Who Governs Socially-Oriented Voluntary Sustainability Standards? Not the Producers of Certified Products

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Summary. — Voluntary Sustainability Standards-Setting Organizations (VSSSOs) create standards to improve the social and/or environmental impacts of globalized production networks. VSSSOs are often assumed to have multi-stakeholder governance structures that include the producers of certified products (e.g., farmers, artisans, and workers). This article argues that including producers in governance is desirable. However, analysis of 33 VSSSOs’ constitutions shows two-thirds do not even imply intention to include producers. At most, 25% ensure producers have votes/seats and 18% give producers veto power. The discussion examines what is lost when VSSSOs do not bring traditionally marginalized voices to global economic governance.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) are regulations created by non-state actors to improve the social and/or environmental impacts of multinational business, international trade, and/or global production networks. This article is about the organizations that create those voluntary standards, referred to here as Voluntary Sustainability Standards-Setting Organizations (VSSSOs).1 Specifically, it examines VSSSOs that include social objectives within their mission statements, or “socially-oriented” VSSSOs. VSSSOs have rapidly proliferated and gained market recognition over the past two decades (Bartley, Koos, Samel, Setrini, & Summers, 2015). From 2011 to 2012, the production of sustainability-certified commodities grew by 41%, in contrast with a 2% increase in the production of their non-certified counterparts (Potts et al., 2014, p. 8). Fairtrade International (FI) alone boasts certification of more than 1.4 million farmers and farm workers.2

VSSSOs are often assumed to have multi-stakeholder governance structures, a feature which serves to legitimize their authority in global economic governance (Cashore, 2002; Hauger, 2003; O’Rourke, 2006; Schepers, 2010). Such structures may include industry associations, production firms, NGOs, workers’ unions, smallholder farmers, academics, or others. However, VSSSOs organize themselves in very diverse ways (Sexsmith & Potts, 2009). This article is concerned with whether and how VSSSOs invite the poorest, most vulnerable, and often marginalized members of their value chains to participate in high-level governance. These are the smallholder farmers, farm workers, factory workers, artisans, crafters, miners, and others who contribute to the production of certified products (e.g., unroasted coffee beans) primarily through their physical labor (as opposed to management or capital) on farms or in factories, typically in the Global South. In this study, these groups are collectively termed “producers.” 3

This article first draws on extant literature to describe why VSSSOs—especially those aiming to benefit producers—should include producers in their highest governance bodies. It then investigates whether producer inclusion is the norm among VSSSOs. It finds that producer inclusion is not typical—at most, only 25% ensure that producers have votes/seats in the most important bodies of governance. This study calls into question the widespread assumption that VSSSOs are inclusive multi-stakeholder organizations, and argues, more broadly, that VSSSOs do not necessarily bring traditionally marginalized voices to bear on issues of global economic governance.

This study is distinct from typical accounts of VSSSO governance in two ways. First, instead of describing power dynamics within a single organization (e.g., Dingwerth, 2008) or a small group of organizations (e.g., Meidinger, 2011), it examines a broad group of 33 socially-oriented VSSSOs. This allows the study to draw conclusions about governance norms across industries and sectors, and discuss this form of economic governance as a whole. Second, instead of focusing on how power dynamics, institutionalization, or bureaucratic processes play out in practice (e.g., Consicone, 2014; Gendron, Bisaiillon, & Otero Rance, 2009; Nelson & Tallontire, 2014), this study examines how the founders and/or leaders of such organizations decided that their organization should be structured, as is documented in their constitutions. This allows the study to describe what VSSSO founders (and subsequent constitution reformers), consider,

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in theory, to be appropriate forms of governance. By answering and discussing the question “Do the architects of VSSSO organizational structures typically decide to include or exclude producers in high-level governance?” this study contributes to the literatures on multi-stakeholder governance and private regulation, which have, especially in recent years, been actively aiming to determine whether and how VSSSOs challenge or reify extant power relations (e.g., Cheyns & Riisgaard, 2014, esp. 410).

The article is organized as follows. Section 2 describes the diverse origins and objectives of VSSSOs, illustrates the widespread expectation of multi-stakeholder governance, explains why including producers is so important (though not without challenges), and highlights the findings of related studies. Section 3 describes the concepts and measurements, case selection process, data collection, and analytic methods. It discusses the assumptions and limitations of this methodology and the biases they may introduce to the findings. Section 4 presents the results, showing which VSSSOs include producers and to what extent. It also examines NGO inclusion, showing that this, too, is not the norm. Section 5 discusses these results. It sets several thresholds for “inclusion” and argues that even when the threshold is quite low, VSSSOs do not fulfill the expectation of appropriate multi-stakeholder governance. It discusses what is lost, what can be done, how this situation could have come to pass, and what future research is needed. The overall argument is that VSSSOs’ legitimacy should be contingent on producer inclusion, that this is not the norm, and that VSSSOs cannot be considered a vehicle for bringing marginalized voices to the fore of global economic governance.

2. BACKGROUND

(a) Diverse origins and objectives of VSSSOs

Since the 1970s, liberal capitalist states have been shying away from regulatory endeavors, in a massive retreatment of the state. Simultaneously, the United Nations and NGOs have been working on ways to limit the ills generated by unfettered globalization—most of it already living on the margins (Daghistini, 2008). The third wave of globalization extended the scope and deepened the impact of this trend at the end of the 20th Century, leading to improved employment conditions in developing countries. Instead, rapid growth of cross-border trade and capital flows since 1990 has not led to improved employment conditions in developing countries. Instead, fragmented and globally dispersed production, multiple tiers and actors within supply chains, suppliers producing for multiple brands, short lead times, tight margins, and all of the other changes that have come with increased global supply chains have generated low pay, poor working conditions, long hours, and injustice to a huge percent of the world’s population—most of it already living on the margins. (Locke, 2013, p. 8.)

In addition to the gamut of workplace issues, we saw that companies were alleged to have harmed health-related rights, rights to land, housing, and access to safe drinking water; the physical security of the person; the rights of indigenous peoples; and even such classic civil rights as free speech, privacy, peaceful assembly, and a fair trial. (Ruggie, 2013, pp. 34–35.)

States failed to pass robust legislation on business and human rights, and those who did were either unable or unwilling to enforce it (Ruggie, 2013, pp. xxv–xxvi). Likewise, the World Trade Organization downplayed linkages between human rights and trade, minimizing its own responsibility to respond (Aaronson & Zimmerman, 2006, pp. 1004–1005). As the globalization era stretched into the new millennium, journalists, activists, scholars, and public intellectuals joined in chorus to highlight the need for more stringent regulation of international trade and business. As Keohane (2006) warned, interdependence without accountable governance could be a “deadly” mix (78).

Within this context, voluntary sustainability standards emerged as a new form of market regulation (Gereffi, Garcia-Johnson, & Sasser, 2001; Haufler, 2001; O’Rourke, 2003). These initiatives are diverse (Hatanaka, 2010, p. 78; Sexsmith & Potts, 2009, p. 3). Their objectives are varied, and include: redistributing wealth, protecting people and the planet, ensuring consumer safety, mitigating supply chain risk, securing access to commodities, attracting green consumers, and challenging hegemonic control over global economic governance (Angel, Hamilton, & Huber, 2007; Bartley, 2007; Conroy, 2007; Haufler, 2001; Locke, 2013; Mayer & Gereffi, 2010; O’Rourke, 2003; Reich, 2007). While some VSSSOs aim to challenge and change mainstream business practices, others opt to create alternative economic systems outside the capitalist market (Raynolds & Murray, 2007, 224). They also vary in their relationships with social movement organizations and industry actors. For example, the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) was originally conceived by industry actors to counter the influence of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) in the area of forest certification (Dingwerth & Pattberg, 2009, p. 727). Fairtrade International (FI), on the other hand, was established by social movement organizations, church groups, and alternative trade networks (Bennett, 2015; Raynolds & Bennett, 2015). While paying more for ethically sourced, certified products seemed a tenuous proposition at the end of the 20th Century, today robust evidence suggests that VSSSOs have succeeded in convincing a great number of shoppers to “vote with their pocketbook” (e.g., Brown, 2015; Hainmueller, Hiscox, & Sequeira, 2015; Kimeldorf, Rachel, Monica, & Ian, 2006).

