

PERSONAL TRUST AND TRUST IN ABSTRACT SYSTEMS:
A STUDY OF FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL-ACCREDITED
CERTIFICATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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Abstract

Forest Stewardship Council-accredited certification in British Columbia arose out of distrust in government and the forest industry as stewards of the province's forest resources. The initiative for forest certification emerged among environmentalists and other interest groups that have been marginalized in mainstream forestry decision-making. Forest certification is a system of green labeling for products that come from environmentally, socially and economically well-managed forests. In other words, certification attempts to redefine appropriate forest management, and build trust where other forestry decision-makers have failed. This dissertation examines how trust is (or is not) built amidst such widely divergent interests.

Building trust amidst diversity is a common problem in our increasingly globalized world. In response to this challenge, modern decision-making systems are often built around abstract concepts, such as pluralist democracy and impersonal, rationalistic systems, that are presumably disembedded from social bias. Likewise, the Forest Stewardship Council has developed a pluralist system of standard-setting and an impersonal accreditation system as a means to win the trust of a diversity of forestry interests.

The results of this research, based on five years of participant observation and forty in-depth, semi-structured interviews of key interest group members in British Columbia, suggest that the Forest Stewardship Council's "abstract systems" increased trust among some interests. However, these abstract systems did not serve to bridge group differences. Instead, decision-making processes became enmeshed in existing dynamics of distrust. The pluralist standard-setting process empowered previously

marginalized interests while exacerbating distrust between some groups. At the same time, impersonal accreditation procedures did not win adequate trust because they did not address the socially embedded causes of distrust.

This dissertation concludes that it is the balance of formal abstract systems and flexibility that creates enabling conditions for trust. Abstract systems set boundaries, reduce risk, and can redress power imbalances. They do not by themselves, however, build trust. Flexibility enables voluntary cooperation, which leads to the bridging of differences. In the context of conflicting values and diverse knowledge, therefore, decision-making should be adequately devolved to the on-the-ground implementation level, to allow room for reciprocal acts of voluntary cooperation and the creation of shared meaning.

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List of Acronyms

AAC	Allowable Annual Cut
AF&PA	American Forest and Paper Association
BC	British Columbia
CCFM	Canadian Council of Forest Ministers
CoC	Chain of Custody
CORE	Commission on Resources and the Environment
CSA	Canadian Standards Association
EMS	Environmental Management System
ENGO	Environmental Non-governmental Organization
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
FSC-AC	Forest Stewardship Council Asociación Civil (The worldwide FSC, “domiciled” in Oaxaca, Mexico)
FSC-BC	Forest Stewardship Council – British Columbia
FSC P&C	FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
LRMP	Land and Resource Management Planning
MoF	Ministry of Forests
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PAS	Protected Areas Strategy
SFI	Sustainable Forestry Initiative
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management

SCS	Scientific Certification Systems
Silva	The Silva Forest Foundation
SGS	Société Général de Surveillance
TSA	Timber Supply Area
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WWF	Worldwide Fund for Nature (in North America = World Wildlife Fund)

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This dissertation is first and foremost about trust. The exploration of trust is grounded in a case study of forestry interest groups in BC, between whom distrust, rather than trust, has long been the norm. This distrust has emerged out of fundamental conflicts over the nature of appropriate forest management in BC, based in both differences over the ways in which forests are valued, as well as conflicts in “science” and other knowledge systems over the appropriate means to protect what is valued. In other words, diversity of both values and knowledge systems have created major barriers to trust. Where there is no trust, i.e. the belief that another party will behave appropriately of its own free will, there will be struggles for control, as witnessed by countless battles over forestry decisions in the province. These battles create uncertainty and instability, occur at great expense to the parties involved, and prevent the creative synergy that can occur when people with diverse knowledge and experience work together towards common goals. It is the contention of this dissertation, therefore, that the generation of trust and trustworthiness between diverse forestry interest groups is not only tremendously challenging, but also highly desirable. It is for this reason that I have chosen the research question of, “How is (or isn’t) trust built in a context of conflicting values and diverse knowledge?”

Trust comes into play in a context of uncertainty and risk. The vast expanses of ecologically productive forest lands in BC are a matter of intense social concern to a wide range of interests, including the province’s indigenous peoples, environmentalists, a large and productive forest industry, urban and rural populations, and other regional, national,

and international interests. As a result of the high value that forests hold to people, and the diversity of social interests in those forests, considerable trust in is needed before BC interest groups will voluntarily risk ceding control over forestry decisions. Historically, the forest industry and government regulators have played a dominant role in forestry decision-making in the province. Forest managers and government officials, however, have failed to convince an increasingly vocal opposition of environmentalists and First Nations, among others, that BC's forests are managed appropriately. This study looks at Forest Stewardship Council forest certification as a new type of decision-making institution that aims to win trust where government and the forest industry have failed.

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an international standard-setting and accreditation body designed to provide market-based incentive for improved forest practices. The FSC, which was spearheaded by international environmental groups such as the Worldwide Fund for Nature¹, sets environmental, economic and social standards for "responsible" forest management, and accredits independent certifying bodies to evaluate whether or not forest management practices are consistent with FSC standards. Forest operations that meet FSC standards may then attach the FSC label of "responsible" forestry to the forest products they produce. The FSC label allows environmentally and socially conscious consumers to support FSC's standards of forest management by buying certified products.

In order for the FSC to "work" as a guarantor of good management, however, people must trust in the FSC label. Such trust, furthermore, has to occur at multiple social scales, from local forestry interest groups to international green consumers. Many

¹ The Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) is the international organization formerly known as the "World Wildlife Fund". The North American branch of WWF is still known as the "World Wildlife Fund".

theorists of trust have suggested that there are distinct differences in the nature and sources of trust at different scales, varying from inter-personal trust at a local level, to the larger-scale institutional trust relevant to modern economic exchange (Beck 1999; Bigley and Pearce 1998; Giddens 1990; Rousseau and Sitkin 1998; Shapiro 1987; etc.). Less attention has been paid, however, to how, if at all, these different types of trust may interact with each other. It is my contention, therefore, that the activities of the FSC in BC, involving multiple levels of social interaction, from local interest groups to international consumers, provides an ideal case study of the relationships between inter-personal trust and larger-scale, institutional trust.

Personal trust is a phenomenon that develops between known individuals and organizations, and is reinforced through repeated demonstrations of cooperative behaviour. It is psychologically multi-dimensional, in that it includes cognitive, ethical and emotional dimensions. The institution of certification, however, emerged as a product of the global marketplace, initiated by industry associations interested in providing credible assurance to distant buyers regarding technical attributes of a product or service (Garcia-Johnson 2001). Due to the relative anonymity of the global marketplace, individual firms have limited opportunity to develop personal relations of trust and trustworthiness with their exchange partners. Trustworthiness in the global marketplace, therefore, has been routinely sought through the development of uniform standards and procedures that minimize the need to trust in the individual people involved in implementation. Anthony Giddens has coined the term “abstract systems” to describe decision-making systems that are presumably disembedded from their social context. These systems are “abstract” in that they are based on abstract and presumably

universally trustworthy concepts, such as reason and science. For Giddens, trust in the global marketplace largely consists of trust in these “abstract systems” (1990).

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification, however, developed in a manner distinct from that of many industry-driven certification systems. The FSC was initiated with the active participation of environmental and social movement organizations who were in fact distrusting of traditional industry decision-making forums. Unlike earlier industry-driven certification systems, the FSC does not limit itself to “technical” product qualities, but rather attempts to define the correct values and knowledge systems that should be applied to forest management and decision-making. In other words, trust in forest certification is more clearly multi-dimensional, including all of the cognitive, normative and emotional dimensions inherent in personal trust.

What formal institutional structures, or “abstract systems”, then, has the FSC developed to address its dual function as definer of social meaning and technical supervisor of forestry audits? Does personal trust also play a role in the functioning of these institutional structures? If so, what is the relationship between personal trust and trust in the FSC’s abstract systems? This dissertation explores these issues in order to better understand how trust functions at the multiple scales so increasingly relevant to modern, and socially complex societies.

The following three sections will now provide the general social context within which the FSC has developed in BC. This includes a brief overview of forestry in British Columbia, a history of the province’s indigenous peoples, and a description of the FSC and other forest and environmental certification systems currently active in BC. These discussions will be followed by a review of other theoretical work that has addressed

social issues in FSC-accredited forest certification, and an explanation of the unique contribution this study will make to the ongoing dialogue. The chapter will then finish with a description of how the remainder of this dissertation is organized.

Forestry in British Columbia

The arena of forestry in British Columbia represents an ideal context for a study of trust amidst diversity. The province has tremendous environmental diversity, and forestry is a matter of intense concern for a wide range of human interests. This section begins with an overview of BC's ecological landscape as well as its forest products trade, situating these in their international context. It then gives a brief history of forest management in BC, outlining some major sources of conflict, as well as efforts at cooperation between BC forest interest groups.

The province of British Columbia covers an area of roughly 948,000 square kilometres (NRC and CFS 1999), comprising 14 biogeoclimatic zones (MoF 1994). This diversity of ecozones results in part from a complex topography, including several rugged and glacier-covered mountain ranges running southeast to northwest. It includes hundreds of kilometers of Pacific coastline supporting temperate evergreen coniferous rainforests of Western Hemlock, Douglas fir, red and yellow cedar and numerous other tree species. The interior of the province includes coniferous dry forests, Northern boreal forests and numerous other forest types. In total, forests cover about sixty-four percent of the province (NRC and CFS 1999).

An abundance of productive forest land in BC has contributed to the development of a large forest industry and the establishment of numerous rural communities economically dependent on timber production. BC is the number one timber producer of

the Canadian provinces, which together constitute a dominant force in the global trade of wood products. In total, Canada contains about 10% of the world's forests, and leads the world in the export of wood products, producing nearly 20% of the total global value of this commodity. The US buys the majority of Canada's wood product exports, accounting for 79% of exports in 1998, when Europe purchased 8% and Japan 7%. Among the provinces of Canada, British Columbia produces the largest volume and value of wood products (WRI 2000) which accounts for approximately 55 percent of the province's total exports (Wilson 1998).

Clearly forest product production has a major impact on the economy of British Columbia, as well as on the dynamics of the international timber trade. At the same time, the province's forest management practices have significant impact on the global environment through their affect on such factors as total forest cover, forest habitat, climate and carbon sequestration. These social and environmental conditions have placed Canada, and BC in particular, in the spotlight of the world-wide struggle over forest conservation and the development of forest certification.

Long before the rise in international concern over BC's forests, numerous conflicts were developing among forest interest groups within the province as well. The following brief history of forest practices in BC reveals how a climate of distrust and conflict emerged out of changing ecological, social and economic conditions, and accompanying belief systems.

Aboriginal peoples, known in western Canada as "First Nations", inhabited the area that is now British Columbia for thousands of years. These early civilizations developed complex and diverse cultures with their own unique relations to the

surrounding landscape. Over time, they included some ten distinct ethnic groups (Duff 1997), with the largest cultural differences distinguishing the peoples of the coast from those of the interior. These diverse peoples maintained a relatively symbiotic relationship with the surrounding landscapes, resulting in low rates of change among the province's forest ecosystems.

European interactions with BC First Nations began in earnest in BC in the late 18th century, with the development of an extensive fur trade. These new traders carried with them diseases that decimated First Nations populations. Historical estimates indicate a population of over 80,000 pre-European contact, which was reduced to a low of about 23,000 in 1929 (Duff 1997). By the late 19th century, around the time that BC joined the Canadian Confederacy, European settlers outnumbered the First Nations. This growing non-native population rapidly changed the ecological and social landscape, clearing forests for agriculture and establishing a commercial trade of timber. The forested wilderness was viewed by settlers as an obstacle to civilization and prosperity and the supply of natural resources appeared abundant and inexhaustible (Worster 1977).

Side-by-side with the pro-development ethos, however, there were also those who argued for the preservation of the "natural", non-human world. The early 19th century saw the emergence of transcendentalists and romantics such as Emerson and Thoreau and, later in the century, wilderness advocate John Muir (Langston 1995). By the late 1800s, concerns for the conservation and management of forest resources combined with government's interest in taxing the profits of timber harvest resulted in the establishment of the Canadian Forestry Association in 1900 (Elliott 1999). BC soon followed suit at the provincial level with the creation of a forest ministry in 1912 (MoF 1997).

Despite some recognition of a need for conservation, however, the primary ideological foundation of BC's early provincial forest policy was based on the mandate to develop the province's industrial infrastructure and economy. According to Wilson (1998), this ideology is rooted in an 'anthropocentric, utilitarian belief system'. This belief system led to the early development of a close relationship between government and industry resembling an economic and political partnership (Marchak 1983; Rajala 1998; Wilson 1998). The government's pro-industry stance was largely supported by BC's strong labour unions and for many years continued without much opposition from the general public (Rajala 1998).

Up until 1912, the BC provincial government granted outright ownership of forest land to railroads and timber companies in order to develop BC's industrial infrastructure and economy. This private land designation accounts for most of the private forest land existing in the province today. With the passage of the 1912 Forest Act and creation of the BC Forest Service, the province asserted greater control over timber harvesting, granting rights to forest companies through one-time timber sale licenses. Private land grants were curtailed, resulting in the provincial government retaining ownership of 95% of the province's forest lands. This public ownership contributed to significant government investment in forest industry infrastructure and management.

By the 1940s, public concern over resource depletion and destructive logging practices led BC to join the international dialogue over long-term "sustained yield" management. The science of sustained yield, pioneered by charismatic leaders such as Gifford Pinchot, founder of the US Forest Service, legitimized what Wilson (1998) terms the "liquidation-conversion" model of forest management. The purpose of liquidation-

conversion is to maximize the sustained yield of wood products by the liquidation of old growth and the conversion to younger, faster growing timber stands.

In 1947, BC introduced longer term area-based timber sale licenses and volume-based timber sale harvesting licenses. It was reasoned that allowing companies longer term rights would both provide incentive for more responsible management and provide the security of supply necessary to attract investment in large scale mills (MoF 1997). This new license system led to the rapid concentration of forest licenses under the ownership of large companies.

The period following the Second World War was a time of growing economic prosperity in BC. It has been claimed that this prosperity was accompanied by a shift of popular belief systems away from anthropocentric, utilitarian values to more ecocentric values (Inglehart 1977; Olsen 1992; Wilson 1998). Such values conflicted sharply with the industry-government agenda of liquidation-conversion. By the 1960s, the wilderness movement in BC began to gain significant momentum. Some of the early members of the movement were fishing and hunting clubs, naturalists and recreationalists. These were joined in the 1960s by groups focused on environmental advocacy. The rise of a diverse but vocal dissenting voice put considerable pressure on the BC government to reconsider its close alignment with the forest industry and develop more transparent decision-making processes. Meanwhile, the concept of "multiple use forestry", whereby forests are managed to protect a diversity of valued attributes in addition to timber, was gaining international momentum.

In 1976 the Pearse Royal Commission was formed to address the inequities of a timber licensing system dominated by large companies, as well as to re-examine forest

management priorities. This led to the 1978 Forest Act and the era of "Integrated Forest Management" (MoF 1997). Large Timber Supply Areas (TSAs) were established within which the Chief Forester was directed to set levels of Annual Allowable Cut (AAC), i.e. the volume of timber to be removed annually. The forest licensing system was restructured once again to include new replaceable forest licenses, timber sale licenses, woodlot licenses and pulpwood agreements. In addition, the renewal interval for tree farm and forest licenses was shortened, allowing more flexibility in revising contract terms (MoF 1997).

Such changes were not to the satisfaction of either the BC environmental movement, nor apparently, more general public opinion. Multiple surveys in the late 1980s and 1990s showed strong public support for the environmental movement and environmental values and relative lack of faith in the government and forest industry (Wilson 1998, 46-7). The divergence of forest policies and public opinion was most dramatically illustrated with the Clayoquot Sound logging protests beginning in the late 1980's. These protests marked a change in tactics by the environmental movement. Focusing on the preservation of coastal old growth forests, environmental groups launched aggressive media campaigns and took their cause to the international arena. This tactic represented a serious threat to the heavily export-dependent BC forest industry.

By 1994, then BC Premier Mike Harcourt took several landmark steps to better incorporate environmental protection and other social priorities into the province's forest management systems. One was the establishment of a Clayoquot Sound Scientific Panel which was assigned the task of developing new natural resource management strategies

for the controversial Clayoquot Sound area. The Forest Practices Code was also established in 1994, comprising the first comprehensive set of guidelines for forest management practices in the province. The impact of the Forest Practices Code (FPC) on timber harvest levels, however, was restricted by the imposition of a 6% cap on reductions to the AAC resulting from the Code (Hoberg 2001).

In addition to this new forestry legislation, several large-scale long-term planning processes run by the Commission on Resources and the Environment (CORE), as well as numerous smaller-scale Land and Resource Management Planning (LRMP) processes, were established across BC with representatives from a diversity of interest groups. One of the mandates of the LRMP processes was to determine the location of new park areas in fulfillment of the province's new Protected Areas Strategy (PAS). The mandate of PAS was to devote 12% of the province to nature preserves. While these land planning processes represented a significant step forward in public involvement in forestry decision-making, they were strictly advisory in nature. Their mandate was limited to setting very broad objectives which did not include, for example, recommendations for changing actual harvest levels, i.e. AAC requirements (Wilson 1998).

Meanwhile, in 1996, the Forest Stewardship Council became active in British Columbia. The FSC represented a new approach to governing forest practices in the province that by-passed government altogether. FSC's connection to the international environmental movement served to greatly increase its social and economic influence in the province. International attention was increasingly drawn to BC for a number of reasons. Among them was growing public concern for the area's prized coastal old growth forest rainforests, its extensive areas of "intact" or un-logged wilderness, the issue

of social justice for BC's aboriginal peoples, and the preponderance of public land that legitimized greater public input into forest management decisions. This international focus on environmental conservation and social justice for indigenous peoples came in direct conflict with provincial forest policies driven by the maintenance of timber license agreements and sustained levels of timber production. At the same time, the BC forest industry was perhaps particularly vulnerable to international pressure due to its dependence on wood products exports (Cashore et al. forthcoming). By 1999, Greenpeace was leading international boycotts of BC forest product exports, pressuring international buyers to reject old growth from BC, and successfully gaining international public support for FSC-accredited certification.

In summary, BC forestry is fraught with conflicts between environmentalists, the forest industry, labour unions, First Nations and numerous other interests. The recent pairing of environmentalist pressure tactics such as international boycotts, with environmentalist demands for FSC-accredited certification, have thrown the FSC into the center of these long-term, ongoing interest group conflicts.

First Nations in British Columbia

Another crucial factor influencing BC trust dynamics, has been the social relations between the BC government and industry and the province's First Nations. First Nations have recently received legal recognition of their unique, aboriginal claim to BC's land and resources. This special status, combined with a long legacy of direct and indirect persecution, may have contributed to the FSC's separate treatment of First Nations in FSC processes in BC. This section, likewise will provide a separate overview

of First Nations issues in British Columbia in order to provide the necessary context for examining the trust dynamics between First Nations and the FSC.

As with aboriginals elsewhere around the world, colonial occupation in BC had calamitous impacts on the region's first peoples. Early contact with settlers brought devastating outbreaks of disease, quickly reducing population numbers. This physical onslaught was then followed by social and political policies that were both culturally demoralizing and economically disastrous for First Nations.

When BC joined the Canadian Federation in 1871, the lieutenant-governor of the province, Joseph Trutch, took a dismissive approach to aboriginal rights. He argued that it was inappropriate and unnecessary to establish treaties with BC's aboriginal inhabitants. Instead he promoted the idea that the native peoples continue to be granted small reserve lands "sufficient to fulfill requirements for cultivation and grazing". This fit well with an ethos of economic progress and development by freeing lands for roads, timber harvest, mining and other economic activities. The moral justification was that the Indians would most benefit by being "civilized" and learning the ways of Christianity and capitalism. To this latter end, the federal government worked with Christian churches to set up a system of residential and day schools for Indian development and acculturation. At the same time, efforts were made to eradicate First Nations traditional culture. In 1884, a ban was placed on the potlatch ceremony, a ceremony of central importance to some First Nations along the Northwest Coast. The banning of the potlatch served to deepen, yet further, First Nations' resentment of non-native governments (Coates 1998; Slade and Pearlman 1998).

If the intent of such an approach to aboriginal peoples was to enable them to compete in the capitalist economic system, it was a miserable failure. As settler populations increased, racial and cultural discrimination led to the displacement of First Nations in the work force by other ethnic groups. Without significant access to land and resources, most First Nations communities were reduced to a state of poverty that in many cases has continued to this day (Coates 1998).

Throughout the colonization of British Columbia, First Nations made efforts to assert rights to their culture and traditional lands. To this end the Allied Tribes of BC was formed in 1916 as the first province-wide First Nations organization. Within the non-First Nations community, attitudes and politics were slowly changing over time. By the end of the Second World War and the creation of the United Nations, Canadian and international opinion had become increasingly concerned with the idea of universal human rights and likewise sympathetic to the idea of aboriginal rights. The 1982 Canadian Constitution reflected this philosophy by explicitly recognizing “aboriginal treaties and rights” (Coates 1998).

Over the last few decades of the 20th century, BC First Nations thus began to turn increasingly to the courts to assert their rights. By the 1980’s a number of court judgments were ruled in favor of First Nations claimants. A major turning point was reached with the case of *Delgamuukw v. The Queen* in which the Gitksan-Wet’suwet’en asserted their rights to traditional territories. Rejected by the BC courts, the claim was then reviewed by the BC Court of Appeals. The Court of Appeals decision in 1993 changed the course of history by asserting that aboriginal rights remained unextinguished on lands for which no treaties had been signed. Also in 1993, the BC Treaty Commission

involving First Nations, federal and provincial governments established a six stage treaty process to address native claims across the province (Coates 1998; Slade and Pearlman 1998).

Many of the Northwest Coast First Nations filed claims through the Treaty Commission. In contrast, many interior First Nations chose to pursue their claims through the courts. Landmark decisions since 1993 include the signing of the Nisga'a treaty in 1998, which was then ratified in 2000, and the completion of an Interim Agreement with the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council in 1996. This latter agreement led to the creation of a joint venture in Clayoquot Sound known as "Iisaak", involving the Nuu-chah-Nulth First Nations and a major forest company, MacMillan-Bloedel. As a result of concurrent campaigns of First Nations and environmental groups in Clayoquot Sound, Iisaak has pursued a conservation-oriented forest management approach resulting in a major reduction of the AAC within its license area (Wilson 1998).

Although First Nations constitute roughly 3% of the province's population, traditional claims have been asserted to the vast majority of the province's land and resources (Kunin 1998). Through their assertion of legal rights and alliances with international groups supporting indigenous peoples, First Nations now possess a potentially powerful voice in the dispute over the management of BC's land and resources. As will be seen in later chapters of this thesis, they have likewise exerted substantial influence in the development of the FSC in BC.

Forest Certification

Certification, in its broadest sense, is a system of authoritative labeling. As such it is hardly a new social phenomenon. The modern institution of certification, however,

is perhaps unique in its reliance on the standardization, or “depersonalization” of such labeling procedures. Given the separation of consumption from production and the highly specialized nature of knowledge, modern consumers are often unaware of how a product was produced and who was responsible for its production. This lack of awareness exists whether the “product” be a society of “professionals”, a “system”, or a physical object. Certification, in the modern context, has thus developed into a commodified and highly specialized service for investigating chosen attributes of a product, company or service.

The term “third party certification” refers to assessments that are conducted by parties that have no direct involvement in the production of the goods being assessed. It is thought that such parties are less likely to be biased in their decisions (FSC-AC 2002b). In other words, the removal of producers from certification decision-making is presumed to objectify certification. Standardization of the third party process, furthermore, minimizes the use of discretion at the level of implementation, thus presumably replacing the need to trust in individual certification assessors as well. Examples of standardized third party certification range from the identification of French wines, to quality labeling of machine parts, plant and animal pedigrees, and professional accreditation. Auditing procedures for third party certification have commonly been designed and refereed by standard-setting organizations composed of governmental, corporate and other technical “experts” (Hauselmann 1997).

More recently, in the “post-industrial” world, certification has been adapted to address more complex and less easily verifiable consumer concerns such as the “green” labeling of organic produce for the purpose of promoting human and environmental

health. As certification attempts to incorporate more complex social values, to make claims that are more difficult to verify, and to address issues for which the credibility of technical expertise is widely questioned, a diversity of interest groups have begun to demand participation based on the assertion that they hold personal stake in certification outcomes.

Forest certification, developed after the establishment of organic produce labeling, represents perhaps the most widely disputed and complex certification process to date. Forest certification was created to provide a complete social, environmental and economic evaluation of “responsible” forest management. Unlike most institutionalized certification systems, third party or otherwise, support for forest certification originated largely outside of the industry it was designed to assess (Elliott 1999). Differences in the construction of meaning between those in the forest industry and those outside the industry have resulted in intense debate over what constitutes “responsible” forestry. They have resulted furthermore, in conflicting ideas about trustworthy processes for developing such meaning.

The challenge of developing international standards of appropriate conduct has spurred a diversity of institutional prototypes. Ulrich Beck (1999, 37) speaks of two kinds of “arenas or actors” that characterize modern international dialogue. These are “globalization from above (for example, through international treaties and institutions)...[and]...globalization from below (for example, through new transnational actors operating beyond systems of parliamentary politics and challenging established political organizations and groups).” Many of the first attempts to develop international agreement on environmental and forestry issues represent the former approach.

For example, in the 1980s the United Nations created the World Commission on Environment and Development, or the Brundtland Commission, for the purpose of establishing international goals for sustainable development. The result of this commission was an influential document entitled *Our Common Future* (1987), suggesting a vision of a common global citizenry reliant on each others' cooperation. *Our Common Future* describes sustainable development as development that "...meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED 1987, 8). The report also emphasizes the importance of social equity and economic growth in poorer countries, as a critical component of environmental protection. Furthermore, it focuses on the role of states in promoting sustainable development, as outlined in its proposed legal principles listed in Annexe 1 (WCED 1987, 348-351).

The WCED's conceptions of sustainability, including the balancing of environmental, social and economic needs, have since come to serve as foundations of forest certification itself. However, the impetus for certification was not to proceed from state sectors.

In 1986, a year before the release of the Brundtland report, the UN also initiated the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), formed for the dichotomous purposes of reducing tropical deforestation and promoting international trade in tropical timber. Some international environmental organizations suggested that ITTO initiate a certification program for tropical forests. Perhaps due to the reluctance of some of its members, including two tropical countries, ITTO did not engage directly in developing a certification system. The organization did, however, develop some guidelines and

criteria for sustainable tropical forest management and identify some objectives and guidelines for appropriate certification systems (Elliott 1999).

The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), commonly referred to as the Earth Summit in Rio, proved an important spark for further international collaboration on environmental protection. This conference produced a broad set of *Forest Principles*, and a general “agenda” for sustainable development, known as *Agenda 21*. Chapter 11 of Agenda 21 specifically targeted problems of deforestation. Both the Forest Principles and Chapter 11 stressed the need for “internationally agreed upon” methodologies, criteria and guidelines for forest management (Elliott 1999).

Many developed countries began to push for a world commission on forests to establish universal agreement on sustainable forest management. Lesser developed countries largely opposed this idea, perhaps perceiving themselves at a power disadvantage in such negotiations. Instead, a number of different inter-governmental and “expert” processes were formed at sub-global levels for the purpose of developing criteria and indicators across more limited regions (Elliott 1999). These included the Montreal Process (involving non-European temperate and boreal countries), the Helsinki Process (consisting of European countries), the Tarapoto Proposal (covering the Amazon Basin), and others. Following up at the national level, Canada’s Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM) incorporated the results of the Montreal Process into a set of national criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.

Forest certification emerged in the 1990s amidst all these debates over appropriate forestry and appropriate forestry decision-making. In fact, a number of competing

systems emerged, some government-based, some industry-based and others, such as the FSC, involving new institutions largely driven by non-traditional forestry decision-makers. In other words, the quest for “universally agreed upon standards” has led to conflicting social strategies as to how to achieve such agreement.

The following subsections provide an overview of the three forest certification systems, and one related environmental certification system, that are currently active in British Columbia. This begins with a relatively in-depth overview of the FSC, which is the focus of this research. It then provides a brief description of three competing government and industry-backed schemes, the international ISO Environmental Management Systems (EMS) certification, the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) certification, and finally the American Forest and Paper Association’s Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). All of these systems hope to capture the trust of diverse interests. As we will see, however, support for the different systems has remained largely divided along interest group lines.

The Forest Stewardship Council

Environmentalist-backed forest certification can perhaps best be described as a form of “globalization from below”, i.e. involving “new transnational actors operating beyond systems of parliamentary politics and challenging established political organizations and groups” (Beck 1999, 37). As such, it involves a re-definition of what constitutes a trustworthy certification institution.

The FSC emerged out of a melding of global and local efforts, a phenomenon that Beck has termed “glocal” (Beck 1999, 15). By the early 1990’s a number of independent certifying bodies had formed in North America and Europe, each developing their own

locally-based models of eco-forestry certification. In British Columbia, the Silva Forest Foundation adopted this role. As this research will illustrate, the role of initial grass roots certifiers such as Silva had considerable impact on the trust dynamics in the subsequent development of the international FSC. However, the dynamics of trust and control were such that local-global interactions were not always synergistic, as the term “glocal” would imply, but often riddled with conflict as well.

Meanwhile, equally complex social dynamics were shaping forestry interests at the international level. In 1993, the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) and other international environmental groups spearheaded the launch of the Forest Stewardship Council at a meeting in Toronto, Canada. The FSC represents a completely new kind of international organization that bypassed the other inter-governmental and trade forums operating at the time.

The FSC chose to expressly exclude direct government participation, because some supporters perceived government involvement “as an unnecessary and/or unwelcome addition to [existing] government control over forest management” (Elliott 1999; 43). Instead, the FSC was established as a membership organization, open to all “global citizens” and non-governmental organizations supportive of its goals. FSC’s decision-making structure is designed to “balance the power” between the wide range of civilian interests. For this purpose, FSC members and executive bodies are divided into three “Chambers”, meant to represent Environmental, Social and Economic “interests”. These three chambers resemble the widely accepted analogy of sustainability as a balance

of environmental, social and economic factors as iterated in numerous international forums.²

The FSC then overlays a hierarchical pyramid of decision-making levels on this conceptually balanced Chamber system. The top of the pyramid is occupied by the FSC-AC (Asociación Civil), the international decision-making body registered in Oaxaca, Mexico. The FSC-AC is comprised of FSC members, an executive director and staff, and an elected board, with Northern and Southern country delegates assigned to each of the three Chambers. Board decisions require a 2/3 majority and at least one vote from each Chamber. This essentially gives each individual Chamber veto power over any decision. This carefully calibrated balance of power represents a major change from most preceding international decision-making institutions.

The FSC-AC's three Chambers have developed and fully endorsed a set of international certification standards known as the FSC Ten Principles and Criteria (P&C). These FSC P&C define the organization's overarching environmental, economic and social goals for forest management (see Figure 1 below and Appendix A). Commitment to the FSC's Ten Principles serves as the basis for FSC membership.

Figure 1.1 The FSC's Ten Principles

PRINCIPLE #1: COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND FSC PRINCIPLES: Forest management shall respect all applicable laws of the country in which they occur, and international treaties and agreements to which the country is a signatory, and comply with all FSC Principles and Criteria.

PRINCIPLE #2: TENURE AND USE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES: Long-term tenure and use rights to the land and forest resources shall be clearly defined, documented and legally established.

² In British Columbia, the commonly used sustainable development metaphor of a "three-legged stool", stabilized by economic, social and economic "legs", was popularized by the former British Columbia Round Table on the Economy and the Environment as well as the former Commission on Resources and Environment.

PRINCIPLE #3: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS: The legal and customary rights of indigenous peoples to own, use and manage their lands, territories, and resources shall be recognized and respected.

PRINCIPLE #4: COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND WORKER'S RIGHTS: Forest management operations shall maintain or enhance the long-term social and economic well-being of forest workers and local communities.

PRINCIPLE # 5: BENEFITS FROM THE FOREST: Forest management operations shall encourage the efficient use of the forest's multiple products and services to ensure economic viability and a wide range of environmental and social benefits.

PRINCIPLE #6: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT: Forest management shall conserve biological diversity and its associated values, water resources, soils, and unique and fragile ecosystems and landscapes, and, by so doing, maintain the ecological functions and the integrity of the forest.

PRINCIPLE #7: MANAGEMENT PLAN: A management plan—appropriate to the scale and intensity of the operations—shall be written, implemented, and kept up to date. The long term objectives of management, and the means of achieving them, shall be clearly stated.

PRINCIPLE #8: MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT: Monitoring shall be conducted—appropriate to the scale and intensity of forest management—to assess the condition of the forest, yields of forest products, chain of custody, management activities and their social and environmental impacts.

PRINCIPLE 9: MAINTENANCE OF HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE FORESTS: Management activities in high conservation value forests shall maintain or enhance the attributes which define such forests. Decisions regarding high conservation value forests shall always be considered in the context of a precautionary approach.

PRINCIPLE # 10: PLANTATIONS: Plantations shall be planned and managed in accordance with Principles and Criteria 1 - 9, and Principle 10 and its Criteria. While plantations can provide an array of social and economic benefits, and can contribute to satisfying the world's needs for forest products, they should complement the management of, reduce pressures on, and promote the restoration and conservation of natural forests.

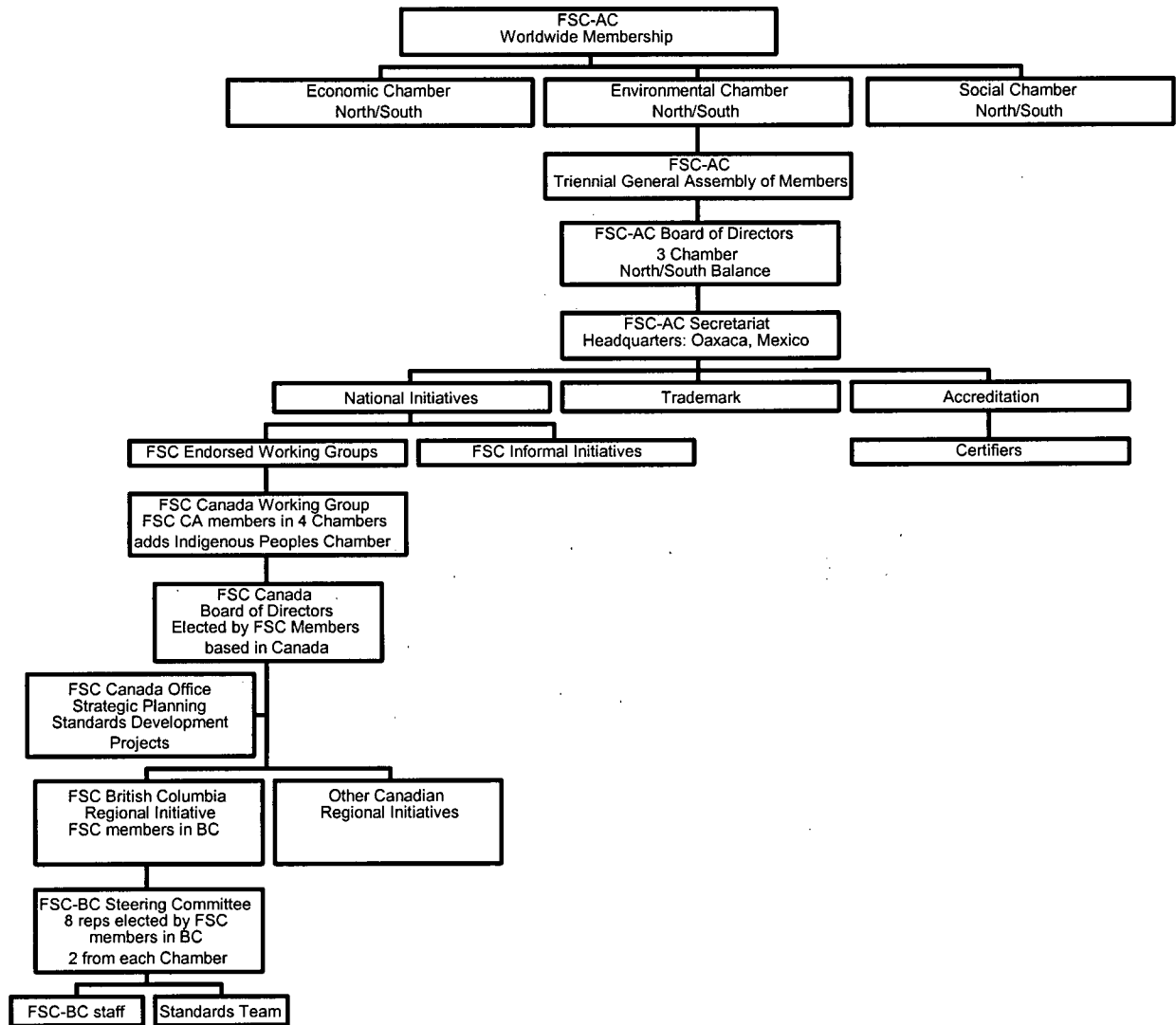
Source: FSC Document 1.2 Revised February 2000

While the FSC was able to come to agreement on a set of general principles and criteria for appropriate forest management, the “devil is in the details”. Many FSC supporters were concerned that these very broad international P&C were not sufficient to ensure their appropriate interpretation on-the-ground. Thus FSC regional standard-setting processes were born, as a step down on the FSC decision-making pyramid. National working groups have been formed in some areas to create regional standards for

the purpose of adapting and augmenting the international Ten Principles to address country-wide concerns.

In larger countries, such as Canada, national working groups have delegated the task of developing regional standards to smaller-scale regional working groups, such as the FSC-BC, which covers the province of British Columbia. All of these Canadian groups have also added a fourth Chamber to their decision-making forums, the Indigenous Peoples Chamber, reflecting the relatively autonomous status of Canadian First Nations in FSC decision-making processes (See Figure 1.2 below and Appendix B).

Figure 1.2 The FSC's Organizational Structure



The FSC-BC's process for developing regional standards includes an FSC-BC Steering Committee with two representatives each in the Environmental, Social, Aboriginal and Economic Chambers. The Steering Committee is responsible for appointing a "technical" Standards Team to translate the forest management priorities established by the Steering Committee into a technically defensible set of written

standards. Once the standards have been drafted, the FSC-BC Steering Committee is then responsible for their final regional-level approval. Approval is achieved by a 3/4 majority vote among the Committee's four Chambers, including at least 1/2 of the members in each FSC-BC Chamber (FSC-BC 1999c). Once the BC standard is approved by the FSC-BC Committee, it must then be sent on for endorsement by the FSC Canada and, lastly, the international FSC-AC.

In addition to developing international and regional standards for forest management certification, the FSC also requires that companies selling products with the FSC label are certified for "Chain of Custody". Chain of Custody certification (CoC) involves the tracking of certified forest products from the forest to their final point of sale. In other words, it constitutes proof that a product sold as certified originates from a certified forest.

The FSC does not itself conduct either forest management or CoC certification assessments. Instead it accredits independent, "third party" certifiers to implement FSC goals. By September of 2001, the FSC had accredited eleven certifiers of diverse organizational types, ranging from the non-profit BC-based Silva Forest Foundation which is focused exclusively on the promotion of alternative forestry, to multi-national, for-profit certification agencies engaging in a wide range of other commercial activities (see Table 1.1 below).

Table 1.1 List of FSC-Accredited Certification Bodies

Country of Origin	Approved Area of Operation	Forest Management	Chain of Custody	Organization
Canada	Canada	√	√	Silva Forest Foundation
Germany	World-wide	√	√	GFA Terra Systems
Italy	World-wide	No	√	ICILA
South Africa	South Africa	No	√	South African Bureau for Standards (SABS)
Switzerland	World-wide	√	√	Institut für Marktökologie IMO
Netherlands	World-wide	√	√	SKAL
United Kingdom	World-wide	No	√	BM TRADA Certification
	World-wide	√	√	SGS Forestry
	World-wide	√	√	Soil Association
United States	World-wide	√	√	Rainforest Alliance SmartWood Program
	World-wide	√	√	Scientific Certification Systems

Source: FSC, Lists of FSC-Accredited Certification Bodies as of September 21, 2001 at http://www.fscoax.org/html/available_documents.html

A number of the above certifiers have sought clients for FSC-accredited certification in BC. As this research will show, the entrance of such a diversity of certifiers had significant effects on trust dynamics within the province.

Meanwhile, the translation of abstract FSC models of decision-making and implementation into the different social dynamics of various regions around the world has had correspondingly very different on-the-ground results. As of April 2003, roughly 36.8 million hectares of forest land world-wide had received FSC-accredited forest certification, distributed across 55 countries (FSC-AC 2003a). The rate in which certification has been adopted, and the size and type of operations certified, has varied considerably between countries and between regions. In Canada, the FSC label has been awarded to 16 forest operations covering roughly 3.1 million hectares. Over 2 million of

these hectares are managed by Tembec Inc.'s Gordon Cosens Forest, a large-scale industrial forestry operation in Ontario which just received FSC-accredited certification in 2003. In contrast, only about 100,000 hectares of forest land has been certified in BC (See Table 1.2 below), consisting entirely of small-scale and low impact forestry operations. In the neighboring US, 96 certificates have been awarded which apply to about 3.8 million hectares of forest land (FSC-AC 2003a), making the average size of certified forest operation in the US considerably smaller than in Canada. Such figures, however, can change quickly. In particular, the certification of large-scale forest companies can result in rapid and dramatic changes to the total land area certified.

What is of most concern in this dissertation, however, are the ways in which trust dynamics shape the environmental, social and economic impact of FSC activities. These dynamics are important in determining the degree to which FSC-accredited certification actually serves to change forest practices, and the affect that the FSC has on the overall ability of different interest groups to resolve forestry conflicts.

Table 1.2 Hectares Certified under the FSC in Canada, and Percentage of Certified Forest to Total Forest Land (including Protected Areas), by Province

Province	Hectares Certified	% of Total Forest Land
BC	99,989	0.2 %
Ontario	2,933,111	5.0 %
Quebec	27,064	Less than 0.1%
Nova Scotia	384	Less than 0.1%
New Brunswick	984	Less than 0.1%
Total for Canada	3,061,532	0.7%

Sources: FSC, Forests Certified by FSC-Accredited Certification Bodies DOC. 5.3.3 April 29, 2003, Available at: http://www.fscoax.org/html/available_documents.html. Natural Resources Canada and Canadian Forest Service. 1999. The State of Canada's Forests.

Other Certification Systems: ISO, CSA and SFI

While the on-the-ground implementation of FSC-accredited certification in BC has proceeded quite slowly, other competing certification processes have attracted the patronage of BC firms. One such alternative certification process is ISO 14001 (Environmental Management Systems) certification. ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is a long-standing international consortium of national standard-setting bodies, first established in 1947 for the purpose of promoting product standardization. ISO first designed a certification process for screw threads, and for many years continued to focus on technical product attributes (Krut and Gleckman 1998). More recently ISO has developed "systems" certification, including the assessment of "quality management systems", known as the ISO 9000 series, and "environmental management systems", known as the ISO 14000 series. Unlike FSC certification, ISO systems certification does not attempt to define the meaning of appropriate management. In other words, ISO does not itself establish the criteria for measuring on-the-ground *performance*. Instead, under ISO, companies create their own management goals within the framework of a certified

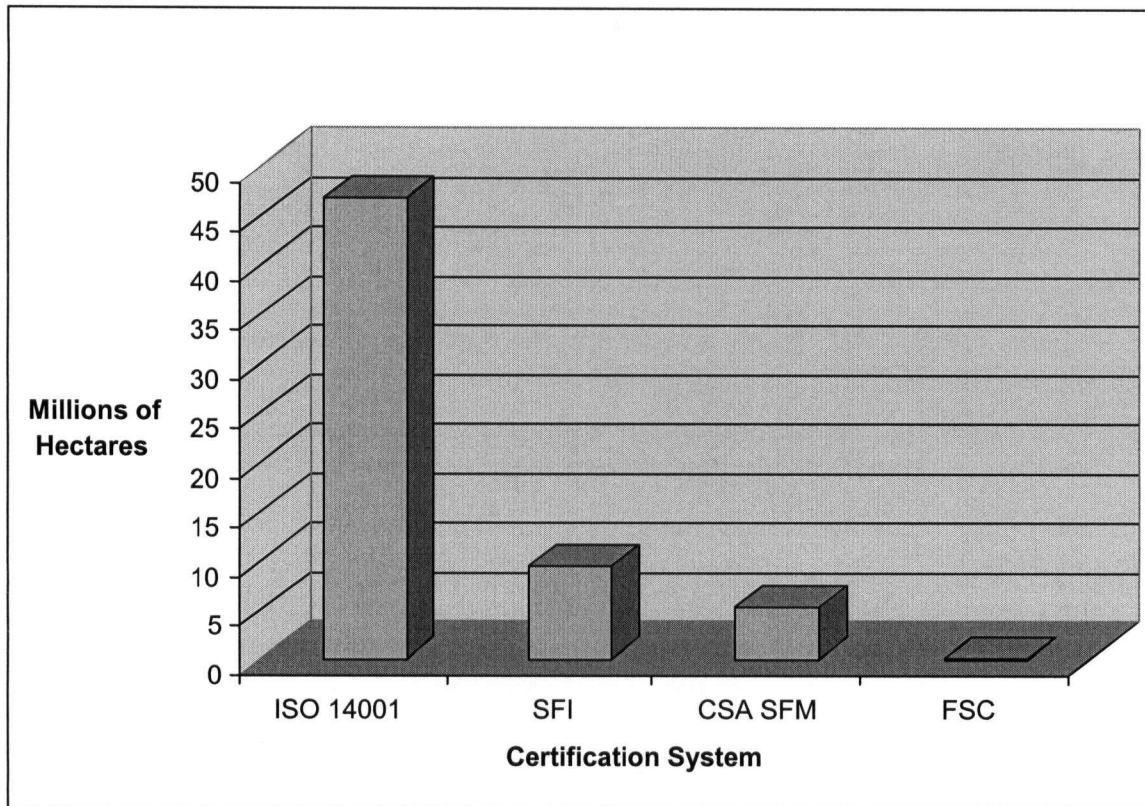
management *system*. The FSC is thus commonly referred to as “performance-based” certification, and ISO as “systems-based” certification (Elliot 1999).

