



Tropentag, September 18-21, 2016, Vienna, Austria

“Solidarity in a competing world —  
fair use of resources”

## Farmer’s Worlds of Justification for Conversion to Organic Farming

HADI VEISI<sup>1</sup>, ALI ALIPOUR<sup>2</sup>, ALIREZA SHOKRI<sup>3</sup>, HOUMAN LIAGHATI<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Shahid Beheshti University, Agroecology, Iran*

<sup>2</sup>*Zabol University, Agroecology, Iran*

<sup>3</sup>*Ministry of Agriculture, Iran*

<sup>4</sup>*Shahid Beheshti University, Environmental Sciences Research Institute, Iran*

### Abstract

Identifying and understanding the heterogeneity of the justifications of farmers is critical for designing better strategies to convert towards organic farming. The objective of this research is to identify and measure the motivations as justifications for conversion to organic farming in Iran. In this regard, the worlds of justification in convention theory i.e. 'market performance', 'industrial efficiency', 'civic equality', 'domestic relations', 'inspiration' and 'renown', more recently adding a seventh 'green-world', to explain the heterogeneity of reasons and motivations of farmers in organic agri-food system chain.

Survey data of 136 farmers was selected from the districts of Mashhad village of Damadvan in Tehran Province and Gonabad of Khorasan Province. Analyses of data were accomplished using factor analysis, which was utilised to reveal the latent dimensions behind the motivations for organic production. Results suggest that economics motivations, health, safety concerns and environmental issues are the predominant justifications for conversion to organic farming, while social and ethical issues are of lesser importance. In conversation with the worlds of justification in convention theory, it can be argued that 'market performance', 'civic equality', 'green orders' are the most important of farmer's justifications for a conversion to organic food production. To prosper, the Iranian organic sector must consider these justifications in agricultural policy. Development of the alternative agri-food networks including farmers' markets and community supported agriculture (CSA) initiatives, sustainable procurement and informational strategies may help to encompass and address some of these justifications by providing more information to consumers and more support for farmers.

**Keywords:** Convention theory, conversion, justification, organic farming