# A New Calculable Global World in the Making: Governing Through Transnational Certification Standards

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## Introduction: The Evolving Politics of Calculable Worlds

The politics of quantification rests on preliminary processes of transforming the world to make it quantifiable, by form-giving, formatting, in-forming, codifying and equivalence-making on the basis of a variety of conventions. This chapter concentrates on such transformations that make the world calculable. It first presents the analytical tools of our research agenda on the politics of statistics and quantification. They are used here to characterize the processes of transformation involved in the globalization of a new mode of governing that operates, away from states, through voluntary certification standards made up of measurable objectives. Initiated as a form of communication along the supply chain of major agro-industry products, it enlarged and gained public legitimacy through

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the implementation of multi-stakeholder governance, while extending the plurality of normative issues it covers, from agricultural good practices to environmental and labour standards, or social accountability. By contrast to other modes of governing, this normative pluralism is entirely encapsulated in the measurable characterization of the product—palm oil in the case we investigated—which is certified to conform with the "sustainability standard" of the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO). All regulations of human actors' behaviours are deposited externally in the material product that circulates between them, and its certification. Certification implies a formal statement which is not legal but issued from an accredited third party body. It gives written assurance that the product or service is in conformity with the standard; the certificate being a form of communication between seller and buyer, while the label is a form of communication with the end consumer. While accountants or auditors certify accounting numbers, this third party body certifies product attributes that consumers cannot evaluate even when they use them. It codifies the process of production, its environmental impact and labour conditions—what economists named "credence" attributes of the product. Such governance is not only based on the objectivity of numbers but on a wider expectancy: that the material world of products, with which and through which human beings interact, would turn into a set of objective options, and their certification would guarantee the individuals who choose them that fundamental values or goods are satisfied.

Our analysis deals with the arts of calculating that are at the core of this contemporary mode of governing by certification standards. Calculating has two connected significances in this art: counting to govern with numbers, but also counting on an environment that is designed to be more reliable and offer possibilities to calculate on it. The linkage between counting and counting on is encapsulated in the term "calculable" with its double meaning of quantifiable and dependable. The first points to measurement while the second introduces a broader idea of guarantee and, therefore, an evaluation.[1] In the first sense, the British approach to Foucault's "governmentality" and "the administering of lives" (Mennicken & Miller, 2014) that Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller initiated in the nineties focused early on "governing by numbers" (Rose, 1991) and the invention of "calculating selves", "calculable spaces" and "calculative practices" (Miller, 1992, 2001). It was developed from accounting practices into a major and productive research agenda on

modes of governing economic, social and personal life (Miller & Rose, 2008; Rose & Miller, 2010).

Another earlier main research agenda on the politics of numbers originated from the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) at the end of the seventies, and initially dealt with a different domain of practices producing numbers: state statistics. After the pioneering work by Alain Desrosières on the history of socio-occupational categories (Desrosières, 1987 [1977], 1987 [1983]; see also Desrosières & Thévenot, 1988), the historical perspective was reinforced by a symposium in which INSEE brought together historians working on quantitative series and statisticians who were urged to take a reflective and historical look at the surveys they were responsible for (Affichard, 1987 [1977], 1987 [1983]). From the very start, history was a major focus of this research agenda, as shown by the early book co-written by Robert Salais on the social categorization of unemployment (Salais et al., 1986), or the author's research on the genealogy of surveys and social categories that measure social inheritance since Francis Galton's eugenics (Thévenot, 1987 [1983]).

While Desrosières related the history of statistics to the formation of states and their characteristics (Desrosières, 1998 [1993]),[2] I brought together the chain of operations involved in the transformation of personal answers into quantified statistics, and the comparable chain of transformative operations induced by representing and voicing personal concern in the proper format for politics. I early conceptualized the elementary process that makes this possible through the notion of "investment in form". An investment in form "produces equivalence" and "social coding", the term "code" covering "the set of conventions which govern 'regulated' communications between people" (Thévenot, 1983, 1984). On the conceptual basis offered by these "conventional forms of equivalence", the research agenda on the "politics of statistics" (Thévenot, 1990) investigated the various segments of the statistical production chain—survey and data collection, classification, codification and the processing of information—to identify fundamental correspondences between "statistical equivalence forms" and the "political constructions of the bond between members of the same polity" (Thévenot, 1987 [1983]).[3] It extended to policy implementation and evaluation, as well as social, economic and political theories involved in this evaluation (Thévenot, 1983, 2011a, 2016).[4] The initial programme on governing through statistics was expanded to non-state modes of

governing through standards and objectives (Thévenot, 1997, 2009, 2015a, 2019b).

The British and French currents lacked opportunities for dialogue.[5] The present book offers such an opportunity, thanks to the interactions facilitated by its co-editors Andrea Mennicken and Robert Salais, and meetings with Peter Miller who provides his views in an afterword, as well as Wendy Espeland.

Far from the politics of state statistics, the transnational—or even a-national—worldwide extension of private voluntary standards has led to a mode of "governing through standards" (Thévenot, 1997, 2009; Ponte et al., 2011; Ponte & Cheyns, 2013) that is intended to make the world not only reliable and countable but even *certifiable* (Thévenot, 2015a). What does it imply in terms of its politics, since this mode of governing has been refurbished in response to criticisms which pointed to the lack of legitimacy that current standard-setting procedures undergo? Several years of a collective research programme I have taken part in focused on investigating the practices of this new calculable world.[6] Observing governing through a certification standard in action has demanded close fieldwork to follow the most vulnerable actors, from their daily life in remote rural areas to "open spaces" of public roundtables, or private confidential negotiations. Proper analytical tools were needed to grasp the wide variety of actors' practices, knowledge, evaluations and voices when they strive to express their concern and criticize.[7] After the next section, which sets out our research programme in more detail, the second part of this chapter examines the normative and regulatory basis of governing through certification standards, which is intended to ensure political legitimacy while taking distance from state legal and political systems. Which alternative to the rule of law does governing through certification standards offer? While the second part deals with the production of regulations, the third one tackles their enforcement. What are the functional equivalents for the judicial system in putting the standard implementation to a critical test? How do actors—particularly those who are most vulnerable—cope with the proper requirement of a certifiable world: Transforming all their concern, from the most personal to the most collectively political, into the format of measurable objectives that the standard enforces?

## From State Statistics to Government Through Standards: A Research Programme on the Politics of Conventional Forms and Engagements

Belonging to the "Disobedient Generation" of the "Sixties" (Sica & Turner, 2005), I shared the Marxist critical stance which prompted the reversal of the hierarchical superiority of abstract and formal knowledge in favour of practice. It propped up the significance of practical know-how along the chain of actors which produce statistical data. Following knowledgeable pollsters and coders who were usually downplayed and treated as low-skilled white-collar workers, I turned to the workplace of the statistical chain, and investigated it as an industrial production line. This line creates in-formation not by assembling parts but mostly by trans-forming, changing the format of entities. Manufacturing transforms a personalized matter—currently collected from oral interviews—and shapes it into a standardized public form: the formal format of codified and quantified items. In the case of social statistics, this trans-formation aims at trans-muting "In Person" into "In Common", one of the most intense experiences and learning of the Sixties politicization. The Marxist tension between theoretical and practical knowledge was at stake, but also the exploration of the "Two Bodies" in which every human being invests (Thévenot, 2005) and not only kings and rulers (Kantorowicz, 1997 [1957]). One body is "invested" with a form which ensures communication in the sense of making common and endowing with coordination power. The other formless corporeal, living and mortal body puts into question such conventional "invested forms".

### Social Coding and Investments in Conventional Forms: The Prerequisites for the Politics of Quantification

Each practical step of the transformative chain that creates data was investigated: interviewing respondents at home, filling in questionnaires, coding answers within social classifications (Thévenot, 1981a). The transversal operation of giving form—or formatting—led to conceptualize "social coding" (Thévenot, 1983) which initially focused on the formatting of occupations.[8] "Investment in form" was conceived as the establishment of a conventional form of equivalence such as classification, criterion, code, standard, routine, rule of thumb, house rule, instruction, custom, regulation, right, trademark, model, template, mould (Thévenot,

1984). Certification standards are among those invested forms, and most of the items of the previous list of invested forms were found in our fieldwork on standard-setting and implementation. Three main criteria were initially set out to distinguish various types of invested forms: (1) the lifespan or extent in time—from a short-lived model, up to a perennial custom; (2) the area of validity or extent in space—from a personally and locally attached rule of thumb or house rule, up to international rights; (3) the objectivity or material consolidation—from an ideal mental criterion, up to a solid template.[9] Investing in forms consists of the costly sacrifice of present coordination potentialities to ensure future returns in terms of economies in the cognitive and practical processes of coordinating actions. Formatting into a formal form is a step prior to any quantification, and a basic procedure in making the world calculable. Power relations ensue from invested forms, such as "the power relations between [agents who use very general forms and] agents who make use of more specific forms", this last power being disqualified by Taylorism when formal definitions of tasks phased out rules of thumbs built up by practiced workers (Thévenot, 1984), as did Toyotism later (Charles, 2016).

Our "practice turn" (Schatzki et al., 2001; Thévenot, 2001b) was not initially influenced by American pragmatism. In addition to what I said of the Marxist reassessment of practice, and the legacy of Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1976 [1972]), our pragmatic or pragmatist view on invested forms was influenced by research on work and organization, more precisely on the problematic of "coordinating" action.[10] This unusual term in the social and political sciences was taken in the sense of an uncertain process rather than its achievement in order. Such a perspective benefited from the cooperation with François Eymard-Duvernay who elaborated further the economists' notion of "specific investment" to contrast personalized and non-transferable longterm relationships based on codified relationships that can be maintained at a distance (Eymard-Duvernay, 1986). This collaboration was subsequently extended within the founding group of the so-called Economy of Conventions of Convention Theory.[11]

### *Placing Value on Invested Forms: The Plurality of* Orders of Worth *Involved in Justifications and Criticisms Referring to the Common Good*

The definition of invested forms did not explicitly refer to evaluation. Yet, the above-mentioned criteria used to characterize them sustain distinct modes of evaluation (Thévenot, 1984). An early empirical research on the invested forms which respondents and coders used to identify occupations showed three core ways of making one's occupation worthy: the legal qualification or office one fills in (*état*), the art to which one is devoting oneself (*profession*), the traditional trade (*métier*) that one learns by doing (Thévenot, 1981b, 1983, 2016). This first insight into the relation between invested forms and worth—the three kinds of worthiness of occupation roughly correspond to the later identified *civic*, *industrial* and *domestic* "orders of worth"—was then fully developed through the intense collaboration and co-authorship with Luc Boltanski, which led to the new analytical step of "worth" analysis (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1987, 2006 [1991]).

