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From Transnational Voluntary Standards to Local Practices

A Case Study of Forest Certification in Russia

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Abstract

In this paper, I discuss how local actors translate transnational voluntary standards of responsible natural resource management into on-the-ground practices in domestic settings. Building on an extensive study of forest certification in Russia, I argue that implementation is not a straightforward execution of transnational rules imposed by powerful transnational actors – e.g., international NGOs, multinationals, governments or consumers. Rather, local actors negotiate the ways in which transnational standards are implemented locally in both formal and informal settings, and thereby settle political conflicts over natural resource management and construct new knowledge related to standard implementation and good natural resource management. They use both global ideas reflected in transnational standards and locally available concepts and practices as building blocks, and combine them in various ways in order to construct new knowledge. I therefore emphasize stakeholder interest negotiation and collective learning as core social processes which enable the translation of transnational standards into on-the-ground practices.

Zusammenfassung

Das Papier beschäftigt sich mit der Frage, wie lokale Akteure freiwillige transnationale Standards für verantwortliches Ressourcenmanagement unter lokalen Rahmenbedingungen umsetzen. Auf der Grundlage einer umfangreichen Untersuchung der Waldzertifizierungspraxis in Russland wird argumentiert, dass die Einführung der Standards nicht über die direkte Implementierung transnationaler und durch einflussreiche transnationale Akteure (internationale Nichtregierungsorganisationen, multinationale Konzerne, Regierungen oder Konsumenten) erfolgt. Wie transnationale Standards vor Ort implementiert werden, verhandeln lokale Akteure in formalen und informellen Foren. Sie lösen politische Konflikte im Bereich des Managements natürlicher Ressourcen und bauen neues Wissen über die Implementierung der Standards und ein gutes Ressourcenmanagement auf. Als Bausteine nutzen sie dabei die in transnationalen Standards reflektierten globalen Grundgedanken sowie vor Ort verfügbare Konzepte und Praktiken und kombinieren diese auf verschiedene Weise. Die Verhandlung von Stakeholder-Interessen und kollektives Lernen sind somit zentrale soziale Prozesse bei der Übertragung transnationaler Standards in die Praxis vor Ort.

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1 Introduction

This research analyzes how local activists and enterprises translate transnational voluntary standards for the responsible use of natural resources into on-the-ground practices in a context of non-advanced industrial countries. The literature on market-driven forms of transnational private governance, such as certification and labeling, assumes that once standards are adopted, they will translate into improvements in enterprises' practices where necessary, and that practices can therefore be read off the standards. However, it overlooks two important social processes which take place at the local level in multi-level governance systems and which condition the implementation of transnational standards: These processes are stakeholder interest negotiation and collective learning, defined as new knowledge building. This paper analyzes the case of certification of the environmental and social performance of forest companies in Russia by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and contributes to transnational voluntary governance literature by elaborating the relationship between changes in existing production practices on the one hand, and negotiation of stakeholder interests and collective learning on the other.

The last several decades have been marked by profound transformations in the patterns of governance of the global economy (Djelic/Sahlin-Andersson 2006; Kahler/Lake 2003). Business and nongovernmental organizations have engaged in transnational regulation that had previously been considered the prerogative of states and intergovernmental organizations. As a result, a plethora of systems of global private governance have emerged to guide and monitor the behavior of firms. While some of these serve to facilitate production and exchange – e.g., international technical standards (Cutler/Haufler/Porter 1999, ch. 2–5; Mattli 2003) – others seek to promote the responsible use of natural resources, environmental sustainability, improvement of labor conditions and human rights protection (Bartley 2007; Gulbrandsen 2010; Pattberg 2007; Seidman 2007).

Among the latter systems, certification and labeling has become a prominent mode of transnational governance (Bartley 2007). Nonstate actors, including multinationals, industrial and professional associations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs),

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have launched certification programs to improve practices in forestry, fishery, tourism, mining, garments, sporting goods, coffee, fruit, toys and many other sectors. Certification is a procedure by which professional organizations assess company practices against a specific standard and give written assurance that practices conform to the standard. Conforming companies can label their products with a seal of approval confirming that they did not use child labor or used raw materials, e.g. timber, from responsibly managed sources. Producers seek to become certified in order to strengthen their reputation, avoid conflicts with NGOs, secure access to markets – and in some cases, benefit from a price premium for certified products.

One of the pioneers in certification is the Forest Stewardship Council, which launched the first forest certification program in the mid-1990s. The FSC is an international non-governmental organization seeking to promote responsible forest management in all types of forests in all regions of the world. The FSC defines responsible forest management as environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable. The FSC developed global principles and criteria (P&C) of good forest management and a third-party system for the verification of compliance with them. Independent certification organizations accredited by the FSC assess the compliance of forest operations with the FSC's P&C. If compliance is verified, certification organizations issue FSC certificates. Certified forest operations can label their products as coming from well-managed forests (Meidinger/Elliott/Oesten 2003).

Since the establishment of the FSC in 1993, the demand for certified forest products has grown significantly. Targeted by NGOs' campaigns, the world's largest industrial forest groups and retailers, as well as many corporations and governments, declared their preference for certified timber products. In response, many suppliers of raw material certified their forest management. Manufacturers certified their supply systems according to a separate standard for supply chains (Chain-of-Custody (CoC) certification) in order to be able to label their products as coming from well-managed forests. As a result, over 130 million hectares of forests in 80 countries had been certified as well-managed by the end of 2010; over nineteen thousand CoC certificates had been issued (FSC 2011). Between 2005 and 2008, the estimated size of the FSC market grew from US$ 5 to 20 billion (FSC 2005, 2008). Similarly programs of certification in forestry, fisheries, mining and tourism were modeled on the FSC system. These data reflect the dramatic worldwide expansion of forest certification and its growing importance in the system of transnational forest governance.

Bartley (2010: 1) conceptualizes certification as a chain of demands and assurances that stretches between consumers and retailers at one end and workers, communities and ecosystems, often in other countries, at the other. In between, it consists of a variety of transnational and local actors, including certification associations (e.g., the FSC), certification organizations and certification auditors, NGOs, multinationals, their subsidiaries and suppliers. He argues that we are only well informed about one end of the certification chain – i.e., about the emergence of certification as a governance form, its legitimacy, and

the patterns of adoption of certification by companies across countries. In contrast, we know less about how local conditions shape the operation of certification programs, especially in countries beyond Western Europe and North America (for important exceptions see Bartley 2010; Espach 2009). This paper explores how the FSC's global principles of good forest management are translated into on-the-ground practices in Russia. It focuses on how local actors (e.g., NGOs, certification auditors and company managers) interpret, adapt and implement global standards in a specific local context.

The overall argument of the paper is that the literature on forest certification overlooks two important social processes that shape the translation of FSC principles and criteria into changes in on-the-ground practices: stakeholder interest negotiation and collective knowledge building. These processes highlight two aspects of actor interaction in the context of transnational standard implementation. The former is associated with the attainment of actor-specific goals, conflict settlement and compromise building. The latter deals with the elaboration of specific rule contents and ways to achieve compliance – i.e., the establishment of common categories and shared meanings that enable communication and facilitate cooperation between actors during the implementation of standards. The former process is concerned with interests; the latter with cognition. These two processes are analytically distinct but occur simultaneously and influence each other. Conflicts may trigger learning. Learning about implementation may, in turn, help settle conflicts between stakeholders, since it may influence actors' perceptions of their own and each others' interests.

In the first part of the paper, I will argue for the importance of considering local action. I will show that changes in on-the-ground practices are not imposed on forest enterprises by the FSC, multinationals or international environmentalists. Rather, local actors, mainly environmental NGOs, act as conductors of transnational impulses and persuade forest companies to certify their forest management under the FSC system. They conduct studies that expose the lack of transparency, illegal activities and inappropriate forest management as widespread forestry problems in Russia. They also campaign against companies that manage their forests irresponsibly from their perspective. This encourages companies to consider forest certification in order to demonstrate that they manage their forests properly. After the interest in forest certification develops among companies, the question emerges as to how transnational voluntary standards are to be implemented in the local legal and social context. I argue that implementation requires negotiation of local requirements that specifies broad transnational standards and the knowledge building required for their practical implementation.

Therefore, I will further show that the negotiation of standards implementation and collective knowledge building occurs in different locations and at different levels within a multi-level certification system: in formal forums (e.g., meetings, seminars and conferences) and in implementation settings (e.g., in certified companies). In formal forums, actors translate broad, relatively abstract global P&C into a set of more specific local or regional indicators of responsible forest management that serve as a refer-

ence point for compliance. Moreover, they also discuss compliance guidelines and "best practices" that can serve as a model for both enterprises and certification auditors. In implementation settings, local actors implement local standards that consist of global P&C and local indicators. They introduce changes into forest management systems and practices in order to comply with standards and become certified. The processes in different locations and levels are recursive (Halliday/Carruthers 2007; Morgan/Quack 2010) – i.e., actors insert practical experience accumulated in the implementation settings into documents negotiated in the formal settings, whereas formally negotiated rules influence practices.

Finally, I will show that actors achieve compliance with FSC standards by combining external, new elements (international concepts, norms and practices) with locally available elements (local concepts, regulations and common practices) in different ways: Local practices are reframed in order to make them consistent with global standards; external practices are transplanted from other settings; and new practices are invented for local use through experimentation.

I start this paper by developing an analytical framework to examine the process of translating transnational standards into on-the-ground practices. In the next section, I will briefly justify my case selection and describe the methods and data I use. I will proceed with an extensive case analysis structured around my three claims. In the conclusion, I will summarize my arguments and relate them to broader discussions of the role of local actors in transnational voluntary standard-setting.

2 Understanding implementation: An analytical approach

In the scholarly debates, the translation of FSC P&C into on-the-ground practices has remained largely a black box (Bartley 2010: 1). Many aspects of forest certification have been well analyzed in the literature: the emergence of forest certification as a new mode of governance in the forest sector (Bartley 2003, 2007; Bernstein/Cashore 2004; McNichol 2006), local effects of forest certification, its broader impact and its limits (Cashore et al. 2006; Gulbrandsen 2005; Pattberg 2006). Moreover, scholars have examined factors that shape company preferences for forest certification (Auld/Gulbrandsen/McDermott 2008; Cashore/Auld/Newsom 2004; McNichol 2006). The typical argument is that if companies export a significant portion of their products to countries where activists, media, governments and consumers perceive forest products as controversial, they are likely to certify their forest operations or require their suppliers to certify in order to avoid controversies. Yet even when companies agree to implement the FSC's global P&C in order to achieve certification, it is questionable whether specific changes in on-the-ground practices can be automatically read off of the FSC's standards and design (Bartley 2010: 1).

This view is reinforced by Wittgenstein's idea that "formulations are unable by themselves, that is, in the absence of established ways of following/applying them, to fix determinately what people do in observing them. … To follow a rule is to join in with how the rule is used/applied" (Schatzki 1997: 291). This means that those who observe rules play an important role in defining what specifically they have to do in order to follow rules. Rules and their implementation are, therefore, analytically different (Streeck/Thelen 2005: 13). The goal of this paper is to examine how implementing actors come up with ways to follow rules when external parties question habitual ways of doing things and provide new rules.

