International Food and Agribusiness Management Review
Volume 15, Special Issue B, 2012

Partnering for Change in Chains: the Capacity of Partnerships to Promote Sustainable Change in Global Agrifood Chains

Verena Bitzer[ⓘ]

Postdoctoral Researcher, Management Studies Group, School of Social Sciences, Wageningen University, Hollandseweg1, Wageningen, 6706KN, The Netherlands

Abstract

Intersectoral partnerships mirror the changing nature of the relationships among state, business and civil society organizations, and are often considered innovative mechanisms to overcome single actor failure in the context of globalization. This article analyzes the capacity of partnerships to promote sustainable change in global agrifood chains from a governance and a development perspective. The global coffee, cotton, and cocoa chains serve as main fields of application. From a governance perspective, the emergence of partnerships is largely positive inasmuch as partnerships act as initiators and agents of change which, although still mostly confined to niche markets, unfolds a chain-wide governance effect. From a development perspective, partnerships can be viewed critically as their top-down and business-driven nature leads to uncertain benefits for producers and results in the marginalization of certain development concerns. These differing conclusions can be explained by the fact that partnerships largely embody the neoliberal agenda, which raises specific questions, particularly from a development perspective.

Keywords: intersectoral partnerships; agrifood chains; sustainable change; governance; development

[ⓘ]Corresponding Author: Tel: + 31.0.317.482.410
Email: V. Bitzer: verena.bitzer@wur.nl

The Rise of Partnerships in Global Agrifood Chains

Over the last ten to fifteen years, intersectoral partnerships between actors from state, market and civil society have attracted the attention of researchers and professionals alike. By creating an institutionalized platform for collaboration between public and private actors, partnerships are often considered as innovative mechanisms to overcome single actor failure in the context of globalization, and advance public goods as well as private interests (Witte et al. 2000; Biermann et al. 2007; Schäferhoff et al. 2009). These positive credentials have placed partnerships in the center of the debate on what kinds of institutional arrangements are most promising to address complex, multilayered, and multi-scalar sustainability issues (Glasbergen 2007).

Partnerships have since emerged in a variety of issue areas, ranging from international development (Reed and Reed 2009) and forestry (Pattberg 2005) to biodiversity (Visseren-Hamakers et al. 2010) and climate change (Bäckstrand 2008). Especially in global agrifood chains, partnerships have experienced considerable growth since the late 1990s in the expectation that they would manage the ‘wicked problem’ (Batie 2008; Peterson 2009) of realizing sustainability within such chains, such as addressing environmental degradation, poor working conditions, and impoverishment of smallholder producers (Bitzer et al. 2008; Schouten and Glasbergen 2011; Fuchs et al. 2011; Dentoni and Peterson 2011). This has given rise to an international policy consensus on the desirability of partnerships (OECD 2006; World Bank 2007), even though the consequences of partnerships are still poorly understood (Lund-Thomsen 2009).

Most notably, the literature on global (environmental) governance and on development studies pick up the debate on partnerships in global agrifood chains. Both strands seek to explain the emergence and implications of partnerships as new institutional arrangements, albeit it from different perspectives. The governance literature originates from a state-based rather top-down view, and focuses on the changing relationships between state, market and civil society. Partnerships, which encompass both state and non-state actors in different constellations, are studied for their potential to serve as new governance arrangements and to solve global sustainability problems, including problems linked to international production and consumption patterns. The development studies literature, on the other hand, is characterized by a bottom-up, producer oriented perspective, and looks at constraints to and solutions for rural development. Partnerships, which have become increasingly common with development organizations, are analyzed for their potential to serve as new development tools by contributing to different development objectives, including poverty reduction and agricultural growth.

As key points, both the governance and development studies literature explore partnerships as new institutional arrangements with greater potential problem-solving capacity. However, important questions remain unanswered as regards the capacity of partnerships to deliver on their proposed added value and on the type of change partnerships promote. Therefore, this article focuses on some of the issues of this debate in order to contribute to a better understanding of partnerships in global agrifood chains, thereby providing lessons for the broader theory on partnerships. More specifically, the article aims to analyze the capacity of partnerships to promote sustainable change in global agrifood chains, and reflect on partnerships from a governance and a development perspective.

Intersectoral partnerships are here defined as collaborative, institutionalized arrangements between actors from two or more sectors of society which aim at the provision and/or protection of collective goods (Glasbergen 2007; Schäferhoff et al. 2009). Partnerships are characterized by a complementarity of actors' roles, which, in theory, allows for a division of labor, risks, and responsibilities among participating actors (Narrod et al. 2009). While this paper uses the term intersectoral partnerships, other terms found in the literature include cross-sector partnerships, multi-stakeholder alliances, public-private partnerships, global public policy networks or global action networks. The *capacity* of partnerships is viewed as an outcome-oriented concept and understood as the ability to promote sustainable change in global agrifood chains by means of pursuing distinct strategies and performing distinct functions. Arguably, this ability is partly influenced by the embeddedness of partnerships in the institutional context and in horizontal network relationships. In line with the two main strands of literature used in this paper, the capacity of partnerships can either be viewed from a governance perspective (partnerships as governance tools) or from a development perspective (partnerships as development tools). Although there are deliberate overlaps between the perspectives, the existing differences between them provide important insights for a systematic enquiry into the capacity of partnerships to promote sustainable change. Finally, *sustainable change* refers to a shift in the configuration and functioning of agrifood chains that addresses the sustainability challenges associated with them.

This article analyzes the capacity of partnerships in the global coffee, cotton and cocoa chains. For all three commodities, the rise of partnerships since the late 1990s is closely related to the increased pressure on multinational companies by NGOs to reassess their responsibility for the conditions at the production level. Public allegations of severe environmental degradation, human rights abuses and widespread poverty, which began to be voiced from the mid-1990s onwards, posed a clear threat to corporate reputation and sales, particularly for branded manufacturers (Schrage and Ewing 2005). Many companies sought to protect their business by engaging in corporate social responsibility activities, such as partnerships (Dentoni and Peterson 2011). Especially in the coffee and cocoa chains, the development towards partnerships coincided with a change in global demand towards high quality and ethical products, which created new markets for smallholders' products (Giovannucci and Ponte 2005). Partnerships with NGOs and other development actors are among the most common means to exploit these market opportunities and secure supply, while demonstrating ethical business behavior (Linton 2005; Neilson 2007). Concerns of supply were particularly salient in the cocoa sector; considerations to develop new specialty markets were dominant in the case of coffee; and incentives to highlight responsible business behavior were the leading motives in the cotton sector. The engagement of NGOs and development agencies, on the other hand, is motivated by the opportunity to directly address unsustainable business behavior, and raise social and environmental standards at the production level (Weidinger and Schmitz-Hoffmann 2007; Pattberg 2005). In general, the objectives of partnerships are stated to encompass the promotion of sustainable production practices, the increase of market access and revenues for producers, and the empowerment of smallholder producers. Combined with other activities at the production level to assist farmers, many partnerships seek to achieve their objectives through the application of a variety of generic and product-specific sustainability standards and certification. By now standards have turned into a key mechanism of partnerships for promoting sustainable change (Bitzer et al. 2012b), making it critical to understand the effects of standards in order to understand the overall effects of partnerships.

This article is structured as follows. Section 2 sheds light on the conceptualization of partnerships from the perspective of the literature on global governance and from the perspective of the literature on development studies. Section 3 briefly elaborates the methodological approach taken in the article. This is followed by an analysis of the capacity of partnerships from the two main perspectives: Section 4 interprets the capacity of partnerships from a governance perspective, and section 5 focuses on the capacity of partnerships from a development perspective. Both sections present different viewpoints on the capacity of partnerships, which partly overlap, but more often appear to be at odds with each other. Differences can also be distinguished between partnerships in the three chains investigated, which are considered in section 6. Finally, section 7 seeks to explain and reflect upon the different viewpoints on the capacity of partnerships presented in sections 4 and 5, offering an overall interpretation of the typical biases partnerships seem to imply.