Boltanski had earlier written on classifications (Boltanski, 1970) and co-authored with Bourdieu a seminal article on classification struggles as a continuation of class struggles (Bourdieu & Boltanski, 1975), giving a classist critical twist to the Durkheim-Mauss legacy on social classifications (Durkheim & Mauss, 2009 [1903]). He had later advanced a more thorough analysis of the representation process in the case of *Cadres* (Boltanski, 1987 [1982]). In our collaboration, we first designed a series of experimental games to investigate the non-expert's modes of classifying occupations and "finding one's way in social space" (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1983).[12] They brought to light the strong connection between bringing occupations together ("*rapprochement*") in social categories and placing value on them.

Taking part in public debate requires that participants transform their personal concerns—or possibly sacrifice some of them that cannot bear the transformation—to invest in conventional forms and reach a higher level of generality ("*Montée en généralité*"). In the next step of the collaboration with Boltanski, we identified the grammar of *Orders of worth* as the model of the sense of justice that human beings rely on, when they justify and criticize. We initially identified six repertoires of evaluation that correspond to this model, each order of worth seeking legitimacy by claiming to contribute to a distinct conception of common

good (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1987, 2006 [1991]). According to this model, considerable aggrandizement of personal concern is needed to demonstrate that one's voice is relevant for the common good. Individual interest does not qualify. Since different orders of worth refer to different constructions of the common good, their confrontation publicizes *difference*—in the sense of *differing* in a dispute—which culminates in severe critical clashes. Each order offers the footing to "denounce" the conception of the common good that another order claims. Unequal commonality entails hierarchical ranking of states of worth. We initially avoided the all-purpose vocabulary of "power", to be more precise about *qualifications* that contribute to both empowerment and domination. Yet, orders of worth relate directly to inequality of power since a higher state of worth provides a higher capacity for coordinating others' actions. Claims of legitimacy strengthen this form of power. Our analysis thus continued Weber's differentiation of orders of legitimate domination.[13]

In addition to distinguishing a plurality of modes of evaluation involved in the justifications and criticisms that aim at public legitimacy, the model of orders of worth differentiates the ways evaluative judgements about worthiness are put to the *test*. The pragmatist realism of the "reality test" (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006 [1991]) involves items of the material environment, on the condition they *qualify* for the tested order of worth, and may thus be taken into account in the judgement and be granted evidentiary value. Because of the two previous features, this model differs from Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) which does not make it possible to contrast modes of relations between beings—human or not—on the basis of their mode of qualification and thus valuation. With regard to its use by Foucault, the concept of *dispositif* can be made more precise and broken into component parts. The qualification of each of them for an order of worth *disposes* human beings to engage in justification according to this kind of worth. The pragmatist realism that the "reality test" and "qualification" carry contributed to the development of the notion of "quality conventions" that makes more precise the analysis of organizations and markets. Previous research by Eymard-Duvernay on "models of the firm" in diverse industrial sectors (Eymard-Duvernay, 1986, 1989) was refined by differentiating, inside the same organization, a multiplicity of modes of coordination framed by these various "quality conventions" used in the valuation of persons, things and their relations (Eymard-Duvernay, 2002; Storper & Salais, 1997; Thévenot, 2001a).

## *The Worth of Standards*

Standards are valuable for the *industrial* worth of technical efficiency when they primarily contribute to the compatibility of methods and tools of production. This worth remains dominant in the palm oil standard intended to spread a uniform agricultural model that is oriented towards industrial efficiency. Since our pragmatist approach relates valuation to coordination, the temporal orientation of each order of worth impacts on the mode of coordination it governs. *Industrial* worth sustains a forward-looking orientation that is fully reflected in the idea of technical investment, since equipment and methods fabricate the future by providing predictability.[14] In addition, this worth is conducive to quantification, which is currently involved in the reality test for this order of worth.

The standardization of market goods and services also enhances their *market* worth. Companies that engage in the standard-setting process seek a competitive advantage.[15] The two conventions of *industrial* and *market* worth—and their worlds of objects—differ significantly in the spatiality (Cartesian space/free circulation space) and temporality (future/present orientation) they sustain in coordination. These differences stir up critical tensions which are internal to the economy and weigh on standard-setting: fixing for the future the standardized characteristics of products opposes the *market* worth orientation towards an ever-changing present.[16]

The worth of *renown*, or fame, is also significant for standards. It does not rely on prices but on signs of recognition in public opinion. It strongly motivates the commitment of entrepreneurs in standardization procedures when combined with *market* worth in "compromises" such as branding and marketing (Richey & Ponte, 2011). A campaign triggered by Greenpeace in 2010 proposed a devastating parody of a Kit-Kat chocolate bar advertisement, in which a bar was stuffed by the bleeding finger of an orang-utan. Within a few weeks, Nestlé accepted to negotiate with the NGO because the firm was deeply concerned by the drastic consequences of this campaign on the brand image. Like market worth, the worth of renown in opinion orients towards the present and its "trends". This worth is made measurable and quantifiable through opinion polls.

By contrast, *domestic* worth emphasizes traditions and customs, and sustains a temporal orientation anchored in the past. The traditional arts and crafts qualify for this worth and have occupied an important place

in the history of quality standards, from the very beginning when they were promoted by corporations. Still very present in today's food certifications (Boisard & Letablier, 1989; Busch, 2011; Cheyns & Ponte, 2018; Diaz-Bone, 2011; Ponte, 2016; Star, 1991), this worth is most often in a critical position in standards of the RSPO type, because of the weight placed on *industrial* worth. This critical position is still weakened by the fact that *domestic* worth is hard to measure and quantify, except through "compromise" variables that combine *domestic* with *industrial* worth.

The reality test of the worth of *inspiration* brings evidence of rupture and revelation, in a temporal orientation on the present and a spatial presence evoking epiphany. Insofar as *industrial* standardization tends to fix things for the future, it generates critical tension with the worth of *inspiration*. Yet, "innovation" processes that create new products and services supposed to reach a compromise that strikes a balance between the conflicting requirements of *inspiration*, *market* and *industrial* orders of worth. This worth of *inspiration* derives from a genealogy of valuations of religious deeds and spiritual engagements. In our investigation, this *inspiration* worth was involved in forest peoples' denunciation of palm oil standardized plantations practices that ignore sacred places.

## Standard-Setting in Search of Legitimacy: The Grammars of Commonality in the Plural

Although orders of worth do play a significant role in some RSPO actors' statements, criticisms or activities, the standard itself, its setting and enforcement processes, thwart actors' attempts to engage in public critiques and justification of large scale. The reason is the following: In response to criticisms pointing to the lack of legitimacy of private, voluntary standards-setting procedures, the RSPO type of transnational standard is built on the "multi-stakeholder governance model", or "multi-stakeholder initiative" (MSI). To understand how MSI governance conflicts with the model of orders of worth, another analytical step is needed: the model of orders of worth has to be situated in a broader analysis of the ways in which actors take part in disputes that claim legitimacy for the whole community.

*Grammars* of practice which support *pluralist constructions of commonality and difference* can be characterized by basic operations: *communicating*—in its original meaning of making an issue common; *differing*—in the sense of disagreeing; and *composing*—in both the ancient sense of

settling a dispute and the wider current meaning of calming (Thévenot, 2014, 2015b). These grammars diverge in the transformation they demand of personal concern into a common format that allows people to agree and disagree. The format of difference channels discrepancies between voices. In addition to evidencing the uses of orders of worth in the United States and France, a comparative research programme (Lamont & Thévenot, 2000; Thévenot & Lamont, 2000) contributed to the identification of the grammar that underlies multi-stakeholder initiatives.

Because of its link to the long and diverse liberal political tradition, I named it *liberal grammar*. As rightly argued by Veikko Eranti (2018), it could be named "grammar of interests". I originally avoided the term "interest" because of its naturalization in the social and political sciences, when it is viewed as an inner force guiding individuals. In the *liberal grammar*, it specifies the format to differ and agree in public. Instead of the large transformation of personal or local concerns into common good issues, and the resulting harsh confrontation when rival conceptions of the common good clash, the transformation of personal concerns into individual choices is lesser, and the confrontation less critical.

Yet, the *liberal* interested individual is also in a state of being formatted for the public. Any personal concern has to be converted into the format of a choice—designated as "preference", or "stake", or "interest"—which an autonomous individual makes between options that should be in a form accessible to all other individuals who constitute the *liberal* public. This format of *opting individuals* cannot express most intimate attachments. Too deeply personal, intimate or emotional concerns are not appropriate for liberal communication (Centemeri, 2015; Stavo-Debauge, 2012). In the grammar of plural orders of worth, differing is strongly critical, resulting from the denunciation of an order of worth in the name of another (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1987, 2006 [1991]), while in this *liberal* grammar differences are less dramatically expressed, because they are presented as individual interests. Criticism is only allowed at a lesser degree and the integration of differences is achieved by "negotiation" and "bargaining" between "stakeholders". Yet, the burden of the transformation weighs on human beings to fit this *liberal* format, and may oppress them as well. This analysis rectifies the current idea that *liberal* politics are "horizontal" as opposed to the vertical hierarchy of *orders of worth*.[17] All *grammars* of commonality are inherently hierarchical because of the gradient they maintain between more and less common formats. The

coordinative power of those who engage in the most common format—being able to articulate their concern as choices for common knowledge options, in the *liberal* grammar—entails de facto domination over those who do not and depend on the previous ones.

This distinction of grammars helps to clarify the quantification and evaluation methods used by governing. Fifty years of using the same statistical survey to evaluate social, educational and employment policies showed the dependence on these grammars of: policies, methods of their quantitative evaluations (socio-occupational categories, mobility tables, correspondence analysis, econometrics) and even underlying social and economic theories (reproduction, de-skilling of work, human capital) (Monso & Thévenot, 2010; Thévenot, 2011a). *Civic* and *industrial* orders of worth support the first welfare-social state policies, quantification methods and social theories, whereas *market* order of worth and the *liberal* grammar are backing the more recent policies, quantified evaluations and theories.[18] This dependence is also visible in Emmanuel Didier's contribution to this volume, which examines the relation to quantification that various American sociology currents have. Interactionism and, more broadly, the trends that constitute the "Qualitative sociology" pole influenced by American pragmatism presuppose a *liberal* grammar of opting autonomous individuals, a grammar that also underlies their sociological criticism of the paternalistic welfare state and its categorical statistical treatment of social groups.

### Committed to Objects: Valuable Regimes of Engagements with the World Affected by Standardization

Unlike other modes of governing, the one that maintains a calculable world by certification standards intervenes in the surrounding material objects to regulate the relations between human beings. Our analysis has thus to leave discursive public arenas and scrutinize the variety of valued human relations to material objects, whether they are public or not. The concept of *engagement* was crafted to capture such valued relations with the environment, each of them consolidating and empowering the self through a certain mode of coordination with oneself that is secured by this relation (Thévenot, 2006, 2007, 2013, 2019c). This self, or *personality*, has a dynamical identity resulting from the integration of a plurality of modes of engagement.

