Governing through Standards

Standardization devices in the governance of sustainable development
Project aims

To analyse changes in political practices induced by sustainable development through a specific object:

**Standardization devices** in the agro-food and forest sectors.
What are we talking about?

- The standardization devices we study share three main features:
- Their adoption is voluntary
- They are based on agreement produced by bringing together heterogeneous points of view
- They are directed towards a large number of actors (beyond one community of interest).
Overview of the research programme

3 main tasks:

- Why these kind of standardization devices emerge?
- Analysing the standard setting process
- Addressing the certification issue
The rise of “Transnational Rule Making Organizations” (Dingwerth & Pattberg, 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>forest</td>
<td>Label</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>fisheries</td>
<td>Label</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Accountability International (SAI)</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>multisector</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethical Tea Partnership (ETP)</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>tea</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI)</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>multisector</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flower Label Program (FLP)</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>cut flowers</td>
<td>Label</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>palm oil</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Common Code for the Coffee Community (4Cs)</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>coffee</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roundtable on Sustainable Soy (RSS)</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>soy</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Better Sugarcane Initiative (BSI)</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>sugarcane</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Cotton Initiative (BCI)</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>cotton</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels (RSB)</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>biofuels</td>
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Multi-stakeholder *fora* in a historical perspective

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70s-80s</td>
<td>Mid 90s</td>
<td>Mid 2000s</td>
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</table>
Standards in the Agro-food. Solving market problem?

- Consumer demand for food product and process attributes
  - Food quality
  - Food safety
  - Environment
  - Social conditions
  - Animal welfare
  - Ethics
Standards in a Business to Business Approach

- Informing firms of product attributes but not consumers
- Integrating the supply chain
  - Traceability
  - Accredited suppliers
  - Transaction costs reductions
- Relying on audits
  - Third party certifications
Sustainable Development as a political project

- Beyond market regulation, SD is promoting new political practices:
  - Integration (economic, environmental and social concerns)
  - Cooperation
  - Participation (role of civil society in the shaping of public policies)
  - Responsibility
- And new institutions (multi stakeholder fora such as RSPO)
The social and environmental embeddedness of the global Market

- New social movements
- Forging global coalitions
Standardisation Devices as a Political Technology?

- Redefining the boundary between State and Civil Society
- Redefining the boundary between Technical and Political matters (a broader definitions of experts and expertise…no longer a state domain)
- Governing through consensus rather than through hierarchy
- Redefining political scales: transnational regulations
Questioning standards devices as NSMD Governance (cf. Cashore and al.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROLE OF THE STATE</th>
<th>Compliance incentives do not come from Governmental regulation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INSTITUTIONALIZED GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS</td>
<td>Institutional system of societal input and policy adaptation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLICY FOCUS</td>
<td>Enduring environmental and social problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE OF THE MARKET</td>
<td>Firms along the value chain evaluate whether to support a certification program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENFORCEMENT</td>
<td>Compliance is verified</td>
</tr>
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</table>
II – The multi-stakeholder standards setting process

- Who participates (or does not?)?
- How this participation is organized?
- How the notion of sustainability is defined?
- What about the role of experts?
- How the local/national/global interact within the standard setting process.
III - Certification

- Audits as a regulating technology: internalising change in process and production.
- Building trust: certification as a substitute for interpersonal trust.
III – Certification: a growing business?

- Certifiers are themselves in business to make money.

- Certifiers usually regulated by accrediting agencies
Conclusion

Evaluating the contribution of standardization devices in the governance of sustainable development.
Conclusion

- How integrative are they (economic, social, environmental)?
- New process of production and management?
- Better international regulation?
Conclusion. A new era of governance?

- From positive law and regulatory state
- To...
- Trans national private standards and third party certification.
Conclusion…Or business as usual?

- Old palm oil in new bottle?
- Weak commitment
- Weak compliance
THANK YOU!!