In addition to the FSC and ISO, several national certification schemes have also emerged. In Canada, the quasi-governmental Canadian Standards Association (CSA) produced a system of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) certification (CAN/CSA-Z808/9-96). In the US, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) was formed by an industry association, the American Forest and Paper Association. Both CSA SFM and SFI combine elements of systems-based and performance-based certification. In other words, they establish some uniform priorities for forest management while also assessing a company’s ability to meet their own performance goals.

BC forestry firms have been adopting ISO, CSA and SFI certification at a relatively rapid rate. By 2002, 46, 914, 550 hectares of BC forest lands had been certified under ISO 14001, 9,530,550 hectares under SFI, and 5,330,000 hectares under CSA. In contrast, only 89,130 hectares had been certified under the FSC (MoF 2002) (see Figure 1.3 below). At the same time, none of these industry-backed certification schemes have received significant environmentalist support (Elliott 1999; Joint NGO Statement 2003).

In other words, interest groups remain polarized over the definition of appropriate forest management and appropriate certification systems. This dissertation will illustrate how trust dynamics have presented the FSC with numerous challenges in achieving its goal of establishing “a worldwide standard of recognized and respected Principles of Forest Stewardship” (FSC-AC 2000).

Figure 1.3 Area Certified in BC in 2002, by Certification System



Source: MoF BC Forest Management Certification Status Report. December, 2002.
Available at <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/het/certification/>

Other Research on Forest Certification

The issues raised in this thesis regarding the social negotiation of forest certification have been addressed within various academic fields and literatures. This section will briefly introduce some of these other approaches, and situate them in relation to the theoretical framework of this research.

Forest certification can be viewed as a new form of governance, or policy-setting, that has originated outside of traditional government and industry decision-making spheres. Cashore et al. (forthcoming) have taken such an approach in their analysis of certification activities within various regions in North America and Europe. Specifically,

these authors have examined how macro-level economic and political factors shape the strategies that different forest certification systems use to gain “legitimacy”, in the marketplace.

“Legitimacy” in the Weberian tradition, refers to the social granting of “authority” to make rules. The importance of legitimacy is grounded in Weber’s conception of “meaningful social action”, whereby social interactions are understood as resulting from the subjective meaning they hold for individual actors. Applying the concept of meaning to social structure, Weber observes how societies assign “roles” to their members, which signify that those individuals hold the “legitimate” authority to carry out given tasks. Social meaning thereby creates a distinction between simple “power”, i.e. the ability to compel others to cooperate against their wishes, and legitimate authority, whereby others willingly cede control to given individuals playing accepted social roles (Parsons 1947). The social roots of legitimate authority are diverse and variable, and may include “tradition, rational belief in an absolute value, emotional certainty, or its establishment in a manner accepted as legal” (Martindale 1960, 390).

Weber was particularly concerned with the functioning of legitimacy within the context of formal governments and capitalist markets (Parsons 1947). Cashore (2002) has drawn on theoretical developments in organizational sociology in order to apply the concept of legitimacy to non-governmental forest certification organizations. The idea of legitimacy thus provides the author with a framework for understanding the competitive strategies that non-state, market-driven governance systems employ to achieve viability.

Trust, the focus of this dissertation, is a concept both related to, and distinct from, legitimacy. Like legitimacy, trust is grounded in meaningful social action. In other

words, trust exists in a context of social meaning and trustworthy “action”, and may result in the voluntary ceding of control to trusted individuals. In contrast to legitimacy, however, trust is more firmly rooted in relations of either symbolic or material *exchange*. Trust is not restricted to the assessment of an individual’s likelihood of fulfilling defined social “roles”, but rather suggests a more dynamic, vulnerable psychological state within which multiple exchange partners negotiate the parameters of their relationship and construct new meanings. An individual can grant another legitimacy without implying any reciprocal action on his/her part. Relationships of trust and trustworthiness, however, imply a shared commitment to cooperation, and a shared vulnerability.

Thus this dissertation’s topic of trust has led to a primary consideration of interpersonal and inter-group relations between actors participating in FSC processes in BC, and how these relations interact with the institutional structures of the FSC itself. Legitimacy, in contrast, suggests a more macro-level dynamic which involves larger scale societal designations of institutionalized authority. Thus, in comparison with this study’s micro-level analysis of trust dynamics *within* the FSC, Cashore et al. have engaged in a more macro-level analysis of how larger scale economic and political factors outside the FSC influence the FSC’s ability to achieve legitimacy among different interest groups, as well as shape the FSC’s legitimating strategies.

Cashore (2002) has drawn on the work of organizational theorist Suchman (1995), in developing a framework for examining legitimacy dynamics in certification. This framework identifies three types of legitimacy: pragmatic, moral, and cognitive (“cognitive” in this context meaning that which has become accepted without question).

Of these, pragmatic legitimacy is presumably the most volatile and short-lived and cognitive legitimacy is the most stable.

Cashore et al. (forthcoming) have looked at interest group involvement and financial support of FSC regional processes as evidence of the level of legitimacy the FSC holds for environmentalists and supply side actors (i.e. forestry firms, retailers). The type of legitimacy was then identified through interviews and behavioural evidence. The authors found that environmentalists in different regions have consistently granted the FSC “moral” legitimacy, while the FSC’s legitimacy among supply side actors has varied significantly between regions, and is mostly limited to “pragmatic legitimacy”.

Cashore et al. have then identified four central factors that appear to influence FSC’s legitimacy among supply side actors. These are “a region’s degree of market internationalization, the degree to which forestry practices in a region are seen as a ‘problem’ on the policy agenda, the structure of a region’s forest industry (in terms of land ownership fragmentation and industry concentration), and the characteristics of FSC’s competitor programs” (Cashore et al. forthcoming).

By focusing at the macro economic and political level, however, Cashore et al. do not consider how the inter-personal and structural decision-making dynamics within FSC regional processes may themselves influence interest group support of FSC-accredited certification. Perhaps also consistent with their macro-level focus, Cashore et al. have equated FSC’s legitimacy with the level of interest group participation in regional standard-setting processes, rather than with the level of on-the-ground adoption of FSC-accredited certification (McDermott and Hoberg forthcoming). This suggests an

assumption that policy-makers have more influence in shaping support for FSC-accredited certification than do the on-the-ground implementers of certification.

In contrast, this dissertation's more micro-level focus on trust dynamics within the FSC, offers an alternative perspective that should shed light on rather different dimensions of FSC dynamics. It involves a look behind the curtain of legitimacy politics, to consider how trust or distrust and a sense of shared or conflicting meanings are formed in the first place between interest groups, policy makers and implementers. This dissertation contends, furthermore, that these more micro-level processes, including the on-the-ground dynamics of implementing certification, are critical to understanding the phenomenon of FSC-accredited certification as it exists today.

Of the research thus far conducted on FSC-accredited certification, Cashore et al.'s examination of legitimacy dynamics is perhaps the most closely related to the topic of this dissertation. Other scholars, however, have offered yet different lenses with which to view the social dynamics of forest certification. For example, Meidinger (1991) has elected to view forest certification as a form of environmental law emerging out of "civil society". From this perspective Meidinger has evaluated the FSC according to criteria commonly applied to law, i.e. certification's efficacy, adaptability, coherence and legitimacy (Meidinger 1991). This dissertation will add to such analyses, by examining how interest group trust dynamics may actually play a role in creating and shaping certification's "laws" themselves.

Elliott (1999) has approached forest certification from a political science perspective, looking at why different actors support or oppose different forest certification systems, and how these different certification systems may or may not

contribute to improving forest practices. Elliott explores these questions using an “advocacy coalition framework”, which views policies as socially constructed and negotiated among and between coalitions of political actors. According to this view, policy change is most likely to occur when a large enough core of policy actors have “learned” a new way of defining and resolving policy “problems”. Elliott tests a number of hypotheses regarding the social conditions in which such policy oriented learning is likely to take place, and examines whether forest certification activities in Indonesia, Canada, and Sweden support or disprove these hypotheses. He also discusses evidence that policy oriented learning and change happen more quickly in private sector arenas, where many certification systems originate, than in the public sphere. Elliott further argues, however, that changes in the public policy arena are sometimes necessary to allow forest certification to meet its own goals.

My research, in contrast to Elliott’s, has chosen to focus on the social relations of actors most directly involved in FSC decision-making in BC. This study does not attempt to address how FSC activities influence and are influenced by other policy-making spheres, including existing governments. Since the FSC has prohibited direct government involvement in FSC decision-making, government attitudes about FSC-accredited certification lie largely outside the boundaries of this research.

Consumers are another social group that is not addressed in this study, but that is clearly important to the long-term survival of FSC-accredited forest certification. Consumers were omitted from this research, in part, due to the assumption that environmental group support of the FSC is an important factor in shaping consumer trust.

By studying the attitudes of interest group members active in the FSC, therefore, this research should provide clues as to the FSC's long-term viability in the marketplace.

Various research has been conducted on consumer attitudes towards forest product certification, and the results provide some backing for the importance of interest group attitudes in shaping consumer behaviour. A number of studies have looked at consumer "willingness to pay" for certified forest products, which provide some clues as to general consumer trust in certified product claims (Biggsby and Ozanne 2002; Forsythe et al. 1999; Irland 1993; Ozanne and Smith 1998; Ozanne and Vlosky 2003; Winterhalter 1994; WWF 1991). In most of these studies, the majority of consumers surveyed indicated a willingness to pay more for certified wood. For example, Forsythe et al. (1999) focused their study on BC consumers in the home improvement market, and found that 67.3% of respondents indicated a willingness to pay a premium for certified wood.³

Ozanne et al. have added to these analyses, by specifically exploring the issue of consumer trust (Biggsby and Ozanne 2002; Ozanne and Vlosky 2003). They found that consumers in both New Zealand and the US generally place the most trust in environmental non-governmental organizations to verify "sustainable" forest management practices. In the US, third party certifiers were the second most trusted group, followed by governments, and then industry, which ranked as the least trusted group. These findings support the assumption made in this dissertation that environmental group trust in FSC-accredited certification is an important determinant of consumer trust.

³ No distinction was made between products certified by the FSC versus other forest certification systems.

In sum, there are many possible approaches for researching the social dynamics of FSC activities in BC. Forest certification can be viewed as a new form of non-state governance, as environmental law, as a form of political advocacy, and as a marketing strategy. I have chosen to add a further perspective to our understanding of FSC activities, however, by focusing specifically on the inter-personal and inter-group dynamics of trust and distrust among participants most active within the FSC in BC, as well as on the effect of FSC's decision-making procedures on these dynamics. In so doing, it should help to fill a significant gap in existing research, regarding how social relations within FSC processes themselves serve to construct the meaning of appropriate forest management, and contribute to perceptions of interest group commonality and difference. The following section will now outline how this analysis will be organized.

Organization of the Dissertation

This chapter provided a brief introduction to my primary research questions, "How is (or is not) trust built in a context of conflicting values and a diversity of knowledge?" It also included an historical overview of forestry in British Columbia, highlighting the ways in which this larger social context has shaped relations between the different forestry interest groups discussed throughout this dissertation. This overview of forestry was followed by an introduction to the various forest and environmental management certification systems that have thus far unfolded in North America. The chapter then discussed some of the other theoretical work that has been done on forest certification, and the contribution that this dissertation makes to this existing body of literature. Although the focus of this dissertation will be on the FSC system in BC, this

chapter helps to situate the case study within broader regional, national and international narratives.

Chapter Two expands upon the theoretical framework of this research, exploring the relationships between personal trust, group trust, and trust in abstract systems. The theoretical discussion in this chapter is interdisciplinary, although it draws most heavily from the fields of sociology and organizational science. It provides a theoretical basis for understanding the conflicting demands of creating shared values and controlling distrusted parties in global exchange. It also examines forest certification as an example of a new kind of trust institution epitomizing the tensions between personal trust and trust in abstract systems. In the context of this theoretical discussion, this chapter also outlines a series of research subquestions which will organize the analysis of the primary research question.

Chapter Three outlines the research methodology that informs this study. These methods include extensive participant observation, review of written records, in-depth qualitative interviews and a written questionnaire.

Chapter Four looks at the evolution of FSC-accredited forest certification in British Columbia, placing certification's trust dynamics in their historical context. It examines how forest certification began as a grass-roots initiative of a BC-based non-profit organization, involving the cooperation of a group of relatively like-minded supporters. This early certification initiative targeted small-scale woodlots practicing relatively low-impact, non-industrial forestry.

The chapter then explains how international environmental boycott campaigns exerted pressure on BC forest companies to adopt the internationally recognized FSC-

accredited certification system. It examines how the entrance of the larger-scale FSC, with its dichotomy of pluralistic and impersonal decision-making structures, altered the earlier trust dynamics surrounding forest certification in the province.

Chapter Five then examines trust in FSC-BC standard-setting, as well as the willingness of different interest groups to cooperate with the FSC-BC standards. This involves an in-depth look at interviewee perspectives as they shed light on how FSC-BC's combination of pluralist decision-making and technical standards-writing impacted trust in FSC processes, as well as trust between interest groups. This chapter also includes an analysis of Draft 3 of the FSC-BC standards themselves, viewing the standards as an outcome of regional-level trust dynamics.

Chapter Six explores the dynamics of trust surrounding the certifiers and forest managers charged with implementing certification standards. This includes an analysis of trust in FSC's certifier accreditation procedures, which are based on a model of impersonal trust. It also includes an examination of trust in the "lived experience" of implementing certification, as it is viewed and practiced by specific individuals and organizations within BC.

This dissertation finishes with Chapter Seven, involving conclusions and recommendations. This chapter summarizes what the analysis of FSC activities in BC reveals about the dynamics of trust within a context of conflicting values and diverse knowledge. It also provides some recommendations for how decision-making structures and processes might be improved to elicit both trust and trustworthiness among all parties involved. This is followed by a discussion of other studies that have addressed the social dynamics of negotiating appropriate forestry and how these other studies might

contribute to future research. The dissertation then concludes with a final summary of the research questions and subquestions, along with proposed answers to these questions based on the findings of this research.

Chapter 2

Trust: A Theoretical Framework

How is (or is not) trust formed in the context of conflicting values and diverse knowledge? It is the contention of this dissertation that in order to understand the dynamics of trust among the diversity of forestry interests in BC, and amidst conflicting knowledge of the nature of appropriate forest management, forest certification requires a much deeper and multi-faceted understanding of trust and distrust than that which has informed conventional certification decision-making institutions. This chapter reviews and critiques the existing literature on trust, in order to develop a new framework for understanding trust and distrust appropriate to the new, and rapidly evolving phenomenon of FSC-accredited certification in BC.

The following section starts with a discussion of the general nature of trust and distrust, particularly as they function in the context of inter-personal relations. It introduces and critiques a rational choice view of trust, suggesting that trust is fundamentally a more socially contingent phenomenon. This socially contingent view leads into a discussion of the influence of group dynamics on trust and distrust, and how such dynamics have led to the development of pluralist decision-making procedures. The chapter then provides a theoretical analysis of trust in impersonal, rationalistic systems, which constitute the institutional form traditionally most strongly associated with certification. The research subquestions are reiterated as they emerge from this theoretical framework of trust.

Personal Trust and Distrust

Trust has been identified by numerous theorists as essential to functioning individuals (Couch 1996; Rosenberg et al. 1995; Rotter 1967; etc.), as well as flourishing societies (Earle and CvetKovich 1995; Fukuyama 1995; Giddens 1990; Misztal 1996; etc.). While there is considerable agreement on the importance of trust, there is far less consensus on what precisely trust is, and how it is built in either inter-personal relationships or larger-scale systems.

From a utilitarian perspective, trust's primary "function" is to promote cooperation between exchange partners (Gambetta 1988; Tyler and Kramer 1996). In the case of forest certification in BC, this means that if there is mutual trust between people involved and concerned with certification, then certifiers will be more likely to address the concerns of forestry interest groups and forestry interest groups will be more likely to support the decisions of certifiers. Trust also implies some degree of *commitment* to cooperation over time. In other words, it is a measure of another's willingness to cooperate even when it is not clearly in their short-term interests to do so (Gambetta 1988). Thus trust implies a sense that the trustee is committed to cooperating despite any contradictory pressures within a single transaction.

While theorists suggest that trust can promote cooperation, it is also argued that cooperation does not necessarily *require* trust. For example, cooperation may occur because the benefits of cooperating outweigh the risk involved, because other options are lacking, or because cooperation is achieved by force or control. Thus, for example, environmentalists may blockade a logging operation and force a forest company to suspend timber harvesting, or police may forcibly remove those same blockaders. Trust,

however, requires cooperation (Gambetta 1988). Thus in cases where there is a history of uncooperative behaviour, such as between forestry interest groups in BC, the result is likely to be *distrust* between the interests groups involved.

Distrust is different from a lack of trust, in that it is based on the perception that the distrusted party is driven by bad intentions. Distrust, it has been suggested, is more easily developed than trust, since proof of untrustworthiness requires only a single incident, whereas full proof of trustworthiness requires complete knowledge of another's behaviour (Gambetta 1988; Hardin 2002; Luhmann 1979). For the same reason, distrust is relatively hard to overcome, once it is formed. Where there is distrust, exchange partners will attempt to control each other's behaviour. A *lack* of trust, on the other hand, implies a lack of any knowledge of another's trustworthiness. Once knowledge is gained about specific exchange partners, a lack of trust is replaced by some level of trust or distrust.

The likelihood of either trusting or distrusting behaviour in any given context, depends on the level of perceived uncertainty or "risk" in a given transaction (Gambetta 1988). Most forestry interest groups in BC have a high stake in the outcome of forest management decisions. For example, First Nations are concerned with their aboriginal rights, loggers with their livelihood, and environmentalists with the protection of fragile ecosystems. Thus considerable trust is required for interest groups to willingly rely on each other's voluntary cooperation regarding a number of key forest management issues. Likewise, where risk is high, distrust can develop very easily if other parties do not demonstrate an adequate level of care for the ideas or things which are valued.

FSC-accredited forest certification, in fact, could be described as founded on distrust, i.e. distrust of government and industry. Its *raison d'être* is the belief that status quo forest practices are environmentally, socially and economically inappropriate. This has led to a struggle for control over the behaviour of the forest industry, an interest group that in BC and other regions around the world has historically held a considerable degree of decision-making power over forest management.

The extent to which power is distributed unequally, further affects perceived risk, in that more powerful parties are, by definition, capable of coercing others to cooperate. Thus, for example, BC's large-scale forest industry may have the economic and political power at their disposal to log in watersheds where there are outstanding First Nations claims or species at risk. In other words, the forest industry has limited dependence on the voluntary cooperation of environmentalists and First Nations. The interests of environmentalists and First Nations, on the other hand, are profoundly vulnerable to the actions of the forest industry. Thus non-industry groups require particularly high levels of trust to risk cooperating with forest companies. Given the stakes involved, any violation of this trust, can lead to high levels of distrust.

Focusing on the logical connections between trust, distrust, and risk, some theorists have proposed a rational choice definition of trust as an "informed gamble" or probability game in which the odds that another will act in a manner benefiting the trustor are perceived to exceed the risk of betrayal (Gambetta 1988; Tyler and Kramer 1996). One might expect, then, that rational individuals or businesses would seek to minimize their need to trust unless the costs of doing so outweighed the benefits. However, the analysis of costs and benefits becomes more complicated if one considers that trust is not

a finite resource but rather one that increases with use (Gambetta 1988). Thus building trust at short-term risk may prove the least expensive means of reducing risk over the long term.

Russell Hardin (2002) further elaborates on trust as part of a long-term, strategic interaction. He emphasizes, however, the importance of strategy on both sides of the exchange, i.e. of the trustor choosing to risk in trusting and the trustee choosing to invest in behaving in a *trustworthy* way with the trustor. The motivation for such an investment, according to Hardin, is the desire to form a longer-term, trust-based and mutually cooperative relationship between exchange partners. In the context of certification, this would mean that a trust-based relationship between certifiers and interest groups, for example, requires that both interest groups and certifiers risk in trusting each other, and that they both commit to behaving in a way that is considered to be trustworthy.

This underlying motivation to trust, according to Hardin, is founded in rational choice. It is based on a sense of “encapsulated interest”, i.e. a belief that the trustee will take on the interests of the trustor as his/her own. It is a rational calculation that is made in light of cognitive, i.e. knowledge-based, evidence of another’s incentives to be trustworthy.

Trust itself is not a strategic act. The trustor does not choose whether or not to trust, but rather trusts or doesn’t trust based on available information. Thus interest groups don’t choose to trust certifiers, but rather either trust them or not based on the evidence available about their willingness to cooperate.

While people do not choose to trust, i.e. to *believe* in another's trustworthiness, people's *actions* on both sides of the exchange are strategic, in that they depend on perceived incentives. According to Hardin, the underlying incentive for the trustor to take risks in trusting, and the choice of the trustee to be trustworthy, are both based on the future relationship the parties hope to form with each other. If both sides are aiming for a more lasting, reciprocal relationship they will employ more trusting and trustworthiness than if they're content to remain as strangers, or opposing parties (Hardin 2002).

Translated into the realm of certification, this means that both interest groups and certifiers, for example, must have incentives to invest in trusting relationships with each other. The reputation of certifiers relies on the trust of interest groups. Interest group reputation, however, does not rely on the trust of certifiers. This suggests that interest groups have less incentives to risk trusting certifiers. In other words, interest groups may try to reduce their vulnerability to certifier betrayal by controlling the behaviour of certifiers, rather than allow themselves to be vulnerable. Exceptions to this dynamic may occur, however, if an interest group is seeking a particularly close and cooperative relationship with an individual certifier.

Likewise Ingold (2000) speaks of trust-based relationships as a type of exchange where both sides choose to be vulnerable to each other. These relationships thus involve elements of both autonomy (choice) and dependence (vulnerability). Any sense that one side is attempting to coerce the other, undermines trust. In other words, once again, the issue of power arises. The appearance of coercion, i.e. control that is not voluntarily accepted by both parties, undermines trust. This is evidenced in the struggle for control that has long dominated relationships between distrusting BC forestry interest groups.

I would add to both Hardin and Ingold's perspectives, that the amount and nature of the vulnerability necessary to promote trust depends on the nature of the relationship. The "nature" of the relationship, furthermore, is determined to some extent by social norms. For example, what constitutes trustworthy behaviour on the part of an environmentalist in a town hall meeting, is normatively distinct from trustworthy behaviour towards a friend or lover. In this sense, trust-based relationships also involve normative and even emotional considerations.

Let us examine, then, a more normative definition of trust and trustworthiness. Misztal defines trust as the "belief that another's intended action will be appropriate from our point of view" (Misztal 1996, 24). In other words, she acknowledges the normative quality of trust as grounded in the trustor's views of "appropriate" behavior.

Yet this definition is somewhat one-sided. It does not provide any guidelines for what motivates the trustee or makes him/her appear trustworthy. According to Misztal's definition the trustee will be equally trusted, whether they are motivated by fear, self-interest or self-sacrifice, as long as they intend to behave appropriately.

Instead, I would argue that normative issues are involved on both sides of the exchange, i.e. in both trust and trustworthiness. The belief that another will cooperate out of fear or self-interest, reduces uncertainty and thus risk in an exchange. It does not, I would argue, embody the full meaning of trust in the individuals or organizations themselves. I define trust, instead, as the belief that someone will behave appropriately, even at some sacrifice to their self-interest. The appearance of a purely strategic motive for gaining another's trust, in contrast, does not constitute trustworthiness. Instead, for both trustor and trustee, trust is grounded in social meaning, including a sense of shared

values. Shared values and shared interests, in fact, are not entirely separable, but rather are mutually reinforcing. Thus both shared meaning and shared interests provide incentives to invest in trust-based relationships.

Earle and Cvetkovich (1995) also argue that a perception of shared values is central to trust. More specifically, Cvetkovich uses the term "salient value similarity" to refer to values that are *salient* to issues of trust in a given situation (Cvetkovich 1999). For example, trust between environmentalists and forest managers undergoing certification requires a sense of shared values *regarding forest management*. These parties may both practice vegetarianism or value democracy, but this is not enough to ensure they will trust each other on the issue of forest certification.

In summary, trust involves an assessment of another's rational as well as non-rational incentives to be trustworthy. Trust, however, is not the only means for promoting cooperation in a context of uncertainty. Thus a certification organization's ability to verify good forest practices for consumers and interest groups may depend on a variety of factors, with trust being just one. Written certification standards serve to define the boundaries of acceptable certification decisions. Certifiers can further reduce uncertainty through increasing the transparency of their actions and decisions, i.e. improving the flow of information about forest management practices. A certification system can also provide incentives for obedience to the priorities of a particular interest group, regardless of the beliefs of certifiers or forest managers. Incentives that motivate conformance can be both positive or regulatory (as in "carrots or sticks"). To the extent that certification standards, greater availability of information, and effective incentive structures serve to reduce uncertainty, these may also increase interest group and/or

consumer confidence in certification. According to the above definition of trust, however, they are not sufficient to create a perception of trustworthiness. Instead, in order for certification organizations to appear trustworthy they must appear to voluntarily behave in a way that both they and the supporters of certification agree is appropriate. Motive, in this case, is central. This motive may include encapsulated interest but extends also to the subjugation of self to socially agreed upon goals or "shared meaning".

How, then, is this shared meaning formed? Berger and Luckmann, in their book, *The Social Construction of Reality*, state that the construction of meaning occurs in the shifting context of thought, action and interaction (1966). Thus, meaning is never fully formed or static but rather is continually created and re-created through the interpretation of new information. Berger and Luckmann speak of the fundamental influence of interpersonal relations on an individual's construction of meaning. Basically, people look to each other when deciding what to think. Thus the formation of shared meaning that creates the foundation for trust, is based on communication.

Ingold, in his book *The Perception of the Environment*, suggests that non-human, environmental factors also contribute to the construction of meaning (2000). He speaks of the importance of "livelihood", i.e. how one goes about the business of physically surviving, as one critical type of lived experience that shapes one's views of nature. Thus the different views that First Nation trappers might have of the forest, as compared to environmental lobbyists, is a matter not only of cultural differences, but also of their different physical experiences. As a result, First Nations trappers may sometimes hold perspectives that are closer to non-First Nations trappers, than they are to First Nations environmental lobbyists. Likewise, the development of "skills" involves learning how to

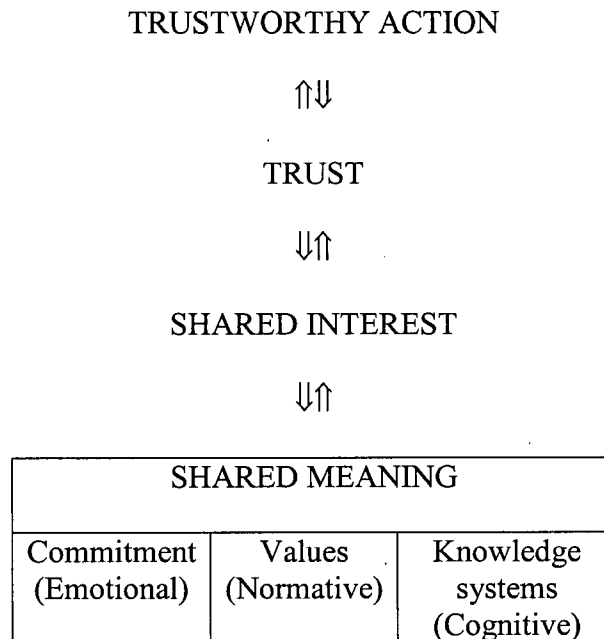
interact with one's surrounding environment. Thus logging produces a different knowledge of the environment than backcountry trekking. Finally, one's "dwelling", whether it be an urban environment or a remote forested area, shapes the meaning that these surroundings have to a person. Thus rural communities experience environmental conditions such as drought, or the threat of forest fire, differently than do urban dwellers.

In sum, meaning is an emergent phenomenon embedded in the complex entirety of social and biological experience. As a result, I would argue, meaning encompasses all aspects of human beliefs, both rational and non-rational. In other words, meaning is multi-dimensional, including cognitive, normative and emotional components. Cognitive meaning involves a knowledge system or framework for understanding the world. In terms of forest management, this could include a belief that forest management should conserve "natural" ecosystem functions, however defined. Normative meaning includes the values one assigns to things, such as the value of an endangered species, or the value of a woodworker's identity. Emotional meaning includes one's commitment to certain values or beliefs, such as the commitment to protecting endangered species or defending one's identity or source of livelihood.

Now if shared meaning creates a foundation for trust, I would suggest the reverse is also true. Communication that leads to the development of shared meaning is more likely to occur among those who share interests and trust each other. The ability to trust, lessens the perceived risk to the trustee of engaging in trustworthy behavior, and thus increases the likelihood that s/he will behave in a trustworthy manner. The following model illustrates why this may be, demonstrating how shared meaning, trust and

trustworthy action build upon and reinforce each other. The two-directional arrows indicate factors that are mutually reinforcing.

Figure 2.1 Trust and Shared Meaning



Shared meaning, however, does not necessarily create trust. For example, one could share the view that it is a “dog eat dog world” and therefore investments in trust or trustworthiness merely invite exploitation. Likewise, shared meaning may dictate suspicion of “outsiders”, such as non-family members or other interest groups. In such cases, shared meaning may create distrust. Given that this dissertation is specifically interested in how trust is, or is not, built among a large and diverse segment of the population of BC, this next section will therefore examine how larger-scale group dynamics may themselves affect the development of trust.

Group Trust and Pluralism

Thus far we have focused on the development of trust between inter-dependent individuals. Forest Stewardship Council certification, however, emerged out of a generalized social distrust of the forest industry. It involved environmentalists and other interest groups developing certification standards meant to govern the behavior of forest managers. What do theories of trust have to say about larger scale interest group dynamics?

The ties that bind some individuals into trusting relationships through the development of shared meaning, may also serve to exclude others. Putnam, in his book on American civic life entitled *Bowling Alone*, has coined the term "bonding" to refer to the development and maintenance of relationships of reciprocity and shared meaning through solidarity and the exclusion of outsiders. "Bridging", in contrast, refers to cooperative communications and acts of reciprocity that cross between interest groups (Putnam 2000, 22-23). Thus, for example, solidarity and shared meaning about appropriate forest management among environmentalists may be reinforced by emphasizing and perhaps expanding upon perceived differences between environmentalists and forest industrialists. The very categorization of "interest groups", in fact, thus serves to emphasize difference.

Earle and Cvetkovich use the term "pluralism" to characterize decision-making processes that emphasize bonding over bridging. Pluralism involves the division of decision-making authority among distinct groups of interests, where each interest is allowed the opportunity to promote and defend its needs. This presumably leads to a "balance of power", where each group involved can be assured of its ability to influence

decisions. People can therefore trust in the pluralist *system* to consider their needs, without necessarily trusting in the other interest groups involved in the system. In other words, pluralism assumes that people can trust in the decision-making system, without engaging in what I call *personal trust*, i.e. trust in specific individuals and/or groups of people. Thus pluralism constitutes a kind of “abstract system” presumably disembedded from the social relations between the different interests participating in the system.

The FSC-BC certification standard-setting process follows the pluralist model of decision-making, involving its four interest group chambers, i.e. the Environmental, Social, Economic and Indigenous Peoples Chambers. These chambers have been established as a means to balance power between different interests (FSC 2000). Presumably the balancing of power between chambers removes the need for trust, since each side is empowered to assert its own interests. The research will explore whether or not the FSC-BC’s pluralist Chamber system, as an example of a formalized, abstractly-based system, is actually disembedded from personal trust (or distrust) by addressing the subquestion 1) What role, if any, does personal trust / distrust play in abstract systems?

Some theorists have argued that bonding is detrimental to successful decision-making in modern, multi-cultural contexts (Earle and Cvetkovich 1995; Hollinger 1992; Fukuyama 1995). Earle and Cvetkovich claim that pluralism, by identifying and separating interests, serves to solidify group divisions and “protect and perpetuate particular existing cultures” (Hollinger 1992, pp 83-84) at the expense of developing common understandings. Thus, according to these authors, pluralism is inherently factionalistic, and actually serves to *undermine* trust.

Earle and Cvetkovich argue, furthermore, that since meaning and “shared values” are neither static nor ever fully formed, it is possible to avoid bonding behaviour and choose instead to focus on developing creative solutions that will better meet the interests of all parties. This creative problem-solving requires the willingness to take social “risks” and likewise invest in what Earle and Cvetkovich call “cosmopolitan trust”. They claim that interest group bonding is, in effect, “backwards looking” (1995).

As the case study of FSC-BC will show, however, the risks of engaging in “cosmopolitan trust” can be very high, unless the trusted party has equal incentives to cooperate. Very often interest groups have differing levels of power in terms of their ability to advance their own interests. Those with more power, by definition have less need to cater to another’s interests. Historically, the BC forest industry as a whole has held much more power to define forest practices than have other forestry interest groups (Marchak et al. 1999; Rajala 1998; Wilson 1998). For a task such as writing certification standards meant to be applicable to all of the diverse companies, organizations and individuals in BC, the perception that “industry” has more power might be reason enough not to trust industry as a social group. The FSC-BC in fact followed a pluralist model precisely for the reason of balancing power between interest groups, presumably assuring each party a voice in decisions. This research, therefore, will consider how issues of power may affect trust in pluralist processes. This leads to research subquestion 2) What role, if any, does power play in trust in abstract systems?

Given the possible influence of personal trust and power in shaping pluralist systems, has the use of a pluralist system actually built trust in the FSC? In order to

address this issue, this research will explore research subquestion 3) Do abstract systems build trust?

Impersonal Systems

Thus far, this chapter has discussed trust in FSC decision-making processes as embedded in socially constructed meaning. The FSC's pluralist system, whatever its faults, could be seen as acknowledging the underlying value-based decisions that are inherent in developing criteria for "responsible" forest management. However, writing standards is not simply about defining values, but also about translating them into prescriptions for forest management.

The FSC-AC and the FSC-BC have approached the *implementation* of values, i.e. the "technical" drafting of standards and the implementation of certification, as a separate challenge from value formulation. In other words, they have handled the question of how shared goals are formed and how one can trust others to implement those goals, as two entirely separate questions. If we view meaning—which includes commitment, values and knowledge systems—as socially and experientially constructed, however, and as forming a basis for the development of trust, then it would appear that the social separation of value formation and implementation may in fact undermine the development of trust. This is because the separation of standard-setters from implementers removes opportunities for the development of trust and shared meaning around the goals of the FSC. Problems, in other words, arise with increasing social distance between trustors and trustees. For example, while auditors may have sufficient knowledge of a client company's trustworthiness and incentive to cooperate, regardless of some possible value differences, it is quite another matter for an outside interest group

to trust auditors who hold conflicting values and also possess independent authority to make decisions. The judgment of auditors becomes even more critical to outside interests, if the company undergoing the audit is perceived as holding inappropriate value priorities.

In the process of conducting certification assessments, therefore, concerned interests must rely on the voluntary cooperation of two categories of implementers. The first is certifiers. Given the limited number of certifiers operating in BC at the time of this research, research participants are likely to have had some familiarity with each of the certifiers and thus to possess some level of either trust or distrust in these certifiers. The second group of implementers involved in certification, are the forest managers undergoing certification assessments. Since concerned parties are unable to know in advance which forest managers will undergo certification assessments, a lack of trust, rather than trust or distrust, is likely to play a larger role in predicting the behaviour of future forest managers who will undergo certification. This research will therefore explore the issue of trust in implementers, by addressing subquestion 4) What role does personal trust / lack of trust / distrust play in systems implementation?

Taking the separation of standard-setting and implementation as a given, for the moment, what might be the components of trust specific to the implementation of certification standards? I would suggest that implementation addresses *instrumental* qualities of trustworthiness. Let us, therefore, first examine some theoretical perspectives on instrumental qualities that promote trust, so that we can locate FSC strategies within this broader theoretical framework.

Theorists have identified various characteristics that contribute to an image of personal trustworthiness. These instrumental qualities, like socially constructed meaning, are not exclusively rational, but rather multi-dimensional in nature. Mayer et al. (1995) have summarized the work of various theorists into three different kinds of trust, these are perceptions of knowledge and skill, perceptions of integrity, and perceptions of benevolence, i.e. belief that the trustee will be sensitive to the well-being of the trustor. These are qualities of what I call *personal instrumental* trust, in that they are distinctly human traits. They are multi-dimensional, with cognitive, ethical and emotional components.

If these are the qualities of personal instrumental trust, what of interactions with large-scale organizations and institutions, such as certification systems? Much of modern life, in fact, involves interactions with impersonal institutions including numerous one-time or infrequent transactions with largely unknown organizations. According to Anthony Giddens, people have dealt with modernity by developing trust in “abstract systems” disembedded from individual communities and cultures (Giddens, 1990). This disembedding process serves the purpose of enabling institutional standardization amidst individual and cultural diversity. Presumably, trust in systems enables exchange under conditions of a lack of knowledge, and therefore a lack of trust, between exchange partners.

A common principle around which modern “abstract systems” are based, is the supremacy of reason and science. The development of modern science has promoted the importance of knowledge based on empirical testing that prohibits reliance on trust or faith. This has led to an abstract ideal of objective decision-making, i.e. decision-making

that is not swayed by personal preferences or pre-conceptions, is based on repeatable empirical testing, and often requires specialized scientific or technical expertise. Modern decision-making institutions have developed several features designed to operationalize this ideal of the "impersonal system". Three fundamental features of "impersonal systems" include 1) legalistic procedures based on a concept of "blind justice", i.e. procedures that are based on third party, unbiased judgments or assessments; 2) standardization; and 3) scientific and technical "expertise". Traditional certification and auditing procedures, such as those followed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), commonly follow an impersonal systems model of decision-making.

The FSC-AC, likewise, has adopted an impersonal systems approach to implementing certification. For this purpose, the FSC has developed a process of certifier accreditation which accredits and monitors certifiers on the basis of their technical competency and financial independence. Presumably, the FSC-AC's assurance of certifiers' objectivity is sufficient to build trust in the outcome of certification assessments. In other words, consumers and interest groups are expected to trust in the FSC-AC's impersonal *system* for accrediting certifiers, rather than in any unique qualities of the individual certifiers themselves. If people thus trust in the FSC accreditation system, then all certification decisions will be considered equally trustworthy, regardless of which certifier is involved in certifying. This would amount essentially to a lack of trust, rather than trust or distrust, in certifiers. The same lack of trust, presumably, would also apply to the forest managers who undergo certification assessments. This research will explore the effectiveness of this approach by applying the first two subquestions to

the FSC-AC impersonal accreditation system. These two subquestions, again, are: 1) Do abstract systems build trust? 2) What role, if any, does personal trust / distrust play in abstract systems?

Anthony Giddens provides some arguments for why trust in abstract systems may never be entirely independent of trust in the individuals involved in those systems. Giddens' concepts of facework and faceless commitments explain how trust in systems is created and recreated through human agency. Facework commitments are social interactions between individuals, which involve personal trust. Faceless commitments involve "faith in symbolic tokens or expert systems" (Giddens 1990, 80), i.e. trust in systems. According to Giddens, where there is uncertainty and trust is needed, faceless commitments are reinforced through ongoing facework. The reverse is also true: association with symbolic tokens or social roles is a necessary part of facework. In other words, faith in "experts" such as scientists or mechanics comes from social labels of competency and integrity. This trust is then reinforced or undermined based on individual experiences with these professionals (Giddens 1990).

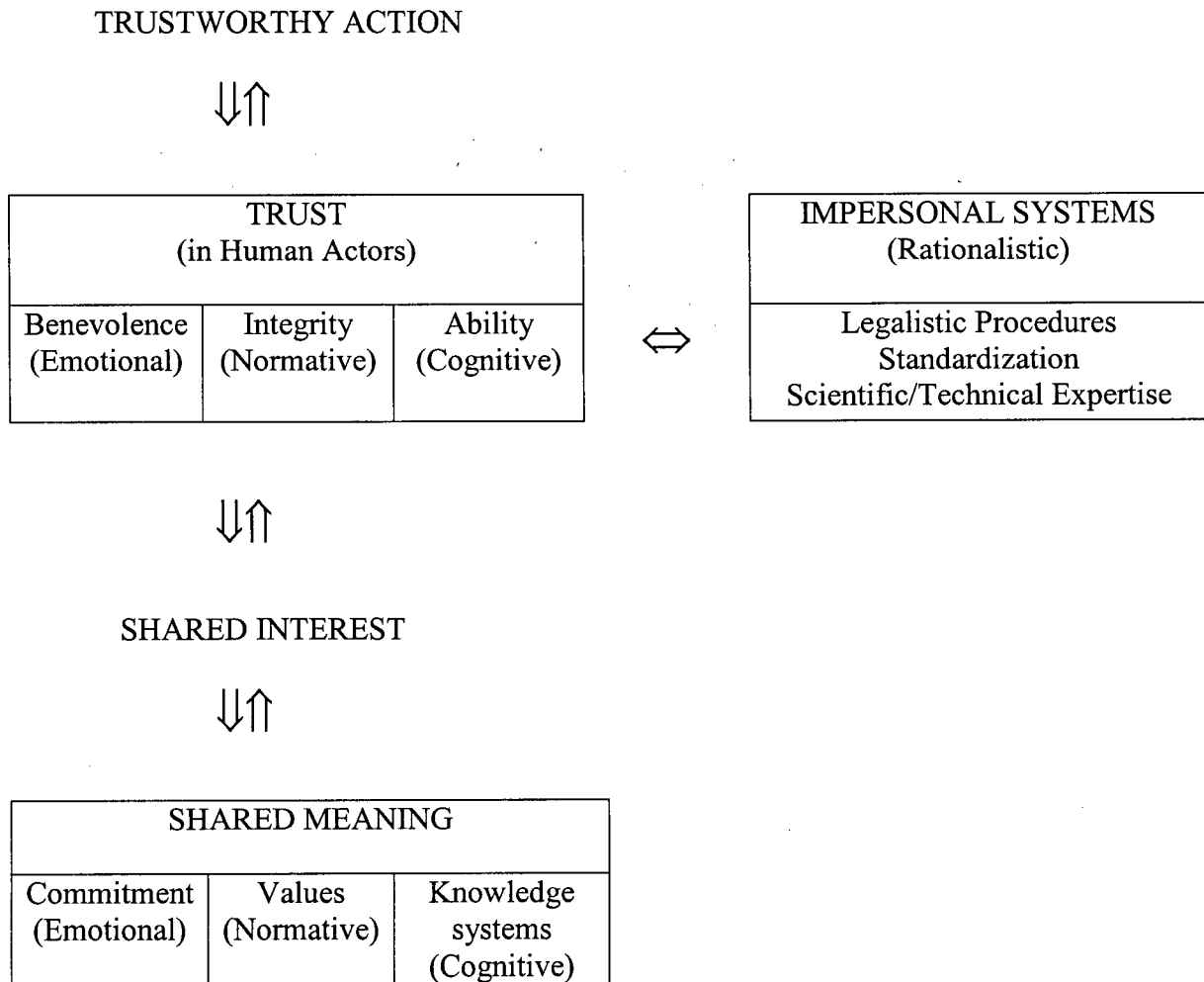
Adding to the possible importance of personal trust, science by its very nature, removes the possibility of certainty, by declaring all knowledge subject to question and thus disproof. Science, furthermore, creates a reliance on "experts" and "professionals" to produce as well as interpret information. Scientific "knowledge" itself, amounts to explanations that have become accepted or useful to a significant "community" of scientists (Kuhn 1962). This "human element" of science introduces the factor of motives and, therefore, trust, into both impersonal as well as personal systems. As

Giddens' points out, this trust in the human interface of "impersonal" systems includes issues of integrity and benevolence, as well as the cognitive issue of objectivity (1990).

Science, and likewise impersonal systems, furthermore, do not provide the underlying social meaning inherent in trust and trustworthiness. In other words, they do not by themselves determine the knowledge paradigms, the value systems and the emotional desires underlying people's expectations of appropriate action. To exercise integrity, or to design a legal system, one needs underlying goals. If trust is the belief that someone will behave "appropriately", it requires a *shared understanding* of what is appropriate. For example, a legal system based on a controversial priority of commitments, unaccepted values, or discredited knowledge systems would not be considered trustworthy. Thus I propose that trust in impersonal systems, like personal relations, develops in a context of socially and experientially constructed meaning.

