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## 11. Fair trade places

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### INTRODUCTION

This chapter adopts a phenomenological understanding of ‘place’, as a distinctive coming together of ‘actants’ (humans and their identities, geographical spaces and the material world), thereby imbuing a particular space (more or less bounded or diffuse) with an array of intersubjectively constructed meanings (Agnew 2011). Given that place is therefore socially constructed in the critical realist sense (Danermark et al. 2005), the idea of place employed here explicitly accepts the possibility of multiple interpretations and, therefore, the potential for contestations over meanings and identities.

Although the concept of alternative trade, and later fair trade, has been constructed with strong reference to the nature of the practices involved, these have always been embedded in supportive interpretations and senses of place. Fair trade requires the recognition that, far from unfolding within an even plane of empty space, the outcomes of economic interactions are both differentiated by place and contribute to the unique nature thereof. The characteristics of ‘producer countries’ simultaneously differentiate the outcomes of economic activities while also contributing to the very classification of their associated underlying spaces. Building on these imagined geographies, fair trade is therefore part of a longer and broader tradition to structure trade between places in ways that promote increasing levels of both procedural and distributive justice (Trentmann 2007).

Within the broad geographies of fair trade, more specific places of production have been fundamental to discourses of the movement – and there is a good tradition of scholarship focused on analyzing their associated issues (see, for example, several of the chapters in Part IV of this volume). In contrast, this chapter focuses on formally constituted fair trade places in ‘consumer countries’ that have specifically focused on: 1) the purchasing and promotion of fair trade goods and 2) wider promotion, awareness raising and activism designed to ‘make trade fair’.<sup>1</sup> While this is not to say these activities *necessarily* exist in empirical

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separation, such conceptual differentiation offers a contribution to understanding the wider fair trade movement. Through focusing on these two elements of fair trade places, on how they have become constructed, reconstructed and therefore are continually operationalized, analysis connects to the wider issue of what the signifier 'fair trade' has come to mean in different empirical contexts.<sup>2</sup>

More specifically, the chapter analyses the development of fair trade places such as towns, schools and nations. The first explicit task here is to provide a history of the emergence of these formalized fair trade places, the account of which is traced to the campaign effort in a small town in Lancashire, in the United Kingdom. However, the major analytical work of the chapter considers how the development of such places has simultaneously interacted with the wider contestation of the fair trade concept.

Situating this focus in its wider intellectual context, many contributors to this book discuss tensions within the fair trade movement, between practices often categorized on a spectrum ranging from the most radical to the most reformist (see chapters in this volume by Laura Raynolds and Nicholas Greenfield; Bob Doherty, Valéry Bezençon and Gaëlle Balineau). Overall, analysis of global fair trade activities suggests that with the mainstreaming of fair trade, it has been the less radical practices that have come to dominate. Moreover, as part of this trend some identify an absolute decline in the activities of dedicated fair trade organizations (FTOs), understood by many to embody the more radical interpretation of fair trade (Doherty, Davies & Tranchell 2012, 181).

In many ways the emergence of fair trade places such as towns, schools and nations has provided consumers with a more organized means of participating in the performance and advocacy of what *they* understand or accept fair trade to require. Bacon (2010) identifies that of all the governance and certification approaches designed to shape international supply chains, it is the constituent networks of fair trade that make it the most democratic; and it is argued here that fair trade places are playing a significant role in contributing to such procedural democracy. In order to make this argument, the chapter undertakes an explicit analysis of how emerging senses of fair trade place have contributed to the contestation of what constitutes legitimate fair trade activity. This emerges as a useful perspective as some previous commentary suggests that place-based campaigning should offer an antidote to the 'diluted notion of individualized "shopping for a better world"' introduced by reformist practices (Low and Davenport 2007, 336). Likewise, some suggest that 'social movement activity by fair trade towns and universities has the ability to create a strong alternative high street in which a

limited number of FTOs could maintain their independence' (Doherty, Davies & Tranchell 2012, 181). On the other hand, however, there is concern that fair trade places could reinforce the conventionalization of both discourses and practices (Fisher 2009). Therefore, this chapter presents a first effort to codify a cohesive understanding of the dynamic around fair trade places and, furthermore, outline potential future avenues for both researchers and practitioners working to shape the future of the fair trade movement.

