

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

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Alliance



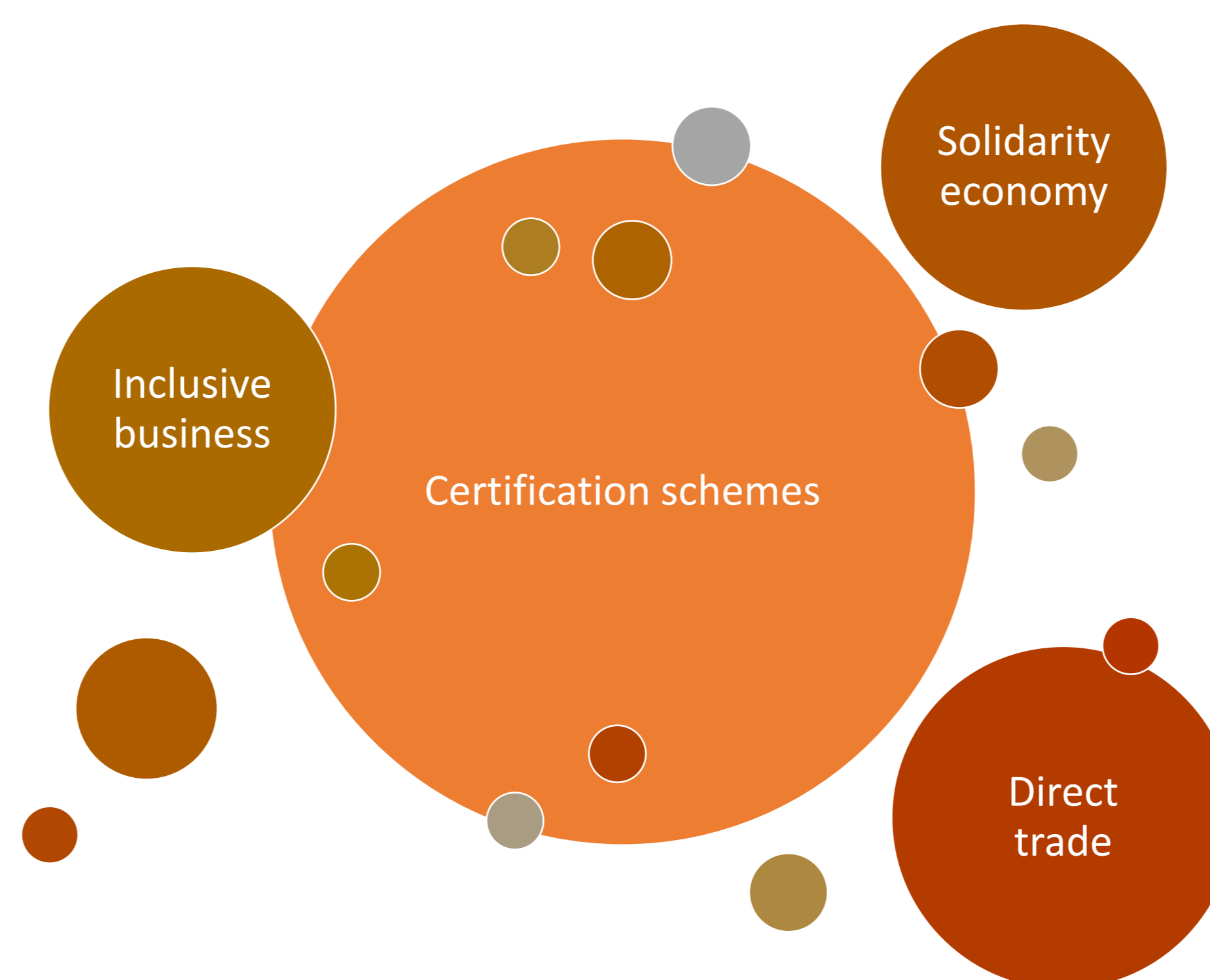
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How to address concerns about human and environmental well-being in agri-food supply chains?

