

Beyond Certification: A Typology of Instruments of Private and Community-Based Sustainability Governance in Agri-Food Value Chains

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Introduction

- Certification of voluntary sustainability standards = **main strategy** to enhance well-being of producers, workers, communities and the environment in agri-food value chains
- **Limited, sometimes even adverse effects** and issues of agency make us wonder: **what alternative or complementary strategies to certification do value chain actors pursue?**
- Growing institutional diversity in strategies of sustainability governance requires **mapping and disentangling of specific instruments**, e.g. on price, ownership, voice, ...
- Recurring combinations of instruments may reveal distinct **archetypes of alternative and complementary strategies**, e.g. resembling solidarity economy, inclusive business, ...
- ... particularly if these archetypes can be linked to **specific theories of change** or impact pathways from instruments to well-being impacts (Oya et al. 2018; Dhillon & Vaca 2018)
- → **Build a typology** of such strategies, associated instruments and theories of change based on empirical survey data collected on Peruvian coffee and cacao value chain actors

Data and methods

- 70+ semi-structured survey interviews with actors in Peruvian coffee and cacao sectors
- ... capturing diversity in value chain activities, ownership, size, markets, services, ... with snowball identification of common & unique models (stratified purposive sample)
- So far: transcription, coding and analysis for subset of 20 cases approximating the diversity of instruments expected for the whole sample
- Identification of recurring patterns or combinations of instruments using Formal Concept Analysis (FCA, using Concept Explorer, Ganter & Wille 1996)
- Coding of elements of theories of change using qualitative content analysis (MaxQDA)

Data analysis

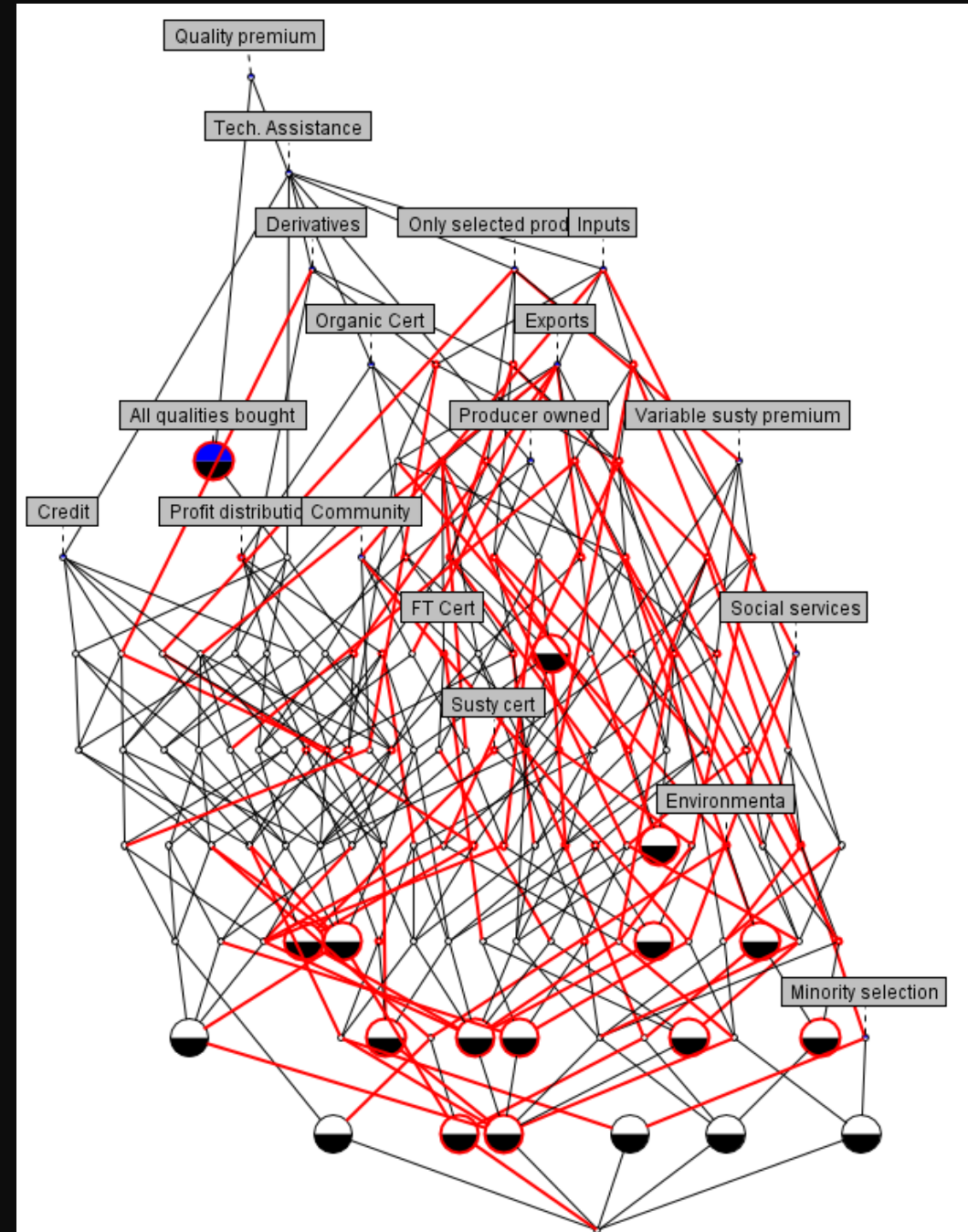
- Conceptual clustering of 20 objects (cases): Producer organizations; intermediary; local & national buyers; nat. & int. exporters; producers; manufacturers ...
- ... wrt 20 attributes (instruments, certifications)
 - Producer-owned; producer-governed; profit distribution
 - Fixed; variables sustainability premium; quality premium; all qualities bought
 - Exports; produces derivatives
 - Buys from selected producers only; minority-oriented selection
 - Technical assistance; input provision; credit provision or access; social services
 - Specific environmental activities; community-oriented activities
 - Fairtrade; Organic; other sustainability certifications (RA, Starbucks CAFE, 4C, AAA)

