



maastricht utrecht nijmegen  
program on partnerships

Newsletter 9 - March 2014

## Partnership research, advocacy, and consultancy



**Dear colleagues,**

Welcome to our new newsletter. Interesting to observe is that the focus of our research program gradually changes. We started our research program over 10 years ago with a primary interest in partnerships as new governance arrangements for sustainable development. Our early research was based on the need to better understand and define the roles and functions of various types of partnerships, their architecture, the conditions that determine their performance, and the implications in terms of governance for sustainable development.

In the meantime we have seen that ‘the partnership paradigm’, which we recognized rather early, has been institutionalized as a (global) governance philosophy and strategy. Although our initial questions are still with us, the focus of the program is now a little bit different. First, we have become more interested in a systemic view on partnerships, which implies that we study partnerships as one form of governance among various other forms of governance in an issue area. We call this the governance system approach. Second, we now more strongly emphasize the relevance of methodological pluralism than before. Qualitative case-study research is still one of our strengths, but large surveys, action research, and social constructivist approaches have found their way in our program. Third, many of our current research projects focus on North-South relationships and development issues, with a primary interest in the contribution of standard-setting and certifying schemes to a more sustainable agriculture. An underlying question is in what way and to what extent sustainable development can be realized through the market mechanism.

The year 2013 was again a fruitful year. In 2013 we welcomed the 5th PhD thesis in our program. Greetje Schouten defended her thesis on the legitimization of certifying partnerships, particularly the Round Tables on Sustainable Palm Oil and Responsible Soy. Her dissertation got a lot of attention, also from the daily newsletters. Currently, 8 PhD students are working in our program. Our 5 Indonesian PhDs started in 2012 and we had some stimulating workshops with supervisors and related programs of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Science and Arts. Luli Pesqueira is finalizing her dissertation, which takes an action research approach in collaboration with Oxfam Novib. Ceren Pekdemir continued her work on fragmentation and cohesion in global governance, with a first focus on the system of fair labor private arrangements. Her new paper will be on meta-governance; a topic that we addressed in several other

papers already. Laura Kurth joined us as a new PhD student. She started working on the politics of halal certifications. Astrid Offermans continued her post-doc work on joint knowledge production in partnerships. As always some master students participated in our research program with their thesis research. Currently, one student is working on water partnerships in South Africa as a stepping stone to a PhD project. Another student develops a climate change adaptation module for standard-setting and certifying partnerships addressing sustainable agriculture.

Many of our research results were presented at international conferences, workshops, and published in international journals. Further information you will find below and on our website ([www.munpop.nl](http://www.munpop.nl)). Your reactions are most welcome.

Prof. Pieter Glasbergen  
Chair MUNPOP

#### **In this newsletter**

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#### **Thesis defense Greetje Schouten**

Greetje Schouten successfully defended her thesis 'Tabling Sustainable Commodities through Private Governance: Processes of Legitimization in the Roundtables on Sustainable Palm Oil and Responsible Soy' on November 4th. With her defense the project "The new role of private actors in environmental governance: an analysis in the field of sustainable agriculture" has formally finished now. Greetjes work received a lot of attention, also from newspapers. A full-page interview with Greetje in the Dutch newspaper NRC can be downloaded from our [website](#).



#### **New Publications**

Glasbergen, P. 2013. Legitimation of Certifying Partnerships in the Global Market Place. *Environmental Policy and Governance*. 23, 354-367. DOI: 10.1002/eet.1625

Bitzer, V., P. Glasbergen, and B. Arts (2013), Exploring the potential of intersectoral partnerships to improve the position of farmers in global agrifood chains: findings from the coffee sector in Peru. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 30: 5-20. DOI: 10.1007/s10460-012-9372-z

Pesqueira, L., P. Glasbergen (2013), Playing the politics of scale: Oxfam's intervention in the Round table on Sustainable palm Oil, *Geoforum*, 45: 296-304. DOI: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2012.11.017

Schouten, G. (2013). *Tabling sustainable commodities through private governance: Processes of legitimization in the roundtables on sustainable palm oil and responsible soy*. Utrecht: Gildeprint Drukkerijen.

