

TZM advocacy direction 2014 - should it change?

In the spirit of the TZM Challenge, I will highlight some problems with the current direction of TZM advocacy in order that TZM can alter their initiatives and have greater impact in achieving global sustainability for humanity.

In summary:

1. The approach used by TZM is not scientific.
 2. The arguments against pricing fail to recognise its social and democratic potential.
 3. It is invalid to dismiss transition issues as "peripheral".
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1. An un-scientific approach

While TZM advocates a scientific approach to governing society based on natural laws, it is proposing a single solution which requires global uptake. This makes it untestable except by actually doing it. Empirical data to support their claim that an NLRBE is the best way to achieve global sustainability cannot be gathered in advance. The analysis put forward is speculation based on evidence from experts in various fields about how things might work in an NLRBE, and while there is some weight to this, its certitude is disproportionate to the risk involved in trying it. In addition to this, NLRBE is often justified with circular reasoning and is therefore unfalsifiable. For example:

"There would be no reason for people to behave like that in an RBE" ;

"The education system in an RBE would ensure that isn't a problem."

This adhesion to a single, untestable, unfalsifiable solution with the unverified assumption that it is correct is unscientific.

Reverse the idea: "We need an NLRBE in order to ensure sustainable access abundance." to get "Once we have sustainable access abundance, we will be living in an NLRBE."

This opens up many possible implementations and paths that achieve the goal of sustainable access abundance. In all likelihood these solutions would have many similarities with the NLRBE currently put forward by TZM, but this approach allows scientific investigation of these ideas. They can be made testable, experimented with, falsified, refined, simulated, and eventually validated through real world trials.

2. Money and pricing

The arguments against money and pricing are based on their use and effects within the current global market, which is a closed, dishonest, and profit-driven economy. They are valid in that context, but don't consider how useful money and pricing could be in any alternative systems that turn price into a rational measure of subjective demand preferences balanced against availability (determined by the design efficiency equation).

If a new type of monetary system were set up correctly, money could be used as a mechanism for obtaining public consensus about a wide range of issues (not just what to produce). Not a consensus of pure wants, a consensus balanced and constrained by social cost (in terms of resources including energy). This would be the rawest form of a participatory direct democracy. Unless the public have a view of (and are constrained by) the resource cost for different endeavours they can't make the best decisions, neither can the best decisions be arrived at scientifically because the extent of the public want cannot be captured or quantified until they put a value on it and commit to paying that cost.

However, TZM assert that no monetary system can be set up in such a way that price would always be a rational measure of value (not subject to artificial distortions), and therefore reject all forms of money and pricing. This precludes the possibility that a money-based system could be invented and advocated by TZM even if it could spark the transition to sustainable access abundance.

3. Transition issues

There are certain causality dilemmas brought up by an NLRBE: Building the systems and physical infrastructure is tricky outside of an existing NLRBE; and the global access-oriented abundance mindset that would be ubiquitous in an NLRBE needs to be widespread before an NLRBE could be possible.

TZM's educational initiatives attempt to address the second point, but although many people *can* learn this mindset only some *do*. It takes a lot of effort and an open mind to re-educate yourself this way and not everyone is that way inclined. Many people will need to experience or at least see it working in order to open up to it.

It is therefore clear that some kind of transition is required. TZM acknowledges this, but steers clear of defining or advocating any specific plans or actions in this area, dismissing the transition as a peripheral issue. However, it is actually a core issue relating to what TZM advocates because even if everyone is convinced, unless there are specific actions to take and initiatives to investigate and experiment with, they will just go back to business as usual. In order to effect maximum change, TZM needs to reconsider the education-only

approach and make 'transition' into a core issue.

TZM could define some transition system requirements, for example valid transition systems should:

- allow us to build the infrastructure that creates access abundance, making NLRBE possible;
- be easy to understand with current mindsets whilst also encouraging a mindset shift;
- not require global adoption;
- be capable of organic growth so it can start off small and scale up;
- allow cooperation with existing systems (capitalist countries/businesses) in its infancy;
- demonstrate the real value and power of a participatory direct democracy to encourage change and eventual adoption by existing economies;
- maintain existing concepts of incentive while other forms can be tested and validated.
- have a natural tendency towards abundance;

This may not be a complete set of requirements, but one could be drafted such that eventually the money aspect of any such system would become redundant. An NLRBE (or something similar) would then come about as a natural consequence of the system.

Conclusion

TZM is not currently having the impact that it could have. Advocating an unfalsifiable idea which is rejected by many people hinders the progress of the movement. However, TZM could be an influential change-agent with the following shifts in advocacy:

- maintain the educational initiatives;
- bring focus to transition issues, accepting that money will almost certainly be involved (at least at the economic border);
- advocate action-based proposals that will ease the transition;

Example of such action-based proposals:

- Testing other systems that would naturally tend towards NLRBE;
 - Develop/test infrastructure vital to NLRBE;
 - Permanently solve problems that would still be a problem in an NLRBE.
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