- Global agri-food supply chains such as for cacao and coffee are the object of numerous concerns about well-being of producers, workers and the environment
- Since the turn of the century, third-party certification of voluntary sustainability standards have emerged as primary governance strategy to address these concerns
- In the last decade or so, research has demonstrated the often limited and sometimes even adverse effects of certification schemes (see Oya, Schaefer & Skalidou 2018, Blackman & Rivera 2011 for systematic reviews)
- In the last decade, various value chain actors have started to develop and deploy own governance strategies and instruments, partly in response to abovementioned limitations but often also for other strategic considerations (Thorlakson 2018)



New governance strategies, moving beyond certification

- Important discourses around emerging governance strategies, as alternatives or complements to certification schemes, include
 - Inclusive Business (German et al. 2020, Chamberlain & Anseeuw 2019),
 - Direct trade (Middendorp et al. 2020, Rueda et al. 2018), and
 - Cooperatives and the wider social & solidarity economy (Utting 2018, Vicari 2014).
- Proliferation of new strategies entail a growing institutional diversity of governance instruments, e.g. on price, ownership, voice, support projects, are linked to different missions, goals, and theories of change, i.e. assumed impact pathways

→ Our study aims to capture the growing institutional diversity to build a typology of value chain governance including and beyond certification



Data and Methods

- 120+ semi-structured survey interviews with actors in Peruvian and Swiss coffee and cacao sectors
- Capturing diversity in value chain activities, ownership, size, markets, services, ... with snowball identification of common & unique models (stratified purposive sample)
- Currently completing data collection in Switzerland, transcribing interviews in Peru and developing codebook
- Coding of elements of **missions, goals and theories of change** using **qualitative content analysis**
- Identification of recurring patterns or combinations of value chain positions, missions, goals & theories of change using formal concept analysis



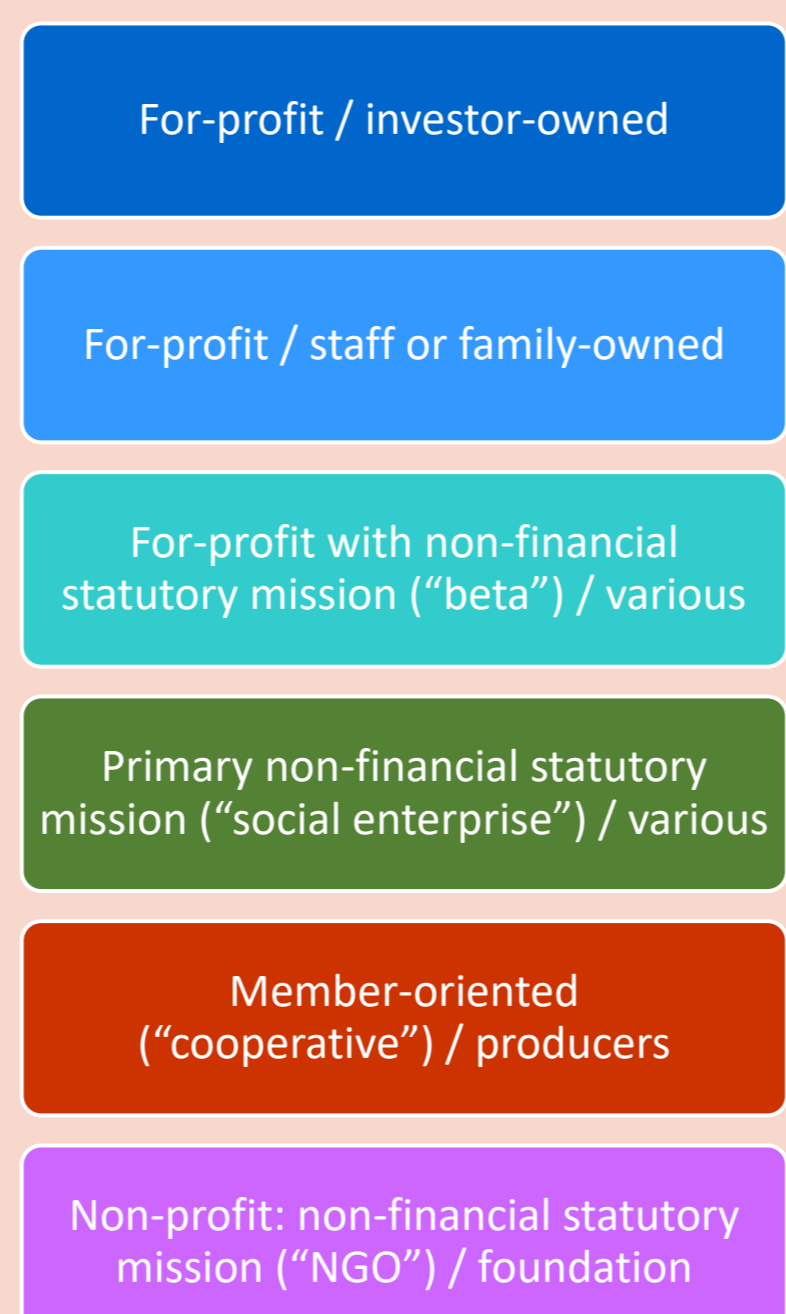
Results and Discussion

- "New" goals, impact pathways and instruments identified, broadening perspectives on what actors do and why
- Variation in **organizational mission and ownership may partly explain** choice of goals, impact pathways and instruments
- Recurring linkages across categories may reveal **logical connection**, e.g. that a goal may require a certain instrument
- Recurring common appearance of elements within a category may reveal **complementarity**, e.g. of instruments
- Consolidated insights on who pursues which goals based on what logic and with which instruments may reveal **building blocks of alternative and complementary governance strategies** including and beyond certification