Transnational voluntary standards are particularly interesting from this perspective, since they present a significant challenge for those who implement them and for those who enforce them. Like any standards, they are a specific type of rule. Rules represent collectively enforced expectations that prescribe or provide guidance for action and thereby make behavior predictable. Similar to formal authoritative rules (e.g., laws and directives) and in contrast to informal rules (e.g., social norms), standards explicitly describe desirable behavior or desirable characteristics of an object (e.g., a forest or a production site) or a process (e.g., a production process) (Brunsson/Jacobsson 2000).[1] In contrast, practices are defined as specific ways in which production and work are actually done (Perez-Aleman 2011: 174).

Transnational standards per se do not precisely specify what those who intend to follow them have to do in order to comply. In other words, they are based on broad and relatively unspecific principles commonly applicable to all types of enterprises in all regions of the world and do not specify explicitly what practices are in compliance with the standards. Moreover, transnational standards contain concepts and requirements unfamiliar to local implementing and enforcing actors, who may find it difficult to establish exactly how they should reform their practice in order to comply with alien requirements that have been formulated in distant transnational forums, such as the FSC (Merry 2006). Significant gaps between global requirements and local practice make such translation problematic. Therefore, when habitual practices are challenged and new standards are provided, implementing actors need to specify broad principles and adapt them to a particular domestic legal and social context and then establish how they should modify their practices and what new practices they should introduce. The ways local actors cope with these gaps and "join in" with how standards are applied is at the core of this paper.

1 At the same time, standards are different from formal rules, since while describing desirable behavior they do not explicitly rule out undesirable behavior. Moreover, those who make standards do not rely on formal authority to make individuals or organizations observe rules but provide incentives for voluntary compliance, such as recognition, membership or distinction from those who do not follow standards (Brunsson/Jacobsson 2000: 12–13).

In order to explicate the implementation of transnational voluntary standards in a local context, I draw on two bodies of literature: organizational studies of diffusion and recent contributions to the sociology and anthropology of transnational law.

Theoretical building blocks

Most importantly, I build on the insights from organizational-institutional studies of diffusion, which suggest that diffusing ideas are reshaped and edited when they are enacted and transformed into practices – i.e., *translated* – across different settings (Czarniawska/Sevon 1996). More specifically, actors who translate ideas recombine new, externally given elements and old, locally given ones (Campbell 2004: 79–80). From this perspective, translation is more than imitation driven by fads and fashions; it is an "active learning process" that involves both imitation and innovation "far from passive adoption" (Czarniawska/Joerges 1996: 9; Sahlin-Andersson 1996). Learning is conceptualized as building new knowledge that helps organizations change existing practices and introduce new ones (Perez-Aleman 2011: 174). When organizations translate ideas, they adapt external ideas, appropriate them, modify them and add to them (Czarniawska/Joerges 1996; Latour 1986: 267), thereby creating and enacting new ideas and practices.

Whereas this approach provides a useful tool – the concept of translation – for understanding the implementation of transnational standards, its application is limited by the lack of an explicit account of the role of conflict and politics in shaping translation outcomes. The translation literature also does not explicitly deal with potential feedback effects that may influence the initial ideas. It may indeed be argued that global ideas – e.g., principles and standards – are reshaped and edited when they are implemented in domestic settings (Schneiberg/Bartley 2008: 49–50). Yet, recent contributions to sociology and anthropology of law suggest that global norms are not directly executed in a top-down manner. Global norm implementation is negotiated between interest (or stakeholder) groups and therefore shaped by political struggles.

Therefore, the second body of literature that informs my study analyzes global law-making and implementation in a domestic context. The overall argument of this literature is that the translation of global legal norms into domestic law and practice is multifaceted, contested, and is shaped by complex interactions between global norms and domestic context as well as between global and local actors. Halliday and Carruthers (2009) and Merry (2006) demonstrate that global norm-making and implementation occur at two levels: Global norms are made in transnational forums whereas implementation occurs at the domestic level.

Domestic actors translate global norms into national law and into actual practices, but this is not a one-to-one adoption process. The outcomes – i.e., national law and practices – are not imposed by powerful transnational actors (e.g., states or international

organizations), but are shaped by the domestic legal, political and social context (e.g., legal arrangements, cultural scripts and interest group constellations) and thus differ across settings (Halliday/Carruthers 2009). Moreover, both global norms and national law and practice are affected by struggles between groups with diverging interests and influence (e.g., international organizations, multinationals and national governments). The global norms and domestic law and practice are thus not imposed but negotiated. Local actors are not passive recipients of global norms. Successful implementation requires the settlement of conflicts and accommodation of many conflicting interests.

Moreover, the recursivity of law framework developed by Halliday and Carruthers (2007, 2009) also provides a tool for capturing feedback loops between domestic lawmaking and law implementation. Lawmakers are often unable to anticipate all the diverse situations to which legal norms are applied and all the consequences which may emerge after a law or a regulation has been enacted. Moreover, implementing actors are not passive recipients of orders, but can delay or even undermine implementation. As a result, implementation gaps emerge and trigger new cycles of legal reforms in order to provide solutions to emerging implementation problems. In addition, although Halliday and Carruthers do not explicitly reflect on this, it is possible that implementation gaps can also open up opportunities for active learning – i.e., for creating new knowledge about the implementation of legal norms, as well as about monitoring and control of implementation.

How does this help explain the implementation of transnational voluntary standards of good forest management? Based on the insights presented above, I argue that the translation of global forestry standards on paper into practices on the ground is shaped by two social processes that have been previously overlooked by forest certification scholars: (1) stakeholder interest negotiation and (2) collective learning defined as the creation of new knowledge and skills. I will also show how on-the-ground implementation feeds back into standard-making at the national level and thus reshapes the national standard. Finally, I will show that not all global requirements – i.e., principles and criteria – are translated in one single manner: Modes of translation range from direct implementation to the invention of new practices for complying with FSC standards. In the following paragraphs, I will provide some background information on the FSC's multi-level forest certification system and specify my claims.

Empirical implications

The translation of the FSC's global Principles and Criteria (P&C) of good forest management (see Table 1) into practice occurs in two steps. First, P&C are translated into a national standard. Second, the requirements specified in the national standard are translated into on-the-ground practices when non-compliance is detected. In the FSC system, the first step is accomplished by designing a set of national or regional indi-

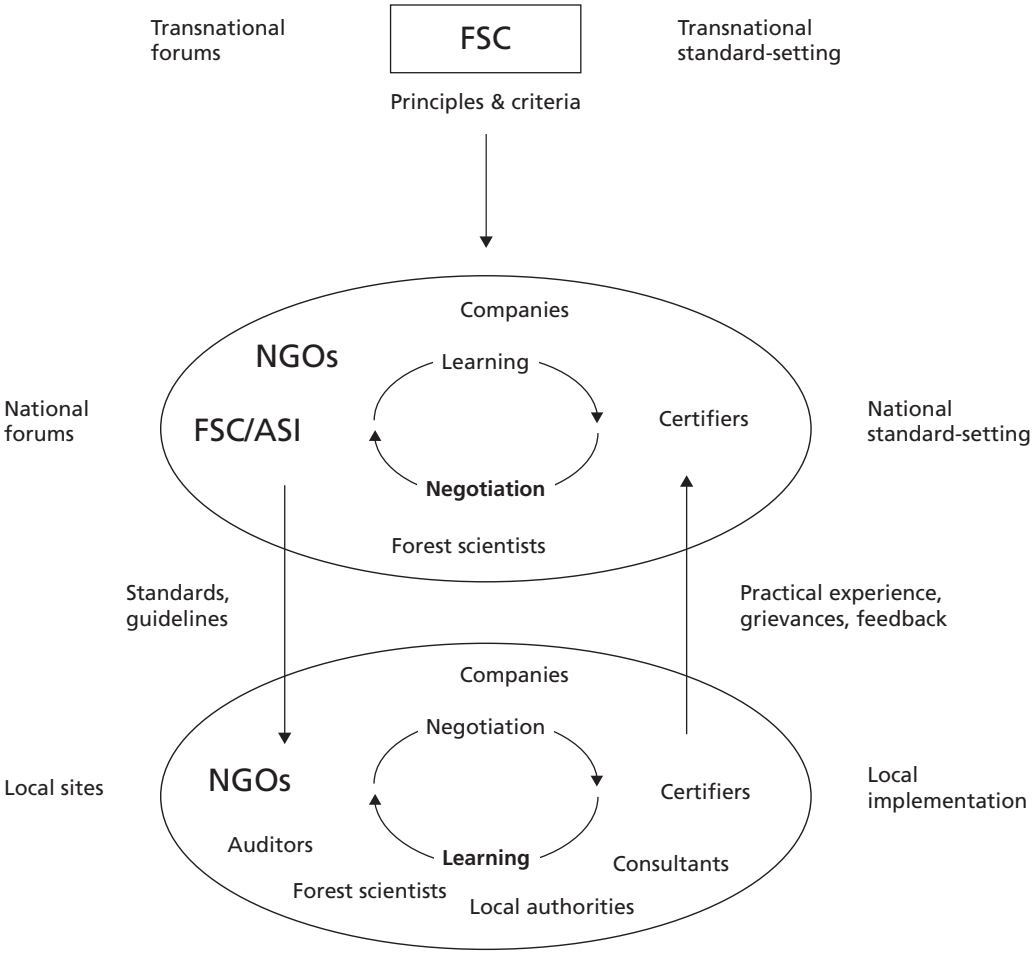
Table 1 The Forest Stewardship Council's Principles for Forest Stewardship

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 are 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 multiple products and services to ensure 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 1–9, and Principle 10 and its Criteria. While plantations can provide social and economic benefits, and can contribute to satisfying the demand for forest products, they should complement the management of, reduce pressures on and promote the restoration and conservation of natural forests.

Source: FSC (1996).

cators for each criterion. Global P&C combine with a list of national indicators and compliance guides to constitute a national standard. Indicators can be developed either by certification organizations working in a country or region or by a national chapter called a national initiative (an association of local FSC supporters officially recognized and accredited by the FSC). The indicators form a checklist that certification organizations use for the assessment of compliance with the FSC's P&C. Local indicators developed by national initiatives are accredited by the FSC and replace certification organiza-

Figure 1 Translation in a multi-level system: FSC Forest Certification



tions' indicators. Forest operations use these indicators as performance targets during preparations for certification.

The second step is accomplished during implementation, when companies and other implementing actors – e.g., NGOs – apply transnational standards to their own operations, as well as when certification organizations assess those who seek certification. Although the FSC has developed a complex system of monitoring and control and provides commentaries and guidelines, the system gives company managers – and particularly compliance auditors – discretion in interpreting standards and practices, especially in the absence of a common national standard (Maletz/Tysiachniouk 2009). In principle, both managers and auditors compare local practices with the transnational standard and establish what practices are in compliance with it and what practices need to be modified, abandoned or introduced to meet certification requirements. This involves trial, error, experimentation and thus learning in the ways that I will analyze in detail in the empirical sections of the paper (see Figure 1).