(b) The assumption of multi-stakeholder governance

Despite their diverse origins and objectives, VSSSOs are often described as having much in common. For example, all VSSSOs are expected to support companies in meeting rigorous social and environmental standards (Hatanaka, 2010; Sabel, O’Rourke, & Fung, 2000); aid in the enforcement of legal standards (Bacon, Rice, & Maryanski, 2015); deliver desirable outcomes for social groups and the environment (Conroy, 2007); and reinforce existing efforts by workers to organize and educate themselves (O’Rourke, 2006). VSSSOs’ organizational features are also assumed to be somewhat standardized (Dingwerth & Pattberg, 2009, p. 724). For example, most have separate rule-making and rule-implementing bodies (Dingwerth & Pattberg, 2009, p. 724).

A common expectation of VSSSO governance is inclusion of multiple types of stakeholders. Stakeholders are groups or individuals who can affect or who are affected by the achievement of an organization’s purpose (Freeman, 1984). VSSSO stakeholders may include producers, NGOs/civil society, workers’ associations and unions, industry organizations, the private sector (e.g., companies and corporations), or academic researchers (see Potts et al., 2014, p. 60). Being included in governance affords stakeholders the opportunity to affect organizational change at the highest levels (Blagescu, de Las Casas, & Lloyd, 2005). As Dingwerth and Pattberg (2009) argue, it is typical for VSSSO decision-making procedures to...
follow a “multi-stakeholder approach” (724). Likewise, Raynolds, Murray, and Heller (2007) note that certification organizations are “generally characterized by their participatory structures” (149). At times, the term “multi-stakeholder initiatives” is even used as shorthand for voluntary standards-setting organizations (e.g., Dingwerth, 2008, pp. 53–54).

VSSSOs are assumed to not only include multiple stakeholders but a broad range of stakeholders (e.g., Brown, 2008; Collingwood, 2006; Hauffer, 2003; O’Rourke, 2006; Slaughter, 2012). For example, Dickson and Eckman (2008) describe the Fair Labor Association (FLA) as “multi-stakeholder in character” because its board includes companies, NGOs, and universities. Dingwerth and Pattberg (2009) refer to this as “guaranteed inclusiveness” (724). Often it is stated or implied that governance includes global production network actors themselves. As the 2014 Sustainability Initiatives Review notes,

In a very real sense, voluntary sustainability standards allow the very actors implicated in the processes leading to sustainable development impacts to identify and implement the appropriate corrective measures while integrating them directly within their business models. ([Potts, 2014, 4, emphasis added].)

Diverse multi-stakeholder governance and producer inclusion are not only defining features of VSSSOs but also a source of moral legitimacy in the international sphere (Bernstein & Cashore, 2007; Cashore, 2002; Dingworth, 2007; Huybrechts, Mertens, & Rijpens, 2014; Marx, 2014). Paradoxically, this widespread assumption does not always reflect reality. For example, the Global Aquaculture Alliance (GAA) is assumed to “represent aquaculture producers” (Tran, Bailey, Wilson, & Phillips, 2013, 326, emphasis added) even through over 75% of its current board members are corporate representatives and the organization’s constitution does not even imply an intention of including the people whose labor produces GAA-certified products.

(c) Why is producer inclusion in governance important?

Including producers in VSSSO governance is critical. Not only is the capacity for self-determination a human right (UN, 1948) and a cornerstone of sustainable development (UN, 1992) but it can also improve the democratic deficit at the international level, generate spillover benefits to producers, produce policies that privilege producers, create advantages for the VSSSO, and contribute to legitimacy. Cosmopolitan democrats and advocates of deliberative democracy argue that the non-hierarchical nature of an increasingly prominent transnational civil society helps to level the playing field (Beckfield, 2003; Risse, 2002). In this way of thinking, democratization of a globalized world requires international actors of all types—including private standards-setting organizations—to adopt democratic norms of representation and accountability in order to be considered legitimate sources of authority (Collingwood, 2006; Hauffer, 2003; McGrew & Held, 2002; Sending & Neumann, 2006). Thus, by systematically excluding particular groups, VSSSOs may compromise the potential to achieve democracy in a multi-layered global order. Second, producer inclusion may generate benefits—such as empowerment and skill building—to producers (Cohen, Figeroa Kupeu, & Khanna, 2008), and foster a sense of fairness and justice in the workplace (Bain, 2010, p. 367). Because many VSSSOs (including all of the organizations included in this study) explicitly aim to support producers, including them in governance supports their mission. Conversely, excluding producers may generate outcomes counter to the mission. Third, excluding producers may reduce the benefits that VSSSO policies create for producer groups, as other groups shape policies to their own benefit (Brown, 2008; Jaffee & Howard, 2009). Fourth, for VSSSOs with social missions, producer inclusion can, itself, contribute to achieving the mission. Doing so may increase producer investment in the organization (Salmen, 1992), transform compliance into productive co-leadership (Peel, 1998), enhance competitiveness and improve working conditions (Locke, 2013), and increase effectiveness in achieving the organizational mission (Hudock, 1999). More specifically, broad participation in agenda-setting can increase sensitivity to local dynamics and generate broader support (Wong, 2012, pp. 57, 74). Likewise, good accountability systems can encourage better alignment of stakeholders with their missions and core values, making organizations more sensitive to conflicts in stakeholder demands and less vulnerable to slip into the pattern of prioritizing the demands of more powerful stakeholders (Brown, 2008, p. 65). By mainstreaming inclusive conversation about contentious issues, VSSSOs may avoid governance crises, fading support, or irrelevance (Brown, 2008, p. 65; Wong, 2012, p. 57). Finally, as noted above, including producers may serve to legitimize the certification system (Carmin et al., 2003, p. 530; Huybrechts et al., 2014, p. 165; O’Rourke, 2006, p. 906; Raynolds et al., 2007, pp. 151, 154, 159). Inclusive governance does not always come without tradeoffs. Increasing the number and diversity of decision makers can slow decision-making time, increase the risk of gridlock, and make already difficult tasks—such as agreeing on a unified vision, negotiating strategic plans, and setting clear parameters around the organization’s objectives—even more challenging (Blagescu et al., 2005, p. 65; Conroy, 2007, pp. 294–295; Mason & Doherty, 2015; Potts et al., 2014, p. 62; Wong, 2012, p. 57).

(d) Challenges to building inclusive governance structures

Simply including producers in governance is not, of course, sufficient for ensuring accountability or better outcomes (Dingwerth, 2008). For VSSSOs that aim to create diverse, inclusive multi-stakeholder structures, the decisions about who to include and how to balance various constituencies are rarely straightforward (Brown, 2008; Brown, Ebrahim & Batilwala, 2012, p. 1100; Sending & Neumann, 2006, p. 655). This section highlights four challenges and provides examples of how multi-stakeholder organizations have aimed to address each: achieving an appropriate balance among different stakeholder groups, selecting individuals able to best represent diverse interests, creating processes that level the playing field between representatives of varying capabilities, and limiting the conversation to expressions that reify the values of market competition and industrial efficiency.

First, multi-stakeholder organizations face the challenge of balancing various stakeholder groups. In the context of the Forest Stewardship Council, for example, the idea to balance Northern and Southern interests was implemented by dividing countries into two categories, according to United Nations criteria: 50% of the votes went to UN High Income Countries (the North) and 50% went to UN Low, Middle, and Upper-middle income countries (the South). This is not a perfect solution—the 15% of the global population living in the North has 50% of the votes, for example (Dingwerth, 2008, p. 61)—but creative solutions like this one can help push complex governance problems closer toward equitable solutions. One option might be for VSSSOs to support producer organization and assembly at the local, national, and regional levels, such that
an international representative might develop a more nuanced understanding of their constituency’s diverse interests and better advocate on its behalf. Another example comes from the European Commission, which has developed a “representation” criterion to identify the management and labor actors with whom it must consult in the social dialog process. Social dialog is another model of multi-stakeholder governance. It facilitates decision-making among various industrial actors (Eurofound, 2016) and implies a clear commitment (among participants who recognize one another’s legitimacy) to resolve conflicts and establish policies through dialog rather than physical or legal force (Stevis, 2010, p. 6).

