
1. Introduction to research on fair trade

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INTRODUCTION*

‘Fair trade’ has emerged over recent decades as a buzzword used by social scientists, socially conscious businesses, international development practitioners, social movement activists and ethically minded consumers. As a concept, fair trade refers to a critique of the historical inequalities inherent in international trade and to a belief that trade can be made more socially just. This notion is increasingly linked to a set of concrete initiatives that challenge global inequalities and create more egalitarian commodity networks, linking marginalized producers in the global South with progressive consumers in the global North. In moving from abstract concept to grounded practice, fair trade works to transform international trade from a vehicle of exploitation to an avenue of empowerment. In the global South, fair trade seeks to enhance wellbeing – by fostering higher prices and wages, stable markets and employment, better work conditions and environmental sustainability – and to bolster individual and collective capacities – by strengthening information exchanges, social service access, opportunities for self-determination and local organizations. In the global North, fair trade seeks to bolster more equitable trade policies, business models and consumption practices by making available a range of goods that are produced under more socially just and environmentally sustainable conditions.

There is now an impressive body of research on fair trade generated by scholars from across the social sciences – sociology, political science, geography, economics and anthropology – as well as business, marketing, policy, international development and other related fields. This Handbook serves as both a synthetic introduction and a guide to the dominant perspectives and concerns in the field. The first of its kind, the volume brings together 43 of the world’s foremost fair trade scholars. These scholars use their extensive experience and knowledge to synthesize existing research findings, evaluate key debates and identify the most critical unanswered questions. The Handbook is written for those new to fair trade as well as those well versed in this domain; for scholars

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interested primarily in theoretical issues and for activists and practitioners focused largely on identifying pragmatic solutions to today's most pressing problems.

This introduction provides a conceptual background to fair trade, laying the groundwork for the rest of the volume. It also identifies the Handbook's structure and logic and how readers can best navigate this collection to identify themes of greatest interest. Following a second, more detailed chapter analyzing fair trade movements and markets, chapters in this volume are grouped according to three dominant research areas: 1) The Fair Trade Movement; 2) The Business of Fair Trade; and 3) Fair Trade and International Development. This introduction highlights the central lines of research in each of these domains, drawing directly on the major contributions of each chapter. It concludes with an assessment of the state of existing research on fair trade and an identification of the most promising directions for future investigation.

THE CONCEPT OF FAIR TRADE

Fair trade is used in common parlance to describe a moral high ground that responds to and critiques conventional trade relations, which for various reasons might be considered 'unfair' trade. This volume focuses more specifically on the notion of fair trade as it is articulated by its major social movement proponents. As defined in 'A Charter of Fair Trade Principles':

Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers – especially in the South. Fair Trade Organizations, backed by consumers, are engaged actively in supporting producers, awareness raising and in campaigning for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade. (World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) and Fairtrade International 2009)

According to this Fair Trade Charter, the objective of fair trade is to create 'a world in which justice and sustainable development are at the heart of trade structures and practices so that everyone, through their work, can maintain a decent and dignified livelihood and develop their full human potential'. It presents a strategy for achieving this vision, in five core principles: 1) market access for marginalized producers; 2) sustainable and equitable trading relationships; 3) capacity building and empowerment; 4) consumer awareness raising and advocacy; and 5) fair

trade as a 'social contract' between buyers (including final consumers) and producers. In short fair trade is envisioned as a partnership that utilizes trade as a vehicle for promoting progressive change and international development.

Fair trade is allied in its vision and mission with a range of contemporary global social justice and environmental movements. In its critique of neoliberal globalization and advocacy for political and economic justice, fair trade aligns with the human rights, global democracy and trade justice movements (Smith 2008). In its focus on improving social and environmental conditions as well as fostering empowerment and self-determination in the global South, fair trade parallels the alternative development, political ecology, local sovereignty, and women's, peasants', workers' and indigenous rights movements (Evans 2008). Yet fair trade moves beyond many of these contemporary social movements in its efforts to go from vision to practice, seeking to demonstrate through example that more equitable and sustainable relations are possible.

In putting its vision into practice, fair trade joins a growing array of standard-setting and certification systems that establish and promote more rigorous social and environmental conditions in global production networks. These new institutional arrangements are commonly referred to as 'private' or 'voluntary' regulations, as they are not legally mandated, or 'multi-stakeholder initiatives' since they often engage stakeholders beyond the firm in overseeing business practices. Such regulatory systems abound in global manufacturing, where they focus largely on labor issues (O'Rourke 2006), and in agriculture and natural resource sectors, where they focus largely on ecological conditions (Auld 2014). Like other standard-setting and certification systems, fair trade operates largely outside of the legal system and brings together multiple stakeholders, most importantly businesses and non-governmental organizations (Bennett 2014). Yet fair trade distinguishes itself from other initiatives via its breadth, in incorporating both ethical and environmental concerns, and its depth, in regulating both production and trade relations (Raynolds 2000). Fair trade is thus best understood as a system of 'social regulation' that engages diverse social actors and pursues diverse social goals (Raynolds 2012).