Building on an extensive study of the implementation of FSC standards in Russia, I will show that the negotiation of stakeholder interests and conflict settlement occurs mainly during the translation of global P&C into a national standard. In formal settings, including official meetings and conferences (particularly those organized by the national initiative), global actors, local actors and intermediaries negotiate local certification requirements and build a political consensus over them. In addition to developing national indicators, they also negotiate and develop commentaries and compliance guidelines for companies and certifiers. Global actors are the FSC, international companies and certification organizations. Local actors are local NGOs, local companies, scientists, professionals and to a certain degree, federal and local governments. Intermediaries are international NGOs that have national chambers in Russia (e.g., Greenpeace and the World Wide Fund for Nature, WWF), national NGOs, scientists and professionals who are carriers of both global ideas and local knowledge and who navigate between different sites across Russia and across borders and between the levels in the certification system (transnational, national and local). They are brokers who connect the local and the global during translation.

Second, I will show that learning mainly occurs in implementation settings when different actors, company managers, certifiers, NGO activists and other stakeholders evaluate existing practices against prescribed requirements and experiment with the implementation of transnational standards. Although they may consult commentaries and guidelines provided by the FSC, national initiatives and NGOs (if available), they often proceed by trial and error as they search for "correct" practices that would fit global P&C. Particularly challenging are the situations where transnational standards considerably contradict national regulations and where they include concepts unknown to most forest managers. I will show that during implementation, new knowledge concerning good forest management practice and compliance with FSC standards emerged as a result of actors' continuous interpreting and recombining of external "global" concepts and local concepts given by national regulations and common on-the-ground practices (cf. Campbell 2004: 79–80).

Third, I will show that not all FSC requirements are translated in one single manner. When global requirements appear clear and unproblematic to local actors – i.e., when actors understand how their practices need to be changed in order to achieve compliance – the requirements are *directly implemented*. In some cases, however, global requirements appear obscure or completely alien to local actors, or concepts imposed by the transnational standards do not have any equivalents in national law and policy (e.g., high conservation value forests and old-growth forests). When local actors do not understand what is required, they seek local categories and concepts that overlap at least partially with global categories and concepts. When categories (or even individual practices) fully overlap with global requirements, it is enough to *reframe* local concepts in terms that are consistent with the language of transnational standards. When the overlap is partial, they are then *combined* with categories that are either *borrowed* or *transplanted* from other settings (cross-border learning) or *invented* specifically for

Russia. The practices used to implement transnational requirements adopted for a local use may also be borrowed or invented.

Finally, I will show that stakeholder interest negotiation and knowledge building are not completely isolated from each other and cannot be strictly assigned either to the development of national standards or to their implementation on the ground. The processes at these two levels of translation are interpenetrating and recursive. Learning occurs during negotiations. Implementation involves negotiation. Learning about global standards, local practice and stakeholder interests can help settle conflicts. Conflict settlement, in turn, enables learning. Moreover, on-the-ground implementation and learning feed back into formal negotiations and influence the national standard and official commentaries and compliance guidelines. Practices developed on the ground are installed into official certification documentation and facilitate closing implementation gaps; they also serve as benchmarks for other companies and stakeholders and thus influence practice.

3 Case selection, methods and data

Russia is an interesting but relatively understudied case for analyzing the implementation of FSC forest certification standards: first, because of its environmental significance and its importance for the international forest sector, and second, because of the gap between high rates of industry participation in the FSC certification program, relatively stringent FSC requirements and apparently unsound forest management practice. Thus, this case is particularly relevant for explicating the processes of translating transnational forest management standards on paper and practices on the ground.

Generally speaking, Russia is an important country for the global forest sector. Russian forests also have a high environmental value. Twenty-two percent of the world's forests are located in Russia, including the greatest tracts of undisturbed boreal forests of a high biodiversity and wilderness value (26 percent of the world's intact forests) (FAO 2007), with only 5 percent of undisturbed native forests being included in areas with special protection at the federal level – e.g., nature reserves and national parks – (Aksenov et al. 2002: 5). Russia is also a significant source of timber – mainly common forest products, e.g. industrial roundwood and sawn wood – for European and Asian, particularly Chinese, markets. According to the FAOSTAT (the statistical database of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), in 2004, the Russian forest sector exported approximately 30 percent of its industrial roundwood, 60 percent of its sawn wood and 30 percent of its wood-based panels and earned 4.4 billion U.S. dollars. This is almost triple the amount exported in 2000.[2]

2 Own calculations based on the FAOSTAT data available at <www.faostat.fao.org>.

This makes Russian producers extremely dependent on foreign buyers and sensitive to their demands. It is not surprising that Russian companies quickly adopted forest certification as a response to the environmental concerns of international buyers and activists. Between 2003 and 2010, many forest companies were successfully certified by the FSC for managing their forests responsibly. By 2010, 123 forest management certificates and 154 Chain-of-Custody (supply chain certification) certificates had been issued; over 24 million hectares of forests had been certified as well managed (FSC-Russia 2010). This equals approximately one-fifth of Russia's total privately managed forest land (Federal Forest Service Agency 2007).[3] Russia now ranks second (next to Canada) in total FSC certified forest area.

Although the high level of acceptance of forest certification is not surprising, this considerable expansion of forest certification in Russia appears unexpected to some observers. Russia has developed an extensive set of relatively restrictive forest and environmental laws and regulations (McDermott/Cashore/Kanowski 2010: 200–204). Yet, these rules often contradict each other. Moreover, permanently underfunded federal and local forest services and continuous and ever-incomplete reforms challenge forest and environmental law enforcement (McDermott/Cashore/Kanowski 2010: 213). The rise of the illegal logging and timber trade and a growing number of violations of forest management standards, as well as the overuse of forestland, particularly in densely populated areas in the European part of Russia, have been well documented and are likely to negatively affect the environmental condition of Russia's forests in the long run (Dudley/Jeanrenaud/Sullivan 1995; Kotlobay et al. 2006, 2002, 2004; WWF 2006).

Therefore, the expansion of forest certification cannot be treated as automatic and thus cannot be taken for granted. Inconsistencies between Russia's environmental and forest laws, contradictions between FSC requirements and national regulations, and the lack of many concepts and categories used by the FSC in the national forest policy and practice required substantive adjustment work from the actors who were interested in promoting forest certification in Russia and making it an effective, genuinely "high-road" forest policy instrument. The case of Russia, therefore, is particularly suitable for demonstrating how organizations and individuals acting locally – environmental NGOs, forest scientists, company managers, workers', indigenous peoples' and community rights activists and certification organizations – in cooperation with global actors, were able to bridge the gap between transnational standards and on-the-ground practices.

I use a qualitative case-study approach largely based on extended semi-structured interviews with global and local actors who have been actively involved in the structuring of the FSC's forest certification program at the global level and in Russia. I conducted forty-seven interviews with FSC officials in the FSC International Center in Bonn, rep-

3 Own calculations based on the data of the Federal Forest Service Agency (2007). Document on file.

resentatives of NGOs, certified company managers, forest scientists, certification body officials, auditors, consultants and members of the Russian national initiative (October 2006–December 2007). Interviews were combined with observations at various official meetings and seminars in Russia and in the FSC's International Center in Germany. In addition, I analyzed position papers, discussion papers and internal documents of the FSC and other organizations.

Another source of empirical evidence is my fieldwork in October–November 2006 in several certified forest operations in Arkhangelsk Oblast and in the Republic of Karelia (northwest Russia) and in October 2007 in the Russian Far East. The goal of the fieldwork was to examine how FSC standards are applied in concrete situations on an everyday basis without the immediate control of the FSC, the national initiative or certification bodies. Field research combined observations and semi-structured interviews with forest workers, local population and operations' managers responsible for logging and other forestry practices, and therefore for the immediate implementation of FSC rules.

4 Forest certification in Russia: A case analysis

In this section, I will present a detailed analysis of the unfolding of forest certification in Russia in order to provide evidence for the claims I developed in the section on the analytical framework. I will start with a background analysis of the development of forest certification in Russia. This helps illustrate the importance of locally embedded actors who facilitate the enactment of forest certification in Russia through a number of activities ranging from information spreading to naming and shaming campaigns. In the second subsection, I will analyze the development of the national standard for Russia in order to illustrate the process of stakeholder interest negotiation. In the third subsection, I will examine how learning occurs in a variety of settings and how learning facilitates the enactment and implementation of forest certification standards. In the last subsection, I will provide a classification of different modes of translation using examples which illustrate how actors combine transnational and local knowledge during on-the-ground implementation and how this helps change existing practices.

The development of forest certification in Russia

Since environmental NGOs play a critical role in FSC forest certification development, I will start with a brief description of the Russian environmental movement. I will show that although that the Russian environmental movement can be considered relatively weak as far as membership rates are concerned, its strength is in its organizational capacity. The Russian environmental movement is well organized, well networked and

well connected to the transnational environmental movement, including international organizations, NGOs and donors. This facilitates concerted efforts on the part of FSC supporters aimed at establishing and promoting forest certification in Russia. In the second part of this subsection, I will analyze these efforts and the initial development of forest certification in Russia.

The strength and the weakness of the Russian environmental movement

There is a general agreement in the literature that citizens' involvement in environmental activism in Russia has been relatively low. Citizens' activism rose dramatically in the late 1980s, but has been steadily declining since then (Henry/Douhovnikoff 2008: 449). According to Dalton (2005, cited in Henry/Douhovnikoff 2008: 450), on the basis of the World Values Survey, membership in environmental groups in Russia was 1.7 percent in 1990 and dropped to 0.7 percent in 1999 (the average for 56 countries surveyed was 5.2 percent). Yet for the development of forest certification, not the domestic membership per se, but environmental organizations themselves – and more specifically, their expertise and transnational networks – mattered a great deal. Transnationally connected NGOs were the first movers in the field of forest certification and relied less on public protests or consumer activism. Rather, they mobilized grass-roots "indigenous" NGOs and individual scientists and activists to support and propagate forest certification in many parts of Russia.

By 1992, there were more than 840 environmental NGOs in Russia (Mirovitskaya 1998, cited in Henry/Douhovnikoff 2008: 450). In the mid-1990s, their number continued to grow (ibid.: 450). Organizationally, they range from highly institutionalized organizations to loose groups that "consist of a name and a handful of individuals" (Henry 2010: 10). Moreover, they can be roughly divided into two groups: branches of influential international NGOs, most notably Greenpeace and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and "indigenous" organizations, many of which have their roots in the Soviet era (Henry/Douhovnikoff 2008: 450; Weiner 1999). Many of these originated in scientific institutes, universities and student environmental organizations called *Druzhina* (from Russian brigade or squad) and are still led and staffed by scientists and former scientists (Weiner 1999). After the fall of the Iron Curtain, environmental NGOs quickly integrated into the international environmental movement and gained access to international funds. Since many NGOs have no sustainable domestic sources of revenue – e.g., membership – they remain project-oriented and rely mainly on foreign donors (Henry/Douhovnikoff 2008). International NGOs – Greenpeace and the WWF – are funded by their international headquarters and branches in other countries (interview with NGO official). They cooperate closely with many grass-roots NGOs.

The most active proponents of forest certification in Russia, who took the leading role in building an FSC forest certification system there, were the WWF, Greenpeace and two Russia-based NGOs which are also active internationally: the International Socio-

Ecological Union (SEU) and the Biodiversity Conservation Center (BCC). Founded in 1988, the International Socio-Ecological Union is an umbrella organization for 349 social and environmental NGOs from seventeen countries, mainly Russia and other former republics of the Soviet Union, but also the U.K., Israel, Spain, Norway and the U.S. The Forest Campaign, a division of the Socio-Ecological Union dealing with forest issues, took an active part in the campaigns for conservation of old-growth forests in northwest Russia and was a pioneer of forest certification in Russia. The Biodiversity Conservation Center was founded in 1992 by the representatives of the Druzhina movement and set up by the SEU. Its Forest Program, together with the SEU's Forest Campaign, Greenpeace and the WWF, initiated forest certification in Russia and took an active part in mapping Russia's old-growth forests and campaigning for them.

