magazine withdrew support for a study it published in November by UC Berkeley Assistant Professor Ignacio Chapela and graduate student David Quist, resulting in a campus wide controversy. The original article went through a full peer review, meaning that several scientists read and approved the article before it was originally published.

Chapela and Quist's report concluded that genetically modified corn had invaded the native Mexican corn population. As the Mexican government outlawed genetically altered corn in 1998, the findings shocked the scientific community. But *Nature* says that **after receiving criticisms from the scientific community, a series of tests has led the editors to believe Chapela's research is unfounded.** **Professors in the department have now expressed their own disappointment with Chapela's report by issuing a joint statement last month "in support of scientific discourse in the Mexican (genetically modified) maize scandal."**

Signed by 19 UC Berkeley professors and graduate students, the joint statement came as a response to a petition signed by 114 individuals and organizations condemning the "McCarthyist campaign" against Chapela. Department Chair Andrew Jackson was one of the 19 to issue the statement. "Every time we publish something, it is open to criticism," Jackson said. "Obviously Chapela's approach was not as stringent as it could have been."

An opposing force is organizing-questioning the reasoning behind *Nature's* withdrawal of support of Chapela's article as well as the issuance of the joint statement. **"Chapela's article already went under peer review before publication,"** said Altieri, who works in the Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management. "The way these professors are handling things is unethical. If they have something to say, they should not be obscure about it."

Altieri said his main concern is **the possible influence the powerful pharmaceutical company Syngenta may have had on the professors involved with the study refuting Chapela's work.**

In 1998, UC Berkeley formed a controversial alliance with the biotechnology company, then known as Novartis. The agreement consisted of **\$25 million in funding to plant and microbial biology researchers**. Chapela was the spokesperson for the opposition to the Novartis alliance and may have consequently earned the disdain of professors in the department who need the Novartis funding, said Steve Beissinger, chair of environmental science, policy, and management. **"Chapela may have threatened what is quite a lucrative industry in genetics," Beissinger said. "That may have put his work under extraordinary scrutiny."**

Altieri issued his own statement last week calling for a "campuswide debate" to provide for the "emergence of an ethical agreement." In the statement, he referred to a similar case in biotechnology in which a professor was "temporarily muzzled and then fired." "Now some people want to do the same to Chapela and Quist as a warning to any other academics that break ranks over (genetically modified organism) research," Altieri said in his statement.

Chapela also noted that others have joined the campaign against his study.

Renowned Professor Antony Trewavas of the University of Edinburgh sent an e-mail to UC Berkeley professors "to request that Berkeley relinquish Chapela's position simply because the reputation of science will have been damaged."

Signers of the joint statement, however, hold that the issuance was not an effort to fire Chapela. But the statement comes at the same time **Chapela is under review for promotion and tenure**. "Chapela is at a point where any damage could affect his promotion," Beissinger said. "This may be the work of people trying to influence his career."

The Daily Californian, Tuesday, April 9, 2002

http://archive.dailycal.org/article/8239/uc_department_torn_over_corn_research