Theoretical Perspectives on Partnerships in Global Agrifood Chains

Conceptualization of Partnerships in the Governance Literature

The governance literature focuses on the changing relationships between state, market and civil society, and the manifestation of new 'governance' arrangements that include both state and non-state actors, such as partnerships. Various scholars conceptualize their emergence as a response to the decreasing capacities of the state to solve the manifold problems posed by global change (Haufler 2003; Jessop 1998; Stoker 1998). Accelerated levels of globalization and the cross-border nature of major contemporary sustainability problems create new interdependencies between actors, and render governments unable to effectively act unilaterally (Biermann and Dingwerth 2004). As a result, private actors have become involved in governance processes in order to counteract the perceived governance gap, i.e., the absence or weakness of governmental regulation (Haas 2004). This has led to a fundamental change in the state-market-society relations towards increased cooperation among actors (Jessop 1998), reflecting a "new image of the manageable society" (Glasbergen 2007, 16). Governance draws more and more on the involvement of actors beyond government, and rests on shared responsibility (Lemos and Agrawal 2006). The implications of this development for the liberal-democratic order are widely debated. Although governance is suggested to be able to address the inefficiencies of state action (Lemos and Agrawal 2006), scholars caution that governance initiatives, such as partnerships, frequently exhibit weak participatory foundations and struggle with legitimacy and accountability deficits (Stoker 1998; Glasbergen 2007; Bäckstrand 2008; Kaan and Liese 2011). Also in terms of their potential to serve as new governance instruments and solve global sustainability problems, the evidence of partnerships' effects remains largely inconclusive, and is often contested. While partnerships have been shown to contribute to agenda-setting, knowledge production, and discourse formation (Pattberg 2005), the picture is less clear with respect to their actual output. Research suggests that partnerships fulfill rule-setting functions to establish rules and norms for sustainable production and business behavior (Andonova et al. 2009; Visseren-Hamakers and Glasbergen 2007). Yet, they perform considerably worse when it comes to policy and rule implementation (Biermann et al. 2007; Pattberg 2010). The capacity of partnerships to address global governance problems thus appears ambiguous.

Conceptualization of Partnerships in the Development Literature

The development literature examines partnerships in the context of a paradigm shift in the political economy of international development in the 1990s (Van Tulder and Fortanier 2009; Reed and Reed 2009). Firstly, this refers to the increasing recognition of the inability and failure of individual actors – be they market actors, governments, donors, or civil society organizations – to solve the development problems associated with global agrifood chains (Kolk et al. 2008). Such a situation is to be addressed through multi-actor collaboration where the capacities and bottom-up orientation of development agencies and NGOs can be joined with the resources and market knowledge of business (Utting and Zammit 2009). More fundamentally, partnerships prescribe a new, active role of business in development. Previously regarded as the "enemies, unconscious engines, or ungrateful beneficiaries of development" (Bendell 2005, 363), businesses are now acknowledged for their potential to contribute to development. This concurs with the new mainstream development discourse, emphasizing long-term interaction, goal alignment and mutual understanding between different actors as key ingredients for institutional change (Van Tulder and Fortanier 2009). This is most pronounced in global agrifood chains, where large multinational companies have considerable influence on how trade is conducted, and are therefore needed for any type of chain-wide change (Weidinger and Schmitz-Hoffmann 2007; World Bank 2007). While the donor discourse tends to emphasize the potential of partnerships to improve the position of farmers in global agrifood chains and to promote sustainable production practices, little is known on their impact and effectiveness. On the one hand, this lack of knowledge is caused by the general difficulty to measure the outcomes of any types of development intervention (Blowfield 2007). On the other hand, observers suggest that different stakeholders may not want to know the effects of partnerships, as it allows them to capture the moral high ground without there being any hard evidence that effectiveness is lacking (Blowfield 2007; Lund-Thomsen 2009). Moreover, critics argue that the close contact of donor agencies and development NGOs with the corporate world makes partnerships susceptible to privileging business interests whilst doing little about the situation of the poor and marginalized people (Utting and Zammit 2009; Reed and Reed 2009; Gregoratti 2011). This raises questions about the capacity of partnerships to serve as new development tools in global agrifood chains.

Analyzing the Capacity of Partnerships in Global Agrifood Chains

Both strands of literature recognize the potential of partnerships, but also point out critical issues which cast doubt on their capacity to fulfill the hopes vested in them. The following analysis looks at partnerships in the global coffee, cotton and cocoa chains, and interprets their capacity to promote sustainable change by looking at the functions fulfilled by partnerships. Such a "functionalist" approach has been particularly popular in policy implementation studies to accommodate an outcome-oriented analysis (e.g. Skok 1995) to analyze where (policy) change comes from. It has also been applied to partnerships to capture and explain their capacity for sustainable change (e.g. Visseren-Hamakers and Glasbergen 2007; Bitzer et al. 2008). The following functions of agenda-setting, rule-setting, policy implementation and upscaling are utilized in this paper:

1. *Agenda-setting* represents the process of opening a discussion around certain issues, including "establishing what values are at stake and mapping out potential diagnoses of the roots of the problem" (Ascher 2007, p. 142). Agenda-setting can also entail the dismissal of other issues and questions as unimportant, i.e., keeping them off the debate.
2. *Rule-setting* denotes the creation of new norms and standards regarding the production, processing and trading of agricultural products. Such a process of rule-setting thus stands in contrast to spontaneous, uncoordinated action (Pattberg 2006).
3. *Policy implementation* describes the process of executing and putting into use the norms and standards evolving from rule-setting, possibly embedded into wider activities in the target locations of the new norms and standards.
4. *Upscaling* refers to the extent to which successful individual initiatives are mainstreamed, connected to each other and unfold a durable effect (cf. Knorringa et al. 2011).

All four functions are interpreted and applied in a rather broad manner to the two perspectives of this paper. This implies that from a governance perspective, the functions of partnerships are particularly relevant to explore their chain-wide steering capacity. From a development perspective, the functions of partnerships shed a light on their capacity at the production level, including the implications for rural producers and their organizations.

Methodological Approach

This article builds on a three year research project connected to and confronted with other research on this topic in the context of the Dutch-based Utrecht-Nijmegen Programme on Partnerships (UNPOP). The idea of this article is to present a synthesis of the key insights, to draw overarching conclusions and to offer fresh perspectives based on the findings and results of this research project.

The methodological approach taken was as follows. First, a comprehensive literature review on partnerships, encompassing both literature on global environmental governance and literature on development studies, was conducted in order to construct the conceptual framework. This resulted in the comparative differentiation between a governance perspective and a development perspective on partnerships, and in the identification of four main outcome-oriented functions against which partnerships are assessed from each perspective.

The subsequent analysis draws on primary research from previous publications by the author (Bitzer et al. 2008; Bitzer and Glasbergen 2010; Bitzer et al. 2011; Bitzer et al. 2012a; Bitzer et al. 2012b). Between these five papers, a total of 82 partnerships were assessed, including 16 partnerships in the coffee chain, 5 partnerships in the global cotton chain, all through qualitative research, and 55 partnerships in the global cocoa chain through a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods (see Table 1 for more details on the methods used concerning the partnerships in each chain). Data on these partnerships was collected in the 2007-2010 period, among others through literature reviews, analyses of "partnership documents" (data made available by partnerships, including plans, status reports, impact evaluations, sales contracts, presentations, websites, etc.) and analyses of secondary literature (all other documents and literature on the case studies made available mostly through an internet search). Over 70 in-depth semi-structured interviews in person or by phone were conducted with partnership members and experts from business, NGOs, development agencies, governments, international organizations, and producer organizations. Participant observation in stakeholder meetings and a two months field trip to partnerships' sites as well as smallholder coffee and cocoa plantations in Peru in 2008 complement the data collected.

