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**Universal, Unconditional, Lifelong, and Enough-to-Survive-Level Cash Transfer System as a Crucial Aspect of Sustainable Food System:**

**Lessons from the Basic Income Pilot Projects in Namibian, Brazilian and Indian Villages**

**Tadashi OKANOUCHI**

Professor, Faculty of Social Sciences, HOSEI University, Tokyo, Japan.

(Email) otadashi@hosei.ac.jp

**Abstract**:

Introducing a system of universal, unconditional, lifelong, and enough-to-survive-level monthly cash transfer to individuals or Basic Income (BI) can be a perfect alternative to the present unsustainable global food system. Because BI could activate all individuals’ local economic activities and communications both in market and non-market spheres, according to the results report of the pilot projects since 2008 in Namibia, Brazil and India and my field research at all those project-sites.

At the same time, politics appeared as the biggest challenge for BI. As the founders of the idea of BI had based it on the strong logic of corrective justice rather than distributive justice, the causation of BI should be based on corrective justice which could create a strong global social movement like decolonization movement including land reform movement in the last century. The origin of the share-capital of TNCs can be traceable to the age of colonialist rule or in the process of primitive accumulation. Therefore, all human beings can claim at least 51% of all TNCs’ share capital, as compensation for past injustice and sustainable funding source for global BI, to be transferred to a newly established transnational public investment fund which will be a holding company co-owned and controlled by all individual human-beings as shareholders.

1. **Introduction: Sustainable Food System and Property Rights**

As is clearly seen in the recent official reports about increasing global undernourished population, building sustainable food systems in a globalizing world has never been achieved until now [1, 2]. Key messages of the FAO report are as follows:

In 2016 the number of chronically undernourished people in the world is estimated to have increased to 815 million, up from 777 million in 2015 although still down from about 900 million in 2000. /After a prolonged decline, this recent increase could signal a reversal of trends. The food security situation has worsened in particular in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, South-Eastern Asia and Western Asia, and deteriorations have been observed most notably in situations of conflict and conflict combined with droughts or floods. /.../Globally, the prevalence of stunting fell from 29.5 percent to 22.9 percent between 2005 and 2016, although 155 million children under five years of age across the world still suffer from stunted growth. /Wasting affected one in twelve (52 million) of all children under five years of age in 2016, more than half of whom (27.6 million) live in Southern Asia. /…/Addressing food insecurity and malnutrition in conflict-affected situations cannot be ‘business as usual’. It requires a conflict-sensitive approach that aligns actions for immediate humanitarian assistance, long-term development and sustaining peace. /This report sends a clear warning signal that the ambition of a world without hunger and malnutrition by 2030 will be challenging – achieving it will require renewed efforts through new ways of working.” [1 p ii]

Globalization, or the empowerment of transnational corporations (TNCs) in human society has been severely criticized as a cause of unsustainability of food systems in the world [3, 4, 5, 6].

At the same time, present globalized free market society with severe competitions among TNCs has been created increasing super-rich people among investors or capitalist class. In 2017, “driven by accelerating economic and equity-market performance in key regions, global HNWI (High Net Worth Individual: a person having investable assets of US$1 million or more, excluding primary residence, collectibles, consumables, and consumer durables) wealth grew 10.6% to surpass the US$70 trillion threshold for the first time./…/HNWI wealth remains on course to reach US$100 trillion by 2025. HNWIs around the world enjoyed investment returns above 20% for the second year running through January 2017 to December 2017” [7]. Please note that we only need US$2.2 trillion to afford for all individuals on the earth PPP$1.25 a day, which is extreme poverty line by world Bank, according to my calculation for the year of 2006 [8].

The number of demi-billionaire (those having US$500 million or more among HNWIs) in 2017 was 129,730 (North America-44,000, Europe-35,180, Asia-35,880, Latin America-4,220, Middle East-4,740, Russia & CIS-2,870, Australia-1,650, Africa-1190) which was 14% increase since 2012[9]. The way how those super-rich people continue to exist in this globalized world is analyzed by a sociologist from the wealth managers’ point of view [10].

At the same time, centralization of the TNCs reached until 2006 to an incredibly high level. Almost all the big TNCs are connected each other by network of shareholdings and they become like one giant capital group of TNCs, dominating 94% of the total operating revenues of all the TNCs in the world. And the biggest 50 TNCs of the group, which were financial institutions except 2, hold control of 40% of the total operating revenues of the TNCs in the group by their direct/indirect majority shareholdings [11].

