

T12P04 / Non-state Actors and the Governance of Supply Chains

Topic : T12 / Policy, Business and Interest Groups

Chair : Joanna Vince (University of Tasmania)

Second Chair : Fred Gale (University of Tasmania)

Third Chair : Hannah Murphy-Gregory (University of Tasmania)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

In recent years, the roles of non-state actors – including civil society organisations (CSOs), multi-stakeholder groups and business associations – have emerged as significant players in the governance of national and global supply chains. Schemes such as Fairtrade, Responsible Care, Forest Stewardship Council, Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification, Marine Stewardship Council, Aquaculture Stewardship Council, Round Table on Responsible Soy, and Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil have proliferated in an effort to regulate corporate production processes.

Corporations have responded in different ways to these non-state market driven initiatives. While some ignore them, others use certification schemes as marketing tools to communicate their social and environmental sustainability in regard to resource management practices, fair labour wages and conditions, respect and engagement with local communities, and animal welfare. This is reflected in corporations' social and environmental responsibility policies (CSR and CER) and plans. The responses of consumers and other non-state actors has also varied, some accepting and others rejecting these certification schemes and CSR/CER approaches. Those engaging with them seize the opportunity to challenge non-compliant corporations by withholding their 'social license to operate' via public advocacy campaigns through social media or traditional campaigning methods.

The presence of third party certification schemes has shifted the focus of governance towards non-hierarchical steering based on balancing market requirements with community acceptance. The state, however, still provides the legislative and regulatory framework that is necessary for corporations to legally operate. Other non-state actors such as CSOs and the media may legitimise or delegitimise certification actors and schemes in this process. In summary, the private regulation of natural resources, food production, tourism and other tradeable goods and services utilising standards backed by certification and labelling is now a complex endeavour in an era where sustainable approaches to production are more widely expected, yet often difficult to achieve.

The aim of this panel is to address the following topics arising from the proliferation of governance arrangements as they affect corporate supply chains. These topics include:

- the evolving nature of governance in this area;
- the diversity of theoretical approaches and terminology used to describe the phenomena;
- the roles, impacts and legitimacy of non-state actors in private transnational regulation;
- the nature and significance of partnerships between business and non-governmental actors;
- the extent to which schemes have resulted in behavioural change on the part of corporate actors; and
- the role of various governments in responding to the standards promoted by these schemes.

This is an emerging research focus for governance and public policy scholars. The key scientific relevance of the panel lies in the limits and possibilities of non-state actors in the process of governance; the evolving relationships between business, non-state actors and governments in transnational private regulation; and the opportunities to chart and evaluate the contours and direction of contemporary private global governance arrangements including (but in some cases beyond) the state.

CALL FOR PAPERS

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Endorsement of Forest Certification, Marine Stewardship Council, Aquaculture Stewardship Council, Round Table on Responsible Soy, and Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil have proliferated in an effort to regulate corporate production processes.

Corporations have responded in different ways to these initiatives. While some ignore them, others use certification schemes as marketing tools to communicate their social and environmental sustainability in regard to resource management, labour standards, engagement with local communities, and animal welfare. This is reflected in corporations' social and environmental responsibility policies (CSR and CER) and plans. Those consumers and other non-state actors engaging with these schemes seize the opportunity to challenge non-compliant corporations by withholding their 'social license to operate' via public advocacy campaigns. Overall, the private regulation of natural resources, food production, tourism and other tradeable goods and services utilising standards backed by certification and labelling is now a complex endeavour in an era where sustainable approaches to production are more widely expected, yet often difficult to achieve.

The aim of this panel is to address the evolving nature of governance in this area; the diversity of theoretical approaches and terminology used to describe the phenomena; the roles, impacts and legitimacy of non-state actors in private transnational regulation; the nature and significance of partnerships between business and non-governmental actors; the extent to which schemes have resulted in behavioural change on the part of corporate actors; and the role of various governments in responding to the standards promoted by these schemes.

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Session 1

Friday, June 30th 08:15 to 10:15 (Block B 3 - 6)

Discussants

Marcus Haward (Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies, University of Tasmania)

Karsten Ronit (Department of Political Science)

Certification schemes and third party accreditation: hybrid governance in the marine and aquaculture sectors

Joanna Vince (University of Tasmania)

Marcus Haward (Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies, University of Tasmania)

Organisational complexity in global certification schemes: governance, regulation, orchestration or ecology?

Hannah Murphy-Gregory (University of Tasmania)

When global certification schemes meet local resistance: the case of Aquaculture Stewardship Council certification and Tasmania's salmon industry

Hannah Murphy-Gregory (University of Tasmania)

Similarities and Differences in Organic Certification Schemes in the Australian Wine Industry

Fred Gale (University of Tasmania)

Joanna Vince (University of Tasmania)

Anna Farmery (University of Tasmania)