Table 1. Partnerships studied in each chain and methods used

Case studies	Data methods and sources	Reference
16 coffee partnerships	• 49 semi-structured in-depth interviews • Literature review • Secondary document analysis • Partnership document analysis • Participant observation	Bitzer et al. 2008 Bitzer et al. 2011 Bitzer et al. 2012b
5 cotton partnerships	• 12 semi-structured in-depth interviews • Literature review • Secondary document analysis • Partnership document analysis	Bitzer and Glasbergen 2010
55 cocoa partnerships	• 18 semi-structured in-depth interviews • Literature review • Secondary document analysis • Partnership document analysis • Participant observation	Bitzer et al. 2012a

The reliance on primary research from previous publications had the advantage of offering different theoretical and empirical perspectives on the capacity of partnerships, both from a governance and a development angle. The diversity of case studies provided insights into an array of issues related to partnerships, and facilitated a systematic inquiry surrounding the capacity of partnerships to promote sustainable change. At the same time, two main limitations regarding this approach can be identified. Firstly, whilst the author holds primary knowledge of all case studies reviewed, the reliance on previously collected data implied that the case studies were originally not explored according to the conceptual framework applied in this article, but served a different, albeit related research purpose concerning partnerships. Secondly, the analysis of this paper only deals with a certain number of partnerships in the coffee, cotton and cocoa chains, limiting the generalizability of the results to *all* partnerships in these chains and even more so to the entire partnership phenomenon in global agrifood chains. Thus, the following analysis needs to be interpreted in the context of these limitations.

Partnerships from a Governance Perspective

From a governance perspective, the capacity of partnerships refers to their ability to solve the 'governance problem' in global agrifood chains, that is, the lack of governance mechanisms to ensure the sustainable production and trade of commodities. Partnerships address the governance problem to varying degrees by contributing to the spread of sustainability values, by establishing private rules for agricultural production, by implementing activities at the production level aimed at the transfer of technical skills, or by forming networked structures and creating linkages to each other, thereby reproducing institutional opportunities.

Agenda-Setting: The Spread of Sustainability Values along Agrifood Chains

As noted also in other issue areas (e.g. Witte et al. 2000), partnerships act as important agenda-setters, and have triggered a debate on sustainability in the coffee, cocoa, and cotton chains. On a broad level, this concerns the spread of values based on environmentally friendly and socially responsible business behavior (Bitzer et al. 2008). Since the issues at stake are complex, covering a variety of complicated cause-effect relationships and concerning different types of producers, manufacturers and retailers (Kolk 2011), partnerships vary in their interpretation of sustainability values and their implications for global agrifood chains, resulting in a multiplicity of approaches of how to deal with sustainability challenges (Dentoni and Peterson 2011). Nonetheless, a baseline consensus has been established among stakeholders, which identifies a set of unacceptable practices in agricultural production and trade, including child or other forms of bonded labor, cutting of primary forest, and severe forms of environmental degradation (Bitzer et al. 2012a). The agenda-setting function of partnerships does not only involve the emergence of mutual norms and values, but also entails adjustments in the behavior of actors towards the recognition of the importance of partnering. NGOs and development agencies have become accepted as knowledgeable and credible partners, whilst businesses have taken on an active role in sustainability initiatives: Particularly in the coffee and cocoa sectors, several multinational companies have been active in sustainability initiatives in an attempt to build core competence and demonstrate leadership in addressing sustainability challenges (Dentoni and Peterson 2011). Finally, the practice of working directly with farmers and producers' organizations, often through partnerships, has become widespread and institutionalized, denoting a clear turning point compared to business practices of up to ten years ago.

Rule-Setting: Creating and Reinforcing the Trend towards Sustainability Standards

Sustainability standards and certification as private rules for agricultural production have experienced considerable proliferation in all of the three agrifood chains over recent years – a trend which has been absorbed and fuelled by partnerships (Bitzer et al. 2012b). A general distinction can be made between two levels of standards, which refers to (i) their main market outlets and participating businesses (niche versus mainstream) and (ii) their content (more stringent versus broader, more lenient requirements) (Bitzer and Glasbergen 2010). Whilst this would amount to a broad classification into four categories of standards, only the combinations of niche/more stringent requirements and mainstream/more lenient requirements can be observed in practice (see Table 2 below).

The coffee chain exhibits the greatest variation of standards used by partnerships, ranging from highly stringent standards (SMBC bird-friendly) to stringent (Fairtrade and organic) to less stringent (Rainforest Alliance, Utz Certified) to quality-oriented standards (Starbucks' C.A.F.E. Practices, Nespresso AAA) and, finally, to baseline standards (Common Code for the Coffee Community-4C) (see also Table 3). Considering the variety of standards, it would appear that the coffee market is saturated in terms of diversity of standards. This might be different in the cocoa and cotton sectors, where fewer standards exist. In the global cocoa sector, five standards have entered the market (organic, Fair trade, Rainforest Alliance, Utz Certified and Starbucks' Cocoa Practices), but none of them is an explicit baseline standard that covers large parts of the sector. In the global cotton sector, two relatively new baseline standards (Cotton made in Africa-CmiA and Better Cotton Initiative-BCI) seek to enter the mainstream market, whereas organic and Fairtrade have managed to establish themselves in niche markets at the other end of the market spectrum. However, it seems that the middle ground in between is missing, which in the cases of coffee and cocoa is taken up by the Rainforest Alliance and Utz Certified standards. Thus, we could potentially see movement in this direction, should the consumer demand for more ethical cotton be confirmed.

While partnerships use different standards, we can observe a trend towards mainstream-oriented standards at the expense of Fairtrade and organic standards (Raynolds et al. 2007; Bitzer et al. 2008) (see Table 2).

Table 2. Broad Classification of Standards Used by Partnerships

	(More) stringent requirements	(More) lenient requirements
Niche-oriented	Mostly “old” sustainability standards, including Fairtrade, organic, SMBC	(not observed)
Mainstream-oriented	(not observed)	“New(er)” sustainability standards, including Rainforest Alliance, Utz, 4C, Starbucks Practices, CmiA, BCI, Nespresso

This is a twofold trend, indicating that partnerships increasingly use mainstream standards and also seek to reach a greater target group of producers. Various factors contribute to this ‘standardization strategy’ of partnerships in favor of mainstream standards, mainly relating to the initiating and/or predominant actor(s) involved in partnerships. Firstly, while even mainstream standards only capture small percentages of the global market, they offer greater market potential than Fairtrade and organic standards, which are mostly confined to niche markets (Bassett 2009; Kolk 2011). Secondly, due to the important role of business in partnerships, increasing emphasis is placed on product quality and quantity, which are only minor aspects in Fairtrade and organic standards, if considered at all (Muradian and Pelupessy 2005). Thirdly, most companies reject the idea of guaranteed minimum prices for producers as required by Fairtrade (Ruben and Zuniga 2011). This also holds for price premiums, which, in mainstream standards, are either flexible and considered to be a matter of negotiation between buyer and supplier, or completely absent. Finally, this market-oriented thinking is increasingly accepted or even endorsed by NGOs and development agencies (Knorringa and Helmsing 2008). For instance, the certification NGOs of Rainforest Alliance and Utz Certified, which both promote mainstream-oriented standards, are among the most active partnership initiators. In sum, mainstream standards are characterized by a high ‘market compatibility’.

At the same time, the standardization strategy of partnerships is influenced by institutional factors at the production level, which facilitate the application of mainstream sustainability standards as opposed to Fairtrade and organic standards (Bitzer and Glasbergen 2010). Partnerships that use organic and Fairtrade standards often face considerable institutional constraints, whereas mainstream sustainability standards fit the existing institutional structures of agricultural production, i.e., exhibit a high ‘institutional compatibility’. Such higher institutional compatibility, including less stringent social and/or environmental requirements, allows for a relatively fast and large-scale application by producers and increases the potential target group (Bitzer and Glasbergen 2010).

Table 3 provides a comparative overview of the standards used by partnerships, further detailing their market and institutional compatibility based on six indicators each.