Such TNCs’ dominating system has been described by some scholars as a system of “Empire” [12, 13, 14], or “Global Capitalism” [15, 16, 17, 18]. They argued that partial success of social movements seeking for solidarity economy, government interventions through development projects, social businesses, BOP businesses, and philanthropies are insufficient without a global systemic change. Some philosophers even say that it is a moral duty for everyone to change the global system, or the present institutional arrangement of the world [19].

However, the image of the alternative system by those critics are not clear as they admit by themselves. The aim of this paper is to present a clearer image of the alternative global system based on my research about Basic Income (BI) movements in the world.

BI is a system of universal, unconditional, lifelong, and enough-to-survive-level monthly cash transfer to individuals. According to the results-reports of the pilot projects which were implemented almost simultaneously and independently in Namibian, Brazilian and Indian villages by NGOs in 2008-12, and my field research at all those project-sites in 2011-13, I can say that BI has a potential not only to achieve poverty eradication but also to promote building sustainable and inclusive food systems. Because BI can activate all individual residents’ local economic activities and communications both in market and non-market spheres.

Though the amount of monthly transfer of cash is enough-to-survive-level, the total amount of money for each individual is quite a big amount, even in a limited pilot project for 2 years. Such kind of monthly cash flow can be capitalized by each individuals. In other words, they can borrow quite a big amount of money to be functioned as capital (money to buy means of production, like goats, cow, fishnet, sewing machine, flour and sugar for baking bread to sell, materials for making sun-bricks, etc.) as far as the amount of BI can guarantee redemption of principals and payment of interests. It means that all individual villagers are empowered in terms of money power. This is the reason why the villagers at first tried to construct safer and sustainable food systems creatively to be fit to their various circumstances.

What does the introduction of such a big amount of cash transfer mean? It is a transfer of property rights of a certain amount of money, i.e. capital. If we think about a global BI system, whose capital can be transferred to all individuals on the earth? This is a question. My answer is quite simple. The capital of all TNCs can. We do not need all of their capital but just 51% of each TNC’s share capital are enough. 100% will lead to a global bureaucratic socialism, and less than 50% will lead to backrush of TNCs’ hegemony. 51% is enough for us to hold the casting board for complete regulation of TNCs. We can create a permanent investment fund or a holding company which expropriates 51% of all TNCs’ share capital for the purpose of sustainable funding of a global BI scheme.

In 2, I present a short looking back of the history of the idea of BI regarding the property rights and the theory of justice. In 3, I summarize the lessons of the contemporary pilot projects. And 4 will be a concluding remarks about the challenge of the global BI scheme.

1. **The Idea of Basic Income or Basic Capital in Historical Origin**

The history of the idea of Basic Income or Basic Capital began in the end of the 18th century as a proposal of a new property rights system in England where the sustainable food system were broken because to many people became landless and extremely poor by the second Enclosure movement. Thomas Paine wrote in his *Agrarian Justice* (1797):

It is a position not to be controverted that the earth, in its natural, uncultivated state was, and ever would have continued to be, *the common property of the human race*. In that state every man would have been born to property. He would have been a joint life proprietor with the rest in the property of the soil, and in all its natural productions, vegetable and animal [20].

Therefore, he wrote, “every proprietor of cultivated lands owes to the community a *ground-rent* for the land which he holds; and it is from this ground-rent that the fund proposed in this plan is to issue [20].” Also he wrote, “the system of landed property, by its inseparable connection with cultivation, and with what is called civilized life, has absorbed the property of all those whom it dispossessed, without providing, as ought to have been done, an indemnification for that loss [20 p 7].”

Then, the nucleus of his plan was “to create a national fund, out of which there shall be paid to every person, when arrived at the age of twenty-one years, the sum of fifteen pounds sterling, as a compensation in part, for the loss of his or her natural inheritance, by the introduction of the system of landed property [20 p 6].”

However, Thomas Spence, one of the English land reform radicals at that time published in *The Rights of Infants* (1797) his proposal which was summarized as follows:

All land should be owned by parishes in the form of a joint-stock company composed of every local resident regardless of gender or age. The parish would allocate holdings to individuals or families through an auction with rents being payable to it. The proceeds would cover the very limited expenses of national and local government; any surplus would be distributed equally between all inhabitants of the parish at quarter intervals, and Spence thought that the level of payment would be sufficient to secure a reasonable standard of living [20 p xx].

