

The Context for Live provenance demonstration support

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(version 2. November 2022)

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1 Problems arising in practice with existing product certification schemes

These days, specialist bespoke single-origin products retailers' customers are interested to establish the provenance, to their satisfaction, right along the entire supply chain that leads right back to the producers/creators of the product that they are considering purchasing.

An increasing number of product certification schemes are currently being vaunted, for in coffee in particular but also for other commodities that gain value through being genuinely and authentically created by small producers, along the supply chain that ends with specialist retailers in order to 'prove' that the particular certified product is made entirely from ingredients that are employed by the product's creator/maker with skill and care, using environmentally friendly and sustainable techniques, traceable back to their originating organisation .

This "backward tracing along the supply chain" is designed to establish and verify the historical provenance of the product. While the tracing technique should reveal who are the actual creators/makers of the particular product, and also reveal the actual, path along the supply chain that ends up with the consumer investigating the product by, for example, scanning a QR code on its packaging that claims to guarantee its certification, this does not, in itself, establish the "good" provenance of its creator/maker or the integrity of the particular supply chain traversed.

Contemporary certification schemes typically try to remedy this by designing procedures and requirements to which the product creators/makers must adhere, regarding sustainable and ethical production practices, etc. A product creator/maker who seeks to be confirmed as an accredited member of the certification scheme, must implement and follow these practices. They must also pay for annual visits from auditors who check that these practices are currently operated as required and offer a semblance of conformity. Failure to pass an audit usually means that the producer is required to make "improvements", specified

by the certification authority, immediately (confirmed by an additional emergency audit that the creator/maker must pay for) or lose their certification.

Many originating organizations (creating/making individuals, cooperatives and SMEs), particularly those in countries that were previously under colonial administration, experience this as an invasive top-down process restricting of their own possibilities for creative bottom up development. The certification requirements imposed on them are designed and controlled by organizations whose requirements decisions are made, are made in boardrooms located in Western developed countries often those that formerly had colonial empires. Thus they are reminiscent of colonial practices. In effect, they restrict the producers/creator's freedom to take control of their own activities in order to find the best way to develop them the sustainable and ethically in a way that brings adequate benefits to themselves and their communities, rather than just pleasing their certification masters.

Such certification schemes involve, for the end-user (purchaser or consumer) interested to discover the provenance of a particular instance of a single origin bespoke product by tracing it along the supply chain leading to the originating individual/organization. This trace in fact, investigates the particular bespoke product instance's historical provenance in order to assess the "goodness" of the provenance in terms of how well activities encountered in the supply chain conforms to historical specifications and requirements established and verified by the authority that designed, and continues control the certification process from its own (usually western, neo-colonial) perspective.

Some certification authorities have tried to compensate for the imbalance of power and control, between the perspectives of the certification authorities and the creators/growers of certified products, in the promotion and authentication of the "good provenance". Typically, they include, within the certification process, provision for activities specifically focused on supporting and facilitating the development of activities, instigated and coordinated by the local cooperative and approved by the certification authority, that provide social benefits to the cooperative's members and the local community (e.g., via schemes for providing educational opportunities for growers' family members, help in paying health care expenses, etc).

For example, over the past the past 40 years Fairtrade has operated a successful program of encouraging bespoke product creators/makers/growers in many countries and production contexts world-wide to form local cooperatives, managed bottom-up by their participants, (the individual creators/growers and enabling the producers/growers to share expertise and maker availability within their originating organization (cooperative), develop joint bespoke product processing and marketing facilities, and to use income from sales for activities that benefit the local community as a whole and enhance their well-being.

Enelow, (2012)¹ identified five key capabilities of cooperatives that were enhanced by participation in the FLO system as:

¹ Enelow, N. (2012). *Fair Trade, Agrarian Cooperatives, and Rural Livelihood in Peru*. PhD Dissertation University of Massachusetts Amherst

- 1) The opportunity to organize cooperatively and democratically;
- 2) The opportunity to learn new production techniques that conserve the environment and increase yields.
- 3) The increased social interaction across communities, (which Robert Putnam would call “bridging social capital”).
- 4) Increased access to market information and low-cost credit.
- 5) Increase in self-esteem.

However, as Enelow (2012) comments “one could argue that these capabilities or functioning stem from the creators/makers/growers’ participation in the cooperatives, rather than the FLO”.

Within Fairtrade’s ideology, the local cooperatives themselves are the principal focus for Fairtrade certification, (signing and maintaining contracts with the international Fairtrade licensing organization, (FLO), and accepting (and paying for) audits, in order to maintain certification for the cooperative’s products.

Retailers of products carrying the “Fairtrade” logo are required to include a "Fairtrade premium" in the price for which they sell this product. The assumption here is that the Fairtrade logo improves the provenance of the product in the eyes of potential consumers who would thus be happy to pay the higher price including the premium that would then benefit the coffee growers' association that originally produced this coffee. In return, each local cooperative receives a “Fairtrade premium”: providing it with funding based on a “Fairtrade levy” charged on sales of its Fairtrade-certified bespoke products worldwide which the cooperative is delegated to administer bottom-up (in consultation with its members) in a way that socially benefits the local community (e.g for subsidising health and education expenses of the members, and building communal facilities thus reinforcing the cooperative’s “good provenance” In how it spends the Fairtrade premium that it receives.