Moreover, since these key organizations cooperated closely with many grass-roots environmental NGOs and individual activists all over Russia, they were able to mobilize them in the forest certification system. Many smaller regional and local NGOs participated in the development of national and regional standards, research and publications, auditing, consulting, auditor and stakeholder training and stakeholder consultations. They perceived forest certification as a new opportunity to gain access to forest companies, access additional funding and further propagate forest-related environmental issues. Due to their broad expertise and established networks with research institutions and each other, they were able to construct an effective alliance, quickly build a working forest certification system and successfully promote forest certification in Russia.

The beginning of forest certification in Russia

In 1996 Greenpeace, the Socio-Ecological Union and the Biodiversity Conservation Center, together with several Finnish NGOs, organized the first meeting to discuss the prospects of forest certification in Russia. Forest companies did not show any interest in forest certification (Tysiachniouk 2006: 275). The Federal Forest Service strongly opposed private forest certification (interview with FSC Russia official). It was critical that NGOs were not discouraged by this. In 1996–1999, the WWF became another leader of the early forest certification movement. Together, these NGOs organized several meetings and conferences on forest certification, published books, reports and brochures, met with company managers and distributed information among forest companies via e-mail (interviews with FSC Russia official and NGO official). Although no response followed, in 1998, NGOs established a national FSC initiative and started developing a national FSC standard for Russia.

At the same time, several Russian and international NGOs led by Greenpeace and the SEU organized a series of campaigns against logging in the world's last tracts of old-growth forests. Old-growth forest, also called intact, virgin, frontier and primeval forest, is a type of large natural forest landscape that has attained significant age and has not been significantly affected by modern land use. These forests are critical for the

survival of numerous animal and plant species dependent on the unique conditions in these forests. One quarter of the world's old-growth forests are located in Russia (Bryant/Nielsen/Tangley 1997: 45). In Russia, as in many other countries, old-growth forests are not recognized as valuable and therefore are not protected as such. Only 5 percent of Russian old-growth forests are included in protected areas, such as natural reserves and national parks (Aksenov et al. 2002: 5). Many companies in northwest Russia continue logging in old-growth forests. Moreover, Russian companies perceive old-growth forests as a source of economically valuable high-quality timber (interview with company manager).

NGOs primarily targeted large exporters shipping timber from Russian old-growth forests to the U.K., Germany and the Netherlands. In Arkhangelsk, Greenpeace activists chained themselves to the grid of one of the timber processing mills. They attacked ships leaving the port of Arkhangelsk with timber consignments (interview with company manager). In Karelia, the Taiga Rescue Network campaigned against harvesting in an old-growth forest tract that was later designated as Kalevala National Park (Tysiachniouk/Reisman 2004). These protests were covered in the European media (interview with company manager). In turn, NGOs in Europe, including Finland, Sweden and the Netherlands, directed public attention to the companies that were buying timber from Russia which could have originated from old-growth forests and other valuable boreal forest ecosystems. It was not common to require any proof of legality or sustainability of sources.

As a result of these coordinated efforts, the reputation of both international buyers and their Russian suppliers was significantly damaged. For a brief period of time, the buyers refused to buy any timber from Russia. A manager in a large company reports that many trucks were forced to dump timber consignments at the border with Finland, since Finnish buyers refused to purchase Russian timber (interview with company manager). As a reaction, several large Russian industrial forest groups declared moratoria on logging in old-growth forests (interview with company manager). Many of them later committed to certifying their forest management in order to demonstrate that their practices were transparent and in compliance with international norms.

At the same time, NGOs started investigating the condition of Russian forests and the impact of forest policy, dominant forestry practices and trade in forest products. In the early 2000s, environmental organizations published reports claiming that inappropriate forest management practices, illegal activity and poor protection of forests constituted the major forest problems in Russia. Moreover, they claimed that timber trade between European buyers and Russian producers contributed significantly to the deterioration of Russia forests. One of the reports commissioned by the WWF suggested that ultimately, every consignment shipped to Germany from Russia was of uncertain origin – i.e., harvested illegally – and potentially contributed to the destruction of the world's last tracts of old-growth forests (Kotlobay et al. 2004). Although many companies named in the report criticized the WWF for using unverified sources and disclosing

sensitive data, this report forced them to react to the NGOs' allegations (interview with FSC Russia official). Another report commissioned by the WWF claimed that massive illegal logging and illegal timber trade with China and Japan might lead to the extinction of the unique Far Eastern taiga, a home of endangered species, including cedar, Amur tigers and Far Eastern leopards (Kotlobay/Ptichnikov 2002).

As a result, international buyers required their Russian suppliers to provide evidence that timber was appropriately harvested and traded. They were willing to accept forest certification as evidence. Russian producers started considering forest certification as a way to improve their reputation and distinguish themselves as environmentally responsible companies. Moreover, many producers who were not directly affected by the campaigns later also considered certifying their forest management in order to prevent potential conflicts with activists and to avoid potential losses in case their partners refused to buy uncertified timber in the future (interview with company manager).

NGOs' studies and campaigns were two important impulses that stimulated the interest of international buyers and their Russian producers in forest certification. NGOs were able to define inappropriate forest management and poor protection of valuable forests as major problems of the Russian forest sector. They were able to construct a perception of Russian timber among international buyers and the general public as ultimately uncertain. In turn, they framed forest certification as a solution to this problem. In many reports published by the WWF, they called on companies to certify their forest management under the FSC in order to demonstrate the appropriateness of their practices (Brukhanov et al. 2003; Kotlobay et al. 2004). NGOs also suggested that certification would help companies to approximate their forest practices to international standards of forest management. As a result of both cross-border and domestic pressure, many forest companies decided to certify their forest management and supply control systems in the early 2000s.

Stakeholder interest negotiation: The development of the FSC national standard

The role of local NGOs in the development of forest certification in Russia was not only limited to promoting forest certification among forest companies. As early as 1998 – i.e., before forest companies showed any interest in forest certification – Greenpeace, the WWF, the SEU and the BCC, in cooperation with several other NGOs, established a national initiative and started developing national indicators for the FSC's global P&C. Why are national indicators important? Locally defined indicators specify broad global P&C and thereby enable certification organizations to check company compliance with them. Through the development of national indicators, global P&C are adapted to local conditions. In the FSC system, local indicators are developed either by certification organizations for the countries or regions in which they work or by national initiatives. In

Russia, before the FSC accredited the national standard, six certification organizations were active in Russia and each used its own set of indicators. The national standard, therefore, reduces discrepancies within the system.

Moreover, the national initiative constitutes an arena where environmentalists and other stakeholders – i.e. companies, indigenous peoples, workers, scientists and certification organizations – can discuss their visions of environmentally responsible, socially beneficial and economically viable forest management and settle political and interpretative conflicts over national indicators of responsible forest management. Environmental NGOs and other groups can insert their visions of different aspects of forest management into the national standard and thereby make them legitimate and obligatory for forest companies seeking certification. Legitimacy is achieved through the three-chamber organizational structure of the national initiative and its consensus-based decision-making system – i.e. equal representation of different interests and procedural fairness, two pillars of legitimacy (Iversen/Werle 2006: 26). National initiative members are divided into three chambers: economic, social and environmental. Each chamber has one-third of the total votes regardless of the number of members. A decision is taken when all three chambers vote for it. No single chamber can be subverted. In other words, the national initiative is a site for settling conflicts and providing legitimacy to adapted national standards and other activities of the national initiative.

In 1999, the national initiative (NI) met for the first time and elected a coordination council, an administrative body that organized and coordinated the national initiative's activity. This became the organizational core of the FSC system in Russia. Its nine members representing economic, social and environmental interests played a critical role in the development of the national standard. In 2006, the national initiative achieved FSC accreditation. In November 2008, almost ten years after the national initiative was launched, the FSC accredited the Russian national FSC standard. Accreditation and national standard-making turned out to be difficult and time-consuming for several reasons. First, FSC procedural rules often contradicted national legislation. Second, formulating standards, accommodating conflicting stakeholder interests and translating and interpreting the FSC's P&C and supplementary standards was a task of enormous complexity. Third, the members of the national initiative also accumulated practical experience with forest certification. This triggered additional rounds of revisions that prolonged negotiations.

One of the obstacles that the national initiative had to resolve was that of inconsistencies between FSC rules and national legal requirements for nongovernmental organizations. The FSC recommends that national initiatives to adopt a three-chamber organizational structure and an equal voting system. At the same time, the FSC requires national initiatives to meet all national statutory obligations for nongovernmental organizations. Russian civil law requires endowing each member of an organization with an individual vote. It does not allow for a three-chamber structure where chambers have one third of votes. The national initiative official reported that in order to overcome this obstacle,

the members of the national initiative had de facto created two organizations. The coordination council was established as a legal entity – i.e., as a nonprofit nongovernmental organization, in which each member was endowed with one vote. The national working group with all its members remained an informal arrangement with a set of informal by-laws. It was not registered as a legal entity. The coordination council signed an agreement with the FSC and became its official partner, the Russian national initiative, but the working group retained the major decision-making power (interview with NI official).

Between 1999 and 2002, the national working group prepared six drafts of the national standard with a list of indicators specifying the FSC's global P&C. The third draft was tested in the winter of 2002 in Moscow Oblast, in May 2002 in Krasnoyarsk Krai in Siberia, and in October 2002 in Primorsky Krai in the Russian Far East. The indicators were tested by the German certification and environmental consulting firm GFA-Terra Systems. Dozens of forestry experts took part in both the development and the testing of national indicators. The idea was to explore the feasibility of the standard – in other words, to examine whether standard formulations were comprehensible and clear to managers, experts and stakeholders and whether and how the indicators could be verified on the ground. The national working group also consulted with regional FSC working groups in Siberia, in northwest Russia and in the Far East. Their opinions and approaches were considered in the drafts. As a result, over 200 amendments were included in the fourth and fifth drafts (interview with NI official).

In November 2002, the working group unanimously approved the sixth draft of the list of indicators for Principles 1–8 and 10. The indicators for Principle 9 ("Maintenance of high conservation value forests") were approved by the majority of the members. Since the FSC preferred consensus-based decisions, the working group decided to continue negotiating the requirements of Principle 9 in order to achieve consensus on it, as well. Principle 9 refers to the maintenance and protection of high conservation value forests (HCVF). The FSC invented HCVF as an umbrella term to denote all forests that require special protection. The Oxford-based environmental and training company ProForest defined and specified this concept and developed six types of HCVF (see Table 2). In 2003, ProForest published a toolkit for identifying HCVF (Jennings et al. 2003). Since then, the concept has been applied more broadly and has been widely promoted by the WWF. Principle 9 became a stumbling block in the negotiation of the national standard, since the activists of two major environmental organizations – the WWF and Greenpeace – and their supporters disagreed on the issue of old-growth forests included in Type 2 of HCVF and more broadly on the degree of stringency of indicators for HCVF. This conflict had to be solved before the standard could be submitted to the FSC for accreditation.