Table 3. Sustainability standards used by partnerships compared

Coffee ★ Cocoa ▲ Cotton ◆		**SMBC** (bird-friendly)	**Organic** (IFOAM)	**Fairtrade** (FLO)	**Rainforest Alliance**	**Utz Certified**	Common Code for the Coffee Community (**4C**)	Cotton made in Africa (**CmiA**)	Better Cotton Initiative (**BCI**)	**Starbucks** (C.A.F.E. and Cocoa Practices)	**Nespresso AAA**
Agrifood chain		★	★▲◆	★▲◆	★▲	★▲	★	◆	◆	★▲	★
MARKET COMPATIBILITY		**LOW**	**LOW**	**LOW**	**MEDIUM**	**HIGH**	**HIGH**	**HIGH**	**HIGH**	**HIGH**	**HIGH**
1.	Self-portrayal	Niche	Niche	Niche	Main-stream	Main-stream	Main-stream	Main-stream	Main-stream	Main-stream	Main-stream
2.	Quality requirements	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	High
3.	Emphasis on quantity	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High	High	High	High	High
4.	Traceability	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Medium
5.	Guaranteed minimum price?	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
6.	Price premium for compliance?	Yes (set)	Yes (flexible)	Yes (set)	Yes (flexible)	Yes (flexible)	No	No	No	Possibly	No
INSTITUTIONAL COMPATIBILITY		**LOW**	**LOW**	**LOW**	**MEDIUM**	**HIGH**	**HIGH**	**HIGH**	**HIGH**	**MEDIUM**	**HIGH**
7.	Entry level for producer organizations	High	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
8.	Number/stringency of environmental criteria (apart from national regulation)	High	High	Medium	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Low
9.	Number/stringency of social criteria (apart from national/ILO regulation	Low	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
10.	Organization of farmers required?	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
11.	GMOs allowed?	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
12.	Certification or verification?	Cert.	Cert.	Cert.	Cert.	Cert.	Veri.	Veri.	Veri.	Veri.	Veri.

Table 3 also reveals that there is a trade-off between the market compatibility and institutional compatibility of standards on the one hand and the number and stringency of environmental and/or social requirements on the other hand. This trade-off causes standards to compete with each other and most of all, with Fairtrade and organic standards on the definitions of sustainable commodities (Bitzer et al. 2008; Visseren-Hamakers and Glasbergen 2007). Despite primarily forming part of a type of parallel production by large companies, such partnerships have already become part of the power struggle in global agrifood chains.

The application of standards enables partnerships to initiate a change in the coordination used among actors along global agrifood chains by commodifying certain sustainability values (Lyon

2006). Normal market-based coordination is supplemented with industrial coordination, which solves uncertainties about the quality of a product through inspection and certification, and with civic coordination, which internalizes social and environmental values into trade, albeit to varying degrees (Bitzer et al. 2008). The notion of complementing market-based coordination with industrial coordination seems consistent with firms forming a type of non-equity alliance to coordinate exchanges between parties along agrifood chains with higher control intensity, but without equity exchanges. Following Peterson et al. (2001, 153), the element of third party certification (or verification) constitutes "the most extreme ex post control" as ultimate enforcement of performance is delegated to a third, external party, exceeding the control of chain actors. Fairtrade is the most civic-driven by focusing on changing the governance structures of global chains and on empowering smallholder farmers vis-à-vis other chain actors (Renard 2003). In contrast, most standards used by partnerships are less civic-driven and can instead be labeled as business-driven, for they rely on inspection-centered coordination to integrate a basic set of environmental and social criteria into trade in reward for a basic price improvement for producers. However, as the effects on producers remain ambiguous, the main benefits accrue to large companies which are able to use standards to attain their business goals, such as market development, chain coordination and strengthening of brands (Muradian and Pelupessy 2005; Daviron and Ponte 2005; Giovannucci and Ponte 2005). Thus, standards leave intact the existing governance structures of agrifood chains and turn into new mechanisms for supply chain governance by large companies (Hatanaka and Busch 2008; Bain 2010). It might even be suggested that, while standards were originally designed to constrain the behavior of companies, and verify their adherence to a set of sustainability values, the current use of standards creates new power imbalances among producers and large buyers (Raynolds 2009). Together with the fact that standards compete with each other, this decreases the value of standards as steering mechanisms for sustainable development.

Policy Implementation: Working with Smallholder Farmers

Regarding the implementation of sustainability values, partnerships introduce good agricultural practices for production and post-harvest processes to increase the skills of smallholder farmers and enhance farm management (Ruben and Zuniga 2011). Often this is combined with the use of standards and certification to promote a set of rules for sustainable production and to align production to global market demand. In this regard, partnerships present a new source of technological change in agrifood chains that often fills a vacuum in developing countries where many farmers do not have access to adequate information and extension services (Bitzer et al. 2011). Thus, partnerships fulfill a task that is generally thought to be the responsibility of governments and public extension services.

Empirical research has shown that the transfer of technology and application of good agricultural practices have resulted in four main benefits for farmers, although there is arguably considerable variation in the extent of the benefits at the individual farmers' level (Bitzer et al. 2011; Bitzer et al. 2012b). Firstly, the employment of improved production methods has led to an increase in product quality and frequently productivity (cf. Potts et al. 2010; Bassett 2009). Secondly, good agricultural practices have improved the environmental performance of farms by adhering to basic environmental management practices, including the conservation of soil and water resources, the rejection of banned pesticides and the upkeep of primary forest (Perez-Aleman and Sandilands 2008; Ruben and Zuniga 2011). Thirdly, partnerships are able to improve the working conditions at the production level and rule out unacceptable practices through the application of standards (Manning and Von Hagen 2010). Finally, certification can increase farmers' revenues, as it is often associated with the payment of price premiums (Raynolds et al. 2007; Potts et al. 2010).

Upscaling: the Creation of Networked Structures

Glasbergen (2011) suggests that the lack of strategic linkages among partnerships using standards leads to excessive multiplicity and fragmentation of the global governance system. This, in turn, limits their potential for upscaling. However, not all partnerships seek to promote chain-wide change by employing standards. A recent research project (Bitzer et al. 2012a), however, shows how particularly in the global cocoa sector, many partnerships work on pre-competitive sustainability challenges, e.g., child labor and poor production practices. Such non standard-based partnerships (NSBPs) take up a chain-wide function by establishing ties to one another, which are formed through overlapping memberships of organizations and increasingly also through institutional linkages between partnerships. The linkages channel the transfer of information (e.g. on agricultural production or farmer training), financial resources and services (e.g. provision of training to farmers), which reinforce the capacity of individual partnerships. Particularly the spread of knowledge and information between NSBPs serves two main purposes. Firstly, it helps in creating a common problem definition, for instance, on the issue of child labor. Secondly, it supports and steers the activities of individual partnerships. In this regard, the dissemination of information takes on a chain-wide governance function and contributes to the convergence of partnership activities according to commonly accepted best practices. The linkages not only increase the upscaling of overall partnership activities, but also indicate the formation of a global network of partnerships, which exists because it is inclusive in terms of (industry) members and exclusive in terms of issues that are addressed by partnerships. This implies that all powerful industry stakeholders are included in the linkages between partnerships, thereby fortifying the power structures of the industry, while competitive issues, such as standards, are excluded from the collaboration. Both aspects serve the purpose of avoiding internal conflicts of interest.

The impact of the linkages between NSBPs is enhanced through a meta-governance organization, such as the World Cocoa Foundation, which strengthens the linkages between partnerships by creating a shared vision of a new legitimate cocoa economy. It also provides guidance to partnerships by spreading information, setting priorities among sustainability issues and lobbying on their behalf. In this manner, the World Cocoa Foundation steers partnerships in reference to overall network goals and sustains the broader sustainability efforts of the cocoa industry. However, the formation of linkages between partnerships was only possible because the competitive issue of standards was deliberately excluded. Thus, NSBPs may address specific issues in a pre-competitive manner; yet, they are not able to establish and enforce rules for sustainable business behavior. They are also limited in their ability to deal with the existence of and competition between different sustainability standards. This exposes the structural fragility of the network of partnerships (Bitzer et al. 2012a).

The Capacity of Partnerships from a Development Perspective

While the governance perspective is largely positive about partnerships in global agrifood chains, various restrictions to the capacity of partnerships become visible when viewing partnerships from a development perspective. This perspective studies the capacity of partnerships in the context of a 'development problem' of agrifood chains, referring to the situation at the production level which is characterized by wide-spread poverty, environmental degradation and labor exploitation. Seen from this perspective, the capacity of partnerships remains limited due to the focus on incremental and not radical change, the ambiguous implications of the use of standards for producers, the inability of partnerships to empower smallholder farmers, and the questionable durability of partnerships' achievements.