Each mode of *engaging with* the world rests on a distinct mode of in-formation, if we extend this notion to highly personal knowledge

and pay attention to the personal indices or landmarks that give convenient form and disposition to a familiarized background. *Engaging in familiarity* is valuable because of the personal ease it generates, due to familiarization with this environment. This intimate relationship to habituated and inhabited places supports a primordial trust in oneself and is deeply affected by changes in the environment. The industrial agriculture development system that the RSPO standard promotes through "good practices" breaks with the personal relationships of using and inhabiting the land that each member of rural communities has with his or her environment. Highly idiosyncratic, *engaging in familiarity* does not easily lend itself to the commonality and communication.[19] It meets the greatest difficulties to find a place in governing by standards which favours, as we shall see, a completely different regime of *engaging in plan*, or project. More than an instrumental relationship to the world, this engagement aims at the good of being able to project oneself into the future through individual plans, provided that surroundings are seized in a functional format.

Dynamical *regimes of engagement* go through trying moments which provide the opportunity to test landmarks and update them. Engagements are thus polarized by two stances, and the process of certification collapses the distinction between the two in favour of the first. The first stance of static quietude sticks to the fixed form that serves as a marker of the engagement and is tested in the trying moment. It corresponds to the *letter* of the convention or the institutional act when *engaging in public justification*.[20] The second stance of moving inquietude brings the awareness of the sacrifices that this fixed form entails, when the situatedness of the engagement opens up to other possibilities of coordination.

## Distinctive Features of a New Calculable World Governed by Certification Standards: Which Substitute for the Rule of Law in the Production of Regulations?

Standards came to constitute a calculable global world through two types of extension of their original technical purpose. Their scope expanded, in terms of the variety of values they take into account. Standard-setting and enforcement procedures enlarged, in search of democratic legitimacy.

### *Made in Standard: All the Good that Money Can Buy*

Standards were originally thought to make technical tools, methods and products more compatible, and to provide economies of scale according to the technical efficiency of *industrial* worth. Quality standards expanded their scope along *market* worth. They developed to bear the burden of the common knowledge identity of market goods that market competition requires against moral hazards, and they backed the market diversification of these goods and services (Busch, 2011; Bowker & Star, 2000; Eymard-Duvernay, 1986, 1989, 2002; Lampland & Star, 2009; Salais & Storper, 1993; Storper & Salais, 1997; Timmermans & Epstein, 2010). As mentioned before, economists use the category of "credence" goods and services when the quality cannot be identified by "search" or "experience"—referring to repair services—and may generate fraud (Darby & Karni, 1973). This category of "credence" good is currently used for the kind of certification that we now consider, such as Fair Trade. Gaëlle Balineau and Ivan Dufeu (2010) rightly contested this categorization, observing that these kinds of goods do not suffer from information asymmetry in the production process, but from another source of uncertainty because the goods' "attributes are seen as means to reach another goal" (Balineau & Dufeu, 2010, p. 335).

This "other goal" actually introduces a most dramatic change in the role of standards. Standards came to carry the responsibility for the satisfaction of basic rights or conceptions of the common good, through certified and measurable properties attributed to goods or services. In democracy, such values are taken into account by legislative bodies of government in the process of making laws. Political public arenas are dedicated to critical debate on this process, with justifications referring to the plurality of these basic rights or conceptions of the common good. The new kind of "standardizing liberalism" ("*libéralisme normalisateur*") (Thévenot, 1997) and mode of "governing by standards" (Thévenot, 2009, 2015a) arise when such evaluative and normative principles are reduced to measurable characteristics of goods and services, and when individual consumers' choices on the market place replace political debates. This reduction (see Fig. 7.1) can be illustrated on three normative principles: social justice and collective solidarity to struggle against inequalities; environmental concern; tradition and customs. Each of the three corresponds to a separate order of worth (*civic*, *green*, *domestic*)

**The critical plurality of debated conceptions of the common good turned into the certified qualities of market goods**
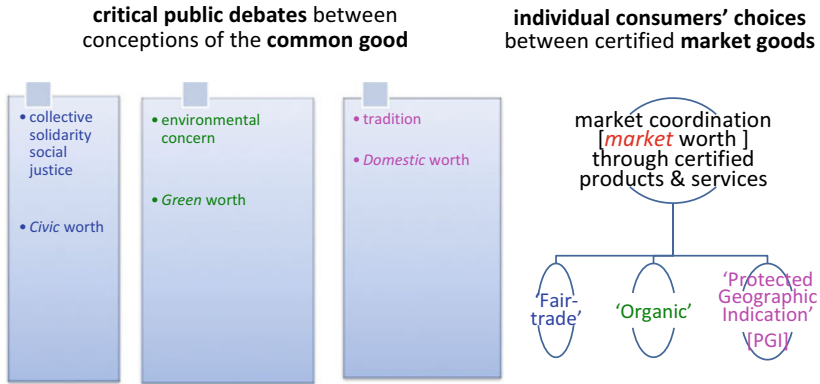
**critical public debates** between
conceptions of the **common good**

**individual consumers' choices**
between certified **market goods**

- collective solidarity social justice

- *Civic* worth

- environmental concern

- *Green* worth

- tradition

- *Domestic* worth

market coordination
[*market* worth ]
through certified
products & services

'Fair-trade'      'Organic'      'Protected Geographic Indication' (PGI)

**Fig. 7.1**   From debated conceptions of the common good to certified qualities of market goods

which is involved in public justifications and criticisms that claim legitimacy by referring to various conceptions of the common good (see the left side of Fig. 7.1). Each of these normative principles is formalized and formatted in laws (labour, environmental, customary) and legal rights. In the reduction to certification standards, each is transformed into measurable characteristics of products and services, such as Fair Trade, Organic, Protected Geographic Indication (see the right side of Fig. 7.1).

## *Multi-Stakeholder Certification: A Liberal Public in Which Opting Individuals Are Formatted as Stakeholders and Options as Measurable Objectives*

With the expansion of their scope and the range of values they take into account, standards of a new generation had to strengthen their standard-setting and enforcement procedures that were previously criticized for their lack of transparency and legitimacy. This was the case for a series of transnational standards that claim to certify sustainability, independently of the political authority of states, and were built on main value-chains of

the agro-environmental business: RSPO (Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil) in 2003, today 1000 members; RTRS (Roundtable on Responsible Soy) in 2005; Bonsucro (Better Sugarcane initiative) in 2006; BCI (Better Cotton Initiative) in 2006; RSB (Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels) in 2008. RSPO began with an agreement that WWF obtained from Unilever in order to be more efficient and faster than states and international legal systems in coping with deforestation. In response to criticisms, these certification standards are ruled by *multi-stakeholder* governing bodies ("roundtables") based on the *liberal* grammar introduced above.[21] In this multi-stakeholder variant of the *liberal* grammar, individuals-in-public are given an additional qualification within a closed list of "stakeholders" corresponding to different interests or preferences for options, with an equal voting right in the general assembly: (1) Oil Palm Growers, (2) Palm Oil Processors and/or Traders, (3) Consumer Goods Manufacturers, (4) Retailers, (5) Banks and Investors, (6) Environmental/Nature Conservation NGOs, and (7) Social/Developmental NGOs.

Standardization alters the *liberal* grammar in that options are to be formatted as elementary *plans* to be engaged in, with the projected output of measurable objectives listed as "indicators" and additional "guidance".[22] Even when they are not quantified, they require codification and formality.[23] In spite of this dominance of the *engaging in a plan*, the RSPO standard progressively included references to conceptions of the good or rights—in terms of "principles of criteria"—that do not fit this format because they overflow the limits of small narrow *plans*. In the 2013 change, four new "criteria" were added, which point to hot issues to be governed: "C1.3 – ethical conduct (Growers and millers commit to ethical conduct in all business operations and transactions)" with the guidance: "A prohibition of all forms of corruption, bribery and fraudulent use of funds and resources"; "C6.12 – forced and trafficked labour"; "C6.13 – respecting human rights"; "C7.8 – minimizing GHG emission from new plantings".

There are six headings of "principles and criteria" under which indicators and guidance are grouped. The first, "Commitment to transparency", concerns information and documentation, including "a written policy committing to a code of ethical conduct and integrity" (indicator 1.3.1) and "a prohibition of all forms of corruption and bribery" (guidance). The second, "Compliance with applicable laws and regulations", states that "2.1. There is compliance with all applicable local, national and ratified international laws and regulations" with extension to other rights:

"2.2. The right to use the land is demonstrated, and is not legitimately contested by local people who can demonstrate that they have legal, customary or user rights". The use of the land is also considered in: "2.3. Use of the land for oil palm does not diminish the legal, customary or user rights of other users without their free, prior and informed consent", with indicator 2.3.1 stipulating the objective of "participatory mapping involving affected parties (including neighbouring communities where applicable, and relevant authorities)", and indicator 2.3.2 stipulating the objective of "copies of negotiated agreements detailing the process of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)".[24] Each of the last four headings of "principle and criteria" relates to distinct orders of worth that they reduce to objective indicators. The third is *market*-oriented towards economic and financial viability, the fourth is prescribing a certain *industrial* organization of work, the fifth ("Environmental responsibility and conservation of natural resources and biodiversity") raises environmental issues and the sixth ("Responsible consideration of employees and of individuals and communities affected by growers and millers") addresses *civic* labour rights while extending to "community values" and "cultural and religious values" in the guidance.

### Participative Technologies and Procedures to Deliberate Over Regulations

The general assembly of members meets annually in a "*convention*" which votes resolutions and changes of the standard. The quest for democratic legitimacy does not rest only on vote but also on direct voices of the constituency through arrangements and procedures that were designed to allow a wide participation in the deliberation over the standard.

Beyond the limitations of voices through exclusion, the concept of a "participation format", developed by Audrey Richard-Ferroudji (Richard-Ferroudji & Barreteau, 2012) in accordance with that of *engagement*, helps to clarify the conditions to take part, and the resulting "burden" that bears on participants as demonstrated by Julien Charles in various domains, from management to politics (Charles, 2012, 2016). In the RSPO general assembly, the requirement to be "pragmatic", "practical", "realistic" and "effective" urges participants to formulate their voice as *engagement in a plan*, and express themselves in public in the format of individual choice between optional plans. This is congruent with *communicating*—making issues common—in accordance with the

*liberal* grammar. It explicitly opposes the "absolute or the ideal" of *engaging in public justificatory orders of worth* backed by conceptions of the common good. Prescriptions make explicit the required *liberal* public civility: "understand the stakes" (options) and express your own ("I want that!"), "be not shy", "proactive", "intervene", "make the first move", "take the floor" (Cheyns, 2011).