Old-growth forests had been a critical issue for Greenpeace. It insisted on a more detailed and strict specification of the requirements dealing with HCVF and particularly with old-growth forests. In contrast, the WWF suggested that there was no need to introduce a concept of old-growth forests into the standard and that existing categories used in

Table 2 Types of high conservation value forests

1	Globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values
2	Globally, regionally and nationally significant large landscape level forests
3	Rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems
4	Forest areas providing basic services of nature in critical situations
5	Forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities
6	Forest areas critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity

Source: Jennings et al. (2003).

Russian legislation and policy, such as protective forests, special protective areas and especially protected areas, could be used to protect old-growth forests. The WWF suggested keeping the indicators broad and flexible, whereas Greenpeace insisted that old-growth forests should be clearly identified and conserved (interview with NGO official). Greenpeace proposed a system of zoning, an internationally recognized approach for managing large protected areas such as nature reserves and national parks. Zoning allows forest companies to continue logging in old-growth forests but at the same time conserve large old-growth areas. Forest areas that Greenpeace mapped as old-growth forests were divided into three zones marked red, yellow and green. Red zones are relatively large tracts of forests where logging is prohibited. Yellow zones are the buffer zones where companies can log using only soft logging techniques, and no clear-cutting is allowed. In green zones, companies can continue logging using standard logging techniques. Greenpeace feared that allowing broad and vague formulations would provide both companies and certification bodies with excessive freedom of interpretation and would make monitoring and control difficult for the FSC and NGOs (interview with NGO official).

During lengthy rounds of negotiations, the WWF and Greenpeace and their supporters were able to eliminate contradictions and agree on the detailed indicators for Principle 9. The category of old-growth forests and the zoning approach were included in the standard. The standard required companies to consult the maps of old-growth forests developed by Greenpeace and other environmental NGOs and engage NGOs as stakeholders in the certification process. The participants in the national initiative representing the positions of both the WWF and Greenpeace reported that during extended discussions of indicators it became increasingly clear to all members of the working group and stakeholders that the initial differences were largely illusory (interview with NI official). They were rooted in the different rhetoric practiced by the WWF and Greenpeace rather than in substantive differences. Greenpeace activists remained more skeptical about the impact of forest certification than WWF members (interview with NGO official), but at the same time they always supported it and never openly criticized the national standard nor ever stepped out of the discussions.

After the disagreements had been eliminated, the national initiative approved the final version of the national standard in December 2004. However, since the FSC introduced

new requirements regulating national standard-making and the structure of the national standard, the national initiative had to revise the standard again. After the national initiative had been accredited in 2006, it finally submitted the national standard to the FSC for accreditation. After examining it, the FSC issued several requests for correction. The national initiative corrected the standard and resubmitted it to the FSC. In November 2008, the Russian national FSC standard was accredited by the FSC.

The national standard was not only shaped by NGOs active in Russia. In 2005–2006, when the national initiative was working on the final draft to be submitted to the FSC, it also participated in an FSC national standards harmonization project that compared the national standards of Sweden, Germany, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Denmark, Poland and Russia. Most of them had been either accredited or submitted for accreditation to the FSC. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency funded the project. Its goal was to compare and eventually harmonize the national standards in these countries using the national standards for Sweden, Germany, Finland and Denmark that by that time had been accredited by the FSC. The participants in the national initiative report that they took the results of this comparison, as well as the Canadian national standard for boreal forests accredited in August 2006, into consideration when implementing the last revisions in the final draft (interview with NI official). Transnational harmonization provided the national actors with an opportunity for cross-border learning, strengthened transnational networks and increased the likelihood of acceptance of national standards by local and transnational actors, including the FSC itself.

The analysis of the creation of the national standard suggests that this process involved both stakeholder conflict settlement (e.g. old-growth forests and more broadly, high conservation value forests) and learning. Moreover, during the negotiations, the national standard was tested on the ground and extensively discussed and amended by many national and transnational organizations and individuals. The product of the numerous negotiation and revision rounds was accepted by most stakeholders and is likely to be effective, since it builds on a broad compromise among groups, organizations and individuals with diverging interests.

Translation into practice as a collective learning process

Collective learning is the second social process that enables and facilitates the translation of transnational standards into on-the-ground practices. In this section, I will show how learning occurs in different settings within the multi-level system of FSC forest certification. Focusing on the WWF-IKEA Partnership on Forests and on model forest projects, I will first demonstrate how NGOs build new knowledge related to forest certification and forest management. I will then provide an account of knowledge building by implementing actors, (e.g., companies) during implementation – i.e., learning by doing.

Knowledge building by NGOs

Along with the development of the national standard, environmental NGOs were engaged in developing guidelines, recommendations and "best practices" in order to provide managers and auditors with guidance on forest certification. Why was such guidance important? First, it was not initially clear to many activists and practitioners how to implement global P&C. An observer of the early certification reports that P&C appeared reasonable, but it was obvious neither to those who were certified nor to those who were assessing compliance how to interpret both the standards and actual practices (interview with forestry scientist). Second, for many NGO activists, it was important to make sure that forest certification did not mean certifying "just about anything." Their goal was to define the thresholds and best practices for companies to avoid the system taking "the low road" and provide a common ground for forest management assessment. Through their guidelines and models, NGOs were able to influence corporate practices. In this section, I will describe two sets of NGOs' projects that contributed to the production of certification-related knowledge for companies and certification bodies: a set of projects in the framework of the WWF-IKEA Partnership on Forests and model forests.

The WWF-IKEA Partnership on Forests: In 2002, WWF International and IKEA formed a global alliance in order to promote sustainable forest management worldwide. Russia was one of the core regions for the WWF-IKEA Project. IKEA supported the work of WWF Russia on high conservation value forests, illegal logging and timber trade, controlled wood and forest certification training programs. These projects were all directly or indirectly related to forest certification (interview with NGO official). In the framework of the WWF-IKEA Project, the WWF's staff and external experts developed a variety of concepts, methods, techniques and guidelines on sustainable forest management that companies, certifiers and other NGOs used for certification purposes.

Two important examples are the projects on high conservation value forests and controlled wood. The WWF defined and mapped Russia's HCVF and created a toolkit to identify them and design a system of protection measures. In 2008, the WWF published a practical guide on HCVF that included a chapter called "Russian Interpretation of HCVF" and a chapter that contained detailed guidelines for HCVF identification in the Russian context (Yanitskaya 2008). Certification bodies, auditors and company managers later used these tools and guidelines widely as a reference for certification.

IKEA also supported the WWF's projects on tools for the development of companies' controlled wood systems. The FSC invented the concept of controlled wood in order to distinguish certified timber from timber which was not certified but could still be considered acceptable. Controlled wood is added to certified timber in the production process in order to enable producers to label their final products as made of timber from mixed sources – certified and controlled. No other timber can be added to certified timber. To be able to label timber as controlled wood, companies should verify that

it was harvested (1) in natural forests, (2) legally, (3) without violations of traditional and human rights, (4) not in protected or valuable forests, and (5) not in forests with genetically modified trees. The FSC developed a special standard for controlled wood. The WWF sponsored several projects aimed at developing the concepts related to controlled wood and toolkits to help companies design systems for controlled wood verification and help certification bodies to assess these systems and verify compliance with the FSC's controlled wood standard.

The WWF-IKEA Partnership also included a program of professional training for forest certification auditors, consultants and experts which began in 2002. Twenty-five participants from all parts of Russia were trained to assess companies' compliance with the FSC's forest certification standards. For two and a half years, they attended seminars every three months and took part in forest management assessments. Leading national and international experts instructed participants on the FSC forest certification program, taught broad principles and concrete practices of sustainable forest management and trained practical assessment skills. Many of the program participants later became forest certification auditors and consultants. The WWF-IKEA training program for auditors and forestry experts was a significant contribution to the development of FSC forest certification in Russia, since even before forest certification began to expand there, a number of local forest certification professionals were available to the forest certification system. Moreover, this program has become an important channel for knowledge dissemination.

Model Forests: NGOs also contributed significantly to the expansion of practical knowledge on forest certification by integrating it into their ongoing projects. Two model forests played a crucial role in this process: the Priluzye Model Forest and the Pskov Model Forest.

A model forest is a project aimed at the development, implementation and promotion of sustainable forest management systems. According to the International Model Forest Network (IMFN 2006), it is a forest territory large enough (1) to represent a range of natural ecosystems and landscapes characteristic for a country or region and (2) to have a range of ecological, social and economic functions. At the same time, it is a specific model for the governance of forests based on principles of sustainability and stakeholder partnership. The common task of model forests is to develop "best practices" of forest management that simultaneously maintain and enhance the commercial value of forests, effectively protect forest ecosystems and protect the living space and cultural heritage of the local populations and indigenous peoples in a country or region. Model forests are governed jointly by stakeholders with economic, environmental, scientific and social interests. Model forests are committed to encouraging the participation of the local population, local civic organizations and indigenous peoples in the decision-making and sustainable management of forest resources. The idea of model forests is, in principle, largely compatible with the FSC principles and mission. In Russia, five model forests were established between 1994 and 2005. Three of them

are members of the International Model Forest Network; two have applied for membership (IMFN 2006).

Two model forests that were established in Russia in the late 1990s – the Priluzye Model Forest (IMFN member) and the Pskov Model Forest (applicant) – decided to certify their forest management to demonstrate to their donors and other external audiences that they indeed manage their forests responsibly and in accordance with internationally recognized standards (interview with NGO official). For the WWF, which provided initial support to both model forests, as well as for the national initiative and FSC supporters, this was an opportunity to experiment with standards, gain experience and demonstrate the feasibility of forest certification in Russia to companies and external audiences.

The Priluzye Model Forest in the Republic of Komi in northwest Russia was among the first organizations in Russia that became interested in the certification of the model forest territory. The WWF organized the Priluzye Model Forest in 1996 and was its main donor up until 2002, when the project secured funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The project staff established a new organization – the Silver Taiga Foundation, a regional nonprofit organization – that took on full responsibility for the project but continued to cooperate with the WWF (interview with NGO official).

In 1998, the WWF decided to certify the Priluzye Model Forest. Moreover, it included forest certification and its development and promotion into the goals of the project. In 1999, a team of international auditors and experts from SmartWood Program, a certification division of the Rainforest Alliance and the world's leading forest certification organization, conducted the first assessment of forest management in the model forest. Financial support was provided by the MacArthur Foundation. Several Russian observers and trainees also attended the assessment in order to gain some experience in forest certification. The first assessment showed that forest certification was, in principle, feasible in the model forest but required a significant reform of the existing forest management practices (interview with NGO official).

Apart from detecting noncompliance with the standard, the assessment of the Priluzye Model Forest showed that the standard used by the SmartWood's assessment team required substantial adaptation to the national natural and social context. One of the assessment observers reported that international experts were often confused and could not judge whether the model forest met FSC requirements because the categories and concepts used in the standard did not match the categories, concepts and practices of Russian foresters:

> The auditors came and asked: What about your environmental protection planning? And they [Priluzye staff] said that forests were divided into groups. Certain groups are protected [according to the Russian legislation]. The auditors stood there and wondered whether it was a good or a bad thing. And they all stood and did not understand each other. I mean it was necessary for auditors to understand what the groups of forests were to assess them. When people cannot compare, they cannot assess. (interview with forestry scientist)

The international experts lacked local knowledge – e.g., of management practices and legislation – and were unable to assess the existing practices.