This Handbook discusses two major facets of fair trade, distinguished via their spelling.¹ Expressed as two words, 'fair trade' refers to the concept, the movement or products/organizations/businesses promoting the general fair trade vision. This 'fair trade' includes the original direct trade model and practices that were developed first in handicrafts and persist in this and to a lesser extent other commodity areas. However, much of fair trade's recent growth has been through the certification of

products by Fairtrade International, a non-profit membership organization which defines fair production and trade standards, establishes auditing procedures and promotes the sale of labeled products. Spelled as one word and capitalized, 'Fairtrade' refers to this specific certification system, as governed by its member organizations: national labeling organizations in countries where Fairtrade products are consumed and producer organizations in countries where Fairtrade products are produced. Certified products currently account for – by far – the majority of fair trade sales, particularly in agriculture and food products.

In addition to Fairtrade International certification there are other influential fair trade labeling systems which are also discussed in this volume. Fair Trade USA – which was until 2011 a member of Fairtrade International – now operates independently, setting standards and certifying products for sale in the United States. A number of chapters discuss this US program, identifying it by its trademarked name 'Fair Trade Certified'. Other fair trade certifications and labels, such as the Institute for Marketecology's 'Fair for Life' and the WFTO's 'Sustainable Fair Trade Management System', are analyzed in this Handbook and are identified using their full program names.

RISING POPULAR AND ACADEMIC INTEREST IN FAIR TRADE

We have over recent decades seen an explosion of interest in fair trade. News reports and opinion pieces related to fair trade are now commonplace in the mainstream print and digital media. Fair trade comes up often in conversations and debates among concerned citizens, producers and social movement activists around the world. While discussions about fair trade were once confined to food cooperatives serving the progressive fringes of society, fair trade is now a topic of conversation among shoppers of all ages in both alternative and mainstream grocery checkout lines. In an effort to capitalize on this interest, companies now reference fair trade (whether they engage these practices seriously or not) to substantiate their business values, rally investor support and foster consumer loyalty. Such claims are not only made by alternative niche market businesses, but also the world's largest retailers and most famous brand corporations.

Where did this interest and engagement in fair trade come from? The contemporary fair trade movement can be traced back to the 1940s, when directly traded handicrafts were first sold out of car trunks.² In the decades that followed, volunteers opened fair trade handicraft shops in

the United States and Europe, and they allied with Latin American cooperatives to begin selling fairly priced coffee in shops and church basements. This informal economic system was revolutionized in the 1980s and 1990s through the founding of increasingly professional fair trade associations, the harmonization of norms and practices and, most notably, the introduction and promotion of the Fairtrade product certification label in mainstream markets.

Fair trade grew dramatically at the start of the 21st century, with the vast majority of this growth occurring in Fairtrade certified product arenas.³ Between 1998 and 2004 the number of commodities carrying the Fairtrade label rose from seven to 18; enrollment of certified producer groups rose from 211 to 433; and the volume of certified sales rose from 28 902 to 125 595 metric tons (Raynolds and Long 2007, 25). This impressive growth helps explain how fair trade caught the attention of consumers, producers, activists, businesses and the media; at the same time this broad public enthusiasm helps explain fair trade's impressive growth.

Academic interest in fair trade follows a similar timeline, with a few chapters, articles and books emerging in the 1990s⁴ and a surge of research at the turn of the century fueling what is now a vibrant, multidisciplinary and sophisticated body of literature. This Handbook's editors are affiliated with the earliest and still one of the foremost research centers in the field, the Center for Fair and Alternative Trade at Colorado State University in the United States. Handbook authors include many of the scholars who pioneered fair trade studies through grounded, field-based research. They bring to the volume a deep understanding of the history and practice of fair trade and how it has changed over time. Also included are newer researchers who raise novel concerns and bring fresh analytical approaches to the study of fair trade. Drawing on a growing body of empirical data, these researchers together identify and illuminate cutting edge issues, elucidating and contributing to the most current arguments and perspectives in the field of fair trade studies.

HANDBOOK ORGANIZATION AND CONTENTS

Contemporary fair trade research addresses a broad range of questions, draws on disparate theoretical traditions, employs diverse methodologies and is conducted by scholars of various disciplines and from different regions of the world. To capture this diversity, this Handbook brings together over 40 scholars from across the social sciences, including sociology, geography, political science, anthropology and economics, as

well as the fields of business, environment and international development. While each scholar brings a distinct perspective to the study of fair trade, Handbook authors share a common commitment to linking theory with praxis. Most authors work in universities and research centers, though some are employed by government agencies or non-profit advocacy organizations. Reflecting the uneven geography of academic scholarship, most authors reside in North America and Europe, although a few are based in the global South and many work extensively in Latin America, Asia and Africa. Since several scholars typically do not publish in English, this volume provides a unique and insightful international perspective.