The large number of participants gathered for the few days of the convention led the organizers of roundtables to provide participatory technologies issued from management. By bringing participants physically closer, the small size of groups is intended to allow more accurate perceptual attention to others. In the 2006 roundtable, the device called "world café" was introduced. It was designed in the end of the 1990s to have participants "spontaneously" formed into "small, intimate table conversations" about shared issues, recording outputs on papers (initially "tablecloths") and periodically switching tables so that ideas might circulate and connect (Brown, 2002; Brown et al., 2005). In the RSPO version, the short-term temporality (twenty minutes) of each session bringing together six unknown people evoked "speed-dating" techniques. This brevity, the circulation from one table to another and the absence of a theme displayed on each table, raised among participants a sense of an arbitrary and poorly significant exchange.

To overcome these shortcomings, another facilitation technique was introduced in the 2013 roundtable, the "open space technology" (OST). Also issued from management and conceived by Harrison Owen in the 1980s, OST was worked out to foster "self-organization" (Owen, 2008). Its device meets the requirements of a *liberal* public of individuals expressing themselves through their choice for options made public. Each individual "convener" takes the responsibility of naming and posting in public an issue for a possible breakout session. Other participants have to choose among the posted themes as options offered to all. A playful staging is intended to turn the implementation into an exciting game. The initiator takes a placard and writes a slogan or objective to gather a discussion group (see Fig. 7.2a, b). Discussions in small groups last for one hour, each taking place in parallel sessions during two days. The output of the conversation is to be written on a flipchart as a list of objectives which will then be collected and transcribed on printed charts. When posted on the walls of the assembly hall, they make possible, in the next step, to produce some proposals to be voted in the plenary meeting.

**Fig. 7.2   a, b** Photographs of Open Space Technology (OST) in action (*Source* Photographs by Laurent Thévenot)

In addition to the *liberal* matrix, explicit mentions to *market* coordination are given. The "open space" is presented as a "marketplace" where participants "shop" for information and ideas (Owen, 2008). Displaying their respective placards, conveners "sell" their respective slogan-objectives on the competitive "market" of discussion groups. Individuals are urged to "freely" circulate between groups according to the one "law" of OST, the "law of two feet". It urges participants to leave the ongoing conversation of a group of discussion for another, "given both their right and responsibility to maximize their own learning and contribution" when they "lose interest" in a breakout session. Owen affirms that this is the correct civility: moving on is "the polite thing to do". It would be quite rude according to another grammar of commonality more hospitable to attachments and generous hospitality (Thévenot, 2014).

These breakout sessions constitute small-scale and short-lived meetings that do not have the validity of the general assembly and may raise doubt about their legitimacy. Therefore, OST provides "principles" which ensure the validity of the constitution, timing and production of these small groups. The RSPO Open Space kick-off PowerPoint recalls Owen's (2008) four principles that assert the legitimacy of these contingent groups:

> *Whatever happens IS the only thing that could have happened*
> *Whenever it starts IS the right time*
> *Whoever comes IS the right people*
> *When it's over IT IS over*

In the PowerPoint presentation, four other norms introduce additional requisites for communicating in the open space. Most of them specify the conveners' dispositions that are required by the *liberal* public. Norm 4— "[speak your] *voice*, share your opinions and reasons. Do it clearly and briefly"—makes explicit the right mode of *communicating* in the format of one's individual "opinion", stipulating the clarity and brevity already pointed to in the above-mentioned requirement to be "pragmatic". It involves to *engage in a plan*, with a short-term and clear-cut objective. Norm 3—"*respect* [all]"—specifies the disposition of tolerance towards *differing voices*. Mentions to "views" or "styles" ("regardless of whether their views or style are similar to ours") sustain the multicultural extension of the *liberal* grammar.

Norms 1 and 2 complement the *liberal* matrix. Norm 1 ("*listen*") does not only prescribe the kind of attention to another individual's opinion that the *liberal* grammar requires. It also recommends to "be genuinely curious about their perspective", which points to a distinct regime of *engaging in exploration* (Auray, 2011) aiming at the good of surprising novelty.[25] It echoes another rule of the open space: "Be ready to get surprises". Norm 2 ("*suspend* [judgement]") does not only plead for respect to other individuals' opinions but for avoidance of criticism: "Suspend our agreement or disagreement".

### *A-liberal Conceptions of Communication and Their Managerial Reductions*

If we look into the genealogy of these open space management technologies, we find they were initially designed to go beyond—or below—the *liberal* public space and overcome its limitations, as suggested by the explicit references to "café" style conversations, "backstage", "behind the scene" and "hallway chats". David Bohm, the author of the most influential *On dialogue* (Bohm, 1996) that Open Space Technology draws upon, was concerned by constructions of commonality and difference that significantly depart from the liberal political tradition.

While obtaining his PhD in the theoretical physics group directed by Robert Oppenheimer at the University of California at Berkeley, his engagement in communist organizations prevented him from being integrated in the Los Alamos project, despite Oppenheimer's proposal. When he was an assistant professor at Princeton University, he was called upon by the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1949. He invoked the Fifth amendment right to refuse to testify and give evidence against his colleagues. Princeton suspended him and he left the United States for Brazil and later United Kingdom, as a Professor of Theoretical Physics at the University of London. In addition to the collective spirit, or more precisely the *civic* worth of solidarity that oriented his youth political engagement, his physicist's activity has been a second source of insights into the limitations of the autonomy attributed to entities and even subjects. Pointing to the "fragmentation" that thought processes—and not only theoretical modelling—bring to the perception of the world, he considered that dialogue should shed light on the limitations due to this fragmentation. His contention that "the representation of thought enters the presentation of perception" (Bohm, 1996, p. 57)

is not only Kantian but meets Ernst Cassirer's neo-Kantian turn based on Einstein's space–time modelling. A third source of his insights issued from his collaboration on human cognition with Stanford neuroscientist Karl Pribram, the psychological philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti and the London psychiatrist and practitioner of Group Analysis Patrick de Maré.

All these resources supported Bohm's conception of dialogue which distances itself from the *liberal* composition of differences through "negotiation":

> A great deal of what nowadays is typically considered to be dialogue tends to focus on negotiation […] People are generally not ready to go into the deeper issues when they first have what they consider to be a dialogue. They negotiate, and that's about as far as they get. Negotiation is trading off, adjusting to each other and saying, 'Okay, I see your point. I see that that is important to you. Let's find a way that would satisfy both of us. I will give in a little on this, and you give in a little on that. And then we will work something out.' (Bohm, 1996, p. 18)

His criticism of negotiation extends to the format of "problem" which occupies a central place in Dewey's pragmatism. He even criticizes the exposition of individual opinion—the mode of taking part in the liberal public—the "pressure […] to get in there quickly and get your point of view across, particularly if you are one of the 'talkers'. Even if you're not, you have that pressure" (Bohm, 1996, p. 30). Bohm digs into the ground of the *liberal* grammar and illuminates the limitations of *engaging in a plan*: "Now, I'm going to propose that in a dialogue we are not going to have any agenda, we are not going to try to accomplish any useful thing" (Bohm, 1996, p. 17). He refers to what Michael Polanyi has called tacit and personal knowledge (Bohm, 1996, p. 52) pointing to the format we rely on when *engaging in familiarity*.

In spite of these various sources which diverge so strongly from the construction of a *liberal* public of individuals choosing among options, these divergences were blunted in the managerial usages of Bohm's original conception of dialogue and the resulting RSPO Open Space Technology and participatory dialogue mechanisms.

### *Experiencing Participative Technologies in Practice: "Open Space" and Dialogue Dispositions Put to the Test of "Smallholders" Engaging in Them*

All RSPO participants are not equally prepared for the objective-oriented participation format that "Open Space" demands. Managers and international NGO members are well versed in the required techniques and procedures. They demonstrate a skilful utilization of the small group talks, using them strategically as a first move in a sequence of plans expected to extend eventually the objectives listed by the standard in the prescribed format of "criteria, indicators or guidance". We observed a group on labour issues that a member of Oxfam stood ready to offer on the "market" of the open space. He planned that the output of this first strategic step would be the creation of a "working group" that was designed to propose to the vote of the general assembly the revision of the standard and the introduction of new criteria about labour rights. This was an example of a step by step—*plan* by *plan*—process calculated to obtain substantial changes of the standard and introduce links with human rights, once formatted as criteria, indicators and guidance.

From now on, we shall concentrate on RSPO governing devices and procedures as they are practically put to the test by the most vulnerable actors of the palm oil value chain. Since our approach offers a dual analysis based on either *personality* or *community*, we followed both entities: a *personality* of "smallholder" (Arifin) and a "local *community*" the territory of which was severely impacted by industrial plantations (Karang Mendapo). Via a series of surveys (Cheyns, 2011, 2014; Cheyns & Thévenot, 2019a; Silva-Castañeda, 2012; Thévenot, 2018), we were able to observe how such a *personality* and *community* took part in RSPO governing devices and coped with the formats that make this world calculable. They were backed up by a variety of NGOs that we could also observe at different levels of their action.

Reacting to the 2009 plenary "smallholder session" in which presentations were only made by certification companies and agencies while smallholders themselves did not play a part, Arifin took advantage of the "Questions and Answers" session to speak publicly in the general assembly. Introducing the recently created farmers' union "Indonesian Oil Palm Farmers Union" [*Serikat Petani Kelapa Sawit*: SPKS] and promoting the representation of family farmers in RSPO, he emphasized the "inequitable" mechanism used to fix palm bunch prices and the

sharing of the value along the chain. As observed by Cheyns, he spoke quietly at first, then his voice became louder and its pitch higher, his movements animated and he often pointed to the dais with the papers in his hand (Cheyns, 2014). As a result, the President asked to "avoid statements" and to provide "shorter questions and comments". A manager of the Indo Oil company commented to a NGO Sawit Watch official: "Why is it that my 'young fruit' makes a noise like that?" The manager referred to a hierarchy within the *Batak* ethnic group to which Arifin and himself belonged. Arifin used the opportunity of a later public meeting to denounce this "young fruit" (i.e. "child") paternalist *domestic* qualification the manager attributed to him. He underlined that he was not taking part in the roundtable as a young *Batak*, but as a representative of the farmers' union, SPKS. He thus claimed for a *civic* qualification (Cheyns, 2014) instead of the *domestic* one that the manager tried to impose.

Commenting on his intervention in an interview by Cheyns, Arifin said that he was angry and felt oppressed because when smallholders "want to fight, they go to jail" while businessmen in RSPO "are the ones who apply this pressure on the ground". Other members of the SPKS family farmers' union actually found his tone "still too soft" because "what is important is to be honest" and Arifin contrasted his full engagement with presentations by a lot of people who "don't speak from the heart" (Cheyns, 2014). Arifin's engagements overflowed in two ways the format of the limited *plan* confused with an objective. He engaged in *public criticism and justification* (in the *civic* denunciation of structural inequalities along the value chain, and promotion of union representation) and also in the *familiarity* of the small farmers' daily life which is severely impacted by industrial "good practices" of farming. Yet, this expansion of the participation formats was harshly criticized and Arifin called to order.