Ultimately, the same held true for the social and workers' rights criteria and indicators. Most of the corrective action requests issued by the assessment team were related to labor conditions, worker safety and local population rights. Formally, some principles and criteria were not met, but in other cases the requirements did not make sense when they were applied to the local social situation. As the observer reported, one of the international experts suggested introducing a system of communal forest management based on self-government in forest villages. Yet it was impossible in the legal and social context of Russia. It was not obvious what the expert wanted. He noted ironically: "The principles [of the FSC] are beautiful but in practice it [the audit] was the theater of the absurd. Or something close to it" (interview with forestry scientist). It was therefore unclear how concepts perceived as alien by many Russian foresters and company managers were to be implemented in Russian context. Thus, the standards had to be adjusted and reformulated to accommodate Russian practice and legal requirements.

The staff of the Silver Taiga Foundation decided to pursue certification and started working on correcting noncompliance. At the same time, they began working on the regional standards of forest management for the Republic of Komi that they hoped to accredit in the FSC. They also participated actively in national standard-making. As they worked towards certification, they developed and published detailed and extensive guides for companies that planned to certify their forest management systems. In 2000, a conference on the prospects of forest certification in Russia took place in Komi; the conference proceedings were published in order to popularize the idea of forest certification. In 2000–2005, the foundation published several brochures and books on forest certification covering various aspects of forest management, ranging from the protection of rare species, old-growth forests and logging techniques to public participation in forest management planning and monitoring.

Although these publications were not the official guidelines approved by the FSC, their goal was to develop and provide companies, auditors and stakeholders with local solutions to the problems that might have emerged when implementing transnational standards. In addition, when companies became interested in forest certification, the Silver Taiga Foundation offered consulting services. They worked with one of the largest forest companies in Komi – Mondi Business Paper, a part of the Mondi Group, a large international paper and packaging group. The Silver Taiga Foundation also offered seminars for companies and auditors from other regions as well as seminars for forest managers and forest service officers.

The Pskov Model Forest, a joint project of the WWF and Stora Enso, one of the world's largest international industrial forest groups, became certified in 2003. The goal of the project was to develop, introduce and promote sustainable forest management models

for the four federal regions of northwest Russia: Pskov, Leningrad, Vologda and Arkhangelsk Oblasts. The goal of the model forest was to create a model system of industrial forest management that enabled companies in these regions to increase profitability of logging operations, restore and cultivate forests and effectively protect valuable and endangered ecosystems, rare species and the well-being of workers and the local forest-dependent population. The model forest project collaborators developed models, exemplary systems and guidelines compatible with – or even surpassing – FSC requirements (interview with forestry scientist).

The Pskov Model Forest also contributed to the development of forest certification, since the WWF and other experts used its experience extensively in developing standards and guidance for companies seeking to certify forest management. The Pskov Model Forest staff also started advising and counseling companies that sought forest certification in order to help them obtain certificates. In 2006, the model forest and the WWF founded a for-profit environmental consulting firm called Greenforest, which now offers consulting services to forest companies in northwest Russia on the basis of the models, systems and methods developed in the model forest (interview with NGO official).

Knowledge building through on-the-ground implementation

Initially, neither the national standard nor detailed guidelines for Russia were available to companies, certification auditors and activists. Certification was new to them, and they often proceeded by trial and error. Companies had to look for pragmatic solutions to various problems they faced while implementing certification standards, including contradictions between Russian forest law and FSC requirements.

One of the contradictions that most company managers responsible for forest management report is in the requirements related to the measures of biological diversity protection on logging sites. According to the Russian forest law, local forest service allocates logging sites, inspects them before logging and issues logging permits to companies. When companies clear logging sites, they are expected to remove all trees except for those trees or groups of trees that have been excluded from logging and documented in the logging permit by a forest officer. Forest officers inspect the sites after logging and are authorized to issue penalties for violating both the logging rules and the requirements documented in the logging permit. The logging rules, a binding regulation for logging operations, also prescribe what trees, groups of trees or parts of a logging site may be excluded from harvesting. However, they do not prescribe excluding several categories of trees that have to be protected according to FSC standards, such as dead trees and dead wood or certain types of key biotopes that are particularly valuable for biodiversity protection. Auditors can issue corrective action requests during assessment and make certification conditional on the introduction of biodiversity protection measures that might formally contradict legal requirements. Companies, therefore, had to resolve this contradiction before they could become certified.

Since there was no universal solution, companies took different measures in order to fulfill FSC requirements and avoid penalties from the forest service. In Arkhangelsk Oblast, the large industrial logging group Titan negotiated general exemptions from logging rules with the local forest service (interview with industry executive). The forest service officially permitted Titan's logging units to exclude certain trees or key biotopes from logging without penalties. In the Republic of Karelia, the Segezha Pulp and Paper Mill hired a group of young foresters and trained them in identifying key biotopes and other types of trees that required special protection according to FSC standards (interview with company manager). This group joined forest service officers when they inspected logging sites before issuing logging permits. They negotiated individual exemptions that had to be documented in a logging permit and helped forest officers to identify trees that had to be left on a particular site (interview with forest worker). They helped inspectors to formulate exemptions in a way that did not contradict legal requirements. In addition to these measures, both companies commissioned several studies by local NGOs and scientific institutes to identify key biotopes, endangered and rare species and ecosystems, and high conservation value forests (interviews with company managers).

These two companies did two different things in order to achieve a common goal: fulfill both FSC requirements and legally binding logging rules. The companies were in different situations, which they had to manage creatively. In Arkhangelsk Oblast, Titan and the forest industry in general and NGOs such as the WWF enjoyed relatively close cooperative relationships with the local authorities, who approved exemptions in order to make forest certification easier for local companies. In contrast, in Karelia, the Segezha Pulp and Paper Mill and Karelia's government had a difficult relationship that was loaded with tensions and open conflicts (interview with company manager). In different situations, the companies came up with two different legitimate strategies for coping with a specific contradiction between national regulations and transnational private standards.

Moreover, even the most comprehensive national standard and the most detailed guidelines cannot cover all the unique situations that emerge in reality. Forests are very diverse, and knowledge about specific forest areas is often limited. Even the most elaborate recommendations cannot precisely prescribe proper behavior for all situations, all types of forests and all types of forest use. In order to demonstrate this point, the national initiative official reported that in practice it was impossible to provide a numerical value in the national standard for the whole country for the amount and the kind of trees that should be left on a logging site after a clear cut[4] in order to ensure an adequate reforestation rate:

> It would be imprudent of anyone to argue he knew that. No one knows this number [for the whole of Russia]. (interview with NI official)

4 Clear cut is a logging technique that requires logging operations to remove all trees, with some exceptions, from a relatively large logging site. This is the most common logging technique employed in Russia. It is often viewed as one of the most harmful logging techniques for forest ecosystems.

The national standard, guidelines and recommendations provide a detailed framework for the assessment of forest management practices but in many aspects they cannot specify precise requirements, such as the number of trees to be left after a clear cut.

In this situation, managers of certified companies became responsible for developing a forest management plan in which the number of trees to be left on a logging site had to be justified. They were also responsible for providing evidence of correct implementation to certification auditors. It was the responsibility of certification auditors to decide to what extent this specific practice had been justified and implemented. The system, therefore, gave discretion to company managers and certification auditors in defining concrete numbers or practices. This also enabled companies to look for individual solutions to the problems posed by the standard. They hired experts to develop forest management plans, commissioned studies to collect information on their forests, and developed their own approaches. They thereby collected valuable experience, on which the makers of the national standard and guidelines could rely.

The main channel through which practical knowledge was transferred across companies and across the levels within the certification system was the community of auditors, activists and consultants who were actively involved in the promotion and development of certification. They met regularly for meetings, seminars and conferences organized by the FSC Office for Russia, the national initiative and major NGOs to discuss the development of forest certification, their experiences, standards and guidelines. They enjoyed close personal ties with each other: Many were colleagues, project partners and friends. Moreover, almost every member of this community had previously participated in certification audits, either as an auditor or as an observer. For example, the head of the national initiative participated in at least five audits (interview with NI official). Many members of the national initiative and regional working groups consulted certified companies. NGO activists became auditors and consulted companies; company managers became auditors; former auditors were hired by companies to become corporate certification managers. In sum, frequent meetings, personal ties within the community and the experience of its members in different positions facilitated the movement of ideas within the system.

From global principles to local practices: Modes of translation

Several examples discussed above suggest that the makers of the national standard, NGO activists, certification auditors and forest operations managers confronted both the need to adapt global P&C to the national or local natural environment, legal arrangements and socio-political situation and the need to solve contradictions between domestic regulations and FSC standards in order to implement those standards. Yet it would be wrong to argue that companies simply had to identify practices that were not in compliance with FSC requirements and substitute them with the "correct" practices. Rather, local actors combined global, external and locally available "elements" – i.e.,

legal requirements, global concepts and on-the-ground practices – in different ways. In some cases, however, it was enough to implement FSC requirements directly – i.e., as the standard prescribed. In some other cases, actors had to invent practices in order to comply with FSC requirements if no local concepts or practices were available to be used as a "template". Whether (and how) external and locally available elements were combined depended on the extent to which global requirements overlapped with legal requirements and existing practices, as well as on the extent to which global formulations were clear to implementing actors, mainly company managers.

Direct Compliance: Several FSC requirements were relatively easy for Russian managers to understand and implement. For example, most of the managers perceived the criteria under Principle 4 ("Community relations and worker's rights"), which are related to occupational safety, to be compatible with the national legislation (interview with company manager). These criteria, therefore, appeared familiar and unproblematic to them. It was clear what the managers had to do. Criterion 4.2 requires forest operations to meet or exceed all applicable laws and regulations covering the health and safety of employees. Certification bodies checked whether local legislation and other regulations – e.g., conventions and codes of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) – were available in the company office; whether workers had access to these documents; whether workers, their supervisors and occupational safety managers were regularly trained in occupational safety; and whether employees actually practiced occupational safety regulations. These requirements were largely identical to the national legal requirements which were also occasionally checked by federal labor inspectorates. Their implementation, therefore, appeared to be unproblematic to forest companies (interview with company manager).

This is not to argue that direct implementation always went smoothly. Clearly, in many cases, demonstrating compliance was easy. In order to fulfill most of the requirements related to compliance with national laws under Principle 1 ("Compliance with laws and FSC principles") and Principle 2 ("Tenure and use rights and responsibilities"), companies had to present their by-laws and internal records in order to confirm that they were registered entities, paid taxes and other charges, and properly and legally used forest land – i.e., leased it from the federal government (interview with NI official). By contrast, providing workers with individual safety equipment, protective uniforms and helmets as required by Principle 4 was more difficult, since companies needed to purchase costly equipment that had to be certified as complying with national laws and the ILO Code of Practice on safety and health in forestry work (interview with industry executive). Moreover, it was a challenge to convince workers to wear uniforms and helmets, since many workers refused to do so, claiming that it was unnecessary and that it disturbed them (interview with certification auditor).