Handbook authors pursue approaches that range from the highly theoretical to the rigorously empirical. Chapters address key macro-, meso- and micro-level questions, and their answers are informed by both qualitative and quantitative research methods (including commodity network research, content analysis, comparative case studies, formal modeling, historical narrative analysis and participatory action research) and a wide variety of data sources (such as survey responses, interviews, observations, archival documents, popular media, commissioned reports and extant scholarship). To enrich their theoretical insights and empirical relevance, Handbook authors analyze fair trade issues across numerous certified and non-certified commodities, including agro-food products like coffee, tea, cocoa, wine, sugar, flowers, fresh vegetables and honey as well as textiles and other handicrafts. The research compiled here maps the production, trade and consumption relations which characterize and link fair trade in the global North and South, grounding analysis in the experiences of key consuming countries (e.g., the United States, United Kingdom, Italy, France and Switzerland) and major producing countries in Latin America (e.g., Mexico, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Peru and Bolivia), Africa (e.g., Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana, Malawi and South Africa) and Asia (e.g., India and the Philippines).

This Handbook describes and evaluates fair trade's varied dimensions and dynamics. Part I provides an overview of fair trade, beginning with this 'Introduction to research on fair trade' and continuing with a synopsis of fair trade's historical and empirical parameters in Chapter 2, 'Fair trade: Movement and markets' by Laura Reynolds and Nicholas Greenfield. This chapter analyzes fair trade as a movement and market, focusing on the complex and contested nature of dominant institutions, market relations, commodity networks and production conditions. Reynolds and Greenfield demonstrate how fair trade social movement efforts to promote alternative relational and civic values have been

repeatedly challenged, but not subsumed, by dominant market forces seeking to advance conventional commercial and industrial interests.

Following the central lines of research in the field, the Handbook's subsequent chapters are organized into three parts. Part II, 'The Fair Trade Movement', examines the varied forces which have historically shaped fair trade activism and organizations. It highlights the complexities, controversies and contradictions that have generated both innovation and fragmentation within the movement. Part III, 'The Business of Fair Trade', examines how the vision of fair trade has been put into practice. Thus, it pays close attention to the dynamics of ethical labeling, the strategies of firms, the role of market forces and shifting consumption patterns. And Part IV, 'Fair Trade and International Development', examines the implications of fair trade for diverse producers and their communities. Typically focusing on a single region, commodity or development objective, each chapter offers a unique perspective on the efficacy of fair trade as a vehicle for development in the global South. Together these sections provide an empirical description of fair trade; explain central theoretical arguments and approaches; outline key ideas, debates and findings; and evaluate the state of existing scholarship. The remainder of this introduction highlights the central concerns and conclusions of each chapter, and draws on them to discuss and comment on the overall state of research on fair trade.

PART II: THE FAIR TRADE MOVEMENT

The chapters in Part II identify and evaluate key dimensions of the fair trade movement in local, national and global arenas. These chapters explain the varied forces that have historically shaped fair trade, including how key groups are organized and governed, and the relationship between fair trade and other social movements and multi-stakeholder initiatives. Discussion focuses on the norms and strategies that define the movement and the debates that divide it. The authors are grounded in the political economy tradition and share a common emphasis on issues of power, yet they apply diverse insights from political science, sociology and geography to illuminate the role of organizational, corporate, labor, consumer, producer and place-based politics in fair trade. As these chapters demonstrate, fair trade is a complex and contradictory social movement located at the nexus between capitalism and its alternatives. In evaluating fair trade's past and future trajectory, this section informs both analysis of and advocacy for the fair trade movement.

Fair Trade in International Political Economy

The early chapters in this section focus on macro-level questions regarding the nature of fair trade in an evolving system of international political economy. Steven Suranovic's chapter, 'The meaning of fair trade', furthers one's understanding of the contested terrain of fair trade by revealing the many distinct ways in which fairness is defined, often in relation to divergent concerns over equality of actions, outcomes or promise keeping. This chapter describes the way fairness is applied in fair trade certification, highlighting the conditions under which labeled products are both consistent and inconsistent with basic fairness principles. In 'Corporate accountability, fair trade and multi-stakeholder regulation', Peter Utting analyzes the changing norms and procedures which characterize new forms of multi-stakeholder regulation, locating Fairtrade certification within the context of other prominent regulatory initiatives, particularly the United Nations Global Compact and the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil. Utting highlights the importance of political economy variables associated with contestation, power relations and participation in explaining regulatory changes and their implications for fostering fair trade and corporate accountability. Elizabeth Bennett's chapter, 'Fairtrade International governance', draws on extensive archival research to examine how Fairtrade International, the Fairtrade certification system's standards-setting body, balances power between producers and other actors in its highest governance bodies. Bennett argues that Fairtrade International's current governance structure is the most democratic and most inclusive of producers in the label's history, but that Fairtrade faces serious challenges due to a prolonged period of excluding producers from governance. Explaining key features in the political economy of fair trade, these chapters reveal the logic of fair trade, the location of fair trade certification within the field of global regulation and the internal politics of Fairtrade International.