During the 2013 roundtable introducing the Open Space Technology and the marketplace of breakout sessions, Arifin first looked upset by this format (see Fig. 7.3a, left-hand). However, unlike other "smallholders" who were discouraged or eventually disappeared at the moment of welcoming newcomers, he overcame a long moment of embarrassment and hesitation and finally got involved. He lifted up a placard written in Indonesian and English: "Smallholder and replanting. Who to support?" [sic] (see Fig. 7.3b, right-hand). His theme assembled participants who were exclusively smallholders. It produced conclusions presented in Indonesian on a flipchart.
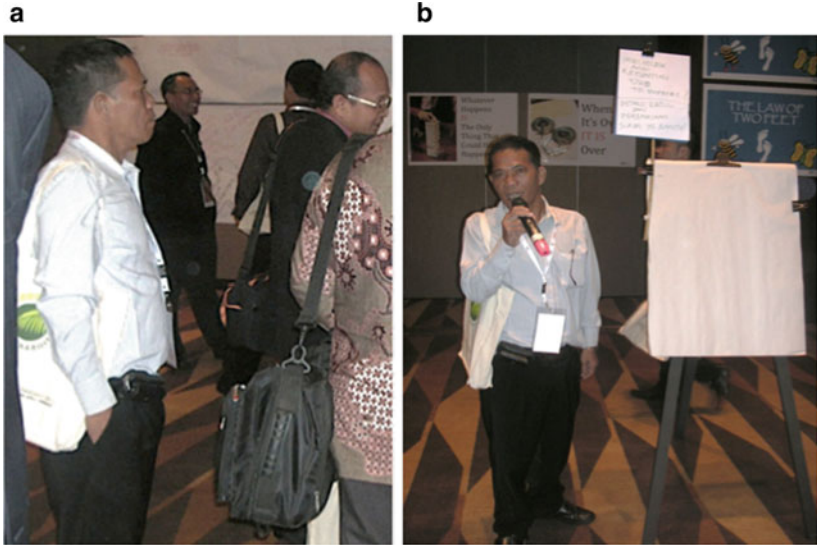
**Fig. 7.3  a, b** Photographs of Arifin, firstly embarrassed and hesitant in front of the Open Space Technology, then animating his "open space" group (*Source* Photographs by Laurent Thévenot)
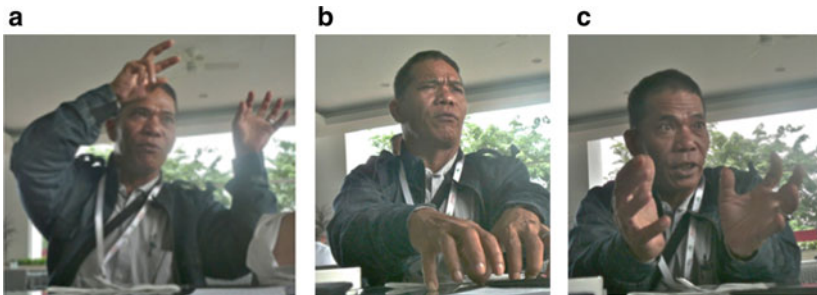


**Fig. 7.4  a, b, c** Photographs of Arifin, at ease during a conversation at the cafeteria (*Source* Photographs by Laurent Thévenot)

Off the roundtable, the author had a conversation with Arifin in the cafeteria. He was quite at ease, expressing himself in a *familiar* engagement with lively gestures and facial expressions (see Figs. 7.4a, b, and c). He

came back to his experience of the Open Space, complaining that:

> […] on the replanting of palm trees for smallholders who want to remain independent, a major issue for sustainability, because they are numerous, is that there were no representatives of consumers, buyers, major companies or banks. […] They rather do brand imaging. […] In Open Space, industry players seem to be passive and wait for conclusions. (Conversation of Cheyns and Thévenot with Arifin, Medan, November 2013, translation by Dani Pradana)

He noted that "NGOs are the ones who open the topic and participate. Industry players don't". Arifin voiced his discontent because of the gap between RSPO discussions and his field experience:

> Initially participants feel satisfied because they expressed their problems, but then they become unsatisfied because they do not see implementation. […] RSPO is supposed to be a place where various individual interests are combined in a common interest. But once the mutual agreement has been reached, its implementation goes back to individual interest and I am fed up with this situation. It's a waste of time and energy to reach this agreement when it is not implemented. (Conversation of Cheyns and Thévenot with Arifin, Medan, November 2013, translation by Dani Pradana)

To remedy this, Arifin continued, one should "make sure that each topic discussed in these forums reach the executive board. […] There should be rules to ensure parties enforce mutual agreements". Arifin emphasizes that the costly operation of composing the common interest from individual interests, in a mutual agreement between differing voices, is defeated on the ground.

Another reason for the gap between the discussions framed by the various technologies of participation and the achievements on the ground is that, unlike many actors involved in the formulation of the standard, "parties which have to implement them are common people who don't know much about the procedures of RSPO. […] They don't know how P&C ['Principles and Criteria' of the standard] came to be; the farmers, workers, businessmen, fields actors who have to implement them" (ibid.). We thus observe that this in-depth criticism of the government by certification standards, informed by Arifin's experience as a small planter, although easily deployed in the *familiar* format of the conversation at

the cafeteria, was disallowed by the general assembly because of the mandatory participative format *in a plan*.

### *Some Lessons Learnt on the "Participative" and "Legislative" Legitimacy of Governing by Certification Standard*

In this second part, we considered the principles and effective implementation of the substitute for the legislative function that governing through certification standards offers. Among the various modes of normativity that matter for members of RSPO to express their differing voices, the objective of a calculable world results in drastic selection to fit the standard. Indicators that make it measurable, and the format of *engaging in a plan* which is a prerequisite for the reduction to indicators, heavily constrain the organization of the dialogue and deliberation preparing decisions on the standard. In spite of the explicit domination of the format of the plan, formulated in the imperative of being "pragmatic", some participants go beyond this constraint. They articulate conflicting conceptions of the common good that raise political and economic justifications and criticisms, or air personal suffering because of the violation of their familiar environment. Even if they are regularly called to order, these strongly critical participants, issued from local concerned communities and relayed by NGOs, actively contribute to changes in the standard content and procedures. However, are the standard and procedures enforced?

## A-testing, Pro-testing and Con-testing: Substitutes for the Judicial System in Putting the Standard Enforcement to a Critical Test

In this mode of governing, how are deeds put to a critical test? What are the substitutes for the judicial bodies of a legal system? When criticizing the enforcement of regulations, how do concerned people (1) provide evidence issued from their knowledge and information (A-testing); (2) express objection (Pro-testing); (3) communicate differing views in dispute and conflict (Con-testing)?

### *Audit Procedures*

The participatory setting framed by the "Open Space" operates de facto as an inquiry device since participants use it to *attest* evidence collected in their experience, in support of their argumentations and claims. However, the de jure process of inquiry is the expert auditing integrated in this government. Silva-Castañeda investigated the practical work of four out of the six audit firms that have certified RSPO companies operating in Indonesia (Silva-Castañeda, 2012). In her investigation, she cared to "create a climate of familiarity, taking a walk with villagers in their forest to be sensitive to their familiar engagement with the environment" (Silva-Castañeda, 2012). By contrast, the process of "rendering auditable"—by virtue of designing measurable procedures and performance—is a test of "the quality of internal […] systems, rather than the quality of the product or service itself as specified in standards" (Power, 1997, p. 84).

Indicators listed in the RSPO standard are codified records of information requests, safety plans, emergency procedures, calendars, monitoring systems, and "companies must develop management systems that will enable them to demonstrate their compliance with the standard" (Silva-Castañeda, 2012). Because auditors regard the document as the ultimate form of evidence, "a lack of 'evidence' – in other words of *documents* – on the side of local communities stands in contrast to the companies' documentary arsenal" (Silva-Castañeda, 2012).

In one of the breakout sessions of the open space that we observed, smallholders and non-smallholders met on the topic of audit. Rather unexpectedly, two auditors joined the group and engaged in criticizing the debated limitations of their work. The self-critical awareness of the auditors allowed an outstanding critical exchange about this core device in the control of the standard enforcement. Because auditors belong to the main inspection body of this mode of governing, their taking part in the critical public debate creates tensions with their official function.

### *RSPO "Dispute Settlement Facility"*

The "RSPO Dispute Settlement Facility" is intended to fulfil some of the jurisdictional functions. Without covering all the aspects of the pre-trial investigation of a case, registering a complaint is part of the critical inquiry we are interested in, in which smallholders are involved. Following our methodological grid, we shall consider the three main operations which

compose the chain of transformation between the kind of wrong which the plaintiff suffers and the formal complaint which is duly registered. While *at-testing* begins with attending and points towards providing evidence, *pro-testing* addresses the critical statement to an interlocutor, a step towards the larger public needed in *con-testing*, which is constrained by the strong requirement of togetherness and based on the invested forms needed for a common format. In our fieldwork with Cheyns, we strived to follow the formulation of the complaint from a village in Indonesia close to Jambi, Batu Ampar, up to the RSPO settlement devices.

*Contest: Formatting the Complaint in the Right Form for the Public*
The needed transformation of the wrong in an official complaint is not a specific feature of this mode of governing. A legal case in court would also require to select "facts" and format them so that they would be taken into account in the procedure. Yet, the plaintiff's frustration, which often results from the formatting, turns out to be particularly severe in RSPO dispute settlement procedures, since complaints have to be strictly formulated in terms of the principles, criteria, indicators and guidelines of the standard. Just as they prepare communities to take the floor at roundtable public sessions—through role-playing exercises among other techniques (Cheyns, 2014)—various NGOs give them a hand in learning and carrying out the transformations of their harm into a standard complaint. It is worth noting that a range of distinct NGOs build up a chain that parallels the needed transformations to turn local knowledge into proper public information formats. Some Indonesian NGOs develop local and close links with smallholders, as Sawit Watch—also a member of the RSPO Executive Board—or Wahli. They help "growing a common cause in proximity" by "accommodating attachments" and emotions within convivial preparatory meetings with farmers and community representatives (Cheyns, 2014). Other international NGOs, such as Oxfam, play their major role within RSPO official bodies, moving forward new rights in the standard. Some of them, such as the Forest Peoples Programme, are able to navigate between the different levels and related *engagements*, from *familiarity* to *public justification* with reference to the common good, because they combine the scientific knowledge and methodology issued from anthropological scholarship and the skilled practice of international organizations (Colchester, 2002; Colchester & Chao, 2013; Cheyns & Thévenot, 2019b).

