
17. Fair trade consumers and knowledge about fair trade

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1 INTRODUCTION

'Fair trade'¹ is a vision for a world in which social justice and sustainable development are at the heart of trade relationships, business models, and economic practices. The objective is for 'everyone, through their work, to maintain a decent and dignified livelihood and develop their full human potential' (Fairtrade International and World Fair Trade Organization, 2009). The 'fair trade movement' is comprised of consumers, businesses, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), faith groups, consumer advocacy networks, and others committed to putting these ideas into motion (Fair Trade Movement, 2018). Through a variety of supply- and demand-side innovations, fair trade advocates aim to limit marginalization (exclusion from the market), oppression (limited freedoms), and exploitation (inadequate compensation) of people working in global supply chains (Raynolds and Bennett, 2015; Bennett, 2020).

'Fair trade consumers' support fair trade by purchasing fair trade products and privileging the brands and retailers that offer them (Micheletti, 2003; Boström et al., 2019). Strong consumer demand can drive brands to increase the portion of products and inputs they source from fair trade suppliers and motivate retailers to offer a greater selection of fair trade goods and brands (Bartley, 2007; Berliner and Prakash, 2012; Boström et al., 2019). Low demand, on the other hand, can lead to the oversupply of fair trade products, depressing the prices and benefits received by suppliers (Valkila and Nygren, 2010; Levi and Linton, 2003; Mook and Overdevest, 2019). In coffee, for example, farmers can pay for a certification that verifies that they have adopted fair trade practices, such as not using child labour, and including women in leadership. The farmers make this investment anticipating that buyers will offer them higher prices for fair trade certified products. However, buyers only seek out fair trade certified coffee (and pay more for it) if they believe there is enough consumer demand. Thus, if buyers do not think there is much demand, farmers will end up selling their fair trade certified coffee at conventional market prices, which is sometimes not enough to cover their investments (Grabs, 2020). Thus, consumers play a significant role in shaping whether and how fair trade initiatives meet their objectives (Balsiger, 2019; Fischer, 2019; Fligstein and McAdam, 2019).

One factor that can shape or limit consumers' engagement with fair trade is their knowledge about fair trade and ethical consumerism, and their capacity to accurately apply this knowledge in the marketplace (Harbaugh et al., 2011; Glasbergen, 2018; Fair World Project et al., 2020). Accordingly, helping people to understand what fair trade is and how to support it is a priority for the movement (Fair Trade Movement, 2018, p. 26). Understandably then, many scholars and fair trade advocates assert that fair trade educates consumers (Gross, 2021) and that fair trade consumers have become knowledgeable about the role they can play in creating fairer markets (Bezençon and Blili, 2009; Schmelzer, 2010). At the same time, however, some

scholars suggest that whether and how much consumers have learned remains more of an open question (Davies and Gutsche, 2016).

This chapter aims to introduce the topic of ‘consumers’ knowledge about fair trade’ to academic, student, and practitioner audiences interested in ethical consumerism, consumer knowledge about morals and markets, and/or fair trade. Section 2 introduces the global fair trade movement, including its history, intended beneficiaries, business models, most significant certifications, outcomes, innovations, relationship to other movements, and struggle with ‘fair washing’. Section 3 introduces fair trade consumers, discussing consumer power, demographics, challenges to consumer demand, and the impact of fair washing on ethical consumerism. Section 4 introduces the concept of knowledge and why it matters. It describes three types of knowledge, the relationship between knowledge and consumer demand, and theories about the role of knowledge in fair trade. Section 5 explains how consumer knowledge of fair trade is studied, focusing on research subjects, approaches, methods, and challenges. Section 6 presents the findings of empirical studies on what fair trade consumers, university students, and the general population know about fair trade. Finally, the conclusion draws on insights from each section to pose three questions about the chapter’s implications and the next steps for the fair trade movement and consumer research in this field.

Overall, this chapter makes the following points: first, what everyday people know about fair trade matters because it impacts their consumption habits and aggregates to demand (or lack of demand) for fairly traded products. Second, despite the common assertion that fair trade has educated consumers, studying consumer knowledge about fair trade is tricky and results are limited—there is a significant need for more fine-grained research in this area. Third, although many people identify as ethical consumers, even those committed to fair trade do not appear to understand even the most basic related concepts. Finally, limited consumer knowledge about fair trade is concerning. Well-intentioned but poorly informed consumers may support ‘fair-washed’ initiatives that do little to promote fair trade goals. Likewise, value-oriented entrepreneurs may unwittingly adopt business models that have a veneer of justice but do little to empower and support the suppliers they aim to serve. Finally, engaged citizens may rally their efforts around private solutions that are *less likely than public policy alternatives* to bring social values to global supply chains.

Through these arguments, the chapter contributes to the literatures on ethical consumerism, private sustainability governance, and fair trade by challenging the notion that the ubiquity of ‘fair trade’ as a buzzword signals widespread knowledge about fair trade goals and how to advance them. It calls for a better understanding of *how* people have been experiencing fair trade’s educational endeavours, and *what* their superficial knowledge means for achieving the fair trade vision. More broadly, this chapter calls into question the efficacy of ethical consumerism as a form of public education.

2 WHAT IS FAIR TRADE?²

2.1 Fair Trade History

The modern fair trade movement originated in the mid-20th century when Americans and Europeans aimed to support and empower small farmers and handicraft cooperatives in poorer countries by offering them direct trade relationships based on trust and equity (van Dam,

2015). For example, in the 1940s, an American Mennonite nun imported and sold Puerto Rican artisans' handicrafts without keeping a share of the profits for herself (Anderson, 2015; Brown, 2015). Over the following decades, fair trade advocates expanded these small-scale practices through mail-order catalogues and brick-and-mortar 'world shops' like Ten Thousand Villages (Bennett, 2012a).

Today, fair trade goods are bought and sold in more than 70 countries (Fair Trade Movement, 2018). As it grows and develops, the fair trade movement has become diverse along many dimensions. For example, while some 'fair trade' businesses commit to fully integrating fairness into their business models, others simply include fair trade certified products in their supply chain. While the proliferation of opportunities to engage in 'fair trade' offers consumers more options and opportunities, it also complicates the shopping experience. For example, consumers may face decisions about which values to prioritize (e.g., women-owned vs cooperatively organized) and which claims to trust (e.g., fair trade certified products from large multinational brands vs artisanal products from small, independent fair trade brands) (Walske and Tyson, 2015; Castka and Corbett, 2016). The increasing diversity of the fair trade movement may also exacerbate consumers' frustrations around accessing credible information, devoting time to learning about new initiatives, and keeping up with relevant changes in the global economy (Bennett, 2020).