Thomas Paine is called a founder of the idea of Basic Capital, and Thomas Spence is called as a founder of the idea of Basic Income. We can easily see in the above texts that redress of historical injustice regarding property rights (i.e. Aristotelean rectificatory or corrective justice, not distributive justice [21, 22, 23]) was the main cause of the idea of basic income/capital for both of them.

Most of contemporary advocates of BI [24, 25, 26] and social movements for BI including those of Namibia, Brazil, and India, seem to have forgotten this point. They only claim distributive justice in social policy as a cause of BI. This is the reason why they are always annoyed by the “free rider” problem and “fundraising” problem. For the land reform radicals, “free rider” and “fundraising” were not problems at all. Everyone should be a rider either she/he can pay or not. The key to fundraising is just at the hand of present landowners, and there is no need to be created. How to earn more fruits from the land/fund is a technically important matter but not the matter of property rights or ownership transfer.

1. **Lessons from the Experiments at Villages in Namibia, Brazil and India**

The Basic Income pilot project in a Namibian village (from January 2008 to December 2009, population: 1,000) was the first BI social experiment at a whole village level in human history [27, 28]. The Brazilian case (from October 2008 to 2014, a new project started from 2016, population: 100) followed it, but it was much more a pilot project for promoting social movement than a social experiment [29, 30]. The Indian case (from June 2011 to November 2012, population: 6,000) was the most strictly organized social experiment according to the random sampling method funded by the UNICEF, Madhya Pradesh, India [31, 32].

From the evaluation reports of all these experiments noted above and my observation [33], we can say that BI could vitalize the villagers at three levels. Firstly, at the level of individual bodies by taking better foods with better nutrition, making their homes better for their health and taking proper medical treatments for their health problems. Secondly, at the level of economic activities both for their own consumption and for market of neighbors in the village, by launching small businesses like chicken, goats, or cow feedings, sewing clothes, making breads, or sun-bricks, also by opening small shops in the village, etc. Thirdly, at the level of village community by women’s participation to voluntary activities for the community, speaking out at the community meetings, etc.

I cannot help summarizing the effects of BI in those project sites from Habermasian point of view [34, 35], as follows: As systemic effects, firstly, BI changed class structure by transforming the vulnerable and exploited classes into independent small entrepreneur class, or small capitalists, or petty-bourgeois class. Secondly, BI changed gender structure by transforming most women from traditionally dependent family members to economically independent family members. Thirdly, BI changed ethnic structure by transforming the traditionally dependent and discriminated ethnic peoples into just different and independent neighbors and making the community open for positive new ethnic relationship.

As effects to the potentials of Life World, firstly, BI gave everyone much more time and place for self-reflection or communication between inner Self and Body, which is necessary for development of personality. Secondly, BI also gave everyone much more time and space for communication among villagers, which is necessary for development of public sphere. Thirdly, BI again gave everyone much more time and space for facing the Nature, or ecological communication with surrounding environment, which is necessary for ecological development of human society, or building sustainable global food system.

Then, where is the focal point or leverage for systemic change, i.e. decolonization of the lifeworld from the present ruling system? Regarding this point, the biggest challenge for BI is politics. Political lessons from all those pilot-projects can be summarized as follows:

We should not leave the results of the experiments of BI medicine only among “doctors” or scholars, for their debate about BI’s effect to cure the “disease” of human society. Also, we should not leave the idea of BI only among some politicians who wish to make the BI one of their sales points in order to win elections. We should rather make the idea of BI our sincere desires to cure our diseases by ourselves, then we should create a strong social movement for BI.

Social movements for BI in Namibia, Brazil, and India suffered very much since the end of social experiments by the long debates regarding the “free rider” and “fundraising” problems among scholars and politicians. Therefore, we do need to change our argument about the cause for BI from distributive justice to corrective justice, as I mentioned in 2.

1. **Challenge of Global Basic Income/Capital: From Land Reform to Global Capital Reform**

Causation of decolonization was not distributive justice. It has been corrective justice which mobilized peoples to the long and hard struggles for independence in human history. Decolonization is not the matter of choosing the best way (or the most effective way considering the future development of productivity) to distribute the new catch of fruits among friends. Under the state of colonization, the catch of fruits had already stolen by your friend. This is the reason why we are starving. Such injustice should be corrected right now. Otherwise, we cannot be friends anymore. Because we do not want to die by starvation. If we really want friendship and peace, then we should correct the past injustice. The logic of corrective justice has been so strong that it has created a global social movement of decolonization in human history until now.