Hegger, D., De Boer, I., Offermans, A., Merkx, F., Dieperink, C., Kemp, R., Van Lente, H. and Cörvers, R. (2013). Kenniscocreatie – naar productieve samenwerking tussen wetenschappers en beleidsmakers, *Datawyse/Universitaire Pers Maastricht*

Hegger, D., Offermans, A. and Y. de Boer (2013) Succesfactoren voor samenwerking wetenschappers en beleidsmakers. *Milieu 7*: 39-42

Valkering, P., R. van der Brugge, A. Offermans, M. Haasnoot, and H. Vreugdenhil (2013) A perspective-based simulation game to explore future pathways of a water-society system under climate change *Simulation & Gaming* 44 (2-3), 366-390

Offermans, A., P. Valkering, H. Vreugdenhil, N. Wijermans, and M. Haasnoot (2013) The Dutch dominant perspective on water; risks and opportunities involved. *Journal of Environmental Science and Health, Part A* 48 (10), 1164-1177

Van der Wal, M., J. De Kraker, A. Offermans, C. Kroeze, P. Kirschner, and M. Ittersum (2013) Measuring Social Learning in Participatory Approaches to Natural Resource Management *Environmental Policy and Governance* DOI: 10.1002/eet.1627

De Kraker, J., S. Kuijs, R. Cörvers, and A. Offermans (2014) Internet public opinion on climate change: a world views analysis of online reader comments *International Journal of Climate Change Strategies and Management* 6 (1), 19-33

#### **Laura Kurth joined MUNPOP as PhD**

Laura Kurth started her PhD entitled "Partnerships and the global Halal food market" at ICIS under the supervision of Prof. Pieter Glasbergen and Prof. Pim Martens. Laura will focus on understanding the politics of contesting worldviews in the (global) halal food market. For this purpose, she will develop three different perspectives on the topic: Halal identity in a multicultural society, public-private relations regarding Halal, and the legitimacy of Halal certification.



### **Integrative SPIN workshop in Utrecht**

During a three-day meeting in Utrecht, all SPIN projects within the pillar of socio-economic development presented and discussed their research objectives and underlying theoretical approaches. It was a highly interesting meeting with partners from KITLV, VU Amsterdam, UVA, University of Twente, Van Vollenhoven Institute (University Leiden) and ICIS (Maastricht University). We learnt a lot about democratization and decentralization processes in Indonesia, the concept of Patronaged democracy, citizenship, the role of formal and informal laws in Indonesia, governance in urban and regional infrastructure, social exclusion and of course global certifying partnerships. MUNPOP presented the project “Global Certifying Partnerships, a southern perspective” through five PhD presentations, a presentation about the postdoc project, and the project leader Pieter Glasbergen gave a presentation on different ways to understand and value reality, resulting in a call for methodological pluralism.



### **Global certifying partnerships: workshops in Maastricht and Makassar**

Almost all project partners from the project “Global Certifying Partnerships” came together in Maastricht from August 20th till August 23<sup>rd</sup> 2013. The workshop consisted of presentations, feedback sessions, discussions on the content of the research and social activities. One of the most important goals was to identify the research questions and methodologies for each PhD project. It also became clear what research steps had to be taken before the PhD students returned to Indonesia to do fieldwork from October till January. In the end of January MUNPOP and University of Lampung organized a three-day workshop in Makassar, Indonesia to discuss the results from the fieldwork and the content of the first working papers. Next, the research program for 2014 was discussed. Important milestones we foresee in 2014 are the submission of articles by all PhDs and the postdoc and a common book chapter about the transition towards a more sustainable agriculture in a development context, and particularly the role of global certifications herein.