Second, it is challenging for a small number of individuals (sometimes a single person) to represent the perspectives of a diverse population. An election process is costly, both in terms of human and material resources, but a process of appointment risks the perception of corruption. Either way, the danger is that the represented groups’ priorities and policy preferences will actively disadvantage or perpetually exclude other groups. This has been a concern for Fairtrade International, which must balance representation of smallholder farmers and farm workers—groups that may advocate for national, which must balance representation of smallholder farmers and farm workers—groups that may advocate for different policies and at times are in competition with one another (Consciencne, 2014; Sutton, 2013). VSSSOs must find creative ways to aggregate the perspectives of large numbers of producers spread over vast regions, who speak different languages—and they must do so without relying on digital solutions or even the assumption of literacy. But here, too, creativity can push governance toward inclusive solutions. Fairtrade International aims to address some dimensions of producer diversity by dividing its 1.4 million producers into three regions, and guaranteeing each a seat on the Board (FI, 2014). The Network of Asia and Pacific Producers (NAPP) is charged with representing more than 250,000 producers in a region where over 3,200 languages are spoken. The NAPP admits, “The cultural diversity of the region is... an operational challenge,” but strives to be inclusive within this context by working in 14 different languages and rotating meeting locations among member countries (NAPP, 2014, pp. 5, 68). One way to relieve some of this pressure is, of course, to increase the number of producer representatives in governance bodies.

Third, after a VSSSO determines how many votes/seats to give each stakeholder group, and develops a process for who will fill each seat, the challenge is creating discussion and decision-making processes that balance the influence of more powerful stakeholders against the interests of less powerful ones (Blagescu et al., 2005; Brown, 2008). Stakeholders with greater material resources and experience in lobbying, such as corporations, may co-opt less experienced or less wealthy stakeholders, such as small NGOs, pushing through weak regulations while touting NGO participation as a signal of legitimacy (Busch & Bain, 2004; Jaffe, 2012; Jaffe & Howard, 2009; Nelson & Tallontire, 2014; O’Rourke, 2006). Several VSSSOs aim to mitigate these discrepancies by offering training to specific representatives or hosting pre-conference meetings in which delegates are assisted in preparing for the main event (Mason & Doherty, 2015, p. 462).

As these challenges illustrate, giving producers a seat at the decision-making table by no means ensures their perspectives affect policy outcomes (Amoore & Langley, 2004; Barnett & Finnemore, 1999). The fourth challenge is the limitation inherent in adopting a political model that depends on a process of stakeholders defending their specific interests, bargaining and balancing interests against one another, in order to generate outcomes for the public good. Drawing on Boltsanski and Thévenot (2006)’s conventions theory, Cheyns and Riisgaard (2014, pp. 411, 414) argue that this system privileges narratives around market competition and industrial efficiency, crowding out alternative value systems, and reifying traditional power relationships (see also Cheyns, 2014: Nelson & Tallontire, 2014). This challenge calls into question the extent to which an interest-based model can achieve deliberative and democratic ideals and suggest more radical transformations of multi-stakeholder decision-making than described above (see Cheyns & Riisgaard, 2014, pp. 419–420).

(e) Previous findings about VSSSOs’ inclusion of producers

Extant scholarship makes clear that voluntary standards-setting organizations are not neutral entities, but instead highly contested and politicized spaces (see Bacon, 2010; Busch, 2014; Cheyns, 2014; Meidinger, 2011, p. 407, Nelson & Tallontire, 2014; Renard & Loconto, 2012, p. 407). This raises concerns about representation and accountability—in particular, how stakeholders are balanced against one another (Barley & Smith, 2010, p. 379; Busch & Bain, 2004; O’Rourke, 2003, p. 338; O’Rourke, 2006; Rochlin, Zadek, & Forstater, 2008, p. 5). Single case studies have aimed to describe and explain how organizations have balanced the tradeoffs and challenges of inclusive and exclusionary reforms over time (e.g., Bennett, 2016; Dingwerth, 2008), while comparative studies suggest that some VSSSOs are more inclusive of producers and NGOs than others (e.g., O’Rourke, 2006; Raynolds et al., 2007, appendix B). Carmin et al. (2003) show that third-party standards-setting organizations (compared to industry associations and government standards-setting agencies) have less diversity in stakeholder consultations, and give industry actors the greatest access to decision-making opportunities. Several studies show how organizational pathologies can result in structures that privilege elite stakeholders (such as industry associations, government aid agencies, philanthropic donors, or corporations with massive buying power) over less powerful groups (such as producer cooperatives and grassroots advocacy organizations)—even when doing so contradicts the organization’s intentions or jeopardizes achieving its mission (Blagescu et al., 2005, p. 20; Brown, 2008, p. 62; Hammad & Morton, 2011, p. 4). An empirical study similar to the research presented here found that industry groups and the private sector play a prominent role on most VSSSO boards, compared to producers, NGOs/civil society, workers’ associations and unions, and other actors (Potts et al., 2014, p. 60). The study also found that developed country stakeholders make up the majority of board members in almost all of the systems reviewed (exceptions being SAN and RTRS) (Potts et al., 2014, p. 61). In short, the “subjects” of voluntary sustainability standards are not always invited to participate in governance (Fransen, 2012; Hatanaka, 2010; Merk, 2007, pp. 712–713; Meidinger, 2011, p. 412).

Despite these findings, little research has examined norms of producer inclusion across a large number of VSSSOs (Dingwerth, 2008, p. 55). This gap in the literature can be illustrated by anecdote. In 2011, Fairtrade International, the VSSSO that manages the worldwide Fairtrade certification system, announced that it would give the producers of Fairtrade’s certified products half of the votes in its General Assembly (FI, 2011). In the flurry of press coverage that followed, “none of the scholars or practitioners who commented could compare its new governance structure with that of other sustainability standards-setting organizations. Was including producers in high-level governance typical of VSSSOs? Revolutionary? Behind the curve? This article fills that gap by
examining how 33 VSSSOs intend to include producers in their two highest governance bodies.

3. DATA AND METHODS

(a) Concepts

This study aims to describe whether and how socially-oriented VSSSOs include producers in their highest governance bodies. This section describes how each concept was defined and operationalized. VSSSOs, as described above, have diverse origins and objectives yet share much in common. This study examines fair trade and sustainability standards together—although they are often disaggregated—for three reasons. First, various types of sustainability standards are, substantively, drawing closer to one another, as fair trade certifications increasingly focus on environmental issues, and environmental certifications increasingly address social issues. Second, and interestingly, fair trade organizations (e.g., IMO) are not more likely to be inclusive than other types of VSSSOs, so including them does not bias results toward overestimating inclusion. Third, consumers, practitioners, and industry actors do not always disaggregate their expectations of different “types” of VSSSOs. For example, when the Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA) created an educational document for the specialty coffee industry titled “Sustainable Coffee Certifications: A Comparison Matrix” (2010), they included Fair Trade Certified, Rainforest Alliance, 4C Common Code, and Utz (among others). Thus, this project reflects the empirical reality that, regardless of labels’ origins or missions, those who interact with sustainability standards consider them at once—practitioners do not necessarily discriminate between fair trade and other VSSSOs. This study does, however, exclude the few organizations that have absolutely no social objectives in their mission statement, as is discussed in the case selection section.

This article is concerned about the inclusion of poor, vulnerable, and marginalized groups within VSSSO value chains. These are the small farmers, artisans, miners, and workers at sites of agricultural production and manufacturing, typically taking place in the Global South—the groups this study refers to as “producers.” What producers—as defined in this study—typically share in common is that they are among the working or poor classes, live in the Global South, and face limited socio-economic mobility. Producers are often among the most vulnerable actors in the supply chain: commodities farmers face volatility in the futures market; factory workers depend on a highly mobile manufacturing sector; and migrant laborers face exploitative production expectations (Fridell, 2013). Compared to many other actors within the supply chain, producers have both the most to lose and gain from VSSSOs’ interventions in the supply chain (Dingwerth, 2008, p. 60). Producers are, of course, not a homogenous group. Their incomes, challenges, privileges, and lifestyles are diverse. Some, for example, are members of large cooperatives or powerful unions, while others are not. Producers, as defined in this study, are conceptually distinct from the owners, executives, or managers of large-scale operations, whose contributions may be capital intensive or who may have more socio-economic mobility than the individuals working directly in the fields or on the factory floor. They are also distinct from other value chain actors, such as traders or importers, or “industry actors” who may be relatively more well-off.

Although there is a conceptual distinction between producers (more labor-oriented) and industry actors (more capital-oriented), VSSSO governance documents were not always as clear about which groups were included or excluded. References to unions, cooperatives, and workers’ associations seem to clearly indicate producer inclusion. However, references to “producers” or “farmers” could refer to either laborers or owners. This creates some internal inconsistency in the use of the term “producers”—the argument is for including the most vulnerable groups, but the data reports inclusion of vulnerable groups plus some additional groups. As discussed in 3(d), “assumptions and limitations,” counting these groups as instances of producer inclusion means the results likely over-report the inclusion of vulnerable groups.