Yet in these cases, establishing what practices were "correct" and how deviating practices could be improved was not problematic. Problems emerged when FSC standards were inconsistent with national and local laws and regulations or when the concepts used by the

FSC in its principles, criteria and policy appeared alien to local actors. In this case, when companies and auditors, as well as other stakeholders, were convinced that their practices were in compliance with FSC standards, they reformulated or reframed them in a way that would fit the standards. If this was not possible, they had to look for "correct" combinations of old and new practices or even invent practices in order to achieve compliance.

Reframing: The criteria under Principle 4 related to relations between companies and local populations provide a good example of reframing. FSC standards require that certified companies take measures to "maintain and enhance the long-term social and economic well-being of forest workers and local communities." Specifically, according to Criterion 4.1, workers, their families and local communities should be given access to employment, training and other services. In Russia, forest companies support local populations and rural infrastructures extensively. They provide the local population with fuel wood, support libraries, recreation facilities, kindergartens, schools and municipal governments and build roads. In many distant, barely accessible settlements, they remain the only enterprise local people can count on as far as jobs and certain services are concerned. On the one hand, this is a legacy of the Soviet past, when forest enterprises provided major services to local communities, including public utilities, child care and recreation. On the other hand, federal and local authorities took companies' voluntary responsibility over rural settlements located near logging sites or managed forest areas into consideration when they allocated forest land to companies. In order to provide evidence of compliance with Criterion 4.1, forest companies had to reframe these activities as the provision of services contributing to the social and economic well-being of local communities and document them.

In general, many managers of certified companies reported that compliance with many FSC P&C was not difficult, and that they were mainly consistent with their existing practices. The only thing the companies had to do was to document their compliance and provide certification auditors with the records (interview with company manager). It took some effort to understand whether their existing practices were actually in compliance with FSC requirements and to complete the extensive paperwork, but all in all they did not have to invest time and resources in significant reforms of forest management. A Greenpeace activist described this situation in the following way:

> The FSC has ten principles and fifty-six criteria. This is about two hundred indicators. … Only about ten percent of them are key indicators. How do they [companies] comply with the remaining ninety percent? They are registered legal entities, they leased forests legally, and they have a logging plan. Here there can be no noncompliance. The FSC was initially created for tropical forests. … In Africa, for example, no-one knows where the borders of the leased forests are. Their legislation is terrible. Our level is a little higher. … The thing is then that in Russia these ten percent of indicators become critical. … These are old-growth forests, clear-cuts versus other logging techniques and some others. … So when they [companies] say that they comply with all requirements, except for logging techniques, it is a big question, since it determines fifty percent of the environmental condition of forests after logging.
> (interview with NGO official)

Achieving compliance with Principles 6 and 9, dealing with the minimization of the environmental impact of forest management and the protection of high conservation value forests was significantly more difficult, since FSC requirements were relatively stringent and differed from national laws and common on-the-ground practices. The concepts used in the P&C and in the national standard – e.g., high conservation value forests and old-growth forests – were absent in domestic regulations. Equivalent concepts, including especially protected areas and protective forests, only partly overlapped with these transnational concepts. Achieving compliance therefore required considerable effort and expertise on the part of forest companies. Companies had to look for ways to come to terms with both FSC requirements and national laws. They either had to combine old and new practices in a coherent way or borrow and invent new practices to comply with both. In the next subsection, I will explicate recombination and invention as another mode of translation and show what kind of solutions to the problem of incompatible concepts emerged.

Recombination and Invention: High conservation value forests (HCVF) and biodiversity protection are probably the two most telling examples of the recombination of locally available, externally given global and new invented elements. HCVF is an umbrella term created by the FSC and adopted by many transnational NGOs. It denotes different types of forests and forest ecosystems that need special protection (see Table 2). There is no equivalent to this concept in the Russian legal discourse. Russian forest and environmental legislation defines different types of forests that have to be protected, but HCVF is a broader concept. For example, old-growth forests are not recognized as a separate category in the forest and environmental legislation and are therefore not protected unless they are part of protected areas, such as nature reserves or national parks. In contrast, for environmentalists, old-growth forests belong to Type 2 of HCVF ("Globally, regionally or nationally significant large landscape level forests"). According to the Atlas of Russia's Intact Forest Landscapes, only 5 percent of old-growth forests are included in protected areas (Aksenov et al. 2002: 5). This means that some of the HCVF, but not all of them, are protected under Russian forest and environmental legislation.

The types and subtypes of HCVF that overlapped with Russian categories were relatively easy for forest companies to identify, map and provide evidence of their protection. For example, forest areas around rural settlements were excluded from commercial use by law. Forest companies, therefore, had to document that they respected this requirement. Moreover, forest areas that had been officially designated as protective forests, special protective areas and especially protected areas – categories used in the Russian forest and environmental law – could be redefined by forest companies as HCVF that they had already protected.

When areas of HCVF were not formally designated as any kind of protected areas by the authorized agencies, but fit the criteria of HCVF defined in the FSC standards, companies had to identify and protect such areas independently of the state agencies or take other measures to protect HCVF. After NGO campaigns against logging in old-growth

forests in the northwest, several companies, including Titan and Onegales, declared moratoria on logging in the forests in question (interviews with company managers). The companies had not practiced this before. Later they used these moratoria to demonstrate to certification auditors that they protected the old-growth forests, even when logging there was approved by the forest service.

Another example concerns Types 5 and 6 of HCVF ("Forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities" and "Forest areas critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity"). In order to identify forest areas used by local people to pick mushrooms and berries – i.e., areas essential for meeting their basic subsistence needs – several companies surveyed the population of the villages surrounding their logging sites. On the basis of the results of the surveys and individual consultations, they excluded these areas from logging. Using interviews and surveys of the local population, they also identified sites that local people perceived as particularly important for their history, traditions and everyday life, including cemeteries, monuments, recreation sites and hunting and fishing areas located in the forests managed by companies.

In fact, Russian forest law required forest companies to organize public hearings with the local population concerning forest management plans. However, public hearings and consultations were often a formality and the questions of sites relevant to community subsistence, identity and history were not discussed. Activists for community rights encouraged certified companies to conduct surveys and individual consultations with local forest officers, people interested in local history and traditions, librarians, school teachers, as well as local people picking mushrooms and berries. Surveys and consultations were not a substitute for public hearings as a familiar instrument prescribed by the national law. They were adopted to complement public hearings as a new method for strengthening company relations with local communities and identifying social HCVF. Surveys and individual consultations became a common practice in villages located on certified territories. In 2009, a group of researchers and activists of the Environmental Sociology working group of the Independent Social Research Center in St. Petersburg, in cooperation with a certification auditor and a certification manager of a large pulp and paper mill, published a detailed 184-page guide to the social aspects of the FSC certification (Tysiachniouk et al. 2009). The guide recommends surveys and extensive individual consultations with the population of forest villages as an effective method for identifying Types 5 and 6 of HCVF. It is now available at the homepage of the FSC regional office in Russia.

In the previous section, I also described how companies combined common and new practices in order to fulfill FSC requirements concerning biodiversity protection measures on logging sites without violating national regulations. Titan, a company in Arkhangelsk Oblast, negotiated exemptions from logging regulations with the forest service in order to be able to exclude key biotopes, dead trees, areas with endangered or rare species and other trees or areas critical for biodiversity protection. Segezha Pulp and Paper Mill, a company in the Republic of Karelia, trained a team of young foresters

who assisted forest officers in identifying important trees and areas and listing them in a logging permit as excluded from logging. Moreover, both companies worked extensively with environmental scholars and activists and commissioned studies from them aimed at identifying key biotopes, endangered and rare species, habitats of certain species – e.g., birds – and HCVF. As a result, SPOK, a local NGO, published a guide to identifying key biotopes in the forests of Karelia (interview with company manager). The publication was supported by the Segezha Pulp and Paper Mill. Supporting research is clearly not a new practice per se, but commissioning studies and using the findings on an everyday basis is a new practice that has been encouraged by forest certification.

Avoidance: In some cases, forest companies and even certification auditors dismissed some of the FSC requirements as non-applicable. As a result, companies avoided some reforms of their forest management. The reason was often not malevolence but a lack of awareness. A typical example is Principle 3 ("Indigenous peoples' rights"). In fact, the problem of indigenous peoples is not characteristic for Russia. Indigenous peoples and their communities practicing traditional use of natural resources are not many. Their rights are relatively well defined and protected by national and local regulations. These are applied to the indigenous peoples included in the federal register of indigenous peoples of the Far North, Siberia and the Far East. Yet, the FSC standard exceeds legal requirements in two respects. First, the definition used in the standard is broader. Companies are encouraged to support communities practicing traditional use of natural resources even when they are not included in the official register of indigenous peoples. Second, companies are encouraged to identify forest areas critical to indigenous peoples' subsistence and identity and protect them as HCVF, as well as to conclude individual agreements with indigenous communities regulating the relations between companies and communities.

For example, the Far Eastern industrial forest group Terneyles concluded an agreement with the Udege communities in the basin of the Samarga River where Terneyles leased forests. The Udege are an officially recognized indigenous people who practice traditional uses of forests, such as hunting. In the agreement, Terneyles committed itself to annually compensating any real and potential damage that logging and forest management could have caused the Udege community. In addition, the company identified areas and sites used by the Udege for religious rituals or associated with their traditional beliefs and excluded them from logging (Tysiachniouk et al. 2009). For certification auditors, concluding an agreement with the Udege and protecting their traditional rights was a condition for Terneyles' certification. If the company had not been able to negotiate an agreement with the Udege, its certificate could have been withdrawn after the first surveillance audit. Environmental and indigenous rights groups also strongly encouraged Terneyles to settle its relationship with the Udege. As a result, within one year after the certification, Terneyles and the Udege signed the agreement (SGS Qualifor 2005).

In contrast to the Udege, the Pomors are not officially recognized as an indigenous people. The communities of the Pomors live on the shore of the White Sea in the North of

Russia and practice traditional uses of natural resources. They extract timber and non-timber forest products (e.g., mushroom and berry picking and hunting) from forests and fish from the sea and rivers. Since the Pomors are ethnic Russians and are not included in the federal register of indigenous peoples, Onegales, a medium-sized logging company certified in 2005, did not consult with them when they certified their forest management, although they logged close to several Pomor villages on the Onega peninsula. Certification auditors were also not aware of the potential damage to the Pomor villages and did not require consultations with the Pomors (interview with certification auditor). The FSC regional working group that had been developing a regional standard for northwest Russia also suggested dismissing Principle 3 as non-applicable (interview with certification auditor).

In 2006, after a group of researchers interested in the development of forest certification in northwest Russia discovered that Onegales was potentially violating the Pomors' traditional rights when they logged close to Pomor settlements, they alerted Pomor rights activists in Arkhangelsk. They appealed to a broader definition of indigenous peoples and claimed that Pomor villages should have been treated as indigenous communities, although they were not included in the federal register of indigenous peoples. In turn, Pomor activists addressed Onegales' managers, filed a complaint to the certification body that issued the certificate for Onegales and alerted the FSC regional office in Moscow. In order to avoid conflicts, Onegales started consultations with the Pomor activists and Pomor village population, despite its initial reluctance to recognize the Pomors as indigenous people (interviews with company manager and with FSC Russia official). Certification auditors were also initially skeptical about the Pomors as stakeholders in the certification process. Yet, in 2007–2008, Onegales conducted extensive consultations with Pomor populations on the Onega Peninsula in cooperation with the Pomor rights activists. As a result, Onegales concluded an agreement with the Pomors regulating its relationships with indigenous communities and committed itself to protecting sites on its leased territories that the population of the Pomor villages used for picking berries and hunting (Ovchinnikov 2009).