In summary, trust in impersonal systems depends on a foundation of shared meaning and some degree of trust in the individuals associated with those systems, i.e. some degree of personal trust. Given that impersonal systems, such as "third party" certification, in theory discourage any personal communications, development of personal trust, or a sense of shared interests, they are not likely to develop trust unless all parties agree to the underlying values and knowledge systems upon which they are built. The following expanded trust model illustrates the relationship between trust and impersonal systems. The two-way arrows indicate factors that are mutually reinforcing. In this model, impersonal systems may reinforce trust, but they cannot by themselves build trust. Instead, they rely on an underlying sense of shared interests and meaning, as well as trust in the human actors responsible for implementing these systems.

Figure 2.2 Trust Model



Where does distrust fit in the above model? Distrust involves the assignment of willful, bad intent to individuals or organizations. It entails a disbelief that a system is governed by the abstract principles upon which it is presumably based. In other words, distrust involves the deconstruction or personalizing of abstract systems. Under such circumstances, all claims to objectivity, consistency or scientific rigour may fall under a pall of generalized suspicion. If the root of distrust is personal, then distrust might be placed somewhere to the left of this model, crossing over to trust only through

interpersonal interactions and the development of shared meaning and interests with trustworthy individuals.

The field of organizational theory provides further insights into how impersonal systems may promote trust or distrust. For example Shapiro, in her observations of the modern marketplace, critiques legalistic controls as a means to reduce the risk of personal trust in market actors (1987). Shapiro observes how legalistic procedures have a tendency to multiply due to their inability to completely control human behavior. The objects of her study include independent "trust brokers" such as insurance companies, third party auditors, auditors of auditors (such as auditor accreditation bodies), and other "nth" order trust organizations designed to serve as the "final guarantors" of trust. Shapiro claims that the production of impersonal trust mechanisms can become a never-ending spiral. Any perception of betrayal necessitates yet another watchdog organization. The trustor is faced with the fact that, ultimately, trustworthiness depends on human discretion and the trustor lacks the time and knowledge necessary to monitor this discretion (which is why nth order trust organizations were created in the first place) (Shapiro 1987).

Sitkin and Roth (1993) propose that the effectiveness of impersonal processes in building trust depends on the nature of the risks involved. These authors claim that there are two sources of trust within an organization—task-specific reliability (which I would call a cognitive instrumental issue) and value congruence (which is a normative issue)—and that these respond differently to legalistic procedures. Of these two sources of trust, reliability concerning a specific task is most conducive to control through contractual relations. Reliability is also the most easily satisfied source of trust. Once a reputation

for reliability is established, it is not easily revoked and is not sensitive to singular mistakes or inconsistencies. Perceptions of value congruence, however, are much more difficult to create and maintain (Sitkin and Roth 1993).

According to Sitkin and Roth, the effect of applying legalistic remedies to value-based organizational problems is to replace the need for people to trust each other, thus removing incentive to improve interpersonal relationships. If people avoid those they distrust, the distance between them grows deeper, making formal contractual agreements increasingly necessary to ensure cooperation. This leads to an “escalating spiral of formality and distance” (Sitkin and Roth 1993, 369). Thus organizations would do better to address problems of value incongruence and distrust directly by encouraging communication and the development of interpersonal understanding between their members rather than imposing formal rules.

Expanding on the observations of Sitkin and Roth, the characteristics of distrust highlight the role of emotions as a determinant of trust dynamics. In “... stressful social situations, group relations are likely to be associated with manifestations of unreality, splitting, hostility and suspicion which magnify the original conflict” (Jacques 1977 in Vogler 2000). This magnification of conflict and difference has been observed in the debate over forestry in BC (Lavallee and Suedfeld 1997).

Likewise emphasizing the role of emotions in interpersonal interactions involving trust or distrust, McAllister addresses the role of affective trust and supportive interpersonal environments within organizations (McAllister 1995). His findings demonstrate “the importance of affect-based trust relationships and the expressive

qualities of interpersonal behavior” and that “the sentiments of care and concern that connect individuals provide a principal foundation for...trust” (McAllister 1995, 53-4).

Thus a multi-dimensional, value-based conception of trust suggests that standardized, legalistic systems may not promote trust where there are disagreements about underlying values, and that demonstrated personal affect, such as the appearance of “concern and care” may be important even within modern, “rational” institutions.

Despite the limitations of formalized systems, institutional rules can, under many circumstances, play a very important role in supporting trust. To the degree that people agree on the criteria of trustworthy behaviour, formal institutionalized decision-making can serve to communicate and enforce clear boundaries on behaviour. Such boundaries help to reduce uncertainty and risk to more acceptable levels, thereby enabling moderate risk-taking and the development of trust even between distant partners in exchange (Rousseau and Sitkin 1998). The various subquestions addressed in this research, regarding the roles of inter-personal relations and abstract systems, should shed light on the various ways in which FSC decision-making institutions may have both helped and hindered the development of trust among affected forestry interest groups.

In summary, this chapter has built upon previous theoretical work in order to create a new, expanded framework for addressing trust in the context of conflicting values and diverse knowledge. This framework views trust as based on a foundation of socially and experientially constructed meaning and interests. A foundation of meaning and interests, in turn, provides incentives for trustworthy behaviour. The qualities of trustworthy behaviour are multi-dimensional, involving cognitive, normative and emotional components. Abstract systems, in contrast, are systems based on abstract, and

presumably universally acceptable concepts, that presumably remove or diminish the need for personal trust between the individuals involved. A socially embedded and multi-dimensional view of trust, however, suggests that abstract systems are not by themselves capable of building trust where there are underlying conflicts over appropriate values and appropriate knowledge. A certain degree of institutional formalization may promote trust by establishing clear boundaries of appropriate behaviour. If these boundaries are too restrictive, however, they serve to increase social distance between partners in exchange, and thus undermine people's ability to develop new areas of shared meaning, personal trust and voluntary cooperation.

The Research Question and Subquestions

The theoretical framework developed in this chapter has led to four general subquestions designed to address the dissertation's primary research question. These questions are reviewed below:

- I. How is / isn't trust built in the context of conflicting values and diverse knowledge?**
 - 1) Do abstract systems build trust?**
 - 2) What role, if any, does personal trust / distrust play in abstract systems?**
 - 3) What role, if any, does power play in trust in abstract systems?**
 - 4) What role does personal trust / lack of trust / distrust play in systems implementation?**

The proceeding analysis of Forest Stewardship Council certification in British Columbia examines the unfolding of inter-personal, pluralist and impersonal decision-making systems in the lived experience of BC forestry interest groups. This examination explores the inter-personal relations and abstract systems that shaped FSC activities in

BC, in the hopes of providing a deeper understanding of how trust is or is not built in a context of social diversity. Before we delve into the study results, however, let us first turn to a description of the methodology employed.

Chapter 3

Research Methods

Research for this paper involved over five years of participant observation, forty in-depth, semi-structured interviews of key individuals involved with the FSC in British Columbia, written questionnaires, and review of written standards and policies regarding forest certification and the Forest Stewardship Council. My work as a participant observer includes two years participating in the SmartWood Program of the Rainforest Alliance, an FSC-accredited certifier. My work with SmartWood certification included establishing a SmartWood-BC regional office; serving as SmartWood's BC representative; developing regional certification guidelines; and conducting certification assessments in California, Washington and British Columbia. I have also been a member in the Social Chamber of the Forest Stewardship Council for several years, and provided feedback on various FSC-BC draft regional standards.

The following sections provide an in-depth discussion of my research methods, including my criteria for selecting study participants, the methods used for data collection, and the process of data analysis. Included in these discussions are some reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches.

Participants

Interview participants for this research were selected from among those individual most involved in FSC certification activities in BC. There were several reasons I chose to focus on these active interest group members, as opposed to the wider population of forest product consumers. These include 1) the current low level of public awareness

regarding forestry and forest certification; 2) the assumption that the environmentally and socially conscious public bases its opinions of forest management and certification largely on the information and viewpoints provided by interest groups, 3) interest groups are most likely to publicly endorse or dispute —and thus influence-- forest management practices, the forest certification process, and/or or particular certification decisions and 4) the demand for certified products has often been driven not by end consumers, but rather by wood product retailers responding to pressure from environmentalist boycotts (Bass et al. 2001). For all of these reasons, the trust and cooperation of interest groups is essential for establishing the trustworthiness of certification among the broader public.

The interest group representatives selected for interviews included members of environmental groups, First Nations, labour groups, forest companies, and managers of FSC certified forest operations. The sampling objective was to cover as broad a spectrum of viewpoints as possible in order to explore the variety of perspectives important to FSC-accredited forest certification in BC, as well as to identify the range of variables important to trust formation. Sampling for variability also increased the likelihood of disproving inappropriate generalizations (Miles and Huberman 1994). For these reasons, interviewees were selected to represent both a wide range of perspectives, as well as a broad range of organizational types. In the case of environmental groups, this meant interviewing representatives of more “radical” lobby groups focused primarily on environmental preservation, as well as “practitioner” groups focused on community-based sustainable resource use. For forest companies, it meant sampling from large and small industrial forest companies, non-industrial forest operations, and FSC certified and non-certified operations. For First Nations, the sample included coastal First Nations, the

majority of whom have been engaged in treaty negotiations, and the culturally and politically distinct interior First Nations, who mostly have declined to participate in treaty processes. In the case of labour, interviewees included representatives of silvicultural workers, as well as unionized and non-unionized loggers and millworkers. In terms of the certification organizations, members of the FSC-BC Steering Committee and technical standards-writing teams, as well as FSC-BC staff were interviewed. Representatives of for-profit and non-profit certifiers were also interviewed, including all of the certifiers most active in British Columbia at the time this research was conducted. A BC Ministry of Forests official was interviewed, in addition, although this study does not include in-depth analyses of governmental responses to the FSC, since the government was denied a direct role in the decision-making processes surrounding FSC-accredited certification.

The total “sample” of interest group members included roughly three quarters of the non-governmental individuals most involved in the FSC’s development in BC. Thus, in addition to providing a wide range of perspectives of those most influential in the processes, the sample also offered clues as to the dynamics of the entire population of FSC activists.

Methods of Data Collection

The methodologies chosen for this study shaped, and were shaped by, the theoretical framework and research questions outlined in this dissertation. The initial seed of interest was planted in the context of my direct involvement in forest certification. My field experience, together with an extensive review of relevant

academic literature, then yielded my theoretical framework, which views trust as a socially and experientially constructed phenomenon.

Given such a framework, I then designed my research methods in such a way as to allow participants to express and demonstrate their trust perceptions in a manner that was meaningful to them, i.e. that fit within their own frameworks of social and experiential understanding. In other words, I used primarily a qualitative case study methodology.

Case studies, broadly defined, involve the examination of specific and bounded phenomena defined on the basis of research objectives (Stake 1994; Smith 1978). The research objectives for this dissertation were to examine how trust is (or is not) built in a context of conflicting values and diverse knowledge. In this sense, this study of the Forest Stewardship Council in BC serves as a case of trust building amidst diversity. Designing this research as a single case study, as opposed to a comparative study or larger-scale survey, allowed for a more in-depth analysis of a specific context where the development of trust has proved particularly challenging.

There are, of course, disadvantages to relying on a single case. The most fundamental challenge, is verifying the relevance of the research findings to other social settings. Buroway outlines two specific strategies that are commonly used to generalize from case studies. These are the interpretive case method and the extended case method. The interpretive case method views "the micro context as a setting in which a particular 'macro' principle...reveals itself". The extended case method examines how a micro context is shaped by external forces (Buroway 1991, 6). My study employs primarily an interpretive case study approach, i.e. it examines the dynamics of the FSC in BC in order

to address the “macro” challenge of understanding how trust functions in a context of conflicting values and diverse knowledge. The validity of generalizing from the case of the FSC in BC, meanwhile, remains an open question subject to modification based on future research addressing other cases.

As is common with case studies, my research is primarily qualitative. From a sociological perspective, “qualitative” and “quantitative” are relative terms reflecting the primary purpose of the research. Qualitative methods use “...an interpretive, naturalistic approach to...subject matter...(Q)ualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin et al. 1994). Quantitative methods, in contrast, involve a structured testing of pre-defined hypotheses through the measurement of chosen variables.

A common criticism of qualitative methods, is that they are somehow less “objective” than quantitative studies. Threats to objectivity include the researcher’s influence on the subjects’ behavior as well as the researcher’s biases in interpreting data. However, both qualitative and quantitative research practices influence, and are influenced by, the perspectives and behaviour of the researcher. The difference, I would argue, is the phase of the research in which the greatest “bias” is introduced. In the case of quantitative research, the researcher’s priorities determine the original design of the study, including the identification of variables and hypotheses to be tested. The data is then collected in a relatively uniform manner as determined by these *a priori* variables and hypotheses. Qualitative research, however, allows the researcher more leeway to adapt the research questions and methods on the basis of new information gained in the

course of research. All researchers must make choices before and after data collection in terms of what is relevant for recording. However qualitative case study research involves recording a greater diversity of phenomena and thus reduces the likelihood that relevant information will be overlooked.

“Validity”, i.e. the assurance that something is what one says it is, presents another challenge. In qualitative research, the use of mixed methods, i.e. collecting data in a variety of ways (for example, participant observation, interviews, review of written documents) and observing the degree of consistency in the results, is a useful way of establishing validity.

My research, in fact, lies somewhere between the extreme ends of the qualitative / quantitative continuum. It involves a variety of methods that increase the robustness of the results. The following subsections describe the different methods used, including participant observation, semi-structured interviews and the written trust questionnaire.

Participant Observation

The most qualitative method I employed was participant observation. Participant observation involves engaging in the social phenomena under research. The researcher “observes” while s/he participates, by continually reflecting upon and recording the relevant social dynamics as they reveal themselves in their “natural” social setting (Buroway 1991).

I first began conducting participant observation five years ago, when I was working with the FSC-accredited Rainforest Alliance SmartWood Program. I have continued to participate in FSC-accredited forest certification to this day, although at a

very reduced level. For the last two years I have been involved as both a researcher and an individual member of the Social Chamber of the FSC.

My experience as a participant observer has been invaluable in informing and shaping my research. During my extensive time in the field, I interacted with a wide range of people within the "natural setting" where decisions relating to certification actually took place. My work allowed me the opportunity to develop a level of social and experiential understanding that can only be gained by sharing responsibility with others in reaching common goals. My social understanding, meanwhile, has been continually tested in the context of applying theory to the practice of certification.

There are, of course, possible disadvantages to my direct involvement in certification. For one, I may have developed a special bias due to the particular ways in which I was involved. This bias could emerge out of an unconscious (and therefore difficult to avoid) need to defend my own actions and points of view due to the personal investments I have made in my research subject. While such bias is no doubt a concern, I would argue that the potential gains in understanding that occur from direct involvement generally outweigh the risks. As it is, several years have since passed since I was directly involved in implementing certification. Thus, for better or worse, I have achieved a certain level of distance from the subject matter I am studying. It is up to the reader to decide for him/herself if there is merit to my arguments.

My research topic itself is a direct result of my work as a participant observer. In the course of my field experience, I observed how personal trust between interest groups, certifiers and forest managers, appeared to play a crucial role in determining the degree to which certification was able to exert a positive influence on forest practices. I also

observed the critical role of forest manager trust and cooperation in facilitating the actual certification assessment process.

Over the years, I observed larger-scale changes in certification's social dynamics as the FSC grew in size and influence, and its decision-making structures became increasingly formalized. I developed an interest, therefore, in how the FSC's evolving institutional structures might interact with personal trust dynamics in shaping overall interest group, certifier, and forest manager trust and cooperation.

Thus my field experiences led me to choose the topic of trust in the FSC in BC, and later helped to shape my theoretical framework and research questions. In this sense, my research is based on "grounded theory", identified by Glaser and Strauss as the "discovery of theory from data" (1967: 1). The guiding motivation for my research, in other words, came from personal experience rather than from past research on the topic of either trust or certification. One of the advantages of this approach, is that it has helped to ensure that my theories closely "fit" the data in my particular research context. It has also served as a powerful motivation to pursue a research topic that has as yet received little attention in the field of social forestry.

The Interviews

Once the "grounded theory" that produced the general topic of my dissertation was developed, I engaged in extensive review of relevant literature and designed some more structured methods for further refining my research. The primary means I employed for this purpose were semi-structured, open-ended interviews. Interviews were recorded in detailed field notes and by digital sound recording, subject to the consent of the interviewee. The field notes provided both a detailed summary of the interview, as

well as quotations of statements that appeared particularly significant. The quotes included in this dissertation are based on either quotations recorded in the field notes, or comments summarized in the field notes, and then quoted from the digital recordings.⁴

The “structure” of the interviews, amounted to a series of questions addressing interviewee actions and perspectives regarding FSC activity in BC (see Appendix C, Sample Interview Questions). The questions were “semi-structured” in that their precise wording and order were adjusted to adapt to the narrative flow of the respondent (Merriam 1988). Interview questions were mostly open-ended, asking respondents about their experiences with forest certification, the FSC-BC standards-writing process, and FSC-accredited certifiers. Respondents were asked to describe their experiences, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of certification organizations and processes, and comment generally on what they believe constitutes good certification organizations and practices. The reason for the open ended approach was to let interviewees identify what was most important to them in telling the story of FSC certification. It was also to be able to place their perspectives on trust in the context of their particular experiences with certification (McCracken 1988). Issues relating to trust were allowed to emerge of their own accord in the context of these interviewee narratives.

A general research question, “How is trust built?” was identified before the interviews were designed. This research question, as well as the research subquestions, were then explored and refined in the process of data collection, and then finalized during data analysis. The advantage of finalizing the research questions in the process of data analysis was to ensure that these questions touched on core issues of importance to the

⁴ Verbal “fillers” such as “you know”, “ah”, “um” and other non-substantive expressions were largely removed from the quotes here cited, because their translation into written text exaggerates their significance, and can serve to undermine the intent of the speaker.

interviewee's themselves. The refinement of subquestions and their analysis involved reviewing the field notes holistically, as well as marking and comparing specific comments related to trust. Care was taken to ensure that the entire range of perspectives was incorporated into the data analysis and presented in this dissertation.

The primary research question (How is (or isn't) trust built in the context of conflicting values and diverse knowledge?), was addressed holistically by reviewing all interviewee comments relating to trust in the FSC, FSC-accredited certifiers, interest groups and forest managers. The five subquestions were then addressed as a means to pinpoint some of the key elements of trust-building.

In order to answer subquestion 1 (What role, if any, does personal trust / distrust play in trust in systems?), I examined interviewee comments regarding the relationship between their trust in individual standard-setters, certifiers and other involved interests, and their trust in FSC decision-making processes. I also compared and contrasted levels of trust of the people and organizations involved in certification, and trust in certification decision-making structures, in order to note any similarities or differences between these different possible sources of trust. I addressed Subquestion 2, (What role, if any, does power play in trust in abstract systems?), by analyzing interviewee comments related to the power dynamics of FSC standard-setting, accreditation and implementation. Subquestion 3 (Do abstract systems build trust?), was addressed by examining specific interviewee comments on the trustworthiness of the FSC-BC's standard-setting process and the FSC-AC's accreditation system. I also searched the interview data for examples of trust in the system that may have developed despite personal lack of trust or distrust.

Such examples would suggest that abstract systems could, in fact, overcome a lack of trust or distrust.

Finally, subquestion 4 (What role, if any, does personal trust / lack of trust / distrust play in systems implementation?), was answered in part, by an analysis of interviewee comments regarding their trust, lack of trust or distrust in the implementation of FSC-accredited certification. It was also explored by examining the nature of the FSC-BC's regional certification standards, and the likely impact of those standards on trust dynamics in the field. For example, highly detailed and prescriptive standards would remove some of the opportunity (as well as perhaps some of the need) for building trust. In contrast, ambiguities in the standards could lead to negotiated standards interpretation, which might create trust or distrust, depending on the outcome of the negotiation. I also examined the comments of implementers, i.e. forest managers and certifiers, for clues about how trust, a lack of trust or distrust may influence the implementation of certification.

The Questionnaire

The written trust questionnaire was the most “quantitative” method I used in this study. The purpose of the questionnaire was to acquire some concise, relative measures of participant trust levels across the multiple dimensions of trust introduced in the trust model in Chapter 2. In order to make such measurements, it was necessary to reduce the dimensions of trust to a series of pre-selected variables, as is typical of quantitative surveys. Various other trust surveys helped to inform the development of my questionnaire (Cummings and Bromiley 1996; Hardin 2002; Johnson-George and Swap 1982; Peters et al. 1996; Rotter 1967; Sheppard and Tuchinsky 1996).

The trust questionnaire was distributed to interest group respondents (i.e. all respondents except the staff of certifiers and the FSC-BC) after their participation in the in-depth, qualitative interviews. The questionnaire measures trust in the FSC-BC and five certifiers active in conducting FSC-accredited assessments in British Columbia.

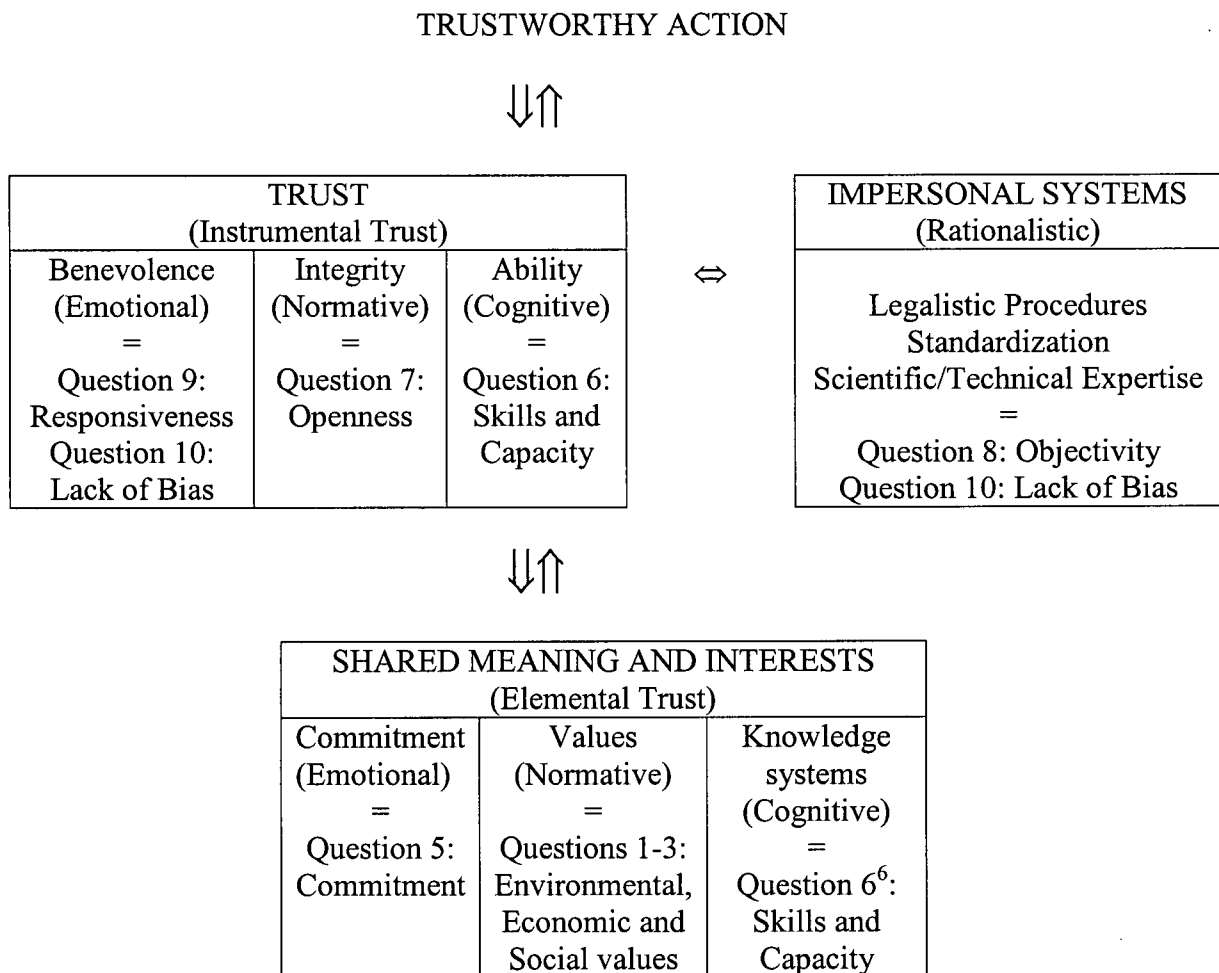
The questionnaire was designed to measure overall trust and trust across the cognitive, ethical and emotional dimensions identified in the theoretical framework for this thesis (see Appendix D, for a copy of the questionnaire). Trust levels were determined by asking respondents to rate their level of agreement with a series of statements about FSC-BC and the five different certifiers active in BC. The rating scale for agreement was one to six, with one meaning “strongly disagree”, and signifying low levels of trust, and six meaning “strongly agree”, and signifying the highest level of trust.

The dimensions of trust were isolated by asking respondents if they “think” that the certifiers behave appropriately on cognitive, ethical and emotional levels.⁵ Overall trust

⁵ The word “think”, as opposed to “trust”, it is proposed, would allow the isolation of a single dimension important to trust. Most other survey instruments reviewed also do not use the word “trust” in their survey

was measured by asking respondents to rate how well they trusted the different certification organizations to make good decisions. Figure 3.1 illustrates the relationship between the survey questions and the model of trust presented in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

Figure 3.1 Relationship between the Trust Model and the Trust Questionnaire



questions. Asking respondents if they “trust” the certifier in any one dimension might lead to greater transference between dimensions. Furthermore, it was felt that the issue of trust was highly sensitive and therefore direct questions regarding trust should be minimized. The word trust was used, however, to measure respondents’ overall trust in certification organizations.

⁶ “Skills and capacity” involve elements of both “knowledge systems” and “ability”, in other words, they cover both elemental and instrumental dimensions.

Out of the 29 who received the survey, 16 respondents completed the questionnaire,⁷ constituting a 55% response rate. The moderate response rate and the non-random, “purposive” sampling of interviewee respondents, restrict the extent to which the survey results should be generalized to the wider interest group population. However, the 29 research respondents represent a large percentage of the entire population of activists most directly involved with the FSC-BC. Thus the perspectives of any of such influential participants is a matter of considerable importance.

The survey results demonstrated that interest group activists hold a wide range of perspectives on the trustworthiness of the FSC-BC and FSC-accredited certifiers. The results for “overall trust” in certifiers are first presented in Chapter 6 of this dissertation. A further analysis of the results is then included in Appendix E. The survey data was reviewed as evidence of the consistency and thus robustness of the results of my qualitative research.

Methods of Data Analysis

As already explained, the collection and analysis of data for this dissertation was an iterative process. The participant observation provided the background for the research framework and research questions. Against this backdrop of participant observation, the interview results were reviewed for all comments relating to trust in the people and processes involved in FSC-accredited certification. The comments were examined for any common patterns, as well as unique perspectives that did not fit the particular emerging patterns. Particular attention was paid to the comments relevant to

⁷ The questionnaire was not given to FSC-BC or certifier staff, as it was considered inappropriate to ask such staff to rate their trust in their own organizations or those with whom they were in direct competition.

(i.e. either in support of or opposition to) my research framework. For example, there was a fairly striking relationship between trust in the people and organizations involved in certification, and belief in the “fairness” of the decision-making system itself. This observation informed my subquestions addressing the relationship between personal trust and trust in abstract systems. The five general subquestions were then systematically addressed through further data analysis. Such an iterative method of analysis is appropriate for a qualitative case study which incorporates elements of both grounded theory and deductive theory-testing (Miles and Huberman 1994).

Chapter 4

Changing Narratives of Trust and Distrust:

The Evolution of Forest Stewardship Council Certification in British Columbia

The Early Days: Local Bridge-building

Forest certification was first introduced and implemented in British Columbia by a small-scale, non-profit organization, the Silva Forest Foundation. In the early 90s, Silva worked with other nonprofit organizations and environmental advocacy groups active in BC to develop a system of certification based on its own criteria for ecologically responsible forest management. Silva awarded its first certification label in 1995 to a small woodlot and log sort yard in Vernon, located in the southern interior of BC. Fundamental to Silva's conception of good forest management, was the conservation of natural ecosystem processes, and the promotion of "locally-based" economies (SFF 2002). Silva primarily targeted small-scale BC woodlot licensees who were interested in working closely with Silva's staff to develop practical models of environmentally sensitive forestry. As such, both Silva's approach to forest management and the process of certification itself, were dependent upon local relations of cooperation. In fact, a stated core goal of Silva's is relationship-building, or "bridging" different interests at a grassroots level:

We work with rural communities, First Nations and environmental organizations, and we help build bridges between divergent interests. (SFF 2002)

Forest certification under Silva thus resembled a kind of “emergent” system developed through trial and error among those involved in its implementation. Given a value-based understanding of trust, Silva’s approach would appear conducive to the development of personal trust among participants, because of the opportunities it provided for developing shared meaning and for creating field-based synergies in the process of working toward a common goal of improved forest management.

Indeed, a number of environmentalists interviewed for this study, have expressed high levels of trust in Silva as a certifier. For example, the following respondent expressed confidence in Silva’s motivation (an aspect of trust) to promote good forestry, citing Silva’s long-term relations with forest managers who have since committed to eco-certification.

I like Silva because it’s local, it’s home-grown... A lot of the people that have, pre-certification, decided that ecosystem-based forestry was what they were interested in, came through Silva, in some form or another. Whether overtly getting their certification through them or getting their forest management plan through them...I think that, you know, they’re pretty clear about where they come from... They’re promoting a different vision of forestry. They’re not reformers, so much. And I like that.

Interviewee 14, Environmentalist

Thus it appears that Silva helped to develop a community of individuals who were dedicated to a common vision of appropriate forest management. Silva, furthermore, was “pretty clear” about its commitment to the values shared within this community. In other words not only was Silva motivated by a need to win the cooperation of local forestry operators, but this motivation went beyond opportunistic self-interest. Within the theoretical framework of this thesis, the perception of such cooperative and altruistic motives form the very basis of trust.

In addition to Silva, another early figure of inspiration mentioned by some interviewees was Merv Wilkinson, and his Vancouver Island woodlot known as "Wildwood". The qualities of forest management, and indeed of social relations, admired in Merv's management echo those outlined in Silva's goals.

Merv is well known in the BC environmental community for his light touch, selective harvesting methods, and his production of a steady stream of high quality wood products. He has been practicing single tree selection, i.e. the removal of individual trees to create small forest openings rather than large patches or clearcuts, for a period of over forty years. For much of his life, Merv has been an active advocate of alternative forestry, leading public tours of his private woodlot, providing apprenticeships, etc. to visitors from BC and around the world eager to see a working, economically viable example of eco-forestry (Rastogi 1995). The following quotes, taken from interviews with people very instrumental in the early development of forest certification in BC, cite Merv's work as an inspiration for their involvement in certification.

Have you been to Merv Wilkinson's forest? ... When you take someone whose never been there...and you say, yah, this can be done, this is practical, possible, and you can make money at it. It's economically viable. That's one of the most important things about a certification scheme, I think. It really has to be practical and workable on the ground.

Interviewee 23, FSC-BC

I wanted to show that you can log in a way that the forest is still healthy and remains there. Like Merv Wilkinson does.

Interviewee 25, Environmentalist

These comments reflect excitement about the translation of environmental ideals into on-the-ground practices. Support for certification was embedded in practical examples of implementation, that had withstood the tests of time.

Seemingly tied to this respect for “*practical and workable*” examples, was the ideal of social cooperation at the local level. After all, “*practical*” means more than technically doable, it means socially workable as well.

I think that [the FSC] has enormous potential here in BC. There are so many out of work loggers, disillusioned forestry workers, communities whose whole history is based on forestry and logging and a certain, sort of, shame that the world thinks we are doing a terrible job. And here's how we could change it! I mean, that's something that I kind of held on to the whole time with FSC.

Interviewee 23, FSC-BC

In other words, certification could help those that had developed reputations of behaving inappropriately, and thus were considered untrustworthy, regain their social standing.

This spirit of inclusiveness was limited in scope, however. The same interviewees who most emphasized bridge-building at the local level, also mentioned interests that were not considered compatible with their visions of alternative forestry. For example, the following statement was made in the context of describing what inspired the interviewee to support certification:

I wanted ... to buy wood that is from a non-corporate entity ... I wanted it to be from a smaller company, so that the benefits accrue to that community.

Interviewee 25, Environmentalist

Several interviewees expressed the view that the social relations embedded in the industrial forestry practices dominating BC's forest economy, were perhaps

fundamentally incompatible with socially appropriate forest management. In other words, certification to these interviewees is about more than a reform of forest practices, it is about social change as well.

Maybe[industry], they may be probably better able to meet some of the environmental standards than smaller companies. But on the social justice, and community economic development front, I think they are just too big and unwieldy ... I would really like to see a shift towards more owner operators, more smaller operators. If certification doesn't help do that, then I don't really see the point.

Interviewee 14, Environmentalist

Certain paradoxes are inherent in these visions of certification, however. Certification originated in the traditions of industrial standardization and quality control. It was designed as a means to market good stewardship to uninformed consumers often far from where the wood products are produced. In other words, certification is a market instrument for communicating attributes of a given product or service within the global marketplace. As such, it was a system first created by the very "corporate" entities condemned by some supporters of alternative forestry.

The extent to which a forest manager meets the ideal of local self-sufficiency and trustworthy community relations, is perhaps the extent to which certification may be unnecessary. The case of Merv Wilkinson in fact may serve to illustrate this point. Merv was not among the early applicants for certification. With his favorable reputation, Merv has been in a good position to sell his wood locally to those supportive and trusting of his work. Certification has thus been unnecessary for Merv.

Silva was no doubt aware that most forest managers in BC were not selling their wood locally, and that certification was a tool to communicate with a wider sphere of

consumers. In a move to coordinate its efforts, by the early 1990s Silva had established links with other non-profit, community-based organizations up and down the Pacific Coast. These included the BC-based Ecoforestry Institute, the California-based Institute for Sustainable Forestry, and the Oregon-based Rogue Institute for Ecology and Economy. All of these organizations promoted small-scale forest enterprises, and expressed a desire to bridge differences between environmentalists, forest workers, and local communities. For example, the following statements by the Institute for Sustainable Forestry (ISF) and the Rogue Institute emphasize the coming together of historically contentious local interests.

...ISF's [Institution for Sustainable Forestry] roots were in both the old logging culture of Humboldt and Mendocino Counties and the "back-to-the-land" counterculture established in the same territory. From the old logging culture came a sense of practicality and enthusiasm for the challenges of working in the woods. From the counterculture came a land ethic based on a vital but untested ecological sensibility. (Simpson 1995, 108)

Rogue Institute was founded in April, 1990 by people who came together from groups at war with one another—timber workers, environmentalists and retired agency officials. They risked their jobs and reputations to found the Institute in response to the growing polarization between timber workers and environmentalists. (KenCairn 1995, 109)

While these US-based non-profit certifiers were interested in building bridges "between timber workers and environmentalists" they, like the Silva Forest Foundation, placed boundaries around the circle of interests with whom they were initially interested in cooperating. The focus of these organizations was on non-industrial forestry operations, as reflected in the make-up of their initial certification clients (McDermott and Hoberg forthcoming), as well as their written statements.

The [Rogue] Institute is currently targeting private nonindustrial forest landowners in its certification efforts. (KenCairn 1995, 110)

Sharing some central goals in common, the Pacific Coast organizations decided to collaborate on developing sustainable forest management standards, naming their standards group the "Pacific Certification Council". The Pacific Certification Council (PCC) set their territorial boundaries as the "Cascadia Bioregion", extending from Northern California to Northern BC. The stated rationale behind these a-political boundaries were "pan-bioregional ecological, social and economic similarities" (Simpson 1995; 141).

The adoption of certification as a means to bridge different interests, however, was to lead to some basic conceptual tensions. "Certification" means to "make certain", i.e. to remove risk, and likewise the need for trust in those being certified. Certification, at least taken literally, is not about bridge-building among practitioners. All of the PCC organizations held that certification should be third party, i.e. conducted by those without other economic ties to the operations being assessed. Trust, in this sense, was to be appropriated by third parties. While there may have been goals of mutual respect, it was up to the certifiers and their stakeholders, not the forest manager, to determine what type of forestry was worthy of the green label.

Who were the early stakeholders? According to a former spokesperson for the Ecoforestry Institute, "First and foremost, certification is an initiative of the NGO / environmental community" (Lamport 1995, 118). In other words, certain interests must dominate the process. Thus from the start, certification was torn between a more trust-based emphasis grounded in the emergent practice of alternative forestry, and a distrust-based desire to control those who might otherwise be "irresponsible", i.e. standard North

American “corporate entities”. As we will see, the latter concerns came to increasingly dominate BC certification politics.

Scaling Up: The International Forest Stewardship Council

At the same time that PCC organizations were developing their own western North American system of certification, global political dynamics were driving international environmental organizations towards certification by a somewhat different path. Focused on deforestation and forest degradation in the Southern tropics, various international environmental organizations, led by the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), and including Greenpeace, Canada, were developing an international accreditation body as a means to “watchdog” claims of sustainably produced timber (Bass et al. 2001). This accreditation body and international authority was named the “Forest Stewardship Council”. The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) held its founding meeting in Toronto in 1993, with participation from environmental groups, indigenous peoples, forest managers, and other forest interest groups from around the world (Elliott 1999).

The argument for a standardized, global certification system, and the resulting empowerment of international interests in influencing regional priorities, was based on the apparent chaos of global marketing claims. A WWF survey conducted in the UK retail market had revealed over six hundred different claims of sustainable tropical wood production. According to the WWF report, only three of these companies were able to adequately substantiate their environmental claims (WWF 2001). In response, the FSC was intended to be an accreditation and standard-setting organization that would serve as the ultimate international guarantor of credible claims to good forest management. The

FSC would accredit certifiers to do the on-the-ground certification work, while itself maintaining an arms-length impartiality from certification clients.

The FSC's arms-length approach is consistent with a long tradition of industrial certification, which initially focused on product standardization and quality control.⁸ Unlike industrial certification, however, non-market concerns were the driving force behind FSC forest certification. Reflecting its non-market priorities, the FSC's internal decision-making procedures were founded on a reformulation of common democratic principles.

These democratic principles are reflected in the design of FSC as a membership organization, in contrast to the traditional "expert-based" decision-making systems of industrial certification. They are also reflected in the "balance of power" between the FSC's Environmental, Social, and Economic Chambers. This chambered decision-making structure resembles a kind of pluralist democracy. Instead of political parties or pre-existing interest group alliances, however, its three-chambered system resembles a metaphor for sustainable resource management as a three-legged stool, i.e. a balance of environmental, social and economic concerns.

Silva and the Ecoforestry Institute attended the founding meeting of the Forest Stewardship Council in Toronto, and were generally supportive of the FSC (Interviewee 23, FSC-BC). But the focus of many of the meeting attendees was on FSC as an international tool, aimed at protecting far away expanses of tropical timber⁹ (Bass et al.

⁸ One of the earliest international standard-setting systems established was ISO (International Organization for Standardization). ISO is a consortium of national standard-setting bodies which was initiated in 1947 to promote product standardization.

⁹ It is interesting how the FSC was originally designed by northern interests to control tropical forestry, and was not particularly welcomed at first into BC when it attempted to over-ride BC's local efforts at developing their own certification system. To this day, adoption of the FSC in southern countries has been

2001). This conception was shared by BC environmentalists as well, as the following quote indicates:

At the founding meeting, we thought that FSC was a good concept, a nice idea. There was really more impetus from the tropical part of the world.

Interviewee 36, Environmentalist

Within BC, however, environmentalists were collaborating with Silva on a certification system that encompassed a social world of small-scale, community-based eco-forestry operations. As the following quote explains, Greenpeace was instrumental in Silva's 1995 certification of the woodlot and log sort yard in Vernon. This apparently set a precedent for the type of forestry, and the type of certifier, that environmental groups would support in the province.

Greenpeace worked with the Small Business Program in Vernon, we helped to fund [Silva's] certification. In 1995 the certification was completed. We called it 'clear cut free'. We wanted to counter industry's claims that it was impossible to make money without clearcutting. At that time, nobody in industry would break ranks and say it was possible to not clearcut and be economically viable.

Interviewee 36, Environmentalist

Thus the Vernon certification was upheld as a model of what forest management, and forest certification should look like. The values mentioned in the above quote, however, focus on the environmental attributes of the Vernon certification. The following quote by the same respondent suggests that some environmentalists may not share the social values that had developed among the original PCC certifiers.

very slow (%?), and there are no? southern country certifiers. This suggests the importance of local buy-in for the adoption of certification systems.

We're an environmental organization. That is ultimately our concern. This isn't to say we might not support a large operation if it met our environmental concerns. It's just that our experience has been that often smaller scale, and community controlled operations have been in a better position to move more quickly. They have less bureaucracy, aren't focused on shareholders.

Interviewee 36, Environmentalist

The social message of the above two quotes is mixed. The first quote implies that industrial forest companies could, if they were willing, “break ranks” and follow an alternative forestry model. But the second quote asserts that this is unlikely because of the change-resistant nature of “bureaucracies” and the demands of “shareholders”. In other words community-based operations may be favored only to the extent that they further the aims of the international environmental groups that have assigned themselves as “watchdogs”.

At the same time that international environmentalists were formulating their conceptions of certifiable forestry, the focus, and perhaps vision, of the local certifiers was changing, as some of these organizations chose to scale up their activities by joining an international network. By the late 1990s, the Pacific Certification Council had dissolved, and the US organizations joined the Vermont-based international SmartWood Network, a program of the Rainforest Alliance. Silva ultimately opted out of that network, choosing instead to focus within Canadian national boundaries.

The FSC, meanwhile, was catching on in Europe and the US, and soon was encompassing much larger areas in the Northern hemisphere than the South. With FSC arriving in their own back yards, many interest groups became concerned that this international certification system address issues that were critical to their particular regions. The FSC responded by developing a system of regional standards, whereby the

FSC International Standards would be adapted to the unique “environmental, social and economic contexts” of the different regions in which it was to operate. In some larger countries, such as the US and Canada, the task of setting standards was divided among a number of regional groups. In Canada, originally four such regional standard setting groups were established, the Maritimes, the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence, the Boreal and the BC region. The national FSC Canada working group was also formed, charged with the oversight of the four Canadian regional processes.

The FSC Canada Working Group and its four regional standard-setting bodies are organized according to the same pluralist Chamber system as the FSC-AC. These Canadian organizations, however, have added an additional chamber, known as the Indigenous Peoples Chamber, reflecting the special concerns and interests of indigenous peoples (FSC Canada 2003).

The FSC-BC process began relatively informally, involving many of the initial supporters of Silva Forest Certification. It was a former employee of the Ecoforestry Institute, in fact, that decided to launch an FSC regional working group in BC in 1996. This individual began to push the development of the FSC in BC with considerable enthusiasm.

If it hadn't been for her tenacity...she did amazing things...This young, very young—not even mid twenties at the time—[woman] took on the big industry guys...She is largely responsible for getting FSC-BC going.

Interviewee 30, Certifier

Things started off slowly, since the small-scale eco-forestry certification efforts, and environmental campaigns focused on large industry, were still separate on the agendas of many BC environmentalists. Nevertheless, FSC-BC received a donation of

\$7,000 CA from FSC Canada for the establishment of a BC standard-setting body (Interview 23, FSC-BC).

After receiving the go-ahead from FSC-Canada, Silva and a local Greenpeace representative stepped in to help . Silva had begun the early stages of applying for FSC accreditation, planning to “wait and see” whether FSC would prove to be consistent with their organizational goals. In other words, far from being internationally driven, Silva viewed itself as a ground up initiative, with its own independent goals and values (Interview, Silva).

The former Ecoforestry Institute employee, and the representatives from Silva and Greenpeace, decided to call a meeting to establish an FSC-BC “working group”. The following account of the launch of the FSC-BC initiative tells a story of a few key individuals, who refused to be daunted by a lack of resources.

What I did, was I got in touch with Silva and I got in touch with Greenpeace, with [individual names], and I said, you know, why don't we pull together a meeting? And I'm happy to organize it, and just contact all the people we know who've expressed interest or anything in certification.

And that's what we did. I just got on the phone and I phoned environmental groups, other social groups who I knew were interested, First Nations contacts that both [individual names] had. I took those and contacted them. At that time, [individual name] of Lignum was one of the key industry people who was quite interested ... And he gave me a bunch of names, and we just, kind of made it grow that way.

So we organized a meeting and it was to be in Nelson... [individual name] from the states... we contacted her and we said, “would you come up and give us a FSC 101 course?” She said yes and then she fell through at the last minute!

So ...[we] just got up there and said, “well, sorry, but you're stuck with us and we'll do the best we can.” ... [We] gave a history of the FSC and ... said what we'd like to do, is set up a process to start writing the

standards here in BC, for BC, and who would be interested? ... At that point we kind of thought we could do it by big committee, and, [laughs] just see what would happen!

Interviewee 23, FSC-BC

In the above description of FSC-BC's beginnings, this interviewee emphasized the idea of a very democratic, inclusive process, with participation inspired by a spirit of volunteerism and commitment to a common vision. The narrator had felt at the time that the standards could be worked out through the cooperative efforts of a "*big committee*". This expectation was later described as "*naïve*", implying a kind of un-informed, and misplaced, trust in the participants' abilities to develop standards in such a loosely organized way.