The recent dramatic increase in the sourcing of fair trade labeled products from large plantations has spawned research and debates regarding the nature and implications of incorporating wage workers into fair trade. In his chapter on 'Global labor politics and fair trade', Dimitris Stevis identifies major areas of agreement and disagreement between fair trade and labor movements in the recent revision of Fairtrade International's hired labor standards. Arguing that the two movements have found some important common ground, Stevis suggests ways in which this relationship can mature to advance global social dialogue and transnational industrial relations. In a related chapter entitled 'Fairtrade

certification, conventions and labor', Lone Riisgaard employs a convention theory lens to analyze Fairtrade labor standards and plantation certification. She identifies the nature and role of industrial and civic conventions in Fairtrade's engagement with hired labor enterprises and explores certification's implications for workers and their organizations, grounding her discussion in field studies of certified flower farms in Ecuador and Kenya. Together these two chapters illuminate the challenges and opportunities for improving the wellbeing and rights of hired workers via fair trade.

Fair Trade in Consumer Countries

The rapid growth of fair trade markets, particularly in Europe and North America, has fueled research on the links between fair trade consumption in the global North and production in the global South, the politics of ethical consumption, programs promoting fair trade purchasing and the potential of new initiatives facilitating fair trade in domestic commodity markets. In their chapter on 'Connections in fair trade food networks', Michael Goodman and Agatha Herman link the history of fair trade marketing in the United Kingdom with the rise of Fairtrade wine production in South Africa. They highlight the tactical practices used to grow and maintain ethical commodity networks, arguing that understanding the ways in which knowledge connections and disconnections are used is central to enhancing the sustainability of fair trade networks. Also focusing on fair trade consumers, Keith Brown's chapter on 'Consumer politics, political consumption and fair trade' analyzes the nature of US fair trade markets and the important history of 'boycotts' in national consumer movements. Situating fair trade within the field of ethical consumption, Brown argues that fair trade's growth has been aided by an ethical turn in markets where social responsibility has become a desirable product attribute. Both chapters reveal the centrality of face-to-face interactions and producer stories in promoting and sustaining fair trade networks.

The final two chapters focus on the national specificities and place-based nature of fair trade movements in the global North. In 'Domestic fair trade in the United States' Sandy Brown and Christy Getz analyze the growing number of initiatives promoting social justice for American farmers and farm workers in domestic commodity networks. They argue that these efforts to 'bring fair trade home' must be understood within the context of US agricultural development, in particular the legacies of agrarianism in shaping farm policy and the central role of marginalized immigrant workers in valorizing the agricultural landscape. Alastair

Smith's chapter, 'Fair trade places', details the rise of campaigns in the United Kingdom to promote fair trade towns, schools and nations, in both discourse and practice. He argues that fair trade places have provided stakeholders in the global North with new arenas within which to contest the nature and purpose of fair trade, but shows how wider power dynamics continue to shape place-based politics and democratization efforts. From different vantage points the two chapters spotlight how Northern initiatives can move beyond individual consumption politics to engage larger communities in promoting trade justice in domestic and international arenas.

PART III: THE BUSINESS OF FAIR TRADE

Part III analyzes the businesses, organizations, systems, relationships and labels that have been developed to put fair trade's goals into practice. These chapters examine the politics of product labeling, weigh the costs and benefits of alternative trade models and evaluate innovations in ethical trade. Several chapters examine fair trade through a business lens, focusing on consumer psychology, ethical branding and the role of labels in capturing markets. These studies often draw on large-scale market research data, compare conventional and alternative trade models or explore innovations in branding. Other chapters draw from geography, sociology and economics to analyze the nature and consequences of varied relationships between fair trade organizations, certification agencies, small businesses and large corporations in major markets in North America and Europe. This section of the Handbook thus elucidates the tradeoffs that key fair trade actors make in selecting strategies for institutionalizing and advancing their objective of making trade fair, and makes arguments about the consequences those strategic choices produce for fair trade markets.