VSSSOs sometimes include other standards-setting organizations, conservation groups, human rights organizations, and research centers in their governance. Although such NGOs might reach out to producers or (though rarely) include them in their own governance, they are not explicitly by producers and for producers and are thus not considered producers’ organizations. Although this article argues that VSSSOs should invite producers to represent themselves (Cheyns, 2014; Nelson & Tallontire, 2014), it also examines whether and how VSSSOs include NGOs, as their interests at times may align. The analysis of NGO inclusion is intended to answer what I believe would be a common follow up question to the finding that VSSSOs typically exclude producers. Here, the term NGO refers to non-governmental, non-business organizations. It does not include industry actors, such as corporate executives, international traders, importers, processing companies, and retailers. In reality, not all actors fit neatly into a category of producer, NGO, or industry. While single case studies and small-n comparative projects have done much to uncover how these categories and dynamics play out in specific cases (e.g., Hatanaka, 2010), this study uses these three coarse categories in order to compare across many organizations and identify trends in the sector.

Governance bodies are the arms of the organization responsible for overall strategy, organizational structure, and policymaking. They have supreme authority over the organization and are distinct from the secretariat (which implements policy), from standards-setting committees (whose responsibilities are limited to defining standards), or consultative bodies (whose decisions are not typically binding). Examples of governance bodies are the board of directors, general assembly, advisory council, assembly of delegates, or governance board. Governance bodies do more than set standards. They are authorized to decide which stakeholders should have a voice in standards-setting processes; they develop long-term strategies to balance and optimize growth (including more producers) and impact (delivering deeper benefits to those producers involved); they reform governance structures to alter the balance of stakeholders (such as corporations and producers); and decide how to approach competition with other VSSSOs (such as cutting costs, watering down standards, or demonstrating impact) (see Brown et al., 2012; Tandon, 1996).

Why study governance bodies? For producers and potential producers of ethically certified products, the policies created by governance bodies are as impactful as the standards themselves. The standards-setting committee might alter producers’ practices and pay structure, but the governance bodies decide whether or not specific types of groups—such as contract workers, smallholder farmers, or cooperatives—are even eligible to participate. Some organizations bestow these rights and responsibilities on one governance body, while others divide them into two bodies to create a system of checks and balances. While each VSSSO’s governance structure is unique, who is represented in these bodies provides an indication of ownership,
Finally, the term “votes/seats” refers to the number of votes and/or seats that are allocated for a specific stakeholder group. In some VSSSOs, in which decisions are taken by vote, “votes” would be the most appropriate term. In other VSSSOs, in which decisions are made by consensus, “seats” would be a more appropriate term. Since both terms are meant to reflect the amount of influence allocated to a specific group, they are referred to together as “votes/seats.”

This study investigates how founders or leaders who design VSSSO governance structures believe producers should be included. It does so by examining the documents that VSSSOs use to capture these founders’ decisions and communicate them to internal and external actors—the written statutes, by-laws, and articles of association provided by the VSSSOs themselves. Unlike an analysis of governance in practice—which likely reflects temporary circumstances, special contexts, or other constraints—this study examines the conclusions that founders and/or previous leaders reached about which groups should be leading the organization, and which groups should not.

Table 1. Case selection criteria for Voluntary Sustainability Standards-Setting Organizations (VSSSOs)

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<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Is currently operational (not in the start-up phase)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Non-governmental (for-profit or non-profit)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sets standards for consumer products</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Certifies a supply chain</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A third-party audits supply chain actors against the standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Companies use certification/label proof of meeting standards to demonstrate ethical commitments to consumers and end users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Have production sites in at least two regions/continents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Are consumed in at least two regions/continents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Production and consumption are at least sometimes in different countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Pursues a social objective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next three criteria specify that VSSSOs operate globally. This ensures that, to some extent, they face similar challenges and opportunities, especially in marketing, cross-cultural communications, economic conditions, and funding. All of the VSSSOs included in this study have production sites in at least two regions or continents. This eliminated the Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community, which restricts participation to countries in the Pacific region, for example, but did not exclude the Fundación de Pequenos Productores Organizados (FUNDEPPO) whose current production is in Latin America but aims to expand. Each VSSSO’s labeled products are marketed to consumers in at least two regions, and their sites of production and consumption are (at least sometimes) in different countries. These criteria aim to eliminate national/regional VSSSOs whose governance structures may reflect local context.

Finally, the VSSSO states a social objective, such as increasing income for farmers, in the mission statement. While any type of VSSSO (socially-oriented or not) could contribute toward closing the participatory gap in global economic governance by including producers, this study is limited to socially-oriented VSSSOs for two reasons. First, it aims to hold VSSSOs accountable to their own missions: If a VSSSO intends to benefit producers and inclusion is beneficial to producers, it is contradictory to exclude them. Second, environmentally-oriented organizations may consider producer interests to be in opposition to the objective, providing some justification for producer exclusion. In this way the study aims to evaluate VSSSOs on their own terms. Thus, environmental standards-setting organizations that do not aim to benefit such groups are not included (e.g., the Marine Stewardship Council). While “social sustainability” qualified, the following goals did not: sustainability; making specific types of products more readily available; providing information to consumers; or ensuring consumer safety. Additionally, the social group could not be limited to children, as this would introduce the question of whether or not a VSSSO could be expected to include minors (or their representatives) in governance.

The author contacted each of the 34 VSSSOs to obtain the current by-laws, articles of association, statutes, terms of...
reference, or other official documents describing the organization’s governance structure. Thirty-three of those organizations generously provided the documents required to be included in the study. This project evaluates the structure formally negotiated and decided upon by the organization’s founders or previous governors—not the current governance practices. These documents determine who would have decision-making power over intensely controversial issues, when legal structures could be called upon to determine who should have a seat at the decision-making table. The author and two research assistants each independently analyzed each VSSSO’s governance documents to answer the following questions: What is the highest governance body? What is the second highest governance body (if one exists)? What role (if any) are producers and NGOs intended to play in these governance bodies? For example, are some votes reserved for representatives of NGOs? If decisions are taken by consensus, are a specified number of seats designated for specific stakeholder groups? Do producers have veto power? The results were used to create three categories of inclusion:

1. “Reserved” indicates that a portion of votes/seats will always be reserved for this group. For example, Bonsucro (which sets standards for sugar cane production) lays out in its “Articles of Association” and “Membership Governance Framework Rules and Regulations” that “civil society” and “farmer” members may each appoint one voting member to the Membership Assembly, and up to two members in the Board of Directors. “Reserved with veto” means the stakeholder group can prevent a motion from passing, either because approval is required from this group, or because they hold enough votes to oppose it. In Bonsucro’s structure, for example, both governance bodies pass motions by majority vote. Since neither producers nor farmers constitute a majority, neither has veto power. (2) “Implied” indicates the organization intends to include the stakeholder group, but it would be possible to exclude them without being in violation of the constitution. The analysis of the Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC) provides an example of implied inclusion of producers. The RJC mandates in its “Articles of Association” and “Governance Handbook” that members of its Board of Directors (the organization’s only governance body) may represent “various stages of activity within the jewellery supply chain,” including “production,” but the documents do not specify that the board’s composition must include such groups. This implies producer inclusion, but does not guarantee it. The analysis of the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) provides an example of implied inclusion of NGOs. ASC’s “Deed” and “Supervisory Board Regulations” state that its highest body, the Supervisory Board, must reflect “a balanced representation of societal backgrounds, areas of expertise and disciplines, such as technical, financial and economic, legal, political, social and/or business backgrounds and involvement