Agenda-Setting: Questions on the Type of Change Promoted

While partnerships act as important initiators of change, their aim is not to disrupt current structures, but rather to adjust these structures within the framework of stakeholder consent, and to take the ruling out of inacceptable practices as the starting point for a sustainable trajectory of agrifood chains. In line with this argument, Visseren-Hamakers and Glasbergen (2007) suggest that some partnerships are merely developed with the aim of slowing down more fundamental change. Bain (2010) even asserts that such a reformist approach may modify some mainstream agricultural practices, but is ultimately aimed at assuring and projecting large buyers' economic priorities.

The incremental change pursued by partnerships has the advantage of being backed up by powerful stakeholders, particularly large corporations, and of fitting into current institutional structures (Fuchs et al. 2011). This shows, for instance, in the 'institutional compatibility' of mainstream-oriented standards, which advocate a process of incremental change based on prevalent agricultural practices, and in the institutional bias against Fairtrade and organic standards, which demand a shift in thinking on agricultural production (Bitzer and Glasbergen 2010). This indicates that the institutional environment of partnerships is most conducive to an incremental and facile type of change that can easily be applied on a large scale. However, this change strategy risks ignoring some of the underlying causes of the development problem of global agrifood chains, such as the significant power and resource imbalances between buyers and producers, which is causally related to the limited share of value added for producers and the exploitative conditions at the production level (cf. Daviron and Ponte 2005; Auld 2010).

Rule-Setting: The Ambiguous Implications of the Use of Sustainability Standards

As mentioned earlier, one of the key functions of partnerships is the use of sustainability standards and certification. Whilst there are several advantages associated with this approach, such as the promotion of set rules for sustainable production, partnerships also create specific problems related to certification burdens. This connects to the recent debate on standards in agrifood chains, in which claims and counterclaims are raised as to whether or not standards exclude smallholder farmers from potentially lucrative export-oriented markets (e.g. Daviron and Ponte 2005; Henson and Humphrey 2009; Jaffee et al. 2011). The core of this debate deals with two aspects: firstly, the compliance demands of standards and secondly, the costs of certification (although Jaffee et al. (2011) caution that inclusion/exclusion equally hinges on a number of other factors, such as economies of scale and access to inputs). Regarding the first aspect, a general consensus has emerged that capacities at the production level are critical for being able to comply with the high demands of standard schemes propagated by partnerships and that if such capacities do not exist, substantial support for training and extension is essential (Mutersbaugh 2002; Bray et al. 2002; Ruben and Zuniga 2011). However, research from the coffee chain indicates that partnerships tend to go for the low hanging fruit, and focus their support activities on the most capable producers in an effort to ensure economic viability and to facilitate quick compliance with standards (Bitzer et al. 2012b).

Concerning the high costs of certification, observers agree that these put considerable financial strain on standard adopters, i.e., producer organizations (Henson and Humphrey 2009). With the exception of cotton, partnerships neither cover the costs of certification nor provide sufficient credit opportunities for producer organizations. Producers themselves are responsible for ensuring that they receive certification to demonstrate their compliance with standards. The lack of available finances to cover certification costs creates great difficulties for producer organizations, and in many cases fortifies their dependence on external donors (Bitzer et al. 2012b).

Whilst the burdens of conformity, including financial costs and risks, are shifted downstream to the production level, the benefits of certification for producers are often uncertain, both in terms of price premiums and enhanced market access. Most standards offer, if at all, only flexible price premiums which are subject to negotiation, regardless of the efforts of farmers to comply with the standards (Daviron and Ponte 2005; Giovannucci and Ponte 2005). Only Fairtrade works with guaranteed minimum prices, but since this approach contrasts the market-based formation of prices, it is rejected by most partnerships (cf. Ruben and Zuniga 2011). Instead, the premiums for certified products are based on process and product quality, negotiation capacity and scarcity. However, the last two criteria make it difficult for producers to receive high premiums. On the one hand, the negotiation capacity of producers and their organizations is often severely limited due to lacking managerial skills (Bitzer et al. 2012b). On the other hand, many certified products are already experiencing situations of oversupply. As supply outstrips demand, price premiums associated with certified products are bound to decline (Muradian and Pelupessy 2005). This confirms that standards do not set in motion a meaningful redistribution of income along agrifood chains (Daviron and Ponte 2005).

Moreover, standards do not serve as a guarantee for enhanced market access in the face of limited absorption capacities of markets for certified products (Daviron and Ponte 2005). Partnerships already face considerable difficulties in finding sufficient buyers for the entire ‘partnership produce’. As a result, producer organizations are increasingly motivated to simultaneously maintain multiple certifications with differing demands to improve their chances for favorable market access (Ruben and Zuniga 2011; Bitzer et al. 2012b). Yet, although farmers are required to adopt new production techniques, comply with a variety of non-harmonized demands, and face high certification costs, improved market access remains elusive in many cases. The limited size and high demands of markets for certified products imply that only a limited number of farmers can participate (cf. Jaffee et al. 2011). These critical aspects limit the sustainability of certification as a business model from a development perspective.

Policy Implementation: Working with Producers, but Without Empowerment

The governance perspective observed different benefits of partnerships for producers due to the promotion of good agricultural practices. However, partnerships seem to be unable to complement this technological change with a more human-centric type of change that focuses on the strengthening and empowerment of producer organizations (Bitzer et al. 2012b). Such empowerment can be understood in a twofold way, referring to the position of producer organizations within a partnership as well as to the position of producer organizations as chain actors. Both perspectives reveal a discrepancy between the objectives and claims of partnerships and the effects of partnership activities.

While many partnerships, especially in the coffee and cocoa chains, cooperate with producer organizations, the latter are often not able to significantly influence the process and outcome of partnering (Bitzer et al. 2011). Producer organizations are considered the beneficiaries and recipients of partnership interventions instead of actual members. They are chosen by the partnership initiators based on already existing relationships, and they are rarely involved in the design planning of partnerships (Rein and Stott 2009). Similarly, other actors from producer countries are frequently underrepresented in partnerships, whereas actors from consumer countries bring in substantial resources, perform critical tasks and are thus able to shape the contour and content of partnerships (Dingwerth 2008; Arifin 2010; Fuchs et al. 2011). Such a pattern of actors' representation and roles reproduces existing power imbalances between already powerful actors, such as businesses, and actors from producer countries, especially producer organizations (Gregoratti 2011). This implies that partnerships are less an expression of an equal reconciliation of interests, but rather one of a managerial approach to the sustainability challenges of global agrifood chains, wherein influence is granted through individual capabilities and resources. As a result, partnerships are mainly business-driven following a demand-oriented strategy as opposed to being producer-driven which would facilitate a needs-based strategy.

This situation also limits the capacity of partnerships to strengthen the position of producer organizations as chain actors. It is generally acknowledged that the establishment and strengthening of producer organizations are associated with several challenges stemming from the lack of human, material and financial resources of producer organizations. Partnerships seem to recognize the difficult situation of producer organizations and often implement training activities to improve managerial and business administration skills. However, the focus of partnership activities on farmer training to promote good agricultural practices and sustainability standards appears to detract attention from the condition and needs of producer organizations. Measures to strengthen producer organizations have been implemented in piecemeal fashion as add-ons and with patchy success at best (Bitzer et al. 2012b). Only partnerships that work with the Fairtrade label are required to pay special attention to the strengthening of producer organizations; for the remaining partnerships producer organizations constitute a means to get access to producers and to create economies of scale. The empowerment ideal might be part of the rhetoric of partnerships, but largely disappears in practice (Auld 2010). As a consequence, producer organizations often continue to struggle with weak financial and human resources, and rely on external support to uphold operations.