2.2 Fair Trade Beneficiaries

Although fair trade was initiated to support smallholder farmers and artisan cooperatives in the Global South³ (Bennett, 2012a; Besky, 2015), today some fair trade advocates extend it to include other populations. Fair Trade USA, for example, extends the fair trade concept to large agricultural estates located in countries all over the world where owners hire workers to provide labour. Similarly, the Domestic Fair Trade Association and Agricultural Justice Project apply fair trade principles to Canadian and American farms. Other initiatives aim to extend the fair trade system to the world's most vulnerable populations, such as migrants, refugees, and women, or combine fair trade models with efforts to promote environmental objectives. These changes have been understandably contentious among fair trade advocates and have led to a fragmented movement (Jaffee, 2010; 2012). On one hand, the more diverse movement has expanded application and reach of fair trade principles (e.g., domestic cannabis, Bennett 2017b; 2019). On the other, it has led to less consistent and more complicated messaging (Naylor, 2014).

2.3 Fair Trade Businesses

Today, many companies, brands, and social enterprises identify as '100% fair trade' and incorporate fair trade principles into their business models (Doherty and Huybrechts, 2013; Cater et al., 2017). Divine Chocolate, for example, is a British chocolatier 50% owned by its Ghanaian cocoa producers. Seriously committed companies can apply for membership of the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO). The WFTO identifies as the 'global authority on' and 'guardian of' fair trade values and principles (WFTO, 2018). The WFTO has over 400 members in 75 countries across the world. Its president argues that conventional business models are hard-wired to exacerbate unequal wealth distribution, the most critical problem in the world (Dalvai, 2018). The term 'fair trade'—because it refers to a social movement—is not

protected by public regulations that limit use. This has made it easy for companies to identify as ‘fair trade’ without participating in the WFTO or fully integrating fair trade principles into their business models. This is called ‘fair washing’, and is discussed in more detail in the last part of this section.

2.4 Fair Trade Certification

Companies that do not orient their entire business model or manage their full supply chains according to fair trade principles can still participate in fair trade by purchasing ingredients, inputs, or finished goods from fair trade certified producers. Fair trade certification started in the 1980s when fair trade advocates wanted to increase coffee sales by collaborating with conventional (non-fair trade) brands and retailers, a practice called ‘mainstreaming’. They developed a label that could be used by conventional brands (e.g., well-known coffee roasters) to market a line of their products as ‘fair trade’. These products would be marked with a logo (‘label’) then sold in conventional supermarkets. Fair trade advocates in support of certification taught consumers to ‘look for the label’ regardless of where they shopped and what product they aimed to buy. By the late 1990s, fair trade labels had emerged in more than a dozen countries and were applied to over a dozen different products, including bananas and tea. In 1997, the national certification programmes united to form Fairtrade International (formerly the Fairtrade Labelling Organisation, or FLO) (Bennett, 2012a).

Today, Fairtrade International is the fair trade movement’s largest and most powerful certification organization (Bennett, 2012b). Together, Fairtrade International (which certifies fair trade products) and the WFTO (which certifies fair trade businesses) work with more than 2.5 million workers and small-scale producers in more than 70 countries (Fair Trade Movement, 2018, p. 26). Fairtrade International is led by a Board of Directors and Membership Assembly where votes are evenly shared between the producers of fair trade goods and the NGOs responsible for marketing them (Bennett, 2016). This is significantly more inclusive than almost any other sustainability certification in the world (Bennett, 2017a).⁴ Fairtrade International’s standards include not only social criteria but also environmental standards, as discussed in the following section. Another very important certification is the Small Producer’s Symbol (or Símbolo de Pequeños Productores, SPP). SPP was launched by Latin American smallholder producers, for smallholder producers in 2011. Its standards and governance structures reflect the challenges that producers have faced in participating in other fair trade certification programmes. For example, SPP requires buyers (e.g., coffee roasters in the Global North) to purchase at least 5% of their overall volume from SPP producers in order to use the logo (Renard and Loconto, 2012). The intention of this policy is to prevent companies from boasting that they support fair trade while choosing to purchase only very small volumes. This was Starbucks’ strategy for engaging fair trade certification in the early 2000s—although only a small portion of its coffee was fair trade, it quickly became the largest purchaser of fair trade coffee in the world (Howard and Jaffee, 2013). This remains a common strategy among multinational corporations today. While Fairtrade International often celebrates large volumes as a success, the SPP identifies it as a form of fair washing (Jaffee and Howard, 2016).

While each fair trade certification programme operates differently, the system can be generalized as follows (see Grabs, 2020). First, a non-profit organization (e.g., Fairtrade International) brings stakeholders (companies, farmers, environmentalists, etc.) together to develop standards for what ‘counts’ as fair trade and which types of groups are eligible for

certification. An eligible group (e.g., a cocoa cooperative) pays a third-party auditor (e.g., SCS Global Services) to conduct a site visit to collect data, and evaluate whether the organization is in compliance with the standards. The standards-setting organization then determines whether the audited entity can be certified. In theory, the companies that purchase certified products (e.g., Green & Black's, a chocolatier) pay the certified suppliers a 'fair price' that is at least enough to support a living income (the term used for smallholder producers who are paid for their crops) or a living wage (the term used for workers who are paid for their time),⁵ in addition to paying for the costs of sustainable production methods (e.g., not using toxic chemicals). The most robust fair trade certifications—such as Fairtrade International and the SPP—set minimum prices (per pound or hour) and also require that the community of workers receive a premium to spend collectively (often on public goods). Unfortunately, the minimum prices and premiums are often not enough to sustain and support suppliers, and less-rigorous fair trade certifications do not have minimum price standards. In the last step of the process, the companies who purchase fair trade goods from certified suppliers at fair trade prices then pay the standards-setting organization (e.g., Fairtrade International) a licensing fee to use the logo on their packaging and in their marketing materials. This fee covers the cost of convening stakeholders to set and revise standards, legal fees for protecting the logo from misuse, investments in supplier training, and other operating costs.

