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Battlefields of ideas: Changing narratives and power dynamics in private standards in global agricultural value chains

Valerie Nelson, Anne Tallontire

Abstract The rise of private standards, including those involving multi-stakeholder processes, raises questions about whose interests are served and the kind of power that is exerted to maintain these interests. This paper critically examines the battle for ideas – the way competing factions assert their own narratives about value chain relations, the role of standards and related multi-stakeholder processes. Drawing on empirical research on the horticulture and floriculture value chains linking Kenya and the United Kingdom, the analysis explores the framing of sustainability issues, especially around labor issues and good agricultural practice, and the choice of response with respect to private standards and multi-stakeholder initiatives since the late 1990s. We identify four competing narratives currently in play: a dominant Global Sourcing narrative, a Pragmatic Development narrative, a Broader Development narrative and a narrative we term Potentially Transformative. This last narrative is currently emerging through the unpacking of narratives in relation to the framing of sustainability problems and solutions, and in terms of legislative, executive and judicial governance. The paper contributes to emerging understanding of power in value chains, moving beyond material power to a consideration of how ideational power is exerted and resisted.

Key words: Private standards; Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives, Agriculture, Governance, Kenya, Sustainability standards

Abbreviations

DFID	Department for International Development
ETI	Ethical Trading Initiative
FLO	Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International
FLP	Flower Label Program

FPEAK	Fresh Produce Exporters of Kenya
GAP	Good Agricultural Practice
GSCP	Global Social Compliance Program
GVC	Global Value Chain
HEBI	Horticultural Ethical Business Initiative
KFC	Kenya Flower Council
MPS	Milieu Programma Sierteelt
MSI	Multi-stakeholder initiative
MSIR	Mature Systems of Industrial Relations
PSA	Participatory social auditing
TU	Trade union
UK	United Kingdom

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Introduction

Private standards, including those involving multi-stakeholder processes, raise questions about whose interests are served and the kind of power that is exerted to maintain these interests (Haufler 2001; Busch and Bain 2004; Nelson., et al 2005; Fuchs and Kalfagianni 2010; Fuchs and Glaab 2011; Hatanaka et al. 2005). More recently similar questions have been raised at the local level about issues of representation and voice (Dolan and Opondo 2005; Blowfield and Dolan 2008; Riisgaard 2009). There is an increasing interest in the institutional dimensions of value chains, moving away from a focus on "buyer drivenness" in chain governance to consideration of how a broader array of actors and institutions co-produce outcomes (Neilson and Pritchard 2010). The "horizontal" dimensions of governance need to be considered, not only the vertical ones, including the nature of engagement of local actors in value chains and how they may shape governance structures, processes and outcomes, particularly in the context of multi-stakeholder initiatives (Tallontire et al. 2011). Unpacking the role of standards in value chain governance is a central part of understanding horizontal processes of governance. While some standards are developed by lead companies in the chain, other standards that are used within the context of the value chain are developed and promoted by a wider range of actors from outside the chain, particularly civil society organizations and multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs).

This paper extends this body of work on the political dynamics of standards by looking more explicitly at how and to what end private standards are used by groups with varying levels of power and how narratives are used to promote interests. We aim to identify the dominant narratives with regards to private standards in agrifood chains and how these interact with other competing narratives. Narratives reflect worldviews and are based on underlying assumptions. Further, they can be used in a process of legitimization for certain paths of development (Leach et al. 2010). Control of material resources and structural power are critical in shaping the governance of global value chains, but it is also the case that ideas promoted through discursive power also play a role.

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Through the unpacking of narratives, the paper contributes to emerging understanding of how standards and MSIs frame sustainability challenges in certain ways that may be judged narrow from the perspective of workers and smallholders and their wider communities. We raise questions about how standards, including MSIs, frame and potentially constrain the participation and agency of smallholders and workers in global value chains. Our approach contributes to a better understanding of standards governance and their changing role in global value chain by showing the importance of ideational as well as material power. Ideational power is the power associated with establishing accepted norms, that is an acceptance of how things should be done, or more simply, the power of ideas. As such, it is, a form of 'invisible' or 'hidden' power. Material power is more 'visible' associated with force or economic structures (Lukes 2005; Nelson et al. 2014). Unpacking dominant and competing narratives helps us to better understand how particular actors promote their own interests in value chains, and how some less powerful voices are excluded.

In this paper we consider how multiple stakeholders are involved in standards governance processes, rather than considering a single multi-stakeholder initiative. Some of the cases we examine explicitly call themselves MSIs, whereas others involve stakeholders in their governances to differing degrees. Our focus is the changing standards landscape in a particular industry, rather than focusing on a specific standard, which has more often been the case in past research on this topic and to explore ideational power and its shaping of development pathways. We have focused on Kenya-UK (United Kingdom) horticulture and floriculture value chains, because these are highly codified industries providing us with multiple perspectives on standards and narratives. Our paper identifies four narratives, namely: (1) Global Sourcing; (2) Pragmatic Development; (3) Broader Development; and (4) Potentially Transformative.

In the next section we describe private standards and their governance, including their approaches to multi-stakeholder engagement in the context of global agricultural value chains. We detail our empirical research method and analyze the dynamics and narratives of private standards in Kenyan horticulture value chains, focusing on labor rights and good agricultural practice. These narratives are examined in more depth in the penultimate section before drawing conclusions.

Private standards and governance

There is now a complex web of standards in agrifood chains, especially for primary products from developing countries. Standards and certification in agrifood value chains is not new (Ouma 2010), but the number, scope and range of certification initiatives is increasing (De Battisti et al 2009). The proliferation of standards is associated with processes of deregulation and re-regulation (Utting 2005) in which retailers and large brands have played a greater role in governing value chains, as risk minimizing measures and to defend their own interests (Loconto and Busch 2010).

Standard systems have diverse emphases (environmental, socio-economic issues, governance related, market focus), methods of monitoring compliance and use of certificates or labels (Henson and Humphrey 2010; Potts et al. 2010; Raynolds et al. 2007; Riisgaard 2011). In addition private standards systems engage with multiple constituencies, across the public, private and third sectors, in different ways. As well as varying substantively in content, the standards have differing relationships to industry and civil society.

The tradition in Global Value Chain (GVC) analysis has been to trace material connections between actors through the exchange of goods and services and the co-ordination of production along a chain (Gereffi 1994; Dolan and Humphrey 2000; Raikes et al. 2000). More recently there has been a trend within GVC analysis to consider the role of standards as mechanisms for governing the chain. This has resulted in a focus not only on the vertical relations between actors in the chain, the traditional concern of GVC analysis, but also horizontal relations, such as the role of actors external to the chain in shaping standards (Gibbon and Ponte 2005; Tallontire 2007; Tallontire et al. 2011). Others extend GVC analysis to consider impact on society, such as with respect to workers or poverty in particular locations (Barrientos et al. 2003; Bolwig et al. 2010). Other scholars emphasize institutional dynamics, especially the relationship with local government and regulations and locally based actors such as NGOs, trade unions, industry associations and the co-evolution of outcomes of global value chains (Helmsing and Vellema 2011; Neilson and Pritchard 2009; Ouma 2010).

Blowfield and Dolan (2008, p. 15) assert that there is a "political economy of knowledge production" with respect to standards, which needs further exploration, especially the process by which they "have emerged, and through which they are implemented and legitimated." In this

regard, there has been an attempt to link convention theory and analysis of quality conventions (Thévenot and Boltanski 2006) to the analysis of value chain governance: Ponte and Gibbon (2005) find that GVC leadership "does not depend only on economic attributes (levels of concentration, market share), but also on the diffusion of dominant normative paradigms that provide legitimacy for the mechanisms used to exert 'leadership'" (2005, p.3).