Likewise, another interviewee observed, "*FSC started with good intentions, no funds. That's the history of FSC, you know*" (Interviewee 36, Environmentalist). The image conjured is of a good will organization, perhaps vulnerable to making mistakes due to naiveté and/or a lack of resources, but nevertheless motivated by good intentions.

In the theoretical framework of this dissertation, such narratives can be viewed as testaments to the trustworthiness of the FSC. Both vulnerability and "*good intentions*", i.e. intentions that are not purely based on self-interest, are core features of trust-based relationships. Thus the above quotes indicate that the FSC in BC was at first very reliant on relations of trust and trustworthiness.

While trust may have been relatively plentiful among the select individuals originally involved with the FSC-BC, the range of individuals and interests participating in FSC processes was soon to expand rather dramatically. With social diversity, comes an increased likelihood of distrust, and a struggle for power in decision-making. If

vulnerability promotes trustworthy behaviour and inter-dependence, power likewise reduces incentives for trustworthiness. The FSC-BC was soon to become embroiled in larger-scale regional conflicts in which power was a central issue.

The FSC developed its pluralist chamber system expressly as a means to achieve a “balance of power” between interests. The FSC-BC likewise adopted a chamber system to organize its regional standard-setting process. It established a “Steering Committee” for this purpose, divided into four Chambers, including the ethnically-based First Nations Chamber, as well as the abstractly-based Environmental, Economic and Social Chambers. It also developed a “Drafting Team” made up of “suitably qualified volunteers” from a range of interest group backgrounds (FSC-BC 1999).

The following four sections examine the perspectives encapsulated in each of the FSC-BC’s interest group categories. This examination reveals the different incentives and constraints that drove an increasing diversity of interests to become involved in the FSC-BC.

Environmentalists

By the mid 1990's, environmentalist market campaigns were redirecting their efforts from the boycott of tropical timber to the boycott of temperate timber from the rain forests of the North American Pacific Coast. These campaigns also included endorsement of FSC certification, putting pressure on large-scale, highly visible wood product retailers to distinguish wood from "sustainable" sources. The following quote suggests that the joining of the FSC with international boycott campaigns was an effective strategy for compelling the BC forest industry to address environmentalists' concerns.

Then in BC, in 1997, the enviro campaign was much more active. Particularly in the rain forests. Companies in the UK were placing pressure on BC logging companies. Many BC companies had been putting all their eggs in the Asian basket. They thought their European business was a sunset industry. But with the Asian flu[Asian economic crisis], Europe became more important. And that put pressure on BC logging companies. There were lots of protests in Europe and the US...The campaign was most focused on Western [Western Forest Products], because they were selling both pulp and soft wood. The UK Buyer's Group¹⁰ was under pressure to meet their targets for FSC products. After a series of protests, Western stood up and said they would get FSC certified.

Interviewee 36, Environmentalist

The public announcement of Western Forest Products' application for FSC certification has been identified as a critical turning point in the history of FSC certification in BC. As one respondent put it,

¹⁰ The UK Buyer's Group referred to here is the "WWF 95+ group", a group of forest product producers and retailers organized by WWF, that have made commitments to the purchase of FSC certification wood.

I think what forced them [BC interest groups] to sit up ... was when Western Forest Products came to the table ... that was really the point that made FSC in BC. I mean for years we had struggled on a miniscule budget ... You know, my second bedroom was it.

Interviewee 23, FSC-BC

When people “sat up”, however, it certainly wasn’t to clap hands and celebrate. BC environmentalists, as well as some BC First Nations, responded to Western’s announcement with alarm.

They [WFP] bragged they wouldn’t need to change their forest practices. They made public statements, in the press, and also in their info material. They said they could get certified without changing their business. They tried to pass off going for certification as equivalent to having it.

Interviewee 36, Environmentalist

This interviewee implies that WFP was motivated purely by self-interest and lacked commitment to the cause. In other words, WFP was not sufficiently trusted to participate in FSC activities in BC.

If one considers the power dynamics at this time, such a response should not be very surprising. The FSC-BC had very limited funds and had been depending on the voluntary cooperation of a relatively small network of trusted individuals. Meanwhile, the FSC-BC regional certification standards, which were to define appropriate forest management in the province, were not yet completed. In contrast, WFP was a relatively well-funded, large industry player holding tenure to large expanses of highly valued coastal old growth forests. Given the power differential between WFP and the FSC-BC, and given that the forest areas in question included highly valued coastal old growth, FSC supporters would have to place tremendous amounts of trust in a certification system still in its infancy, to willingly allow WFP to undergo a certification assessment at that time.

Power differentials between the FSC-AC and the FSC-BC also contributed to tensions over WFP's announcement. The FSC-AC held sole authority for accrediting certifiers. Thus WFP was free to choose any internationally accredited certifier to assess their BC operations, regardless of whether or not these certifiers were trusted by BC interest groups. Furthermore, it was FSC-AC policy that certifiers were allowed to conduct assessments prior to the completion of regional standards. Thus, as long as there were no BC standards, only the FSC-AC held authority to determine if the international FSC P&C were being correctly interpreted.

In the absence of regional standards, regional interest groups would have to trust in the FSC-AC and accredited certifiers to use their discretion in interpreting the international FSC P&C. Apparently such trust was there when Silva certified the Vernon woodlot with Greenpeace's endorsement. However, Western chose to work with the Qualifor program of SGS, an international, for-profit certifier based in Oxford, England. In contrast to the Silva forest foundation, SGS was a large, multi-national company not so clearly associated with BC eco-forestry circles.

SGS Group, I mean they are in 160 countries around the world, and forest certification is not their main business, even certification is not their main business, it is an independent inspection and verification group. They do a lot of work in the ports, they monitor imports and exports and customs work and they do a lot of environmental testing, agricultural industries and things, a whole range of industries...

Interviewee 38, Certifier

Environmentalists, as well as some First Nations, responded very negatively to WFP's choice of SGS as a certifier. SGS received letters signed by the province's major

environmental groups telling the company to take its business elsewhere (ENGO letter to SGS, released October, 1999).

If one considers the trust dynamics we've discussed so far, perhaps this reaction to SGS, like the reaction to WFP's announcement, is precisely what one would expect. It would be difficult to come up with two certifiers with more different organizational structures and cultures than Silva and SGS. Yet both held equal rights to apply the FSC label to BC forest practices. It would also be difficult to imagine more diverse forestry operations, within BC at least, than the small-scale Vernon woodlot and the industry giant Western Forest Products. Thus, whether anticipated or otherwise, the environmentalist campaign to use the FSC to pressure BC industries, led to a profound philosophical battle over the nature and goals of certification in the first place.

Was certification to promote small-scale, community-based eco-forestry, as indicated by its early history in the Pacific Coast? Or was it intended to promote improved industrial practices on a scale capable of supplying the large retailers targeted by international boycotts? Could one label effectively promote both kinds of forestry, or would it simply favor the lowest cost producer able to meet certification standards? Furthermore, what constitutes credibility in an ethical certification system? While the tradition of certification, pioneered by organizations such as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), was of an ordered, "expert"-driven process of standardized decisions, it did not appear thus far that the FSC was gaining credibility by applying its single label to profoundly diverse certifiers.

At the center of the debate was the issue of motive, a key component of trust. As long as one relies on another's voluntary cooperation, it is important to know that the

party in question has adequate motivation to be trustworthy. This is reflected in the following quote in which an environmentalist claims that WFP was “*not sincere*”, and merely intended to establish a bad precedent that would undermine the development of appropriate BC regional certification standards.

WFP was not sincere. They thought they could bring the [BC] standard down with them, or that if they didn't get certified they could claim the standard wasn't viable.

Interviewee 36, Environmentalist

Meanwhile, forest companies were also questioning the intentions of environmental groups, regarding their willingness to work with industry at all:

Well I think you get two different messages from them [environmentalists] ... I think they are astute enough to realize that the message to the marketplace is, 'no, we want them to get certified'. So that when the customers hear it they think, 'ok, well that seems reasonable'. But, in other forums ... you probably saw some of the comments related to Western Forest Products. 'There's no ways those bloody guys should ever get it', blah blah. And I mean that company bent over backwards ... And just got screwed, from the point of view of putting a lot of effort, a lot of good faith, a lot of resourcing around it, really trying to make something happen ... And really it was the politics in the end that said, 'no, you're not acceptable to the group right now, sorry'. What does that tell everybody else that's observing, right?

Interviewee 10, Industry

Clearly, little trust existed between environmentalists and industry at the time of WFP's application for certification under the FSC. Yet a door had been opened between the original, relatively small group of individuals supporting FSC in the early days, and a much larger population of interests concerned with forestry in BC.

Among the new interests to pass through the door, were the province's First Nations. The following section describes some of the incentives and constraints that led

some First Nations to become increasingly involved in the FSC-BC, beginning around the time of the WFP announcement.

First Nations

The international FSC P&C include strong language protecting the rights of indigenous peoples. Principle 3 of the FSC-AC's standards requires that forest managers respect aboriginal rights to "own, use and manage" their lands, territories and resources, unless they have delegated such control through "free and informed consent". As already explained, the FSC-Canada and the four FSC regional working groups, have further highlighted the rights of aboriginal people by creating an Indigenous People's Chamber, in addition to the Environmental, Economic and Social Chambers used by the FSC-AC and other regional processes world-wide. In BC, however, the Indigenous Chamber remained empty during the first few years of FSC activity in the province (Interviewee 23, FSC-BC).

This changed fairly dramatically around the time of Western Forest Product's announcement in 1998. Members of the Heiltsuk First Nation, who were engaged in an ongoing dispute with WFP, allied themselves with Greenpeace and other BC environmentalists in opposing WFP's certification under the FSC (FAN BC 1998). The Interior Alliance of non-treaty First Nations also became increasingly involved with the FSC-BC around this time (Interview 23, FSC-BC). Then in 1999, two First Nations stepped forward to fill seats on the FSC-BC Steering Committee. Since then, First Nations have been very influential in the development of the FSC-BC standards.

The participation of First Nations in the FSC-BC added a considerable degree of social, and even legal authority to the standard-setting process. The reason for this was

embedded in the evolution of First Nations rights within BC, as summarized briefly in the introduction to this dissertation.

In essence, the early BC governments' failure to sign treaties with the majority of the provinces' First Nations, has resulted in tenure disputes over nearly the entirety of BC Crown lands. Recent court decisions have confirmed the existence of First Nations' aboriginal rights to their traditional lands and resources within the province. Nevertheless, the provincial and federal governments have yet to succeed in creating new treaty agreements or to otherwise reach settlement on the location and extent of those rights. As a result, aboriginal rights remain largely undefined, and have produced little tangible benefit to First Nations communities throughout the province. First Nations interviewees expressed considerable frustration at the slow progress of treaties in the province, and a sense that government has betrayed their trust by failing to protect their rights.

First Nations have a long history of seeing trust betrayed over and over again ... by industry and by government. There is no reason for First Nations people to trust There is nothing in the past to justify trust.

Interviewee 40. First Nations

Thus First Nations entered the FSC-BC process, with a strong incentive to assert rights which had been denied them through other means. Furthermore, they had legal backing for their claims. At the same time, their long history of dealing with non-First Nations who failed to consider their interests, meant that trust was not likely to play a role at the regional level. Instead, the FSC-BC was of most use to First Nations if it was able to assert control over distrusted, and powerful, industry and government actors.

Economic Interests

The qualifications for membership in the FSC's Economic Chamber delineate how "economic interests" are defined by FSC decision-making bodies. This definition includes individuals and organizations that have "a commercial vested interest in commercial forest product organizations". Included in this category are industrial and non-industrial forest operators as well as employees, contractors and "certification bodies" (FSC-AC 2002a). In essence, FSC's category of economic interests includes most of the parties potentially responsible for implementing FSC standards.

Forest certification in its early days under the Silva Forest Foundation, was generally geared towards small-scale and community-based forestry operations (SFF 2002). As already discussed, these small-scale models of alternative forestry set a precedent for the type of forestry that many BC environmentalists viewed as appropriate for the FSC label. Such a vision of low-impact forestry, however, was not likely to appeal to BC's large-scale forest industry.

Thus, as the FSC was gaining hold in the province, many larger-scale industrial forestry firms put their support behind alternative certification schemes. As outlined in the introduction to this dissertation, these competing schemes included the international ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems certification, the Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) certification of the Canadian Standards Association (CAN/CSA-Z808/9-96), and the American Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) of the American Forest and Paper Association.

These industry-backed certification schemes employ elements of a "systems-based" approach to certification. To receive "systems-based" certification, a company must establish its own environmental performance goals and then develop a formal

“management system” to meet those goals. Certification then involves an assessment of the effectiveness of the system in meeting the company’s own criteria of appropriate management. The CSA and SFI certification standards also include a number of performance criteria, providing some standardized guidelines for appropriate management practices. Nevertheless, all of these alternative schemes allow forest companies considerable freedom to pursue their own management priorities.

The support of the BC forest industry for these alternative certification systems has grown very rapidly over the course of a few years. Between 1999 and 2002, around 62 million hectares of BC forest lands had been certified under ISO, SFI, and CSA combined. In contrast, only about 90,000 hectares had been certified under the FSC.

There are various possible explanations for industry’s preference for non-FSC certification systems during this period. Firstly, the performance criteria of the industry schemes may have been perceived as less rigorous. Secondly, as evidenced by WFP’s application for FSC-accredited certification, FSC supporters had demonstrated strong opposition to the certification of industrial forestry operations, at least prior to the completion of the FSC-BC’s regional standards.

In addition, the BC forest industry was facing a number of economic challenges at the time. The late 1990s was a period of economic crisis in Asia, which resulted in decreased demand for BC forest products. At the same time, the Canadian government was embroiled in trade wars with the US over softwood lumber imports (Pierce 2001). Meanwhile, the BC Ministry of Forests (MoF) had increased its regulatory restrictions on forestry practices with the introduction of the Forest Practices Code (FPC) in 1994. These challenges may have created both incentives and constraints towards certification.

The Asian depression created incentives to increase European market share, where demand for the FSC label was highest. At the same time, economic difficulties may have made some companies particularly reluctant to pursue the uncertain and immensely challenging road of FSC certification.

In 2001, yet another factor emerged to shape industry perspectives on certification. In May of that year, BC voters supported a new Liberal government, politically much more conservative than the previous New Democratic Party leadership. This led to major government downsizing and the anticipation of forestry deregulation. The new industry-backed certification initiatives provided a potential avenue for off-loading government responsibilities to police the forest industry (Hoberg 2002). In particular, the ISO and CSA concepts of “management systems” certification may have fit particularly well with government priorities. As stated by the following interviewees, the development of environmental management systems (EMS) could allow companies to get certified while at the same time providing proof of due diligence to government regulators.

We have a policy around certification. Basically that policy states that in conjunction with the province wanting to move towards a results-based Forest Practices Code, and in conjunction with the Ministry of Forests downsizing its operations and changing its focus ... that certification should be a tool available to companies to provide two essential services: namely, independent, arms-length verification of practices, and demonstration of due diligence as the deliverer of the standards that are required.

Interviewee 22, Small Business

... the program that I came here to [company name] with ... was to advance forest management and sustainable forest management, basically. And I needed a third party endorsement of what we were doing ... we took the approach that we were going to be certified by a variety of systems ...

Interviewee 34, Industry

Both of the above quotes, from a small business interest as well as a larger industry representative, indicate a need for “*independent*” or “*third party*”, i.e. impersonal verification of good forest practices. Furthermore, the small business interviewee perceived that an appropriate role for certification was the “*demonstration of due diligence*”. This implies a view of certification as a potentially useful form of legal protection.

While certification may have appeared legally useful, forest industry respondents generally expressed a preference for certification systems that would not inhibit their freedom of choice. The following interviewee viewed the systems-based approach to certification with particular favour because it allowed the company to develop its own environmental management system (EMS), that “*fit with the culture*” of their company.

ISO 14001 ... I think that to do it [an EMS] well, one has to make sure what you're doing fits with the culture of your company ... For us, an environmental management system was not something that was designed by somebody in an office ... It had to be something that people understood in their day to day life ... So ... we incorporated people that were doing the job into the design work ... there is a much greater desire to fix the flaws if you created them than if they were somebody else's.

Interviewee 10, Industry

The EMS systems-based approach allowed the company to incorporate some of its own priorities that they “*understood*” and that were culturally appropriate. In other words, a

systems-based approach resulted in a management system that was trustworthy to company employees.

The above interviewee also mentioned concern about the durability of the different certification systems, probably due to the considerable investment required to implement any of the various certification schemes.

What we were looking for in systems ... was ... something that wasn't at risk from the vagaries of, you know, in today, out tomorrow.

Interviewee 10, Industry

Not surprisingly, all of the above industry interviewees were interested in a certification system that would be sensitive to their needs, interests, and even company "culture". At the same time, it was hoped that certification would provide a lasting means to improve their standing among other interest groups. Legal protection, i.e. the proof of "due diligence" was thus mentioned as a motivation in pursuing certification. It would seem that the focus of industry-backed certification systems on EMS, was particularly suited to the systematic verification of due diligence. As the following quote illustrates, FSC certification, on the other hand, might be more specifically relevant in areas where there is public conflict.

To the extent that there has been demand [for certification], it's been more generic. 'Certification', whatever that means. So in the states it could be very frequently SFI, it could be CSA, and/or ISO. A lot of that demand becomes pretty unspecific. Unless you get into situations where there is significant controversy or conflict. Which is the coast situation. In that case, customers may see FSC as being the system that is likely going to be the best indicator that that conflict is under control.

Interviewee 8, Industry

According to the above interviewee, “customers” are interested in FSC certification for wood products coming from areas along the BC coast “where there is significant controversy”. The “customers” to whom the interviewee is referring are not the end consumer, but rather the wood product retailers who have been the target of international boycott campaigns.

[It's] not consumers [driving certification] at all. We don't sell to consumers, we sell to the middlemen ... primarily the big box stores. The Home Depots, and the Lowes, etc. Mostly the larger chains ... Even Home Depot, their position has always been FSC or equivalent, whatever that means....[FSC] continues to be their preference, and whether or not that is going to be feasible comes into question and so, just practically, they have to say, well 'if not, what have you got to give me? I need some assurance that will be broadly acceptable' ... and that's where the 'or equivalent' phrase comes into play.

Interviewee 8, Industry

According to company figures in 2003, The Home Depot is the largest single purchaser of lumber in North America (Sharpe 2003). Thus if international environmental boycotts of large-scale retailers such as The Home Depot are indeed “driving” the demand for the FSC label, the early days of FSC as an initiative promoting small-scale, non-industrial forestry with the support of local communities, would appear to be numbered. Small, non-industrial operators do not produce the steady, large-scale volumes necessary to supply retail giants such as Home Depot.

In general it would appear that, despite industry's aggressive pursuit of non-FSC schemes, BC firms were facing significant economic incentives to become certified under the FSC as well. Thus one would expect that BC industries would be placing pressure on the FSC-BC to develop regional standards that are more systems-based, and that minimize performance requirements that constrain forest practices.

The forest industry, however, is not the only "economic interest" included in the FSC's Economic Chamber. In BC, woodlot and community forest owners and licensees constitute forestry interests that are quite distinct from mainstream industry. These small-scale licensees together control less than 5% of BC's forest tenures. Nevertheless, they played an important role in the shaping of FSC certification in the province, and constitute an approach to forestry much advocated by many FSC supporters. How, then, does this small, but important, minority of BC economic interests view the FSC?

Interviews revealed that some woodlot licensees feel they have been marginalized by all the certification systems operating in the province, including the FSC.

I think its still the idea, or the perception of the other certification processes, that they weren't built for us ... my big pet peeve is that it [FSC] still caters to the large licensee. It still has that problem like everyone else does. The major licensee, let's cater to them because they'll give us the best mileage for what we want.

Interviewee 15, Small Business

This woodlot interviewee claimed that the focus of the FSC-BC was on "*the large licensees[s]*", who "*give the best mileage*" presumably because they control the vast majority of forest lands in the province.

Woodlot licensees have, in fact, held seats in the Economic Chamber of the FSC-BC Steering Committee. Nevertheless, it appears that some small-scale interests may not

view the internationally and regionally-driven FSC as a vehicle of empowerment. Instead, as expressed in the following quote, some may prefer a certification system that operates at a smaller scale.

I'd like to keep it in BC ... I'm really, really not impressed with anybody ... [I'd like] sensitivity to my needs, and to who I have to work with, the First Nations and so on. And acknowledgement. I think that's where Silva ... they're the best there. But it's just they're overzealous to go above and beyond [the standards] where I might not be willing to or capable of going above or beyond.

Interviewee 15, Small Business

The above interviewee sees Silva, the BC-based certifier responsible for an earlier, more trust-based model of certification, as closest to embodying his idea of how certification should work.

Thus, FSC's category of "economic interests" encompasses a wide range of concerns and perspectives. Many large industry interests have favoured ISO, CSA and SFI certification processes, with their emphasis on formal management "systems". Some small operators, however, favour more informal, locally-based decision-making processes.

Social Interests

The qualifications for membership in the FSC's Social Chamber define social interests as non-profit, non-governmental organizations and individuals with a "demonstrated commitment to environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable forest management" (FSC-AC 2002). This definition is notably broad, as is the actual composition of the Social Chamber in BC.

Forest workers, however, are perhaps the most easily distinguished category of interests that have participated in the FSC-BC Social Chamber. Within the category of "worker", however, there is still considerable variation. Forest labour jobs range from logging, to milling to seasonal silvicultural work (tree planting, brush clearing, etc.). Workers also vary in their organizational strategies, including those that are unionized and those that operate independently. As we will see, worker attitudes are equally diverse.

The Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada (PPWC) are a minority union of loggers and millworkers that has actively participated in the FSC-BC since its inception (Interview 23, FSC-BC). In contrast, the International Woodworkers Association (IWA), the largest forest worker union in BC, has been resistant to participating in the FSC. The following representative offers some reasons for this resistance.

We started out basically fighting off the FSC ... FSC is essentially a creature of the EU and EU governments with whom we are competitors, and the green groups who have never done anything much to help us. And so we were extremely leery of FSC.

Interviewee 11, Labour

According to the above interviewee, the FSC was a "competitor" on the side of the "greens". The greens had "never done much to help us" and thus were not

trustworthy. In fact, as stated in the following quote, this interviewee felt the most useful role that certification could play would be to “get the greens off [their] ass”.

Our main concern is creating a regime where companies operate sustainably and ENGOs, for the most part, leave them to do it ... So that's the reason that you need a standard, is basically to get the greens off your ass, right?

Interviewee 11, Labour

What is implied in the above quote, is that labour's interests are aligned more closely with the BC forest companies than with the interest groups shaping FSC standards. The quote also indicates that workers want to be able to control their own lives and that to do this they need protection from the “greens”.

The following non-unionized logger also argued for greater worker self-control. In this case, however, the interviewee felt that certification should allow workers independence from both the FSC and forest companies as well.

I think they should certify loggers. Companies say it can't be done. Loggers are the ones making decisions on the ground...If it's up to the companies, they will just push paper around. The FSC-BC is just pushing paper. I say, do it on the ground. Do what you can do on the ground.

Interviewee 24, Labour

Thus workers, like all the other forestry interests thus far discussed, view the FSC-BC in the context of how it may best empower them to satisfy their concerns and interests. The workers quoted above indicate that the FSC-BC threatens their ability to act in a way they feel is appropriate.

This point of view, however, stands in contrast to that of a silvicultural worker interviewed. The following interviewee indicated that the FSC provided an important

means for silvicultural workers to defend themselves against conflicting interests, including large, organized labour unions.

IWA does not represent our interests...We look for alternative means to represent our cause...[FSC] certification seemed an obvious choice. It was an existing forum with a chamber system and balanced representation to level the playing field.

Interviewee 16, Labour

According to this interviewee, the FSC represented a means to “*level the playing field*”, resulting in the relative empowerment of silvicultural workers.

Thus, within the category of “labour”, there are clearly a wide range of conflicting interests and views as to the appropriate role of the FSC-BC. What all of the above quotes demonstrate, however, are how these workers want to be empowered to make decisions regarding matters that affect them.

In fact, even the union worker quoted above who was generally quite negative about the FSC, expressed interest in FSC’s potential regarding the specific issue of workers’ rights.

It’s only kind of recently that we started thinking about ... the potential self-protection benefits of having that stuff in the standards ... some stuff on union’s right to participate, and training, and health and safety standards ... And, you know, on paper, FSC has always been quite good on that stuff ... it’s only in the last while since the Harris government was elected in Ontario, for instance, and the Campbell government here, that it has become ... a possibility for us that ... a certification standard might be useful to us in terms of labour rights and working conditions and health and safety standards.

Interviewee 11, Labour

According this respondent, political changes within BC have increased his interest in the FSC’s potential for protecting workers’ rights.

In fact, looking at all of the above BC “interest groups” as a whole, it would appear that FSC-accredited certification is viewed with greatest favour when people perceive that the FSC-BC will increase their power over conflicting BC forestry interest groups. For such interests, it was of paramount importance that the FSC-BC be able to correct for power imbalances within the province.

The Formalization of the FSC-BC’s Pluralist and Impersonal Systems

By the late 1990s, environmentalists, First Nations, the BC forest industry, non-industrial operators and a range of forest workers were each holding a growing stake in the outcome of the FSC-BC regional standard-setting process. This put the FSC-BC under considerable pressure to tighten its organizational structure in a manner acceptable to a wide range of often distrustful interests. From the perspectives of environmentalists, First Nations, and some forest workers, the FSC-BC process had to be seen as capable of defending alternative interests against a forest industry that had long dominated forestry decision-making in the province. From an industry perspective, the FSC-BC needed to produce a standard that was affordable to implement and capable of demonstrating “due diligence”. From the perspective of non-industrial forest operators, it was important that the FSC-BC be responsive to small-scale interests. From a labour perspective, it was important that the standards empower workers, and that they correct for inadequacies in government protection of workers’ rights. In order to meet such demands, the FSC-BC needed more than good intentions and trustworthy volunteer work.

The FSC-BC re-charged its efforts to find funding. According to the following interviewee, the controversy over WFP may have been what it took to attract the financial support of US Charitable Foundations, as well as BC industries.

The US Foundations wanted to ensure a supportable standard that was economically viable. There was a fear, at one point, that if WFP was not sincere, it was not a forgone conclusion that we would have an environmental standard. If there was a norm for logging in central coast rain forest, there could be a bad standard. FSC was on a shoestring. As there was more pressure on industry, at least by 1999 or 1998, BC companies were (also) willing to put money into the standards.

Interviewee 36, Environmentalist

The FSC-BC also held a series of meetings in 1998 to develop a "structure" for certification to proceed in BC. These meetings were attended by the FSC-AC Executive Director, the FSC Canada Coordinator, "all the accredited certifiers then involved in BC certifications, and representatives of the companies seeking certification" (FSC-BC 1999b). At these meetings, a number of actions were taken to formalize the FSC-BC regional initiative. These included the FSC-AC's acknowledgment of the FSC-BC as a "recognized regional initiative under the authority of the FSC Canada Working Group" (ibid 1999b). Thus the FSC-BC, which started out as a ground up, self-proclaimed initiative, was now officially situated in a hierarchy of decision-making bodies recognized at an international level.

The international recognition of the FSC-BC's status provided the backdrop for several of the other decisions made in the 1998 meetings. These included an agreement that certifiers would wait for the release of Draft 1 of the BC regional certification standards before certifying forest operations in the province. The certifiers would then use the draft regional standards "as part of their reference materials" in any certification assessments they conducted in BC (FSC-BC 1999b). Technically, only the FSC-AC has authority over accredited certifiers. Thus the FSC-AC's official recognition of the FSC-

BC gave the regional standard-setting initiative a formal avenue by which to influence the behaviour of certifiers in the province.

The 1998 meetings also outlined steps to formalize the FSC-BC Steering Committee. This was to be done by creating a new committee that adhered more closely to the abstract conceptions of democracy and pluralism upon which FSC standard-setting processes are generally based. For the purpose of democratizing the process, the FSC-BC was to hold "elections" for the new Steering Committee. Residents of BC who were FSC members and those who applied for membership before the time of the elections, were eligible to run for one of the two seats in their respective chambers, or to nominate other members. The same members and applicant members were then eligible to vote for two nominees within their Chamber (FSC-BC email communication with members, June 1999). This formal election process would presumably make the Committee more representative, and therefore enable it to more accurately balance its pluralist Environmental, Social, Economic, and Indigenous Peoples' Chambers.

Elections for a new FSC-BC Steering Committee were held in June of 1999. Two candidates were nominated for the two seats in each Chamber, except the Economic Chamber, for which there were three candidates. In terms of voter participation, one ballot was cast from among the three eligible voters in the Indigenous Peoples Chamber, fourteen ballots were cast from among fifteen eligible voters in the Economic Chamber, eight ballots were cast from among the twelve eligible voters in the Environmental Chamber (with one ballot rejected), and eight ballots were cast from among the twelve eligible voters in the Social Chamber (FSC-BC email communication with members, June 1999). The result of the elections, was the re-appointment of most of the previous

Steering Committee seats. The incumbent seats included: in the Environmental Chamber, Tamara Stark, a Greenpeace forest campaigner and John McInnis, an environmental consultant; in the Social Chamber, John Cathro, who was promoted to Chair and replaced by Nicole Rycroft, a community-based environmental activist from Clayoquot Progressive Ventures, and Hans Elias, from the Harrop-Proctor Watershed Protection Society; and in the Economic Chamber, Bill Bourgeois of Lignum, Ltd. New appointees included the FSC-BC's first two Indigenous Chamber representatives, Dave Monture from the Shuswap Tribal Council and John Yeltatzie appointed by the First Nations Summit. A small-scale wood products manufacturer, John Brink of Brink Forest Products replaced the Silva Forest Foundation in the Economic Chamber. Reflecting a growing separation between pluralist standard-setting and implementation, Silva did not run in the elections because they did not think it "*appropriate for a certifier to be on the Steering Committee*" (Interview, Silva).

Silva's decision to leave the Steering Committee reflected a growing formal separation in the FSC-BC between standard-setting and implementation. This separation, however, appears to have been most important in a symbolic, or "abstract" sense. Silva continued to communicate in an informal capacity with the FSC-BC (Interviewee, Silva). Such informal involvement, however relied on personal, trust-based relations with members of the FSC-BC. The following quote indicates that not all certifiers were equally welcome to provide their input into standards development.

I remember inviting somebody from a certifier to one of the early drafting committee meetings. Just to explain how these things were interpreted, how they were viewed, worked with on the ground. And that was another huge fight ... They were furious -- that I had invited this particular person to the drafting committee -- they were furious. Because they felt that that

particular certifier was not to be trusted, that they would try to put undo pressure on the drafters to include their own material in it.

Interviewee 23, FSC-BC

It would appear that distrust of “*particular certifiers*” was driving some to support a more impersonal system where standard-setters and certifiers were to remain strictly at “arms length”. Such an approach represented a major departure from the earlier days of eco-certification, where certifiers wrote their own certification guidelines in the context of cooperative relations with forest managers and local and regional interest groups.

The effect of using an impersonal systems approach to remove distrusted certifiers from the process of FSC-BC standard-setting, was to put increased pressure on the standards as the only means of controlling those distrusted certifiers. An appropriate set of standards would presumably force appropriate behaviour on otherwise untrustworthy certifiers.

Thus in the context of distrust, formalization was used a means for the Steering Committee to exert control. It essentially allowed those with official positions within the FSC-BC to choose whom to include in decisions by means of informal communications, and whom to exclude through formal rules. Meanwhile, the Steering Committee held the final authority to determine appropriate forest management “values”. All other tasks, from the actual drafting of the standards to implementation, were to involve an “impersonal systems” approach. The official relationship between FSC and certifiers, was to be restricted to the FSC-AC’s impersonal system of certifier accreditation and monitoring handled at the international level.

The new Steering Committee also used an impersonal systems model to re-organize the original FSC-BC “drafting team”. They replaced the earlier team with a

“technical” Standards Team, which was to develop “objectively measurable and scientifically rigorous” standards consistent with the “values” identified and agreed upon by the Steering Committee (FSC-BC 1999b). In other words, the “values” determined by the pluralist structure were to be translated into objective prescriptions enabling the impersonal execution of certification assessments.

The Steering Committee was responsible for selecting the technical “Standards Team” “experts” from among nominees made by FSC members resident in BC. The Standards Team was organized according to the same four interest group chambers as the Steering Committee, with two seats per Chamber. In the case of the Standards Team, however, the different Chambers were not to represent different interests, but rather different areas of scientific and technical expertise (FSC-BC 1999b). Furthermore, Standards Team “experts” were not required to have applied for membership in the FSC. In the final phase of standards drafting, this eight person Standards Team was replaced by a four person Technical Advisory Team.

The Steering Committee also selected process administrators, including an Executive Director, as well as a Chair for the Steering Committee, and a Coordinator for the Standards Team. These individuals were expected to serve as facilitators and were not to assert their own value judgments in the development of the standards (FSC-BC 1999b).

A series of three drafts of the FSC-BC standards was produced by the technical drafting teams in coordination with the FSC-BC Steering Committee. The Steering Committee posted Drafts 1 and 2 on the FSC-BC web page, soliciting comments from FSC members and the general public. In addition to receiving public comments, the

FSC-BC also hosted a series of formal "expert" consultations on the first two drafts, with each Chamber selecting individuals across the province to meet with that Chamber's Steering and Standards Team members. These "experts" were asked to offer their advice on how the standards might be improved. Certifiers also conducted "field tests", to determine the "measurability" of the regional indicators included in the standards. In addition the Standards Team engaged in numerous informal consultations and discussions (FSC-BC 1999b).

While the standards were being drafted, there were also a few certification assessments carried out on the ground. Between the completion of Draft 1 and Draft 3, three small-scale woodlots received certification from the Silva Forest Foundation. In addition, SmartWood certified a small business operation, as well as a First Nations joint venture practicing low intensity forest management. There was apparently sufficient trust among regional forestry interest groups to allow the certification of small-scale and low intensity operators in the absence of completed regional standards. The same was not true for larger scale operators, however. The certification assessment of WFP was stalled, and no other large-scale industrial operations underwent full certification assessments during this time.

In the spring of 2002, the Steering Committee voted to approve Draft 3 of the FSC-BC regional standards. All seats endorsed the standard except for the one industry representative. Draft 3 was then sent to FSC Canada and then Oaxaca for FSC endorsement at the international level.

Draft 3 of the BC standards was described as highly "prescriptive" by many interviewees, both those supportive of the standards and those disapproving of them. The

standards prescribe some very detailed steps that forest managers must take to reach certification, including matrices outlining contingent numerical thresholds for ecological protection. They also include extensive, although less precise, assessment and monitoring requirements.

As we will see in the following analyses of FSC-BC processes, interviewee response to the standards was quite variable across all interest groups. In general, the standards were not viewed with favor by the majority of certifiers, or the forest practitioners responsible for meeting its requirements on the ground. At the same time, a number of other interviewees, including one certifier, indicated that prescriptive standards were central to their support of the FSC.

Summary and Conclusions

Overall, the standard-setting process has had a profound impact on trust dynamics surrounding forest certification within the province. The evolution of FSC certification in BC essentially involved the transference of control over certification standards and processes from the local level, centered around an individual certifier, the Silva Forest Foundation, to regional, national and international levels, involving the FSC-BC regional standard-setting group, the FSC Canada, and the international FSC-AC. Likewise, this new hierarchical and more formalized certification system involved a change of decision-making procedures from one based on the cooperative trial and error efforts of like-minded individuals involved with Silva certifications, to a combination of pluralist and impersonal systems designed to govern the behavior of formally divided interest groups.

The initial small-scale certification model established the conditions for personal trust based on the development of shared interests and meaning, and the long-term

reputation of forest managers and certifiers. Silva's work, furthermore, set an important precedent regarding the type of forest management many BC environmentalists expected forest certification to promote. As such, the personal trust and shared meaning that Silva had built played an important formative role in shaping the later development of the FSC, with its more formalized decision-making structures. This suggests that in partial answer to research subquestion 1 (What role, if any, does personal trust / distrust play in trust in abstract systems?), in BC, personal trust played an important, formative role in creating and shaping FSC-accredited certification. Environmental group trust in forest certification was first formed through personal trust in the Silva Forest Foundation. This personal trust was developed in the process of the voluntary, synergistic, on-the-ground implementation of Silva certification within small-scale woodlots. Thus, in partial answer to research subquestion 4 (What role, if any, does personal trust / lack of trust / distrust play in systems implementation?), it would seem in the case of Silva certification that personal trust served to promote voluntary cooperation and creative synergy, thereby facilitating systems implementation.

The FSC's entrance into BC brought distrusted forest companies and unknown certifiers into forest certification decision-making circles, thereby altering interest group narratives of trust and distrust. The following two chapters will delve inside of FSC-BC's standards and procedures to see how the FSC-BC's use of pluralism and the FSC-AC's use of impersonal systems affected interest group trust in FSC-accredited certification itself.

Chapter 5

Trust Dynamics in the FSC-BC Regional Standard-setting Process

Forest certification in British Columbia began as a cooperative effort, involving a BC-based certifier who developed interpersonal trust within a restricted group of relatively like-minded individuals. With the entrance of the international Forest Stewardship Council, certification evolved into a complex and hierarchical process involving diverse interests organized into formal interest groups, or “Chambers”. Trust in FSC-accredited certification was intended to be embodied in abstract conceptions of appropriate certification processes.

The FSC-AC officially separates value formation, which is to be achieved through certification standard-setting, from implementation, which is the work of FSC-accredited certifiers. In the “language” of trust, this means a separation between the construction of shared meaning on the one hand, and trustworthy action on the other. The construction of meaning within the FSC is handled through a pluralistic process of standards development. The control of trustworthy action is achieved through an impersonal certifier accreditation system. This chapter will focus on the former half of this dualistic system, trust in FSC-BC standard-setting. The following chapter will then address trust in FSC-accredited certifiers. As we will see, however, these two halves of the certification process, as well as the two corresponding chapters in this thesis, interact with each other in myriad ways.

FSC standard-setting procedures are based on the abstract concepts of environmental, economic and social interests, concepts often associated with the “three-

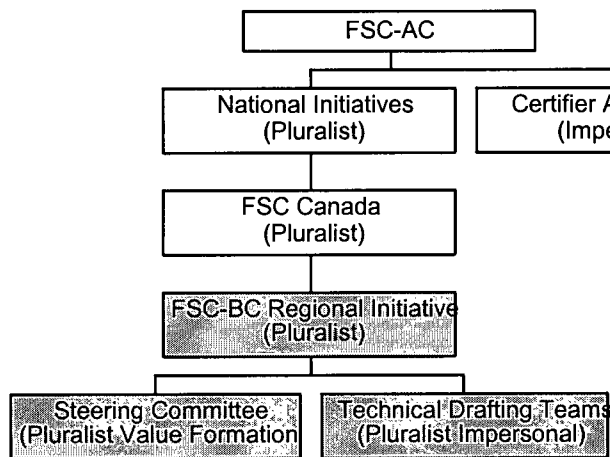
legged stool” of sustainability. These concepts form the basis of a three-chambered decision-making structure (four chambers in Canada), designed to “maintain the balance of voting power” between these presumably distinct interests (FSC-AC 2002a). In other words, the Forest Stewardship Council has developed a pluralist decision-making structure resembling a metaphor for sustainability.

Within this pluralist structure, the FSC emphasizes consensus-based decision-making, meaning that FSC Chambers are expected to cooperate with each other in making mutually satisfactory decisions (FSC-AC 2003b). The three Chambers of the international FSC-AC were able to reach consensus on the FSC Ten Principles and Criteria, a broad set of standards for globally appropriate forest management. These international standards, however, leave considerable room for interpretation in their local implementation. As we observed in the last chapter on the evolution of FSC certification in BC, many BC forestry interests did not trust FSC-accredited certifiers to interpret the international standards correctly. This placed pressure on FSC-BC regional standard-setters to develop very precise regional indicators that would control the behavior of certifiers.

In order to meet this demand, the FSC-BC developed a formal structure based on a dichotomy between value formation and the creation of technically defensible standards. The setting of values was to be handled by a formally elected Steering Committee, and the drafting of the BC standards to be handled by a Standards Team. Both of these branches of the FSC-BC followed the Canadian four-chambered pluralist system, including Environmental, Social, Economic and Indigenous Peoples Chambers. The Steering Committee was the executive body with the authority to approve the

standards, and thus determine the meaning of appropriate forest management in BC. The Standards Team, in contrast, was to “primarily have a technical focus”. It was “not [to] represent the interests of nominating chambers”, but rather to ensure that “the perspectives and opinions of all chambers are canvassed and duly considered” (FSC-BC 1999b). In the case of the Standards Team, therefore, the four Chamber structure stood symbolically for four general areas of expertise, rather than for values or interests. After the completion of Draft 2 of the FSC-BC standards, the Standards Team was replaced by a smaller “Technical Advisory Team”, involving one member per FSC-BC Chamber. As its name implies, this smaller drafting team was also to serve a strictly technical function.

Figure 5.1 Conceptual Diagram of FSC-AC and FSC-BC Decision-making Systems¹¹



This chapter will explore the role that the FSC-BC’s dualistic pluralist and impersonal decision-making structures played in the trust dynamics of the diverse interests involved in FSC-BC standard-setting. It will also examine the impact of the FSC-BC’s trust dynamics on the nature of the regional standards themselves. These analyses will be revisited in the final Summary and Conclusion section of this chapter,

¹¹ For a more complete FSC Organizational Chart, see Appendix B.

and applied to the four research subquestions outlined in this dissertation, regarding the relationships between pluralism, personal trust, power and the process of systems implementation.

Theoretical Review

FSC pluralist systems are based on the assumption that people can be accurately grouped according to abstract classifications of differing interests and values, and furthermore, that such classification enables a “balance” of “power”. Underlying this assumption, is the belief that the interest groups themselves, and the interests they hold, pre-exist their incorporation into the decision-making system. From this perspective, “appropriate” (i.e. trustworthy) decisions will then emerge as a synthesis or compromise of these pre-existing interests.

The dichotomous split between value formation and technical standards-writing, likewise, assumes that knowledge systems operate independently of social meaning. From this perspective, the process of developing prescriptions for action can be made “objectively”, once an agreed upon and thoroughly defined set of values is established.

In contrast, Berger and Luckmann (1969) view interests and values as elements of socially constructed meaning that are never fully formed but rather are created and re-created in the shifting context of human interaction. Such a perspective leads one to wonder what effect the imposition of fixed interest group categories may have on how interests and values are themselves constructed.

Earle and Cvetkovich (1995) suggest that pluralist systems are inherently divisive. They argue that the separation of people into different “interest groups” encourages groups to “take sides” against other groups. This idea is evident in FSC’s use of

chambers to balance power between interests. In order to balance power, each group may perceive a need to assert its “power” lest others overpower them.

Solidarity is a means for social groups to enhance their power (Della Porta and Diani 1999). Solidarity is created through cooperative communication and action that builds shared meaning and trust. The development of a strong group identity may also involve the active exclusion of outsiders. Putnam (2000) refers to the development of shared meaning and trust within a given interest group as “bonding”. “Bridging”, in contrast, is the creation of shared meaning and interests *between* interest groups. Thus the extent to which the FSC-BC’s pluralist Chamber system encourages trust-building within groups, as opposed to trust-building between groups, is the extent to which FSC’s pluralist systems may exacerbate group differences.

The FSC-BC’s four-chambered technical drafting teams involve the overlay of an “impersonal system” on pluralist value-formation. These technical teams are expected to use their “objective” judgment to translate the “interests” of the four chamber Steering Committee into a technically defensible set of written standards. Such “impersonal systems” rely on the authority of a universal language of science and reason (Giddens 1990).

While the distinction between the value-setting Steering Committee and the “technical” drafting teams may be clear enough in theory, however, we will soon see that it was less clear in practice. In fact, even for the purposes of analysis, it is difficult to entirely separate the work of the Steering Committee and that of the technical drafting teams. In part, this is because the FSC-BC regional standards were developed through iterative communication between the Steering Committee and the drafting teams. In

addition, separation is difficult because many interviewee respondents referred to the “FSC-BC” regional initiative as a whole, and thus did not distinguish between decisions made by Steering Committee members and those made by the technical drafting team. The following sections, therefore, are organized into an analysis of the FSC-BC’s four chamber structure (which applies to both the Steering Committee and the technical drafting teams), followed by a discussion of the role that “technical” or “impersonal” decision-making played in the overall development of the standards.

Interviewee Perspectives on FSC-BC Standard-setting

The interviewee quotes provided throughout the following analysis were given in response to one of several open-ended questions relating to FSC standard-setting. Firstly, respondents were asked to describe their experience with forest certification in BC. This broad question allowed interviewees the opportunity to identify issues of importance to them. Respondents were also asked, more specifically, what they thought of the FSC-BC standards-writing process and the FSC-BC standards (see Appendix C for the Sample Interview Questions).

The Pluralist Chamber System

Bonding versus Bridging

The purpose of the FSC-BC’s four chamber system, like that of the FSC-AC’s three chambers, was to ensure that different interests had “equal power” in decision-making (FSC-BC 1999b). In other words, each chamber was expected to assert their interests, and acceptable decisions would presumably flow from the equal force of those assertions. The following quote indicates that participants in the FSC-BC Steering

Committee were certainly aware of their responsibility to assert the interests of the group or groups with which they identified.