"Net Effects" of Translation: In order to evaluate the impact of translating FSC P&C into on-the-ground practices, it is necessary to evaluate their "net effect" on the forest management practices in certified enterprises. In other words, we need to systematically examine which requirements certain translation modes are applied to in order to achieve compliance with FSC standards, and under what circumstances. Is it mainly direct compliance or creative recombination? What modes of translation are applied in particularly difficult cases? Such an examination would require, for example, an analysis of certifiers' compliance assessments and annual surveillance reports or their public summaries over time (for an example of a similar study see Newsom/Bahn/Cashore 2006). These reports document what practices were not in compliance with FSC standards and whether (as well as how and when) they were corrected by certified companies. Such an analysis would provide a more systematic picture of how operational practices change and what, specifically, managers do in order to change them.

At this point, my preliminary analysis of net effects suggests that in fact, a significant number of criteria and indicators do not require substantial changes in on-the-ground practices. Companies commonly comply with Principles 1 (compliance with national laws) and 2 (tenure and use rights). Their implementation is not problematic, since problems with tenure and compliance with major national laws, including civil law, are rare and not typical for Russia (as compared to most tropical countries, such as Indonesia, where land tenure is a serious problem (Bartley 2010)). Principles 3 (indigenous peoples' rights) and 4 (community and workers' rights) usually require a marginal adaptation of existing practices, such as improved documentation or reframing (clearly, there are also exceptions here). In the case of tenure, as well, in contrast with Canada (Tollefson/Gale/Haley 2008) and many tropical countries, indigenous peoples' rights do not represent a significant challenge for forest certification in Russia. With a few exceptions, including the Udege communities in the Russian Far East, their interests and rights are not severely violated or threatened by forest companies, or at least are not perceived as such by the indigenous communities and NGOs. Moreover, the rights of recognized indigenous peoples are relatively well protected by national law.

In contrast, it is likely that recombination and invention are more often applied to Principles 5 through 9, which deal with forest management planning, benefits from forests, environmental impact, monitoring and assessment, and high conservation value forests.[5] Environmentalists have continuously drawn attention to the importance of high conservation value forests and operational forest management practices (e.g., logging) as their most serious concerns, not only because they perceived common practices of Russian companies as not environmentally sound, but also because these principles include criteria and indicators that are not regulated by the national forest law. The extremely important concept of high conservation value forests is absent from Russian legislation, whereas many types and subtypes of what are defined as high conservation value forests – e.g., old-growth forests – are not protected by Russian forest and environmental law as such. These are exactly the principles and criteria that are particularly important for environmental activists and scholars (interview with NGO official).

These are also the indicators that are particularly difficult to implement because of the gap between domestic law and practice and FSC requirements and environmentalists' demands, and also because initially, there was not enough knowledge available concerning these principles and criteria and their implementation. In order to comply with these principles, implementing actors had to use and recombine national concepts, common practices and international requirements and concepts in different ways at all levels within the certification system: in national standard-setting forums and in local implementation sites. Maintenance and protection of high conservation value forests includes a range of measures: from a zoning approach for old-growth forests (an internationally recognized approach to managing protected areas, e.g. nature reserves) to protective forests and especially protected areas (concepts taken from domestic regula-

5 Principle 10 is not applied in Russia because of the absence of certified plantations.

tions). Sometimes new practices and arrangements had to be invented (e.g., negotiated exemptions from national regulations) when neither a transnational nor a national practice would serve to fulfill FSC requirements.

It has to be noted at this point that although Russia faces a number of serious problems in the forest sector, including illegal activities and weak enforcement of environmental and forestry regulations, mainly in Siberia and the Far East (McDermott/Cashore/Kanowski 2010: 197), forest certification is prominent in the relatively sound segment of the forest sector (Tysiachniouk 2006; interview with FSC Russia official, interview with NGO activist). This sector includes usually large, vertically integrated companies – some of which have multinationals as parent companies – and their suppliers, who are not engaged in illegal activities and comply with domestic regulations. Therefore, the major challenges for activists and certifiers are not exposing and eliminating illegal activities or enforcing domestic regulations, but promoting the implementation of transnational standards that are different from domestic regulations, such as requirements dealing with high conservation value forests.

5 Conclusion

In this paper, I have analyzed the translation of transnational voluntary forestry standards into on-the-ground practices in the Russian forest sector. With this study, I aim to contribute to two bodies of literature. First, I seek to add to the literature on transnational standard-setting, which so far has paid little attention to the idea that in order to become effective, transnational standards – and more generally, rules – need to be enacted, appropriated and blended into their everyday practice by implementing actors embedded in a domestic legal, institutional, social and political context. I show that interest negotiation and collective learning enable the effective implementation of transnational standards. Second, I seek to contribute to the literature that emphasizes the role of skillful and knowledgeable intermediaries navigating between the global forums and the local settings in a multi-level governance system. They represent a key requirement for translating global standards into local practices and are likely to foster the effectiveness of transnational voluntary programs.

With a few exceptions (Bartley 2010; Espach 2009), the literature on transnational private regulation of environmental and social performance of firms stops short of explaining how local forces and dynamics influence the implementation of global norms into specific on-the-ground practices, particularly in developing and transitional countries with considerable environmental and economic problems and significant gaps between transnational standards and local practice. Even less attention has been given to explicating how changes in on-the-ground practice occur. This body of literature mainly analyzes the influence of global and transnational factors, including multinationals and

transnational social movements, on the uptake of various certification programs, but does not trace the process of implementing the accepted standards into practice. In contrast, I argue that global standards are not directly imposed on local producers by parent multinationals, foreign buyers or international NGOs. I show that local actors play a significant role in spreading environmental standards and in translating them into practice.

How do transnational actors enact and translate transnational standards? Following the literature on diffusion/translation (Czarniawska/Sevon 1996) and organizational learning (Perez-Aleman 2011) and the recent literature on transnational law (Halliday/Carruthers 2009; Merry 2006; Quack 2007), I argue that through engaging in two social processes – negotiation of conflicting stakeholder interests and collective learning – local actors translate broad global P&C of good forest management into nationally applicable standards, develop knowledge about their implementation and actually translate global principles into on-the-ground practices. These processes involve the reflexive adaptation of transnational standards to domestic regulations and practice, collective sense-making and problem-solving through the creative recombination of existing and new concepts and practices of forest management (Quack 2007). Thus, interest negotiation and collective learning represent two mechanisms of change that have been previously neglected in the literature on transnational standard-setting.

Specifically, interest negotiation occurs at two levels. At the national level, actors representing different interests (e.g. economic, social and environmental) negotiate national indicators for global principles and criteria in formal settings, such as conferences, meetings and seminars. They also develop practical recommendations and compliance guidelines for companies seeking to become certified. At the local level, companies, auditors and stakeholders negotiate specific on-the-ground practices that have to conform to the FSC's global and national standards. Thus, similarly to conflict settlement at the transnational level (Bartley 2007), at the domestic level, forest certification provides an arena for settling conflicts between (and within) different stakeholder groups – i.e., environmentalists and industries as well as state authorities – related to the responsible use and management of forests.

The role of collective learning defined as new knowledge and skill building (Perez-Aleman 2011: 174) deserves special attention. This concept of learning enables closing a theoretical gap between transnational standard-setting literature, which assumes that a change in practices will occur after the introduction of a standard (provided there is a gap between standard and practice), and a widespread understanding of practices as sticky and hard to change. The concept of collective learning helps identify ways to change practices. The literature on translation as a main mechanism for the diffusion of ideas, such as practices or organizational forms (Czarniawska/Sevon 1996), specifies one of the ways learning contributes to change: While being imitated, ideas are *edited* and may, therefore, take a different shape across settings depending on local circumstances (Sahlin-Andersson 1996). I suggest that translation may occur in several dif-

ferent modes, ranging from direct implementation to the invention of new practices, but in general I argue that the "editing" of global ideas occurs through a recombination of externally given and locally available concepts and practices that serve as building blocks for new knowledge.

Locally embedded actors – both "indigenous" grass-roots organizations and branches of international organizations – use global and local knowledge reflected in concepts, categories, common practices, national regulations and voluntary standards as building blocks for constructing knowledge related to certification. They combine external, "global" elements (high conservation value forests or old-growth forests) and locally available elements (especially protected forest areas) in different ways in order to define a way to achieve compliance with certification standards that might differ from national legal requirements. When certification requirements cannot be directly implemented, local practices can be reframed to meet FSC requirements. Local elements may also be combined with new elements that can be either borrowed or invented specifically for Russia. From this perspective, new forest management practices are not always derived directly from "global ideas" and imposed on forest companies, but are constructed from both external and locally available elements. Negotiation, learning and experimentation play a crucial creative role in turning transnational voluntary standards into local practices.

What the translation approach lacks is an explicit account of the feedback loops that may occur when ideas travel between settings. Drawing on the recursivity framework (Halliday/Carruthers 2007), I argue that implementation and standard-making, at least at the national level, influence each other. The cyclical, multi-stage nature of standard formation, diffusion and implementation is also increasingly emphasized in the standardization literature (Botzem/Dobusch 2010). Standard-making and implementation are connected through a network of advocates – mainly NGO activists – who play different roles in the certification system: They develop national standards, advise companies, train managers, auditors and stakeholders, conduct research in certified forests, monitor certified companies, attend audits and develop compliance guidelines and recommendations for certified companies. They accumulate and generalize practical experience and insert it into the national standard, other official documents and compliance guidelines. In turn, new requirements are reflected in the changes in companies' forest management systems and on-the-ground practices. Standard-making and implementation are recursive: Through the national standard, forest certification advocates shape implementation whereas implementation feeds back into standard-making.

In addition to the account of stakeholder interest negotiation and collective learning as mechanisms of change in practice, I also seek to contribute to the literature that emphasizes the significance of the organizational capacities of local actors to make voluntary programs effective, and thereby induce change in environmental practice. My findings are generally consistent with the findings of Espach (2006, 2009), who shows that the organizational capacity of the local environmental groups – i.e., "the social and mate-

rial resources of local groups and coalitions" supporting transnational regimes (Espach 2009: 131) – explains the local effectiveness of transnational regimes. He measures effectiveness in terms of the size and diversity of membership and effects on the environmental practices of member firms. Furthermore, my study also confirms the particular importance of actors who possess knowledge of both global concepts and local practice, navigate between global forums and local settings in a multi-level and multi-sited system of international governance (Merry 2006), are embedded in both local and transnational self-regulating communities of practice (Djelic/Quack 2008: 310–311, 2010; Quack 2007) and possess what Fligstein (1997, 2001: 105) calls social skills. These are defined as abilities to induce cooperation and attract political support and funding in order to arrange negotiations, reach a compromise and enact new rules.

In conclusion, I suggest two directions for future research. First, we need a more sophisticated analysis of the power relations behind creative adaptation and learning and their impact on translation outcomes. This paper has rather focused on the creative and cognitive aspects of translation of standards into practice. Second, a detailed analysis of the "net effects" of translation along the lines suggested in the subsection on the modes of translation is required in order to understand whether some modes actually represent a limitation to the effectiveness of certification and labeling and to what extent they limit its transformative potential.

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