Table 2. Voluntary Sustainability Standards-Setting Organizations (VSSSOs) that meet the ten criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VSSSO</th>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Social certification/program/label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4C Association</td>
<td>4C</td>
<td>4C Code of Conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance for Responsible Mining</td>
<td>ARM</td>
<td>Fairmined Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquaculture Stewardship Council</td>
<td>ASC</td>
<td>ASC Farm Certification and Supplier Certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Cotton Initiative</td>
<td>BCI</td>
<td>Better Cotton Standard System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonsucro</td>
<td>Bonuscuro</td>
<td>Bonuscuro Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equitable Origin</td>
<td>EO</td>
<td>EO100 Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Tea Partnership</td>
<td>ETP</td>
<td>Ethical Tea Partnership Global Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair Labor Association</td>
<td>FLA</td>
<td>Workplace Code of Conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair Trade USA</td>
<td>FTUSA</td>
<td>Fair Trade Certified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FairTrade International</td>
<td>FI</td>
<td>Fairtrade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FairWild Foundation</td>
<td>FairWild</td>
<td>FairWild Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florverde Sustainable Flowers</td>
<td>Florverde</td>
<td>Florverde Sustainable Flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Stewardship Council</td>
<td>FSC</td>
<td>Forest Management Certification and Chain of Custody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundación de Pequeños Productores Organizados</td>
<td>FUNDEPO</td>
<td>Small Producers Symbol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Aquaculture Alliance</td>
<td>GAA</td>
<td>Best Aquaculture Practices Certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Organic Textile Standard International Working Group</td>
<td>GOTS</td>
<td>Global Organic Textile Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global G.A.P.</td>
<td>Global G.A.P.</td>
<td>(16 different standards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Council on Toy Industries, CARE Foundation Inc.</td>
<td>ICTI CARE</td>
<td>ICTI Care Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute for Marketecology</td>
<td>IMO</td>
<td>Fair for Life Social &amp; Fair Trade Certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Analog Forestry Network</td>
<td>IAFN</td>
<td>Forest Garden Products Label</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Council on Mining and Metals</td>
<td>ICMM</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Sustainability in Carbon Certification</td>
<td>ISCC</td>
<td>ISCC Certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturland</td>
<td>Naturland</td>
<td>Social Responsibility Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification</td>
<td>PEFC</td>
<td>Chain of Custody Certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible Jewellery Council</td>
<td>RJC</td>
<td>Chain of Custody Certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round Table on Responsible Soy</td>
<td>RTRS</td>
<td>Standard for Responsible Soy Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials</td>
<td>RSB</td>
<td>RSB Certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil</td>
<td>RSPO</td>
<td>Rainforest Alliance Certified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Accountability International</td>
<td>SAI</td>
<td>SA8000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soil Association</td>
<td>SAN</td>
<td>Ethical Trade Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Agriculture Network</td>
<td>SAN</td>
<td>Rainforest Alliance Certified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union for Ethical BioTrade</td>
<td>UEBT</td>
<td>Ethical BioTrade Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTZ Certified</td>
<td>UTZ</td>
<td>UTZ Certified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production</td>
<td>WRAP</td>
<td>WRAP Certification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VSSSO did not provide data and is therefore not included in analysis.
in responsible aquaculture” (emphasis added). While it does not explicitly reserve votes/seats for NGOs, it implies that such groups should be included. (3) Finally, “not specified” is the designation for organizations that do not express an intention or commitment to including the stakeholder group.

Each VSSSO’s governance bodies were categorized as reserving votes/seats, implying inclusion, or not specifying a role for producers and NGOs, as displayed in Table 3. The results were shared with each VSSSO, and each organization was invited to identify errors or raise concerns. Twenty-three organizations responded, and eight of those conversations generated edits to the results. In some cases, the organization provided additional documents that clarified how structures were arranged. In other cases, they clarified terms used for various stakeholder groups, or pointed to nuances that had been overlooked. Often, they highlighted current practices that are more inclusive than what is mandated by governance documents, which is further discussed in the section “theory versus practice.” When there was an explicit discrepancy between data from formal documents and personal correspondence, documents were privileged. The purpose of this methodological decision was to maintain the project’s objective of comparing (across organizations) the decisions that founding members or official governance bodies reached after debating various organizational structures. This methodological approach allows these findings to be used in a future comparative study of governance de jure and governance de facto. Finally, VSSSOs were invited to give feedback on the overall analysis by providing comments on a draft of this article. The eleven responses, along with comments from a representative of ISEAL (the accreditation organization for social and environmental standards-setting organizations), generated two edits to the results and several important insights into the analysis and discussion.

(d) Assumptions and limitations

The interpretation of documents and categorization of results required several assumptions, which were universally applied. Each assumption generates a systematic bias toward overestimating the inclusion of producers in governance, such that the results can be read as a (very unlikely) best-case scenario. This section describes five assumptions and then discusses two additional limitations of this methodology.

First, as discussed in 3(a), on concepts, although the objective is to understand how the most vulnerable groups in the supply chain are included in VSSSO governance, many VSSSOs do not provide enough descriptive information to determine whether the groups they include are producers (more labor-intensive groups) or industry actors (more capital-intensive groups). Interviewing each VSSSO to gather more information about the size and organization of producer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VSSSO</th>
<th>Producers in 1st</th>
<th>NGOs in 1st</th>
<th>Producers in 2nd</th>
<th>NGOs in 2nd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4C</td>
<td>Implied</td>
<td>Reserved</td>
<td>Implied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ARM</td>
<td>Reserved</td>
<td>Implied</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ASC</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Implied</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>BCI</td>
<td>Reserved with veto</td>
<td>Reserved with veto</td>
<td>Reserved with veto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bonsucro</td>
<td>Reserved</td>
<td>Reserved</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>EO</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Reserved</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ETP</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>FLA</td>
<td>Implied</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>FTUSA</td>
<td>no data</td>
<td>no data</td>
<td>no data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>FSC</td>
<td>Reserved with veto</td>
<td>Reserved with veto</td>
<td>Reserved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>FairWild</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Reserved</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Florverde</td>
<td>Implied</td>
<td>Implied</td>
<td>Implied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>FSC</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Reserved with veto</td>
<td>Reserved with veto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>FUNDEPO</td>
<td>Reserved (100%)</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Reserved with veto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>GAA</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Reserved (100%)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>GOTS</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>GlobalG.A.P.</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>ICTI CARE</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>IMO</td>
<td>Implied</td>
<td>Implied</td>
<td>Implied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>IAFN</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>ICCM</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>ISCC</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Naturland</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>PEFC</td>
<td>Implied</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>RJC</td>
<td>Implied</td>
<td>Reserved with veto</td>
<td>Reserved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>RTR</td>
<td>Reserved</td>
<td>Reserved with veto</td>
<td>Reserved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>RSPO</td>
<td>Implied</td>
<td>Reserved</td>
<td>Reserved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>SAI</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Implied</td>
<td>Reserved (100%)</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>SAN</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Reserved (100%)</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>UEBT</td>
<td>Implied</td>
<td>Reserved</td>
<td>Implied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>UTZ</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Reserve</td>
<td>Implied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>WRAP</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Implied</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N/A indicates the VSSSO does not have a second highest governance body.
groups initially seemed to be a way forward, but not all organizations were willing to provide such details, and it was unclear whether reporting was biased. Complicating matters further, the distinction between different types of actors can vary across commodities and regions. Thus, there was a trade-off between a systematic bias toward including some producer groups who should not be considered “traditionally marginalized” and reducing the sample size or introducing self-reported data. Because the results are already disappointing (VSSSOs rarely include producers), the decision was to maintain the larger number of cases, continue studying only decisions that had been formally documented, and introduce a systematic bias toward over-inclusion.

A second (and similar) assumption that introduced a bias toward overestimation is that the category of “NGO” includes not only NGOs that have the potential to promote producer interests, but also other types of NGOs, which might work against them. The study is also unable to distinguish between NGOs that exclude producers from their own governance and the few that may include them. Very unfortunately, most of the constitutions do not provide enough descriptive information to determine which types of NGOs they are likely to include, and self-reported data introduce new biases and may reflect governance practices instead of plans. Thus, the results of the study of NGO inclusion must be read as an unrealistic overestimation of how VSSSOs may include producer interests.

Third, in cases where a stakeholder group is given “up to” a specified number of votes/seats, it was assumed the group would fill this maximum. However, an organization would not be in violation of its constitution if it did not include members of the group. This also overestimates producer and NGO inclusion.

Fourth, if a stakeholder has reserved votes/seats in the first body, and the first body appoints the second body, it was implied that the group would hold votes/seats in the second body. For example, Utz Certified, which sets standards for the production of coffee, cocoa, and tea, reserves seats for producers and NGOs in its highest body—the Supervisory Board—and the Supervisory Board appoints the second highest body, the Board of Directors. Although the composition of the Board of Directors is not specified in the organization’s Articles of Association, it is implied that the body will include producers and NGOs. This assumption also overestimates producer and NGO inclusion.

Fifth, when a specified number of votes/seats was reserved for multiple stakeholder groups (e.g., traders, producers, and university experts), it was determined that inclusion was implied (since the group was mentioned), but not reserved (since the group would not necessarily have to be included). For example, the Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) reserves half of the votes/seats in its highest governance body, the General Assembly, for “Affiliate” members who are “trade associations, NGOs, community producers/collectors, National BioTrade Programmes, and any other organization active in BioTrade.” This implies that producers/collectors will be included, but does not reserve seats for them specifically. Since the specific group in question (producers or NGOs) may not actually hold a seat, this is also overestimating their inclusion.