A first complaint was send to the RSPO DSF (Dispute Settlement Facility) by the village or Batu Ampar and written in Indonesian. Without formal template, it mixed a DSF category ("Effort taken to resolve the issues") with other ones. Gun, a local member of the Indonesian NGO Sawit Watch, helped villagers to write this first version. A second version still written in Indonesian was framed within the DSF Form, after the first complaint had been rejected because of its inappropriate format. The chronological narrative which was so significant for the history of the community was taken out. In addition to "Efforts have been taken to resolve the issues", the other two DSF categories, "Nature of Complaints" and "Supporting Evidence", were filled in. Nauli, who created the local branch of the Indonesian NGO Wahli (Wahli Jambi), gave a helping hand. Already an activist in college, he later organized demonstrations in labour regional unions. As a lawyer, he dealt with cases related to activism, students, labour cases and community cases. We observed this double training in activism and law among other intermediaries who have to compromise between different worlds. Nauli critically comments:

A lot of fuss about "sustainability", catchy phrase. No concern for local communities. No conflict resolution model. Commitment on paper, not in actual practices. Weak involvements of local communities. (Nauli interviewed by Cheyns in Jambi, 6 November 2014)

This second attempt still did not suit the needed format of the DSF complaint. Karlo, who is a less local member of the Sawit Watch NGO, rewrote in English a third version of the complaint. In the "Nature of complaints" category, he transformed the former list which mentioned under the heading "Land dispute" the items: "management system, partnership system, land grabbing". In the new list of grievances, he strictly connected each item to the numbered principle or criteria which were viewed as violated. Under the heading "Land dispute related to violation of the Principles 2.2 and 2.3", he wrote:

The right to use the land is demonstrated, and is not legitimately contested by local people who can demonstrate that they have legal, customary or user rights [2.2]; […] Use of the land for oil palm does not diminish the legal customary or user rights of other users without their free, prior and informed consent [2.3].

In these successive versions, we see the progressive trans-formation of evidence, from formats that fit smallholders' experienced troubles faced in their engagements, to formats that rigorously stick to the objectives phrased in the headings of the standard.

*Attest: Land Appropriation and Appropriate Evidence*
The extension of industrial plantations damages a range of farmers' *engagements* with the land and the surrounding nature. Smallholders face great difficulty in bringing into the dispute the acceptable evidence of these damages and rights infringements. The reason is that RSPO Government depends on the formalization of modes of engagement to the land which stay remote from the various relations maintained and valued by villagers. *Liberal* property right is only one among many modes of appropriating land (Silva-Castañeda, 2015) and nature that make them proper to one's use or habitat, and maintain the kinds of dependency that cosmologies or mythologies convey (Breviglieri & Landoulsi, 2016). These modes, which suffer from the radical change provoked by industrial plantations, procedures and normative frameworks, are weakly taken into account by the standard.

The need for exclusive property and associated rights demands mapping and boundaries, between neighbouring communities in particular. A document—in Indonesian—produced by the Batu Ampar village community and distributed at the 2012 roundtable to document the "Case profile" with the questioned company describes the relationship to the land as follows:

> The methods used by the villagers in cultivating their farms and orchards still follow old methods of wise and traditional management, although some have adopted relatively modern tools and framing techniques. Communal work traditions (*gotong royong*) are still practiced on planting and harvest times for agricultural produce, including thanksgiving ceremonies and family parties/celebrations.

In 1916, the community moved across the river to its present location, the document states in this respect:

> [...] the boundaries of Batu Ampar customary territories were delineated in a customary *tembo*, an oral customary *seloko* (poem) which began to be recorded in a written form during the 1940–60s. The written record made in 1985 still forms the guidelines for the current boundaries of the Batu Ampar village.

**Table 7.1**  The local familiar and customary format of evidence

| Tunggul Bungo Besar | Pemayang Tembesu | Tebat Patah | Pematang Belubang |
|---|---|---|---|
| A tree stump with a large flower growing on it/the stump of a large flower | A dry islet in the swamp with a *tembesu* tree on it | A broken/kinked dam or pond | A small island/embankment with a break of mole |

Landmarks are based on such customary, local and even personal formats of evidence (see Table 7.1).
We observed in the field the "trans-formatting" chain artfully designed to overcome this handicap via proper devices. Currently engaging in *familiarity* with the natural environment, some villagers—not even the chief—had the familiar knowledge needed to identify local markers of territories, such as plant species or trees—when they were not already destroyed by new industrial plantations. The instrument of global positioning system (GPS) made possible the transformation of these markers into geographic coordinates (see Figs. 7.5a, b). This chain of inquiry translated local and situated formats of information, such as *familiar* landmarks, into formal proofs that would be accepted as publicly *justifiable* "evidence" for the standard. The villager's chief (the woman on the right in the photograph of Fig. 7.5b) was helped by an NGO member with a GPS who calculated "the coordinate points based on the Tembo names obtained from the Batu Ampar village, as well as the agreement between the Batu Ampar and the Karang Mendapo".[26]

*Protest: Direct "Private" Interaction*
A result of the mapping efforts that Batu Ampar villagers strongly struggled for was a decision [SK] by the local governing authority—the head of district [*Bupati*]—settling the debated boundary between their village (*Batu Ampar*) and the adjacent one (*Karang Mendapu*). It grounded their claim that their rights were infringed because of the faulty map that the company drew in 2001. This new piece of formal evidence was expected to be pivotal in their fight for their rights. In the DSF category "Efforts have been taken to resolve the issues" that was already filled in the first version of the complaint, they recorded three points in the last version: (1) Boundary checking into the field by District and Village Government; (2) Boundary determination by *Bupati* with the issuance
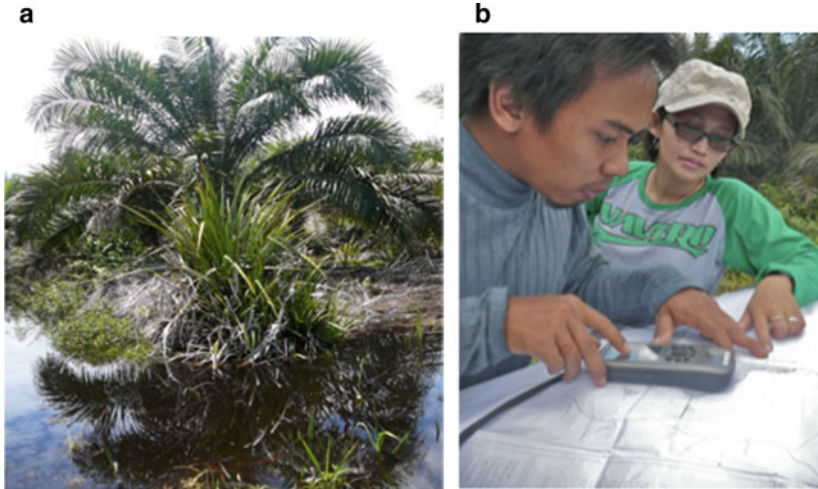
**Fig. 7.5**   The transformation of familiar-customary landmarks (**a**) into quantifiable space markers; (**b**) recorded by the NGO technician (left) and the village chief (right) (*Source* Photographs by Laurent Thévenot)

of the decision on the administrate border village; and (**3**) Asking the company for implementing the decision letter.

The head of the village, Yanti, came from her village to the RSPO annual meeting in Medan. Away from the public arenas, roundtable annual meetings offer the opportunity of "side events" that allow a direct confidential exchange between stakeholders for private negotiation. We managed to attend such a closed meeting between: a director of GAR (Golden Agri-Resources) headquartered in Singapore; the main palm oil company of one of the largest Indonesian conglomerates Sinar Mars[27]; which owns the local subsidiary company KDA in Jambi; the director of this subsidiary company KDA; the village chief Yanti; Karlo from NGO Sawit Watch; Nauli from NGO Wahli local branch in Jambi; Agun, a mediator from the consultant firm TFT (Tropical Forest Trust) who was paid by GAR. Local participants spoke Indonesian while a translator whispered the English translation to the GAR director who did not understand Indonesian. The photographs show the full roundtable (Fig. 7.6a); the GAR director with his assistant listening to the translation in English (Fig. 7.6b); Karlo with the camera recording the meeting (Fig. 7.6c);

**Fig. 7.6** Photographs of the direct confrontation with the headquarters company directors. (**a**) (top photograph; right of the table, from left to right): Karlo (NGO Sawit Watch), Bondan (Sawit Watch), Yanti (Batu Ampar village chief), Nauli (NGO Wahli Jambi); (**b**) (bottom left): GAR (Singapore) director of communication; (**c**) (centre): Karlo; (**d**) (bottom right): Yanti (*Source* Photographs by Laurent Thévenot)

Yanti dressed up for the occasion and wearing the hijab (Fig. 7.6d, in contrast with her informal clothing and cap she had on in the field, see Fig. 7.5b).

> Karlo (NGO Sawit Watch):
> The Batu Ampar villagers have worked hard to resolve the boundary issue during the past year. I present documents describing the effort made to

resolve the boundary issue. […] we brought this up to RSPO to try and pester the company to implement the government decision so that Batu Ampar can access its lands.

Yanti (chief of the village):

Our last meeting was stuck on boundary issues. In July this was resolved at the government level in favour of Batu Ampar, and I have requested KDA to implement this resolution and allow the Batu Ampar villagers to work the land. The company has not given a satisfactory answer. […]

Agun (mediator from Tropical Forest Trust, paid by GAR):

The Bupati [head of district] office held the SK [decision] and demanded payment. TFT wouldn't engage with this since it involves bribery and we don't know how the SK [decision] finally got issued. […]

Nauli (NGO Wahli, local branch in Jambi):

Can't KDA give evidence of progress that can be presented to the Batu Ampar community? Without progress Yanti's efforts may lose community support, so give us something to show. […]

Karlo:

I don't quite understand the notion of the Bupati asking money for the SK. Does this have anything to do with the Batu Ampar request for funds for boundary mapping? […]

Yanti:

I'd like to mention that I've borrowed money to perform the mapping and boundary delineation work.

Mediator:

Well, TFT doesn't want to know about bribery.

Yanti:

We're not talking about bribes! It's about the costs of the mapping work.

Yanti (to the director of this subsidiary Company KDA):

Would you dare to walk into the disputed area, since you said you're a Jambinese?

Nasir:

I would as a Jambinese, but that's not the problem.