The Organization and Practice of Fair Trade

The first three chapters examine the tensions inherent in trading fairly in a capitalist economy and analyze the cooperatives, businesses, corporations and social enterprises that negotiate these tensions in fair trade production, exporting and marketing. Darryl Reed's chapter, 'Cooperatives, corporations and fair trade', provides an analytic model to explain how cooperatives and corporations both cooperate and compete within fair trade markets, illustrating how the two types of organizations differ in their

purposes, values, logics and governance. He argues that while cooperative-led value chains embody fair trade principles and contribute to an endogenous model of development, corporate-dominated value chains promote a corporate-led model of growth which may, but does not necessarily, contribute to poverty alleviation. In his chapter on 'Fair trade and social enterprise', Benjamin Huybrechts shows how an understanding of 'social enterprises' can help reveal the DNA of fair trade organizations and locate these enterprises within a broader organizational taxonomy. Drawing on a study of 57 fair trade social enterprises in four countries, he moves the discussion from what fair trade organizations *do* to what they *are* – innovative social enterprises which link market dynamics with social purpose. Manush McConway and Geoff Moore's chapter, 'Local fair trade organizations and institutional logics', shifts one's focus to fair trade export enterprises in producer countries, examining how these groups manage the competing forces of operating in both fair trade and mainstream markets. Focusing on the case of a craft export enterprise in Peru, they illustrate how a local fair trade organization can successfully respond to and negotiate competing institutional logics. The three chapters thus explain the diverse organizational models and business strategies used by fair trade enterprises, highlighting both important innovations and persistent tensions in global fair trade networks.

Fair Trade Mainstreaming, Certification and Corporate Collaboration

The following three chapters analyze patterns of fair trade mainstreaming, certification and corporate collaboration. These transformations have at once contributed to fair trade's recent market growth and fueled concerns regarding the dilution of standards, reduction in producer benefits, adoption of undemocratic practices and generation of support for corporations with poor human rights records. Ronan Le Velly's chapter, 'Fair trade and mainstreaming', argues that while 'mainstreaming' is commonly used to refer simultaneously to the *aim* of increasing sales, the *means* of utilizing conventional sales channels and the *consequences* of eroding of fair trade principles, it is important not to conflate these related but distinct processes. He studies the 'socio-technical agencements' underlying the sales growth of Artisans du Monde in France (via professionalization) and of Fairtrade International (via the delegation of business activities) to identify the ways in which fair trade goals have been facilitated or endangered. In 'Fair trade certification, performance and practice', Bradley Wilson and Tad Mutersbaugh analyze the fair trade product labeling system, arguing that the embrace of an

ISO-style approach to certification contributes to oft-noted problems in fair trade, including the lack of producer participation in standards-making, the weakness of democratic practices in network activities and the significant burdens placed on producer groups. While certification can foster a disembedding of the solidarity relations that once made fair trade unique, the authors identify practices that may enhance democracy and transparency in fair trade. Complementing the prior chapters, 'Retailers, corporate ethics and fair trade' by Alex Hughes identifies the diverse and evolving pathways of fair trade mainstreaming through corporate grocery retailers. She analyzes the nature and goals of corporate mainstreaming, comparing the adoption of Fairtrade goods by competing UK supermarket own-brand lines, by corporate social-responsibility-oriented top global retailers and by emerging supermarkets in the global South. Collectively these chapters reveal the complex nature of fair trade mainstreaming, pointing to the potential dangers of these processes as well as the possibilities for promoting expanding sales while maintaining fair trade principles.

Fair Trade Markets in the Global North

The final two chapters show how variations in fair trade organizations and patterns of mainstreaming and certification shape major fair trade markets in the global North. In the chapter 'Fairtrade International and the European market', Bob Doherty, Valéry Bezençon and Gaëlle Balineau compare and contrast fair trade market parameters, focusing particularly on Italy, France, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. They demonstrate the critical yet paradoxical contribution of Fairtrade International in developing national markets for Fairtrade labeled products which depend crucially on the marketing strategies of retailers and the structure of their supply chains. April Linton and Claudia Rosty's chapter, 'The US market and Fair Trade Certified', examines the nature of fair trade labeling, certification and mainstreaming in the United States. Drawing on existing scholarship and interviews with fair trade and labor rights advocates, the authors argue that the best strategies for growing fair trade in the United States involve engaging consumers as groups rather than individuals and messaging in a way that connects fair trade issues with larger social justice and sustainability agendas. Studying the world's largest fair trade markets, the two chapters reveal the important role that national context, culture and history play in shaping fair trade organizations and practices.

PART IV: FAIR TRADE AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Part IV explores the fair trade movement's role and efficacy in promoting sustainable development in the global South. These chapters analyze the local social, cultural, political, economic and environmental implications of fair trade, advancing international development scholarship and providing recommendations for policies and programs to enhance fair trade's impact on the ground. Drawing insights from anthropology, sociology, economics, environmental studies and business fields, the authors reveal fair trade's strengths and weaknesses in bolstering wellbeing and empowerment in diverse communities and countries across Latin America, Africa and Asia. The chapters draw largely on field-based research using participatory, ethnographic and survey methods to illuminate fair trade's organization in key commodities and regions, often using commodity chain analysis to identify local/global connections. Studies unpack fair trade's multidimensional history and diverse operations in order to explain its local development outcomes. The chapters in Part IV reveal how fair trade's grounded impacts vary based on commodity and locality as well as by the nature of producer organizations, production enterprises and export relations. These variations in turn help explain fair trade's differential implications for specific individuals and groups, many of whom are marginalized by inequalities based on race, ethnicity, gender, class, geography and market access.