### THE EMERGENCE OF FAIR TRADE PLACES: ACCREDITATION AND CONTESTATION

The formal concept of a fair trade place first emerged in the small town of Garstang, in the county of Lancashire, in the United Kingdom. Here the local Oxfam group had been campaigning on issues relating to global poverty and particularly international trade justice (Crowther and Human 2011, 89-90). After the launch of the Fairtrade Mark by the United Kingdom's Fairtrade Foundation in 1994, the promotion of Fairtrade International certified goods also became a prominent element of the group's activities (Garstang Fairtrade 2000–2014). Despite initially limited successes in their campaign, by 2005 the group secured a pledge from 95 per cent of local businesses, all the churches, the local council and all the local schools, that they were committed to sell at least one Fairtrade certified product (Crowther and Human 2011, 90). In order to endorse this achievement, the group requested that the Parish Council recognize this commitment, and the motion was carried in April 2000 following a vote at a public meeting (Garstang Fairtrade 2010–2011).

The development of the world's first formally recognized fair trade place was significant as, to some extent, it moved participants away from a neoliberal model of individual action to instead focus on what could be organized *among* global citizens through group purchasing (Low and Davenport 2007, 344). The achievement of generating widespread community support for Fairtrade, however, was specifically based on embedding the knowledge of this opportunity within the context of place. In 1999 the Oxfam group had participated in an annual fast, held on the theme 'Give it up for Ghana' (Garstang Fairtrade 2000–2014). As part of this activity, the group worked with the local school using the now celebrated Ghanaian cooperative, Kuapa Kokoo, as their example of Fairtrade activity. Moreover, this work was then extended through a project focused on 'Fairtrade and the Slave Trade'. As the steering group themselves identify, drawing on the town's proximity to the neighboring

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city of Lancaster, previously Britain's fourth largest slave trading port, the promotion of Fairtrade goods could be framed in reference to both historical and contemporary connections between Garstang and Ghana (Garstang Fairtrade 2000–2014). In this way, the fair trade town is seen as 'representing global rather than local belonging and expressing global rather than local responsibility, viewed through the lens of consumption' (Samuel and Emanuel 2012, 191). Here, fair trade places might be understood to respond to Massey's call for 'an adequately progressive sense of place, one which would fit in with the current global-local times and the feelings and relations they give rise to, and which would be useful in what are, after all, political struggles often inevitably based on place' (Massey 1991, 26).

Within the direct embedding of fair trade campaigning in a sense of place, it is important to recognize that the first town emerged not from the Fairtrade Foundation, but from a local group (Alexander and Nicholls 2006, 1247). Right from this early point, the construction of fair trade places was carefully developed in order to encompass participation by actors in a range of key consumption sectors. Importantly, the involvement of government actors has lent an element of state legitimacy to the recognition of fair trade places; as has formal signifiers usually associated with state authority, such as road signs that identify the boundaries of, and formally welcome visitors to, officially demarcated fair trade places.

A final important element to the creation of the world's first fair trade town was the negotiated understanding of what practices should constitute a sense of fair trade place. While the emphasis was largely on Fairtrade certified goods, the Garstang group worked explicitly with mission-driven FTOs, for example in 1995 through participation in the Cafédirect Challenge (Garstang Fairtrade 2000–2014). Also, in addition to drawing on international connections, the fair trade group highlighted relationships with the places of UK agriculture. For this reason, when campaigners held a promotional meal to encourage greater buy-in from local stakeholders, food consisted of both Fairtrade goods and those sourced from local producers (Garstang Fairtrade 2000–2014). This had the direct effect of establishing a connection between local and international social justice and demonstrated the lack of conflict between them (on which Sandy Brown and Christy Getz write more in this volume).