Each one of the folks that came to the [Steering Committee] table really felt that their constituents were trusting ... them ... I heard some people say very clearly that they were very in touch with their constituents and if this wasn't in the standard that was going to be critical. And some of them didn't seem to have a common voice, but, I guess each one of them there knew their constituents well enough that I would say it was probably the same for me. I would have said, 'I know my constituents are trusting in me to have this removed from the standard'.

Interview 33, Industry

Trust, according to this interviewee, was an important force in motivating representatives to serve the interests of their constituents. This is the type of social interaction theorists have referred to as “bonding”, i.e. relationships of trust and reciprocity that facilitate cooperation among people that seek a common group identity (Putnam 2000). According to this interviewee, most of the Steering Committee members identified strongly with their respective “constituents”.

At the same time, there was a lack of trust of other interest groups.

Draft 3 was built by a group of people who didn't trust the industry, didn't trust the government, and didn't trust the certifiers. And, consequently, you had to have a whole lot of detail ... And even though we told them that they were supposed to be results-oriented, I think that that whole thing got lost by the Technical Committee and got lost by the Steering Committee. So you now have a standard that is very procedural and very prescriptive. Because if you don't trust anybody, you don't trust the certifier, then you have to tell the certifier paint by numbers.

Interview 34, Industry

As it relates to your primary issue of trust, I felt that there was no trust ... very little trust within the environmental community of what industry would really do ... to the point where my feeling is this BC standard is

highly prescriptive. It needs to be that way because there is that lack of trust ...

[At] the last moment ... unrelated numbers [were] bargained for the sake of getting a deal ... I think the lack of trust played into it ... we just kept adding words to further qualify which then became more restrictive ... I always say less is more. If you can leave the intent and have some trust ...

Interview 33, Industry

The prescriptiveness of the standards being developed was equated with a lack of trust in those responsible for implementing the standards, particularly certifiers and “industry”. This lack of trust was dealt with by attempting to develop detailed control over the behavior of distrusted parties through the impersonal mechanism of written standards. Since there were no certifiers sitting on the Steering Committee, and since the accreditation of certifiers was handled by the FSC-AC at the international level, one of the major sources of distrust could only be dealt with by such indirect, impersonal means.

The forest “industry”, another of the distrusted parties mentioned in the above quotes, did have representation on both of the Steering Committee and drafting teams. As the following quote illustrates, however, one of the biggest sources of contention may have lain outside of the control of all Steering Committee members, industry representatives included.

I mean there were comments such as, ‘I don’t want you to get certified ... harvest it and run off to Mexico and live on the beach, or the Cayman islands or something ... [laughs] god, if I want to go to the Cayman islands, I’m not going to stop, get certified, then go rape a piece of property to make a bunch of money! I’ll just go rape the piece of property and run off with the money, never mind applying for certification first!’

Interview 33, Industry

According to this interviewee, the problem was the hypothetical industrialist who may choose to take advantage of the FSC by not correctly implementing the standards. Since it was impossible for standard-setters to anticipate the behaviour of future, unknown parties, this problem actually resembles a “lack of trust” more than distrust. Given the inability to know the reputation of future, hypothetical managers, this lack of trust could only be dealt with impersonally, through prescriptive standards.

Even though distrust and / or lack of trust in industry was perhaps directed more at hypothetical industry applicants for certification than at industry participants in the standard-setting process, many of the forest producers interviewed indicated that it undermined their faith in the process, and in the good intentions of the groups involved.

FSC is too political for our liking ... [Because of] turf ... we work here on the premise of reasonable people making reasonable decisions with good information, we wish that everybody would take that approach ... how do you de-politicize FSC? ... I don't think that the way it's set up, with its chambers and its structures, that you can actually de-politicize it ... and that's frustrating ... There was a certain amount of cynicism that it would do any good. You know, it's a highly politically charged process. What's the point of trying to go bang your head against the wall? ... the ENGOs ... they hold court in FSC ... World Wildlife Fund, I mean they're the guys that created the thing, is that not true? ... Where you build the foundation with that bias in it and it's going to carry through the whole organization.

Interview 22, Small Business

The FSC-BC's pluralistic approach was thus criticized as “politicizing” the system, i.e. making the development of standards about “*turf*” rather than about “reasonable, common sense judgment”. It was held that if only people would be reasonable, they might be able to develop common understandings. Instead, it was perceived that the ENGOs “*hold court*”, in other words, had the most power to assert their interests at the expense of others around the table.

These criticisms of FSC-BC's structure in fact echo some of Earle and Cvetkovich's (1995) critique of pluralism, i.e. that pluralism encourages group bonding at the expense of inter-group bridging and thus inhibits the development of trust. Trust, according to these theorists, plays an important role in enabling interest groups to look outside of their own traditions and assumptions in order to come up with new, synergistic solutions to conflict. These theorists, therefore argue that effective decision-making systems encourage the development of "cosmopolitan trust" in which the emphasis is on bridging different perspectives in order to better fulfill the interests of all.

Regardless of the possible advantages of cosmopolitan trust, a number of interviewees expressed strong support for FSC's pluralist structures. The following quotes regarding the BC-standard setting process shed light on why this may be the case.

... there were lots of strengths. It was set out from the beginning ... they had paid people, a facilitator, 3/4 approval so that no interest would dominate. I will be extremely disappointed if FSC [FSC-AC] disrupts things. The process was totally fair, transparent and open. It would be completely political if people bow to him [industry rep who abstained from voting for Draft 3 of the FSC-BC standards]. They wouldn't have if it was the enviro or social chamber that had a problem with things. Industry has a problem with everybody being equal.

Interviewee 30, Certifier

One of the strengths has to be that level playing field. That, in fact, no one group could dominate. That was very troubling for industry ... The province didn't like being excluded as a voting member, also ... The Steering Committee strived for as balanced a representation as they could get amongst themselves and in building the Standards Team ... this is BC, so you're never going to cover all interests.

Interviewee 40, First Nation

It comes down to having strong people negotiating.

Interviewee 25, Environmentalist

Interviewees who supported FSC's pluralist process, primarily some of the environmentalists and First Nations, stated that the purposeful division of interests was critical to ensure that industry did not co-opt the process. To them, it was important that everyone was "*equal*", and "*no one group could dominate*", i.e. that all groups had equal power to influence the process. The reference to "strong" people negotiating, implies that a skillful use of power was necessary to assert group interests.

In other words, to some respondents, the pluralistic system was appropriate precisely because it served to correct power imbalances. In particular, it was set up to counter what was perceived as industry's usual domination of forestry decision-making. Earle and Cvetkovich's call for cosmopolitan trust does not acknowledge the challenges of power inequalities. If one group has more power, then there is less incentive for that group to invest in cooperative and trustworthy relations with the other. As many scholars have noted, the forest industry has been tremendously influential in shaping forest management in the province (Marchak 1983; Rajala 1998; Wilson 1998). Some felt, therefore, that the FSC-BC re-dressed existing power imbalances, while according to others it had shifted too far to the side of alternative interests.

Either way, it appears that the implementation of a pluralist system necessarily involved the social negotiation and construction of power relations. In other words the abstract principle of "balancing power" has no universally accepted meaning. This would suggest that trust in the FSC-BC's chamber system is not a thing that can be

achieved on the power of the abstract ideas generating it, rather it must develop in the process of creating shared social meaning.

Regardless of the success or failure of pluralist systems in balancing power between acknowledged interests, however, standards development suffered from a proverbial “elephant in the room”. This “elephant” was those whose behavior was the very target of the standards themselves, i.e. those certifiers and forest managers responsible for implementing the standards. Despite the fact that the certifiers and the vast majority of forest managers who might potentially pursue certification did not have seats at the table, they were exerting a powerful influence on the social dynamics of everyone concerned.

The Construction of Interests and Values

Trust is built on a foundation of shared interests and shared meaning. FSC's chambered decision-making structure, however, is based on abstract concepts of environmental, social and economic interests. While these concepts might be useful as part of a theoretical framework for sustainable forest management, interviews revealed how their translation into the social context of FSC Chambers has generated considerable controversy.

...if you look at the [FSC] membership structure there were some games played in terms of trying to stack the membership of the different chambers, you know, and really limit membership in some chambers ... there was clearly some overt games made trying to make sure that like-minded people were involved in the process, so that if you didn't think like us, then we didn't want you here.

Interviewee 38, Certifier

Keep in mind that that Steering Committee was very skewed in one direction. I mean ... there were four people from the environmental side,

two of which they called themselves social, but were aligned with the environmental side of things ...

... I mean [name of FSC member] is in the economic chamber! Hello? ... Because he's a consultant. Even though he works for the environmental community 100% of the time. Hello! Wait a minute, the system's flawed here!

Interviewee 34, Industry

While the FSC BC structure may express itself in conceptually distinct categories, clearly its interpretation is socially contingent. What was a “*flawed*” assignment of interest to some, was “*totally fair*” to others.

The notable exception to this disagreement over chamber assignments, was the Indigenous Peoples Chamber. This Chamber was defined according to a pre-existing, legally established ethnic category. In other words shared social meaning had already developed over the nature and boundaries of First Nations as an interest group. Supporting the existence of shared meaning, none of the participants interviewed indicated any disagreement over the assignment of membership to the Indigenous Peoples Chamber. Establishing a separate Indigenous Peoples Chamber, meanwhile, put First Nations in a strong position to assert their interests in the standards-writing process. Interviewees did not mention any disputes over such empowerment of First Nations interests, indicating that those involved with the FSC-BC were not actively contesting this particular aspect of socially constructed power. Since First Nations occupy a unique social, historical and legal position in BC, however, it is unlikely that any other group of interests could form their own chamber with as little controversy.

The FSC-BC's abstractly-based Chambers, however, were perhaps inevitably subject to dispute. Such disputes, in fact, extended beyond the definition of different

interests to the issue of which parties should be allowed to participate in FSC processes at all. A number of interviewees suggested that perhaps decision-makers across all Chambers should be restricted to those that they perceived as sharing common conceptions of forest management.

What needs to be figured out from the start is what is FSC about? It comes down to one of two things:

1. The standards process is supposed to include everybody and make them agree.

Or

2. Do we get together as an interest group and come up with standards and force it down industry's throat?

I think it should be the latter. The FSC is a kind of hybrid. The Ten Principles were decided by a small collection of people, albeit from different interest groups, and used as a framework. But then with FSC-BC they are trying to include everybody...

Interviewee 25, Environmentalist

This interviewee observed that, despite the intended appearance of including “everybody” in the development of the BC standards, the FSC-BC afforded more weight to some voices than others. As an example, this respondent mentions comments on Draft 2 of the FSC-BC standards produced by a consortium of BC forest companies, referred to as the “fifty page industry document”.

Although it may end up that, with the FSC BC regional standards, because industry was involved they will be less able to criticize it. Maybe it's worse though, because they really were ignored. The fifty page industry document was ignored. The standard just got stronger. They have been pretending to involve industry but they aren't—maybe that's worse...

FSC will be smaller than the other certification systems anyway. There is a perception that the FSC is controlled by enviros anyway. But it isn't. Why not just say outright that it is?

Interviewee 25, Environmentalist

Several other interviewees also suggested that the FSC should be controlled by NGOs (non-governmental organizations), or people who shared a common viewpoint on forest management. One of these interviewees suggested that if NGOs took over the FSC, then the process would be more efficient with less demands for legalistic language. This interviewee commented that there were people participating in FSC processes who were not in the "*right frame of mind*". A proposed solution was that the FSC develop in-house auditing, and curtail the use of certifiers as well (Interviewee 3, Environmentalist).

The debate over who should be allowed in the process in the first place highlights the question of the FSC-BC's scope. If the FSC is to serve as the ultimate guarantor of trust in claims to good forest management, democratic principles would suggest that all those affected by FSC decisions should be given a voice in the process. Alternatively, the FSC-BC could more closely mirror the original approach of the Silva Forest Foundation, and build itself from the ground up as a network of like-minded individuals and organizations.

Even should the decision be made to limit participation in the FSC-BC to more like-minded individuals, the problem would remain of determining who those like-minded interests are. If the process is to be controlled by environmentalist NGOs, for example, do these NGOs have a common vision of appropriate forest management? The following quotes from two environmentalists belonging to the same organization would suggest not.

I'm not afraid of industrial forestry ... ultimately I'd love to see the industry settle down into a place where we have a good, profitable, viable industry, with good forestry practices. And that would include everything from small woodlots all the way up to the multinationals.

Interviewee 13, Environmentalist

In contrast, another employee of the same organization said,

... they [industry] may be probably better able to meet some of the environmental standards than smaller companies. But on the social justice, and community economic development front, I think they are just too big and unwieldy ... I would really like to see a shift towards more owner operators, more smaller operators. If certification doesn't help do that, then I don't really see the point.

Interviewee 14, Environmentalist

These variable perspectives suggest that the forced categorization of "interest groups" in fact hides considerable variations in opinion. The above quotes could be interpreted as an example of different forest "values" co-existing within not only the same interest group, but the same environmental organization. In regards to the acceptability of industrial forest management, the first respondent's "values", and therefore interests, may in fact be closer to those of many in the forest industry, than to the "values" of many environmentalists. Nevertheless, a pluralist structure as embodied in FSC chambers, would place both respondents in the Environmental Chamber because they both work for an environmental NGO.

The above two quotes, on the other hand, could reflect similar values but differing perspectives on how appropriate values translate into on-the-ground practices. Both interviewees may be interested in the FSC maximizing its role as protector of the environment. The first, however, might think this means including industrial forestry in the list of certifiable forest practices, and the second may believe that change would be

more effectively achieved by favoring small-scale producers. In other words, the line between interests, values and the presumably “technical” matter of implementing those values is not so clear as FSC-BC’s pluralist and impersonal decision-making structures would suggest.

This brings us to the second decision-making model incorporated into the FSC-BC standards process, i.e. the techno-rational model of translating forestry “values” into legitimate certification standards as presumably embodied in the FSC-BC Standards Team and Technical Advisory Team.

“Technical” Decision-making

Science and Technology: A Universal Language?

FSC-BC standard-setting involved the dichotomous division between goal-setting, as embodied in the Steering Committee, and standards-drafting, which was to be primarily technical (FSC-BC 1999b). The FSC-BC Steering Committee was charged with selecting “technical experts” to write the FSC-BC standard, applying science, reason and practical experience to articulate values the Steering Committee had identified. The Steering Committee solicited nominations from FSC-BC members and selected two experts per Chamber from among these nominees.¹²

The distribution of experts across the four interest group chambers presumably provided the necessary breadth of technical expertise. The eight experts first selected by the Steering Committee became the official Standards Team, which was later replaced by a four person Technical Advisory Team. These teams were charged with editing Drafts 2 and 3 of the standards, respectively.

A number of interviewees were critical of the Steering Committee’s selection of drafting team members. A common complaint on all sides was that some committee members were biased, i.e. they weren’t “technical” enough.

¹² The individuals appointed to the Standards Team by the FSC-BC Steering Committee included: from economic interests, Mr. Patrick Armstrong, a forest consultant and land use negotiator from Nanaimo and Mr. Jim Burbee, Chairman of the McGregor Model Forest and former Chief Forester for Northwoods Ltd. of Prince George; from environmental interests, Mr. Tom Green, an ecological economist and certification consultant from Nelson and Greg Utzig, consultant in land use planning and environmental risk assessment from Nelson; from First Nations interests, Mr. Russell Collier, consultant to the Gitksan Treaty Office and co-founder of the Gitksan Strategic Watershed Analysis Team from Hazelton, and Mr. Dave Mannix, Forestry and Economic Development Officer for the Snuneymuxw Nation and owner/operator of Mannix Logging from Nanaimo; and from social interests, Mr. Brian Tuson, Forest Resource Officer for the Pulp and Paper Woodworkers of Canada from Prince George and Ms. Jessica Clogg, Forestry Lawyer for West Coast Environmental Law. Two government ex-officio members also attended Standards Team meetings. These were Rod Davis from Victoria, Director of Habitat Branch, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and Brian Murphy from Victoria, Deputy Director and Manager of the Forest Development Forest Practices Branch, Ministry of Forests.

The biggest weakness was problems of fundamental knowledge among all the parties. Some people lacked field experience and the idea of what works on the ground.

Interviewee 20, First Nation

One of the biggest problems we had, was that when we selected the technical team, they really weren't technical people ... One, two, maybe three [had] technical knowledge. The rest were not real technical people ... it was so polarized, where everybody had to have their person ... And so you ended up with people who were there for other reasons rather than their technical knowledge. And we would have been better off trying to find real technical people that were not directly associated with a particular chamber ...

Interviewee 34, Industry

The only major weakness was how they selected the technical writing team. They had to be qualified to do the job. The industry choice didn't meet any of the qualifications. It turned out OK, anyway.

Interviewee 30, Certifier

We also struggled over the definition of professional. We had differing opinions on that. Does it mean professional forester?

Interviewee 20, First Nation

Like the conceptual categories of environmental, social and economic, the definition of technical experts was a matter of considerable debate. Of course if there is disagreement on the definition of good forest management, there will be disagreement on who is most qualified to promote it. A legally recognized forester registered under BC's professional forestry system (the Association of BC Professional Foresters) may be well equipped to write forest management plans according to BC regulations, but may have little experience with alternative forest practices. In a similar way, the assignment of expertise may vary according to the nature of a person's experience, i.e. be they a policy-maker, a political advocate or a practitioner.

You know, good ol' truck loggers ... we're not playing in that political game. We're just saying to people, 'look, we should be doing this, but if you're going to do it, come talk to us guys that actually work on the ground and know how to implement this stuff. Practical, common sense folk. 'Cause you come talk to us, we can tell you what you're doing doesn't make any sense.'

... I mean, what does [environmental standards team member] know about logging? Nothing. OK, good, you're writing the standard buddy, go for it! ... What does [economic standards team member] know about logging? Nothing. Zero. Nada.

Interviewee 22, Small Business

I don't think [the standards process] was reality-based enough ... I don't think the process involved the practitioners enough ... there's a tendency when developing policy, or something like the regional standards in this instance, to not involve the people on the ground enough.

Interviewee 39, Certified Operation

The concept of a technical drafting team implies a universal language of science, reason, and practice. In practice, however, it appears that the selection of a technical team involves value judgments as well. Furthermore, even at a cognitive level (let alone a normative or emotional level), two "technical" sources of knowledge, such as scientific expertise and "*practical*" expertise, may often be at odds with each other.

The FSC is not alone in attempting to establish institutions with claims to objectivity, divorced from social "corruption". The difference is, that the meanings and values that the FSC is promoting diverge from industry and government practices, and as such their value basis is much more apparent. The FSC is merely harnessing the logic of modernity and the global marketplace in order to bring about social change. In so doing, however, they expose the social and personal underpinnings of modern professional, scientific and market institutions.

The Standards

The Challenge of Consensus

In the spring of 2002, the Steering Committee held a vote on approval of Draft 3 of the FSC-BC regional certification standards. The industry representative was the only member not to endorse the standards. After the vote was taken, the FSC-BC sent the standards to FSC Canada, where again all members except one in FSC Canada's Economic Chamber approved the standard. FSC Canada then passed the standard on to the FSC-AC.

How was industry's refusal to endorse the FSC-BC standards viewed by the various interest groups involved? Some environmentalist and First Nations respondents suggested that industry had acted in bad faith. At the same time, several of these interviewees indicated that they did not hold industry's Steering Committee representative personally responsible, since a certain level of trust in this representative had developed through the years of working together around the table. Thus interpersonal communication may have helped develop trust in this individual. Nevertheless, the integrity of BC large scale industry in general was called into question. One environmentalist recounted a story based in California, entitled "*Lessons from Mendocino County*", about how industry should not be trusted in multi-stakeholder processes.

I don't know if you've ever seen this paper, Lessons from Mendocino County? ... there was a dispute around regulation of logging in Mendocino County ... industry was there at these meetings full-on negotiating, trying to drive down the standards as much as possible ... And, when it got to the point where 'OK, you either have to sign onto this or not', they essentially said 'no' ... strategically it makes sense in a way ... You just move to your outside plan, and do whatever you can to drive the standard down further at this next stage.

Interviewee 37, Environmentalist

The above quote refers to industry decisions as “strategic”, i.e. motivated by self-interest and thus, by implication, untrustworthy. While refusal to endorse the FSC-BC standards or a given watershed plan could be interpreted as resulting from substantive concerns, the questions about industry's integrity and benevolence enter the multi-dimensional arena of distrust. Clearly, whatever trust might have developed in the individual industry representative sitting at the Steering Committee table, it did not apply to industry as a whole.

I asked interviewees why industry backed out at the last minute, when they had signed off on many of the decisions throughout the standards-writing process. Here was one industry representative's explanation:

It's the cumulative impact of all the little irritants and decisions. In negotiations, you sometimes have to make decisions to glaze over some of it and focus on key issues. But still, all of it, including what you glazed over, adds up.

Interviewee 33, Industry

A more graphic description of the process elaborates on how the “cumulative impact” may have been of considerable force. First of all, there was the wider context of work in which FSC-BC Committee members were operating.

It's actually been really awkward, but so much of any job these days in forest management is. In industry you're dealing with so much change, so quickly, and, to be honest, so many times I feel like I'm just skimming across the surface of it ... I just got an email with a white paper on government tenure reform that I have to comment on. I suppose I'll stay up tonight instead of eating or sleeping and work on that...

Interviewee 33, Industry

Work on the FSC-BC draft was then added on top of these other stresses.

In BC ... the draft is so huge, so convoluted and complicated ...

There has been a significant amount of money spent in BC to come up with the BC standard, to the point where the funding sources were saying, ok, enough is enough, you get an agreement ... it was like, we're getting an agreement no matter what.

And one can't agree to it ... without some further evaluation of what it was we were buying. Numbers were getting thrown around like, it would have been irresponsible to just say, 'yes, we can live with that'...

Interviewee 33, Industry

In fact, a number of participants listed time and money as major challenges for the FSC-BC. Yet, as we have seen, the size, scope and significance of the FSC-BC standards is largely a factor of the trust, lack of trust, or distrust of the certifiers and forest managers responsible for implementing them. The need for highly prescriptive and complex standards was driven by both distrust and a lack of trust embedded in uncertainty over which forest managers would ultimately apply for certification. In this sense, it was the distrust itself, as well the lack of trust resulting from writing a single regional standard designed to control all known and unknown forest managers alike, that was the greatest source of expense.

If trust is based on the development of shared meaning, what does this mean in the context of something as complex and multi-faceted as a set of regional standards

expected to control a potentially unbounded collection of certifiers and forest managers across an entire province? The following quote points out how the challenges of communication between interest groups begin at the very basic level of language itself, and that the development of common language around forestry is a process that has evolved over many years.

Sometimes it gets down to common language ... Foresters, people in the forest industry, technical people in general, tend to use words that mean something to them, and the audience are hearing something different ... there's many times there where if the groups could have stopped for a moment and said 'are we talking about the same thing?' ... It could have helped, but no, they were focused on the 'got to get this done, so much to cover'.

Interviewee 33, Industry

Apparently some participants perceived they could not afford even to have “*stopped for a moment*” to improve communication between participants around the table, due to the massive amount of material that needed to be covered. Thus it would seem that many considered the substantive issues of debate as more important than communication and social relations between interest groups. Ironically, however, a lack of social understanding and communication may have been the root cause of some perceptions of disagreement over substantive issues.

Thus it appears that participants might have been able to save both time and money by investing more energy into the development of shared language among participants in the Steering Committee. Yet we have seen the polarization that existed around the table, involving different groups categorized, *a priori*, as having different “values” and “interests”. I propose that given the assumption of differing values and interests, group members may have assumed disagreement over a number of substantive

issues where there might only have been misunderstanding. Once such an assumption of difference is made, however, the appropriate strategy would be to focus on bargaining for the victory of one's own interests and values over others.

Such assumptions, however, depend on the nature of a group's involvement in the standard-setting process. It is perhaps not surprising that industry representatives have argued for the importance of common understanding between interest groups. The FSC-BC chambered structure implies a range of interests that are "separate but equal". Yet each of these general "interests" are facing profoundly different incentives, and only some may view trust between historically conflicting groups as a desired component of standard-setting. Presumably environmentalists are hoping to reform industry practices, First Nations are asserting basic rights to land and resources, social chamber members are concerned about benefit-sharing and public input, and lastly industrial and non-industrial forest managers are negotiating the level of control these standards will assert over their own behavior. It would seem the latter group has the most obvious, if certainly not the only, incentive for winning the trust of the other participants in the interests of creating more industry-friendly, flexible standards.

While industry respondents may have hoped for the development of trust around the standard-drafting table, it appears that some of the other groups involved were more concerned with creating a set of standards that would assert their interests. It would also appear that the FSC-BC's pluralist and impersonal standard-setting system proved much more satisfactory to those seeking to change the power dynamics of BC forestry, than to forestry implementers reliant on others' trust.

Regardless of the importance of trust versus power to the participants in FSC-BC processes, FSC regional standard-setting processes are expected to aim for consensus on the regional standards they produce (FSC-AC 2003b). If trust contributes to peoples' ability to develop shared meaning, which in this case would mean shared ideas of appropriate forest management, then perhaps more trust would have brought the FSC-BC closer to consensus. How, then, might more trust have been built?

A number of labor, small business, and industry interviewees suggested that a more personal approach might have worked better. The industry respondent quoted above suggested the following way of building trust around the Steering Committee table.

Start off with a barbecue and a picnic. Get to know each other a little bit, find out that you are all real people ... Find out where there is common ground and understanding and then slowly build that trust.

Interviewee 33, Industry

Some argued that this personal approach should include a wider range of individuals than those sitting on the Steering Committee.

The way that the FSC could be improved, could have more success, would be if more opportunities were given to those outside of the Steering Committee to get together. Despite the existence of positional negotiations that exist between the groups involved.

Interviewee 16, Labour

Another respondent suggested that trust built through inter-personal relations "shades out" into trust in larger organizations.

... when you go through the individual, personal trust building ... for instance, there is a significant amount of trust extended to [individual

name] by a lot of people in the environmental community, personal trust. It doesn't necessarily extend ... to the rest of the industry, but it shades out from there. So, if people trust [individual name] ... they're going to have a little more trust for this company, than they might for a company where, there's really nobody there that they can see and trust.

Interviewee 8, Industry

Thus some interviewees perceived a need for more informal means of developing personal trust between individuals, including those outside of official FSC-BC processes. Formalistic systems, however, are designed to expressly avoid influence from such uncontrolled encounters. There are practical barriers to such participation as well. The considerable expenses incurred in a regional-level "negotiation" between key forestry advocates for a single set of regional standards meant that there was little time or money for this sort of personal, informal contact with many interest group members most affected by FSC decisions (Interviewee 29, FSC-BC). Whatever the reason for the FSC-BC's limited outreach, the following quote from a woodlot licensee suggests it may have given the process an appearance of exclusivity and lack of openness.

To me FSC has been almost a closed room deal, you know? For what the other processes are ... the public is invited and have an opportunity to have input, on a face to face basis ... It would be nice to have that kind of public awareness that I don't know if FSC would do or not ... I get the feeling it's very secretive and closed, clubbish. Like ... you're a member and the member is listened to more than the general public. You know, to have input you have to be a member. And I don't know if that's right or not.

Interviewee 15, Small Business

This interviewee specifically emphasized the importance of "face to face" communications. It was suggested, furthermore, that FSC's membership structure was by its very nature exclusive.

In fact the FSC-BC did make various efforts to conduct outreach with the wider public. These included the web-based circulation of the first two drafts of the FSC-BC standards. There were 173 comments submitted on Draft 2 alone, with some responses, such as the *"fifty page industry document"* referred to earlier, that included multiple signatories (FSC-BC 2002b). However, a number of interviewees claimed that they did not have sufficient time to provide adequate, detailed comments on a document as large and significant as the BC standards. One might expect, furthermore, that the immense time required would put those with fewer resources, such as small-scale operators, at a disadvantage. Even should concerned BC interests spend the time to write out detailed comments, it is questionable whether such an exercise by itself would, or should, produce trust. If, in fact, the person or group commenting on the standards did not feel their issues were addressed, this could have served as evidence that the FSC-BC was not behaving cooperatively and thus undermine trust. According to one interviewee already quoted, *"the fifty page industry document was ignored"* (Interviewee 25, Environmentalist), indicating that industry trust in that particular outreach effort, would perhaps have been misguided.

In terms of more face to face outreach efforts, each FSC-BC Chamber ran "technical briefing" sessions, inviting FSC members and other select interests. In addition, Steering Committee and technical drafting team members were free to consult informally with whomever they deemed appropriate. Some interviewees in fact indicated that a considerable amount of communication occurred on an informal level. The effect of such informal communications, would be to create a kind of "inner circle" of key consultants. Given the limited scope of such face to face consultations, and the resulting

exclusion of a majority of BC forestry interests, these encounters could possibly have undermined the trust of some groups who perceived themselves as left out of the process.

Whatever the desirability of more face to face contact, the reality of writing a complex set of FSC-BC standards meant to control distrusted certifiers and unknown forest managers, is a formidable task which could potentially affect a far greater number of people than one could reasonably expect to be included in standards development. What, then, of trust in FSC-BC's system of standard-setting itself? After all, theorists have proposed that trust in abstract systems is essential to life in the large-scale, relatively impersonal modern world (Beck 1999; Giddens 1990; Luhman 1979; etc.).

FSC-BC's standard-setting processes were in fact based on abstract ideals of pluralism and value-free "technical" knowledge, both of which in theory were supposed to operate independently of inter-group trust. Some of the interviewees who were very dissatisfied with the outcome of the FSC-BC standards process, at the same time expressed admiration for the FSC in the abstract. For example,

FSC I thought, and I still think, their system of Criteria and Indicators basically, based on a suite of values ... I think is an excellent system. The concept of regional standards, I think is great too. The idea of purity of purpose, intent and performance I think is also admirable ... In some ways, my concern is about ... the hardening of position around the FSC ideas and ideals ... [This] is likely going to result in it becoming more of a boutique certification that's very well suited to certain high-value areas where perhaps there's a product differential that helps offset the fact that access to resources are more restrictive ... to me it has contributed to the marginalization of FSC as a standard of choice backed by the range of stakeholders ... [it] has distanced the forest industry ... they see it being continually more restrictive...

And again, the idea of regional standards is great, because it allows you to tailor the applications of the standards of performance to the situation at hand. But, I think in some ways it got subverted as it went along.

Interviewee 39, Certified Operation

Thus support for an abstract idea of a system, may in fact not translate into trust in the system as it is actually implemented by living individuals and interest groups. The FSC's idea of basing standards on a "*suite of values*" held appeal to the above respondent, but this did not translate into acceptance of the FSC-BC standards as an outcome of that process. In fact, this respondent implies that the very "idealism" that produced FSC-BC's perhaps conceptually pleasing and "pure" structure, may have contributed to its demise with the introduction of fallible human beings charged with putting it into practice.

A similar dichotomy of trust in the abstract that was lacking in practice, was reflected in complaints over the "technical" qualifications of standards drafting. Let's look, for example, at an excerpt from an industry respondent quoted in a previous section,

One of the biggest problems we had, was that when we selected the technical team, they really weren't technical people ... we would have been better off trying to find real technical people.

Interviewee 34, Industry

This respondent objected to the particular people chosen as technical experts, rather than the ideal of technically-based decisions. As we have already discussed, however, it is questionable whether it would be possible to find BC forestry experts whose expertise would be universally accepted on all matters.

Thus even in cases where there may have been some initial trust or belief in the appropriateness of the FSC-BC as an abstract system, this was not adequate for

developing trust in FSC-BC standard-setters or the standards they produced. Instead, such trust in the “lived experience” of FSC-BC required a sense of shared values, and shared trust in the individuals and groups responsible for its implementation.

As it turns out, the FSC-AC has since dealt with the controversy over the FSC-BC standards, by awarding the FSC-BC standards with a “preliminary” endorsement. This “preliminary” endorsement, which was granted in July 2003, means that the standards have been approved on condition that they be revised based on the experience gained from their implementation (FSC-AC 2003c). As we will explore further in the next chapter, perhaps the process of implementation, as opposed to the formalized procedure of pluralist standard-setting, could prove more conducive to the development of trust.

Prescriptive or Empowering?

A number of respondents, including both industry and environmentalists, indicated that the FSC-BC standards were “prescriptive”. This suggests that the standards provide the precise management requirements necessary to control the behaviour of certifiers and the forest managers undergoing certification assessments. A review of some of the BC regional indicators included in the standards, however, tells a somewhat different story.

Let’s take, for example, the FSC-BC standard’s treatment of Principle 3. The requirements under Principle 3 of the FSC-BC standards were approved by the entire Steering Committee relatively early in the standards-drafting process (Interview, First Nations). Essentially, the approach that was taken under this Principle, was to make First Nations formal consent a pre-requisite for certification. First Nations consent, according to the FSC-BC regional indicators, must include a “protocol agreement”, outlining “how the

parties will establish and conduct their relationship” (FSC-BC 2002a, Indicator 3.1.3 a)). It also may include an agreement for First Nations joint management of the forest operation in question (FSC-BC 2002a, Indicator 3.1.5 a)). Consent of this nature would be required from all First Nations claiming aboriginal rights in the forest management area, including those whose claims are overlapping. I would suggest that such a requirement is not prescriptive, in that it does not prescribe the form of agreement with affected First Nations. Instead, it empowers First Nations at the local level to determine how their rights can best be protected.

Some First Nations have expressed very strong support for the manner in which Principle 3 was interpreted in the BC standards. The reason given, was that it provided First Nations with veto power over forest certification in the province.

Principle 3 is the door through which companies must pass in British Columbia to acquire certification ... And of course it has great significance for the rest of Canada.

Interviewee 5, First Nation

For this respondent, the FSC represented a force potentially powerful enough to assert First Nations interests. This was a power furthermore, that had been denied them in other forestry decision-making processes. According to the above interviewee, the treatment of Principle 3 in BC thus set an important precedent for the entire country.

While all Chambers signed off on this interpretation of Principle 3, it was mentioned a number of times by forest manager interviewees as perhaps the most challenging requirement in the FSC-BC standards. Why, then, were all Chambers willing to sign off on this Principle?

One First Nations respondent suggested that agreement was reached by focusing on “outcomes” rather than “*legalistic*” language.

Initially it did look like [Principle 3] was going to be a very big hurdle to deal with, and probably a show stopper ... Maybe even impossible to be written, we weren't sure ... but ... as soon as we switched the focus ... away from a legalistic interpretation over to an outcome-based interpretation with the hammer at the end there, it became something that they could agree to.

Interviewee 40, First Nation

This comment is particularly interesting from the perspective of trust building. The decision to avoid a “*legalistic*” approach suggests a consensus that all parties should try to resolve their concerns outside of government judicial systems. In other words, the empowering of First Nations through strong language in Principle 3 may have created an environment in which all parties can develop sufficient trust to reach agreement. In this sense, while Principle 3 ensures that First Nations do not have to trust forest managers or certifiers to respect their rights, it ultimately provides all parties with an opportunity to develop trust in the process of implementing Principle 3 of the standards.

Some interviewees, however, have suggested that giving First Nations veto power tilts the balance too far to the other side, and thus may undermine good faith negotiations. The following First Nation respondent, for example, was critical of the treatment of Principle 3 in the FSC-BC standards. This respondent suggested that the Principle was only approved because people felt they had to be “*sensitive to the indigenous view*” and therefore wouldn’t “*duke it out in the open*”.

... those other standards everybody knows a lot about and they're not afraid to be upfront and open ... industry, environmental, government, aboriginal, whoever's around there. They're going to duke it out over the

environmental stuff. On the indigenous stuff, everybody's going to be sensitive to the indigenous view, and they're not going to duke it out in the open ... I think it could have been ... better through a much stronger debate ... It wasn't about building a standard that's good for all of us ... I think [the other principles] are more balanced.

Interviewee 17, First Nation

Regardless of the exact nature of the debate over Principle 3, perhaps all the interviewees would agree that *"It [the standards] needs to be applied. The proof is in the application."* (Interviewee 40, First Nation) In other words, the most important test of Principle 3 both in terms of its ability to protect First Nations rights, as well as its effect on trust, will be revealed in the process of implementing the standards among the living forests and communities of BC.

In fact some hints about how the FSC-BC standards might function in the field have been provided by the few certification assessments that were carried out prior to the completion of Draft 3 of the BC standards. As already mentioned, these certification assessments were conducted on small-scale and low-intensity forest operations and thus perhaps provoked relatively little controversy. Nevertheless some conflicts did emerge that could provide useful lessons. Let's take a closer look, therefore, at Iisaak Forest Resources, Ltd. as an example of how the BC standards might function in the context of an actual certification assessment.

Iisaak Forest Resources, Ltd. is a joint venture company owned by Weyerhaeuser and the Nuuchahnulth First Nations. Iisaak's forest license is located on Vancouver Island's Clayoquot Sound, an area famous for protests over the logging of coastal old growth. In June 2001, Iisaak was awarded certification by SmartWood, an FSC-accredited certifier, using SmartWood's interim BC certification guidelines.

Interviews with various forestry interest group members have revealed a number of controversies surrounding Iisaak's assessment, regarding the appropriate balance of social and economic priorities. The reason for this, in part, lies in the history of interest group relations in the communities surrounding Iisaak's forest tenure.

The creation of Iisaak represented radical changes to forest management within the company's license area, including the involvement of local First Nations in forest management decision-making processes, and benefit sharing with these First Nations. Iisaak was also actively soliciting input from other interest group sectors, and succeeded in developing a Memorandum of Agreement with a number of BC's major environmental groups concerned with the fate of old growth forests in Clayoquot Sound (ENGO MOA 2000). This MOA was a result, to a large degree, of Iisaak's dramatic reduction of timber harvest levels within its license area. In part because of its extensive efforts at public outreach, combined with reduced timber harvest, Iisaak has faced considerable financial challenges in implementing a forest management approach that departs significantly from typical BC forest industry practices.

From the perspective of the FSC-BC standards, Iisaak's management approach raises some interesting questions. As one would expect, the FSC P&C are clearly supportive of public outreach and old growth protection. When it comes to the FSC's social and economic criteria, however, the interpretation of the FSC P&C becomes more complex. In particular, Principle 4 addresses the issue of local community benefit from forest practices. This raises the issue of who precisely the "local community" is that should receive such benefits, as well as what quantity of benefits is sufficient. Likewise

Principle 5 addresses the issue of economic viability. Iisaak in its first few years had yet to break even on its investments.

It was precisely these social and economic issues that led some interviewees to question the judgment of the FSC-accredited certifier in awarding Iisaak certification. For example, the following interviewee reports that another FSC-accredited certifier was critical of SmartWood for their lack of concern for economic viability.

I had one certifier, for example, who will go unnamed, who told me they would not have certified Iisaak. It's not economically viable, you know. It may be the most cracker jack environmental performer around ... but it's not economically sustainable. I think that should be a fundamental criteria I mean we have CSA certifications for operations that are losing their shirts. Is that ... sustainable forest management? ... to be in a continual, ongoing deficit position? Well, that doesn't sound very sustainable to me.

Interviewee 8, Industry

Another industry interviewee pointed out that the assessment did not make sufficient note of the social costs to local loggers and mill workers who were out of work for several years during which no wood was harvested from Iisaak's license.

People that did actually have concerns about social aspects not being fulfilled, in other words, the people that were living out in that community that said, 'hmm, you know, like, the program sounds pretty neat but we haven't worked for five years and, we're really feeling left out in terms of the social part of sustainability here. And ... all this glorious thoughts of things really isn't providing any benefits back into the community from an economic perspective or a social perspective.' And they had what would appear to be legitimate concerns and they weren't even addressed [in the certification assessment].

Interviewee 10, Industry

According to the two above interviewees, Iisaak's financial difficulties, and the fact that loggers and woodworkers have lost their jobs, are proof that Iisaak is not

providing sufficient economic and social benefits. Given that Iisaak took several years to begin timber harvesting of any kind, this point of view is not without justification even within the constraints of logging according to FSC standards. In contrast, however, an environmentalist interviewed provided a different interpretation.

On the social side, they [Iisaak] have made efforts to allow more people to get economic benefit from it. Like indirectly, they are really trying to minimize economic impact on entrepreneurs and other economic actors in the region, maintaining sight lines ... They've posted a five day course on establishment of non-timber forest products business ... That sort of thing involves Nuu chah nuulth people. They are looking at the broader opportunities—multiple use activity. For sure, there probably are fewer jobs for Uchuelet loggers as a result of Iisaak. But you know, hopefully there will be more for the broader community, including the ownership, First Nations. So ... in terms of the local voices, loggers have certainly been the loudest voice. But they're not the only voice. There are also some loud local environmental voices too.

Interviewee 14, Environmentalist

Which one of these perspectives is right? Who is more important, those benefiting from the forest products industry or those benefiting from the scenic and ecological value of intact forest? What really is the end goal? To maximize community monetary profits within ecological constraints? To distribute benefits equally? Are tourism operators, or other residents or non-residents more important?

In general, the SmartWood's certification assessment report of Iisaak was quite positive regarding Iisaak's management priorities. The public summary does, however, mention the issue of unemployment among displaced forest workers.

Efforts were made to ensure that workers within the community had first opportunity to work in the harvesting, although the low volume did not provide the amount of employment that some in the area would have preferred. (SmartWood 2001)

The auditors placed a condition on certification that within one year of the issuance of a certificate Lisaak must incorporate into its management plan “an evaluation of the range of social impacts relating to its operations, and its strategies to address the social impacts of its operations” (SmartWood 2001). The condition, however, does not indicate which social impacts are of most concern. Nor is there any particular evidence that the plight of timber workers in the area will be addressed in any significant fashion.

Would Draft 3 of the FSC-BC regional standards have provided further direction regarding the responsibilities of forest managers in mitigating social and economic costs? The above certification condition, in fact, encapsulates much of the requirements listed in Draft 3. One addition, however, would be FSC-BC Indicator 5.1.6, requiring the establishment of benchmarks for addressing social impacts. However, Draft 3 provides no further direction as to the relative importance and priorities of those benchmarks and thus what steps would be adequate to address them. This means that the FSC-BC standards leave critical decisions to be assessed, or perhaps negotiated, in the field.

Draft 3 of the FSC-BC standards also provides a definition of “local” as “people...(who) permanently reside within daily commuting distance by car or boat from the management unit, or where they are part of the First Nation whose lands and territories contain or are contained within the management unit” (FSC-BC 2002a, 29). Since FSC Criteria under Principles 4 and 5 emphasize the strengthening and diversifying of the “local” economy, and sharing benefits with “local” communities, the FSC-BC definition does serve to further clarify exactly who the “local” residents are that are worthy of special attention. However, since both the timber and non-timber workers mentioned in the above quotes qualify as local, the FSC-BC definition does little to

resolve the controversies over the application of Principles 4 and 5 in the Iisaak assessment.

Principle 4 of the FSC P&C, furthermore, requires that forest managers consult with “people and groups directly affected by management operations” (FSC-BC 2002a). The FSC-BC standards add to this with a definition of “directly affected persons” as,

People or groups who:

- consider themselves directly affected by the proposed and current operations;
- reside in communities within or adjacent to the management unit; or,
- have legal and customary rights in the management unit. (FSC-BC 2002)

The FSC-BC regional standards then require that “Steps sufficient to protect the rights or interests of directly affected persons are developed...” (FSC-BC 2002a, Indicator 4.4.3). Again, neither the FSC-BC definition nor its indicators prescribe a particular course of action. Rather, they define directly affected persons as all those who “consider themselves directly affected”, and they require only that “sufficient” steps are taken to protect the rights of these affected people.

As a final example, Principle 8 of the FSC P&C, regarding monitoring, is also relevant to the disagreements surrounding the Iisaak assessment. FSC-BC regional indicators under Principle 8 include extensive requirements for assessment and monitoring of the environmental, economic and social costs of forest management. The regional indicators do not, however, provide any clear goals or priorities for the appropriate treatment of economic and social issues. Instead, certifiers are left to exercise their own priorities, subject to the influence of the pressure groups most influential in the certification processes.

In sum, despite the large amount of detail provided in the FSC-BC standards, the standards are not “prescriptive” in terms of dictating how managers should address important social and economic issues. Nor do they provide much guidance as to how socio-economic issues should be balanced with environmental concerns. Instead, the standards include open-ended requirements for monitoring and assessment, and for consulting with affected parties. These detailed and yet open-ended requirements provide many potential avenues for contesting certification decisions. This suggests that, in regards to the central issue of balancing environmental, social and economic management priorities, the FSC-BC standards are more *socially contingent* than prescriptive. Specifically, they serve to empower those most influential over FSC-accredited certification decision-making in the province. The following chapter will provide further insight into who some of those influential interests are, and how certification decisions may actually be “negotiated” in the process of implementation.

Summary and Conclusions

What all of the above quotes on the FSC-BC standards process taken together reveal, is a fundamental struggle over the cognitive, ethical and emotional meaning of good forest management as well as good standards processes. FSC’s dichotomous structure, however, assumes that the task of developing shared meaning and values (through the development of region-wide standards) can be separated from the implementation of those values (achieved through an impersonal certifier accreditation system). It furthermore assumes that a pluralistic decision-making process will achieve a balance of “power” between pre-existing interests, leading to a set of widely accepted certification standards. Both the separation of value-setting from implementation, and

the pluralist categorization of different interests, are based on abstract ideals of appropriate decision-making structures. In other words, they are characteristic of what this thesis has termed “abstract systems”.