Fair Trade and its Objectives: Peace, Development, Sustainability and Equality

The first half of Part IV examines fair trade's challenges and opportunities in promoting key international development objectives. The initial chapters explore fair trade's capacity to promote development by addressing three deep-rooted problems: political conflict, underdevelopment and environmental degradation. Eileen Davenport and William Low's chapter, 'Fair trade, peace and development in conflict zones', reinterprets fair trade's evolution, identifying the central role of peacebuilding as a driving force of the early movement and its subsequent marginalization in the mainstreaming of fair trade. The authors argue that the recent introduction of products from conflict and post-conflict zones, such as coffee from the Democratic Republic of the Congo or olive oil from Palestine, marks a re-emergence of an *intentional* focus on peacebuilding as a principal objective, rather than a by-product, of fair trade. In the

chapter 'Fair trade and development in African agriculture', Anne Tallontire explores the history of fair trade in African agriculture, highlighting the important role of cooperatives in the engagement of small producers and the rising significance of the Fairtrade hired labor model. She argues that while fair trade has improved local living conditions, colonial-based institutional forces and the current sourcing requirements of retailers and brands limit potential advances in key arenas like infrastructure access and gender equity. Christopher Bacon, Robert Rice and Hannah Maryanski's chapter, 'Fair trade coffee and environmental sustainability in Latin America', analyzes the direct and indirect environmental impacts of Fairtrade certified coffee production in Latin America and the Caribbean. Drawing on surveys, interviews and years of field experience, the authors examine fair trade's implications for biodiversity conservation, pollution reduction and climate change adaptation, finding the results to be mixed and context specific. Taken together these three chapters suggest that fair trade has had some important success in promoting its peacebuilding, social development and environmental sustainability goals and point to concrete ways in which these efforts can be enhanced.

The subsequent three chapters focus on fair trade's capacity to achieve its objective of promoting equality, especially for women and disadvantaged ethnic and racial groups. Each chapter identifies the major challenges facing particular marginalized groups and fair trade's efforts to address them. Sally Smith's chapter, 'Fair trade and women's empowerment', draws on empirical evidence from a range of countries and sectors to demonstrate that there is considerable variation in the extent to which fair trade supports processes of women's empowerment, not least because fair trade impacts are mediated by local contextual conditions. She argues that the new gender strategies being pursued by Fairtrade International and WFTO are conceptually sound, but that implementing these strategies will require significant commitment, leadership and resources. In her chapter on 'Fair trade and indigenous communities in Latin America', Sarah Lyon explores the implications of fair trade for the indigenous groups often depicted in coffee marketing campaigns, drawing on case studies from Mesoamerica, Bolivia and Brazil. Lyon identifies the risks and benefits of strategic essentialisms and identity politics for indigenous coffee farmers and their organizations and concludes that fair trade can foster economic development by helping indigenous communities access and compete in international markets. Jennifer Keahey's chapter, 'Fair trade and racial equity in Africa', pursues a multi-level analysis of Fairtrade certified production which integrates the scholarly literature, organizational interviews and participatory action research with small-scale rooibos tea farmers in South Africa. Keahey finds that while

African organizations pursue innovative approaches to challenging racial inequalities in production and trade, paternalistic benevolence hinders interracial solidarity. She concludes that fair trade's record in promoting racial equity is mixed and that greater producer participation is needed to foster interracial empowerment and ownership. The three chapters thus concur that fair trade has had only partial success in promoting its equity agenda. Chapter authors find that women and non-white populations benefit from fair trade, but argue that increasing the participation of marginalized groups in fair trade governance and practice is necessary to enhance gender, ethnic and racial equity.

Fair Trade for Economically Marginalized Groups

The following set of chapters focus on fair trade's efforts to provide market access, economic opportunity and other benefits to three economically marginalized groups: artisans, small-scale farmers and farm workers. The authors describe how fair trade initiatives have engaged these disadvantaged groups. They also evaluate the success of these efforts and identify how different groups may at times compete for fair trade benefits. Mary Littrell's chapter, 'Fair trade and artisans', examines the experiences and challenges of fair trade artisans in India and Guatemala. She shows how fair trade principles of respect for cultural traditions, including daily lifestyles and artistic production, promote the organizational growth and evolution of local handicraft groups and enhance artisans' cultural identity. Littrell argues that to maintain fair trade's benefits for artisans it is imperative that consumers understand the distinctive nature of fair trade artisan work in an increasingly crowded and confusing ethical marketplace. In 'Fair trade for small farmer cooperatives in Latin America', Marie-Christine Renard analyzes the rise of fair trade labeling from the perspective of small producers and traces recent conflicts between Fairtrade International and the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Small Fair Trade Producers (CLAC). Renard argues that Fairtrade International's emphasis on growing certified markets has privileged corporations over small farmers in fair trade governance. She describes how small producers have responded by launching the new Small Producers Symbol (SPP label), an initiative that aims to reorient fair trade to its original mission and focus on smallholder farmer cooperatives. Rie Makita's chapter, 'Fair trade and plantation workers in Asia', shows how both current and former workers can benefit from Fairtrade, drawing on case studies of a tea plantation in India and a cooperative of former sugarcane plantation workers in the Philippines. She argues that while current workers can use Fairtrade premiums to