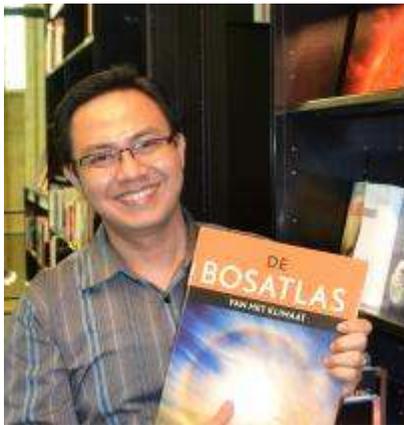
### **Memorandum of Understanding between University Lampung and ICIS**

A Memorandum of Understanding between ICIS and the College of Agriculture (University of Lampung - FP UNILA) was signed by Ron Cörvers (ICIS) and Wan Abbas Zakaria (UNILA) on January 30th in Makassar, Indonesia. This Memorandum formalizes our joint willingness and efforts to continue the collaboration between ICIS and UNILA in the SPIN-MUNPOP project "Global Certifying Partnerships".



## **Ongoing projects**

### **Farmers' preferences for coffee certification schemes – Ibnu Muhammad**



Certification is believed to contribute positively to smallholder's livelihoods. However, this causal relationship, if it is existent at all, is highly debated. One factor contributing to this debate is that certification programs rarely consult the farmers in the development of a certification scheme, leading to neglecting farmers' specific conditions, problems and their preferences in the program characteristics. Based on literature research, Ibnu assumes that certification programs which are appropriate to farmers' specific circumstances are preferred by farmers, and therefore more likely to make positive changes in farmers' livelihoods. Ibnu developed an verified a list of attributes and used conjoint analysis

to measure the various attributes of farmer's preferences for assessing which certification scheme is considered ideal and how this ideal relates to existing schemes.

### **Impact of certification on palm oil smallholders' livelihood – Nia Kurniawati Hidayat**

The expansion of oil palm plantations is highly debated in terms of economic, social and environmental effects. Certification is expected to be a solution to make the production more sustainable. However, the

impacts of certification are still debatable - particularly regarding the impacts on smallholders. To respond to the fragmented existence of many different types of impact studies and used research methods, Nia Kurniawati developed a conceptual model wherein she combined insights from impact studies with insights from the livelihood literature. The livelihood concept is considered to be a comprehensive and relevant approach to analyze the impact of certification on smallholders, and to choose and organize variables in a more meaningful and structured way. During her fieldwork, Nia validated her model through interviews with different actors in the field (companies, middlemen, governments, NES etc.).



#### **Intermediary roles of Southern NGOs in certification - Luciana Sani Kosasih**

NGOs gain a stronger and more important position in global governance. The question however is whether NGOs should be involved in certification at all, and if so, what role suits them best. Most current studies recognize the possible roles of NGOs in transnational governance, but there is hardly any systematic categorization of these roles. Also, most studies only focus on the role of Northern NGOs. During her first fieldwork study, Sani interviewed employees from multiple NGOs in Indonesia to gain more knowledge on the intermediary roles of Southern NGOs.

#### **Certification and economic performance for southern actors - Esther Sri Astuti**

Certification of agricultural products may influence the economic performance of southern actors in the value chain. However, financial benefits resulting from certification schemes are not always distributed equally along the product chain. Based on a global value chain analysis, Esther collected many questionnaires to assess the economic performance of certified and non-certified Southern actors in the coffee value chain. After analyzing the results, an overview can be provided on the distribution of economic benefits of certification and factors that function as blocker or enabler for upgrading actors' economic performance.



