

Governing through Standards

Standardization devices in
the governance of
sustainable development

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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)

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)	1993	forest	Label
Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)	1997	fisheries	Label
Social Accountability International (SAI)	1997	multisector	-
Ethical Tea Partnership (ETP)	1997	tea	-
Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI)	1998	multisector	-
Flower Label Program (FLP)	1998	cut flowers	Label
Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)	2003	palm oil	-
Common Code for the Coffee Community (4Cs)	2004	coffee	-
Roundtable on Sustainable Soy (RSS)	2005	soy	-
Better Sugarcane Initiative (BSI)	2005	sugarcane	-
Better Cotton Initiative (BCI)	2006	cotton	-
Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels (RSB)	2006	biofuels	-

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Multi-stakeholder *fora* in a historical perspective

IFOAM (1972)	FLO (1997) – fair trade SAI (1997) – social account. GRI (1997) – corp. reporting ETI (1998) – labor	?	Multisector
	FSC (1993) – forestry MSC (1997) – fisheries ETP (1997) – tea FLP (1998) – flowers	RSPO (2003) – palm oil 4Cs (2004) – coffee RSS (2005) – soy BSI (2006) – sugarcane BCI (2006) – cotton RSB (2006) – biofuels	Crop-specific
70s-80s	Mid 90s	Mid 2000s	

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

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Questioning standards devices as NSMD Governance (cf. Cashore and al.)

ROLE OF THE STATE	Compliance incentives do not come from Governmental regulation
INSTITUTIONALIZED GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS	Institutional system of societal input and policy adaptation
POLICY FOCUS	Enduring environmental and social problems
ROLE OF THE MARKET	Firms along the value chain evaluate whether to support a certification program.
ENFORCEMENT	Compliance is verified

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

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THANK YOU!!