Upscaling: The Uncertain Durability of Partnerships' Achievements

Finally, the capacity of partnerships to promote sustainable change is restricted due to the questionable durability and upscaling potential of partnerships' achievements (cf. Visseren-Hamakers et al. 2010). Both appear to be constrained by the focus of many partnership activities on certification and by the implementation of activities in a project-like manner within a limited timeframe. The focus on certification is associated with high financial burdens for producer organizations, and results in a comparatively narrow target group of farmers. The project-like trait of partnership activities seems to confine the capacity of partnerships to promoting technological change whilst overlooking to a large degree the importance of empowering smallholder producers and their organizations to act as self-determining chain actors for the uptake and upscaling of partnership activities. Moreover, the shift of technology provision from public agencies towards partnerships raises questions about the roles and responsibilities of these agencies and other governmental institutions from producer countries once partnership activities are terminated. Particularly in the coffee sector, local public agencies are hardly involved in partnerships, limiting the ability of partnerships to institutionalize their changes in local practices (Bitzer et al. 2008). This problem is less pronounced in the cocoa sector, where similar observations on partnerships have been made in the past, and where partnerships have started to actively seek the engagement of producer country governments to link up their own activities with local initiatives and public agencies (Bitzer et al. 2012a). In a related manner, cotton partnerships either include companies with local branch offices or establish ties to public extension services to root new technologies in local systems (Bitzer and Glasbergen 2010).

Differences between Partnerships in the Three Chains

Two key differences between partnerships in the three chains investigated can be distinguished (see Table 4 for a comparative overview). Firstly, this concerns the role of so-called lead firms, i.e., firms that are able to set the parameters under which other actors in the chain operate (Humphrey and Schmitz 2001). Particularly in the coffee and cocoa chains, the presence of lead firms, such as large coffee roasters and chocolate manufacturers, is well documented (Daviron and Ponte 2005; Fold 2002). In these chains, lead firms are generally involved in multiple partnerships simultaneously, and have also assumed prominent roles in partnerships in terms of initiation, funding and implementation. This has contributed to a mainstreaming of partnerships, which, in turn, has paved the way for sustainability values to enter the agenda of big business. At the same time, the active role of lead firms creates an imbalance in resources compared to other partnership actors, thereby reproducing existing imbalances within these chains. The inclusiveness of large business actors is less pronounced in the cotton sector, where fewer partnerships are active and clear lead firms are difficult to point out due to long and fragmented supply chains and the reduced concentration of market power amongst a limited number of companies (Daviron and Gibbon 2002).

Secondly, the three chains differ significantly regarding the development of institutional linkages among partnerships for purposes of collaboration and resource exchange. The global cocoa sector constitutes a kind of prototype for such linkages among partnerships, whereas the case of coffee showed that partnerships compete with each other due to their reliance on sustainability standards (Bitzer et al. 2008). Just a few years ago, the cocoa sector was considered to be lagging behind the coffee sector in terms of sustainability efforts, which had significantly more partnerships, featured more sustainability standards (with greater market share), and attracted more publicity, particularly to the activities of large coffee companies. Since then, the cocoa sector has taken a different development path in terms of sustainability initiatives, which outshines the achievements of coffee partnerships with respect to the emergence of linkages which channel different types of resources among partnerships. The presence of such linkages can largely be attributed to the explicit focus of many cocoa partnerships on issues other than promoting standards, to the involvement of all large industry stakeholders, and to the performance of a meta-governance role by the World Cocoa Foundation. This does not imply that institutional linkages among partnerships are completely absent in the coffee and cotton chains. However, they do seem to be more unlikely due to the rootedness of most coffee partnerships and all cotton partnerships in the use of standards. Moreover, a neutral meta-governance organization, such as the World Cocoa Foundation, is lacking in both chains.

Table 4. Comparison between the coffee, cotton and cocoa chains

	Coffee chain	Cotton chain	Cocoa chain
Total number of partnerships (until March 2010) (Bitzer 2010)	125	25	55
Key drivers behind partnerships	Increased pressure on companies (e.g. coffee crisis, child labor allegations); emergence of new specialty markets	Some pioneer companies, but mostly conventional corporate social responsibility policies	Supply concerns; increased pressure on companies (child labor allegations)
Role of 'lead firms' in chains	From reactive to active	No clear lead firms; generally passive business behavior	From reactive to active
Engagement of lead firms in partnerships	Common; often multiple partnerships at the same time	No clear lead firms; slowly increasing engagement of big textile companies	Common; often multiple partnerships at the same time
Mainstreaming of partnerships?	Yes	No	Yes
Institutional linkages among partnerships	Hardly (due to competition between standards)	Hardly (due to competition between standards and lack of mainstreaming of partnerships)	Yes, particularly between non-standard based partnerships
Meta-governance organization coordinating different partnerships?	No	No	Yes, the World Cocoa Foundation

Discussion and Conclusion: Partnerships and the Neoliberal Agenda

Partnerships can mostly be seen as reactions to government and market failures which result in various sustainability challenges of global agrifood chains. From a governance perspective, the emergence of partnerships is largely positive inasmuch as partnerships act as initiators and agents of change which, although still mostly confined to niche markets, unfolds a chain-wide governance effect. From a development perspective, the positive effects of partnerships are rather indirect and ambiguous. Several aspects of partnerships can be viewed critically and challenge their capacity to promote sustainable change. These differing conclusions on the capacity of partnerships can be explained by the fact that partnerships fit into and largely embody the neoliberal agenda (Blowfield and Dolan 2008; Utting and Zammit 2009), which raises specific questions, particularly from a development perspective. Here, we do not refer to the neoliberal project of the 1980s and early 1990s, propagating privatization, liberalization and deregulation, but rather to the subsequent process of what Peck and Tickell (2002) refer to as 'roll-out neoliberalization', i.e. extending the legitimacy of neoliberalism, including the efficiency of private enterprises and market-based solutions to social and environmental issues.

The article revealed that the neoliberal agenda is mirrored in three key conceptual underpinnings of partnerships, which each create considerable friction with certain development objectives. Firstly, partnerships, in a reciprocal interplay, promote as well as reflect the increased importance of businesses, but also of stakeholders from civil society. While this is suggested to counteract the insufficient reach and enforcement of traditional governmental approaches, the endeavor of exploiting the changing role of business in society seems to result in partnerships being increasingly driven by businesses that are able to strategically use partnerships to address concerns relevant to them and to expand their sphere of influence on sustainable development issues (Gregoratti 2011). Secondly, partnerships epitomize the decreased importance of governments, since governments, particularly from producer countries, are conspicuously underrepresented in partnerships, and since partnerships primarily act as change agents at the global and local levels, but not at the national level. This risks leading to the exclusion of governments from shaping the notion of development, and it implies that important decisions regarding production issues are often made far away from the actual country of production (Schouten and Glasbergen 2011). Thirdly, partnerships represent a managerial approach to solving sustainability challenges, which can best be seen in the popularity of standards among many partnerships. However, standards do not represent neutral tools, but rather typify new social practices that have ambiguous implications for producers and serve to focus on particular issues, while detracting attention from other issues (Hatanaka and Busch 2008).

This neoliberal orientation of partnerships appears to result in a depoliticized agenda-setting, which marginalizes certain development concerns, such as the issue of smallholder empowerment, the costs and benefits of different certification schemes, or the implications for the poorest segment of producers. Other concerns are not addressed at all, such as the patterns of power and resource distribution underlying global agrifood chains. The dominance of business objectives over development concerns shows that partnerships are constrained in their capacity to reshape the relationship between business and development without external incentives. Ultimately, they might adjust current structures, but it is unlikely that the incremental change pursued by many partnerships would lead to more fundamental change.

This should not be taken as a plea against the involvement of business in partnerships. Rather, this discussion aims to highlight the tensions within partnerships due to the difficult relationship between the neoliberal orientation of partnerships and certain development objectives. The comparison of partnerships from two distinct perspectives revealed that partnerships pursue a pragmatic view of sustainable change, which is subject to different limitations, and is not able to fully capture the conditional nature of positive development outcomes. This calls for a re-conceptualization of partnerships and their underlying assumptions to change the way that they construct the relationship between business and development. Partnerships are not 'wrong', but insufficient and therefore, renewed attention should be paid to the gaps in the solutions provided by partnerships.

Businesses cannot be expected to commence such a re-conceptualization against their self-interests and their framing of problems. As Knorringa and Helmsing (2008: 1059) argue: "Firms have no interest in […] a focus on development impacts beyond what they need in terms of verifiable information to satisfy their stakeholders". Participation in partnerships makes good business sense on a variety of grounds and can be helpful in gaining or maintaining competitive advantage. On the one hand, corporate engagement is important for their license to operate by portraying responsible business behavior to consumers, investors, business partners and society at large. On the other hand, involvement in partnerships can result in concrete deliverables, such as developing new markets and products, securing supply, coordinating supply chains and mitigating risks. Although no information exists on the actual benefits gained by businesses through their engagement in partnerships, the fact that businesses have been so successful in determining the agenda of partnerships, including the use of standards, may indicate that most existing partnerships are the best governance mechanism for achieving the sustainability goals of *businesses*.