As Smith and Fischlein (2010) assert, there is a competitive market for standards, a rivalry between standards system within different sectors, which effectively become "rival private governance networks," with relative traction flowing from the status and positionality of their members (e.g., board participants bridging between civil society and commercial sectors, governmental endorsement etc). But this "competitive vetting process" is not necessarily leading to more stringent standards or benefiting workers (Ponte and Riisgaard 2011, Hospes this issue). There is a need to look beyond the content and immediate value chain impacts of standards, to understand their discursive impact in the battle of ideas about how best to respond to perceived problems of sustainability and equity.

In this paper we hone in on the ideational power at work in the shaping of standards as a response to sustainability and equity concerns associated with global value chains. Material power is easier to see in the development and uptake of standards – powerful retailers may require suppliers to meet a particular standard before buying from them – but it is also useful to recognize that ideational and material power are intertwined (Fuchs and Glaab 2011) and that different constellations of actors influence this dynamic process. Further, the ideas that become dominant have an influence on the actual development pathways taken: there is often "lock-in" to a single powerful narrative and associated pathway, to the exclusion of others, especially in situations of "entrenched political economy of money and resource flows" (Leach et al. 2010, p. 78).

Our framework of analysis comprises vertical governance (i.e., the interactions between actors within the chain engaged in commodity exchanges in a value chain, such as buyers, producers), and horizontal governance (i.e., the role of actors external to the chain, such as worker representatives, non-governmental organizations and government). Actors external to the chain can (increasingly) influence standard content and development (e.g., through participation in multi-stakeholder initiatives or dialogue with company or industry standards bodies) and also influence their implementation. It is also important to distinguish not only the actor dimension of

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governance and their position vis-à-vis the value chain, but also the ideas being contested in different dimensions of governance – legislative, judicial and executive (Tallontire 2007; Tallontire et al. 2011). Legislative governance relates to who sets the rules and how, such as the choice of private standards as a response, their differing origins, the type of standard chosen (e.g., risk minimizing or market differentiating), the rules and content of the standard, membership criteria and participation. Judicial governance is about what compliance or conformity means, how it is assessed, audited or certified. Finally executive governance is related to how compliance is promoted: who chooses the tools to be used, processes of standard implementation including requiring or enabling suppliers to meet standards. Using this framework it is possible to explore the involvement of multiple stakeholders across the different aspect of standards governance and in the "battlefield of ideas." In this paper we conduct narrative analysis using the standards governance framework – identifying what the key narratives are, who they are articulated by, and if and how they are contested or resisted in relation to framings of sustainability and equity.

Methods

Kenya has been at the forefront of the globalization of cut flower and vegetable value chains and is a focus of donor activity (Jaffee 2005; Humphrey 2008).[1] We selected Kenyan-UK agrifood value chains as the focus of our empirical research. In relation to the fourth narrative, we have also drawn from our on-going tracking of the positions and activities of standard bodies and multi-stakeholder initiatives in agricultural value chains more generically.[2]

The Kenya-UK standards landscape is dynamic and comprises multiple standards of diverse origins, foci, longevity, actors, sector and degree of implementation (Dolan and Opondo 2005; Riisgaard 2009). This high level of codification is linked to the industry's success in attracting supermarket buyers in Europe and meeting their requirements.[3] The Fairtrade

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[1] In the last seven years alone, horticulture has overtaken tea as the principal foreign exchange earner (Republic of Kenya 2008; 2010).

[2] For example work on sustainability standards and impact, Tallontire et al. (2012).

[3] A high proportion of vegetable exports, particularly 'high care' prepared and packaged products are exported directly to supermarkets in the UK and other parts of northern Europe (Jaffee 2005).

Labelling Organisations International (FLO) has certified flowers since 2005. Some standards are specific to the cut flower sector (e.g., the Flower Label Program, or FLP, in Germany, and Milieu Programma Sierteelt, or MPS, in the Netherlands), whereas others are business-to-business standards and cover a variety of agri-food products. Some standards prioritize social justice issues, and others have a technical and environmental focus or place food safety centre-stage (e.g., GlobalGAP). Some of the standards are Kenya specific, developed by industry (or industry plus other stakeholders) such as the Kenya Flower Council code, which was initially a technical and environmental standard, with a social component added later. The extent to which the standards in operation can be said to be multi-stakeholder varies – some are explicitly so, such as Fairtrade, Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI), and the Kenya Horticultural Ethical Business Initiative (HEBI) whereas others involve a variety of stakeholders in certain processes, but are more rooted in the private sector (e.g., GlobalGAP and MPS) and while they involve a multiplicity of stakeholders, all stakeholders do not necessarily play comparable roles in governance. The extent of multi-stakeholder engagement in MSIs is of course a contested issue, in theory and practice (Cheyns 2011; Fuchs et al. 2011).

Our field research was conducted between 2008 and 2009 using a "snowball approach" to identify and interview key informants: (1) actors linked vertically in trading relationships (e.g., workers, smallholders, suppliers, importers, buyers), (2) other national and local actors (e.g., NGOs working with workers, trade union representatives, auditors, government officials), (3) actors at an international scale (e.g., international initiatives on labor standards, food industry associations, bilateral donors , multilateral agencies etc). In total there were over 60 interviews plus 29 focus groups with workers on 13 farms and 18 focus groups with smallholder farmers. In semi-structured interviews we sought to identify and discuss the standards in which the informants and their organizations were involved, why and how they were using standards and how their engagement with standards had evolved over time and the nature of worker/smallholder participation.

We also held three participatory workshops (Nairobi, September 2008) to further investigate the narratives of different actors on power and standards in which approximately forty people participated and in which we used and developed participatory "power" tools to facilitate discussions. The workshops were followed by focus groups with farmers and workers,

which were undertaken in local languages with local research assistants. A feedback/validation workshop was held in January 2010 in Nairobi.

We analyzed the empirical data using our analytical framework of actors, governance dimensions and narratives. There is a long history of narrative analysis in qualitative and particularly sociological research.[4] This has been applied to the framing of environmental sustainability, for example Leach et al. (2010) and to the contested narratives on the role of smallholder farmers in a context of globalization (Murphy 2010). Many scholars in narrative analysis focus on how people or organizations tell stories about events or decisions – not as a series of facts, but how they are linked, in terms of a plot line, with a development over time (Lawler 2002). Narratives are thus an "interpretive device" used by people to represent themselves to the world. Beyond the basic chronology of events, action, time, location, the editing and decisions are made by a story-teller and so there is meaning in who is narrating what, to whom, why and in what context (May 2012).

Narratives can be oral or written text. Thus in addition to interviews, workshop and focus group data, we analyzed the public documents on standard content, and other private standard materials (e.g., conference presentations and reports). Our first round of coding was grounded based on the 'in vivo' comments of the various informants, which we used to develop stories of the standards processes from the differing perspectives of the people we encountered. The development of the narratives was based on a second phase of more conceptually informed coding of the stories about the various standards that was framed around the governance framework (legislative, executive, judicial, as discussed above), to which we added another dimension, 'framing of the sustainability challenge'

Dynamics and narratives of private standards in Kenyan horticulture value chains

The private standards landscape in Kenyan horticulture and floriculture value chains covering social, environmental and food safety issues is now highly diverse. Labor standards have been the primary focal social issue in global value chains to date, with food safety/good agricultural

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[4] See for example the debates a special issue of Qualitative Research in 2008 8(3).

practice standards being the focal environmental ones. These two groups of standards evolved separately, but there has been some convergence of late in their content, although less so in mode of implementation.