In addition to the introduction of bias, there are two limitations of the methodology. First, it only describes what the founders and other authors of VSSSO constitutions agreed to lay out in writing. The governance documents do not reflect what happens in practice, but instead what authors hoped would happen in governance or what they wanted others to believe would happen in governance. Thus, this is a study about what VSSSOs believe are appropriate practices or think others will believe are appropriate practices in governance. These ideas may be very disconnected from what actually happens on the ground. Therefore, this study cannot evaluate how VSSSOs are actually governed in practice. It says nothing about the informal customs, cultures, and norms that are critical in shaping how actors operate within the formal structures. As other studies have shown, important decision-making may actually take place in the bureaucracy, the secretariat may not implement governance bodies’ policies, and CEOs may retain more influence than is documented (e.g., Conscione, 2014). In this study, for example, the Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials (RSB) noted that the voting rules outlined in the governance documents were rarely evoked, as the governance took seriously the constitutional mandate that decisions be reached by consensus whenever possible. If giving producers a seat at the table is a necessary but insufficient condition for producer empowerment, this study is only able to determine which organizations state an intention to meet that precondition. This study does not evaluate whether VSSSOs are actually empowering producers.

The second limitation relates to comparative case analyses, more generally: letting go of individual case details enables a better understanding of the broad, cross-case organizational field (e.g., Brown et al., 2012; Koppell, 2010). By categorizing actors as “producer,” “NGO,” or “industry,” and classifying VSSSOs’ structures as “implying,” “reserving,” or “not mentioning” their intentions to include producers, some of the nuances are lost, but the ability to compare across cases with different types of documents, structures, supply chains, and certification systems is gained. This trade-off reflects the objective of this study: to better understand whether and to what extent it is typical for VSSSOs to formally state that they will include producers in their highest levels of governance.

4. RESULTS

(a) Producer inclusion

As noted in the section above, the interpretation of governance documents required several assumptions, each biasing the results toward an overestimation of producer inclusion. Thus, these results should be interpreted as the most inclusive governance structures possible. The results for VSSSOs’ inclusion of producers are displayed in Table 4 and Figure 1. Of the 33 VSSSOs analyzed in this study, eight reserve votes/seats for producers in both of the highest governance bodies (if there are two) or in the single highest governance body (if there is one). Three reserve votes/seats in the highest body but only imply inclusion in the second body. Two VSSSOs reserve votes/seats in the second highest body but in the first body only one implies inclusion while the other does not mention an intention to include producers. Eight VSSSOs imply inclusion in the first and second bodies (if there are two) or in the highest body (if only one). And 12 VSSSOs do not express an intention or commitment to include producers in either of the highest bodies (if there are two) or in the highest body (if there is only one). Of the 12 VSSSOs that reserve votes/seats for producers, six give them veto power in at least one governance body. To summarize, 61% of VSSSOs (20 of 33) do not reserve votes/seats for producers on either of their two highest governance bodies. Of those VSSSOs, 40% (8 of 20) do imply (some more emphatically than others) that producers will be represented, while 60% (12 of 20) do not express, in their formal
While NGOs are not a substitute for producer groups, in some cases, they may advocate for producer interests or bring producer perspectives to bear on governance issues. As noted in the previous section, this analysis is based on several assumptions that systematically overestimate the number of NGOs included. Thus, the results presented here should be considered an unlikely, best-case scenario—an overestimation of NGO inclusion. The results for VSSSOs’ inclusion of NGOs are displayed in Table 5 and Figure 2. Of the 33 VSSSOs analyzed in this study, eight reserve votes/seats for NGOs in both of the highest governance bodies (if there are two) or in the single highest governance body (if there is one). Four reserve votes/seats in the highest body but only imply inclusion or do not mention inclusion in the second body. One reserves votes/seats in the second highest body, but only implies inclusion in the first. Ten VSSSOs imply inclusion in the first and second bodies (if there are two) or in the highest body (if only one). And 10 VSSSOs do not express an intention or commitment to include NGOs in either of the highest bodies (if there are two) or in the highest body (if there is only one). Of the 13 VSSSOs that reserve votes/seats for NGOs, seven give them veto power in at least one governance body.

(c) Producer and/or NGO inclusion

Eight VSSSOs (24%) reserved votes/seats for both producers and NGOs (BCI, Bonsuero, FL, FSC, RSB, RTRS, RSPO, Utz). This suggests that the authors of their constitutions did not consider producers and NGOs the same stakeholder group. Additionally, four reserved seats for producers but not NGOs in the highest body (ARM, FUNDEPPO, GlobalGAP, and Naturland), also suggesting that the authors felt producers should be directly represented, or that the structure of governance documents, an intention to include producer groups.
Table 5. How do VSSSOs include NGOs in their governance, according to official documents?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest body</th>
<th>Reserved</th>
<th>Reserved</th>
<th>Reserved</th>
<th>Implied</th>
<th>Implied</th>
<th>Not specified</th>
<th>Not specified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second body</td>
<td>Reserved</td>
<td>Reserved</td>
<td>Reserved</td>
<td>Implied</td>
<td>Implied</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCI**</td>
<td>4C</td>
<td>FairWild</td>
<td>RSPO</td>
<td>ASC</td>
<td>ISCC</td>
<td>ETP+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonsucro</td>
<td>FSC*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ARM+</td>
<td></td>
<td>FUNDEPO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EO+</td>
<td>UTZ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FLA+</td>
<td></td>
<td>GAA+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI*</td>
<td></td>
<td>Florverde</td>
<td></td>
<td>IAFN</td>
<td></td>
<td>GlobalGAP+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOTS****+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PEFC</td>
<td></td>
<td>ICTI CARE+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTRS*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SA+</td>
<td></td>
<td>ICMM+</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSB*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>UEBT</td>
<td></td>
<td>Naturland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAN/RA****</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>WRAP+</td>
<td></td>
<td>SAI+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total = 33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results
12 reserve votes/seats for NGOs in the highest governance body
1 reserves votes/seat s in the second highest, but not first
10 imply that NGOs will be included but do not reserve votes/seats for them
10 do not imply that NGOs will be included or reserve votes/seats for them

NGO Inclusion

Figure 2. How do VSSSOs include NGOs in their highest governance bodies?

should be made to appear producer-inclusive. At the other end of the spectrum, six VSSSOs (18%) did not specify an intention to include producers or NGOs (ETP, GAA, IMO, ICMM, SAI, ICTI). This suggests that the authors of their constitutions did not find it necessary to bring producers into governance or give the appearance of doing so. The following section discusses these findings and their implications.

5. DISCUSSION

(a) Do VSSSOs meet governance expectations?

This study examined how VSSSOs typically describe producer inclusion in their constitutional documents, and evaluated the degree to which VSSSO norms meet the widespread expectation of producer inclusion. What it means to “include” producers can vary. One perspective is that producer inclusion requires seats/votes to be reserved for producer groups. According to this definition of inclusion, only 39% (13 of 33) of VSSSOs meet the standard for inclusive governance. Some might argue that this is too rigorous a threshold for inclusion. But even if the standard for “inclusion” is reduced to implying in a constitution that producers will be included in either of the two highest bodies, barely more than half of VSSSOs would meet expectations (64%, or 11 of 33). What if the bar for inclusion was raised instead of lowered? How would VSSSOs measure up if the standard “inclusion” meant holding veto power over other stakeholder groups in the highest governance body? Such a practice would ensure that producer inclusion is not “tokenism” but instead a real opportunity to influence outcomes. When the threshold for inclusion is increased in this way, only 18% (6 of 33) VSSSOs meet expectations. In other words, VSSSOs fail to meet expectations of producer inclusion 82% of the time if the bar is high, 61% of the time if standards are lowered, and 36% of the time if they are further reduced. Regardless of how one defines “inclusion,” VSSSOs are not widely inclusive of producers.

Even if one were to consider NGOs a viable substitute for producer representation—as I have argued against—VSSSOs still do not universally meet expectations. Only 82% meet the most basic standard, 55% meet a rigorous standard, and 27% meet the highest threshold. Recall that, as described in
the methods section, several assumptions made in the analysis bias these results toward overestimating producer inclusion and NGO inclusion. Thus the numbers presented here represent a best (most inclusive)-case scenario. These findings are summarized in Table 6.

(b) What is lost?