So was the global social movement of small peasants seeking for their landownership, or land reform. Although all the advocates of land reforms did not explicitly mention corrective justice as causation of land reform, some land reform radicals, Thomas Payne, Thomas Spence, etc., did. Moreover, they took one step forward. They noticed the limited productivity of landownership as a source of wealth as Adam Smith did, and they invented the idea of Basic Capital/Income on the ground of corrective justice as I have shown in 2.

Land reform, or claiming enough-to-survive level landownership for all individuals, had been a strong desire of “modern,” or individualistic people in human history from the 16th century until the end of 20th Century. However, the globalization since 1990s had deteriorated the value of land, as means of production, especially for food production. The emerging global food market dominated by mass production system of TNCs, i.e. the global food system, made the land reform unattractive for most of individuals on the earth. Because claiming just a piece of land becomes not enough to survive by agricultural production for market. Land reform cannot work as making of an inclusive and egalitarian property rights system under globalization.

In order to survive in a global market society, we need a certain amount of capital as a source of cash flow for daily consumption for our life, instead of a piece of land as a source of agricultural production flow for daily consumption for our life.

Thomas Paine and Thomas Spence never explained the origin of accumulated capital in the hands of capitalist class at that time. But Karl Marx did in his book on capital [36]. His explanation was as follows: Firstly, it was plundered or taken by violence from the all the peoples who lived on the earth including the homeland of capitalist class. He called it “primitive accumulation”. Secondly, it was taken legally but unfairly from the present working class according to labor contract. He called it “normal accumulation” based on exploitation of labor. Thirdly, it was taken from other capitalists by Merger & Acquisition legally and fairly. He called it “concentration and centralization”. Although he never mentioned about theory of justice, we can distinguish “primitive accumulation” as a matter of corrective justice, and “normal accumulation” and “concentration and centralization” as matters of distributive justice.

It means that the primitive accumulation can be the strongest cause of social movement because it is based on corrective justice. Social movements of working class were finally tamed in Europe, North America and Japan, because they were based on distributive justice. Socialist inspired revolutions in Russia, China, Vietnam, Cuba and other places were mostly social movements of landless peasants who claimed land reform, i.e. corrective justice. Decolonization movements which include those socialist revolutions were also landless peasants’ movements seeking for corrective justice against primitive accumulation.

However, the post-colonial states including socialist states failed to accomplish corrective justice against primitive accumulation. They lost sight of the real target of corrective justice, i.e. capital in the hands of global capitalist class. In other words, state-to-state relationship obscured the real relationship in primitive accumulation. Almost all individuals on the earth had lost their means of production in the process of worldwide primitive accumulation, and the global capitalist class finally took the ownership of those means of production in the form of share-capital of TNCs.

According to the empirical analysis of transnational capitalist class formation by scholars of global capitalism school [15, 18], we can specify the accumulated capital of present capitalist class in the share-capital of all TNCs. Also according to my analysis about the origin of the ruling top 50 TNCs [37], we can say that the origin of present share capital of TNCs is traceable to the age of colonialist rule or primitive accumulation.

Therefore, we can target the share capital of all TNCs as compensation for the past injustice. We need a global social movement which claims a new inclusive and egalitarian property rights system in human society to fulfill our desire for corrective justice, i.e. a global capital reform of all TNCs.

The global capital reform can be outlined as follows: A new public and permanent investment fund or a holding company will be created. The fund will be responsible to manage the co-owned properties of all individuals or common human heritage. The fund will be entitled to expropriate 51% of all TNCs’ share capital as compensation for past injustice in the process of primitive accumulation. All individual human beings have inherited more or less negative heritages originated in the process of global primitive accumulation. Therefore, every human being is entitled to be a co-owner of the properties or common human heritage in the Fund in the form of share capitals of TNCs. The Fund will be controlled as if it were a big holding company and all individual human-beings were equal shareholders. Annual revenue of the Fund, which consists of dividends from all TNCs, will be distributed to all individual human-beings on the earth as global BI or universal, unconditional, lifelong, and enough-to-survive-level cash transfer to individuals.

Creating a strong global social movement for such a global capital reform will be a biggest challenge after the experiments of BI in those villages.

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