Value chain position



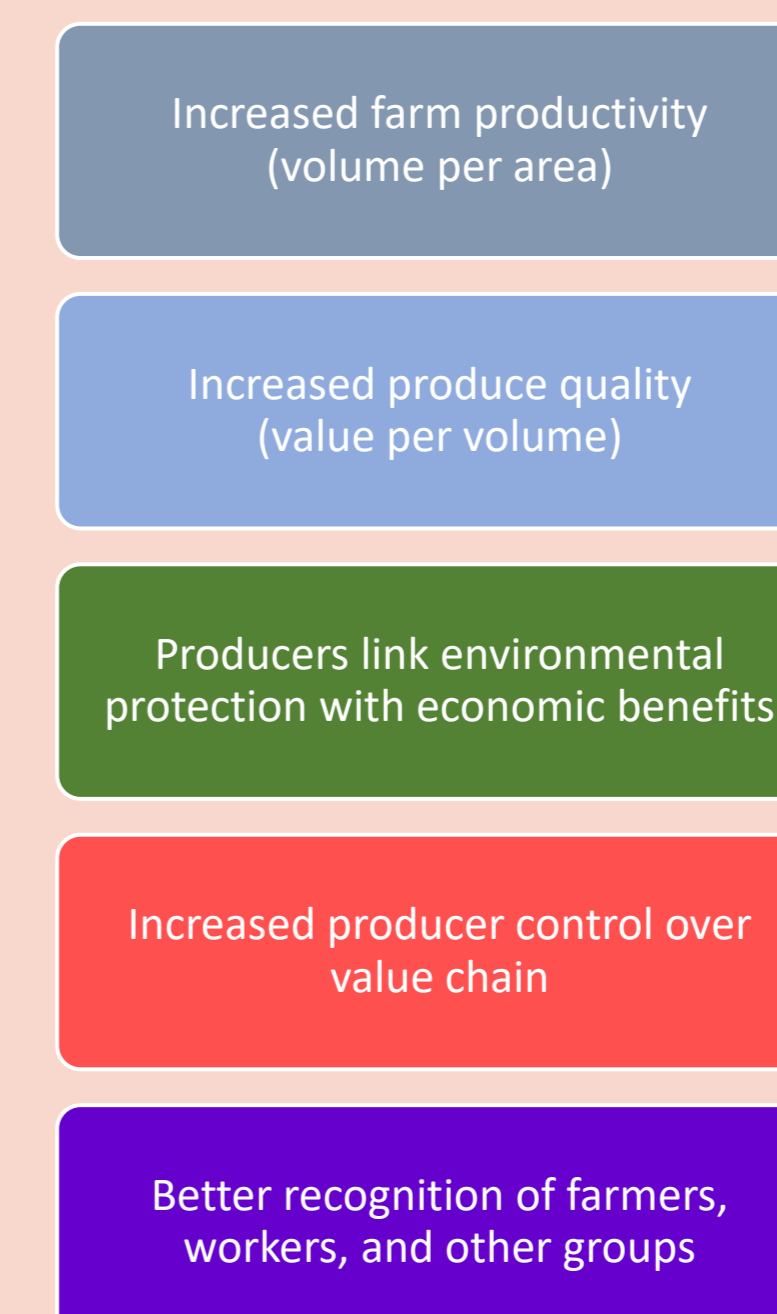
Mission / Ownership



Goals



Impact pathways



Instruments



Conclusion, Recommendations and Outlook

- Making sense of governance strategies as constrained by value chain position, organizational mission and ownership "endogenizes" choice not only of specific instruments, i.e. institutional arrangements and practices, but also underlying goals and impact pathways
- This step is necessary not only to systematize the institutional landscape as it has evolved beyond certification, but also to open the discourse on value chain governance to actors whose goals and impact pathways were hitherto disregarded in research and practice
- Comprehensive knowledge of instruments, particularly on price, may provide actors with new ideas and options for negotiation
- Comparative research on the effect of different strategies on human and environmental well-being can build on typology (2023-2024)

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