But Fairtrade (FLO) itself takes on the responsibility to guarantee a cooperative’s “good provenance” through insisting that the cooperative accounts for spending the premium entirely on “socially beneficial” activities that are pre-specified and pre-approved by Fairtrade as confirmed by external annual auditing of the cooperative’s “Fairtrade Premium” income and expenditure account.

2 Benefits of Live Provenance Certification for all sides

The Live Provenance Certification Scheme (LP-CERT) is founded the realisation that: *Innovative and creative activities responding to real needs for sustainable social, economic, environmental and cultural development that are well understood and promoted locally bottom-up by the cooperative and their communities themselves are the real source of the Live provenance of a cooperative.*

In contrast to the certification schemes reviewed above, a Live Provenance Certification Scheme (LP- CERT) brings alive the positive meaning of Live Provenance through enabling the creating/producing organizations (usually SMEs of and their communities to implement, document and share the provenance achievements as they develop. This is the principal generator permitting live provenance appreciation by all those involved along the product

supply chain that originates live provenance certified creator/growers' organization (usually a SME or cooperative) participating in the Live provenance Certification scheme cooperative and extends through the production, packaging, distribution, retailing and consumption of the bespoke products sourced at the originating organization

3 Investigation of Live Provenance

Historical provenance search (the conventional way to explore and establish provenance) is anchored in the past. Historical provenance search results are achieved through historical provenance threads for the Agents and Entities involved in the transactions of interest to the Provenance explorer. Moreover, these entity-provenance and agent-provenance chains interact at every transaction in their establishment, and are woven together in Live Provenance Endeavour's Live Provenance Demonstration, Exploration and Certification (LP-DEC) App's Provenance Tapestry to form the core structure that underpins the investigation, validation and establishment of historic provenance and authenticating the information about "what actually happened"

In this way we improve our understanding of the provenance of agents and entities that were the focus of our search explorations. However, the Assessment of the "quality of the historical provenance" is based on establishing conformance to specific pre-established specifications within the perspective of only one side (the certification agency and its requirements). In this purely historical context, there is no opportunity for anticipating and improving the "goodness" of present or future provenance of these entities and agents, according to the pre-established specifications, applied to transactions in which the agents and entities were involved in the past.

However, by actualising a multisided perspective supply chain leading from creator/producer to end-user, we are able to support, facilitate and publicise all participants' current bottom-up attempts to characterise and improve their provenance through current developments, and those anticipated in the future, in a climate of transparency and trust.

4 Demonstrating Live provenance with bespoke product originating organizations

Within the implementation of a live provenance Provenance Certification scheme, (LP-CERT) enables originating organisations (Creators, makers growers, etc.) to make stories and publish about their services, products, innovative economic and social development activities benefiting the communities. They are encouraged to form a Live provenance young persons' Club and to support its activities that include instigating, documenting, discussing, and sharing the bottom-up local developments, creating audiovisual stories explicating these developments, sharing them as public goods.

In addition, all the agents participating in the supply chains originating from a Live provenance certified cooperative may contribute to the live provenance media archive (maintained and promoted by the London Multimedia Lab, (www.londonmultimedia.org) by publishing stories there as public goods showing and telling about their innovative activities that transforming and adding value to particular products sourced from the originating organisations (creators

and growers) in the ecosystem The Originating organizations are encouraged to form a Live provenance young persons' Club in their community and to support its activities that include instigating, documenting, discussing and sharing the bottom-up local developments, creating audiovisual stories explicating these developments, sharing them as public goods.

This also helps participants in the local ecosystem to develop their own live provenance, bottom up, as they gain visibility, advertise their own good provenance and products, find new resources and initiate new supply chains. The innovation support activities provided by the Live Provenance young person's club (when established) increase the Live Provenance Club members' own provenance by establishing and publicising the good provenance of their creations and artefacts. The club members are also enabled to make and share case studies of success in social entrepreneurship, thus supporting the cluster-building process bottom up and catalysing innovative activities.

15 Operational specification of Live Provenance certification

Through representing publicly a multisided perspective on the supply chain leading from an originating (creator/masker) organization within a safe direct trading ecosystem, we are also able to support the development and investigation of Live Provenance through providing features that facilitate and publicising all participants' current bottom-up attempts to characterise and improve their provenance through current developments, and those anticipated in the future.

Thus, *live provenance demonstration support* facilitates sustainable development enabling activities to become much more visible and attractive in both the real and the virtual world. It provides techniques to promote originating organisations' innovative creations, in each case "with attribution", and for "letting others know about these activities", This provides creative facilities for making media productions involving story-telling in a synthesis of rich (audio-visual) and restricted (textual) language that enables participants to show-case current expertise, know-how and innovations emanating from the cooperative and its local community. The resulting audiovisual stories are placed as public goods in media channels that are freely accessible by the appropriate audiences attracting visitors, collaborators, and clients worldwide.

Actualising LP-CERT enables the originating organisations (individual makers, cooperatives or SMEs) to implement, document and share their achievements as they find ways to improve and demonstrate the provenance of the bespoke product that they create. Such demonstration process enhances the provenance of the creative originators and the provenance of their creations thus publicised.