foster their empowerment if third-party organizations (rather than plantation management) control the premium, former plantation workers can maximize their income by pursuing fair trade production on communal land in conjunction with household livelihood diversification. The three chapters draw on rich empirical data and intensive fieldwork to illustrate how movement- and organizational-level politics play out on the ground and how fair trade can best engage diverse groups of artisans, farmers and workers in the global South.

Fair Trade Impacts

The volume's final chapters analyze fair trade's impacts across commodities and contexts. Valerie Nelson and Adrienne Martin's chapter, 'Fair-trade International's multi-dimensional impacts in Africa', synthesizes the findings of a number of recent field studies on the impacts of Fairtrade on smallholders and hired workers. They find that while certification can generate important benefits, in Africa Fairtrade's record of reducing gender and social inequalities and lifting people out of poverty is mixed, often modest, and highly context specific. Nelson and Martin suggest ways for improving Fairtrade impacts and sustainable trade. 'Quantitative analysis of the impacts of fair trade' by Leonardo Becchetti, Stefano Castriota and Pierluigi Conzo reviews numerous studies of fair trade impacts, analyzing the strength of their methods as well as their statistical findings. The authors argue that rigorous research demonstrates fair trade's benefits in a number of countries, related particularly to fair trade affiliation's impacts on objective measures (like income and food consumption), subjective measures (like life satisfaction and self-esteem) and household issues (like child labor). Both chapters reveal fair trade's important positive impacts yet remind one that these benefits may be less impressive and inclusive than are sometimes assumed and can be undermined by less committed actors.

CONCLUSIONS

The *Handbook of Research on Fair Trade* describes existing challenges and opportunities, informs core debates and raises new questions for the field of fair trade research. While the authors advance scholarship on a broad range of topics, their contributions focus on five key themes: 1) mainstreaming, labeling and the role of conventional actors in fair trade markets; 2) the increasing scale, complexity and diversity of fair trade production; 3) governance, leadership and the balance of power

within fair trade and its major organizations; 4) the fair trade movement's relationship to other social and environmental movements and initiatives; and 5) how to bolster fair trade's positive impacts, particularly for extremely marginalized groups. This concluding section summarizes the central arguments and debates within each topic, highlighting major unresolved questions for fair trade researchers and recommendations for fair trade practitioners.

The question of how to theoretically negotiate and practically manage the tension of simultaneously working *within* and *against* the market to achieve social justice aims is an enduring question in fair trade research (see Barratt Brown 1993). Handbook chapters shed new light on this challenge by developing fresh theoretical lenses which merge insights from new approaches, like convention theory, socio-technical analysis and institutional logics, with well-established political economy, organizational and development analytics. Empirically, Handbook chapters show how conventional, profit-oriented actors are increasingly participating in fair trade, either through collaborating with committed fair trade practitioners or by designing their own systems which incorporate select aspects of fair trade. While some authors see this trend as a symptom of fair trade's success in regulating the global economy, others argue that it is indicative of fair washing. Handbook authors agree that fair trade mainstreaming facilitates market growth but disagree about the nature of the related costs and whether the benefits derived from market growth outweigh these costs. Several case studies suggest that fully committed fair trade distributors and producers can negotiate relationships with mainstream actors that channel the benefits of market growth while minimizing the tradeoffs. Further research is needed to understand how and when this type of win-win scenario is possible and whether conventional market actors can bring more to fair trade than expanding markets. The recommendation to committed fair trade practitioners is clear, albeit challenging to implement: successful collaboration with mainstream market actors requires a clear understanding of one another's profit motives and social impact objectives, even if those priorities are not fully shared.

A second common theme addressed by Handbook chapters relates to the increasing scale and complexity of fair trade production. Scholars in this volume describe how fair trade has come to incorporate new types of producer organizations, novel products, lengthier supply chains and additional production locations, generating increasingly complex networks of actors and practices. A more multifaceted and competitive fair trade marketplace is emerging. It's comprised of a proliferating number of ethical labels, a novel set of trading models, a quasi-parallel

certification system created by Fair Trade USA's departure from the Fairtrade International umbrella, a set of new domestic (within country) fair trade initiatives and an incipient practice of international South–South fair trade. But a number of critical questions remain. How will this more diverse market affect the fair trade movement and its underlying principles? How will these changes affect the benefits channeled to producers? Fair trade research points to a number of potential negative repercussions from these trends, including discrediting the movement, diluting social and environmental standards, confusing consumers by not differentiating between rigorous and 'light' fair trade, and even jeopardizing the existence of highly committed pioneers. On the other hand, some studies of fair trade suggest that experimentation and innovation may generate novel approaches that harness the strengths of traditional models and mitigate these new challenges. For fair trade practitioners it is a time for creative thinking and fresh approaches. For researchers there is much to learn about the new factors shaping fair trade consumption, trade and production, particularly in rising consumer countries like Mexico, Brazil and South Africa. Whether the current fair trade movement and market are best understood as a terrain of crisis or innovation remains to be seen.