Analysis of the above data reveals, however, that FSC’s dualistic structure has exacerbated distrust and perpetuated a lack of trust of some of the primary parties (certifiers and forest managers) influencing standards development. This suggests that in partial answer to research subquestion 4 (Do abstract systems build trust?), that the depersonalization of implementation does not build trust in the FSC. The presence of a lack of trust and distrust in implementers, furthermore, has led some of the interest groups at the standards-writing table to push for highly detailed standards for the purpose of controlling certifier and forest manager behaviour. This has created conflict and undermined the trust of some FSC members in the FSC-BC’s standard-setting process. Thus, in partial answer to subquestion 1 (What role, if any, does personal trust / distrust play in abstract systems?), distrust promotes the development of an inflexible, highly controlling system. The creation of a highly controlling system, furthermore, has led some interests to distrust the FSC-BC standard-setting process itself.

At the same time, the FSC-BC’s pluralist structure may play an important role in ensuring that groups who perceive themselves at a power disadvantage in mainstream forestry decision-making in BC, will have a strong voice within the FSC system. Thus in answer to subquestion 2 (What role, if any, does power play in trust in abstract systems?), the correction of perceived historical power imbalances was a primary reason why some interest group members developed trust in the FSC-BC. The FSC-BC’s standard-setting system, in other words, offered a structure for renegotiating decision-making power.

This structure promoted trust in the FSC-BC among those who felt empowered by the system, and distrust among those who felt themselves disadvantaged.

Thus, as a further response to research subquestion 1 (What role does personal trust / distrust play in abstract systems?), is that those that trusted the parties empowered by the FSC-BC's pluralist system also appear to have trusted the system itself. For those who felt at a power disadvantage in the system, however, the standard-setting process did not build trust. Instead, these distrusting parties suggested that the process was biased in favour of certain interest groups. In other words, distrust made the system appear socially constructed rather than grounded in any universal, abstract ideals. In other words, distrust led to the deconstruction (i.e. personalization) of an abstract system.

Is there perhaps some "objective" way to decide whether or not the FSC-BC achieved an equal "balance of power"? I would suggest not. Since there is no universally agreed upon means to define interests and measure social power, a lack of shared meaning between distrusting parties as to what "balanced power" signifies appears to have led to disagreements over who the different "interests" are who deserve to assert their power within the FSC Chambers. This disagreement extended even into the supposedly value-free arena of choosing the appropriate "experts" to do the "technical" job of writing the standards. If there was no agreement on the very definition of the "interests" to be balanced, or who the "experts" are who can translate those interests into management prescriptions, there was certainly little chance that there would be agreement on the meaning of an appropriate distribution of power. Instead, I would argue, the implementation of any system based on abstract concepts involves the social construction of power.

The one chamber that was not mentioned in debates over defining interests, “experts”, and appropriate levels of power, was the Indigenous Peoples Chamber. Membership in this chamber was based on ethnicity, defined in a manner that appeared to invite little dispute. The presence of an Indigenous People’s Chamber served to empower a relatively well-defined social group with a history of persecution. The apparent agreement around the amount of power afforded the Indigenous Peoples Chamber was not due to the achievement of some abstract, “objective” social balance, rather it occurred because the entirety of interest groups involved did not dispute the appropriateness of empowering this particular interest group. In this way, the Indigenous Peoples Chamber represents a notable exception to the rest of the Chambers seated at the standards-writing table.

A number of respondents articulated the perspective that trust would be better built outside of the formal standards-writing process, through more inter-personal interactions among a broader group of affected BC interests. Such a perspective is consistent with the theoretical framework of this dissertation, which suggests that trust is built between distrusting groups through interpersonal interaction and the development of shared meaning. The reality of regional standard-setting, however, is that there are so many affected interests involved that it would require an enormous investment of resources to develop such inter-personal trust within the process of standard-setting itself.

While a number of research participants indicated their disagreement with the way in which the FSC-BC’s pluralist system was implemented, this does not necessarily signify disagreement regarding the abstract concepts upon which the system was based. In fact, a relatively wide range of interviewees expressed support for the FSC-BC’s

multi-chamber structure as a means to incorporate a "suite of values". Many also appeared to support the use of technical experts to draft the standards. Belief in the FSC's institutional approaches in the abstract, however, appears to have failed to develop trust in the standard-setters and interest groups who have been charged with putting theory to practice. This merely points out how trust in the universal validity of abstract concepts does not translate into trust in abstract systems themselves without corresponding trust in the people associated with those systems. In other words, trust in systems is ultimately a personal affair.

The FSC-BC standards that emerged out of the existing trust dynamics indicate a strong concern for interest group influence on individual certification decisions. As such, the standards appear to be better designed to empower interest groups, than to provide precise prescriptions for forest management. Thus, in partial answer to the research subquestion 4 (What role does personal trust / lack of trust / distrust play in systems implementation?), the effect of between group lack of trust and distrust was to create a highly detailed standard that empowered distrusting groups to influence individual certification decisions.

The following chapter will now focus on the issue of trust and distrust in the FSC-accredited certifiers charged with implementing certification. Distrust in these parties seems to have played a major role in producing the highly detailed and complex set of regional standards. This raises the question of the effectiveness of the FSC-AC's certifier accreditation procedures in producing trust in BC, where there is a high level of conflict over appropriate forest values and diverse knowledges. It suggests, furthermore, that

perhaps the issue of trust in certifiers lies at the very heart of trust in the FSC-accredited certification system.

Chapter 6

Trust versus Control: The Case of FSC-accredited Certifiers

In the last chapter we looked at how the FSC-BC's pluralist Chamber structure and technical drafting processes influenced the development of trust within and between the interest groups involved. We also observed how these trust dynamics contributed to the lack of consensus around the regional standards produced. In this chapter, we will now explore an entirely different branch of FSC decision-making—the accreditation of certifiers responsible for implementing FSC standards.

The FSC, in its role as an accreditation body, resembles what Shapiro has coined as a “third order” trust organization (1987), i.e. it serves as a guarantor of the trustworthy behavior of certifiers (second order trust organizations), who in turn are guarantors of the trustworthy behavior of forest managers (first order trust organizations). The FSC's guarantee is based on its status as a “third party”, system, twice-removed from the influence of its local implementation. In particular, FSC's development of regional and international standards is designed to guarantee independence from the economic and social concerns of individual certifiers or forest managers involved in implementing those standards. The development of the FSC standards is based on a pluralist decision-making model, designed to “balance the voting power” of recognized interests. The implementation of certification, however, is treated as an impersonal system.

The FSC-AC governs implementation through its certifier accreditation and monitoring procedures. These procedures have so far been handled at the international

level, through the FSC Board Accreditation Committee (Part 2, Section 7.1, Document 3.1, The FSC Accreditation Manual).¹³ The FSC has cross-referenced its accreditation and monitoring requirements with ISO Guide 62 'General requirements for bodies operating assessment and certification / registration of quality systems' (1996) (Page vi, Preface, Document 3.1, The FSC Accreditation Manual). This cross-referencing with ISO, a well-established and well-known industry certification organization, highlights FSC's similarities with long-standing traditions in industrial certification.¹⁴ Such an impersonal approach to certifier accreditation and monitoring, involves a transfer of responsibility for trustworthiness from people to impersonal, bureaucratic systems.

For some stakeholders operating at the international level, the use of impersonal systems may appear desirable as a means to promote the rapid spread of FSC-accredited certification around the globe.

I want to see a huge amount of certification, done in a boring way. I want efficient, trained auditors with clip boards. Mechanical. My goal is 200 million hectares in five years. We need lots of boring big guys. It would take hundreds of Silvas.

Interviewee 4, Environmentalist

Ironically, as we will see, this approach to certifier accreditation may in fact have dramatically slowed the on-the-ground implementation of FSC-accredited certification in British Columbia. As we've already observed, concern about distrusted, large-scale certifiers played a role in producing a lengthy and expensive standard-setting process

¹³ The FSC is undergoing a process of re-structuring in which it has been proposed that regional working groups play a greater role in accrediting and monitoring certifiers.

¹⁴ FSC has not adopted all of ISO's standardizing procedures, however. One important difference is that, unlike ISO, the FSC does not take on the task of certifying auditors qualified to conduct FSC-accredited assessments. Instead, it is up to the certifiers to determine the training required by its auditors. This arguably increases the diversity of "experts" available to participate in FSC assessments.

which, in turn, produced a highly controversial set of very prescriptive standards. Meanwhile, only 89,130 hectares of forest land in BC had received FSC-accredited certification by the time Draft 3 of the FSC-BC standards was completed, none of which included forest land managed by large-scale industry interests. In other words, the social dynamics of trust and distrust in a given region, may defy even the best laid plans for impersonal systems.

The slow initial rate of FSC certification on the ground in BC was certainly not due to a lack of interest on the part of certifiers. By the late 1990s, four other certifiers, in addition to the Silva Forest Foundation, were pursuing clients in BC. These certifiers were remarkably diverse in organizational structure and culture. They included two FSC-accredited non-profit organizations, the small-scale, BC-based Silva Forest Foundation accredited to work in Canada, and the international US-based SmartWood Program of the Rainforest Alliance, active at the time in North, Central and South America, Europe, and Southeast Asia. In addition, two FSC-accredited for-profit certifying firms were competing for clients. These were the US-based multinational consulting company Scientific Certification Systems' Forest Conservation Program; and the Oxford-based Qualifor program of the Swiss multinational firm, Société Générale de Surveillance (SGS). In addition, the Canadian multinational KPMG was also applying for FSC accreditation and seeking clients by this time, having created "Forest Certification Systems, Inc." as a presumably separate company for this purpose.

The entrance of such a diversity of certifying organizations is the direct result of the transference of control over certification from the original certifying organizations to the international FSC-AC. Such transference, furthermore, was initiated due to

generalized concerns over false labeling claims, as cited in a UK study of company labels (WWF 2001). In other words, it was based on a presumed inability of consumers to distinguish between a diversity of green labels. Certifiers such as Silva, that had inspired trust among some key interest groups, thus became subsumed under a system driven by generalized suspicion.

FSC Accreditation and Monitoring Procedures

The FSC-AC accreditation process involves the development of standardized and impersonal criteria for assessing any organization interested in marketing the FSC logo. The process includes an assessment of the applicant certifier's structures and procedures for certification, and of their performance in certifying companies under the certifier's own preliminary certification system. These structures, procedures and performance are assessed to "provide a credible assurance that certification bodies are competent and independent in providing specified certification services" (Section 1.2, Part 1, Document 3.1, The FSC Accreditation Manual). In other words, the emphasis is on technical competence and lack of bias, or objectivity. Both of these concepts are central features of impersonal systems.

The FSC accreditation auditors also conduct "express and extensive stakeholder consultation", regarding perceptions of the applicant certifier (Section 1.2, Part 1, Document 3.1, The FSC Accreditation Manual). This could, in theory, allow for the inclusion of more "subjective" issues such as stakeholder trust in the certifier applicant. The purpose of FSC's stakeholder consultation, however, is not expressly spelled out. Presumably, if the system is to be impersonal, stakeholder consultation would be used exclusively to aid accreditation assessors in determining how well the applicant meets

FSC's own criteria for accreditation. There are no specifications, furthermore, regarding the extent of stakeholder consultation. An Accreditation Report issued in 2002 includes a list of five stakeholders who were consulted in that accreditation process (Amariei and Droste 2002, 7), indicating that official consultation, at any rate, may in practice be fairly limited.

The FSC also conducts annual monitoring of all FSC-accredited certification bodies. This monitoring involves an assessment of records, an investigation of compliance with any prior conditions the FSC has placed on the certifier's continued accreditation, and an inspection of complaints regarding that certifier (Section 4, Part 2.4, Document 3.1, The FSC Accreditation Manual). The complaints, presumably, are examined in light of information they might reveal on violation of any of FSC's own rules. In other words, FSC's approach is essentially legalistic, where compliance with the rules is considered the primary measure of trustworthiness.

How effective are these accreditation and monitoring processes in building trust among the supporters of the FSC in BC? One might be hard pressed to find a more diverse assortment of organizations than the certifiers that have thus far vied for the use of a single FSC label. At perhaps the two opposite ends of the spectrum are the Silva Forest Foundation, a BC-based non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of community-based, low impact eco-forestry, and KPMG, an international for-profit auditing company operating in over fifty countries and involved in a vast array of services from financial auditing to ISO certification. Ironically, perhaps, a lack of trust led to this impersonal system which then allowed the entrance of distrusted certifiers. The assumption, perhaps, is that FSC accreditation and monitoring will render the nature

of the certifier irrelevant. Let us now turn to the research results to see whether such an assumption is justified.

Trust in Certifiers

The following quote, regarding those involved in FSC-BC standard-setting, indicates that perhaps there was little agreement between interest groups on the trustworthiness of FSC-accredited certifiers.

The biggest problem was that there was no agreement on who are the good certifiers. KPMG, Silva, SmartWood. Each name ran shivers down different people's backs. If they had agreement on the criteria for a good certifier it would have been much easier. It came up all the time. You bet it came up all the time, over and over."

Interviewee 20, First Nation

These FSC-BC standard-setters apparently did not trust the accreditation system to produce appropriate certifier behavior. The respondent implies that this was because there was no "agreement on the criteria for a good certifier". Furthermore, it seems that it would have been difficult to come to agreement on a single set of criteria, given such apparently widely divergent opinions.

The trust questionnaire that was distributed to respondents, provides further evidence of widely divergent levels of trust in the different certifiers. Table 6.1 below presents the responses for overall trust. The chart lists the total number of questionnaire respondents per interest group category, the average score, range, and the number of responses per cell. As discussed in Chapter 3, the overall response rate for the questionnaire was 55%, meaning that there were only a few respondents per cell. Given that the respondents were among the most active participants in FSC activities within the province, however, the results are worthy of attention.

Table 6.1 Overall Trust in Certifiers (1 = Low Trust to 6 = High Trust, NR = No Response)

Certification Organization		Large Industry	Small Business	Environmental	Labour	First Nations
	No. of Respondents	3	4	5	2	2
Silva (Non-profit Certifier)	Average	2.67	3	5.8	3	4
	Range	1-5	1-4	5-6	1-5	3-5
	No. of Responses	3	3	4	2	2
SmartWood (Non-profit Certifier)	Average	4.67	4	4.4	4	4.5
	Range	4-5	2-6	4-5	4	4-5
	No. of Responses	3	3	4	1	2
SGS (For-profit Certifier)	Average	4.5	NR	2.75	4.5	NR
	Range	4-5	NR	1-4	4-5	NR
	No. of Responses	2	0	4	2	0
KPMG* (For-profit Certifier)	Average	5.5	3	1.75	2	5
	Range	5-6	2-4	1-3	2	5
	No. Responses	2	2	4	1	1
SCS (For-profit Certifier)	Average	5	NR	2.33	NR	NR
	Range	5-5	NR	1-3	NR	NR
	No. of Responses	2	0	3	0	0

*KPMG's Forest Certification Services Inc. © was not yet officially accredited at the time the interviews for this research were conducted. However, the company was conducting certification assessments according to FSC standards, as a prerequisite to accreditation. Interviewees who knew of KPMG's FSC activities indicated that they expected the company to become accredited in short order. Forest Certification Services Inc. has since received full accreditation.

One of the most striking features of these results, is the tremendous variation of trust levels, not only between interest groups, but within them as well. The interest groups that show the greatest divergence in average scores are large industry and environmentalists. In general, industry scores show preference for the for-profit certifiers

and environmentalists for non-profit certifiers. These results are largely consistent with the interview data.¹⁵

Uncertainty and Control

As a result of this widely variable trust in certifiers, interviewees suggested that FSC standard-setters have created prescriptive standards as the chosen means for dealing with distrust in certifiers.

Originally the notion was that certifiers would play a crucial role. I think the regional standards have become much more important than FSC originally envisioned ... [We used to think] by and large, we will select whom we trust and respect on the evidence of their own actions and their own standards. But then over time, of course, it's moved farther and farther from that. And ... you could probably, just by looking at a standard, be able to tell how much trust exists within that region. There is an inverse relation between the number of pages and the prescriptiveness of the standards and the level of trust.

Interviewee 8, Industry

As already discussed, where trust is lacking, groups will prefer to deal with uncertainty through control. Thus distrust of various certifiers, combined with a lack of trust in the unknown future forest managers who would undergo certification, put increasing pressure on the FSC-BC standards to control certifier behavior. In response to the demand for regional standards that would strictly control certifiers, forest managers chose to slow down or stop proceeding with FSC-accredited assessments, while they waited for the regional standards to be completed.

... there was some sort of understanding, I guess, with major companies not to go ahead with evaluations until the regional standards are in place ... And that's probably a good thing. If it wasn't the case ... industry ... they'll just say 'well, we'll go with an unscrupulous certifier, get KPMG

¹⁵ See Appendix E for a more in-depth discussion of the questionnaire results.

maybe, to do the evaluation'. They'll loosely interpret it, the watchdog organizations don't have the resources to go over it ...

Interviewee 25, Environmentalist

According to this interviewee, the standards had to be written for the “*unscrupulous certifier*”. This respondent assigned KPMG this distinction, although clearly other respondents might equally distrust any of the other certifiers. The solution in dealing with distrusted certifiers and hypothetical “*industry*” for which there was no trust, was to control them through the FSC-BC standards. This was considered particularly important because distrusting parties did not have sufficient resources to “*watch dog*” certification processes.

This use of the term “*watch dog*” is particularly worthy of note, as it implies the need to monitor FSC activities. Yet the FSC itself, as a third order trust organization, was designed for the very purpose of overseeing certifier activities. According to this interviewee, however, the FSC-AC is not to be fully trusted either. Instead, other “*watch dogs*” are required. In the language of trust, these watch dogs would constitute a fourth order trust entity, i.e. watch dogs to monitor the dogs who are watching other dogs who are watching the original dogs. In other words, consistent with Shapiro’s predictions (1987), the existence of lower level watch dogs, rather than producing trust, was motivating a growing spiral of trust organizations, each vying to serve as the “*final guarantor*” of trust.

This distrust in certifiers themselves, furthermore, led to their exclusion from the standard-setting process.

...you can't be certain how all certifiers will interpret the standards. In BC they [FSC-BC] made a point of not involving the certifiers [in

standard-setting]... Because of KPMG making an application and they appeared to be devious, people have no appetite for leaving decisions to the certifiers."

Interviewee 35, Environmentalist

According to this interviewee, distrust in certifiers contributed to FSC-BC's decision to not involve the certifiers in decisions regarding standards-setting or allow them discretion in implementation.

This thesis has proposed that trust emerges through the development of shared meaning. From such a perspective, the exclusion of certifiers from the development of certification standards, would be expected to further reduce the chances of developing trust and shared understanding between those certifiers and FSC-BC interest groups. Illustrating the self reinforcing nature of distrust, however, the less trusted the certifiers, the more they are likely to be excluded from decision-making processes.

In fact, the level of certifier involvement in standard-setting did vary between certifiers, and some of this variance was related to issues of trust. In the early days of the FSC-BC, the Silva Forest Foundation held a seat on the FSC-BC Steering Committee. Interviews with members of this initial Committee indicated high levels of personal trust in Silva. As the FSC-BC process became increasingly formalized, however, the Silva Forest Foundation gave up its seat. According to an FSC-BC staff member, Silva stepped out because they perceived they *"had to be seen as removed from environmental advocacy in the FSC process..."* (Interviewee 23, FSC-BC). Nevertheless, several interviewees indicated that FSC-BC Steering Committee members continued to consult with Silva on a regular, informal basis after their official withdrawal from the committee. Thus the formalizing of FSC-BC decision-making structures officially increased the

social distance between FSC-BC and certifiers. In practice, however, it allowed Steering Committee members to choose for themselves whom to include and whom to exclude.

From this point on, the FSC-BC exercised strict control over the official involvement of certifiers in the standard-setting process. Certifiers were allowed, along with other stakeholders, to submit comments on Drafts 1 and 2. Otherwise, certifier involvement was expressly solicited on only two occasions. The first was soon after the release of Draft 1, when certifiers were invited to a half day meeting in which they were given instructions to comment on the “auditability”, i.e. “measurability” of the standards (Interview 23, FSC-BC). In other words, they were not to comment on the appropriateness of the standards’ objectives or priorities, but rather were to restrict their comments to assessments of their technical quality.

In a similar vein, once Draft 3 was released, certifiers were invited to participate in a “field test” of the standards. This field test did not involve a full certification assessment. Instead, certifiers were again to be strictly focused on the measurability and “technical” quality of the standards. Specifically, they were to “evaluate whether Draft 2 of the BC regional standards was sufficiently clear, comprehensive and practical for application by certification bodies on the variety of tenures and ecosystems in BC”. The field test, in other words, was structured to assess how “auditable” Draft 2 of the standards was (Moore 2001). This treatment of certifier input implies that the process of implementing certification is a purely technical and practical matter and that certification assessors should be primarily concerned with the challenges of measuring things.

This restricting of certifier involvement to the “technical” side of certification, however, meant that certifiers were not provided with an opportunity to develop shared

meanings regarding the interpretation of the FSC-BC standards. As the following quote indicates, the certifier field testing served to highlight this lack of shared meaning.

My experience on the field test of Weyerhaeuser was really eye-opening. The most interesting and useful part of the whole [standards-writing] process. That really changed my view of the standards. You can't allow flexibility. Everyone interprets the standards so differently...

Interviewee 35, Environmentalist

Apparently, the certifiers had widely divergent views on the correct implementation of the FSC-BC standards. The above respondent saw this as cause for ensuring that the standards did not “allow flexibility”. I would suggest, however, that the conclusion to be drawn from the variability of certifier interpretations, depends on one’s view of the appropriate relationship between standard-setters and certifiers. First of all, if one believes that some decisions about appropriate forest management are best made at the field level, rather than through the medium of written standards, then one might have a higher tolerance for the inevitable variability that results from devolving decisions to certifiers. This tolerance will be even greater, if one supports the idea of certifier diversity. Certifiers, and indeed their field auditors, are likely to vary somewhat in their perspectives of appropriate forest management. These different certifiers own their own trademarks and have developed their individual reputations. Thus if there is variability between certifiers, then interest groups, and even end consumers, can choose to support those certifiers who best reflect their perspectives on the appropriate approach to certification. It appears, however, that the above respondent felt that all substantive matters should be resolved by the FSC-BC at the regional level, and that certifier diversity was a “problem” in need of control.

Given the perspective that variability between certifiers should be minimized, there is still more than one conclusion that could be drawn from the “problem” of variability revealed in the field tests. Within the theoretical framework of this thesis, shared views of appropriate action are developed within the context of trust-based relationships. Thus one way to produce more consistent interpretations among certifiers might be to increase the level of communication and trust between standard-setters and certifiers. The above interviewee, however, concluded that the only way to ensure consistency was through the development of inflexible standards. Such inflexible standards, presumably, would force certifiers to behave consistently regardless of their differing ideas of what might be appropriate in the context of an assessment.

It would appear that the FSC-BC adopted a perspective similar to that of the above respondent. Draft 3 of the FSC-BC standards was completed in April of 2002, about six months after the field testing of Draft 2. This draft included many more specific thresholds, or prescriptions for performance, as well as twenty-nine “major failures”, i.e. requirements identified as so important that a failure to satisfy them would preclude certification (FSC-BC 2002a). As such, Draft 3 was more prescriptive than the Draft 2 standards used in the certifier field-testing.

Did the increased prescription in Draft 3, then, solve the problem of distrust? Perspectives on this issue varied considerably. In general, those supportive of prescriptive standards did derive a sense of greater “certainty” about how certification would be implemented. For example, the following quote expresses a sense of greater comfort with Draft 3.

Prior to this point, where we actually have a standard now that all certifiers would have to use ... the lack of consistency, I think, between the certifiers, creates a level of discomfort for the broader public in terms of the standard now, I think to a large degree that will be done away with, but again there is still a level of discretion.

Interviewee 36, Environmentalist

According to this interviewee, the “broader public” preferred consistency among certifiers. Prescriptive standards have presumably addressed this public’s need for consistency by controlling certifier behavior. Thus control, from this perspective, replaced much of the need for trust.

Many theorists, however, argue that trust relations have many advantages over control-based systems (Earle & Cvetkovich 1995; Fukuyama 1995; Hardin 2002, etc.). Trust and trustworthiness promote voluntary cooperation on both sides of an exchange. Thus trust-based relations serve to greatly reduce the cost of effective monitoring and enforcement. According to Hardin, however, investment in trust-based relations requires incentives for trustworthy behavior on behalf of both trustor and trustee (2002). Would the interviewees supporting prescriptive standards, therefore, have preferred a trust-based system if it could have been limited to trustworthy certifiers? Or might they have lacked a perceived incentive to trust? In order to explore the answer to these questions, I asked the following environmentalist interviewee, “Would you prefer a certifier that simply objectively followed the standards, or one with their own goals that you agree with?”

I think in an ideal world, the former would be preferable ... But to do that ... the standards would have to be written even more tightly than they are. And scoring systems would have to be specified, essentially. The way that it is now, and I know that this is an FSC set up and I think it can work, but there is a lot of leeway for interpretation by the certifier ... There is, therefore, leeway for some inconsistencies, some differences, and from my

view, the interpretation that I hope gets broad is ... to err on the side of ecosystem integrity. Because ... that's the irreparable stuff.

Interviewee 37, Environmentalist

Apparently this interviewee preferred that certifiers strictly adhere to the standards, rather than act in a manner that is consistent with his / her own views of appropriate forest management. In other words, this respondent preferred that the FSC control certifiers through their standards and procedures, rather than trust the certifiers to make appropriate judgments. At the same time this respondent observed that within the current regional standards, *"there is a lot of leeway for interpretation by the certifier"*. Such uncertainty meant that it was still important that the certifier share the interviewee's ideas of appropriate management. According to this respondent, the risk of inappropriate certifier decisions was in fact considerable, given the threat of *"irreparable"* damage to *"ecosystem integrity"*. In other words, trustworthy behaviour was still seen as important given that certifiers might use the leeway remaining to them to do irreparable damage.

The perspective of preferring control over trust might seem logical enough, especially given a perception of very high risk and relatively little concern about cost, if one believed that complete control would yield desired on-the-ground results. Some environmentalists interviewed, however, were not so sure that prescriptive standards were likely to translate into meaningful environmental protection.

They didn't seem to be satisfied with anything but ... [numerical] thresholds ... And it was all very technical and they had their scientific evidence but you could almost see that there was the same scientific evidence arguing for the exact opposite ... You know, we're talking about forests for god's sakes, we're not talking about buildings that are all built the same way ... I can appreciate that you can't just simply prescribe something and then expect that that prescription is going to meet every situation. But you see I would think that that's the certifier's job. To

come in and ensure that those standards have been applied appropriately in each case. And, you know, I'm comfortable with the certifier doing that.

Interviewee 13, Environmentalist

Furthermore, another environmentalist questioned the ability to force compliance on unwilling practitioners. This interviewee observed that there is false hope in “*nailing down legalistic language*”. This respondent said that those participating must respect the spirit of things or it won't work. This individual's past experience has shown that “*if people are not into it they will find loopholes*” (Interviewee 3, Environmentalist).

Thus interviewees differed in their preference for relying on trust versus control. This difference could be explained, in part by their perception of the risks involved, their level of trust or distrust in certifiers, their beliefs about the flexibility needed to implement ecosystem management, as well as their beliefs about the importance of voluntary forest manager cooperation in the certification process.

Despite these differing views about the desirability of trust, however, all interviewees indicated that some level of trust in certifiers was essential to the credibility of trust in the certification system. How, then, did they think trust in certifiers might be formed?

Conflict of Interest or Shared Interests?

In order to identify key attributes important to trust in certifiers, interviewees were asked “What to you are the most important qualities of a good certifier?” Many interviewees from a variety of different interest groups mentioned “independence” and a “lack of conflict of interest” as particularly important. For example, the following quote offers one respondent’s perceptions of good certifier traits.

... independence. Not deriving a significant amount of income from other contracts, relationships, with those whom you are auditing ... It’s always going to be a bit of a continuum. It’s not just yes or no so ... Non-profit status, I think helps. Again, it does contribute a bit more to the independence.

Interviewee 37, Environmentalist

The FSC attempts to address concerns about independence by requiring that companies conducting FSC audits must not engage in other consulting work with the companies they are assessing for certification (Section 4.2, Part 3, Document 3.1, The FSC Accreditation Manual). In addition, FSC certifiers “may operate more than one certification programme and may undertake consultancy activities, only if these activities are clearly and explicitly compatible with FSC accredited certification. In cases of doubt, the final decision as to compatibility rests with the FSC Board” (Section 2.2, Part 3, Document 3.1, The FSC Accreditation Manual). This latter requirement is fairly ambiguous. The for-profit FSC-accredited firms active in BC have developed “separate” companies expressly for the purpose of FSC auditing, perhaps for the purpose of clearly separating their FSC activities from other potentially incompatible ventures. Some FSC supporters, however, do not view the establishment of legally separate entities as sufficient for addressing conflicts of interest. In other words, the FSC’s accreditation

rules addressing company independence are not enforceable to the satisfaction of some FSC supporters.

It erodes trust when there are perceived conflicts of interest, such as KPMG which works for the same companies it audits. Enron may make them think about that ...

One issue that the FSC has a rule about, but doesn't enforce, is the idea of having a certification body evaluate to other systems ... you have the paper walls apparently, but theoretically it says, 'you are not allowed to make public statements in endorsement of certification systems that don't meet the principles and criteria.' And certifiers do it all the time ...

It erodes trust in the FSC if people sell other things. It's like, 'if the FSC doesn't work out, we have a back up'. It means they can use that to undermine the FSC. 'Here, buy this, we also do FSC if you want but our model is easier'. It is even worse than just having another independent certification system

Interviewee 25, Environmentalist

For this respondent, the credibility of KPMG was undermined by the perception that they engaged in other auditing activities for the same companies they sought as clients for FSC-accredited certification. KPMG had developed a separate company, Forest Certification Systems, Inc., in order to establish a separation of auditing activities. These kinds of separation, however, are referred to in the above quote as merely “*paper walls*”.

While a number of environmentalists indicated similar distrust in some or all of the for-profit certifiers due to perceived “*conflicts of interest*”, they did not necessarily have the same concerns about certifiers whom they trusted.

I like Silva because it's local, it's home-grown ... A lot of the people that have, pre-certification, decided that ecosystem-based forestry was what they were interested in, came through Silva, in some form or another.

Interviewee 14, Environmentalist

This quote implies that many of the operators who appeared truly dedicated to eco-forestry developed working ties to Silva. Presumably, therefore, there could be a “*conflict of interest*” if Silva certified these operators. In the case where the certifier was trusted, however, the possibility of mixed loyalties was not raised as a matter of concern.

Likewise, while many forest industry respondents indicated that certifiers should be “*independent*” and “*third party*”, they generally indicated preference for certifiers with which they or other forest industrialists were already familiar. In fact, there is considerable competitive advantage to be had for certifiers to be connected with companies that engage in other types of auditing. For example, an interviewee explained a forest company's decision to work with KPMG:

We looked at SGS because they had an international reputation ... and therefore it made sense for us initially to have the benefit of their experience ... And I liked the idea that they had identified somebody locally, so that we weren't dealing with a lot of international travel.

We also I guess realized that KPMG was another credible certifier ... and, the fact that they had been doing some work with us as the certifier for the other work, in terms of our sustainable forest management plan, that it makes sense logistically, and from an efficiency point of view, to have them involved in looking at applications for FSC.

Interviewee 10, Industry

The importance that interest groups place on “*independence*” and lack of conflict of interest as a means of producing trustworthy certifiers, combined with varying perspectives on what this actually means, suggests a socially embedded view of trust.

Such socially-embedded trust stands in stark contrast to the idea of impersonal trust based on abstract concepts of objective and value-free decision-making. A more social understanding of trust, however, would help to explain why the FSC-AC seems to have failed in its efforts to create trust through legalistic accreditation procedures.

This thesis suggests that trust depends on a foundation of shared meaning as well as shared interests. As one respondent put it,

Well, I mean, everyone wants a certifier who will agree with them. You know, all of us, of any persuasion. So we're most inclined to trust people who absolutely agree with everything we believe, right?

Interviewee 8, Industry

Consistent with this observation, many industry respondents expressed a preference for for-profit certifiers, while many environmentalist respondents expressed preference for non-profit certifiers. This meant, effectively, that respondents preferred certifiers who were closer to the organizational structures and purposes of the forestry interest groups with whom they identified. Take, for example, the following interviewee's answer to, "Why did you choose the particular certifier that you did?"

We were really looking at three. We were looking at SGS, SmartWood and SCS. And we felt that SGS was the more business-like organization. It had structure, it had everything that that we feel, felt comfortable with.

Interviewee 34, Industry

This respondent felt "comfortable" working with a certifier that had a "business-like" approach. In the context of evaluating the FSC, the same respondent distinguished good business from the way that non-profit organizations operate.

FSC has grown, as you know, from a grass-roots environmental movement, almost. And ... they've grown to the point where they are a business. They haven't changed -- whether it be the structure, or it's an attitude, or the organization, whatever -- to business-like stuff.

Interviewee 34, Industry

Thus the FSC itself was unsatisfactory because it was not sufficiently “*business-like*”.

In contrast, a number of environmentalists expressed preference for non-profit certifiers. For example, the following quotes are in response to the question, “What to you are the most important qualities of a good certifier?”

If it is non-profit driven it has primarily less chance for conflict of interest.

Interviewee 25, Environmentalist

Non-profit status helps, I suppose, as it relates to the independence issue...

Interviewee 37, Environmentalist

These environmentalist respondents seem particularly concerned about the economic pressures placed on certifiers. The following respondent, however, points out that all certifiers are subject to economic pressures. According to this respondent, the difference lies in the source and nature of that pressure.

There are different incentives for non-profit and for-profit, though both are under economic pressure. Non-profits need to prove to the foundations that they are promoting values and doing a unique job of it. The for-profit is about selling so there is more of a risk of a conflict of interest, I guess...

Interviewee 25, Environmentalist

This interviewee claims that the economic pressure placed on non-profit certifiers is preferable, as it comes from foundations who want certifiers to prove they are “*doing a*

unique job” of “*promoting values*”. In contrast, for-profits are “*about selling*”. From an impersonal systems perspective, however, the pressure to promote values or sell services would constitute equally undesirable sources of bias.

In fact, some First Nations respondents emphasized the importance of not having a type of forest management to “*sell*”.

... the ideal characteristics of a certifier ... I'd want to make sure that they are entirely objective, and not biased in any way, shape or form. No, I want to hear the straight goods here. I don't want to hear somebody's interpretation of what they think I should be doing ... And that's, in my opinion, the problem with having a product to sell and being a certifier too.

Interviewee 17, First Nation

A good certifier to me is independent. It is not associated with interest groups of the range from green to industry. It makes a case for sustainable communities and forestry. Unbiased. It knows the on-the-ground economics of communities. Not theoretical. Not off-the-shelf. An objective, honest broker.

Interviewee 5, First Nation

The preference for certifiers not associated “*with interest groups of the range from green to industry*” is not particularly surprising for interest groups that do not fall entirely into either of the dominant green or industry camps. This latter respondent, however, did express a preference for certifiers committed to “*sustainable communities*”. This respondent also prefers certifiers with practical, rather than theoretical, i.e. “*off-the-shelf*”, knowledge.

Some environmentalist respondents expressed a specific preference for “*local*” certifiers.

I like Silva because it is local, it's home-grown.

Interviewee 14, Environmentalist

I like the model of the organic certification system. It has more integrity. If it is non-profit driven it has primarily less chance for conflict of interest. There are no KPMGs in organic certification. It is more grass-roots. They have to use local certifiers. There is a lot to be said for local certifiers. I'm not comfortable with the whole global economy thing.

Interviewee 23, FSC-BC

The latter quote associates “local” organizations with non-profit status, and identifies these as separate from the “global economy”. Thus, one reason for preferring locally-based certifiers is the perception that they are associated with a whole suite of desired values.

The following quote mentions another reason for preferring local certifiers.

Silva Forest Foundation being a BC-based certifier is going to engender a level of trust and/or the ability to know how to engage with them, that we wouldn't have necessarily with the others.

Interviewee 36, Environmentalist

This respondent prefers local certifiers because of the ease with which one can “engage with them”. In other words, trust in local certifiers can be more easily built through inter-personal understandings. Thus, in addition to shared meaning, it is important to trust in the individuals responsible for implementing that meaning.

In fact, this same respondent expressed the opinion that trust in for-profit certifiers could also be built, given similar opportunities for inter-personal communication. Although SGS may initially have been “off to a very rocky start”, this respondent explained how trust was built over time in an individual working for SGS.

SGS [was] off to a very rocky start ... getting to an amiable relationship took some time, took a lot of meetings, took us all sitting down ... over probably a period of a year and a half ... We developed a personal relationship with one particular woman there who appeared to be sincere in her attempts to sort through the difficulties ... but she since left ... you do develop a certain level of trust based on individuals ...

Interviewee 36, Environmentalist

In summary, the above respondents indicate many qualities that may promote trust in individual certifiers. These include perceptions that the certifier is driven by appropriate incentives (or “motives”). They include perceptions of shared values. The perception of shared incentives and values, furthermore, may be influenced by the certifier’s organizational structure and culture. Many respondents expressed preference for certifiers whose profit status and mode of operating most resemble that of the interest group to which the respondent belongs. Finally, trust may develop through trust in an individual involved with a given certifying body.

The FSC-AC’s impersonal system of accreditation is not designed to address any of these issues. Instead, it has accredited a wide diversity of certifiers who inspire just as wide a diversity of trust and distrust among the BC interest groups concerned. Since FSC accreditation aims to standardize the behavior of certifiers, for many respondents there may be little grounds to trust in the *system* itself.

In response, some respondents suggested that the FSC should take more direct control over the implementation of certification. For example, it was suggested several times that the FSC should not allow forest companies to select certifiers but rather should either do the selection itself, or delegate that responsibility to regional initiatives, such as the FSC-BC. Others suggested that FSC regional groups should simply conduct the certification assessments themselves, without intermediary certifiers. This latter

suggestion is particularly interesting, in terms of the light it sheds on how perceptions of “bias” are framed. If FSC regional groups handled certification themselves, why should they not be subject to the potential conflicts of interest associated with “selling” certification? Apparently some interviewees felt that the FSC-BC could either be better trusted or better controlled, and was therefore less likely to succumb to inappropriate behavior. In other words, conflict of interest was only a concern when it came to distrusted organizations, or organizations over which individuals or interest groups felt unable to exert control.

Echoing this desire for greater control, the following respondent called for greater stakeholder involvement in the accreditation and monitoring of certifiers.

The accreditation process focuses on the wrong things. On the bureaucratic processes. Like are the filing cabinets locked and the computers password-protected. What's ignored is where there has been a controversial assessment...People care about that sort of thing. There needs to be a clear mechanism for local stakeholder involvement

Interviewee 25, Environmentalist

“Impersonal” systems were apparently not acceptable because they did not focus on the things that people care about.

Both trust and control are tools used to facilitate cooperation between two parties. Trust can inspire voluntary cooperation on both sides. What, however, of control? What effect might the attempt to control certifiers and forest managers have on the trust dynamics of those targeted for control?

The Implementers

Thus far, we have primarily focused on FSC-BC interest group trust in certifiers. There is a whole other side to the trust equation, however. That is the trust of the certifiers and forest managers in the certification systems designed to govern them. Such trust might be expected to influence who chooses to engage in the voluntary process of certification in the first place, i.e. the success of the FSC in finding certifiers and forest managers who will submit to FSC standards. It also would influence the degree of cooperation that could be expected, i.e. the extent to which certifiers and forest managers cooperate with the intent of the standards, or search for loopholes to undercut them.

The one direct segway that the FSC-BC standard-setting process provided between standard-setting and implementation of those standards, was certifier "field testing". The field tests, however, were supposed to be focused exclusively on the "technical" aspects of certification. They were, thus, designed in a way that altered most of the social dynamics ordinarily involved in the implementation of certification. A closer look at the full process of certification will reveal a number of issues that were not adequately addressed in the "technical" testing of the standards.

A company applying for certification firstly must select a certifier. Companies may choose a particular certifier for a variety of reasons. Reasons mentioned by interviewees included cost (although in many cases the lowest cost certifier was not selected), past experience with the certifier, agreement with certifier "values", the certifier's reputation as having high environmental standards, the certifier as having the appropriate balance of environmental values with appreciation of the need for economic viability, and the certifier's acceptability to environmental groups. Presumably, a

company is not likely to select a certifier whom they do not trust. Instead, their choice of a certifier reflects a stage in the cultivation of some kind of cooperative social relation with that certifier. The FSC-BC field testing, in contrast, did not involve forest manager selection of a certifier, thus removing one important social element influencing standards implementation.

The field test also differed in terms of the organization and type of auditors it involved. A full certification assessment may include an interdisciplinary team of certification assessors, with the size of team and type of expertise based on what is appropriate for a given forest management area. Such teams include foresters, as well as possibly ecologists, First Nations, sociologists, and economists, and a variety of other “experts”. The fact that the FSC does not have standardized requirements for auditor registration, increases the available diversity of potential auditors.

The FSC-BC field test, however, appears to have selected participants according to their organizational affiliation. The participants included FSC-Canada and FSC-BC staff, BC Forest Practices Board auditors, two members of the Standards Team, government representatives and certifier staff (Moore 2001). The decision to involve FSC staff and government representatives certainly seems justified, in terms of the opportunities it provided for on-the-ground communication. Furthermore, the collective group of people involved also possessed considerable forest management and auditing “expertise”. However the emphasis on organizational affiliation differs from an actual full certification assessment. In a “true” assessment, auditors would be chosen according to their expertise in the particular social, economic and environmental contexts of the individual companies undergoing assessment.

Full assessments also include extensive field audits, with the number of person hours depending in part on the size of the forest operation. In contrast, the field tests were limited to “three to five days” in the field per company undergoing a “simulated” audit, and were focused on the “measurability” of the standards. The field tests “did not ... address the actual requirements established in the standards ... (or) whether the standards set to high or low a bar for certification” (Moore 2001).

In summary, the field testing was *disembedded* from many of the social, economic and ecological realities of implementing certification. It did not concern itself with who might be interested in becoming certified in the first place, and with which certifier. It did not attempt to draw on the balance of certifier expertise appropriate in each context. Furthermore, it involved a shortened time frame, which not only reduced the amount of information that could be collected, but also greatly reduced the amount of interaction between certification assessors, forest managers, and any directly affected local interest groups.

Forest Managers

Let us now look at an example of a forest manager interviewed who had received FSC-accredited certification prior to the completion of the FSC-BC Draft 3 standards (Interviewee 22, Small Business). This case will be examined in light of information it provides on the social dynamics of the certification process. It will also identify the type of information that would not have been revealed through an FSC-BC controlled certifier field-testing.¹⁶

First of all, I asked this forest manager why he decided to pursue FSC-accredited certification. The manager replied that he wanted to learn about how to improve his forest management, and to show that he could meet a high standard of environmental performance. I then asked how he made his choice of certifier. He said he chose the certifier on the basis of its reputation for having the highest environmental standards of all certifiers active in BC. Therefore, he claimed, certification by this particular certifier, signified the ultimate green stamp of approval. I would add that if, as some FSC-BC supporters were insisting, all certifiers were to become identical in procedure and judgment, such distinctions would no longer be possible. This could conceivably have reduced this manager's incentive to become certified.

As we walked around the forest management area in question, the forester went into considerable detail explaining what he liked and disliked about the certification process. He was particularly positive about the experience of spending time in the field with the lead assessor. He explained how a kind of communicative learning process

¹⁶ Since this interview was largely conducted on foot, walking with the forest manager through the certified forest area, I decided it was not convenient to make an audio recording. The following analysis, therefore, is based on field notes of our conversation, with a limited number of direct quotes that were written, verbatim, in my field notes.

developed between himself and the lead assessor that lasted over a period of many months. Such in-depth communication, of course, would not have been part of the certifier "field test" of the FSC-BC standards. Yet, as we will see, it affected both the forest managers willingness to cooperate with the certification process, and the way in which the certifier guidelines were eventually interpreted.

One of the mutual learning experiences that occurred in the extended period it took to complete this forest manager's certification, was a discussion regarding "buffer" (reserve area) widths for riparian zones¹⁷. The certifier's field assessment guidelines included set rules regarding the treatment of riparian buffer zones. The manager felt that the treatment was not appropriate to this particular forest management area, because it did not adequately consider the number and transience of riparian areas, or the extent of harvesting in the surrounding area. The manager pointed out that the forest area became heavily inundated during the wet season, thus becoming virtually "*one big riparian area*". He claimed that, as a result, some level of harvesting within riparian zones was necessary for the operation to be economically viable. Furthermore, he argued that a small amount of harvesting within the riparian buffer combined with light harvesting outside of the buffer, was preferable to heavier cutting up to the riparian buffer and zero harvesting within the buffer. Yet the certifier's field guidelines, if taken literally, would find the latter management approach acceptable while rejecting the former. As it was, the certifier and manager were able to reach a mutually acceptable solution, involving a reinterpretation of riparian protection requirements in the guidelines.