Through inductive narrative analysis, we have identified four narratives based on the recurring themes and patterns which emerged from stakeholder perspectives (captured from interviews, position papers, workshops etc.). First, there is a "Global Sourcing" narrative, which is mainly promoted by retailers and brands, and has recurrent themes of securing supply in global value chains and managing reputational risk, with suppliers responsible for compliance with the required standards. Second, we detect a "Pragmatic Development" narrative, which raises concerns about worker welfare and calls for measures to mitigate exclusionary tendencies of global value chains towards smallholders. Third, we identify a "Broader Development" narrative, which shifts from a paternalistic worker welfare theme to a process oriented labor rights theme (Barrientos and Smith 2007).[5] Moreover, while this narrative retains a focus on smallholder market access, it is also concerned with livelihoods. Fourth, we identify a narrative that is termed "Potentially Transformative," because of prominent recurring themes, such as collaborative action across a sector involving diverse stakeholders and the ambition involved, for example, by tackling a broader set of sustainability and labor issues than in the past, often at a landscape or industry level rather than farm or factory level, and/or seeking the development of new types of power relationships in enterprise and trade activities.

Within this fourth narrative a wider group of stakeholders and a more in-depth quality of participation is envisaged or attempted, compared to the interpretations of stakeholder engagement embodied by initiatives promoted under the other narratives. The Potentially Transformative narrative foregrounds small producers in future farming systems or places them at the centre instead of large producers. There is greater consideration of rural differentiation, with questions being asked about the situation of hired laborers employed by smallholder farmers and other sections of rural society, such as very poor households and landless laborers, which not generally reached by sustainability standards. Workers and smaller producers are regarded as active participants in efforts to tackle social and environmental problems in the value

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[5] We can distinguish between those ILO labor rights that are focused on working conditions and outcomes (e.g. health and safety, working hours) and those that foster worker self-organisation and ability to advocate for themselves (process rights such as the right to collective bargaining).

chain, and these efforts move beyond a narrow definition of labor rights.[6] In some initiatives efforts therefore go beyond the scope of the standards to intervene on broader issues such as living wages, access to land, and stakeholder participation in strategic landscape management. Private standards become just one tool in a wider process of stakeholder engagement aimed at tackling underlying institutional, environmental and structural issues in a landscape or territory. For example, UNRISD has been focusing on "Social and Solidarity Economy" approaches, holding a conference in 2012, and defining such approaches as "a broad range of forms of production and exchange. What they have in common are explicit economic and social objectives: they reconnect economic activity with ethical values and social justice, aim to satisfy human needs, build resilience, expand human capabilities, empower women, foster workplace democracy, and/or promote ways of living, producing and governing that are more caring of both people and the environment" (UNRISD 2012, p1-2). While associated with values such as solidarity, cooperation, reciprocity and distributive justice, interpretations vary with Latin American conference speakers emphasizing "non-capitalist" elements, whereas Asian and African speakers spoke more of the role of community organizations and NGOs in social service provision, as well as social entrepreneurship and enterprise (UNRISD 2012, p2). In the fourth narrative the place of standards is much reduced or even absent.

[Table 1 about here]

Table 1 illustrates the key components of the different dominant and emergent narratives we have identified, and an analysis of their framing of the sustainability challenge (problematization) and governance issues (e.g. legislative, judicial and executive governance). These different narratives currently co-exist, although they have emerged in a sequence, and the fourth is still relatively undeveloped, but is rapidly gaining momentum. In the next section we discuss separately the evolution of these narratives with respect to action on labor issues and on agricultural practices/food safety.

Action on labor issues and narratives

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[6] There are many workplace or value chain issues that are not included in conventional MSI or standards discussions, such as domestic violence, HIV/AIDs and alcohol addiction (Nelson et al, 2007) or who has responsibility for the safety of workers travelling to work, especially women at night (Pearson 2007).

In the 1980s and 1990s global sourcing by retailers and brands expanded rapidly, often based on cheap labor in producing countries and aligned to processes of economic globalization and grocery sector buyer power concentration. NGO networks in Europe and Kenya provided evidence that labor abuses were occurring in particular supply chains and said retailers were responsible for prevention (see for example Christian Aid 1997), leading to demands for action from suppliers and to the establishment of labels in some markets, such as FLP in Germany and MPS in the Netherlands.

Within a Global Sourcing narrative, horticulture and floriculture buyers and exporters recognized the need to manage risks of supplier non-compliance and potential negative publicity, but consensus was lacking on what would be appropriate action and where responsibility should lie. Growers, trade unions, and NGOs developed sectoral codes and retailers developed their own (minimum) standards, which they could require suppliers to meet avoiding damage. Many actors in the South subscribe to the Global Sourcing narrative either because they agreed with it and/or saw it as a source of economic advantage. The standards tended to focus on ILO core labor rights,[7] not covering other factors that may affect well-being related to the workplace such as transport or housing (Blowfield 2003).

Because of increasing criticism of corporate codes and auditing practices (e.g., few worker interviews, over-reliance on written records, costly commercial auditors without local knowledge), a new approach began to gain traction based upon the involvement of multiple stakeholders. MSIs were promoted by retailers, some donors, international NGOs and parts of the research/development practitioner community as the most effective way to improve standard implementation. Some international NGOs worked hard to open up a new space for participation and to engage with companies. Donors, such as UK's Department for International Development (DFID), were keen to support MSIs as they too subscribed to the idea that "learning together" in an MSI was the best way to improve labor standards, a key element of the second pragmatic development narrative. Experiments began in the buyer countries: the ETI was set up in the UK in 1997, a tripartite body with retailers, NGOs and trade unions joining together in an

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[7] The 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work identifies four core labor rights: (a) freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; (b) the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labor; (c) the effective abolition of child labor; and (d) the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

improvement model, running project pilots and agreeing a base code for members. MPS, the main flower standard in the Netherlands initially focused on pesticide use, but expanded its remit to create a Social Chapter, partly in response to, but not incorporating the civil society and trade union model code, International Code for Cut Flowers.

In Kenya, and in some other African countries, producers began to develop their own codes, in response to emerging buyer and regulatory pressures (especially with respect to plant protection), but also to assert a reputation for quality, which later gained social and environmental connotations, following negative press coverage. Donor-funded development consultants asserted that the content of national codes would be more appropriate than codes developed in the north (Dankers 2002).

By the early 2000s southern MSIs were seen by retailers, some donors and participating international NGOs (excluding trade justice campaigning NGOs) as a way of improving code implementation. The ETI actively supported the formation of southern based MSIs to help localize standard setting and auditing, and increase attention to process rights. The main actors promoting a Global Sourcing narrative became more aware of gaps in their understanding of development and so were keen to engage with local stakeholders and donors articulating a Pragmatic Development narrative (e.g., Sainsbury 2002), that is, those with a vision of development that is essentially business as usual, but with a greater welfarist agenda (e.g., market access for smallholders, preventing harm to workers, etc.) and in which businesses seek help from outside to mitigated perceived social and environmental challenges.

