

Title: Coffee, Certification Schemes and the reshaping of Sustainability

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Special Session 4: Foodscapes Beyond the Alternative/Conventional Food Networks Binary . (Ulrich Ermann, Annalisa Colombino, Renate Renner, University of Graz)

Abstract:

To enhance Sustainability (produce, farm and consume sustainable products) seems to be one way of following that sentence "trust in markets", a common invitation of neoliberal economics for solving all social and environmental problems legacy of the green revolution. One way of overcoming such practices has been the promotion of standards, labels, marks to symbolize a whole "new" way of producing goods, commodities. Those in terms of international trade organizations such the International Coffee Organization (ICO) are certification schemes whose standards are introducing important changes in the governance agriculture. More importantly, certification schemes are enacting Sustainability in terms of trust, a key element in the "constitution" of any interchange in the market. Nevertheless, many of these approaches isolate technical and social dimension of certification as separated realms.

In this paper, drawing on STS contributions about classification and standardization processes, I explore how that trust is technically crafted in the standards enacted in some certification schemes for producing and perform sustainable coffees and sustainability. Certification schemes are designed to produce trust in sustainable markets regarding the transparency and the consistency of coffee production according to international environmental criteria (sustainability). Nevertheless, such trust is limited to the boundaries of the certificate. By doing a local and specific use of certification schemes it is possible to remark different uses and enactments of sustainability. Certification schemes can be framed, among others, in terms of foodscapes that are enacted as coffee relationships. These involve a more emotional and sensuous experience of the market. I present how some standards could be harmonically integrated in some arrangements and how sometimes such integration cannot be possible.