The third major cross-cutting theme addressed by Handbook chapters relates to the challenges of fair trade governance, both within key initiatives and in the larger movement. Scholars in this volume argue that producers' participation in organizational and movement governance is critical and advocate more democratic processes of decision-making and heightened transparency. They raise concerns about the balance of power between different types of stakeholders (e.g., producers versus marketing organizations) and between different types of producer groups (e.g., hired laborers versus small farmers). While fair trade principles promote the incorporation of marginalized producers, research finds that in practice the participation of women, racial and ethnic minorities, and the poorest fair trade communities is often limited. For those involved in fair trade networks, this Handbook points to some of the gaps in democratic practices and some of the promising avenues for fostering participation. This volume also identifies a number of important areas for further research, including how stakeholder participation affects committed fair traders' ability to compete in the crowded 'ethical' market, how different governance patterns influence the content of standards and in what ways increasing producer participation in organizations and in the movement as a whole affects the benefits of fair trade on the ground.

The fourth major issue addressed by the fair trade literature relates to the movement's location among, and relationship to, other global regulatory initiatives, certifications and labeling efforts. On this issue scholars examine how fair trade actors have collaborated or worked independently of solidarity, labor, environmental and food justice movements. Many Handbook authors recommend that fair trade practitioners build stronger alliances with related social movement groups. Given fair trade's growth in large enterprises dependent on hired labor, the relationship between fair trade and international and national unions has become particularly important. As fair trade expands to incorporate new producer groups, scholarship in this area raises the question: fair trade *for whom*? Further research is needed to better understand how fair trade can deliver benefits to different groups and how these benefits compare to those offered by other initiatives. This volume examines fair trade as a form of social enterprise, private regulation and consumption-based political activism. While these studies point to fair trade's similarities with other initiatives, further research is needed to evaluate the ways in which fair trade's advocacy efforts, consumer education and benefits to producers are distinct.

The final theme that emerges frequently in fair trade scholarship relates to the level and type of benefits that fair trade brings to producers, their families and their communities. The research included in this volume shows that fair trade's impacts are variegated, variable and uneven across producer groups and localities. Strategies that generate benefits in some contexts appear not to work as well in others. This is due to differences in prevailing social, economic and political conditions, in commodity and production requirements and in regional development characteristics. Fair trade has fallen short of its goals of pulling people out of poverty, ameliorating entrenched structural inequalities, transforming economies and re-embedding global capitalism. But as studies in this volume demonstrate, fair trade has in some contexts made meaningful contributions to promoting social justice and sustainable development. For researchers the key conclusion is the need to move beyond an overly simplistic dichotomization between fair trade's lofty rhetoric and its more modest impacts, in order to help identify the factors which either facilitate or impede benefit streams. Action-oriented scholars in particular should focus their research on how to improve – as well as measure – fair trade impacts, and how to engage fair trade producers in defining and monitoring success. Handbook authors make a number of recommendations for fair trade policymakers and practitioners to bolster benefit streams, including encouraging livelihood diversification; promoting a living wage for workers as well as farmers; stabilizing contractual

relations between buyers and producers; diversifying fair trade practices to accommodate diverse production contexts; and employing and learning from innovative pilot programs.

As this Handbook suggests, academic research on fair trade has a rich history of analyzing and informing the ways in which fair trade principles are put into practice. The editors hope that this volume will advance fair trade as an interdisciplinary and international topic of scholarly inquiry; that it will be a tool for igniting new research on emerging issues as well as perennial debates in the field; and that it will reinforce the links between research and practice. Fair trade research clearly has merit as an intellectual project, but it also can play a critical role in addressing the world's most pressing social, economic, political and environmental problems.

NOTES

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1. The terminology follows the Fair Trade Charter, which notes that there are two distinct but complementary fair trade supply channels: 1) 'the integrated supply chain route whereby products are imported and/or distributed by organisations that have fair trade at the core of their mission and activities' and 2) the Fairtrade channel or 'the product certification route whereby products complying with international standards are certified' (World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) and Fairtrade International 2009).
 2. Of course, this was not the first time that social justice-oriented groups appealed to consumers to 'vote with their dollar' (see, for example, Glickman 2009).
 3. As Reynolds and Long (2007, 21) document, by the early 2000s certified items had come to account for 88 per cent of total fair trade sales.
 4. Particularly prescient was Michael Barratt Brown's (1993) book, entitled *Fair Trade*.

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