A Horticultural Ethical Business Initiative (HEBI) was established in Kenya in 2003, involving exporters, NGOs, the Trade Union, and observers,[8] and responding to an NGO campaign by a national NGO (Kenya Women Workers' Organisation,) and an international NGO in the UK (Women Working Worldwide) (as documented in Hale and Opondo 2005; Dolan and Opondo 2005; Nelson et al. 2013). A powerful faction of retailers supported by donors created this "southern MSI" seeking to improve standards through the adaptation of codes to national contexts and by involving NGOs and trade unions as audit observers. The donor funded HEBI adapted the ETI base code to the local context, and conducted limited training on participatory social auditing (PSA) with NGO staff. PSA and local codes were originally developed by Diana

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[8] This kind of model had already been tried in South Africa in the wine sector and the South African Wine Industry Ethical Trade Association continues today.

Auret, a development consultant with roots in the Zimbabwean horticulture industry (Auret and Barrientos 2004). The approach includes training of workers before audits to enhance their understanding of the process and then including workers in the audits, as well as drawing on evidence from civil society bodies, and draws on methods from participatory research as opposed to more "tick-box" approaches. In design PSA was moving towards a broader development narrative, but in implementation has been watered down.

However, some participants rejected the call for partnership and cooperation between NGOs, trade unions (TUs) and companies (a recurrent theme of the pragmatic development narratives). The trade union refused to participate in this or any private social standards, as there were role conflicts (NGO-led standards were seen by trade unions as undermining their role in representing workers) and this was worsened by personal antagonisms and limited capacity. HEBI stalled in early 2008 due to the lack of cooperation from TUs, but also the private sector's only faint support for a potential competitor to its own export association code (Kenya Flower Council, KFC), plus a lack of capability among NGO members and poor management/leadership of the MSI itself (Nelson et al. 2014). KFC has improved its social auditing program and adopted elements of the HEBI program (e.g., the use of female auditors, gender committees). This is an example of the actors who have generally promoting the dominant Global Sourcing narrative taking on aspects of the ideas promoted by the Pragmatic Development narrative. Many of the NGOs in Kenya did not question standard content per se, but did highlight the need for greater action on gender issues; indeed the HEBI code is more gender sensitive than KFC or ETI.

In the early to mid 2000s, there were market pressures from different buyers from the Netherlands and Germany for flower growers to be certified against MPS (including the social chapter) and also the FLP (Riisgaard. 2011). By the mid-2000s there was pressure on FLO to create a fair trade flower standard, particularly in Switzerland and the UK, where the popularity of the label was growing. Using a label began to appeal to UK retailers, because corporate code impact evidence was showing limited progress, especially on empowerment indicators and for non-permanent workers (e.g., Nelson et al. 2005; 2007; Barrientos and Smith 2007). The lack of a consumer facing label from ETI led retailers to seek market differentiation elsewhere. Fairtrade launched cut flower (hired labor) and vegetable standards, which have been adopted by suppliers and retailers. Thus we see elements of the Pragmatic Development narrative being taken on by retailers, but in a piece meal way and driven by risk management priorities. The Broader

Development narrative has not emerged in the action on labor story in Kenya, because of the lack of engagement from trade unions, the lack of uptake of PSA full stop or its watering down.

Lastly, global retailers have pushed back against the pressure for greater southern stakeholder engagement in ethical regulation. They became impatient with southern MSIs, with one interviewee characterizing MSIs as "painful" (February 2009) and another bemoaning the slow pace of HEBI's development (November 2008). Instead they are reverting to a more global approach as this offers them greater control over the criteria used in standard content-setting, and over systems for monitoring compliance identifying and risks. The latter is done through the use of risk assessments, simplified auditing methods and shared databases (e.g., SEDEX, a web-based tool, is used for storing producer audit reports to which buyers have access and reducing the need for multiple audits [Spence and Bourlakis 2009]), which may have advantages, but it also disadvantages as it creates a distant "command and control" approach at the international level, in which southern stakeholders have little influence.

The Global Social Compliance Program (GSCP) led by Tesco, Carrefour and Walmart has castigated national initiatives for being "silos," locked in their own worlds and not speaking to each other (Anstey presentation at ETI conference 2008). An increasing number of UK retailers are joining GSCP, which benchmarks other standards rather than creating its own and refers to supplier databases like SEDEX. GSCP is becoming a minimum requirement, setting the tone about what is necessary. More "forensic" in-depth audits are for use only in limited, "difficult" cases, rather than as part of a more interactive, on-going and multi-stakeholder approach for improving worker and smallholder livelihoods that those promoting Participatory Social Auditing (PSA) envisaged. For its proponents, PSA (development consultants and some NGOs articulating a broader development paradigm) should have formed the basis for regular monitoring across all suppliers – instead retailers have gone ahead with a streamlined system, which they say enhances transparency and enables the identification of corrective actions. The retailers (and ETI at the time) narrowed their interpretation of participation by southern stakeholders to a role of local resources as providers of services (e.g., remediation or training) (Impactt 2008) rather than as a group supporting less powerful workers in advocacy. Service oriented NGOs, such as Africa Now, continue to engage with the private sector in this capacity. But other advocacy oriented NGOs in Kenya reported in 2009 a sense of having been co-opted into to an unsuccessful process.

Labor rights have become less visible among retailers priorities: "Supermarkets are now differentiating themselves around sustainability – labor rights have gone as a pure topic…," (industry stakeholder 1 April 2009). Pushed by regulatory pressures on climate change and reputational and eco-efficiency benefits of waste minimization and energy efficiency, supermarkets have promoted sustainability policies such as Marks and Spencer's Plan A (Marks and Spencer, originally 2007) of which labor rights are only a small part of being a "fair partner." A similar trend has occurred in many international NGOs as other major challenges have come to the fore (e.g., the renewal of focus on global agriculture and food security, climate change challenges, the global financial crisis). Representatives from advocacy oriented NGOs in 2009 said that PSA and localized codes are a promising approach and should just be better implemented (e.g., better auditing methods; allowing proper NGO and trade union participation to improve standards and identifying labor abuses). These NGOs were unaware of most retailers having already concluded that PSA is "dead in the water" (UK horticulture industry representative December 2007). These advocacy oriented NGOs offered no other broader vision about how worker rights may be facilitated (e.g., challenging assumptions about purchasing practices, retailers sharing compliance costs, capacity building), and some were focused more on minutiae of the standard content (e.g., working hours of security guards), although some, more recently have raised issues of living wages as opposed to minimum wages which demonstrates a more systemic approach beyond-compliance based approach (Women Working Worldwide 2013).

There has been some recent recognition, primarily for instrumental reasons, of the flaws of current approaches to labor standards among some standard bodies, academics, NGOs and retailers, with a new narrative emerging: there is a clear requirement for companies to move beyond auditing (ETI 2006; Usher and Newitt 2009). Following this criticism of social auditing and studies showing limited impact there are moves afoot to try and implement what could be termed "Potentially Transformative" approaches, which seek to work in a collaborative fashion with stakeholders across the sectors and across multiple issues. There are also narratives which emphasize enterprise based on a different set of values, as we discuss in the next section.

Action on good agricultural practices (GAP), food safety and narratives

In the late 1990s, European retailers formed the EurepGAP standard in response to European Union food safety legislation which makes them liable for food safety along the chain. Global Sourcing narrative proponents (i.e., retailers and governments) have placed food safety as a top priority with well-monitored food safety standards outlining good agricultural practices that manage risk being critical to effective value chain operation. The widespread uptake has effectively narrowed the framing of sustainability and ethical concerns in value chains, potentially excluding broader interpretations of "good" agricultural practice, and social and environmental issues. The narrow framing of environmental sustainability concerns as primarily food safety related (excluding waste management beyond safe use and disposal of chemicals, water use, biodiversity conservation) and as a purely scientific-technical issue (Bain et al 2010) means smallholder participation in standard setting is not possible or relevant in the eyes of the retailers (Tallontire et al. 2013). Rural communities are not in the frame of vision at all.