¹⁷ A riparian zones is a "terrestrial area, other than a coastal area, of variable width adjacent to and influenced by a perennial or intermittent body of water" (Helms, J. 1998).

This same interviewee expressed strong opposition to the FSC-BC Draft 3 standards because the manager perceived that the FSC-BC would not allow for this kind of flexibility. In response to the written questionnaire, this manager gave high scores of trust to the certifier in question and relatively low scores to the FSC-BC. In other words, a case-specific interpretation of certification standards was able to lead to the development of shared meaning and personal trust between manager and assessor. On the other hand, the FSC-BC process, with its relatively impersonal and inflexible standards, had not inspired the manager with similar levels of trust or desire to cooperate.

I asked the manager if he had it to do over again, would he go through a certification assessment. Despite the positive experiences he had, he answered “no”, the certification process “*was not worth the trouble*”. He said the reason for this was the extent of “*paper work*” and administration involved. He said he became involved in forestry because he wanted to work in the woods, and time spent in paper work took him away from what he enjoyed doing. I would add that if, in fact, the FSC-BC standards were more prescriptive and complex than the certifier guidelines used in his assessment, presumably they would require even more documentation and thus make certification that much less “*worth the trouble*”.

The FSC-BC, however, has had no mechanism for direct learning from the sorts of field based social dynamics between certifiers and forest managers described above. The certifier field tests, instead, focused on the “measurability” and “technical” proficiency of the standards. Such an approach to field testing thus ignores the importance of social relations of trust or distrust and cooperation or resistance that may

affect the outcome of implementing certification. It also minimizes opportunities to improve certification decisions based on experience directly learned in the field.

Finally, let us turn to the perspectives of the certifiers themselves, regarding FSC standards and processes, as well as the dynamics of trust involved in implementing those standards.

Certifiers

As already discussed, the certifiers involved with FSC-accredited certification in BC represented a tremendously broad range of organizations, from non-profit to for-profit, from BC-based to multi-national. Interviews with these certifiers revealed correspondingly diverse perspectives on the appropriateness of FSC-BC's standards and processes.

For example, the following certifier interviewee spoke very highly of the FSC standards-writing process.

The process. It was excellent. There were clear terms of reference...The equal representation across the chambers, the democratic elections. They did an excellent job...The process was strong and open. I can't think of any [weaknesses].

Interviewee 31, Certifier

This same interviewee spoke very positively, when asked about the FSC-BC standards.

Good, very detailed. Very well researched. Very well-supported...

The FSC-BC has done a good job of getting in detail. Telling the auditors what to do... They've raised the bar internationally...

Really detailed standards are necessary to have a quality system. I don't think leaving a lot of room for a lot of discretion is good. You need the possibility for confusion limited.

Interviewee 31, Certifier

This certifier appeared satisfied with the standards, and thus apparently felt that not much room should be left for certifier discretion. Having a restrictive standard, would merely force certifiers to adhere to a forest management approach with which this respondent already agreed. Thus a control-based approach may seem appropriate to those who agree with the rules it entails.

Other certifiers, however, were highly critical of the standards. While most of them spoke highly of the "technical" quality of the standards, they felt that prescriptive standards would not be conducive to improving forest practices on the ground.

It depends on what your issue is. Do you want a standard that is useful to control what is good forest management, or do you want forest practices to improve? Big difference. Initially I think the FSC was pretty good on the second part, forest improvement. Now, in North America, I don't know...It's not proceeding and it is just mired in controversy.

Interviewee 28, Certifier

The standard's extensive level of detail, praised by one respondent, was mentioned by others as a barrier to the adoption of certification on the ground.

I think the challenge is really going to be is it implementable, because it is so detailed ... and just the sheer complexity of detailed performance requirements ... And the measure of a good standard, I mean, it is fine to have a good standard, but if nobody is going to apply it then, you know, what is the purpose of having it?

My test on this is in terms of uptake. Where I'd say that within any category of size of operation ... small, medium and large operations ... FSC ought to be able to take up 25% of tenures, or hectares, or numbers of operations ... over a ten year time period ... the reason why ... is in

terms of developing an economy and a culture around certified products. So, you can't expect one mill to source from one forest ... you need to have a threshold level of buy-in at all levels, from forest management, to Chain of Custody, to distributors and retailers so that there's choice in the market place and flexibility around price level. And that's when you have an economy, that FSC products are integrated into the economy ...

It gets to be politics and PR and spin, and communications, and I'm just afraid that the window of opportunity for FSC can't withstand something like the BC standard coming out -- with a bar that is set too high ...

Interviewee 27, Certifier

Thus one objection to a complex and prescriptive standard, was that it was not likely to have much impact if few forest companies would cooperate with its requirements. Furthermore, without some minimal level of adoption, the FSC simply would not survive due to the nature of wood product markets.

In addition, one certifier suggested that each company has a different “*culture*” and “*different way of doing things*”.

...every forest manager and every forest company is going to be slightly different, their culture is going to be different, the company culture, or the individual philosophies of its individual woodlot owners are going to be different. People are going to have different values and they are going to have different priorities...

Interviewee 38, Certifier

Because of these differences, this interviewee goes on to say, forest companies should be given room to implement things in a way that works for them.

...So rather than having, like a cookbook approach, certification is not about getting every single company to do things in exactly the same way, you know the regulatory model. Its about getting companies to consider the full suite of activities and properly consider them and work with them, but each according to their own way of doing things, because there is no one size fits all model. And I think that has been one of the issues that has been difficult for the general public and stakeholders sometimes, in

thinking that certification means that everybody does things identically and that is the only way you can guarantee good forest management.

Interviewee 38, Certifier

From this perspective, certification is not some objective process of “making certain” that a company will behave appropriately by creating detailed prescriptions for action. Instead, certification must be more flexible. This is because it should inspire companies to “*consider*” alternative management practices and “*to work with them*”, i.e. cooperate in coming up with ways of improving their forest practices. In other words, this interviewee is suggesting that certification should promote the features of trust-based, rather than control-based social relations.

This same respondent expressed the opinion that the “*public*” that was pressuring for “*super-regulatory*” practices, simply didn’t understand the realities of forest management. This was because they were not developing their understanding of forest management in the same context as the foresters they felt they needed to control.

This was always really one of the big issues that I had (with) particularly the community of people that is really interested in a super-regulatory standard, because, you know, they want to make sure that every time somebody turns around that’s ok, that’s approved, and you know it’s kind of a, you know, it’s a trust thing, right, and people who are non-foresters in particular, who are maybe armchair foresters, because they take a lot of interest in forestry and standards and how forestry is done, but maybe don’t understand all of the realities of doing forestry, um, you know, expect to have every ‘i’ dotted and crossed to feel comfortable that things are properly dealt with...

Interviewee 38, Certifier

From the perspective of this interviewee, the lack of trust in foresters can be explained by a lack of shared understanding of forest management that is presumably gained through the “*realities of doing forestry*”. Of course, the diversity of opinions

among practicing foresters would suggest that these “realities” do not in themselves create shared visions of forest management. Nevertheless, this respondent essentially implies that standards written by people not involved in their implementation will be out of touch with the “realities” of that implementation.

So far, we have observed different certifier views on the appropriateness of detailed standards. Some felt that detailed standards were inappropriate because they would not win the cooperation of a significant quantity of forest operators, and/or would not lead to appropriate on-the-ground forest management decisions. Other respondents felt that detailed standards were necessary to “limit confusion”, i.e. produce greater certainty in the outcome of certification.

How much certainty, however, do certification standards produce? Some respondents suggested that standards actually play a limited role in how forest certification has actually been implemented.

There are some really rigorous processes out there. They are different processes, but come to similar conclusions, which is pretty interesting. But that's not the case between all certifiers, or for any standard, and the FSC just as much. Regardless of how prescriptive it's going to get it is still going to boil down to the individual values of the auditor, really, in terms of how they interpret things, so, it's a huge challenge.

Interviewee 28, Certifier

Thus, regardless of the standards, different auditors will produce different results based on that auditor's priorities. In fact this diversity between auditors, thus goes beyond even the diversity between certifiers. This is because each certifier must select a team of auditors to conduct any given assessment. Certification decisions then incorporate the individual preferences of the auditors chosen.

It may not be just the auditors, however, that contribute to differences in standards interpretation. Some interviewees suggested that certification decisions are influenced by outside interest groups, as well.

I don't really think the FSC process is all that open. It's open at a certain level. But it's still underneath the same. If you want to get certified we have to go and meet with certain groups to get their approval. I don't see that in FSC's manual. Major environmental groups have to buy into it otherwise there will be an automatic appeal. The company would wish they had never done it.

Interviewee 28, Certifier

A similar complaint emerged, in an interview with a forest manager that had undergone a certification assessment. This forest manager expressed the belief that the certification process took unduly long, and was influenced by political considerations not covered by the standards themselves.

A lot of it started to percolate through well after the assessment was done ... concerns seemed to drift off course ... my sense was that consultation within, by each individual member [of the assessment team] with their respective constituency, may have influenced that ... I believe that some of the local environmental groups corresponded directly with SmartWood ... And I'm sure those concerns were carefully looked at, because ... the assessment team was concerned about ... increased activism.

Interviewee 39, Certified Operation

This interviewee suggested that the assessment team was influenced by fears of “increased activism” from environmentalists, implying that the certification decision was ultimately contingent on environmentalist buy-in. In other words, *the interpretation of standards is socially contingent*. As such, trusting in certification involves not only trusting in a set of certification standards, or a set of formal or abstract procedures for

implementing those standards, but rather trusting in the humans involved in implementing the standards.

As an illustration of this point, note the following response of one certifier interviewee to “How do you build trust in certifiers?”

Performance over time is the only way. And then personnel. So, I think the most critical aspect is who the field teams are ... people that have some substantial experience in management ... the candidates have to be strong generalists, but with a definite specialist field ... I would say that the quality of the team, are they acknowledged as competent? Are they sufficiently senior to do an assessment, do they have leadership skills? ... Are they able to ... acknowledge their own biases, and ... establish an objective position? I think you have to have that level of experience to be able to defend your positions.

Interviewee 27, Certifier

You have “*to be able to defend your positions.*” That statement expresses quite eloquently how the implementation of certification is inherently a socially negotiated process.

Summary and Conclusions

In summary, it would appear that the FSC-AC’s accreditation process, designed as an impersonal system conducive to international trade, enabled the entrance of distrusted certifiers into BC. By overlooking the existing social dynamics within the province, it served to exacerbate interest group tensions over the implementation of FSC certification in BC. The controversial prescriptiveness, complexity, and detail of the FSC-BC standards is quite likely a direct result of both distrust in FSC-accredited certifiers and a lack of trust in the unknown future forest managers who may apply for certification. Thus the answer to subquestion 3 (Do abstract systems build trust?), in this

case would appear to be “no”. The FSC-AC’s accreditation process did not appear sufficient to build trust in certifiers, and certainly could not create trust in the unknown entirety of future forest managers who might undergo certification.

Both this lack of trust and distrust in the implementers of certification, in turn, led some non-industry interest group members to demand that the FSC-BC regional certification standards minimize the decision-making flexibility allowed certifiers and certified forestry operators. In other words, in answer to subquestion 4 (What role does personal trust / lack of trust / distrust play in systems implementation?), both a lack of trust and distrust led to a demand for strict control over implementers. This desire to control the behaviour of implementers, furthermore, was related to the perceived critical importance of ensuring adequate forestry reform, i.e. to perceived high levels of risk. Since implementers were not involved in the standard-setting phase of decision-making, there was no opportunity for the implementers to win the personal trust of BC forestry interest groups and thereby reduce the risk of incorporating flexibility into the standards.

Interviews with the variety of interest groups involved with FSC activities in BC, indicate a distinct split between those who want to control certification activities and those who would prefer more trust-based systems. All respondents, however, indicated that some trust in certifiers was necessary given remaining uncertainties surrounding the implementation of certification. Thus the answer to subquestion 1 (What role does personal trust / distrust play in abstract systems?), appears to be that personal trust in certifiers is an important component of trust in FSC-accredited certification, and that distrust in certifiers undermines trust in the entire FSC system. This is true, despite the fact that the FSC-AC is an international organization overseeing the verification of forest

practices in a presumably impersonal global marketplace. The story of FSC in BC, in fact, reveals both how regional interest groups draw their own conclusions about certifiers based on personal experience, and also how these interest groups are fully capable of influencing international opinion about particular certifiers. Thus, even at the global level, trust in certifiers appears to depend more on the certifier's personal reputation than on the FSC-AC's impersonal accreditation system.

Interview data was analyzed to identify what some of the key variables might be that influence trust in certifiers. Many respondents identified a lack of "conflict of interest" and/or "independence" as important traits of a good certifier. These traits, at first glance, might appear to be consistent with the guiding principles of impersonal systems. An exploration of what they mean to different BC interests, however, suggests a much more socially embedded interpretation. Some environmentalists, in particular, were concerned about economic conflicts of interest. Other respondents, including First Nations, however, emphasized the importance of being "value-free". Industry respondents expressed preference for certifiers associated with companies with whom they already had working relations.

In general, environmentalists more often preferred non-profit, locally-based operations and industry respondents showed preference for for-profit organizations. This could reflect a preference for certifiers with organizational structures and/or values most common to the interest group with which the interviewee most identified. It also might reflect the effect of such certifier traits on the ease of developing inter-personal trust. Whatever the reason, this provides further evidence that the answer to subquestion 3 (Do abstract systems build trust?), is that the FSC-AC's accreditation system is not sufficient

to build trust. The system, however, did facilitate the involvement of for-profit certifiers with whom the BC forest industry already had business associations. This decreased environmentalist trust in the FSC and increased industry trust. In other words, it was perhaps not so much the “impersonal” or “rational” components of the accreditation system that affected trust levels, but whether or not the accredited certifiers that were produced by such a system inspired trust. Thus it would appear that the impersonal accreditation system was ineffective in bridging differences across the conflicting values and diverse knowledge of the interest groups concerned with certification.

This chapter also looked at the other side of trust interactions, i.e. the trust of forest managers and certifiers expected to implement FSC-accredited certification. This examination began with an analysis of an interview with a forest manager who had received FSC-accredited certification. This manager expressed how his interest in becoming certified was contingent on his choice of a certifier. He also described how extended field-based communication between himself and the lead auditor led to a shared understanding of appropriate management, and how this contributed to a certification decision with which both sides could agree. In summary, however he stated that the documentation and bureaucracy involved in certification rendered the process “*not worth the effort*”.

This same forest manager felt the FSC-BC regional standards were too inflexible to result in good on-the-ground certification decisions. While these standards had undergone field testing, the field tests were focused only on the “measurability” of the standards. Thus the field testing process did not address the issue of rule flexibility that the forest manager interviewee had identified as crucial to his support of certification.

This suggests that the answer to subquestion 4 (What role does personal trust / lack of trust / distrust play in systems implementation?), is that trust in the FSC-accredited certifier responsible for assessing the manager's forestry operations may be essential to achieving voluntary, cooperative implementation. It also suggests that the lack of trust of standard-setters in the unknown future forest managers applying for FSC-accredited certification, as well as distrust in FSC-accredited certifiers, resulted in standards that undermined forest manager trust in FSC processes. The fact that the FSC-BC field testing was restricted to "technical" issues, suggests that the FSC-BC failed to recognize the importance of forest manager trust in the successful implementation of certification.

Finally, this chapter explored certifier perspectives on FSC-BC standards and processes. The certifiers involved in FSC-accredited certification in BC vary widely in terms of their organizational structure and culture. Interviews with individuals working for these different certifiers revealed similarly diverse perspectives. The one certifier that was most supportive of the FSC-BC standards, felt that the major strength of the standards was their high degree of detail, and the limits placed on certifier discretion. This suggests that prescriptive standards may be acceptable to those who agree with their content.

The other certifiers interviewed, however, were highly critical of the FSC-BC draft standards. While most seemed to agree that the standards were of high technical quality, they felt that the standards were not likely to be adopted by many forest operators. As a result, the FSC would not have a significant impact on forest practices, nor would it create a market in certified wood products that was large enough to be economically viable. Furthermore, it was argued that the standards were overly

influenced by “*armchair foresters*” who were out of touch with the realities of implementing certification among a diversity of companies and a diversity of field conditions. Thus it would appear that the effect of distrust in certifiers is a resulting lack of agreement and buy-in on the part of certifiers for the standards they are expected to implement in the field.

Finally, some interviewees suggested that, regardless of the nature of the certification standards, the implementation of certification was socially contingent. According to some, certification decisions depend on the priorities of “*individual auditors*”. They also depend on the buy-in of influential interest group organizations. In other words, even complex and highly detailed certification standards do not produce certainty. Instead, they depend on the cooperation of the host of individuals and organizations involved. Thus personal trust plays an important and formative role in creating and shaping the outcome of the FSC’s abstractly based decision-making systems.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and Recommendations

How is trust built in the modern world? The current proliferation of certification institutions, i.e. systems of manufacturing “certainty”, would appear to remove the need for trust. This dissertation has shown instead that certification is as much about winning trust, as it is about creating certainty.

In the tradition of industry and government-driven certification systems, certification procedures are generally portrayed as impersonal and “objective” processes for verifying given attributes of a commodity or service. Such abstract systems, i.e. systems based on abstract concepts of appropriate decision-making, presumably produce rational decisions based on sound science that remove the need for trust altogether. Of course, even from this point of view, some trust is still necessary for those who are not directly involved in certification decision-making, in that they must believe that decision-makers are “honest brokers” who have accurately portrayed the “facts of the case”.

What this research reveals, however, is that trust in fact plays a much more complex and socially embedded role in certification than such views suggest. The role of trust is particularly apparent for socially contentious phenomena such as forest certification, for which there is no agreement on either the appropriate values that should govern forest management or the credible science that will allow us to protect what is valued. This lack of agreement on values and knowledge creates uncertainty. It is in the context of uncertainty that trust comes into play. The central research question addressed in this dissertation, therefore, is “How is (or is not) trust built in a context of conflicting

values and diverse knowledge?” The case study I have examined to answer this question is Forest Stewardship Council-accredited certification in BC. The development of the FSC in BC has involved a wide diversity of conflicting forestry interest groups, making it fertile ground for exploring trust and distrust.

My focus on trust has led to a unique micro-level analysis of inter-personal and institutional relations *within* FSC processes, which should complement existing research on macro-level legitimacy dynamics. Other literatures on forest certification have focused on the strategies that interest groups have used to compete with each other in establishing the “rules” of certification (Cashore et al. forthcoming; Elliott 1999), as well as on evaluating the rules themselves (Meidinger 1991). This research, in contrast, has explored how decision-making processes contribute to the construction of shared or conflicting interests, and serve to magnify or reduce the perceived need for formal rules in the first place.

At the root of the differences between my approach and that of other researchers, is my focus on *trust and trustworthiness*, as opposed to *legitimacy*. Both trust and legitimacy are central to meaningful social action, i.e. they contain subjective meanings that motivate cooperation or conflict. The concept of legitimacy differs from trust, however, in that it addresses how social groups gain the authority to make rules and/or fill established “roles”. Trust dynamics, in contrast, affect the very need to govern or control the behaviour of others. Personal trust, in particular, exists as part of a multi-party exchange of both goods and ideas. It is rooted in the willingness of all parties to be vulnerable to each other. The motive for such vulnerability, furthermore, is to elicit synergistic cooperation, rather than rule-based conformity.

Yet certification is a product of the global marketplace, and as such must involve a certain degree of standardization and “rule-making” for the purposes of coordinating action across large social distances. In other words, it requires boundaries limiting the vulnerability of affected interests to uncooperative and untrustworthy behaviour. This research, therefore, has focused on the interaction between abstractly-based, formalized systems and more informal decision-making processes, and has examined how the balance of rules and informal decision-making affect overall trust in FSC certification.

In order to determine the interplay between control and flexibility within a context of social diversity, four research subquestions were developed, as reiterated below:

I. How is / isn't trust built in the context of conflicting values and diverse knowledge?

- 1) Do abstract systems build trust?**
- 2) What role, if any, does personal trust / distrust play in abstract systems?**
- 3) What role, if any, does power play in trust in abstract systems?**
- 4) What role does personal trust / lack of trust / distrust play in systems implementation?**

The following sections provide an overview of the findings of this research, as the light they shed on the research questions and subquestions outlined above. This review is followed by recommendations that are based on the understanding of trust that has emerged over the course of this dissertation. This chapter then discusses some other approaches that have been taken to examine multi-party negotiating processes like the FSC, and suggestions for how these other approaches might be applied to future research

on forest certification. The chapter then concludes with a final summary of the findings of this research.

Overview of Findings

Where there are conflicting values and diverse knowledge, a balance of formal abstract systems and flexibility create enabling conditions for the development of trust. Abstract systems set boundaries, reduce risk, and can redress power imbalances. Flexibility is necessary to enable voluntary cooperation among individuals. It is this voluntary cooperation that makes possible the bridging of differences.

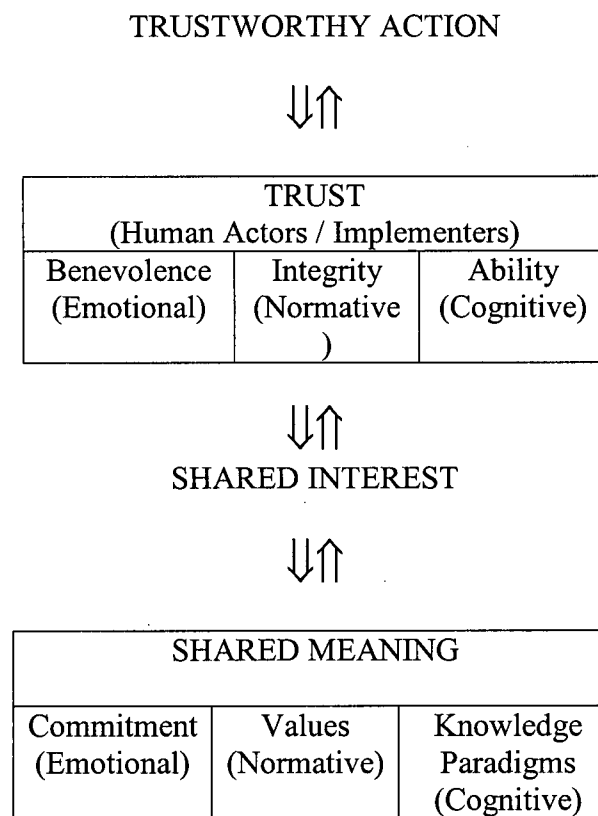
The above statement summarizes the answer to my primary research question, “How is (or is not) trust built in the context of conflicting values and diverse interests?” Let us now revisit the analyses that led to this proposition.

Personal Trust

The independent work of the Silva Forest Foundation, a BC-based, non-profit organization, provided an important early precedent for the development of FSC-accredited certification in BC. Silva’s small-scale, collaborative efforts to initiate forest certification in the province, are consistent with the trust dynamics outlined in the above model of personal trust. The small number of people, and the voluntary nature of their involvement in Silva’s certification activities, allowed individuals numerous opportunities to uncover and to develop shared meaning. Such direct personal communication has the potential for addressing the cognitive, normative and emotional dimensions of relevance to the meaning of forestry. In other words, it provides the space to articulate shared knowledge paradigms, values and commitment. Interacting and

communicating on a personal level also provides continual opportunities to demonstrate trustworthy behavior, which this model identifies as actions that display ability, integrity and good will. Reputations of trustworthiness encourage further trust-based interactions which in turn reinforce shared meaning, interests and trust. In other words Silva, as a locally-based organization involved in the collaborative implementation of certification, was well situated to achieve the self-reinforcing personal trust-based relations illustrated in the trust model reiterated below (see Figure 7.1).

Figure 7.1 Personal Trust



An analysis of the results of participant observation and interviews with those involved with Silva certification in the early days, paints precisely such a picture of

reciprocal relations of trust and cooperation leading to synergistic problem-solving and the bridging of different social and experiential backgrounds.

As it turned out, Silva set an early precedent for the type of forest certification system BC environmental groups were interested in supporting. This precedent later came to play a critical role in shaping the future direction of the FSC in BC. Thus, in partial answer to research subquestion 1 (What role, if any, does personal trust / distrust play in trust in abstract systems?), the early days of certification in BC provide some evidence that personal trust plays an important, formative role in creating and shaping abstract systems. Furthermore, in the context of conflicting values and diverse knowledge (such as existed to some extent between early environmentalists, forest managers and loggers as they began to work together), trust in the system of certification was first built through personal trust. This personal trust was developed on a case-by-case basis, through risk-taking (ceding control) on the part of the trustor and demonstrations of trustworthiness on the part of the trustee. The result of developing personal trust in the early days of implementing forest certification, appears to have been high levels of voluntary participation in the creative process of developing a certification system. In other words, in answer to the first part of subquestion 4 (What role does personal trust / lack of trust / distrust play in systems implementation?), it appears that personal trust promotes voluntary cooperation and creative synergy, thereby facilitating systems implementation.

Pluralism

The merging of forest certification with BC's international environmental market campaigns led to a change in approach. These environmentalist campaigns were focused

on the protection of BC's coastal old growth rain forest, as well as a more general reform of status quo industrial practices. In BC, both the provincial government, which owns 95% of the province's forest lands, and BC's forest industry, which holds harvesting rights to the majority of BC's productive forests, have historically held a large degree of control over forestry decision-making. With control, comes a lessened dependence on trust and cooperation. In other words, the forest industry has had limited incentive to cooperate with other interest groups, or to elicit their trust. Any system hoping to transform forest practices, therefore, has to first find a way to reduce industry control. Thus, in partial answer to subquestion 2) (What role, if any, does power play in trust in abstract systems?), it would appear that perceived power imbalances inhibit the development of trust.

The Forest Stewardship Council emerged as an international organization designed to provide the final guarantee of trustworthy forest certification. Arguably, FSC's attempt to monopolize the market for ethically produced forest products was necessary to pressure industries into participating in FSC-accredited certification. If the FSC was to establish itself as the only trustworthy label, however, it needed to design a system that held claim to universal trustworthiness. At the same time, the FSC needed to ensure that distrusted interests were not allowed to dominate decision-making processes. Two abstract concepts that the FSC employed for such purposes were "pluralism", which involves the "balance of power" between different interests, and "sustainability", as the balancing of environmental, economic and social goals. These concepts formed the basis of FSC's three Chamber system, which divide decision-makers into Environmental, Economic and Social Chambers. A product of this pluralistic structure was the FSC's

international forestry standard, known as the Ten Principles and Criteria of forest stewardship (see Appendix A, the FSC's Ten Principles).

These international P&C, however, were not enough for the FSC to gain acceptance among forestry interest groups in British Columbia. Instead, many non-industry interests felt that regional standards were necessary to ensure that certifiers and BC companies correctly interpreted the very broad mandates of the international FSC standards. For this purpose, the FSC-BC established a regional standard-setting process that resembled the FSC-AC's three-Chambered system, with an additional fourth Chamber, the Indigenous Peoples Chamber. The latter, ethnically-based Chamber functioned quite differently than the other Chambers.

Research results revealed that the use of abstractly-based Chambers (i.e. all Chambers except the Indigenous Peoples Chamber) spurred considerable disagreements regarding their translation into actual social categories. The results suggest that the very acts of defining interests and determining the appropriate balance of power are socially contingent. For example, while one research participant found the ways in which people were assigned to Chambers to be "*totally fair*", another viewed Chamber assignments as "*flawed*" and "*skewed in one direction*". This suggests that a further answer to subquestion 2 (What role, if any, does power play in trust in abstract systems?), is that the translation of abstract systems into living institutions inevitably involves the social construction of power. Thus the FSC-BC's pluralist system did not inspire universal trust, because there was disagreement regarding the appropriate mix of "interests" involved, and the appropriate "balance of power" between those interests. For those who agreed with the social construction of Chambers, they viewed these Chambers as based

on abstract and fair principles. For those who did not agree, they viewed Chamber assignments as the direct result of inappropriate behaviour on the part of specific interest groups. This suggests a further answer to subquestion 1 (What role, if any, does personal trust / distrust play in trust in abstract systems?), is that distrust leads to the deconstruction (i.e. personalization) of abstract systems.

The Indigenous Peoples Chamber, in contrast, corresponded to pre-existing societal definitions of an ethnic group that had long suffered from persecution. For this reason, perhaps, there appeared to be no dispute over who belonged in the Chamber. The existence of a distinct indigenous Chamber, at the same time, appeared to successfully empower BC First Nations to create strong regional indicators protecting their rights to influence forest management. Since First Nations hold a unique social, historical and legal position in BC, it is doubtful whether other Chambers could define themselves in ways that would be similarly uncontroversial and effective.

Meanwhile, the act of dividing people into Chambers may have served to perpetuate distrust between groups, by reinforcing perceptions of difference and encouraging what Putnam (2000) has referred to as group bonding rather than the bridging of group interests. Thus FSC-BC Chamber representatives may have had greater incentives to invest in trust-based relations with their "*constituents [who] were trusting them*", than with other representatives sitting around the standard-setting table.

Research results indicate, however, that pluralist systems may be effective in reinforcing trust among those who agree with the social foundations upon which they were built. For example, an interviewee who agreed with the structure and composition of FSC-BC decision-making claimed that "*You didn't have to trust all the people because*

you trusted the mechanisms that were there." The FSC-BC's chamber structure, meanwhile, served to redistribute power to certain interest groups, thereby enabling those that trusted those in power, to likewise trust in the FSC-BC decision-making system. However, those who did not support the social dynamics of the FSC-BC, likewise did not trust in its "*mechanisms*" either, nor agree to its distribution of power. Thus, the answer to research subquestion 3 (Do abstract systems build trust?), is that in a context of conflicting values and diverse knowledge, abstract systems build trust by empowering trusted parties.

In terms of the role of personal trust, a number of interviewees raised concerns about the particular representatives chosen to fill the FSC-BC chambers. Since all those most directly involved in shaping the FSC-BC standards process were familiar with the specific people and organizations involved in the process, clearly the level of trust in these individuals played an important role in people's belief in the appropriateness of the FSC-BC process. This provides further evidence that an answer to subquestion 1 (What role, if any, does personal trust / distrust play in trust in abstract systems?), is that personal trust plays an important role in creating and shaping abstract systems, as well as in the development of trust in those systems.

Despite the divisive pressures of representing different "interests", this research suggests that some level of trust was built through the continued communications and contact of those individuals actually present at the standard-setting table. However, this trust did not extend to the wider community of forestry interests who did not hold seats on the Steering Committee or standard-writing teams. Furthermore, it appeared that the standard-writing process was driven by distrust in certifiers and a lack of trust in the

future hypothetical forest managers who would undergo certification assessments. The FSC-BC effectively denied certifiers a place at the standard-writing table and could not feasibly include all potential certification clients at the table either. Thus, it is no surprise that the FSC-BC standard-setting process did not build trust across the tremendous scope and diversity of interests concerned. Furthermore, a number of research participants felt that the risks of relying on trust were very high, due to the critical importance of reforming BC forestry practices. This high level of perceived risk combined with distrust and a lack of trust, was reflected in the product of the standard-writing negotiations, i.e. the FSC-BC regional certification standards themselves. Many research participants stated that the BC regional standards were highly detailed and complex, and that they were written that way in order to remove certifier discretion. Thus, in answer to subquestion 4 (What is the effect of trust / lack of trust / distrust on systems implementation?), in situations of high risk, both a lack of trust and distrust lead to a desire to control the behaviour of implementers.

The nature of the FSC-BC standards, as the end result of FSC-BC negotiations, suggests a general distrust in certifiers and lack of trust in forest managers responsible for their implementation. Many of the respondents interviewed for this research suggested that the BC standards are “prescriptive”, in that they carefully control the behavior of implementers. I have argued, however, that there are many areas in which the standards are more “socially contingent” than prescriptive. In other words, they include a considerable number of requirements that are both detailed and yet wide open to interpretation. In effect, this means the standards increase the dependence of certifiers and forest managers on the sanction of other interest groups in interpreting the standards.

This creates considerable vulnerability for implementers matched with considerable opportunities for disputing implementation decisions. The root of this vulnerability rests in certification's very nature as a trust-based institution.

Since certification is fundamentally about trust, certifiers rely on the trust and support of interest groups to validate their worth to the end consumer. Thus, regardless of the standards used, certifiers are under pressure to make decisions that are acceptable to key forestry interest groups. The creation of highly detailed written standards, however, makes it that much easier for concerned interests to dispute a certifier's decision, by providing more concrete and specific grounds for complaint and even opening up avenues for legal action. In this way, the highly detailed, yet socially contingent FSC-BC standards could be used by interest groups to control the behavior of on-the-ground implementers through coercive means such as threats of negative publicity and/or lawsuits.

This research suggests, however, that if individual implementers develop trust-based relations with concerned interest groups on a case-by-case basis, then they are likely to develop relations of reciprocity and shared understandings on the important issues. The fact that the FSC-BC standards still allow certifiers and forest managers considerable decision-making discretion, means that there is still some room for both sides to take risks in trusting and demonstrating trustworthiness, thereby allowing the development of trust-based relations. If, however, no such personal trust develops, then the areas of flexibility in the standards are likely to generate considerable conflict. This, in turn, will motivate interest groups to fight for ever more complete control over certifiers and forest managers.

In summary, high levels of distrust and lack of trust between interest groups in BC have resulted in the production of regional certification standards that could be used as a means to control the certifiers and forest managers responsible for implementing them. The ability to control distrusted actors, however, has been viewed by some interest groups as necessary to counter industry's usual dominance of forestry decision-making in the province. Thus if the FSC-BC standards favour the interests of environmentalists and First Nations, this could be viewed as a means to offset power imbalances existing outside of FSC processes.

Was the standard-setting process, then, a success or failure? That depends on how you define its objectives. The official organization of FSC-BC standard-setting implies some sort of objectively valid "balance of power" between interests. I've argued this is impossible since there is no one "correct" way to divide interests and define power. Rather, the abstract concept of "balancing" environmental, economic and social "interests" on which the FSC-BC standard-setting process is officially based, could only be satisfactorily achieved if there was some sort of consensus as to what this means. Since there clearly was no such consensus, the FSC-BC was unable to meet its own objectives of balancing power. If, however, one steps outside of the abstract terminology and its claims to universality, and considers how well the FSC-BC met its larger objectives of reforming forest practices, then a different picture might emerge. If the process has somehow served to compensate for industry's greater power outside FSC processes, then it may have served a useful function.

To the extent that power has been more equally distributed overall, then each interest group now has the ability to *choose* trust-based over control-based relations in the

context of individual certification assessments. Such choices only come with power that is shared. Meanwhile, the FSC-AC's acceptance of the FSC-BC standards, allows BC interest groups the opportunity to move forward and become involved in implementing certification. Ultimately, it is the implementation of the standards that is most important in meeting the goals of the FSC.

Certifiers play a crucial role in implementation. The following section reviews the findings on FSC certifier accreditation, regarding whether the FSC has built trust in its accreditation processes, and the effect of FSC accreditation on trust in certifiers.

Impersonal Systems

The FSC-AC's system of certifier accreditation is based on a model of impersonal decision-making. Such a model is consistent with the traditions of industrial certification. This impersonal accreditation process has resulted in the accreditation of an enormously diverse group of certifiers, a number of whom have pursued clients in BC. The certifiers range from the Silva Forest Foundation, a BC-based non-profit organization with a history of promoting small-scale models of eco-forestry, to multi-national, for-profit consulting firms engaged in a wide variety of commercial enterprises. Apparently all of these organizations were able to demonstrate the technical competence necessary to meet FSC accreditation requirements. But have they inspired trust?

Research results showed highly variable levels of trust in certifiers (see also Appendix E, Questionnaire Results). High levels of distrust in some FSC-accredited certifiers indicate that the FSC accreditation process provides insufficient means for building trust in certifiers. Instead, trust in certifiers appears to be based on more socially contingent variables, such as certifier organizational structure and culture, the certifiers'

reputations for working with industrial or non-industrial forest managers, whether or not the certifiers are non-profit or for-profit, and whether or not they are locally or internationally based. Some interviewees also mentioned the importance of interpersonal communication with members of certifier organizations in building trust and even overcoming distrust.

This examination of the FSC-AC accreditation system yields an answer to research subquestion 1 (What role does personal trust / distrust play in abstract systems?) that is consistent with other study findings, i.e. that personal trust / distrust plays a central role in trust in abstract systems. Furthermore, in answer to research subquestion 2 (Do abstract systems build trust?), the answer is that the FSC-accredited certification system was not sufficient to build trust.

A socially embedded understanding of trust is consistent with such results. If trust is based on shared meaning and interests, and forest certification has multi-dimensional meaning to many interest groups, then rationalistic processes which only address technical concerns are ineffective in building trust across the many dimensions relevant to forest management. Rationalistic processes, furthermore, promote the standardization of decision-making and thus remove opportunities for individual certifiers to develop trust based on interpersonal reputations. Furthermore, by separating those in charge of defining appropriate values from those in charge of implementing decisions based on those values, rationalistic processes also reduce incentives for both parties to develop mutually satisfactory decisions in the interests of promoting long-term trust.

An interview with a forest manager that had undergone FSC-accredited certification, indicated that personal trust and shared meaning regarding the appropriate management of his woodlot was critical to his support of certification. One certifier who agreed with the level of detail and prescription in the FSC-BC regional certification standards, expressed the opinion that certifier discretion should be minimized. The majority of certifiers, however, argued that writing regional standards based on distrust would lead to too few forest managers applying for certification, as well as undermine the quality of on-the-ground decisions. Standards-writers who distrusted certifiers and lacked trust in forest managers, however, were loathe to allow certifiers much flexibility, given the perceived high environmental risk of inappropriate certification standards. Thus, consistent with previous answers to research subquestion 4 (What role does personal trust / lack of trust / distrust play in systems implementation?), in situations of high risk, a lack of trust and distrust lead to increased control over systems implementers and decreased opportunities for building trust, resulting in reduced incentives for voluntary cooperation.

In conclusion, the findings of this research suggest that where there are conflicting values and diverse knowledge, trust is built through a balance of abstract systems and inter-personal cooperation. Trust in people, furthermore, is necessary before one can develop trust in the systems those people create, no matter if those systems are based on presumably “universal” goods such as rationalism, the “balance of power” or popular concepts such as “sustainability”. In fact, where there is distrust or a lack of trust, an over-reliance on abstract systems may undermine the development of trust, since it precludes the risk-taking and interpersonal reputations that serve to build trust.

Recommendations

FSC-accredited certification has a lot of potential to effect positive change. As witnessed in the early days of its development, forest certification offers many opportunities to develop shared meaning and trust between the diverse interests concerned with forest management. Trust will not be built between diverse interests, however, through abstract systems and written standards alone. Instead, it must first be built, on a case-by-case basis, in the process of social exchange and shared experiences surrounding the implementation of certification.

The following recommendations address how the FSC might improve its decision-making procedures by placing more emphasis on trust-building in the field, from the ground up. While the following discussion focuses on the FSC, I would suggest that it is of relevance to all decision-makers interested in building trust amidst social diversity.

Standard-setting

- **Build standards from the ground up, through their implementation**

The implementation of certification is a tremendous opportunity for experiential learning and bridge-building between people with different backgrounds and experiences (up until now, unsatisfactorily referred to as “interest groups”). Thus better outcomes may be achieved if standards are not written exclusively through pluralistic processes which take place largely behind closed doors. Instead, robust standards can be developed iteratively, through pilot, on-the-ground certification assessments. In order to produce mutually acceptable standards, it would be important for pilot projects to involve multi-sided exchange between interest groups, certifiers and forest managers. Better standards

can be built through direct interaction between standards-writers and the forests and communities affected by the imposition of any certification system.

- **Invest in social relations \geq written standards**

The effectiveness of certification in improving forest practices can be increased by investing at least as much, if not more resources (time, money, etc.) into relationship-building, as into the development of written standards. The building of productive relations involves developing standards and implementing certification in a way that encourages reciprocal relations of cooperation, and improved communication between interested parties, certifiers and forest managers.

- **Prescriptiveness may be necessary to protect the least powerful interests**

Prescriptive social indicators may be necessary to protect those interests that are least empowered both outside and within FSC decision-making systems. Included in this category, are rural communities and non-industrial operators. As was the case with the empowerment of First Nations in the FSC-BC standards, prescriptiveness serves to correct power imbalances if it increases the decision-making authority of often marginalized interests.

- **Protect other interests through inclusive assessment processes**

To the extent that certifiers and forest managers are afforded flexibility in the implementation of certification standards, it is essential that robust public involvement processes be developed that ensure all affected parties a voice in on-the-ground decision-making.

Accreditation

- **Decentralize**

Trust in certifiers is crucial. This is particularly true in the early phases of implementing certification within any region where there is significant conflict over forest management. Likewise, the initial development of regional certification standards is a highly sensitive matter. While regional standards are eventually revisited and revised, the first set of standards is important in setting precedents regarding the meaning of appropriate forest management. If regions are to use a more iterative and trust-based process of developing standards, it is of paramount importance that there first be some level of trust in the certifiers involved.

The results of this research clearly demonstrate that FSC accreditation processes were not by themselves capable of building trust in certifiers operating in British Columbia. The results also indicate that distrust in certifiers has played a profound role in shaping a set of BC regional certification standards that lack the support of a number of key interest group members. Among those opposing the standards, are forest managers already practicing the type of forestry endorsed by many BC environmental and First Nations organizations. In other words, even those potential implementers who

agree with the FSC's intent, may not choose to cooperate with the FSC-BC regional standards as they now stand.

Given the profound effect that distrust in certifiers has had on the development of BC's regional standards, the decision of which certifiers should be involved in the initial implementation of certification in BC would have been better handled if it had involved more regional input, instead of being handled almost exclusively at the international level. While there may be pressures to restrict accreditation decisions to the international level in order to speed the implementation of certification, decisions that ignore the social dynamics of a given region can be tremendously inefficient and counter-productive.

Instead, in the early days of standard-setting and certification, regional standard-setting bodies could negotiate with a variety of potential certifiers and determine which certifiers they would like to involve in the iterative, on-the-ground development of the standards. It may happen that a more iterative process of standards development, in which interest groups are directly involved in the pilot testing, may lower the perceived risk of involving a diversity of certifiers. It is also likely that as more certification assessments are implemented in a given region, and greater understanding is developed as to what appropriate certification looks like, perceptions of lower risk may enable a greater diversity of certifiers to operate effectively in the area. Thus sufficient caution and social sensitivity in the short run, can lead to much greater benefits and faster implementation in the long run.

- **Maintain certifier diversity**

Several interviewees suggested that either the FSC should take over the job of conducting assessments, or that the FSC should assign certifiers to companies, rather than

allow companies to choose the certifiers with which they would like to work. There are several disadvantages to such an approach, however, that I would now like to point out. First of all, let's address the issue of the FSC as certifier. Some people might object to the FSC acting as certifier because it places them at less than "arms length" from the potentially corrupting job of selling and implementing assessments. My primary objections, however, are for a different reason.

A diversity of certifiers with their diversity of labels is likely to lead to greater innovation in the field. A variety of certifying bodies, both for-profit and non-profit, and with different organizational structures and manners of operating, would also allow both forest operators and consumers a chance to support the certifiers whom they most trust and who best meet their needs. The FSC's role is to set boundaries on acceptable certification decisions. It is questionable, however, whether the FSC should be granted the moral authority to monopolize certification decision-making.

This research has shown how FSC's decision-making systems based on abstract concepts do not, in fact, give its decisions universal validity. While the FSC may make important contributions to improving forest management, it should not be claimed that its processes are so "fair" and "balanced" and "rational" as to justify the FSC becoming a monopoly certifier.

Another argument against the FSC becoming involved in the business of certification, is that the organization has evolved for an entirely different purpose, and thus is not likely to be well-designed for the job. Thus far, the FSC has no experience in making certification work on the ground. It is a relatively bureaucratic organization that was created for the purpose of writing standards, and accrediting and monitoring

certifiers. Certifiers, on the other hand, have evolved as implementers, through a process of learning by design, and by trial and error over many years. Unfortunately, policy makers may often discount the knowledge, skill and experience it takes to implement management on the ground. This undermines the effectiveness of both policy makers and implementers.

If the FSC and certifiers retain their distinct roles, however, it is very important that they work to improve their trust and understanding of each other. One way to achieve this, is for both FSC policy-makers and certifiers to “cross-train”, i.e. gain both field experience in implementing certification and experience in developing policy. Such shared experiences help to improve the quality of the policy created, as well as increase certifier acceptance of policy decisions.

I have also suggested that it is desirable that companies applying for FSC-accredited certification continue to be given the opportunity to choose which FSC-accredited certifier will conduct their certification assessment. The reasons for this have to do both with incentives for certifiers to improve their performance, and the importance of creating a cooperative climate between certifier and the forest operator under assessment.

Firstly, some competition for clients contributes to certifier diversity and innovation. Diversity and innovation are inter-dependent, and both are desirable. Secondly, I have proposed that implementation works much better in a climate of trust and cooperation. Given the current diversity of certifiers, ranging from multi-national for-profits to local non-profit organizations, there is little grounds to expect that forest operators will be equally willing to work with the remarkable range of FSC-accredited

certifiers currently in existence world-wide. If control is what one aims for, then one could claim that companies will simply go for the most “*unscrupulous*” certifier and therefore must be forced to meet a higher standard. My research has shown that this has often not been the case. Instead, different companies have chosen different certifiers for a diversity of reasons, including desire to work with a certifier who is trusted by non-industry interests. Nevertheless, there is some risk that companies will choose certifiers in a bid to undercut FSC standards. However, I would argue that there is greater risk in trying to force an unwilling company to comply with a distrusted certifier, than there is in trusting the company to choose their certifier wisely.