Labelling has benefits as well as risks, challenges, and negative spillover effects. On the positive side, certification makes what 'counts' as fair trade transparent through publicly available standards. It also requires that compliance is verified, and boosts demand for fair trade ingredients or materials by channelling them into conventional markets (Conroy, 2007; Reynolds, 2012). On the negative side, it is not unusual for standards-setting processes to reify traditional power dynamics (Ponte and Cheyns, 2013; Loconto and Hatanaka, 2017; van der Ven, 2022). Additionally, auditing and verification processes are often unable to detect non-compliance (Multi-Stakeholder Initiative Integrity, 2020). Furthermore, the cost of achieving higher social and environmental standards often falls to producers and outweighs whatever additional compensation they receive (if any) (Loconto, 2015; Ortiz-Miranda and Moragues-Faus, 2015; Grabs, 2020). Finally, the certification can diminish the importance of developing more collaborative businesses and equitable supply chains, undermining the very mission of fair trade (e.g., Muller et al., 2012). Fair trade advocates have long debated whether the benefits outweigh the limitations (Bezençon and Blili, 2009; Wilson and Mutersbaugh, 2015).

2.5 Fair Trade-Inspired Innovations

In the last decade, reflections on the successes and shortcomings of fair trade have led to several new innovations that aim to bring fair trade principles into supply chains. Worker-driven social responsibility (WDSR) initiatives, for example, aim to give farmers and farm workers more bargaining power with the large companies who purchase their products so that they can receive enough compensation to support healthy and dignified work environments. For example, the Milk with Dignity campaign requires participating companies to sign a legally enforceable contract in which they commit to sourcing all dairy from farms that adopt a farmworker-authored code of conduct, educate farm workers about their rights, and permit third-party compliance audits. Companies must also contribute to economic justice through premiums paid directly to farmers and farm workers. Milk with Dignity was launched in 2014,

and three years later Ben and Jerry's signed the first Milk with Dignity agreement. Due to the ice cream company's large purchasing volume, the majority of Vermont's dairy farmers are now employed on Milk with Dignity farms (Migrant Justice, 2022; Frye-Levine et al., 2019).⁶

2.6 Fair Trade and Other Social Movements

Fair trade is related to and supportive of several other global social movements, yet remains distinct in its mission. Although fair trade supports the transfer of value from traditionally wealthy communities to marginalized and exploited groups, it is distinguished from traditional philanthropy, charity, and development aid in that it focuses on doing so through market activities. Fair trade emphasizes the need to shift structures of oppression such that all people can sustain themselves through their participation in the market, without requiring voluntary acts of generosity or state welfare (Raynolds and Bennett, 2015). This commitment also distinguishes fair trade from the more contemporary model of philanthrocapitalism—in which a company first maximizes profits, then returns a portion of those profits to the communities where suppliers are located (Bishop and Green, 2008)—in that profit distribution is part of the business plan (Santos et al., 2015; Spicer et al., 2019). Although fair trade supports the movements for living wages and living incomes, it emphasizes that these changes, alone, are insufficient to make trade relations fair (Fair Trade Movement, 2018). The fair trade vision also aligns with the sustainable development agenda and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. It supports systemic shifts, collective action, and individual actions that support environmental sustainability. Yet, it is distinct from the broader sustainability movement in that it emphasizes the need to address social and economic goals (e.g., decent work and ending inequality), whereas many sustainability initiatives focus on the environment (Bennett, 2019; Grabs, 2020).

While many farmers and workers who engage in fair trade also adopt organic agriculture practices, the two movements are distinct in several ways. One distinction is in how the movements are organized. Fair trade is nearly fully non-governmental, with most of its support coming from civil society (e.g., churches, grassroots organizations, NGOs, and student groups). Organic standards-setting, in contrast, is often facilitated by governments, with input and implementation support from NGOs. Organic standards-setting, auditing, certification, and labelling systems vary among different countries. In the United States, for example, the organic label is managed by the National Organic Program (NOP), which is part of the US Department of Agriculture. Several American NGOs, such as the Organic Trade Association, aim to promote and contribute to the NOP. In the United Kingdom, the organic label is largely promoted by various NGOs, most notably the Soil Association. The Soil Association certifies production against both European Union standards, which are set by inter-governmental processes with input from non-governmental actors, and the Soil Association's own standards, which are more rigorous and are also developed with multi-stakeholder input. Although the organic movement was originally organized around both the environment *and* the aim to support farmers, farm workers, and farming communities, today it focuses almost exclusively on non-human issues (Jaffee and Howard, 2010).

2.7 Fair Trade and ‘Fair Washing’

The fair trade movement is diverse, decentralized, fast-growing, and contentious. These factors create an environment in which companies can easily make fair trade claims without sincere efforts and significant investments toward ‘decent and dignified livelihoods’ and the opportunity for all people to ‘develop their full human potential’ (Fairtrade International and World Fair Trade Organization, 2009). The term ‘fair washing’ refers to strategies that have a veneer or ‘wash’ of fairness on the outside to attract consumers, but beneath the surface are largely conventional business models and trade relationships (Bartley et al., 2015). The social science literature refers to this as ‘decoupling’—meaning actions are not coupled with, or reflective of, claims (Kuruvillea et al., 2020). As fair trade has grown and diversified—e.g., including more complex products and fragmented supply chains—so have the opportunities for fair washing and decoupling. Some illustrations include: identifying a product comprised of many parts or ingredients as ‘fair trade’ when only a small portion was fairly traded; identifying a manufactured product as fairly traded, when only the final facility to assemble the product is certified as fair; making claims about fairness without revealing what the standards are, who created them, and how these practices are verified (e.g., Whole Foods brand’s ‘Whole Trade’ label); and lowering standards so that they are simply the legal minimums (e.g., minimum wage) (Jaffee, 2012; Jaffee and Howard, 2016; Huybrechts et al., 2017; Bennett, 2018). The diversity and complexity of the fair trade movement presents many questions, opportunities, and challenges to fair trade consumers.

3 WHAT IS THE ROLE OF FAIR TRADE CONSUMERS?

3.1 Fair Trade Consumer Power

The primary way that individuals support the fair trade movement is by purchasing fair trade products. By purchasing fair trade, people⁷ can signal to companies that they prefer brands and products that aim to support fair trade principles. However important this is, shifts in individual consumer behaviour may not necessarily aggregate to the extent required to impact companies’ decision-making—it is *not* a panacea (Willis and Schor, 2012). The power of consumer demand can be hampered by the ideas and priorities of a very small number of experts—such as corporate social responsibility directors of multinational corporations—who are well positioned to make strategic decisions that influence fair trade (Bürklin, 2019). Accordingly, fair trade advocates aim to embed consumer demand within broader strategies and campaigns to pressurize or incentivize companies to voluntarily orient around fair trade practices (Samuel et al., 2018). In March 2009, for example, fair trade advocates convinced Cadbury to use cocoa certified by Fairtrade International in all Dairy Milk bars manufactured for the British market (Thorlakson, 2018).