In the 2000s EurepGAP became known as "GlobalGAP" and suppliers became members, though other categories of stakeholder were admitted as associate member (e.g., auditors, consultants, NGOs). In Kenya, following concerns that smallholders could not meet the standard (Graffham et al. 2007; Ouma 2010), a national Horticulture Task Force was formed (2004) to develop a KenyaGAP standard – something expected to be more attuned to local conditions and a National Technical Working Group was established (2005) to benchmark the Kenyan standard to GlobalGAP. Encouraged by donors who expressed a pragmatic development narrative, both private bodies (e.g., Fresh Producers Exporters Association of Kenya, FPEAK and KFC representing large producers and exporters) and public bodies (e.g., KEPHIS, the Kenyan Plant Health Inspectorate Service) were invited onto this group, together with donor representatives. Smallholder representation was absent, despite their significance to production, KenyaGAP being based on the FPEAK code of practice, and the extensive promotion of KenyaGAP was a way of making the standard more appropriate to African agriculture and smallholders (EurepGAP 2005, p.8; Humphrey 2008; Tallontire et al 2013).).

Direct participation of smallholders was not prioritized by the working group conveners, despite FPEAK's claim to represent both direct exporter members and the thousands of smallholders the exports contract. Smallholders are not members of FPEAK; their voice is presented through FPEAK via the exporters who buy from them, which of course ignores power

relations and denies smallholders' voice (Tallontire et al. 2013). Others claiming to represent smallholders had no direct links, such as a consultant who purported to represent smallholders, but when questioned explained he was "rather representing the PMOs [primary marketing organizations, or exporters] dealing with smallholders*"* (15 July 2009). In interviews with KenyaGAP working group members it was acknowledged that in the horticulture sector, there was no one who represented smallholders, and there was consensus that the national producer organization (KENFAP) was ineffective and does not cover horticulture.

Despite achieving benchmarking of KenyaGAP to GlobalGAP, no exporters have used the KenyaGAP standard. Retailer buying power has ensured that the international standard is the one being used. FPEAK has encouraged KenyaGAP use in domestic markets. In later interviews retailer representatives said that there is no real need to debate the content and objectives of GlobalGAP, because the issue is seen as being already resolved: for example in one interview, an industry stakeholder stated (1 April 2009): "version 4 will have almost no retailer input because they think it is job done."

Throughout the 2010 to 2011 period, consultation within GlobalGAP continued generating national industry perspectives on the global standard (e.g., in the production of national interpretation guidelines), rather than to allow space for the voices of diverse stakeholders. The standard became more attuned to producer (i.e., commercial farm and exporter) needs.GlobalGAP undertook a "global tour" in 2009 which took the GlobalGAP message to suppliers about how to facilitate compliance. Participants in our Nairobi workshops emphasized the verification of GAP criteria rather than questioning its content, not due to its technical superiority, but because they accepted it as a market access requirement. The retailers shape the dominant narrative and set the framing of sustainability and the boundaries for action on "good" agricultural practice in global value chains, with the detail then being deliberated upon by suppliers.

Exporters and their associations have abandoned independent local standards (except with respect to local markets) and have aligned with global standards. While KFC persists, it does so as a standard benchmarked to GlobalGAP and as a quality differentiator. Moreover, some northern retailers and brands adopt an ever more global and technical approach through the Global Food Safety Initiative. Unlike GlobalGAP the GFSI seeks to promote uniformity of outcomes, but does not prescribe what a producer should do. Because leading food brands are

supportive, it is a benchmark that is shaping the expectations for other standards: GlobalGAP and other leading private initiatives are benchmarked to it.

The GlobalGAP and KenyaGAP standard setting and implementation process has framed best practice in agriculture with regard to a narrow set of technical criteria, drawing on a pool of technical specialist knowledge. Two reasons are given for this approach: (1) the highly scientific nature of the standard and specific control points, (2) the importance of delivering safe food to the consumer, a service which for supermarkets cannot be compromised. This technical framing excludes or suppresses other possible understandings of "good agricultural practice" and environmental sustainability goals and gives primacy to expert knowledge over and above representation by smallholders of their interests. Expert scientific knowledge is important in assuring delivery of safe food (e.g., in relation to the microbiological contaminants in food or control of pesticides), but the national working group in Kenya did not look beyond the selected agronomists, extension workers, auditors and FPEAK exporter members to smallholders themselves. This is partly due to the lack of strong producer organizations in this sector in Kenya, but also due to the framing of appropriate knowledge in standard setting generally, as well as the initial framing of the problem to be tackled and of private standards as the primary response.

Our field research indicates a mismatch between smallholder priorities and GlobalGAP interests. Many of the smallholders we interviewed found that while GAP certification does provide them with various benefits, such as improved hygiene in their homesteads and safe use and disposal of empty chemical containers, many smallholder priorities do not fit with the GlobalGAP standard. This is because the smallholders interviewed indicated that their priorities are related to the need for more clarity on pricing, marketing and terms of trade issues (e.g., access to credit, transport, contractual terms, modes of certification) rather than the issues contained within the standard which the auditors discuss with them, and they noted the lack of communication channels, opportunities to have a dialogue with the contracting companies or complaints mechanisms. The smallholders interviewed had little knowledge of the standards, were not aware of the national debates on them and were thus unable to articulate alternative narratives or to have a voice in the process of standard setting and implementation.

There has been some acknowledgment by retailers that smallholder issues are important to the sustainability of the value chain, particularly through the Smallholder Ambassador

initiative (also known as the "Africa Observer"). Since late 2007, DFID and the German development agency GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit) have worked in collaboration with GlobalGAP to create this role which aims to "to provide more opportunities for small holder representation in the standard setting process" (Africa Observer 2010). An appointee with experience of working with smallholders presented a catalogue of smallholder issues to the technical committee, followed by a "consultation" in 2008. In this consultation the Smallholder Ambassador was assisted by the Smallholder Task Force (six "experts" from Europe and Africa, working in research, audit, import and export) who sought and reviewed proposals on GlobalGAP's Control Points and Compliance Criteria and systems for certification. We understand that no proposals were taken forward from this initiative, as it seems that there were restrictions on the voices that were seen as credible. One importer representative argued that: "NGOs ...had no idea about food safety- well-meaning but not useful and focused on silly detail like first aid boxes, and there was nothing that would drastically reduce the cost of audit or make it more accessible" (UK based consultant, interview 1 April 2009). The approach appears to be focused on creating a space for participation to enhance efficiency of outputs (in this case compliance), rather than on the basis of representation. This initiative is indicative of the Global Sourcing narrative that pervades retailer discourse on GAP, though tempered with a Pragmatic Broader Development narrative concerned with facilitating market access for smallholders. Direct representation, producer organization capacity building and responding to broader smallholder and indeed community interests, which may be part of a more broad based development narrative have not been prioritized. The efforts of the Smallholder Ambassador to engage with smallholders themselves have been largely symbolic, and arguably with more benefits to retailers than the farmers (e.g., the "seven on seven" meeting in early 2010 was essentially sensitizing retailers to the realities of smallholder farming, more than a serious attempt at articulating voice).[9] Achieving more substantial representation will be difficult if producer organizations such as FPEAK continue to neglect issues of smallholder representation and do not engage with other sustainability and ethical standards bodies that have a wider remit than GlobalGAP, such as Fairtrade which does seek to support farmer organization. Smallholders and communities in the same territory that are not part of global value chains but who may be

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[9] This was a meeting of seven smallholders with seven retailer representatives in Germany held before the Fruit Logistica meeting in February 2010, Africa Observer (2010).

affected by them may also have interests and priorities that are not being taken account of in such processes.

