Global decisions and local realities: Socio-economic, environmental and commercial priorities and producers’ upgrading opportunities in agricultural global production networks

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Welcome
Today’s session

• Increasing popularity of sustainability standards:
  – Who wants change? -> drivers (policies)
  – What does the change mean? -> local upgrading benefits?
  – Links

• Case-studies: Horticulture in Kenya, cocoa in Nicaragua

• Implications, further research
Research gap & contributions

Problematising
– Diverging priorities
– Upgrading
– Links: agency?
Research design & methods

Cocoa/Nicaragua
• Documentary analysis: 321 articles
• Interviews: 96
• FGDs: 3

Horticulture/Kenya
• Documentary analysis: 244 articles
• Interviews: 46
• FGDs: 4
Q1: Who/What drives change?

Priorities underlying sustainability standards

**POWER**

GPNs:

Drivers/Priorities:

**EMBEDDEDNESS**

What drivers do different stakeholders associate with sustainability standards?

**AGENCY**

**Socio-economic**

**Commercial**

**Environmental**
Conceptual contribution: Constellations of priorities

- **Socio-economic:**
  - food security,
  - social certification
  - farmer organisation,
  - capacity-building,
  - livelihood improvement

- **Environmental:**
  - disaster vulnerability reduction
  - carbon sequestration,
  - organic certification,
  - biodiversity,
  - protecting soils and water.

- **Commercial:**
  - reputation
  - traceability,
  - supply security,
  - improving yields,
  - high-quality crops
Q2: What does the change mean locally?


To what extent does assumed automatism of smallholder upgrading benefits hold?
Nicaragua - cocoa

Diverging priorities

- Livelihood improvement (income increase and diversification, asset...
- Capacity-building
- Social certification
- Farmer organisation
- Food security
- High-quality crops
- Crop yield and volumes
- Safeguarding supply
- Reputation
- Traceability and food safety
- Protecting forests, soil and water
- Biodiversity conservation
- Organic certification
- Carbon sequestration
- Disaster/climate vulnerability reduction

Floral
Macacao coop
Kenya - horticulture

Northern buyer-exporter
Government
Kandara farmers’ group
Similarities & differences (1)

- Parallels between case-studies:
  - Embeddedness & Power
  - Asymmetries <-> priorities

Upgrading benefits for smallholders?
Similarities & differences (2)

• Differences between case-studies:

- Economic downgrading
- Public sector presence
Further research

• Need to test the model in other agricultural production networks/beyond agriculture

• Need to further think through and conceptualise the manifestations of social/economic/environmental upgrading at the local level

• Need to think through systematically the links b/w priorities and local upgrading outcomes
Conclusions

• Paper confirmed unpacking of diverging priorities is crucial given their implications for sustainability standards‘ implementation and local realities (N policies -> S realities)
• Paper confirmed that there is a need to problematise the assumed automatism of ‘upgrading‘ entailing local benefits for smallholders
• Need for further research
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Thank you!
Comments and thoughts most welcome

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Links between priorities and upgrading?

Power

Economic-commercial

Environmental

Social/livelihoods

Agency

Embeddedness