At the VSSSO level of analysis, the most obvious consequence of exclusion is that VSSSOS relinquish all the advantages of inclusive governance. As described in Section 2, this includes not only empowerment, skill building, and favorable outcomes for producers, but also benefits to VSSSOs, such as becoming more sensitive to local contexts, deepening stakeholder investment, broadening the base of support, bolstering impact, and fostering a sense of empowerment and fairness among stakeholders. Additionally, exclusion may generate further adverse consequences such as diminished credibility (Schepers, 2010 on PEFC); compromised accountability (e.g., Bain, 2010 on GlobalGAP); diluted standards (Renard, 2015 on FI); structures that reflect the ideas of traditional elites (Dingwerth, 2008 on FSC); and reduced benefits for intended beneficiaries (e.g., Bacon, 2010 on FI).

At a broader level, these findings also have implications for global economic governance. At the end of the 20th Century, as the third wave of globalization began to unfold, some scholars began to cite VSSSOs as part of the potential solution to the “democratic deficit” (Nye, 2001) in global economic decision-making. The idea was that by bringing diverse stakeholders to the fore of private standards setting, VSSSOs would help to close the “participatory gap” between the “transnational capitalist class” and groups typically excluded from global economic governance (Conroy, 2007, pp. 38–39; Levy, 2008, p. 852; Reinicke and Deng, 2000). Scholars and practitioners alike expected that VSSSOs would not only adopt multi-stakeholder structures, but also include traditionally marginalized groups among those stakeholders. “Traditionally marginalized groups” refer to populations (such as farmers and workers) that have typically not been invited to participate in negotiating global economic policy (such as states and international organizations), and do not have funds or power to push decision-makers to act in their interests (such as business associations and large corporations) (Haufler, 2003, p. 239; O’Rourke, 2006; Slaughter, 2012, p. 5). As O’Rourke (2006) notes, VSSSOs are part of an “effort to make global governance more democratically accountable to those most directly impacted” (900). In a more general sense, many scholars consider VSSSOs members of transnational civil society and global social movements, and argue that in this capacity they are bringing new voices to international affairs (Beckfield, 2003; Florini, 2000; Kaldor, 2003; Keck & Sikkink, 1998).

Thus, the finding that the founders and leaders of VSSSOs do not universally—or even usually—plan to include producers in their governance turns on its head the notion that VSSSOs are a democratizing force in global governance. The groups traditionally marginalized from high-level decision-making—such as smallholder commodities farmers in the Global South—have once again been relegated to advisory and consultative positions, their perspectives taking a back seat to more traditional elites. If the success of the VSS movement depends on the organizations that comprise it becoming more transparent, accountable, and democratic (O’Rourke, 2006, p. 912), the standards movement is failing. When VSSSOs govern without participation of the governed they not only lose their capacity to make unique contributions to global governance, but they also become complicit in a broader hegemonic project (Friedrichs, 2005; Levy, 2008).

(c) Governance plans versus practice

This study of governance documents is a first step in understanding the broader question of how VSSSOs approach producer inclusion. Without a doubt, governance documents are important: they provide insights into how founders believe VSSSOs should be governed; communicate internal processes to external actors; and can be used to hold organizations accountable for inclusion. Yet, many constitutions are ambiguous or do not reflect what is happening on the ground (see Fransen, 2012). In practice, VSSSO governance may be less inclusive of producers than is indicated in the results of this study. For example, seats reserved for producers are not always filled (e.g., Fransen, 2012, p. 183). Likewise, seats reserved for either producers or industry actors may be filled by the latter. In many ways, even the most “inclusive” organizations may not bring producers to the fore.

On the other hand, when the results of this study were shared with VSSSOs, many responded by pointing out ways in which their practices are actually more inclusive of producers than what their formal structures demand. The ICTI (International Council of Toy Industries) CARE Foundation Inc., for example, does not specify in its by-laws that NGOs should be included in its Governance Board. However, its current board includes representatives from the International Youth Foundation and the International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies—both NGOs. Likewise, the Soil Association, which sets standards for organic production, only implies that producers should be included, yet four of its nine board members are farmers. In other words, VSSSOs can be more inclusive or less inclusive than their governance documents suggest.

Future research should examine the gaps between governance de jure and de facto. Why does this gap exist? In cases where practices are more inclusive than plans: What are the sources of resistance to revising formal governance structures to reflect new values or realities? Do bureaucratic protocols make key documents difficult to amend? Or, are incumbent leaders fearful of formalizing power-sharing practices? What does it mean when an organization adopts more inclusive practices than are required? Is it a sign of progress or a cosmetic adjustment intended to communicate an ethos of inclusion? A longitudinal study might adjudicate between these interpretations by examining whether documents are eventually revised (reflecting progress), or the formal structure remains exclusionary (suggesting a more superficial form of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inclusion of producers</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Implies inclusion or reserves votes/seats in at least one governance body</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Reserves at least one vote in at least one governance body (must do more than imply inclusion)</th>
<th>Higher</th>
<th>Veto power in highest governance body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion of producers or NGOs</td>
<td>64% (21 of 33)</td>
<td></td>
<td>39% (13 of 33)</td>
<td></td>
<td>18% (6 of 33)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion of producers or NGOs</td>
<td>82% (27 of 33)</td>
<td></td>
<td>55% (18 of 33)</td>
<td></td>
<td>27% (9 of 33)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
inclusion). In cases where plans are more inclusive than practices: Did VSSSOs ever intend to follow the plans, or are inclusive documents an example of “legitimation politicking” (Fransen, 2012)? In cases where founders intended to follow through with plans of inclusion but did not, were the challenges more material or cultural? An initial query into these questions might compare this study’s findings with those presented in the 2014 “State of Sustainability Initiatives Review” which examines actual stakeholder distribution on the boards of 15 organizations, 13 of which are also included in this study (Potts et al., 2014, p. 60). Further research may require in depth fieldwork in organizations with various types of gaps between governance on paper and governance in practice.

(d) Other forms of inclusion

VSSSOs were quick to highlight that reserving votes/seats in the highest governance bodies is not the only way to include producers and NGOs in voluntary certification systems. For example, the Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT), which sets standards for biomass production, does not reserve votes/seats for producers or NGOs in its General Assembly or Board of Directors but does include producers and NGOs in its Standards Committee, which has full authority over standards-setting. This is illustrative of a broader trend—it is more common for VSSSOs to engage a broader range of stakeholders in standards-setting than in governance (ISEAL, 2015; Potts et al., 2014).

Yet, alternative forms of inclusion should not be understood as satisfactory vehicles for bringing producer voices to the highest governance bodies is not the only way to include producers and NGOs in voluntary certification systems. For example, the Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT), which sets standards for biomass production, does not reserve votes/seats for producers or NGOs in its General Assembly or Board of Directors but does include producers and NGOs in its Standards Committee, which has full authority over standards-setting. This is illustrative of a broader trend—it is more common for VSSSOs to engage a broader range of stakeholders in standards-setting than in governance (ISEAL, 2015; Potts et al., 2014).

Yet, alternative forms of inclusion should not be understood as satisfactory vehicles for bringing producer voices to the most important decision-making tables. While Fung and Wright (2003) note that “empowered participatory governance” can take many shapes, such as “popular participation, decentralized decision-making, practical focus, continuous deliberation and engagement, or co-operation…” (263), alternative forms of inclusion are not substitutes for allowing stakeholders to vote on a VSSSO’s most far-reaching, fundamental decisions (Dingwerth & Pattberg, 2009). Producers should have a voice in the most important decisions, such as: eligibility requirements (which producers to include), benefits what producers will gain), and growth strategies (how many producers the system can support before diluting benefits). Furthermore, empirical studies illustrate that follow through on other forms of inclusive consultation processes can be woefully inadequate (Suiseeya & Caplow, 2013). Further research on the relationships between governance and standards-setting bodies might determine the degree to which this arrangement (of delegating producers to peripheral bodies) is problematic. A standards-setting committee with full authority to approve standards content, for example, is less concerning than one serving only as an advisory body, making suggestions that may be approved or rejected by higher powers.

(e) Explaining inclusion and exclusion

What explains variation in how VSSSOs include producers? Koppell (2010) argues that undemocratic governance features, such as excluding key stakeholder groups or limiting their participation, should not be understood as random attributes but instead as key elements of organizations’ strategies for survival and effectiveness (6). How might VSSSOs see producer inclusion or exclusion as key to survival and effectiveness?