The framing of debates on sustainability by GlobalGAP also has a bearing on labor rights and social standards dynamics. GlobalGAP has developed its own "worker welfare" module, GRASP (GlobalGAP Risk Assessment on Social Practice), in collaboration with supermarkets in Germany and Switzerland (GlobalGAP 2007). This focused largely on human resource management policies and documentation at the farm level, with a minimal notion of farm-based worker representation. While the GRASP module has not gained traction in the UK to date, perhaps due to the broad acceptance of the legitimacy of the ETI, its basis in a risk approach and focus on documentary control, as opposed to worker testimony and representation, is indicative of the power of the Global Sourcing narrative and its resistance to development narratives that encourage a more politicized, transformative approach. Other standards and labels proffer broader definitions of what might constitute "good agricultural practice" and sustainability (e.g., FLP, Fairtrade). FLO's fair trade approach (which usually is promoted with a Broader Development narrative) for example, includes provisions on agricultural practices, but also covers smallholder livelihood issues such as the terms of trade, but this itself is not necessarily homogenous. Exporters and their associations have abandoned local standards (except with respect to local markets) and aligned with global standards that embody a risk minimization approach.

Examining the narratives

In our discussion of the evolution of private standards in Kenya-UK horticulture and floriculture we have focused on labor rights and good agricultural practice, and have identified two strong narratives, which have captured most of the attention to date: the dominant mainstream corporate "Global Sourcing" and "Pragmatic Development" narratives. Beyond these two narratives, a third "Broader Development" narrative has been observed in more recent years, and a fourth less well articulated narrative can also be distinguished very recently around what might be termed "Potentially Transformative" approaches.

This represented one of the few initiatives seeking to build worker agency and representation, in alliance with international actors to begin to challenge dominant Global Sourcing and Pragmatic Development narratives. This was an early sign of a more politicized approach, with multi-scale campaigning and capacity building focused on worker representation and voice, but in recent times this network has appeared to have struggled.

However, we also detect an on-going shift or at least expansion of the narrative spectrum in recent years, based on our analysis of the on-going activities and statements of key organizations and actors in agrifood chains worldwide (in the activities of standard bodies such as GSCP, ETI, but also academics, NGOs and TUs). There are multiple examples where stakeholders in this field are searching for more effective solutions to the perceived labor, social and environmental challenges posed by global value chains.

The strongest narrative (because of its material power and ideational prevalence) is the Global Sourcing narrative promoted primarily by multi-national companies and into which suppliers are integrated to retain market access. This narrative prioritizes securing product supply and reputational risk management through private standards (framing issues). Technically focused standards based on a risk assessment approach are utilized (legislative governance). Retailers engage with other stakeholders in standard development mainly based on how they can improve standard content (executive governance). The focus is on compliance, as attested by third party auditors, often those with ISO65 accreditation, with an increasingly globalised approach (judicial governance, see Table 1).

There have been diverse challenges to this narrative by donor and development practitioners through the Pragmatic Development narrative, which accepts that standards are a key tool used by retailers, but tries to render them more amenable to development objectives (executive governance). They suggest modifications to standards processes (e.g., by including civil society voices or revising criteria, for example to make them more gender aware) by appealing to the business case for retailers (e.g., in terms of legislative governance highlighting how more participatory approaches will enhance the efficiency, effectiveness or legitimacy of standards). This narrative has sought to make auditing more effective, through the promotion of auditor training and promotion of best practice (judicial governance). While all the narratives we discuss have accepted to greater or lesser degrees that there is a need for solutions "beyond

auditing" (Usher and Newitt 2009), this narrative has focused on the efficiency and effectiveness of current systems.

The idea of private standards as the main solution to emerging sustainability issues has gained widespread acceptance in industry and development, as has the compliance agenda (judicial governance) and an intensification of global control through technical mechanisms and harmonization. To some extent, many civil society groups and supplier managers have internalized the rules and practices of these first two narratives, accepting them as a market reality and focusing only on changes to minor internal rules. Many NGOs, for example, are focusing on service provision (see, for example, the Local Resources Network 2011) with respect to standard compliance or assisting retailers and suppliers in fixing "non-compliances." This is important work, but which raises questions about where alternative narratives will arise from.

A Broader Development narrative is also apparent among some international NGOs, such as Oxfam's work on purchasing practices, , and alternative trade organizations such as Traidcraft, which have sought to move past the Pragmatic Development approach to encourage a greater focus on process labor rights (as opposed to output standards and worker welfare, Barrientos and Smith 2007), to greater participation of stakeholders (e.g., in setting international standards, in developing national codes, in participatory social auditing), and in the case of some mainstream parts of the fair trade movement to tackling the terms of trade for smallholders. This narrative places more emphasis on worker and smallholder rights and livelihoods rather than risk assessment, welfare and market access which are part of the Pragmatic Development narrative; the former see workers and smallholders as active agents in their own right whereas the latter regard them as beneficiaries or targets of external actions. Sometimes proponents use Pragmatic Development narratives for tactical ends, especially when developing standards (legislative governance). In the Broader Development narrative achieving compliance more effectively occurs through the proper implementation of participatory social auditing (judicial governance). Multi-stakeholder approaches such as ETI and SAI and roundtables such as the Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels and the Roundtable on Responsible Soy, have gained recognition as vehicles for supporting workers and smallholders rights, but critically there are limits to multi-stakeholder engagement, especially given the reality of power differentials and the way in which agendas and the modes of engagement are shaped by more powerful actors (Nelson et al. 2014,

Cheyns 2011, Cheyns and Riisgaard this issue) Moreover, executive aspects of governance remain firmly with the private sector players.

The fourth narrative, "Potentially Transformative," is less well articulated, particularly in the Kenyan floriculture and horticulture value chain, but our work on other sectors and engagement with practitioners suggests that this is clearly emerging and growing stronger, Nevertheless, in Kenya there was a promising example, the emergence of network called the Global Horticultural Workers and Environmental Rights Network was established with support of international NGOs such as War on Want and Women Working Worldwide – both of which have good relationships with trade unions, and involving one of the pioneers of HEBI, Kenya Women Workers Organisation. This seeks to provide a forum for advocacy and bargaining, engaging human rights organizations, employers and the public on labor and environmental issues.

While any market intervention has inherent tensions in terms of development goals (Edward and Tallontire 2009), some approaches move towards the more transformative end of the spectrum. By transformation we are referring to a particular normative goal - transforming worker livelihoods for the better and improving the outcomes for smallholders resulting from engagement in the value chain - both political and economic empowerment. Much of this fourth narrative is associated with horizontal processes of governance, beyond developing and influencing standards, but rooted in the agency of workers and smallholders to articulate their own needs in a variety of forums, public as well as private, with multi-scale level alliances being important to create pressure for change and external actors acting as brokers and facilitators and in some cases involving a different set of values relating to economic development. This fourth narrative also involves a recognition that private standards need to be considered in connection with other regulatory processes and critically it has also to be connected to other accountability processes, with strong roles for civil society (in advocacy, alliance creation and capacity building) and for government (e.g., in job creation, social protection, legislation and enforcement) as well as the private sector. Another key shift is the recognition that global value chains operate within territorial institutional dynamics and that to create change requires a complex adaptive systems approach – that is, engaging key actors to work collaboratively across a sector on multiple issues in a process of learning and action across scales, especially moving beyond farm level interventions to landscape and industry-wide initiatives. It is also important to

recognize that even within this narrative there are a continuum of positions ranging from those that are still working "from within" to improve global value chain operations and those that are seeking to replace them with social and solidarity economy type approaches instead.