Data analysis

	Prod-own	FT Cert	Organic Cert	A_CAFE 4C)	Var.susty pr...	Quality pr...	All qualitie...	Exports	Derivati...	Selected ...	Minority ...	Profit dist...	Tech Ass...	Inputs	Credit	Social ser...	Environ...	Commu...
In...			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X				
C...	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
S...		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X		X		
C...			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X				X
C...	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
C...	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Ai...						X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X
C...	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X
M...			X			X	X	X	X	X			X	X				
C...	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
V...				X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X			
L...						X	X	X	X	X			X	X		X	X	
Al...						X	X	X	X	X			X	X			X	
C...	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	
A...	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			X
Fl...					X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X
T...						X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	
C...	X				X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X			X	
C...	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X		X	X	

Results FCA

- Clarification of formal context eliminates one object and two attributes
 - Producer-governed (identical to producer-owned)
 - Fixed sustainability premium (identical to Organic cert)
- 134 concepts, 67 non-empty implications
- Conceptual cluster analysis to be completed and combined with insights from content analysis



Results QDA

- Selected elements of theories of change found in preliminary qualitative content analysis
 - Producer ownership → producers take decisions → producers build personal relationship with clients
→ trustworthy, long-term relationships
 - Organic certification → safety of products and production → natural, healthy diet for producer
→ waste management, reforestation → healthy environment
→ competitive advantages in commercialization
→ higher esteem of producers at “local, social, everyday level”, as more educated
 - Only buying from selected producers → producer as direct beneficiary
→ transparency, traceability of product → higher value
+ technical assistance → investing directly in producer capacity, better productivity
+ technical assistance → quality assured → better client relations
 - Minority selection (women) → make women’s work visible → change social recognition of their work
→ receive sustainability premium for women-only coffee

Discussion

- Identification of clusters of instruments as a novel and potentially promising approach to identify and compare strategies of value chain governance beyond certification
- Further coding of elements of theories of change allows to fill single instruments and clusters with meaning as perceived by implementing actors ...
- ... and to consider differences in underlying goals and assumptions about mechanisms, opening discourse for preferred directions of change based on actors' perspectives
- Basis for process tracing when matched with outcomes and understand effects (2nd stage, 2023-24): **systematic comparison between certification and other strategies**
- Binary attributes may conceal (very) important information: farmgate price, #served, ... could be partially mended through extensive coding of values into fuzzy set (quality?)

References

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