Several studies suggest that some VSSSOs use inclusive governance to support their processes of legitimation, because they believe legitimacy is key to survival (Bernstein & Cashore, 2007, p. 351). 17 They may boast inclusion of marginalized groups (Bernstein, 2004), a diverse range of stakeholders (Schepers, 2010, p. 281), NGOs (Nikoloyuk, 2009; Schepers, 2010), or a significant cross-section of the supply chain (Nikoloyuk, 2009). Inclusive structures aim to build “moral authority” by signaling independence from corporate or state rule (Raynolds et al., 2007). For example, Taylor (2005) argues that the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) reformed its governance structure to address critiques that industry representatives and powerful retail actors exercised too much power in governance, relative to social interests (141–142; see also Schepers, 2010, p. 284). As a result, Schepers (2010) argues that the FSC “is perceived as stronger and stricter” than competing VSSSOs “due to its greater degree of input from NGOs” (280). Other organizations have also reformed their structures to become more inclusive over time, responding to the non-inclusive nature of previous private sustainability standards regimes (Cheyns & Riisgaard, 2014, p. 410). These include the Fair Labor Association (Dickson & Eckman, 2008), Fairtrade International (Bennett, 2015), the FSC (Taylor, 2005), and GlobalGAP (Henson, Masakure, & Cranfield, 2011).

Yet, several of the VSSSOs in this study have survived for over a decade (or two), despite their exclusion of producers. Thus, it appears survival is not dependent on legitimacy; or that legitimacy can be pursued by means other than producer inclusion. In what other ways can VSSSOs use producer inclusion or exclusion as part of a strategy for survival and effectiveness? Brown et al. (2012) suggest that organizations’ strategies reflect their primary accountabilities. Organizations are driven to serve a constituency group, a mission, or the members. Since the governance structure will reflect this priority, variation in producer inclusion may be a reflection of variation in primary accountabilities. For example, a VSSSO accountable to its constituents may be more likely to include that group in governance than an organization that prioritizes the mission of generating public goods (1106). This explanation and other post-structural approaches focus on the ways in which organizations privilege different ideas, narratives, and discourses about the organization’s mission and strategic objectives. A more material explanation for variation in producer inclusion is that governance structures are designed to facilitate access to the resources the organization requires (Campi, Defourny, Grégoire, & Huybrechts, 2012), such as funding, information, or major contracts (Pfieffer & Salancik, 1978). This may generate governance structures that privilege stakeholders who are gatekeepers to such resources (Brown, 2008; Howard & Jaffee, 2013; Huybrechts et al., 2014). Scholars should be open to understandings of governance structure outcomes that combine insights both post-structural and interest-based explanations (Cheyns & Riisgaard, 2014).

Future research should focus on how VSSSOs understand and leverage governance structure in their strategies for survival, effectiveness, and legitimacy. What determines whether producer inclusion is part of such strategies? The objective of this agenda is to identify the strategic beliefs, priorities, and resource opportunities that are shared among VSSSOs that include producers, and those shared among those who exclude them. A cross-case comparative study using qualitative methodologies, such as non-participant observation of high-level meetings and interviews with board members, may be an effective approach. Some studies of this kind are already taking place. van der Ven (2015), for example, finds that organizations that (a) partner with environmental NGOs; (b) have non-profit structures; or (c) have a broad transnational reach are more likely to follow best practices, including good gover-
nance. Future research might compare the findings of this study (of socially-oriented VSSSOs) with the findings of an additional study of environmentally-oriented VSSSOs in order to better understand how the decision to include producers is (or is not) related to the goal of impacting producer communities. A second phase of research might aim to better understand how various governance structures actually affect survival, legitimacy, and effectiveness. Such an effort may examine failed or failing VSSSOs, or those critiqued as ineffective. For example, Auld (2014) finds that certification programs lose support (actors exit) when there is greater opportunity for them to be effective outside of the organization than potential to influence (have voice) within the organization. By generating knowledge about how VSSSOs use producer inclusion as part of a larger strategy, researchers can equip advocates of producer inclusion to better champion their cause.

6. CONCLUSION

Voluntary sustainability standards-setting organizations (VSSSOs) are assumed to have multi-stakeholder governance structures that incorporate a diverse variety of actors—including the farmers, workers, miners, artisans, and others who produce the sustainability-certified products. Producer groups typically contribute physical labor to globalized supply chains, live in the Global South, are vulnerable, face few opportunities for social mobility, and have traditionally been marginalized from global economic governance. For all VSSSOs—but especially those with a social mission to support producer groups—including producers in governance can create diverse and important benefits. Yet, research suggests that there is great diversity in whether and how organizations intend to give voice to such groups.

This study shows that when the founders or leaders of VSSSOs design the organization’s governance structure, they often decide to exclude these producers from the highest governance bodies. Producer inclusion is not, in fact, the norm. While planning to give producers a vote or seat in governance does not ensure their perspectives will influence policy outcomes, having a seat at the table is necessary for meaningful, accountable inclusion. This finding calls into question the notion that VSSSOs are vehicles through which traditionally marginalized voices are brought into global economic governance. It suggests that actors interested in diversifying global economic governance take on VSSSO governance reform as an opportunity to bring fresh perspectives to the decision-making table.

NOTES

1. The term “Voluntary Sustainability Standards” (VSS) has become a common way to refer to this phenomenon, and thus the acronym VSSSO aims to create a terminology for the class of organizations that creates those standards. Note that this phenomenon is studied under many different names, including: “experimentalist governance” (Sabel & Zeitlin, 1997), “non-state, market-driven” forms of governance (Cashore, 2002), “social regulation of the market” (Haufler, 2003), “transnational private regulation” (Bartley, 2007), “non-state certification systems” (Bartley, 2007), “new governance jurisprudence” (Alexander, 2009), “transnational alternative agrifood networks” (Hatanaka, 2010), “competitive supragovernmental regulation” (Meidinger, 2011), “voluntary sustainability initiatives” (Potts et al., 2014), and “multi-stakeholder initiatives” (Cheyns & Riisgaard, 2014).

2. To put that in perspective, if we thought about FI as a corporation, and considered FI-certified farmers and farm workers to be akin to employees (since FI sets their minimum wages and regulates working conditions), FI would be the third largest private employer in the world (following McDonald's and Walmart), in terms of number of persons employed (Taylor, 2015). The employee count for McDonald’s and Walmart does not, of course, include the producers of the goods it sells, such as farmers and farm workers. If that were the case, their number of employees would increase exponentially and be much, much greater than FI’s number of farmers and farm workers.

3. Note that this definition differs from other common uses of the term “producer.”

4. On the diversity of initiatives aimed at transforming global food systems, see Barrientos and Dolan (2006).

5. Note that over 10% of people in the world lack basic reading proficiency, and over half (nearly 3.1 billion people) do not have access to the Internet—even through mobile phones (CIAgency; 2015; Fitzsimons, 2014).

6. VSSSOs are, of course, not alone in their struggle with inclusion. Other types of organizations and other social movements similarly find that advocating for some means excluding others (Armstrong & Bernstein, 2008). At the movement level of analysis, even the most diverse, progressive social movements, such as human rights, become dominated by a single institution that is not representative of the movement as a whole (Bennett, 2012, p. 804).

7. See, for example, Michael Sheridan’s (2012) “Fair Trade and Governance, Revisited” on the Catholic Relief Services “Coffeelands” Blog and journalist Marc Gunther’s (2012) piece “A Schism Over Fair Trade” on his website.

8. In this study, 19 VSSSOs have two governance bodies and 14 VSSSOs only have one.

9. The question of why and how VSSSOs decide upon the structures they do, and whether their exclusionary practices should be understood as intentional or inadvertent, is taken up in Section 5.

10. In 2002 a cohort of VSSSOs established ISEAL (International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling), an independent NGO that provides guidance for international social and environmental standards-setting organizations. In 2004, it launched a Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards, which has become the global reference for good social and environmental standard-setting processes. ISEAL is now a central actor in developing a cross-domain certification community (Bartley & Smith, 2010, p. 369).


12. Fair Trade USA was the only organization that did not respond to the author’s four queries.

13. For an example of this, see Bennett (2015, 2016) on the history of Fairtrade International’s governance structure.
14. When discrepancies occurred, the researchers used each other’s notes to re-evaluate their findings, identifying any implicit assumptions that accounted for inconsistent findings. The team then agreed on which assumptions to adopt, and applied the same logic to all of the cases. The resulting set of assumptions is discussed in the subsequent section.

15. Several of these findings are based on analyses of governance structures that have since been reformed. Nonetheless, they provide insight into the types of problems that may be caused by exclusionary governance.

16. The question of whether non-state regulators (in theory or practice) democratize world affairs or threaten democracy by circumventing elected national governments is beyond the scope of this article.

17. On how this argument plays out in the forest sector, see Cashore (2002) and Meidinger (2011); on RSPO, see Schouten and Glasbergen (2002) and Meidinger (2011); on RSPO, see Schouten and Glasbergen (2002) and Meidinger (2011).

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