In this narrative standards have a much less prominent role in judicial governance. Where standards continue to have a role they may be used to push for change, and in other approaches more systemic solutions are discussed. For example, in "mission-led Fairtrade" which provides capacity building support, advocacy building and networking across scales the key actors are pushing for change using the standard and a range of other inputs, including investing in institutions (e.g., producer organizations and networks). Other groups promote something beyond standards and auditing, and in so doing demote standards substantially, for example, the Mature Systems of Industrial Relations (MSIR) approach. This reasserts the fundamental importance of the relationship between workers (and TU representatives) and the employer. Emanating from the trade union movement and while still operating within the globalization paradigm, MSIR seeks to mitigate its worst excesses. It is presented as a "means for mitigating the conflicts and exploitation arising from the globalization of production; to move beyond ineffective mechanisms of social compliance (i.e., auditing, verification and reporting); and to empower local actors and local labor institutions in countries where existing systems of industrial relations are weak or absent"(Gregoratti and Miller 2009, page 1). Recognizing the limits of self-regulatory and private standards approaches, it reasserts a central role for freedom of association, collective bargaining and the primacy of employer-employee relationships to advance core labor rights. A recent evaluation of MSIR implemented in a multinational apparel supply chain in Cambodia highlighted several challenges to its efficacy in the context of prevailing power relations. While there are some positive effects, there are "broader forces at work in the commercial pressure cooker of an apparel supply chain" (Gregoratti and Miller 2009, p18).

For multi-stakeholder standard bodies in consumer countries – ETI and Social Accountability International – recent discourse and practice has highlighted the need for more far-reaching approaches, with recognition of their own limited efficacy to date. While "forging good practice," ETI acknowledge that "Our combined efforts have not been good enough" and they have failed "to arrest an alarming decline in real wages, excessive working hours and the growth in vulnerable employment relationships." They argue that they are promoting "radical

new approaches to promoting labor rights" and are "focused on "tackling the root causes of poor working conditions" (ETI 2013). New collaborative, sector-wide programs have begun that: (1) promote good workplaces (improving management and human resource systems and moving towards MSIR); (2) ensure payment of living wages (developing tools and encouraging payment); (3) push for integration of ethics into core business practices; (4) tackle discrimination in the workplace and focus on the most vulnerable workers; (5) improve audit practice. The ETI discourse is now less about promoting compliance with their base code in particular company supply chains, and more focused on brokering and driving for change across a sector, with a broader identification of challenges, focus on the root causes of workers' rights abuses, and early and consistent involvement from across the stakeholder spectrum in a collaborative program. Similarly, Social Accountability International (2013) has various programs aimed at building an enabling environment or culture for labor rights, with three prongs: (1) strengthening local capacity and leadership to support employer compliance efforts and enable worker participation; (2) promoting social dialogue as a foundation for sustainable change; (3) connecting government enforcement with incentive-driven voluntary compliance. It is not yet possible to assess how far this rhetoric will translate into practice and how effective the programs will or can be. However, it is clear that they operate from "within" the industry. Yet, we argue that this is still a substantive shift from the previous narratives in terms of critical aspects of standard governance, especially with respect to framing of the sustainability challenge beyond the work place and also judicial governance as there is greater connection with public regulatory processes and "social dialogue" between trade unions rather than relying solely on private sector audits in these MSI cases.

Within the FLO standard system it is possible to detect an ongoing contestation between different narratives, principally the Broader Development narrative to a Potentially Transformative one. Mainstreaming has occurred rapidly in the past decade, but there has been increasing critique of the limitations of the mainstream approach, whereby retailers and brands use Fairtrade simply as a label to differentiate them to consumers, with limited consideration of the more "relational" criteria that are fundamental to the standard's principles (Smith 2010, Tallontire and Nelson 2013) and the mission driven Fairtrade actors (e.g., the alternative trade organizations and the Central American smallholder fair trade network) have continued throughout to articulate a position which prioritizes smallholder agency and livelihoods. FLO is

investing in the development of regional, national and product based Fairtrade Producer Networks to help articulate producer voice within the movement and beyond and each of the networks promotes differing narratives themselves. Moreover, governance changes within the FLO system reflect greater representation by producers and workers and the beginnings of decentralization via the producer networks and emerging economy marketing organizations. Recently FLO has begun a campaign on trade justice in relation to the post-2015 agenda, seeking to represent smallholder views on the global stage.

Within the wider fair trade movement there are also differing positions, with some groups more closely aligned to a position of challenging the terms of trade, rather than prioritizing market access. The Latin American fair trade network (known as CLAC) has established a Small Producers' Symbol, which is certified independently and is a response to "a world economy increasingly dominated by large-scale private enterprise, we need this symbol to continue competing on the basis of the quality and the unique values of our products and our work" (CLAC 2013) . There is clear resistance to economic globalization – and associated private standards – within the "Slow Food" and the Latin America agroecology movements, such as La Via Campesina. Recently, more attention is being paid in international development to social and solidarity economy (SSE), [10] which seek to find alternative forms of economic development (UNRISD 2012). Practical examples include: women's self-help groups, credit unions, fair trade networks, small farmer networks and movements, informal workers, social enterprises etc. The UNCTAD Trade and Environment Report (UNCTAD 2013, p. i) calls for a "rapid and significant shift from conventional, monoculture-based and high external-input-dependent industrial production towards mosaics of sustainable, regenerative production systems that also considerably improve the productivity of small-scale farmers." Transforming agriculture will require more than "simply tweaking the existing industrial agricultural system," with both drastic reductions in the "environmental impact of conventional agriculture" and a broadening of the

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[10] SSE is defined by UNRISD as a 'term increasingly used to refer to forms of production and exchange that aim to satisfy human needs, build resilience and expand human capabilities through social relations based on cooperation, association and solidarity. Other values and objectives such as democratic/ participatory decision making, social and environmental justice, social cohesion and non-violence are also often prominent features of SSE. SSE may interact with but is distinct from state-owned enterprises or public service provisioning and conventional for-profit private enterprise. Aspects associated with collective organization and solidarity may also distinguish SSE organizations from individual, unorganized, own-account ("informal") workers, or micro- or small enterprises' (UNRISD, 2012, p1).

scope for "agro-ecological production" (UNCTAD 2013, p. i). In the same report Fuchs and Hoffmann (2013, pp. 266-275) argue that agricultural trade rules should support regionalized and localized food networks for a more balanced approach located between liberalization and food sovereignty.

It is not yet clear if private standards can still play a role in such approaches, or whether they are indeed anathema to a system which gives primacy to smallholder agency in solidarity based trading chains and a different set of values from that embodied in corporate globalized value chains. These emergent approaches which are embodied in the potentially transformative narrative thus range from those that seek to work from within, tackling the whole complex, adaptive system, with engagement from multiple stakeholders, but not challenging the fundamental participation of corporations, for example, to those that seek to transform the system itself, requiring quite significant structural and institutional change.