During the campaign to have Garstang recognized as a fair trade place, representatives approached the United Kingdom's Fairtrade Foundation to endorse the status of the town. Initially, the Foundation were reserved

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about this initiative as they questioned the potential to maintain campaigning in a given place, constantly increase awareness and demand, and also improve the supply of Fairtrade products in a given locality (Samuel 2013, 103). Retrospectively, however, the initiative in Garstang ‘inspired the Fairtrade Foundation to develop the Fairtrade Town campaign’ (Fairtrade Foundation 2009b). In September 2001 the Fairtrade Foundation launched the ‘Fairtrade Town’ scheme and in the following November presented Garstang with their accreditation as the very first formally recognized fair trade place (Garstang Fairtrade 2010–2011).

In order to obtain status as a Fairtrade Town in the United Kingdom, the Fairtrade Foundation (Fairtrade Foundation 2009a) has required that:<sup>3</sup>

- The local council passes a resolution supporting Fairtrade and agrees to serve Fairtrade products (for example, in meetings, offices and canteens).
- The area’s retailers (shops, supermarkets, newsagents and petrol stations) and catering outlets (cafés, restaurants, pubs) make a range of Fairtrade products readily available.
- Local workplaces and community organizations (places of worship, schools, universities, colleges and other community organizations) support Fairtrade and use Fairtrade products whenever possible. A flagship employer is required for populations over 100 000.
- Media coverage and events raise awareness and understanding of Fairtrade across the community.
- A local Fairtrade Steering Group is convened to ensure the Fairtrade Town campaign continues to develop and gain new support.

As summarized by Harriet Lamb (2008), Executive Director of the Fairtrade Foundation during the launch of the Fairtrade Towns campaign, the development of such a standardized set of ‘quality attributes’ made it possible for the Fairtrade Foundation to fairly assess, evaluate and certify the claims of any place in relation to their commitment to Fairtrade promotion and consumption. Based on this focus, some have described the Fairtrade Town scheme as a certification for consumption (Fisher 2009), the model for which has also been applied to places of different scales. Although the scheme remains known as Fairtrade Towns, status is also available to villages, cities, islands, boroughs and counties, as well as zones for all other geographical locations not fitting into one of the above categories (Crowther and Human 2011, 93; Fairtrade Foundation 2009a). On this basis, the Fairtrade Town scheme has been hugely successful, and by the early months of 2014, there were 579 accredited Fairtrade Towns in the United Kingdom (Fairtrade Foundation 2014).

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In addition to fair trade places defined by the boundaries of state administration, the Fairtrade Foundation has also developed other place-based accreditations. For example, universities and colleges in the United Kingdom have had the opportunity to apply for Fairtrade status since 2003 (Fairtrade Foundation 2011a) and a scheme was introduced for schools in 2007 (Fairtrade Foundation 2011b). The Foundation also offers recognition to places of worship (Fairtrade Foundation 2011c). All these schemes have been based around similar requirements to those of Fairtrade Towns: specifically that a central authority is required to codify a commitment to both purchase Fairtrade goods and support their promotion in the wider sense, including during the United Kingdom's Fairtrade Fortnight (when the Fairtrade Foundation coordinates a nationwide campaign of promotion, usually themed around the promotion of a given Fairtrade certified product).

Focusing on the centrality of Fairtrade certification, some scholars have primarily analyzed the Fairtrade Towns as a marketing device for Fairtrade goods. Here it is suggested that the development of formally recognize fair trade places represents the third of three marketing approaches. The first approach focused on the Fairtrade *process* to appeal to strongly ethical consumers; a second aimed to widen appeal by highlighting the intrinsic qualities of the fair trade *product itself*; and the third focuses on fair trade *places* and what consumers can do as part of their daily lives (Alexander and Nicholls 2006). In support of this marketing approach, Malpass et al. (2007, 634) argue that campaigns for fair trade places are a different and significant way of practicing ethical purchasing, introducing 'the importance of placed rather than seemingly placeless consumption of fair trade ideas and goods'. For Samuel (2013, 9), Fairtrade Towns have 'shifted existing marketing paradigms, regarding the use and conceptualization of place in the marketing mix' and even move place from being 'last in the line' to being at the center of the marketing strategy.

