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Reconciling Safety and Fairness in Global Agri-Food Standardization

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ABSTRACT

Private food safety standards have recently emerged as a dynamic power in the global value chain. Good agricultural practices (GAP) is one such standard currently gaining popularity as a prominent field-level food quality assurance system. Achieving private GAP certification, most notably of GlobalGAP, is a difficult option for low income producers in the Global South due to the high costs required for necessary investments and certification. This paper critically analyzes the ethical implications of private food safety standards in light of three theoretical perspectives from environmental sociology: ecological modernization, risk society, and eco-socialism. It then examines the potential of public GAP schemes currently emerging in the Global South for reconciling safety and fairness in global agri-food standardization. It is suggested that the expansion of producer participation in public GAP program be regulated by gradual improvements in the state capacity of resource mobilization for auditing and extension institutions.

KEYWORDS

Global Agri-Food Standardization; Food Safety; Fairness; Good Agricultural Practices; Public Gap Standards

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