Consumer demand for fair trade products does not, in all contexts, have the net or exclusive effect of supporting fair trade objectives. Over the past decades, the case of quinoa has become an often-cited example of how consumer demand and an interest in supporting traditionally marginalized communities can, together, generate unintended negative consequences (Romero and Shahriari, 2011). Quinoa is an exceptionally healthful plant food that has been grown by Andean farmers for more than a thousand years (Romer, 2015). Around 2010, as more people

became aware of its health benefits, consumption increased in both the Andes and globally (Romer, 2015). On the international market, quinoa was commonly marketed as an indigenous crop, and it was sometimes suggested that purchasing it could benefit indigenous communities (Walsh-Dilley, 2017). The surge in global demand, however, raised prices beyond what some Andean producers could afford when purchasing it for their own consumption. The result was difficult trade-offs between nutrition and profit (for farmers), shifts in social, environmental, and economic dynamics and questions about fairness (in Andean farming communities), and confusion about how to support indigenous communities (for global consumers) (Cáceres et al., 2013). Another potential challenge of increased consumer demand is that it can incentivize less-committed brands to engage in fair washing, or lead existing certifications to compete for market share by lowering their standards or narrowing their focus (Auld, 2014).

3.2 Who Are Fair Trade Consumers?

As detailed in other chapters of this volume, a significant portion of the global population aims to generate change through their consumption behaviour. In a survey of 27,000 people in 27 international markets, nearly half the population (44% of respondents) ‘strongly agreed’ they try to support companies and brands that have a purpose of making a positive difference in society through their products, services, and operations (Bemporand and Baranowski Marketing Group (BBMG), 2020). In the United States, this figure nearly doubles: 88% assert that the term ‘conscious consumer’ describes them well or very well (Bemporad and Baranowski, 2007). The idea that one could use one’s own purchasing power to effect macro-economic change is not a novel one, of course. In the antebellum United States, for example, anti-slavery advocates supported the ‘free produce’ movement by purchasing cotton, clothing, and sugar that was not produced with slave labour (Brown, 2015). In the 1990s, at the dawn of the globalization era, activists elevated this concept by promoting the anti-sweatshop movement, which promoted clothing produced without child labour or exploited adult labour (Rivoli, 2005). The idea spread rapidly and by the year 2000, *most* Europeans believed their purchasing practices *could* influence a company’s behaviour (Hines and Ames, 2000).

Although many people are interested in ethical consumerism, many are not familiar with the fair trade movement. Among those who are aware of fair trade, not all choose to purchase fair trade products. A survey of Europeans shows that both the percentage of people who are aware of fair trade and the portion of those who purchase it vary significantly among countries (Koos, 2021). People in Spain, for example, are less likely to know about fair trade (only 20%) and purchase it (15% of that group or 3% of the overall population) than in most other countries. People in Luxembourg, on the other hand, are more aware of fair trade (more than 50% of the population) and more likely to purchase it (more than 50% of that group, or 30% of the overall population) than other countries in Europe. The findings of this survey also support extant studies about individuals’ characteristics and fair trade consumerism. It suggests that although men and women are similarly aware of fair trade, women are more likely than men to purchase fair trade products. Other individual variables that increase the likelihood of purchasing fair trade products include: having more education, holding service or white-collar jobs (as opposed to labour jobs), enjoying greater incomes, and identifying with the political left (Koos, 2021). In the US context, market research suggests about 10% of the population is very engaged (e.g., participating in fair trade advocacy), 20% somewhat engaged (e.g., sometimes purchasing fair trade), 58% interested in or intending to be engaged,

and 12% unengaged (Bemporad and Baranowski, 2007; BBMG, 2011). Several academic studies have aimed to learn more about these segments. Drawing on a web-based survey of US fair trade consumers, Doran (2009) finds that some are ‘active’ in their engagement with fair trade and ‘loyal’ to fair trade purchasing, while others are ‘occasional’ or ‘intermittent’ in their fair trade shopping. Similarly, Brown (2013), draws on ethnographic research centred around a US fair trade coffee shop to distinguish among ‘promoters’, ‘conscientious consumers’, and ‘purchasers’ of fair trade. While fair trade originated as a way for people in the Global North to support marginalized groups in the Global South, fair trade products are increasingly being sold in the countries that produce them, including Brazil, India, Kenya, and South Africa (Anderson, 2018).

3.3 Challenges to Consumer Demand

There are several factors that may inhibit consumer demand for fair trade products (Bartley et al., 2015). First, material and ideological barriers may limit willingness or ability to shop and pay for fair trade products (Brown, 2013). Although in many contexts consumers are willing to pay more for fairly traded products, the amounts vary significantly by consumer demographic and type of product (Andorfer and Liebe, 2012; Marconi et al., 2017; Katt and Meixner, 2020).⁸ Second, fair trade objectives may compete with other values, such as personal health benefits and convenience, in shaping shopping habits (Guthman and Brown, 2016). Third, some types of purchases (such as food) are more likely to be ‘earmarked’ as appropriate sites of consumer activism than others (e.g., electronics) (Zelizer, 1997; Wheale and Hinton, 2007; Brown, 2013; Bennett, 2017b). Finally, and most germane to this chapter, consumer demand may be hampered by limited understanding about how individual purchasing decisions can impact macroeconomic systems (De Pelsmacker and Janssens, 2007).

3.4 Fair Washing and Fair Trade Consumerism

Many companies want to market products to fair trade consumers but are not committed to fair trade values. The practice of flooding the market with low-cost goods that deliver few benefits for those who produced them has significant consequences. For committed fair trade companies, the oversupply of cheaply produced fair-washed goods may depress prices and reduce demand. In competing with fair-washed companies, genuine fair traders may have to compromise the amount of value they are able to transfer down the supply chain and otherwise reduce benefits to the very communities fair trade explicitly aims to serve (Dragusanu et al., 2014). For fair trade certified factories and farms, this may mean selling some of their products on the conventional market, where they do not receive the minimum prices established by the fair trade certification organization, or the premiums that fair trade requires buyers pay to supplier communities. In some cases, this may mean operating at a loss, which can ignite or exacerbate a cycle of debt (Grabs, 2020). For consumers, knowing that some fair trade goods are fair washed can lead to frustration, fear of deception, feeling overwhelmed, and scepticism. Faced with the task of gathering, evaluating, and making sense of complex information about each product they intend to purchase may lead consumers to develop counterproductive consumption habits (Einstein, 2012). These may include unrealistic optimism that all claims are true, or giving up on shopping according to their values completely (Doherty et al., 2013;

Elder et al., 2014; Barrientos, 2016; Bennett, 2022). These dynamics highlight the importance of consumer knowledge about fair trade.