### *Some Lessons Learnt on the "Judicial" Legitimacy of Governing by Certification Standards*

In this third part dedicated to the ways standard enforcement is put to a reality test, we followed three general procedures for monitoring compliance with the standard and dealing with disputes about it, which have counterparts in the judicial system (complaint, judgement), its periphery

(mediation) and other private or public government processes (audit). The three differ due to the formatting of the world they demand to make it calculable, and the disposition of the participants they involve, so that all beings "qualify" for the test and can be taken into account in the judgement. Audit is carried out in the company, most often on the basis of documents, and is therefore the most formal test and the farthest from a direct confrontation between protagonists. The Dispute Resolution process requires of the plaintiffs hard formatting work for the complaint to be admissible. Judgement includes a process of questioning the parties but not the adversarial confrontation organized by the judicial system. Finally, the mediation test is the least formal of the three. The parties in conflict are brought together face-to-face to display their disagreement on their conformity to the standard. It allows them to become involved in *regimes of engagement* that deviate from the format of the plan and the objective set out by the standard. As observed more generally in mediation (Cardoso de Oliviera, 2005), the openness to familiar engagement that this face-to-face relation makes possible is conducive to expressions of suffering or humiliation that complainants consider to be lost in the judicial process that sacrifices them in favour of qualified facts.

In order for the test to have public legitimacy, the bodies that guarantee the procedure should be impartial: auditors, RSPO members issuing a judgement, or mediators. In the three types of tests we examined, this impartiality is highly questionable. Such procedural faults reveal the imbalance of power between parties, which the *liberal* grammar and the *multi-stakeholder* matrix claim to overcome to the benefit of the juxtaposition of "stakes" in a horizontal dialogue around a "roundtable". In the first test, failure comes from the financing of audits by companies with resulting dependency and conflicts of interests. In the second test, a fault results from the choice among the "board" of the "judges" who rule on dispute resolutions, which was recently remedied. In the third test, the flaw ensues from the financing of the mediator by the company that is one of the parties in conflict. The consequences of this flaw are made visible in the meeting above when the mediator himself, and not one of the parties, undertook to disqualify the new major piece of evidence provided by the village chief: the delimitation of the village territory ratified by the local administrative authority, which contradicts the map produced by the company. This disqualification on grounds of "bribery", without any supporting evidence, is an interference by the mediator to which the village chief, Yanti, replied firmly. As a young Muslim nurse, she

demonstrated her ability to shift the regime of engagement with great versatility. Although adjusted by her formal dressing and composure to a public space, she was also able, in the presence of managers, to adopt familiar expressiveness and gestures (Fig. 7.6d) of indignation that we also observed on Arifin (Fig. 7.3b).

In the continuation of this move towards familiarity, she challenged the local company's manager to come on site. The request to "come on site", which contrasts most radically with the detachment of the judgement from the contextual situation, and even more with abstraction through numbers, is often expressed by critics to demonstrate that the chain of transformation of their testimony has, in the end, led to the sacrifice of what was most important to them and affected or threatened (Richard-Ferroudji, 2011; Thévenot et al., 2000; Thévenot, 2019a).

Unlike the closure of the judicial system, which is due to its heavy normative equipment, jurisprudence accumulated over time and with support from its professional bodies, the most recent RSPO system is relatively more open to varied modes of normativity. They are either explicitly transferred into the standard (production methods, national and international law, indigenous peoples' rights, customary law, etc.) or advanced via criticism and interventions by legitimate *stakeholders*. The diversity of these stakeholders allows disputes to question the lack—or reduction—of certain modes of normativity even if they eventually undergo a significant transformation to enter the standard.[28] The most vulnerable actors, with the support of an architecture of NGOs that fit the stakeholders' various engagement formats, from local proximity to dealings with international multinationals, seek compromises, through inquiry and critical devices, with such governing through objectives whose limitation they are aware of. With one foot in and one foot out, they also engage in other modes of attesting, protesting and contesting, such as unionization or street demonstration in relation to the 2013 RSPO convention.

## Discussion of the Certified Objectivity Sought by a "Standardizing Liberalism": Power-Knowledge and the Enlarged Analysis of Oppression and Criticism

Quantification studies are part of research on objectivity which historians of science nurtured (Daston & Galison, 2007; Porter, 1995). The social

sciences have a long tradition of critical deconstruction of claims to objectivity, fostered by social constructivism, ANT (Actor-Network Theory) and STS (Science and Technology Studies). Just as STS authors concerned with the coordination power of "regulatory objectivity" (Cambrosio et al., 2009), our research agenda adopts a pragmatist approach to the study of the politics of quantification. More precisely, it investigates the relations between quantified objectivity and modes of governing that make the world calculable. In contrast to a range of politics that govern by quantifying the individuals themselves (Thévenot, 2011a, 2019b), be they state policies based on survey statistics, or organizational ones that digitally track individuals, or the quantified "social credit" which Tong Lam introduces in this volume and which combines the central control of the Chinese state with the data mining of digital individual tracks, or even the "quantified self" movement that Uwe Vormbusch examines in this volume, the politics considered in this chapter govern human beings indirectly through objects, via the transnational voluntary certification of market goods. In spite of its material basis and "private" character, this form of government takes on values that are generally under the responsibility of the "public" government of people based on the rule of law. As pointed out by Andrei Guter-Sandu and Andrea Mennicken in their contribution to this volume, "the boundaries between the public and private are blurred and/or reworked". The *liberal* grammar that stays in the background of these new modes of governing indeed facilitates the link with *market* coordination and contributes to this blurring. Yet, research attention should be given to the consolidation of this link by the standardization of goods—a process which is, in itself, neither *liberal*, nor implicated in *market* competition. Rather it evolved into a new kind of "standardizing liberalism" (Thévenot, 1997) which has expanded on a world scale.

Marc Breviglieri analysed at large this expansion in the domain of "the guaranteed city" (Breviglieri, 2018), showing the formatting it brings about in the environment that stands close to a person's singular intimacy—the habitat—and supports the construction of commonality built on cohabitation. The array of labels, accreditations and certifications that guarantee a "smart city", "inclusive city", "global active city", "what works cities", etc., transforms what Breviglieri calls the "architectures of usages" which, by contrast, rely on familiarized dependencies between inhabitants and the spaces they dwell in. This transformation

produces certified options that allow the choice of opting liberal individuals, and market coordination as well. In her comprehensive research on "halal" certification (Bergeaud-Blackler & Kokoszka, 2017; Bergeaud-Blackler et al., 2016), Florence Bergeaud-Blackler demonstrated that the investments in forms and measurement conventions required by this standardization led to a *dispositif* that combines *inspiration*, *market* and *industrial* orders of worth to reach a stabilized compromise and create a certifiable halal quality of goods and services. She showed the effect of this reduction of faith to a measurable and certifiable quality: it reinforces, on a large scale and insidiously via the *market*, a literalist and fundamentalist conception of religion (see also Stavo-Debauge, 2018).

The European government of education (see also Corine Eyraud's contribution in this volume), health, social work and employment—i.e. core policies of the former welfare state—also display this process of "standardizing liberalism". What are the similarities and differences with the certification we studied? Although standards are central (Landri, 2016; Normand, 2016a; Timmermans & Berg, 2003; Normand, 2010), as well as good practices (Normand & Derouet, 2016) in these post-welfare policies, both are grounded in "politics of evidence" (Normand, 2016b, 2020) which do not have the same role in the RSPO certification standard. Decision-making processes also diverge, since the European policies combine elements of state legal systems with experts from influential transnational think-tanks and private firms, all of them being connected in networks through which normative and evaluative tools "travel" (Lawn, 2013). Yet, in spite of the links with representative democracy, this combination does not appear to be much more favourable to critical questioning (Bruno, 2016) than the RSPO standard.

Research on these different policies, and "standardizing liberalism" more generally, provides an important meeting place for the two research approaches on standardization and quantification brought together in this volume (see also Hansen, 2016, 2017; Normand, 2016a). This volume enables a dialogue between two long-standing research agendas on quantification, which until hitherto, with some notable exceptions, particularly more recently, have not interacted that much: Foucault inspired studies of quantification, on the one hand, and French works on the "Economie des conventions", modes of justification and orders of worth, on the other hand. The dialogue engendered here helps elucidate convergences and divergences between these approaches.[29]

The first point of convergence results from the significance of words-things connections already unfolded in Foucault's *Les mots et les choses* (Foucault, 1966), before STS and ANT paid attention to materiality. Being concerned with the notion of "qualification" in our analysis, these became also important in Foucault oriented studies of quantification which extended from accounting to material arrangements, such as those studied in the "spatial reordering of the manufacture" by Peter Miller and Ted O'Leary (1994); Foucault's dispositif being a shared inspiration for both.

In contiguity with the previous connection through Foucault's micro-power of dispositifs, the power-knowledge connection (Foucault, 1985 [1984], 1995 [1975]) is a second central issue in both research streams, although grasped differently. In Foucault inspired governmentality studies, the "administering of lives" (Mennicken & Miller, 2014) and managing at a distance through the "conduct of conduct" are key issues. In the other approach, in-forming, trans-forming and formatting through invested conventional forms are central operations, because they sustain coordination power under uncertainty.

A third shared concern—clearly visible in this chapter—is the move beyond the state, but also beyond the "neoliberal" as an all-encompassing notion. But also here the main categories used to achieve this move differ. Compared to the Foucauldian historical-genealogical approach aimed at studying and unpacking regimes of political rationality, the "Economie des conventions" approach is interested in the critical pluralism of modes of evaluation constituted by conventions, orders of worth and valued regimes of engagements. While "programmes" (of governing) are the main empirical objects in the Foucauldian tradition to scrutinize management reforms, breaking down policies and politics into a variety of valued modes of coordination is at stake in the other tradition, with special attention given to the tensions between most public conventions and most personally convenient modes of engaging, and the chain of transformation involved when shifting from familiar attachments to public qualifications (Nielsen, 2015).

Shared concern and dialogue might intensify on research objects that bring to light changes in governmentality and modes of governing in response to former waves of criticism. Mennicken and Miller[30] noted that research on modes of "exercising voice" is all the more needed today, as for instance the language of NHS health policy guidelines they study shifted from an earlier focus on "satisfaction", to "choice"

and now towards "voice", with even attention paid to "formal and informal knowledge ('soft intelligence')" and "relationship knowledge". In their contribution on quantification in the English Prison Service in this volume, Guter-Sandu and Mennicken also come to take into account a diversity of values that quantification gives room to, including the rise of measures of decency in response to former criticisms.

Accounting for differing voices, their evaluative orientations, the formats of the evidence that qualifies for claims according to grammars of commonality, are a main strength of the extended Convention Theory research programme. Following the processes of attesting, protesting and contesting brought new insights into politics, the ways people take part in the polity and express a differing voice (Luhtakallio & Thévenot, 2018). Many contributors to this volume share a concern for critical voices and what quantification does to them. They follow the process of investigation, construction of the categories and the information used to quantify and govern, considering both structural domination and the participation of the persons in the organization and criticism of this domination, with a possible enhancement of citizens' capabilities (De Leonardis et al., 2012). Fostering on this point the dialogue between the two research agendas nurtured by this volume, Vormbusch recalls in his chapter that, while the sociology of critique has been criticized for overlooking the historically specific restrictions limiting the very possibility for critique, Foucault has been accused of neglecting human agency. Regarding self-quantifying practices as "an investigative praxis [...] *without* neglecting the discourse of power", Vormbusch shifts the analytical angle towards "the participants' agency and their capacities of critique".