As long as there is certifier diversity, however, we must accept that certifiers will interpret the standards somewhat differently. For forest managers, this inconsistency is likely to appear more acceptable if they at least have some choice of certifier. For environmentalists and First Nations, some flexibility may appear tolerable, or in fact necessary, as long as they have influence over field decisions. As this research has demonstrated, these interest groups do in fact have considerable influence over certification decisions. This is, in part, because FSC standards require that companies address First Nations and stakeholder issues. It is doubly true because it is politically unwise for certifiers to ignore the concerns of interest groups that hold power in FSC processes, and have influence over FSC consumers. Thus interest group influence is not limited to standard-setting. Instead, interest groups can continue to provide important “checks and balances” on certifier discretion in the field.

Such checks and balances do not, however, guarantee a uniformity of certifier decisions. The combined effect of the ecological and socio-economic diversity of each

forest area under assessment, along with certifier diversity, and some flexibility in standards, as well as field-based social negotiations over correct standards interpretation, will inevitably result in decisions that are not perfectly replicable. Yet I'd argue that this is a desirable result. Certification should aim for agreement on the important issues surrounding forest management, while at the same time be flexible enough to inspire cooperation. A moderate level of inconsistency, I would argue, is a reasonable price to pay for the benefits of diversity.

In general, the FSC's role is to provide boundaries for acceptable certifier behavior, but not to control or usurp the implementation of certification. Instead, it is important that certifiers be given room to develop individual reputations of trustworthiness. This requires that certifiers continue to be allowed to use their own labels, in addition to the FSC label. It also supports FSC's policies thus far that allow certifiers some flexibility in developing their own structures and procedures.

- **Increase certifier awareness and investment in positive social relations**

In order to retain such flexibility, however, certifiers must take responsibility for developing reputations of trustworthiness. As summarized in the trust model in Figure 7.1, this is a complex and multi-dimensional undertaking. It involves an understanding of what forest management means to the many interests affected by certifier decisions, and the demonstration of ability, integrity and also good will in developing certification decisions that address the concerns of such affected interests.

The diversity of interest groups concerned, and the diversity of potential certifiers, makes developing trust a considerable challenge. However, I'd argue that the rewards far

outweigh the risks. It is precisely the combination of diversity and trust, that leads to creative synergy and innovation.

Implementation

Truth makes little sense and has no real impact if it is merely a collection of abstract ideas. Truth that is living experience, on the other hand, is challenging, threatening, and transforming. The first kind of truth consists of information collected and added, from a safe distance, to our mental inventory. The second kind involves risking our familiar and coherent interpretation of the world—it is an act of surrender, of complete and embodied cognition that is seeing, feeling, intuiting, and comprehending all at once. Living truth leads us ever more deeply into the unknown territory of what our life is (Ray 2000).

▪ Emphasize trust-building and cooperation

I'd like to close with a discussion of what, to me, is the most interesting and most important part of forest certification—its implementation in the field. For this purpose, I'd like first to turn to some of my own field experiences. As mentioned in the "Research Methods" Chapter of this dissertation, I've worked for several years for an FSC-accredited certifier, and served on a number of FSC-accredited assessments in the US and Canada. I would therefore like to describe an experience I had working in the field.

This narrative is meant to highlight the difficulty of forcing decisions on managers simply because "it's in the standards". It is a story about an assessment on which I served where, as was often the case, the assessment team was dealing with a very independent-minded forest manager. This manager had developed relations of mutual respect with local environmentalists, most probably due to his innovative forest practices, as well as his openness in collaborating with interested stakeholders. Thus one would think he was an excellent candidate for cooperating with FSC standards. The frustrating thing about this manager, however, was that he put very limited stock in written

standards. In particular, he refused to make any changes based on the certification standards unless the assessment team could convince him and his management team that the changes were important and necessary.

Now, the assessment team could have just walked away and not certified the forest operation in question, because the manager was initially resistant to some of the conditions for certification. But, when we thought about it, none of us felt good about asking the manager to do something that we couldn't defend as important. So we struggled to communicate the rationale for the requirements in the standards. In the end, this manager chose to cooperate. We could also be confident that he would continue to cooperate, because he had fully understood and agreed to the terms. If, however, we had told him to take or leave our certification decision without taking the time to defend it, or if we were unable to defend the standards because they didn't make sense to us either, I am fairly confident he would have abandoned the FSC. Thus a good example of eco-forestry would not have been certified. The reason, I would argue, would have been a lack of respect for the manager's concerns, and a disregard of the manager's need to earn the cooperation of his management team.

In general, conducting FSC-accredited assessments is a wonderful exercise in forcing the consideration of a wide variety of perspectives. One gets to know the company one is assessing, and thus it is difficult to disregard their knowledge and experience. At the same time, one bears considerable responsibility to all interest groups who have a stake in the outcome of certification.

If, on the other hand, FSC-accredited certification becomes a routine of check-the-box audits, backed up by legal requirements and protections, such consideration for

other peoples' concerns is likely to be lost altogether. At that point, I, for one, would have lost interest in the FSC.

At the same time, certification does need boundaries. As a social assessor who has served on teams otherwise consisting of foresters and natural scientists, I am used to feeling somewhat outnumbered regarding the importance of social issues in an assessment. In fact the job of "social assessor" has sometimes been assigned as a default, to provide a label for people who want to participate in an assessment, but have no particular training in social issues (Interview 3, Environmentalist). I therefore would argue that certification standards should not be so vague and "flexible" as to make it possible to disregard social priorities. Furthermore, the fact that certification assessments are likely to involve field-based social negotiation, raises issues of equity. Some people, after all, have more power to protect their interests than others. Likewise, interest groups may be more dedicated to protecting some valued resources, such as environmental health or industry profitability, than others, such as social welfare. I would argue, therefore, that the need for strong standards is greatest when it comes to protecting minority interests, such as workers and rural communities, who do not hold much power in either the FSC or outside decision-making spheres.

The majority of certification assessments that pre-date the development of regional standards in the US and Canada have been small-scale operations and public lands practicing low impact forestry (McDermott and Hoberg forthcoming). Given the low level of controversy surrounding most of these assessments, prescriptive regional standards have not been necessary for building trust in many of these initial certified forest operations. Instead, certifiers, forest managers, and concerned interest groups have

managed to develop trust through the process of implementation, even between individuals who were initially distrusting of the process.

While it is relatively easy to see how trust might develop in the context of small-scale, and low intensity forestry, what of larger-scale forest industry? In other words, what suggestions do I have for those who do not fit the “boutique” model of grass roots trust-building?

There is evidence that trust-based relations can also work for larger forestry operations. Tembec, a large Canadian forestry firm, has been working collaboratively with the World Wildlife Fund over the last few years, with the aim of having all of their 32 million hectares of Canadian forestlands certified under the FSC. As of April, 2003, already 2 million hectares in Ontario had received FSC-accredited certification (CNW Telbec 2003). What this illustrates, is that by first building cooperative relationships with a major environmental group, Tembec has succeeded in getting enough interest group buy-in to achieve FSC-accredited certification for its industrial forest operations. It is important that further research be done on this case, however, to determine how broad the level of interest group support is for this example of FSC-accredited industrial certification.

Thus certification, like any other social system, relies on a degree of trust and mutual understanding between the individuals and interest groups involved. One cannot rely entirely on formal decision-making procedures based on abstract concepts to replace the need for trust in living individuals and organizations. Instead, certification can build trust only if it signifies a commitment on the part of forest managers, certifiers and concerned interests, to ongoing social relations of trust and trustworthiness. This requires

that all sides demonstrate their willingness to develop shared meaning, and to find ways of sharing in the benefits of forest management.

Other Relevant Research and Suggestions for Further Study

The challenges of decision-making under the FSC certification system resemble the difficulties faced by many decision-making processes involving multiple, conflicting interests. Theorists of public participation and negotiation have examined such processes from a different angle, focusing on the identification of key principles of “effective” decision-making. Such an avenue of inquiry suggests a number of possible approaches for further research.

Fisher et al., for example, in their seminal work *Getting to Yes* (1991), discuss the concept of “interest-based negotiation” as a means to promote lasting and mutually satisfactory decisions. Their focus is on guidelines for appropriate negotiating behaviour that can be intentionally adopted by all interests at the negotiating table. According to Fisher et al., the four central strategies underlying interest-based negotiation are, 1) to focus on substantive issues and separate these from inter-personal conflicts, 2) to identify and assert one’s basic interests rather than taking a “position” on how those interests must be accommodated, 3) to commit to creating new options that will satisfy all parties, and 4) to develop agreements based on “objective” criteria garnered from reputable sources. My research would suggest, however, that distrust may prevent negotiators from adopting the type of behaviour that Fisher et al. recommend. Researchers could test these findings, by investigating whether or not different ground rules for appropriate negotiating behaviour, or different facilitation practices, might have led participants to adopt different negotiating behaviour despite the existing conditions of distrust.

Fisher et al., in fact, contend that negotiators should employ strategies to reduce their need to trust other interests at the table. They suggest two such strategies that rely on self interest, rather than on either trust or control. One is for each party to create and communicate its "best alternative to a negotiated agreement", i.e. the alternative each party will pursue if not satisfied with the negotiating process. The knowledge that parties may simply abandon the negotiating table creates a non trust-based incentive for all involved to work together to produce mutually satisfactory decisions. Another strategy, is for negotiators to create an agreement in which all sides are better off than they would have been without negotiation. If all parties benefit from a decision, then all parties have incentive to cooperate with it (Fisher et al. 1991).

My research would also suggest, however, that if some of the most critically important parties are absent from the negotiating table (i.e. certifiers and all the forest managers who may potentially undergo certification assessments), then negotiators remain dependent on either trust or control as the two options for ensuring the cooperative implementation of their certification standards. Further research could test these findings, however, by focusing specifically on all of the possible reasons why the FSC-BC failed to create mutually satisfactory certification standards (and therefore lessen the need for trust).

Dorcey and McDaniels raise the question of the "legitimacy" of citizen involvement in decision-making processes. They identify three fundamental challenges to process "legitimacy", these are 1) representativeness, 2) the legitimacy of rules and 3) the use of technical information (2001). The first problem, that of representation, lies in how well decision-makers represent their own constituents as well as how well the

process addresses other interests not at the table, including the more diffused “public”, the interests of children, and even the interests of future generations and other living species. Important factors in determining representativeness include the means of selecting representatives and the efforts made by those representatives to consult with constituents throughout decision-making processes (Susskind 1999). The FSC-BC offers an interesting case study for further exploring these issues. As illustrated in my thesis, however, the question of representation in the FSC-BC is greatly complicated by the fact that membership in the FSC is based on allegiance to a particular view of forest management. What, then, might this imply in terms of which interests may exert a “legitimate” influence on FSC decisions? Should involvement in FSC processes require some minimal level of agreement with the FSC principles? If so, what would that “minimal” level be? My research indicates that there was little consensus on these fundamental questions. Thus future research on the issue of representativeness in the FSC faces a complex, if nevertheless important, challenge.

The second challenge listed by Dorsey and McDaniels (2002), that of establishing legitimate rules, addresses the logic of decision-making procedures and methods of accountability. There is ample room for research in this area, involving a detailed examination of the FSC-BC’s and the FSC-AC’s decision-making procedures and mechanisms for accountability. As previously explained, this dissertation has focused on trust rather than on evaluations of the FSC’s rule-making legitimacy.

The third challenge outlined by Dorsey and McDaniels (2001), the use of technical information, refers to ensuring that decision-makers are sufficiently informed about relevant technical issues, including the many dissenting opinions of technical

experts. This is particularly problematic in an area as highly debated as sustainable forest management. Even the definition of legitimate knowledge regarding forest management is under dispute, including the appropriate roles of traditional ecological knowledge, local experience, technical training and scientific expertise. One possible avenue for future research, therefore, is to compare and contrast the ways in which the different interest groups involved in the FSC define and employ "legitimate" expertise. Another issue worthy of exploration, is whether or not the participants in FSC processes have had equal *access* to the wide range of relevant information.

The issue of access to information has also been raised by theorists focusing on the distribution of power in decision-making processes. Forester sees such power inequalities as a virtual given within a capitalist political-economy (Forester 1989, 59). He claims that responsible decision-making therefore requires the identification of structural forces perpetuating this inequality and proactive efforts to counter these forces. He argues against a "rational" planning perspective that ignores the ways in which reason is bounded in political-economic contexts. Instead, he claims that inequalities are rooted in the distortion and strategic misuse of information. Thus a progressive decision-making process should employ "communicative action", whereby every effort is made to provide complete information in a format accessible to each of the affected parties.

According to Forester, "Planners can expect organizations to have two related faces: one producing instrumental results, the other simultaneously, but less visibly, reproducing social and political relations involving knowledge (who knows what), consent (who exercises power and who obeys), trust (who cooperates with whom), and the formulation of problems (who focuses on or neglects which problems)" (Forester

1989, 80). Some future researchers, therefore, may wish to focus more exclusively on the power dynamics inherent in FSC processes, perhaps comparing them with other industry or government-driven processes.

Other negotiation theorists have looked at decision-making outside the confines of structured procedures. Innes, for example, argues for the importance of adaptive management. She claims that "an adaptive, self-organizing process is a highly efficient way of accomplishing many tasks in a complex, uncertain, and unchanging environment. Such a process can do things that are either impossible by mechanical command and control methods or inordinately time-consuming" (1999, 643). This suggests another possible area for future research in the FSC, i.e. examining the degree to which FSC standards and procedures allow room for the practice of adaptive management.

FSC standard-setting could also be viewed as a form of "regulatory negotiation" (often referred to as "reg-neg"), although the FSC lacks the statutory authority of the state. Essentially, regulatory negotiation means involving affected parties in designing the rules by which they are governed. Proposed advantages of reg-neg are that it 1) helps to increase rule compliance, 2) leads to better-informed decisions due to the incorporation of practitioner expertise, 3) ensures that rules are practical to implement due to practitioner input, 4) allows non-governmental organizations to influence decisions, and 5) increases people's general understanding of the rule-making process and the resulting rules themselves (BCRTEE 1991). Researchers may be interested in following the implementation of the FSC-BC regional standards to see if, in fact, the FSC yields any or all of the proposed advantages of regulatory negotiation.

In sum, the opportunities for research on the social dynamics of decision-making among diverse interests are endless. I have focused on the social and experiential construction of trust and meaning, in hopes of contributing to our understanding of trust as it plays out in the Forest Stewardship Council in BC. Let us conclude this dissertation, then, with a brief summary that crystallizes this study's contribution.

Final Summary

This thesis has explored the primary research question, "How is (or isn't) trust built in the context of conflicting values and a diversity of knowledge?" In doing so, it has examined forest certification as a means to not only improve forest practices, but also to reinvent relationships among interest groups with a long legacy of distrust. This exploration, grounded in Forest Stewardship Council activities in British Columbia, has yielded a number of insights. Below I have summarized these insights, together with the research questions within which they have emerged.

1) What role, if any, does personal trust / distrust play in abstract systems?

General Observation:

- Personal trust plays an important formative role in creating and shaping the outcome of abstract systems.
- In the context of conflicting values and diverse knowledge, trust in systems is first built through personal trust.

The Case Study:

Forest certification first entered BC through pathways of personal trust developed between known, individual local forestry operators and locally known environmental groups. It was during this time that the meaning of forest certification was largely created, and served to inspire the early development of the FSC in BC. When, responding to market pressures,

large-scale BC industry firms and other certifiers became involved in the FSC, environmentalist and First Nations distrust of these firms contributed to the development of more formalized decision-making procedures. Those groups who had already developed personal trust in influential FSC decision-makers, had higher levels of trust in FSC decision-making systems. Those who had no such personal trust, or especially those who were distrusting of the majority of FSC decision-makers, likewise did not trust FSC systems. Meanwhile, distrust between interest groups led to a set of highly detailed FSC-BC regional certification standards meant to control the behaviour of distrusted certifiers and the “lowest common denominator” of forest managers.

General Observation:

- Distrust leads to the deconstruction (i.e. personalization) of abstract systems.

The Case Study:

Those that did not trust the representatives involved in FSC-BC standard-setting, discredited the “objectivity” and “fairness” of the FSC-BC’s decision-making system itself.

2) What role, if any, does power play in trust in abstract systems?

General Observation:

- Perceived power imbalances inhibit the development of trust.

The Case Study:

Many environmentalists and First Nations involved in FSC-BC processes felt that the BC forest industry had long dominated mainstream forestry decision-making in the province. Thus, in order for these interests to support FSC decision-making processes, it was necessary that they felt empowered to assert their interests over those of industry.

General Observation:

- The implementation of abstract systems inevitably involves the social construction of power.

The Case Study:

The four chambers of the FSC-BC standard-setting system, i.e. the Environmental, Social, Economic, and Indigenous Peoples Chambers, were intended to provide a “balance of power” among different forestry interests in BC. In order for power to appear balanced, however, all parties had to agree on the definition of these largely abstract categories. Such agreement only occurred in regards to the Indigenous Peoples Chamber, which was based on a socially accepted understanding of an ethnic group. The assignment of representatives in all of the other Chambers was disputed by various participants in this research.

3) Do abstract systems build trust?

General Observation:

- In a context of conflicting values and diverse knowledge, abstract systems build trust by empowering trusted parties.

The Case Study:

The disputes over how to translate FSC’s abstract concepts of appropriate decision-making into living institutions, highlight the need for shared meaning and trust in the individual decision-makers charged with putting these abstract concepts into action.

The FSC-AC’s impersonal accreditation system was not sufficient to build trust because it did not address the cognitive, ethical and emotional sources of distrust in certifiers. Only the judgment of trusted individuals or organizations regarding the ability of certifiers to meet the multi-dimensional requirements of trustworthiness would create wider interest group trust in FSC-accredited certifiers.

4) What role does personal trust / lack of trust / distrust play in systems implementation?

General Observation:

- Personal trust promotes voluntary cooperation and creative synergy, thereby facilitating systems implementation.

The Case Study:

The early examples of certification assessments, preceding the completion of the FSC-BC standards, involved forest managers, First Nations,

environmentalists, certifiers and others working synergistically to develop and improve the implementation of certification. It is doubtful if, without this field-based, cooperative work that demonstrated the possibility of implementing environmentalist-backed certification, forest certification could ever have achieved the level of acceptance from a diversity of interests that it has thus far achieved, and that is so necessary for its survival.

General Observation:

- In situations of high risk, both distrust and a lack of trust lead to increased control over systems implementers and decreased opportunities for building trust, resulting in reduced incentives for voluntary cooperation.

The Case Study:

Due to the very high value of BC's forests to many interests, and thus the high level of risk involved in forest management, distrust in certifiers and a lack of trust of forest managers has resulted in the development of highly detailed and socially contingent standards meant to carefully control the behaviour of on-the-ground implementers. As a result of the detailed standards, many forest managers profess low interest in FSC-accredited certification. This is true even of forest managers whose on-the-ground forestry practices exceed FSC-BC standards.

In conclusion, then:

- I. How is (or is not) trust built in the context of conflicting values and diverse knowledge?

Where there are conflicting values and diverse knowledge, a balance of formal abstract systems and flexibility create enabling conditions for the development of trust. Abstract systems set boundaries, reduce risk, and can redress power imbalances. Flexibility is necessary to enable voluntary cooperation among individuals. It is this voluntary cooperation that makes possible the bridging of differences.

Now that the FSC-BC regional standards have been provisionally approved, the focus of FSC-BC supporters will be on implementing the standards on the ground. Given

that the standards still leave certifiers and forest managers substantial decision-making flexibility, the opportunity has arrived for all sides to take risks and develop trust.

This dissertation has effectively questioned the possibility of universal agreement around “objective” and “fair” systems, and the resulting view that such systems are the final solution to social conflict. It has also served to highlight the importance of micro-level interpersonal and institutional factors in creating and shaping international systems such as forest certification. Finally, and most importantly, the goal of this research has been to highlight the importance of pausing in our search for universal solutions and formalized systems, and spend more time actually listening to one another. If it has done that, then these efforts will have succeeded.

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Appendix A: The FSC's Ten Principles

Taken from FSC Document 1.2 Revised February 2000

PRINCIPLE #1: COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND FSC PRINCIPLES

Forest management shall respect all applicable laws of the country in which they occur, and international treaties and agreements to which the country is a signatory, and comply with all FSC Principles and Criteria.

PRINCIPLE #2: TENURE AND USE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Long-term tenure and use rights to the land and forest resources shall be clearly defined, documented and legally established.

PRINCIPLE #3: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS

The legal and customary rights of indigenous peoples to own, use and manage their lands, territories, and resources shall be recognized and respected.

PRINCIPLE #4: COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND WORKER'S RIGHTS

Forest management operations shall maintain or enhance the long-term social and economic well-being of forest workers and local communities.

PRINCIPLE # 5: BENEFITS FROM THE FOREST

Forest management operations shall encourage the efficient use of the forest's multiple products and services to ensure economic viability and a wide range of environmental and social benefits.

PRINCIPLE #6: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Forest management shall conserve biological diversity and its associated values, water resources, soils, and unique and fragile ecosystems and landscapes, and, by so doing, maintain the ecological functions and the integrity of the forest.

PRINCIPLE #7: MANAGEMENT PLAN

A management plan—appropriate to the scale and intensity of the operations—shall be written, implemented, and kept up to date. The long term objectives of management, and the means of achieving them, shall be clearly stated.

PRINCIPLE #8: MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

Monitoring shall be conducted—appropriate to the scale and intensity of forest management—to assess the condition of the forest, yields of forest products, chain of custody, management activities and their social and environmental impacts.

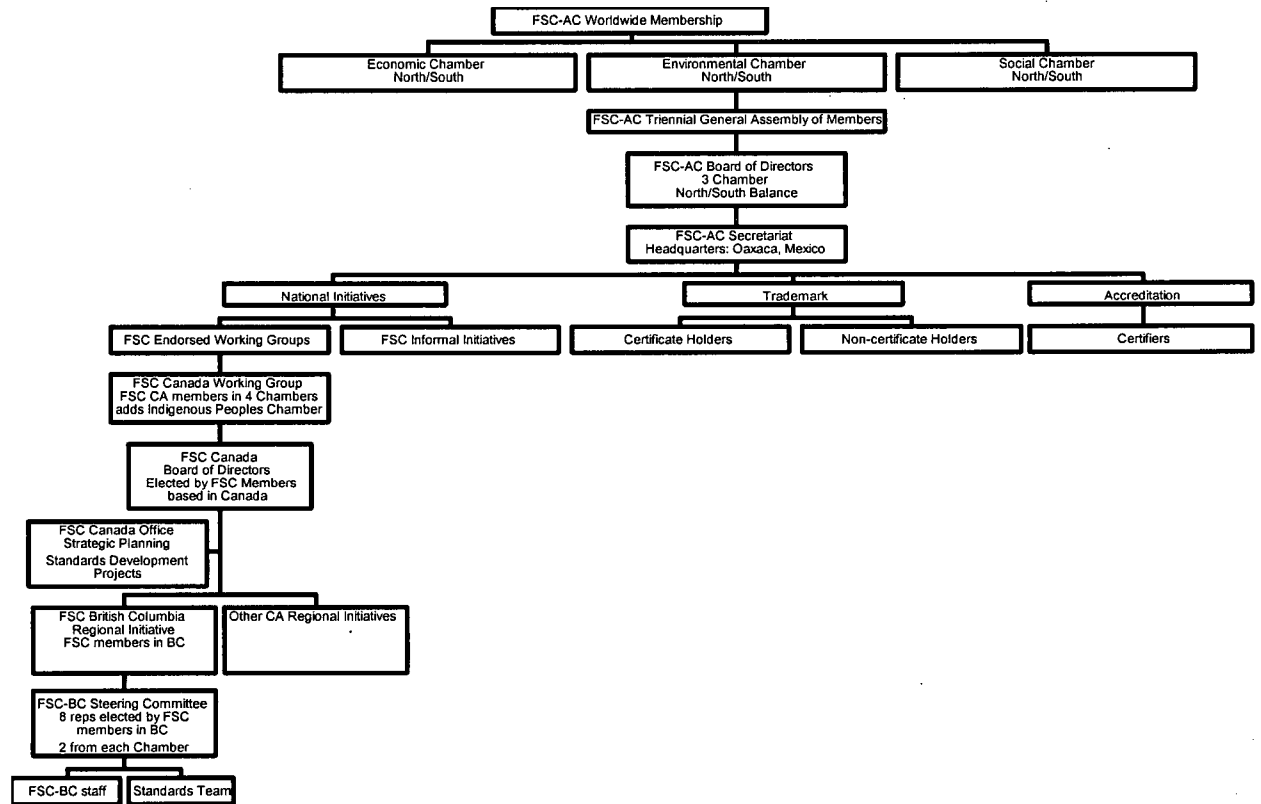
PRINCIPLE 9: MAINTENANCE OF HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE FORESTS

Management activities in high conservation value forests shall maintain or enhance the attributes which define such forests. Decisions regarding high conservation value forests shall always be considered in the context of a precautionary approach.

PRINCIPLE # 10: PLANTATIONS

Plantations shall be planned and managed in accordance with Principles and Criteria 1 - 9, and Principle 10 and its Criteria. While plantations can provide an array of social and economic benefits, and can contribute to satisfying the world's needs for forest products, they should complement the management of, reduce pressures on, and promote the restoration and conservation of natural forests.

Appendix B: The FSC's Organizational Structure



Appendix C: Sample Interview Questions

Perspectives on FSC Certification in BC

Name:

Date of Interview:

Length of Interview:

Gender:

Address (municipality/ region):

Location of Interview:

Occupation / Job title:

MD Recorded: Y N

Organization / Company:

Questionnaire: Y R Pending

1. How did you first find out about certification?

What's the process through which you got involved?

Year _____

Why involved?

2. Involvement in other systems?

	CSA	ISO	SFI	FSC	Other:
Heard of it?					
Involved in Dev./ Standards?					
Why involved?					
Pursued certification?					
Why pursued?					
Preference?					
Describe:					

FSC Member? Yes No

Individual / Organizational

Chamber:

What do you think of these different certification systems? What are their major strengths or weaknesses?

2. What, to you, are the most important aspects of a good certification system?

3. What do you think of the FSC BC standard-setting process so far? Is it good, bad or mixed? Why? What events have influenced your opinion?

4. What do you think of the FSC BC standards? Are there areas of major strength or weakness? Please describe.

5 a). Do you think that FSC-accredited forestry certification is improving forest management in BC or not?

Yes No

b) Have you seen examples of companies changing their forest practices as a result of FSC certification?

Yes No

Explain:

6. Are you familiar with the different FSC-accredited certifiers now operating in BC? Which ones?

7. Do you have a preference for any of the certifiers? Why?

8. What qualities do you most like to see in a certifier? In an audit team?

Appendix D: The Questionnaire

Please rate from 1- 6 how well each of the certification organizations now operating in BC fulfills the following statements. Write the number in the box above the name of the corresponding certification organization. Just answer to the best of your knowledge, given how much you know about the organization so far. If you have no impressions at all about the organization, just leave the box blank. The rating 1 - 6 represents:

1	2	3	4	5	6
STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	SLIGHTLY DISAGREE	SLIGHTLY AGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE

1. I think _____ gives enough priority to environmental values.

☐

FSC BC

☐

Silva

☐

SmartWood

☐

SGS

☐

KPMG

☐

SCS

2. I think _____ gives enough priority to social values.

☐

FSC BC

☐

Silva

☐

SmartWood

☐

SGS

☐

KPMG

☐

SCS

3. I think _____ gives enough priority to economic values.

☐

FSC BC

☐

Silva

☐

SmartWood

☐

SGS

☐

KPMG

☐

SCS

4. If certification standards allow flexibility in decision-making, I think _____ will make good certification decisions.

☐

Silva

☐

SmartWood

☐

SGS

☐

KPMG

☐

SCS

5. I think that _____ is committed to improving forest management.

☐

FSC BC

☐

Silva

☐

SmartWood

☐

SGS

☐

KPMG

☐

SCS

6. I think that _____ has the skills and capacity to do their job right.

☐

FSC BC

☐

Silva

☐

SmartWood

☐

SGS

☐

KPMG

☐

SCS

7. I think that _____ is open and forthright in the work that they do.

☐

FSC BC

☐

Silva

☐

SmartWood

☐

SGS

☐

KPMG

☐

SCS

8. I think that _____ makes decisions as objectively as possible.

☐

FSC BC

☐

Silva

☐

SmartWood

☐

SGS

☐

KPMG

☐

SCS

9. If I told _____ that I had a problem with what they were doing, I think they would do their best to address my concerns.

☐

FSC BC

☐

Silva

☐

SmartWood

☐

SGS

☐

KPMG

☐

SCS

10. I think that _____ is not too biased towards any particular interest groups.
(BELOW THE NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION, PLEASE LIST WHICH GROUPS, IF ANY, THE ORGANIZATION IS BIASED TOWARDS)

☐

FSC BC

☐

Silva

☐

SmartWood

☐

SGS

☐

KPMG

☐

SCS

11. I trust _____ to make good decisions.

☐

FSC BC

☐

Silva

☐

SmartWood

☐

SGS

☐

KPMG

☐

SCS

12. I am more likely to trust a certifier to make good decisions if the certifier is _____.

☐

Non-profit

☐

For-profit

☐

BC-based

☐

Based outside of BC

13. Please rank the following factors from 1 to 3, in terms of their importance to you in determining your trust in a certification decision. (1 = the most important of the factors listed. Assume that the FSC International Principles and Criteria will be used as a baseline standard.)

_____ Audit team

_____ Standards used

_____ Certifier

Appendix E: Questionnaire Results

Chapter 3 of this dissertation explains the purpose and methodology of the written trust questionnaire which was distributed to all the interviewees who participated in the research for this dissertation. A copy of the written questionnaire is provided in Appendix D.

In summary, the questionnaire was designed to measure trust levels across the multiple cognitive, normative and emotional dimensions of elemental (meaning-based) and instrumental (process-based) trust. Results for these dimensions were also compared with those for overall trust, in order to explore the relative importance of different psychological dimensions in determining overall trust.

Table E.1 below presents the results for overall trust in certification organizations by interest group. The chart lists the total number of questionnaire respondents per interest group category, the average score, range, and the number of responses per cell. Respondents were asked to assign scores based on the best of their knowledge, regardless of how familiar they were with the particular certifiers. In some cases there are fewer data points than respondents, indicating that some respondents declined to assign a score.

Table E.1 Average Score, Overall Trust (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Slightly Disagree, 4=Slightly Agree, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly Agree)

Certification Organization	Overall Trust					
		Large Industry	Small Business	Environmental	Labour	First Nations
	No. of Respondents	3	4	5	2	2
FSC-BC (Non-profit Standard-setting Body)	Average	3	3.5	5	3	5
	Range	2-4	2-5	4-6	1-5	5-5
	No. of Responses	3	2	4	2	2
Silva (Non-profit Certifier)	Average	2.67	3	5.8	3	4
	Range	1-5	1-4	5-6	1-5	3-5
	No. of Responses	3	3	4	2	2
SmartWood (Non-profit Certifier)	Average	4.67	4	4.4	4	4.5
	Range	4-5	2-6	4-5	4	4-5
	No. of Responses	3	3	4	1	2
SGS (For-profit Certifier)	Average	4.5	NR	2.75	4.5	NR
	Range	4-5	NR	1-4	4-5	NR
	No. of Responses	2	0	4	2	0
KPMG* (For-profit Certifier)	Average	5.5	3	1.75	2	5
	Range	5-6	2-4	1-3	2	5
	No. Responses	2	2	4	1	1
SCS (For-profit Certifier)	Average	5	NR	2.33	NR	NR
	Range	5-5	NR	1-3	NR	NR
	No. of Responses	2	0	3	0	0

*KPMG's Forest Certification Services Inc. © was not yet officially accredited at the time the interviews for this research were conducted. However, the company was conducting certification assessments according to FSC standards, as a prerequisite to accreditation. Interviewees who knew of KPMG's FSC activities indicated that they expected the company to become accredited in short order. Forest Certification Services Inc. has since received full accreditation.

One of the most striking features of these results, perhaps, is the tremendous variation of trust levels, not only between interest groups, but within them as well. On average, the FSC-BC scored highest with environmentalists and First Nations, while industry, small business, and labour average scores indicated a modest lack of trust. These results are not contradictory to the decision of industry not to approve Draft 3 of the FSC-BC standards. Nor are they inconsistent with the strong stance of the FSC-BC standards regarding environmental protection and First Nation's rights. They are also not inconsistent with interview results, which indicate relatively high levels of satisfaction with the FSC-BC standards among environmentalists, combined with considerable frustration among some industry, small business and some labour respondents. However, the one industry rating of "5" for trust in the FSC-BC is somewhat surprising, given that the same respondent offered considerable criticisms of FSC-BC standards and processes in the context of an in-depth interview. The positive trust rating, however, could partly be explained by this same respondent's claims of trusting the FSC-AC not to approve the BC regional standards until greater consensus was achieved.

The tremendous variation in trust levels among the two labour group respondents is entirely consistent with interview results. These respondents represent workers from different production sectors, i.e. silvicultural workers versus logging and mill workers. Both of these respondents fall within the FSC-BC's Social Chamber, highlighting the tremendous variation of perspectives and interests that the FSC groups together as a single theoretical category of "interest".

In terms of certifiers, industry showed a greater preference for for-profits and environmentalists for non-profits. These results are consistent with the interview data.

Furthermore, there were considerably more skipped questions regarding the for-profit certifiers than the non-profit. This could indicate that respondents had greater knowledge of the non-profit certifiers than the for-profit certifiers. This interpretation is particularly likely in the case of the low response rate for SCS, which has had very restricted levels of activity in BC. Some responses from the interview data, also indicate a relatively low level of knowledge about SCS. Following this line of reasoning, the data could indicate that the small business, labour and First Nations respondents were generally less well-informed about some of the certifiers active in BC than were industry and environmentalist respondents. Further research would be necessary to determine if this is the case. If it is, however, this has important implications regarding the equity of information distribution, which has been identified as a key variable determining the ability of different interests to influence decisions (Forester 1989).

In addition to measuring overall trust, the questionnaire also took the respondent, step by step, through the different dimensions of shared meaning and personal trust. Shared meaning was measured in terms of values and commitment. Personal trust was measured in terms of openness, knowledge and skills and responsiveness to the respondent's concerns. Elements of "impersonal" trust mechanisms were measured through statements regarding objectivity and bias.

The resulting scores are analyzed for overall variation, variation between interest groups, and possible correlation with overall trust, i.e. whether scores in any given dimension were similar to or distinctly different from overall trust scores. If scores for a particular dimension were very different than scores for overall trust, this was taken as an indication that the particular dimension was not a primary factor in determining overall

trust. On the other hand, if scores are similar, this might or might not indicate the importance of the dimension, as the similarity may be incidental. It also presents the possibility of transference between dimensions, i.e. that if a certifier is generally trusted, then a tendency towards cognitive consistency would make the trustor more likely to view the certifier as trustworthy across multiple dimensions.

The questionnaire included three statements addressing respondents' perceptions of value similarity with certification organizations, as a measure of shared normative meaning. These statements asked if respondents think that the organizations in question "pay enough attention to" to environmental, social and economic values respectively. The questionnaire did not attempt to uncover the substantive nature the respondent's values. Instead, it focused on whether the respondent perceived those values sufficiently addressed, i.e. whether sufficient priority was given to the different values that the respondent deemed relevant to certification. Table E.2 below provides an example of survey results on value similarity, showing data on environmental values.

Table E.2 Average Score, Environmental Values (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Slightly Disagree, 4=Slightly Agree, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly Agree)

	Enough Attention to Environmental Values					
Certification Organization		Large Industry	Small Business	Environmental	Labour	First Nations
	No. of Respondents	3	4	5	2	2
FSC-BC (Non-profit Standard-setting Body)	Average	5.67	5.5	5	5.5	5
	Range	5-6	5-6	4-6	5-6	5
	No. of Responses	3	4	5	2	2
Silva (Non-profit Certifier)	Average	5.67	5.5	5.8	6	5
	Range	5-6	4-6	5-6	6	5
	No. of Responses	4	4	5	2	2
SmartWood (Non-profit Certifier)	Average	5.67	5.5	4.4	5	5
	Range	5-6	5-6	4-5	4-6	5
	No. of Responses	3	4	5	2	2
SGS (For-profit Certifier)	Average	5.67	4	2.75	5	NA
	Range	5-6	4	1-4	4-6	NA
	No. of Responses	3	2	4	2	0
KPMG (For-profit Certifier)	Average	5.67	4	1.75	2	NA
	Range	5-6	4	0*-3	2	NA
	No. Responses	3	2	4	1	0
SCS (For-profit Certifier)	Average	5.67	NA	2.33	6	NA
	Range	5-6	NA	1-3	6	NA
	No. of Responses	3	0	5	1	0

*One environmentalist respondent assigned KPMG a score of "0", although the lowest rating listed was "1".

The above scores vary significantly between interest groups. In general, scores varied less between organizations of the same profit status than between for-profits and non-profits. Consistent with the scores for overall trust, environmentalists generally indicated greater agreement with the value priorities of the FSC-BC and non-profits. Large industry respondents, in contrast, assigned equally high scores to all certifiers, indicating that these respondents felt all of the certifiers paid enough attention to environmental values.

In general, the variation of environmentalist trust over environmental values more closely mirrored their overall trust scores than did their scores for trust in economic or social values. This indicates that environmental values were perhaps more instrumental in determining environmentalists' overall trust. The opposite was the case for industry. In this case the economic values of the certifier were most closely correlated to industry trust. In the case of "enough attention to social values", perspectives were more variable within interest groups.

The cognitive dimension of meaning and trust, i.e. perception of knowledge and skills, yielded the least variable ratings both between certifiers and between respondents, with most scores rating four or higher. The lowest scores for knowledge and skills were given by industry, which averaged below three for FSC-BC and Silva. The average scores given by environmental groups did not show much variation between certifiers. Given the major variation between certifiers in overall trust ratings by environmentalists, this indicates that knowledge and skills were not the primary determinant of environmentalist respondents' trust in certifiers.

Perception of commitment to improving forest practices was used as an indicator of the emotional dimension of meaning. Environmental groups and small business, rated FSC-BC and the non-profit certifiers higher on commitment. In the case of environmentalists this was consistent with their scores on overall trust. Small business, however, showed relatively higher trust in commitment than in overall trust, indicating that perceived levels of commitment to improving forest practices was perhaps not a good indicator of overall trust for this interest category.

First Nations rated the FSC-BC and non-profit certifiers highly on commitment, but did not provide enough data on for-profits for a comparison. Labour showed wide variation between the two respondents. Large industry did not indicate much difference between certifiers in this dimension, indicating this may not be as major determinant of overall trust for this interest group.

In terms of instrumental trust, the questionnaire asked about "openness" as the normative component. Openness is not equal to "integrity", which was the normative component indicated in the trust model, Figure E.1. However openness and honesty have been identified as key components of trust by some theorists (Peters et al. 1997), and are qualities related to integrity. It was felt that asking about an organization's integrity or honesty was inadvisable due to the sensitivity of the subject. Asking for such sensitive information might alienate the respondent as well as be potentially destructive to the organizations involved. For this reason, the questionnaire was limited to the more neutral question of openness. Once again, environmental groups and small business showed relative preferences for non-profits in this component. First Nations rated non-profits favorably and did not provide enough data on for-profits for a comparison. Labour

showed widely diverse responses. Finally, large industry on average rated most certifiers highly on openness except Silva, which was given a low rating. Perhaps it should not be surprising that industry would find certifiers relatively open, since this interest group serves as the certifier's clients, and therefore may have had direct, personal communications with the different certifiers. Likewise, non-profit certifiers have generally had more small business clients (McDermott & Hoberg forthcoming), which might explain why small business respondents indicated higher scores of openness (i.e. communicativeness) to non-profit, rather than for-profit certifiers.

Respondents were asked about their perceptions of the "objectivity" of certification organizations, as a measure of instrumental impersonal trust. Environmentalists rated non-profit certifiers higher for objectivity. This was the one occasion where the average score among environmentalist respondents was higher for SmartWood than Silva, the latter getting equal or higher average ratings among environmentalists across all other criteria, including overall trust. The higher rating for SmartWood indicates that objectivity is certainly not the only source of certifier trustworthiness for environmentalists. Small business and labour did not include enough responses to allow for meaningful aggregate analysis. Large industry gave variable ratings for the different certifiers, giving Silva the lowest score. Both environmentalist and industry scores on certifier objectivity are similar to their ratings on overall trust, with higher scores awarded to non-profit and for-profit organizations respectively. This does not negate the possibility that perceptions of objectivity are important in determining overall trust for these groups. However it suggests that perceptions of objectivity may be influenced by a sense of shared values. In other words, it could be

evidence of transference between dimensions of trust (i.e. variable correlation), whereby the more trusted the certifier for whatever reason, the more likely the certifier will appear objective.

Table E.3 Average Score, Objectivity (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Slightly Disagree, 4=Slightly Agree, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly Agree)

Certification Organization	Objectivity					
		Large Industry	Small Business	Environmental	Labour	First Nations
	No. of Respondents	3	4	5	2	2
FSC-BC (Non-profit Standard-setting Body)	Average	3.33	3	5.25	3	5
	Range	3-4	2-4	5-6	1-5	4-5
	No. of Responses	3	2	5	2	2
Silva (Non-profit Certifier)	Average	3.33	4	4	3.5	4
	Range	3-4	2-5	3-5	2-5	3-5
	No. of Responses	3	3	4	2	2
SmartWood (Non-profit Certifier)	Average	4.67	4.67	4.5	NA	5
	Range	3-6	4-6	4-5	NA	5
	No. of Responses	3	3	4	0	2
SGS (For-profit Certifier)	Average	4.5	4	3	5	NA
	Range	4-5	4	2-4	5	NA
	No. of Responses	2	1	4	1	0
KPMG (For-profit Certifier)	Average	5.5	3	2.25	NA	5
	Range	5-6	2-4	1-3	NA	5
	No. Responses	2	2	4	0	1
SCS (For-profit Certifier)	Average	5.5	NA	2.67	NA	NA
	Range	5-6	NA	2-3	NA	NA
	No. of Responses	2	0	3	0	0

Question 10 addressed the issue of bias. Similar to "objectivity", the issue of bias is relevant to trust in certifiers as "impersonal" executors of an impersonal certification system. It may also serve as a measure of certifier "benevolence", i.e. the more emotional issue of a certifiers' sensitivity to the concerns of various interest groups.

There appeared to be some confusion among respondents over the wording of Question 10. This question asked certifiers to rate their level of agreement with the statement that certification organizations were "not too biased towards any particular interest groups". It then asked respondents to list which groups, if any, certifiers appeared to favour. A holistic analysis of research results, including a consideration of the qualitative interview data, indicates that phrasing Question 10 in the negative led several respondents to assign the opposite ratings of what they intended. The results presented here are corrected for these clear discrepancies.

On average, environmentalists felt that for-profit certifiers were too biased towards industry. Likewise, industry indicated that Silva was too biased towards environmental groups. While it is not possible to say from this data how critical this is in determining overall trust, it is at least consistent with the scores for overall trust. However, in a number of cases trust in lack of bias seems to exceed overall trust, which would indicate the importance of other factors in determining overall trust. Also interesting to note, was that respondent scores for objectivity were different than their scores for lack of bias. Further research would be necessary to understand why these two related concepts may have been interpreted differently.

Finally, certifier "responsiveness" was used as a measure of benevolence, an element of personal, instrumental trust. Environmentalists rated non-profits highest in

responsiveness. Small business gave relatively low ratings overall on this criterion, and did not provide sufficient information on for-profits for a comparison. First Nations gave scores of four or higher for non-profits, and provided only one data point on for-profits, awarding KPMG a five. Large industry gave average response ratings of over four for all certifiers except Silva, which received a three, along with the FSC-BC. The scores of environmentalists and large industry for "responsiveness" thus vary in a manner similar to their responses to overall trust.

In summary, the questionnaires show considerable variation in trust between interest groups, and notable variation within interest groups as well. It appears that, with some exceptions, respondent trust levels are fairly consistent across the dimensions of trust. In other words, if a certifier is trusted in one dimension, they are likely to be viewed favorably in other dimensions as well. Likewise, if trust is low in one area, it is low in most every other sense. This consistency across dimensions provides some support for theories of cognitive consistency, which would predict the transference of trust between the dimensions, as discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

The skills and capacity component, which relates to cognitive trust, is the least variable across all interest groups. This raises the possibility that cognitive trust may be relatively less influenced by normative and emotional considerations. In other words, the assessment of a certifier's knowledge and skills is not greatly affected by assessment of their values, openness, commitment, good will, etc.

Scores for cognitive trust, however, do not show a strong correlation with overall trust. Instead, the questionnaire results suggest a socially embedded view of trust in certifiers. Despite the tradition of "auditing" as an impersonal process grounded in

rationalized, abstract systems, the data so far are consistent with the hypothesis that underlying shared values and meaning are central to the formation of trust in certifiers.