Conclusion

We have identified three narratives that are active in the MSIs operating within the Kenyan horticulture value chain and also identified a fourth emergent narrative. The dominant narrative is Global Sourcing, but this is tempered by and interacts with a Pragmatic Development narrative. A Broader Development narrative was also identified, originating from NGOs and embracing multi-stakeholder dialogue not only around the content, but also the auditing of standards on a more regular basis. The fourth narrative, Potentially Transformative, is not currently evident in Kenyan horticulture. However, attempts have been made in the sector to build women's worker multi-scale alliances and campaigns, and the narrative is beginning to emerge in the narratives of some formal MSIs (such as the ETI, FLO Fairtrade), in academic debates (e.g., around the role of social and solidarity economy) and in practical interventions in "ethical and sustainable" enterprise development and by social movements (e.g., La Via Campesina).

Our use of narrative analysis to unpack ideational power in standards and MSI governance in the context of global value chains gives insights into the varying interpretations of what multi-stakeholder dialogue may mean in this context. While some benefits for workers and

smallholders may result from MSIs, it is important to recognize that in most cases the dominant narratives that shape MSIs are the Global Sourcing and Pragmatic Development narratives, and so they are unlikely to offer these actors a real voice. For some MSIs, the dominant narrative frames legitimate stakeholders according to the extent to which they can improve the content of the standard to ensure it meets risk minimization and enhance the legitimacy of the corporate actors and these are frequently in the Global North. These MSIs may be influenced at times by the Pragmatic or even Broader Development narratives to include representatives of producer interests, but these are often proxies and may be only included sporadically. There are many power barriers that prevent the voice of smallholders and workers being heard in MSIs and standards. Further, many of the current voluntary sustainability standards fail to tackle territory- or landscape-wide issues, structural challenges and power inequalities. This has led some organizations to question the value of MSIs, either as being too limited in reach and scale, but also because they tend to reinforce existing power inequalities.

Moreover, our analysis suggests how more equitable outcomes might be achieved, by questioning some of the underlying received wisdom of dominant narratives. Some actors are working from within processes of globalization seeking to make reforms that can deliver on worker/farmer empowerment and sustainable agriculture goals. But others are seeking a transformation of the system itself. This is an enormous task, and despite some progress there has not been the full paradigm shift that is needed (Fuchs and Hoffman 2013). This is in part because of the dominance of the Global Sourcing and Pragmatic Development narratives, backed by the material power of the main proponents. In the battlefield of ideas, there are examples of resistance to the ideational power of economic globalization from the global South, primarily located within the social and solidarity economy and agroecology movements of Latin America. Fuchs and Hoffmann (2013) give examples of "regionalized/localized" food networks which make decisions on their own, food establishing "GMO free regions," and a city (Belo Horizonte) which adopted a regional/local structured pattern to rapidly overcome food security challenges (Fuchs and Hoffmann 2013, p. 274). The question remains whether such approaches can successfully challenge prevailing current dominant narratives and processes of agro-industrial globalization and engage in and win the battle of ideas for alternative approaches which transform agriculture to sustain livelihoods for workers and smallholders in equitable and sustainable ways that respect their rights and agency. Fundamentally, the issue is about control

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and power with the emerging collaborative programs involving multiple stakeholders, but usually involving multi-nationals in a central way and other approaches which are being discussed and promoted which seek to resist agribusiness control and instead find more local forms of economic enterprise and exchange – although reaching a regional scale as well (UNCTAD, 2013). Our analysis illustrates the changing role of private standards and MSIs, but also their limitations in the light of the nature of the changes in agricultural production and trade which are needed, and which are of a systemic and transformational nature, but also fundamentally about control and power in agrifood systems.

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Table 1: Narratives associated with private standards in UK-Kenya global agrifood chains

	Global Sourcing Narrative	**Pragmatic Development Narrative**	**Broader Development Narrative**	**Potentially Transformative Narrative**
Framing of sustainability challenge	Good agricultural practice is framed as primarily as an issue of the delivery of safe produce to consumers obtained from efficient, reliable and sustainable sources. (Some risk to reputation if smallholders excluded). Labor issues are primarily a risk management issue.	Good agricultural practice is dominated by the delivery of safe produce for consumers, but also market access for smallholders (mainly outgrowers) who depend upon this trade for their livelihoods. Worker welfare is important and abuses pose reputational risks.	**Environmental sustainability** beyond regulating pesticide use for food safety and health reasons to better agricultural practices and natural resources management and for some standards is linked to the terms of trading as part of farmer livelihood security. **Social issues** – rights based approach, especially empowerment rights / process oriented	Addressing a broader set of sustainability challenges and tackling beyond the site of production. Tackling inequalities in value chain relations have greater priority. Rights based, but also who gets work, job creation, what kind of jobs and livelihoods are available and to whom. promoting smallholder agency
Legislative governance				
Tools chosen & content	Private standards in the face of lack of enforcement of government regulation. Standards that focus on the conditions of production and handling only, not value chain relations. Global processes of governing from a distance (e.g., setting uniform global standards)	Combination of risk-minimizing standards and differentiating standards / labels where there is a business case for linking environmental/ societal benefits to business benefits	Social and environmental standards of production Mainstream commercial Fairtrade value chains	Standards are either part of a wide range of mechanisms (public sector, worker networks, systems of civil society accountability pressure and solidarity) to enhance the position of producers and workers including cross-scale, multiple stakeholder alliances and capacity building, social industry wide dialogue and negotiation methods; Decent Work Or they are not used at all.
Who is involved in standard setting	Participants are selected on the basis of how they can improve the content of the standard to ensure it meets risk minimization and enhance legitimacy	Encourage the participation of representatives of supplier interests, but often proxies and may be sporadic	On-going multi-stakeholder engagement to review standards	Multi-stakeholder involvement across scales includes direct smallholder and worker representation
Smallholder	Practically non-existent. Expert	Very limited, contingent,	Varying levels of representation	Of paramount importance –

and worker participation and representation	knowledge given primacy.	parameters for discussion and range of appropriate responses – narrow. Expert knowledge prioritized mostly over smallholder or worker knowledge	in standard setting, auditing etc More engagement with trade unions and civil society	much greater representation through TUs and smallholder bodies.
Judicial governance				
Accountability process	Focus on compliance with the standard	Compliance and the potential for improvements; search for mechanisms 'to make auditing more effective in terms of identifying problems	Compliance is important for integrity of standards but also concern with improving and demonstrating impacts	Enhancing impacts but also linking internal complaints mechanisms to public judicial processes
Who monitors?	Accredited third party auditors, often part of professional quality based consultancies; development of standardized 'best practice'	Legitimacy of professional auditing companies recognized; efforts to develop and encourage adoption of best practice (e.g., in verifying and sampling)	Dialogue between professional/3rd party auditors with stakeholders at multiple levels (especially at site level)	Local and government bodies monitor, but may use the results of audits in relation to related to other accountability mechanisms; Participatory guarantee systems, or peer review
Executive governance				
Who promotes use of particular standards	Retailers select the standards that meet their risk minimization and market differentiation needs	Recognized that retailers determine which standards are used but efforts made to include insights from good development practice	Standards are promoted through multi-stakeholder processes that are engaging with a range of sustainability challenges	(Organized) workers and small producers that see some potential for standards to promote their interests
How is the implementation of standards promoted?	Retailers promote their expectations to suppliers and may share good practice with them, but rarely share resources	Some intervention to facilitate compliance with donor/NGO resources, especially focused on smallholders or to deal with persistent labor welfare issues	Sensitization of workers with respect to their rights; efforts to involve smallholders in dialogue about the content or implementation of standards	Engage with standards processes as one of a number of mechanisms to promote their interests