In her contribution to this volume, Ota de Leonardis brings to light a "semantic shift" towards "spatialization" of inequality that obscures the "political issues of power" and the "vertical political architecture of modernity", because of a new ideological "dream of a domination free from any bond with the dominated". This statement converges with the changes that result from the new calculable global world that this chapter is dedicated to. Sharing the concern of the governmentality agenda for a more precise analysis of what is usually covered by the extensive term "neoliberal", we identified three distinct components whose combination obscures dependency between individuals and domination bonds.

The first component is political liberalism, currently presented as "horizontal" politics that free autonomous individuals from hierarchies and the kind of hierarchical bonds that we modelled in orders of worth.

Yet, the analysis of the *liberal* grammar shows that, as any grammar of commonality, it creates a dependency between human beings because of the coordination power provided by the format of commonality, and the dominated situation of those who are not in a position to engage in this format. The undeniable emancipatory empowerment of the liberal grammar has a price: all engagements are to be transformed into individual choices—or preferences—for common knowledge options. Even intimate bodily engagements involved in sexual and love relationships, for which this liberal emancipation is widely recognized, have to be transformed into common knowledge options designated as "sexual preferences".

The second component is the *market* competition convention of coordination. It is distinct from the *liberal* grammar because of its two dominating common forms: money and price. Yet the connection between liberal politics and market competition is easily made possible by confusing options with market goods, and "choosing" with "buying".

The third component strengthens this connection by encompassing in market goods a wide variety of conceptions of the common good, or fundamental rights, as certifiable and assessable properties of these goods. In an unprecedented extension of the commodity fetishism that Marx exposed, the combination of these three components reinforces the illusion that human beings are freed from dependency and hierarchy bonds and only connected through a world of things, becoming independent opting individuals facing an array of secured options. Yet, unless critical capacity recovers from the illusions of an assessable world, as we have seen among some "smallholders" and NGOs, under the pressure of the new calculable world people's temper might become incalculable.

## Notes

1. Because of our attention to conflicting valuations in calculability, we depart from other uses of the term in literature, such as Callon and Muniesa (2006).

2. This approach is particularly suited to relate statistics with the history of the new state of the Soviet Union, as demonstrated by Martine Mespoulet in her chapter in this volume (see Chapter 2, "Creating a Socialist Society and Quantification in the USSR").

3. Wendy Espeland developed an important and influential research agenda on "commensuration" (Espeland & Stevens, 1998), without linking this programme explicitly to the study of the modes and politics of producing equivalence.

4. For recent comparative research, conducted in the same spirit, on changes in lifelong learning systems among five European countries (Germany, Denmark, France, Sweden, UK), see Verdier (2017). Magnus Paulsen Hansen (2017) pragmatically followed the processes of justification and critique, emancipation and coercion, as well as quantified modes of "trying the unemployed", in comparative research on measurement, measures and evaluation that compose contemporary unemployment reforms in Denmark and France aimed at the "Active Society".

5. For a recent overview on the sociology of quantification, see Diaz-Bone and Didier (2016).

6. Directed by Emmanuelle Cheyns (CIRAD), this research project was funded by the Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANR) (grant No. ANR-11-CEPL-0009). See Cheyns (2014, 2011), Cheyns and Thévenot (2019a), Thévenot (2018). See also the research carried on by Laura Silva-Castañeda (2012).

7. I do not refer here to the precisely delimited concept of "voice" that Albert Hirschman distinguished from "loyalty" and "exit" (Hirschman, 1970), but to the sequence of operations of attesting, protesting and contesting (see section "A-testing, Pro-testing and Con-testing: Substitutes for the Judicial System in Putting the Standard Enforcement to a Critical Test" of this chapter).

8. A large part of the original article on "social coding" (Thévenot, 1983) has been made available in English (Thévenot, 2016) with additional comments benefiting from thirty years' experience with the analysis of investments in qualification and quantification, unfolded in Convention Theory.

9. On the relations with Bourdieu's approach to [symbolic] forms, see Thévenot (2011b, 2016); to Simmel's forms, see Thévenot (2017).

10. Foucault's *Les mots et les choses* ("Words and things", translated as *The order of things* (see Foucault, 1971 [1966])) also exerted a significant influence over our initial research, as evidenced in the title of the article presenting our research on classifications, "Words and numbers [*les mots et les chiffres*]: socio-professional nomenclatures" (Desrosières &

Thévenot, 1979). Because of the close attention Foucault paid to power-knowledge and the variety of forms of bringing together [*rapprochement*], his influence departed from that of Bourdieu.

11. For more detailed presentations of this avenue of research in English and its continuation in Convention Theory and French Pragmatic Sociology, see Amossé (2013), Desrosières (2011), Diaz-Bone (2016), Thévenot (2016).

12. A new generation of sociologists well versed in quantitative methods replicated and elaborated further the experimental games: Amossé (2013), Deauviau et al. (2014), and Penissat et al. (2015).

13. Any unequal ordering or ranking among human beings threatens an ideal of a *common humanity* which has been endorsed by various moral, religious and political principles. We found that two distinctive features—shared by all orders of worth but not all repertoires of evaluation—are intended to appease this threat: (1) the "superiority" of more *worthy* should benefit all, as far as their *worth* is linked to a construction of the *common good*; and (2) this "superiority" or unequal qualification for worth should not be permanently ascribed to their persons but regularly *put to the reality test* of effective coordinated actions.

14. For a wide view on the future and expectations, see Beckert (2011, 2016).

15. Robert Salais and Michael Storper devised a pluralist approach to the organization of economic activity which has some family resemblance with orders of worth but aims at integrating production and market. It differentiates "worlds of production" through institutions, social practices and conventions, which coordinate economic actors by defining specific "frameworks of economic action" (Storper & Salais, 1997). Quite independently, Roger Friedland and Robert Alford have developed another pluralist approach of organizations in terms of "institutional logics" (Friedland & Alford, 1991) which became influential in the English literature on organizational studies, and only recently came into dialogue with Convention Theory and Pragmatic Sociology (Brandl et al., 2014; Cloutier & Langley, 2013; Patriotta et al., 2011).

16. François Hartog underlined the contemporary "presentism" by situating it in a succession of "regimes of historicity" (Hartog, 2003).

17. On the criticism of "flatland", see De Leonardis (2008). See also our concluding critical discussion in this chapter on this point.

18. In his contribution to this volume, Thomas Amossé examines the continuation of this history and the recent rise of "matched panels" techniques involved in a quasi-experimental evaluation of incentive policies targeted at specific populations, and intended to establish "purified causalities" of "good variables" on individuals' behaviours.

19. *Engaging in familiarity* hardly achieves a mutuality which remains partial. It is obtained by communicating through personally and emotionally

invested "common-places" of extremely unequal scales, from the closest level of intimacy in love or friendship to wide communities. The good of ease in familiarity can turn into evil when oppressing other engagements, or made instrumental in populist politics. On these issues, see Thévenot (2014, 2020).

20. The sociological use of the "taken-for-granted" of "lifeworld" mainly sticks to this first side of *engaging in familiarity* usually termed "routine".

21. A meta-norm principle borrowed from the "International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labeling" (ISEAL), which enacts standards of standards and defines "what credibility looks like for standard systems", is called "engagement" and introduces this governance principle with the following definition: "Engagement. Standards-setters engage a balanced and representative group of stakeholders in standards development. Standards systems provide meaningful and accessible opportunities to participate in governance, assurance and monitoring and evaluation. They empower stakeholders with fair mechanisms to resolve complaints" (see https://www.isealalliance.org/credible-sustainability-standards/iseal-credibility-principles, accessed 16 June 2020).

22. On the reduction of European Community government and evaluation to "guidelines" which are themselves reduced to quantitative "indicators", with the detailed case of the guideline "Ensure inclusive labour markets", see Salais (2006, 2017). More on the distance between the political rhetorical justification one can see in the wording of guidelines and the effective policies that are driving their monitoring through performance indicators can be found in Salais' contribution to this volume. On benchmarking for state policies, see also Bruno and Didier (2013).

23. In the 2013 changes, forty new indicators were added, such as the quantified "4.4.4. mill water use per ton of Fresh Fruit Bunches (FFB)", "4.6.2. records of pesticide use", "5.4.1. renewable energy use and fossil fuel use per ton or Crude Palm Oil (CPO)".

24. On the normative principle of "Free, Prior and Informed Consent", its anchoring in the *liberal* grammar of individual choice, and possible or contingent extension to peoples' collective consent, see Cheyns and Thévenot (2019a, 2019b).

25. This sense of curiosity to others is nowadays frequently observed in norms and practices of US liberal communities (Berger, 2012; Eliasoph, 2011). Curiously *engaging in exploration* converges with the key insistence on "experience" that was at the heart of Dewey's pragmatism.

26. Our young Javanese translator who accompanied us in the field, although moved by a curiosity as strong as ours, was not able to understand and thus translate without ambiguity the wording of the landmarks. He was obviously lacking the *familiar engagement* with the places thus named and pointed to by the villagers.

27. After a Greenpeace campaign in 2010, Burger King, Unilever and Nestlé cancelled their supplier contracts with GAR subsidiaries due to unsustainable farming practices. GAR adopted afterwards a *zero-deforestation policy* which required Greenpeace, GAR and a consultancy firm to develop a tool to codify and quantify forest called the High Carbon Stock (HCS) approach. Because of the pre-eminence of the *liberal* grammar, it still rests on the format of relations to the land and bargaining negotiations that raise criticisms similar to those reported here (Cheyns et al., 2020).
28. On the opening of legal studies to a wider variety of modes of normativity, see the special issue in English of *La Revue des Droits de l'Homme* dedicated to "Modes on normativity and normative transformations", edited and introduced by Véronique Champeil-Desplats, Jérome Porta and Laurent Thévenot (Champeil-Desplats et al., 2019). On the "'transformation' of social rights [transferred] under modes of normativity other than those of human rights", such as objectives, programmes, indicators, standards, see in this special issue Porta (2019).
29. In addition to the numerous meetings that were held in connection with the production of this book, Andrea Mennicken and Peter Miller hospitably organized an additional side-meeting at the LSE in April 2017, with Uwe Vormbusch, initiator and go-between, and myself. This meeting nurtured my comments that still do not pretend to synthetize the generous and considerate conversations we then had.
30. Exchange during the London meeting.

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