So the question remains, which other actors could stimulate and nurture a renewed conceptualization of partnerships? Governments, as noted throughout the partnership literature, are hardly or only sporadically involved in partnerships, and mostly lack a strategic and coordinated approach to partnerships. This leaves us with NGOs, despite the significant criticism they have received, among others as regards their effectiveness and accountability in development efforts, and despite their shortcomings in addressing these criticisms. Yet, given their active role in initiating the partnership trend by challenging firm behavior, it would appear that it depends mostly on NGOs to re-politicize their interactions with businesses in order to achieve a broader framing of the sustainability problems than businesses are willing to endorse. Furthermore, their position as intermediaries between state, market and citizens, as intermediaries between different countries and levels of global-local action, and as intermediaries between vision and pragmatism (Edwards 2011) might make them well-suited to embrace the challenge of reconceptualization. Again, this does not imply that NGOs should collectively abandon the collaborative approach towards business and resort back to campaigning, naming and shaming. As Edward and Tallontire (2009, p. 830) point out, re-politicization is about creative contestation in lieu of antagonistic confrontation and should therefore not be interpreted as anti-business behavior. Rather, it entails a renewed, deliberate and independent problem analysis in terms of what the sustainability challenges of global agrifood chains are, what kind of change would be necessary to overcome these challenges, how this change could come about, either through partnerships or through alternative action, and what the roles of the different stakeholders in these pathways could be.

References

Andonova, Liliana B., Michele M. Betsill, and Harriet Bulkeley. 2009. Transnational Climate Governance. *Global Environmental Politics* 9(2): 52-73.

Arifin, Bustanul. 2010. Global Sustainability Regulation and Coffee Supply Chains in Lampung Province, Indonesia. *Asian Journal of Agriculture and Development* 7(2): 67-89.

Ascher, William. 2007. Policy sciences contributions to analysis to promote sustainability. *Sustainability Science* 2: 141-149.

Auld, Graeme. 2010. Assessing Certification as Governance: Effects and Broader Consequences for Coffee. *The Journal of Environment & Development* 19(2): 215-241.

Bäckstrand, Karin. 2008. Accountability of Networked Climate Governance: The Rise of Transnational Climate Partnerships. *Global Environmental Politics* 8(3): 74-102.

Bain, Carmen. 2010. Governing the Global Value Chain: GLOBALGAP and the Chilean Fresh Fruit Industry. *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food* 17(1): 1–23.

Bassett, Thomas J. 2010. Slim pickings: Fairtrade cotton in West Africa. *Geoforum* 41(1): 44–55.

Batie, Sandra. 2008. Wicked Problems and Applied Economics. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 90(5): 1176-1191.

Bendell, Jem. 2005. In whose name? The accountability of corporate social responsibility. *Development in Practice* 15(3&4): 362-374.

Biermann, Frank, Man-san Chan, Aysem Mert, and Philipp Pattberg. 2007. Multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development: does the promise hold? In *Partnerships, Governance and Sustainable Development. Reflections on Theory and Practice*, edited by Pieter Glasbergen, Frank Biermann and Arthur P. J. Mol, 239-260. Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, USA: Edward Elgar.

Biermann, Frank, and Klaus Dingwerth. 2004. Global Environmental Change and the Nation State. *Global Environmental Politics* 4(1): 1-22.

Bitzer, Verena, Mara Francken, and Pieter Glasbergen. 2008. Intersectoral partnerships for a sustainable coffee chain: Really addressing sustainability or just picking (coffee) cherries? *Global Environmental Change* 18: 271-284.

Bitzer, Verena, and Pieter Glasbergen. 2010. Partnerships for sustainable change in cotton: an institutional analysis of African cases. *Journal of Business Ethics* 93(S2): 223-240.

Bitzer, V. 2010. Partnerships in the global coffee, cocoa and cotton chains - database version March 2010. Utrecht-Nijmegen Programme on Partnerships (UNPOP), Utrecht.

Bitzer, Verena, Jeroen Van Wijk, A. H. J. Helmsing, and Victor Van der Linden. 2011. Partnering to facilitate smallholder inclusion in value chains. In *Value Chains, Social Inclusion and Economic Development: Contrasting Theories and Realities*, edited by A. H. J. Helmsing and Sietze Vellema, 221-246. London and New York: Routledge.

Bitzer, Verena, Pieter Glasbergen, and Pieter Leroy. 2012a. Partnerships of a feather flock together? An analysis of the emergence of networks of partnerships in the global cocoa sector. *Global Networks* 12(3): 355-374.

Bitzer, Verena, Pieter Glasbergen, and Bas Arts. 2012b. Exploring the potential of intersectoral partnerships to improve the position of farmers in global agrifood chains: findings from the coffee sector in Peru. *Agriculture and Human Values* [online: 10.1007/s10460-012-9372-z].

Blowfield, Michael E. 2007. Reasons to be Cheerful? What we know about CSR's impact. *Third World Quarterly* 28(4): 683-695.

Blowfield, Michael E., and Catherine S. Dolan. 2008. Stewards of Virtue? The Ethical Dilemma of CSR in African Agriculture. *Development and Change* 39(1): 1-23.

Bray, David B., Jose Luis Plaza Sanchez, and Ellen Contreras Murphy. 2002. Social dimensions of organic coffee production in Mexico: Lessons for eco-labeling initiatives. *Society and Natural Resources* 15: 429-446.

Daviron, Benoit, and Peter Gibbon. 2002. Global Commodity Chains and African Export Agriculture. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 2(2): 137-161.

Daviron, Benoit, and Stefano Ponte. 2005. *The coffee paradox. Global markets, commodity trade and the elusive promise of development*. New York: Zed Books.

Dentoni, Domenico, and H. Christopher Peterson. 2011. Multi-Stakeholder Sustainability Alliances in Agri-Food Chains: A Framework for Multi-Disciplinary Research. *International Food and Agribusiness Management Review* 14(5): 83-108.

Dingwerth, Klaus. 2008. North-South Parity in Global Governance: The Affirmative Procedures of the Forest Stewardship Council. *Global Governance* 14: 53-71.

Edward, Peter, and A. Tallontire. 2009. Business and development - Towards re-politicisation. *Journal of International Development* 21(6): 819-833.

Edwards, Michael. 2011. Development INGOs: Retirement, replacement or rejuvenation? The Broker: http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/Articles/Development-INGOs [accessed August 23, 2012].

Fold, Niels. 2002. Lead Firms and Competition in 'Bi-polar' Commodity Chains: Grinders and Branders in the Global Cocoa–chocolate Industry. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 2(2): 228-247.

Fuchs, Doris, Agni Kalfagianni, and Tetty Havinga. 2011. Actors in private food governance: the legitimacy of retail standards and multistakeholder initiatives with civil society participation. *Agriculture and Human Values* 28(3): 353-367.

Giovannucci, Daniele, and Stefano Ponte 2005. Standards as a new form of social contract? Sustainability initiatives in the coffee industry. *Food Policy* 30: 284-301.

Glasbergen, Pieter. 2007. Setting the scene: the partnership paradigm in the making. In *Partnerships, Governance and Sustainable Development. Reflections on Theory and Practice.*, edited by Pieter Glasbergen, F. Biermann and A. P. J. Mol, 1-28. Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, USA: Edward Elgar.

——— 2011. Mechanisms of private meta-governance: an analysis of global private governance for sustainable development. *International Journal of Strategic Business Alliances* 2(3): 189-206.

Gregoratti, Catia. 2011. Global nuts and local mangoes: a critical reading of the UNDP Growing Sustainable Business Initiative in Kenya. *Agriculture and Human Values* 28(3): 369-383.

Haas, P. M. 2004. Addressing the Global Governance Deficit. *Global Environmental Politics* 4(4): 1-15.