#### **Private Certification and the Response of Southern Governments - Atika Wijaya**

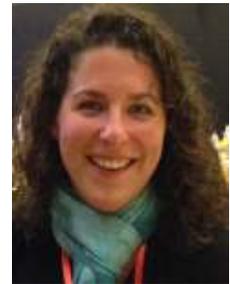
Private certification is a new emerging phenomenon challenging governments to determine their response and involvement. Most research solely focuses on Northern governments. This research focuses on possible responses of Southern governments to private certification of agricultural products. Based on literature research, Atika assumes that governments play a strategic role in private certification, which may differ for different stages of certification (initiation, implementation and



monitoring) and different agricultural products. In her first fieldwork, Atika focused on three roles: leaving certification to the market (adopting no public responsibility with no involvement); accepting private certification and sustaining it (balancing public and private responsibilities with high governmental involvement) and blocking private certification and/or forming own standards (high public responsibility with no involvement in the private certification).

### **Joint knowledge production in certifying partnerships – Astrid Offermans**

Partnerships are multi-stakeholder governance arrangements that can be characterized by their potential to produce knowledge. Given their structure and the complex issues they are dealing with the produced knowledge and the knowledge processes in partnerships are expected to have some characteristics: different knowledge types can be recognized, knowledge processes are not linear but inherently integrative; and knowledge production is organized. In other words: we expect effective partnerships to produce knowledge in line with “joint knowledge production”. Because of a lack of empirical support to validate these expectations Astrid developed an analytical framework to analyze the extent to which knowledge processes in partnerships can be understood as joint knowledge production. This framework will be applied to the exemplary case of the Round Table for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO).



### **Global Sustainable Change: Partnerships Between Fragmentation and Cohesion – Ceren Pekdemir**

Within the current global public domain, private and public-private arrangements are increasingly engaged with regulatory activities spanning different sectors and domains. The proliferation of different regulatory schemes has produced a decentralised and fragmented governance system. Scholars have, to a certain extent, focused on the rise of (competing) regulatory institutions, on the standards that have been set, and to a lesser extent examined the effectiveness of these regulatory standards. One feature that has hardly been addressed is the network of different regulatory arrangements. There are different organisational fields developing in which actors interact and collaborate, yet little is known about the configuration of these practices. The research topic of Ceren Pekdemir is intended to fill in this gap in scholarly literature. In her research on “Global Sustainable Change: Partnerships between Fragmentation and Cohesion” she principally addresses the question in how far issue-specific governance systems are fragmented or cohesive in their institutional structures, from organisational, ideational, and relational perspectives, and to what extent this influences the



effectiveness of the regulatory frameworks. Ceren presented her work on July 15th at the 20th Multi-Organizational Partnerships, Alliances and Networks (MOPAN) conference at Newcastle University Business School, and in February 2014 at the international workshop “Fostering Labor Rights in the Global Economy: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on the Effectiveness of Transnational Public and Private Policy Initiatives” .

### **Oxfam Novib in global governance - Luli Pesqueira**

In the last year, Luli continued researching the participation of NGOs in the creation of sustainability standards for the agri-food sector. Using again empirical evidence from Oxfam’s experiences in this field, her latest research studies the processes of interaction between different NGO groups around the creation of a certification scheme for the tropical farmed shrimp sector. Here, Luli shows that the strategic interaction between multiple NGOs in the context of multi-stakeholder governance is not unproblematic. In fact, the dynamic interplay between different NGO groups requires that goals become constantly (re)aligned and positions (re)negotiated. All of this taking within a field where other interactions with actors – businesses, partners, allies, confederation members, donors, and governance bodies – also need to be managed. Luli identifies the frames deployed by different NGO groups in favor and against the creation of a certification scheme for farmed tropical shrimp. She also analyzes the variety of roles and functions that NGOs are required to play in their interaction with other NGOs, and concludes discussing the factors that enable or constrain NGO’s ability to take on the variety of roles that are ascribed to it. In April 2014, Luli will join EGADE Business School in Mexico City as lecturer and director of Executive Education. EGADE Business School is part of the Monterrey Institute of Technology (ITESM), one of the largest and best-ranked universities in Mexico.