4 WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

4.1 Types of Knowledge: Facts, Judgements, and Intuition

Knowledge plays a critical role in fair trade consumerism. ‘What people know’ can mean many things. Research on knowledge and ethical consumerism tends to focus on three types of knowledge: tacit, normative, and embodied.

Tacit knowledge is an understanding of how the world *is*. It refers to codified, explicit information that can be easily tested and passed on. For example, some people are able to accurately identify the fair trade mission, goals, and labels (Herédia-Colaço et al., 2019). In studies of consumer behaviour, this is sometimes referred to as ‘prior knowledge’. Prior knowledge is the ‘domain-specific knowledge’ that one acquires through experience or training and brings to point-of-purchase decision-making (Wood and Lynch, 2003, p. 416). For example, some people are aware of which problems (e.g., low wages) are likely to occur in specific sectors (e.g., clothing) (Auger et al., 2008). Tacit knowledge also includes the ideas people hold about how individual consumption relates to social goals and economic structures. This is sometimes referred to as ‘ethical expertise’ (Herédia-Colaço et al., 2019, p. 738). For example, some people are able to articulate theories about how business, trade, and the economy intersect with the principles of equity, fairness, and other social values (van’t Veld, 2020, pp. 191–192).

Normative knowledge is an understanding of how the world *should be*. In consumer studies, this is sometimes called ‘perceived ethicality’. This type of knowledge includes the ideas that people hold about what attributes a company, brand, or product must demonstrate in order to be judged as fair or moral (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001; Brunk, 2010; 2012). For example, a consumer may know that a company that shares profits with its suppliers is fair, because profit-sharing is what *should be* (e.g., Bennett and Grabs, 2021). Normative knowledge is distinct from tacit knowledge in that it draws on judgements, values, and evaluation of how close something *is* to what it *should be*. This way of knowing often draws on political perspectives, religious values, and cultural norms regarding how various groups of people should contribute to or benefit from the economy (Cater et al., 2017; Lappeman et al., 2019).

Finally, knowledge can also refer to the complex, dynamic, contextually dependent meanings that people hold in the context of interpersonal relationships, their bodies, and the social world (Polanyi, 1966; Collins, 2010). As one scholar described it, this is the type of knowledge we refer to when we realize that ‘we can know more than we can tell’ (Polanyi, 1966, p. 4). Knowledge of this kind includes the feelings, senses, and intuitions that arise in certain situations. In the context of fair trade and ethical consumerism, some studies show that people experience a ‘warm glow’ when they exercise morality through shopping, and/or a ‘cold prickle’ when they choose not to prioritize values in purchasing decisions (van’t Veld, 2020, p. 197).

In making decisions about whether and how to participate in fair trade consumerism, people engage in a complex process of drawing on, layering, and combining multiple types of knowledge (Ferreira and Ferreira, 2018). For example, feelings of belonging, judgement, or superiority in a fair trade cafe may reflect tacit knowledge about fair trade’s potential for

empowering marginalized populations, value-based judgements about who can and should support fair trade, and embodied knowledge about social hierarchies and belonging (Varul and Wilson-Kovacs, 2008; Brown, 2013). The complexities of knowledge can make it a difficult phenomenon to study and theorize. Because scholars approach knowledge from different conceptual perspectives, their empirical research may draw on very different methodological approaches and methods of data collection, as described in Section 5. As a result, there are many interesting and diverse arguments and theories about the role that knowledge plays in ethical consumerism and fair trade, but no grand theory.

4.2 Knowledge and Consumer Demand

Knowledge impacts fair trade consumerism in many ways. Most directly, knowledge contributes to the creation of a general attitude about consumption, ethics, and fair outcomes. More indirectly, it alters the ways in which individuals process new information, form opinions, and make decisions (De Pelsmacker and Janssens, 2007). The process of deciding whether or not to purchase fair trade goods (or adjudicating between fair trade options) requires enough knowledge to interpret, make meaning from, and understand what ethics are (potentially) being purchased (Davies and Gutsche, 2016). Studies point to the special role that ‘prior knowledge’ plays in this process. Prior knowledge is the information that people already have when they approach a consumption decision. Prior knowledge helps consumers to process new point-of-purchase or packaging information, deal with ambiguous situations, evaluate claims, identify greenwashing, select products, and discern messaging from high-profile influencers (Hysing and Olsson, 2005; Auger et al., 2008; D’Astous and Mathieu, 2008; O’Rourke and Ringer, 2015; Pancer et al., 2017; Johnstone and Lindh, 2018; Herédia-Colaço et al., 2019).

Among the general population—and especially among less-committed and more mainstream consumer segments—insufficient prior knowledge is consistently identified as the foremost barrier to ethical purchasing (De Pelsmacker and Janssens, 2007; Lyon et al., 2014). Research suggests that even ethically oriented consumers may not privilege fair trade goods if they are unable to adjudicate between rigorous, credible claims and weak, dubious marketing. As De Pelsmacker and Janssens (2007) note, ‘the more people know about fair trade’, the more they care about its vision and the less sceptical they are of fair trade initiatives (p. 372). Additionally, the researchers argue that increased knowledge leads to a more positive perception of the quality of fair trade information and a more negative perception of the quantity of information provided about product attributes (De Pelsmacker and Janssens, 2007, p. 372). Being knowledgeable and feeling confident in applying one’s knowledge is, of course, made more difficult in a context of proliferating fair washing. As false labels, unsubstantiated claims, and media exposés of fraudulent ethical marketing become ubiquitous, even knowledgeable consumers may (perhaps rightly) doubt their capacity to make informed consumption decisions (Harbaugh et al., 2011; Glasbergen, 2018; Fair World Project et al., 2020).

