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*Review Article*

# Implementing Certification from a Third party: A Case Study of Organic Shrimp Certification between Science and Politics

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## Abstract

Divergent perceptions of third-party certification have emerged as a prominent governance mechanism. Third-party certification is defended by supporters as a technical and objective governance mechanism, while detractors contend that it is characterized by power dynamics and politics. In terms of understandings of science and politics, as well as how TPC is understood, we reject this dichotomy. We make the case, based on research in science and technology, that third-party certification is both scientific and political, and that both science and politics involve social and technical practices. We investigate the creation and upholding of standards by employing an Indonesian organic shrimp project as a case study. Our investigation yields three significant conclusions. First, the extent to which all stakeholders' interests and realities are successfully translated and incorporated is partly dependent on the development and enforcement of standards in a third-party certified project. Second, contrasts between entertainers in an outsider ensured project are epistemological, yet additionally ontological. Therefore, reconciling interests and knowledge with material realities is necessary for overcoming TPC differences. Thirdly, TPC is per formative because enrolment and translation must be on-going procedures if the standards are to be adhered to. In closing, we contend that a science and innovation examination focuses to the need not exclusively to democratize TPC, yet additionally expand the epistemological premise of norms, and that endeavours to guarantee consistence need to go past reviews.

## INTRODUCTION

The perceived technical and objective nature of TPC is a major factor driving its increasing use. Audits and certifications, on the other hand, are understood to be impartial and open, and the standard-development process is viewed as democratic, inclusive, and based on science. An impartial and efficient compliance mechanism is the outcome, as are standards that represent best practices and have been scientifically supported and agreed upon (Konefal J, 2011). However, more critical understandings that conceptualize TPC not as a science-based governance mechanism but as a political and power-laden process have accompanied this conventional view of TPC. To put it another way, critics contend that understandings of TPC as a science-based governance mechanism obscure the ways in which TPC's practices and procedures privilege some actors and

types of knowledge and marginalize others (Etilé F, 2016). In addition, critics of TPC argue that the outcome frequently results in standards based on "best practices," which tend to "sustain the unsustainable" but mitigate the most serious social and environmental issues. This paper rethinks TPC as a political and science-based form of governance at the same time, drawing on STS research that argues that politics are technical and science is political (Prajogo D, 2016). We maintain that TPC encompasses aspects of both critical and conventional perspectives and should not be understood in isolation from either. On the one hand, TPC is governed by technical rules and procedures based on important scientific principles like disinterestedness, reproducibility, and validity. On the other hand, there is a lot of room for manoeuvring, politicking, and negotiating within these rules and procedures (Kim K, 2011). According to STS research, these latter social practices are just as much a part of

science as technical procedures and rules are (Iannucci G, 2022). Therefore, just because TPC is political does not make it unscientific, and just because TPC is scientific does not make it unscientific. TPC involves scientific norms, self-interested politics, and technical and social practices, similar to science (Tanner B, 2000). We argue that viewing TPC from this vantage point leads to divergent perceptions regarding its scope, operation, and potential as an equitable, inclusive, and efficient governance mechanism.

## METHODS

This essay gives a case study of an Indonesian shrimp project that was certified organic by a third party (Little PC, 2017). The organic shrimp project was investigated using three qualitative methods: participant observation, interviewing, and document content analysis. Content analysis of information on shrimp aquaculture and TPC found on websites, bulletins, and reports published by international and national SMOs,

### **Certification from a third party: political or scientific**

There are two perspectives on how people understand TPC, as was mentioned in the introduction. The first is an understanding of TPC as an objective, science-based governance mechanism that produces measurable, repeatable, and accountable outcomes (Etri M 2016). This view is held by numerous industry chiefs and some SMOs, and is advanced by those entertainers who complete and administer TPC confirmation bodies, principles improvement associations, and license associations).

### **Studying third-party certification through the lens of science and technology**

Science and technology studies (STS) offer a helpful analytical framework to investigate TPC because it is essentially founded on and justified by scientific norms and practises, such as objectivity, independence, disinterestedness, and reliability (Castañeda LS, 2012). The main findings from STS that are relevant to TPC and that we utilise to examine the third-party certified organic shrimp project are summarised below. Hilgartner contends that science supports Goffman's idea of dramaturgy by extending it.

### **Establishing and upholding organic standards**

The organic shrimp project in Bojokulu appeared to be a stable and successful one when field research was conducted in 2004. In the beginning, organic standards were established, which were developed in a collaborative manner

with all stakeholders (Haward M, 2019). Second, the project was supported and participated in by a significant number of dedicated farmers. Thirdly, there was a mechanism for oversight with clearly defined procedures that ensured.

## CONCLUSION

Understanding TPC as a science-based and objective form of governance is a significant contributor to its widespread acceptance. Stakeholder participation in the standard-development process, objective audits, and a complex set of technical rules and procedures designed to prevent undue influence are all features of TPC that contribute to this understanding. We agree that TPC is science-based governance, but we also contend that.

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