Hatanaka, Maki, and Lawrence Busch. 2008. Third-Party Certification in the Global Agrifood System: An Objective or Socially Mediated Governance Mechanism? *Sociologia Ruralis* 48 (1):73-91.

Haufler, Virginia. 2003. New forms of governance: certification regimes as social regulations of the global market. In *Social and Political Dimensions of Forest Certification*, edited by Errol Meidinger, Chris Elliott and Gerhard Oesten, 237-247. Remagen-Oberwinter: Forstbuch.

Henson, Spencer, and John Humphrey. 2009. The Impacts of Private Food Safety Standards on the Food Chain and on Public Standard-Setting Processes. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO).

Humphrey, John, and Hubert Schmitz. 2001. Governance in global value chains. *IDS Bulletin* 32(3): 19-29.

Jessop, Bob. 1998. The Rise of Governance and the Risks of Failure: the Case of Economic Development. *International Social Science Journal* 50(155): 29-45.

Kaan, Christopher, and Andrea Liese. 2011. Public private partnerships in global food governance: business engagement and legitimacy in the global fight against hunger and malnutrition. *Agriculture and Human Values* 28(3): 385-399.

Knorringa, Peter, and A. H. J. Helmsing. 2008. Beyond an Enemy Perception: Unpacking and Engaging the Private Sector. *Development and Change* 39(6): 1053-1062.

Knorringa, Peter, Gerdien Meijerink and Greetje Schouten. 2011. Voluntary Governance Initiatives and the Challenges of Inclusion and Upscaling. In *Value Chains, Social Inclusion and Economic Development: Contrasting Theories and Realities*, edited by A. H. J. Helmsing and Sietze Vellema. London and New York: Routledge.

Kolk, Ans, Rob Van Tulder, and Esther Kostwinder. 2008. Business and partnerships for development. *European Management Journal* 26: 262-273.

Kolk, Ans. 2011. Mainstreaming sustainable coffee. *Sustainable Development* [Online: DOI: 10.1002/sd.507].

Lemos, Maria Carmen, and Arun Agrawal. 2006. Environmental governance. *Annual Review of Environmental Resources* 31: 297-325.

Linton, April. 2005. Partnering for sustainability: business–NGO alliances in the coffee industry. *Development in Practice* 15(3&4): 600-614.

Lund-Thomsen, Peter. 2009. Assessing the Impact of Public–Private Partnerships in the Global South: The Case of the Kasur Tanneries Pollution Control Project. *Journal of Business Ethics* 90: 57-78.

Lyon, Sarah. 2006. Migratory imaginations: The commodification and contradictions of shade grown coffee. *Social Anthropology* 14(3): 377–390.

Manning, Stephan and Oliver von Hagen. 2010. Linking local experiments to global standards: How project networks promote global institution-building. *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 26(4): 398-416.

Muradian, Roldan, and Wim Pelupessy. 2005. Governing the Coffee Chain: The Role of Voluntary Regulatory Systems. *World Development* 33(12): 2029-2044.

Mutersbaugh, Tad. 2002. The number is the beast: a political economy of organic-coffee certification and producer unionism. *Environment and Planning A* 34: 1165-1184.

Narrod, Clare, Roy Devesh, Julius Okello, Belem Avendaño, Karl Rich, and Amit Thorat. 2009. Public–private partnerships and collective action in high value fruit and vegetable supply chains. *Food Policy* 34(1): 8-15.

Neilson, Jeffrey. 2007. Global Markets, Farmers and the State: Sustaining Profits in the Indonesian Cocoa Sector. *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 43(2): 227-250.

OECD 2006. Promoting Pro-Poor Growth - Agriculture. In *Promoting Pro-Poor Growth: Policy Guidance for Donors*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Pattberg, Philipp. 2005. The Institutionalization of Private Governance: How Business and Nonprofit Organizations Agree on Transnational Rules. *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions* no. 18 (4):589-610.

——— 2006. Private governance and the South: lessons from global forest politics. *Third World Quarterly* 27: 579-593.

——— 2010. Public–private partnerships in global climate governance. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change* 1(2):279-287.

Peck, Jamie and Adam Tickell. 2002. Neoliberalizing Space. *Antipode* 34(4): 380-404.

Perez-Aleman, P. and M. Sandilands. 2008. Building value at the top and the bottom of the global supply chain: MNC-NGO partnerships. *California Management Review* 51(1): 24-49.

Peterson, H. Christopher, Allen Wysocki, and Stephen B. Harsh. 2001. Strategic choice along the vertical coordination continuum. *International Food and Agribusiness Management Review* 4(2): 149-166.

Peterson, H. Christopher 2009. Transformational supply chains and the 'wicked problem' of sustainability: aligning knowledge, innovation, entrepreneurship, and leadership. *Journal of Chain and Network Science* 9(2): 71-82.

Potts, Jason, Kees Van der Meer, and J. Daitchman. 2010. The State of Sustainability Initiatives Review 2010: Sustainability and Transparency. Winnipeg, Canada: International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD).

Raynolds, Laura T., Douglas L. Murray, and Andrew Heller. 2007. Regulating sustainability in the coffee sector: A comparative analysis of third-party environmental and social certification initiatives. *Agriculture and Human Values* 24: 147-163.

Raynolds, Laura T. 2009. Mainstreaming Fair Trade Coffee: From Partnership to Traceability. *World Development* 37(6): 1083–1093.

Reed, Ananya Mukherjee, and Darryl Reed. 2009. Partnerships for Development: Four Models of Business Involvement. *Journal of Business Ethics* 90: 3-37.

Rein, Melanie, and Leda Stott. 2009. Working Together: Critical Perspectives on Six Cross-Sector Partnerships in Southern Africa. *Journal of Business Ethics* 90: 79-89.

Renard, M. C. 2003. Fair trade: quality, market and conventions. *Journal of Rural Studies* 19: 87-96.

Ruben, Ruerd, and Guillermo Zuniga. 2011. How standards compete: comparative impact of coffee certification schemes in Northern Nicaragua. *Supply Chain Management: An International Journal* 16(2): 98-109.

Schäferhoff, Marco, Sabine Campe, and Christopher Kaan. 2009. Transnational Public-Private Partnerships in International Relations: Making Sense of Concepts, Research Frameworks, and Results. *International Studies Review* 11: 451-474.

Schouten, Greetje, and Pieter Glasbergen 2011. Creating legitimacy in global private governance: The case of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil. *Ecological Economics* 70(11): 1891-1899.

Schrage, Elliot J., and Anthony P. Ewing. 2005. The Cocoa Industry and Child Labour. *Journal of Corporate Citizenship* 18: 99-112.

Skok, James E. 1995. Policy Issue Networks and the Public Policy Cycle: A Structural-Function Framework for Public Administration. *Public Administration Review* 55(4): 325-332.

Stoker, Gerry. 1998. Governance as theory: five propositions. *International Social Science Journal* 50(155): 17-28.

Utting, Peter, and Ann Zammit. 2009. United Nations-Business Partnerships: Good Intentions and Contradictory Agendas. *Journal of Business Ethics* 90:39-56.

Van Tulder, Rob, and Fabienne Fortanier. 2009. Business and sustainable development: from passive involvement to active partnerships. In *Doing Good or Doing Better: Development policies in a globalizing world*, edited by Monique Kremer, Peter van Lieshout and Robert Went, 211-235. Den Haag/Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Visseren-Hamakers, Ingrid, and Pieter Glasbergen 2007. Partnerships in forest governance. *Global Environmental Change* 17(3-4): 408-419.

Visseren-Hamakers, Ingrid, Pieter Leroy, and Pieter Glasbergen. 2010. Conservation Partnerships and Biodiversity Governance: Fulfilling Governance Functions through Interaction. *Sustainable Development* 20(4): 264–275.

Weidinger, Rita, and Carsten Schmitz-Hoffmann 2007. Quo vadis Public-Private Partnership? *Entwicklung & Ländlicher Raum*, 6-8.

Witte, Jan Martin, Wolfgang H. Reinicke, and Thorsten Benner 2000. Beyond Multilateralism: Global Public Policy Networks. *Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft* 2: 176-188.

World Bank 2007. World Development Report 2008. Agriculture for Development. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