4.3 Fair Trade and Knowledge

The fair trade movement frames issues, raises awareness, and disseminates information about trade justice, economic exploitation, and systems of oppression (Micheletti, 2003; Bossy, 2014; Fair Trade Movement, 2018; Bürklin, 2019). Fair trade educational initiatives are diverse and include information on packaging, displays, booths at festivals and events, blogs,

videos, World Fair Trade Day (the second Saturday of May), and festivals such as ‘Fairtrade Fortnight’ in the United Kingdom (Wheeler, 2012). One of the initiatives that many in the movement identify as a success in educating the public is ‘Fairtrade Towns’, a ‘grassroots campaign to ‘grow the Fairtrade market’ one community at a time’ (Lyon, 2014, p. 150). Operating in more than 1,830 cities and towns in 28 countries, Fairtrade Towns is a marketing campaign driven by local activists and supported by major global fair trade organizations and brands (Fair Trade Movement, 2018, p. 26). It seeks to promote fair trade by increasing fair trade product availability, institutional commitments to fair trade, and consumer demand for fair trade (Peattie and Samuel, 2016). Fairtrade towns and other educational initiatives not only share information about fair trade initiatives but also help people draw connections between specific, individual consumption habits, global social movements, and macroeconomic systems (Baumann et al., 2015; Forno, 2015; Laamanen et al., 2015). Overall, fair trade facilitates self-education, identity formation, and prefigurative thinking (imaginative thought about how the world *could be*). In doing so, the movement aims to empower people to move beyond simply voting with their dollar. It intends to foster deep lifestyle changes and active engagement in local, national, and international politics (Haenfler et al., 2012; Brown, 2013; Lekakis, 2013; Bossy, 2014; Dubuisson-Quellier, 2015).

Although the fair trade movement aims to educate, some of the movement’s dynamics make this challenging. Competitive branding campaigns among fair trade certifications, for example, may cast doubt on the credibility of all fair trade labels or lead consumers to doubt their understanding of which labels are more genuine (Walske and Tyson, 2015). Similarly, changes and modifications that fair trade initiatives make to adapt to new market conditions may result in an ever-changing and expanding landscape of information that is overwhelming (Harbaugh et al., 2011; Jaffee and Howard, 2016). Finally, to reach the consumer segments most likely to shift purchasing habits in favour of fair trade, fair trade may target a narrow, elite segment of the population, resulting in uneven exposure to information (Alkon and McCullen, 2011). Overall, these aspects of the fair trade movement—competitive campaigns, ever-changing information, and uneven education—may help to explain why some people know about fair trade but choose not to engage (Koos, 2021). These realities may also explain why some people limit their ethical shopping to specific product categories (Zelizer, 2011) or choose to ignore inconvenient information (Davies and Gutsche, 2016). These dynamics make it both important and challenging to examine what people know about fair trade and ethical consumerism.

5 HOW IS CONSUMER KNOWLEDGE OF FAIR TRADE STUDIED?

5.1 Research Subjects

Most research on fair trade consumers and their knowledge about ethical consumerism focuses on the populations that seem to be already participating in fair trade—such as consumers in a coffee shop (Doran, 2009; Varul, 2009; Bondy and Talwar, 2011; Brown, 2013; Davies and Gutsche, 2016)—or university students and other groups that are more likely than the general population to know about and be interested in fair trade (Auger et al., 2008; D’Astous and Mathieu, 2008; Lyon et al., 2014; Herédia-Colaço et al., 2019). As a result, only a few studies

examine knowledge of the general public (two exceptions are De Pelsmacker and Janssens, 2007, and Brunk, 2010, which both examine popular knowledge). Presumably for reasons of convenience, most academic studies study the knowledge of people living in the United States, as well as Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany and the United Kingdom (exceptions include Auger et al., 2008 in Hong Kong and Nguyen et al., 2020 in Vietnam). Although most studies of knowledge and ethical consumerism focus on fair trade, some studies examine other aspects of sustainability or other moral values (e.g., Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001, on corporate social responsibility).

5.2 Research Approaches

There are two dominant approaches to studying what people know about fair trade and ethical consumerism. Research from the microeconomic approach focuses largely on tacit knowledge and normative ideas. These studies typically engage knowledge as one of several independent variables that can help explain consumers' purchasing behaviour and willingness to pay for ethical products (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001; De Pelsmacker and Janssens, 2007; D'Astous and Mathieu, 2008; Lyon et al., 2014; Davies and Gutsche, 2016); perceived ethicality of a company, brand, or product (Brunk, 2010); or both (Herédia-Colaço et al., 2019). A significant body of microeconomic research has examined knowledge as a factor that may influence fair trade purchasing. Unfortunately, the concept of 'knowledge' is typically operationalized bluntly, focusing more on *whether* anything is understood than on *how much is understood* and *what*, exactly, is known (e.g., Herédia-Colaço et al., 2019).

Research from the sociocultural approach takes a more phenomenological perspective of knowledge. This means that it focuses on how people experience fair trade, and how they make meaning of those experiences. Studies that follow this tradition typically aim to describe how various segments of a population (e.g., promoters of fair trade or conscientious consumers) know, think, value, act, live, and decide about issues of markets and morals (Auger et al., 2008; Varul and Wilson-Kovacs, 2008; Doran, 2009; Bondy and Talwar, 2011; Brown, 2013; Ritch, 2020). These studies aim to understand consumption not as a single decision or set of habits, but instead as an orientation to the world or a 'moment in almost every practice' (Warde, 2005, p. 137). For this reason, it is common for sociocultural studies to focus on developing a nuanced and contextualized understanding of a specific group, as opposed to the general population, which is much more diverse. Brown (2013), for example, focuses on fair trade coffee advocates. Other studies examine the knowledge of fair trade 'experts' (Ponte and Cheyns, 2013; Keahey, 2016; Loconto and Hatanaka, 2017).

5.3 Research Methods and Challenges

Research on fair trade consumerism and knowledge typically engages one or several of the following methods: surveys and quizzes (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001; Auger et al., 2008; D'Astous and Mathieu, 2008; Doran, 2009; Bondy and Talwar, 2011; Herédia-Colaço et al., 2019); in-depth interviews and ethnographic methods (Brunk, 2010; Brown, 2013; Varul, 2009; Davies and Gutsche, 2016); focus groups (De Pelsmacker and Janssens, 2007), or 'shopalongs' in which the researcher accompanies an individual on a shopping trip, asking questions and recording field notes about their behaviour and responses (Lyon et al., 2014). Many scholars aim to bolster the validity and reliability of their research by drawing on multi-

ple sources of data and methods of analysis (e.g., Brunk, 2012). Yet, empirical research on fair trade knowledge remains tricky for several reasons. One reason is that consumer behaviour and reasoning are often inconsistent (Devinney et al., 2010; Moraes et al., 2012; Carrigan, 2017). Another is that people are prone to under-reporting the gap between their good intentions and actual actions (e.g., Silva et al., 2007). Finally, it can be challenging to gather data because much of the framing and meaning-making that people engage in is conducted below the level of conscious thought (Granovetter, 2017, p. 171). Despite these challenges, researchers have generated broad and sometimes contested notions of what people know about fair trade and ethical consumerism.

6 WHAT DO FAIR TRADE CONSUMERS KNOW?

6.1 Fair Trade Consumers and Knowledge about Fair Trade

Research on fair trade knowledge often focuses on people associated with the fair trade movement, purchasing fair trade products, or attending university. Brown (2013), in a landmark ethnography of fair trade coffee shops and the fair trade coffee community in the United States, divided customers into three segments. ‘Promoters’ are very knowledgeable about fair trade and the way in which it connects individual consumption decisions to broader social, political, and economic forces and structures. Promoters, Brown found, ‘view themselves as part of a movement and see all forms of consumption as having political and ethical implications’ (p. 25). ‘Conscientious consumers’ are less knowledgeable about fair trade. They ‘do not see themselves as part of a larger movement and do not partake in the rituals or consciousness-building activities that serve to foster a fair-trade identity’ (p. 26). Finally, ‘purchasers’, who simply choose to patronize fair trade cafes, ‘know little to nothing about fair trade’ (p. 27).

Davies and Gutsche (2016) conducted 50 in-depth field interviews at the point of purchase in a fair trade coffee shop in the United Kingdom. They found that only 4% of fair trade coffee shop customers could provide a complete definition of fair trade. The remaining 96% offered superficial responses, such as ‘It’s a bit like organic, but better isn’t it?’ or ‘It means no child labour is used in factories and stuff like that’ (p. 1332). Likewise, most struggled to distinguish between very different concepts, such as ‘local trade, organic products, and eco-products’, but granted all of them a positive association (p. 1332). The authors describe the respondents as ‘not knowledgeable about what they buy’ (p. 1341), aware of their ‘distinct lack of knowledge about their purchases’ (p. 1341), and not interested in ‘seeking information on which to base a decision’ (p. 1332), often because they do not want to risk learning something that will induce guilt or compromise feeling good.

Varul and Wilson-Kovacs (2008) similarly conducted 57 interviews of people in fair trade coffee shops in Devon, England and Württemberg, Germany. Of those, 11 (19%) were involved in activism related to fair trade. Their research suggests that meaning-making about moral markets is context specific and closely related to national history and that committed fair trade consumers maintain a sense of exclusivity based on superior knowledge and powers of discernment (p. 11). They also identify a gap between what is taught and learned: while promotional materials framed fair trade around farmers’ incomes, recognition, and self-esteem, the people they interviewed interpreted fair trade as an alternative to charity.

Finally, Doran (2009) used a web-based survey to study American consumers who purchase from online fair trade retailers. Doran divides consumers into three groups based on self-reported shopping habits: active/loyal, occasional/intermittent, and non-consumers. In her effort to reveal what consumers understand to be important in the context of fair trade, she finds that active consumers prioritize issues that value *all* people and nature, while occasional consumers focus on benefits to *specific* beneficiary groups (e.g., women). It is unclear whether this finding reflects differences in knowledge about the fair trade vision or differences in priorities or values.

6.2 University Students and Knowledge about Fair Trade

Another set of studies examines the knowledge of university students about fair trade. In a survey of 185 American students—interpreted with ethnographic insights from ten shopalongs—Lyon and colleagues (2014) find that only 51% can select the correct definition of fair trade, from among three options. Only 20% report that they feel comfortable explaining fair trade, 50% have some doubts, and 30% are completely uncomfortable. When asked ‘Who primarily benefits from fair trade?’, their responses included farmers (81%), consumers (67%), and the environment (51%). Their findings also show that 8% do not believe that purchasing fair trade has any real benefits; 61% think fair trade is only available at specialty stores (including the corporate supermarket chain Whole Foods); and 37% learned about fair trade in a classroom. This is one of very few studies to report findings related to where or how people learn about fair trade. A study by Ma and colleagues (2012) also examined this question. Drawing on 810 responses to a self-administered web-based survey of 18–28-year-old female students at an American university, they found that about 75% had heard of fair trade. These respondents reported encountering the term in newspapers and magazines (40%), through word of mouth (34%) and by shopping in a fair trade retail store (32%).

In another study, survey methods and a choice experiment were used to gather data about university students and human rights supporters in Australia and Hong Kong. Auger and colleagues (2008) found that 41% are socially conscious, 37% socially influenced, and 22% mainstream. This study also found that the research subjects were able to associate specific moral issues with certain types of products where those issues were likely to emerge, such as child labour in shoe production or animal testing in cosmetics. Finally, using a series of multiple choice quizzes to survey US and Portuguese university students, Herédia-Colaço and colleagues (2019) find students who are more educated about fair trade and ethical issues place greater value on ethical certifications than those with less knowledge.

6.3 The General Population and Knowledge about Fair Trade

Although research overwhelmingly focuses on the engaged consumer segments, a few studies examine knowledge about fair trade in the broader population. One study aimed to learn whether people self-identified as knowledgeable about fair trade. Drawing on a survey of 292 Spanish consumers, Pérez and del Mar García de los Salmones (2018) found that, on average, ‘consumers do not consider themselves to have a good knowledge of fair-trade issues’ (p. 125). Another study—focused less specifically on fair trade—aimed to understand what people believe constitutes ‘ethical’ behaviour in the context of corporations. Based on 20 long interviews of people in Great Britain and Germany, Brunk (2010) finds respondents

understand ‘ethical’ to mean: respect for moral norms, adherence to the law, social responsibility, avoidance of damaging behaviour, being good, and considering consequences for all involved when making decisions (p. 258). The article did not report any responses related to trade justice; fairness in market access or pricing; or leveraging business to support traditionally marginalized, oppressed, or exploited groups. This raises the question of how much respondents know and care about fair trade, and how they incorporate information about fair trade into broader perspectives.

6.4 Knowledge about Fair Trade

Most of the studies presented in this section focus on fair trade advocates, people who spend time in fair trade spaces, and people who belong to demographic groups more likely to be involved with fair trade. This research also suggests that these populations are more likely to be knowledgeable about fair trade than the general population. Given these two general insights, the empirical research described in this section suggests that most people are unable to define fair trade, distinguish it from related movements, describe how it differs from charity, or explain how fair trade consumption is related to broader macroeconomic structures. These studies also suggest that most people are sceptical about whether fair trade claims are superficial or genuine, do not have enough knowledge to process information about fair trade products accurately, and lack confidence in their understanding of fair trade and ethical consumerism.

There are several shortcomings to this body of work. First, studies tend to focus on whether (or not) people are knowledgeable, rather than what they do (or do not) know. Second, very few studies integrate multiple types of knowledge, leaving open questions about how people integrate facts, values, and experiences. Third, almost nothing has been learned about where and how people learn about fair trade, whether they receive conflicting information, and, if so, how they make sense of diverging perspectives. Given the importance of these open questions, it is not surprising that many scholars have called for more fine-grained empirical research (Brunk, 2012; O’Rourke and Ringer, 2015; Davies and Gutsche, 2016; Jacobs et al., 2018; van’t Veld, 2020).

7 WIDESPREAD AWARENESS AND SURFACE-LEVEL KNOWLEDGE: SO WHAT? WHAT NEXT?

Over the past three decades, people all over the world have come to identify as conscientious consumers and engage in ethical consumerism. At the same time, fair trade has emerged as one of the most well-established, far-reaching, well-known, and diverse global social movements operating within the ethical consumerism sphere. One of the movement’s explicit goals is to educate the public about how individual-level purchasing habits can be leveraged to create a global economy that is more fair. Put together, these trends—interest in voting with one’s pocketbook and commitment to educating the public about how to do so—appear to create an ideal context for propagating knowledge about fair trade. Thus, it is unsurprising that many scholars and advocates assume that the past three decades have resulted in widespread knowledge about fair trade.

Interestingly, however, the research presented in this chapter challenges this conventional wisdom. Instead, it suggests that very few people have even a basic understanding of what

fair trade *is*, much less a deep knowledge of fair trade's vision for the world and strategies for achieving it. Although many people hold fair trade in positive regard, are willing to pay more for fairly traded products, and/or are sceptical of fair washing, their lack of knowledge about fair trade is profound. This reality raises two important questions for future research.

First, how have people been experiencing fair trade and its educational endeavours, and why? Many of the movement's central actors identify education as a key strategy for achieving fair trade objectives. Yet, this study shows persistent limits to widespread understanding. Future research should examine why this may be the case. A better understanding of the nature and causes of disconnect between educational initiatives and consumer knowledge would serve to inform whether and how a 'broader educational campaign, one that specifically reaches out to a large swathe of consumers rather than a narrowly targeted demographic' could be put into place (Lyon et al., 2014, p. 146). Additionally, research should aim to identify potential trade-offs between widespread, basic information campaigns and more narrowly targeted, in-depth educational initiatives. For example, it is currently unclear whether the fair trade vision is more likely to be realized by a few well-informed consumers or a larger group of somewhat informed citizens. Both theory and policy would benefit from a more nuanced understanding of whether, when, and how educational initiatives shape fair trade outcomes.

Second, what are the implications of superficial knowledge for achieving the fair trade vision? For people interested in using their purchasing power to effect positive change, how does this impact their choices about how to engage? As Giridharadas (2019) argues in *Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World*, some of the ideas that the world's most privileged people hold about how to make change in the world have led them to take actions that actually entrench, obscure, and distract from macro-level problems (instead of solving them). Thus, future research should examine whether and how poor understanding of fair trade inhibits well-intentioned entrepreneurs from leveraging their business models to generate fair and equitable outcomes. For example, my own research in the context of fair trade cannabis (marijuana) in the United States shows that entrepreneurs who draw on their own consumer experiences tend to create initiatives that are more reflective of fair washing than fair trade (Bennett 2017b; 2019). Another link of future research should also examine how poor knowledge about the structures underlying fair trade affects everyday people's decision-making about how to work for social change. As Ganz and colleagues (2018) argue, superficial market initiatives can distract citizens from the underlying economic structures and power dynamics that account for inequitable outcomes. In doing so, these efforts may diminish engagement in the public sphere and inhibit collective action for social change (see also Spicer et al., 2019). Further research should examine the role that knowledge—in all its forms—plays in shaping how consumers, entrepreneurs, and citizens evaluate the opportunities and choose to engage in creating a fairer and more just world.

This chapter marks a first step in giving shape and texture to the question of what people know about fair trade and ethical consumerism. Bringing together extant research from the fields of socio-economics, social entrepreneurship, marketing, and fair trade, it suggests that everyday people—despite their exposure to and awareness of fair trade—know very little about what it is, how it works, and when to trust it. Future research may take a closer look at why fair trade education has unfolded in this way and how it has affected the development of consumer activism, social entrepreneurship, and political engagement.

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NOTES

1. Raynolds and Bennett, 2015, pp. 5–6:

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 labelled 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.

2. For a more complete introduction to the fair trade movement and a discussion of its initiatives, current debates, and possible futures, see Bennett, 2020.
3. Here ‘North’ refers to developed, wealthy, high income, or ‘First World’ countries, as opposed to the geographic region of the northern hemisphere. See Naylor (2014, p. 275), on the concept of ‘Global North’ and ‘Global South’ in the context of fair trade.
4. An analysis of 33 sustainability certification organizations shows that only 25% even *intend* to include farmers and workers (the communities they intend to benefit) in their highest levels of decision-making and governance (Bennett, 2017a).
5. For more about living income and living wages in the context of global supply chains, consult the Living Income Community of Practice and Global Living Wage Coalition, respectively.
6. For more on labour justice in the US dairy sector, see Keller (2019).
7. Some recent studies have shifted away from the concept of ‘consumers’ in favour of thinking about the subjects of marketing research as ‘people’. The idea is to not obscure the many other ways in which people shape markets (Davies et al., 2020). This nomenclature is attentive to the reality that most individuals both consume *and* supply goods, services, or capital; and that most market actors engage the market in ways that *both* support a more equitable economic order *and* entrench structural barriers to equality (Balsiger, 2019).
8. Gathering data on consumers’ willingness to pay for ethical goods can be challenging. Many studies rely on self-reporting of past behaviour or anticipated behaviour in hypothetical scenarios, which tends to overstate how much consumers are willing to pay (Silva et al., 2007).

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