Taking a wider perspective, Low and Davenport pick up on the coordinated efforts of fair trade places and suggest that they 'hold great promise for expanding sales, shortening the distance between producer and consumer and reinvigorating the message of reforming and transforming international trade relations' (Low and Davenport 2007, 336). (On the changing dynamics of connecting consumers to fair trade producers, see also Eileen Davenport and William Low's chapter in this volume.) Other analysis, however, is less optimistic. Fisher (2009, 994) raises the possibility that fair trade places might reinforce reformist and therefore less impactful interpretations of fair trade practices. Although many commentators suggest that such tendencies have been embedded in

Fairtrade International's certification system (Gendron, Bisaillon & Rance 2009), other analysts highlight that impact also depends on the specific type of supply chain governance in operation for any given product (Doherty, Davies & Tranchell 2012; Reed 2009). Based on the first of these interpretations, Smith (2011) points out that linking the concept of fair trade places to the Fairtrade certification system has narrowed the discursive focus to promotion of Fairtrade certified products. This marginalizes other approaches to the fair trade concept and excludes products outside of the (largely food-oriented) Fairtrade International certification system. Others go further to suggest that given the requirements made of local state institutions (requirement number one, see above), the Fairtrade Towns scheme 'compel[s] Local Authorities to serve Fairtrade produce during their meetings and promote Fairtrade produce in their area' (Preuss 2009, 217). Although there is little empirical work that examines the actual activities of Fairtrade places, research in Scotland identifies that practices, particularly with regard to state procurement, do indeed mostly focus on Fairtrade certified goods (Smith 2013b). This therefore reinforces concerns that campaign appeals to the consumers' sense of place are constructing a monopoly market for commodities bearing the Fairtrade Mark: a trend that comes at the expense of both other fair trade practices and authorities (e.g., the WFTO) and other sustainability certification (e.g., Rainforest Alliance) (Mohan 2010, 98). While the value of such prioritization is highly debated vis-à-vis our limited understanding of impact (see Part IV in this volume for a general overview), the barriers to obtaining Fairtrade certification for many producers might be reason enough for reservation over this trend (Smith 2014). In addition, the exclusive focus on consumption arguably constructs fair trade places as accepting of a neoliberal economic model, against which wider and original fair trade activism was attempting to fight. Indeed, Fridell's (2004) research on Fair Trade Universities in the United States highlights the possibility for fair trade status to be used as an 'ethical fig leaf' that obscures the dilution of radical campus politics with growing corporatization.

Having said this, however, there is also evidence that under the right circumstances, fair trade places in the United Kingdom have avoided oversimplifying the construction of fair trade activities. For example, Doherty, Davies and Tranchell (2012, 177) suggest that some Fairtrade Town groups in the United Kingdom have lobbied retailers to stock FTO products and, therefore, have reinforced the existence of more radical fair trade practices. In East Dunbartonshire, Scotland, the involvement of a dedicated FTO and state actors receptive to a wider understanding of fair trade has allowed place-based input into the direct construction of fair

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trade relationships with the National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM) (Smith 2013b). In addition, there have been educational efforts that go well beyond those usually associated with the marketing of Fairtrade products. This much thicker level of information goes well beyond that embedded in fair trade purchases made in most corporate retail environments and mirrors one of the fundamental functions of dedicated fair trade retailers (Low and Davenport 2007, 337). Moreover, this arguably makes a much greater contribution to developing an outward looking sense of place.

These findings therefore support the recognition that fair trade places open space for multi-directional flows of information between a range of stakeholder organizations (Alexander and Nicholls 2006, 1247). Indeed, it has been suggested that what is important in shaping the nature of fair trade places is the specific communities of practice that constitute them (Smith 2011). Although representatives of the Fairtrade Foundation welcome applicants that go above and beyond the formal requirements, the Foundation places itself in a difficult position by both setting the standards for fair trade places and standing to gain from the activities generated by these. For example, the organization inevitably finds complexities in promoting FTO products over and above others, as this is readily perceived by other licensees as a contradiction to their interests and investments.<sup>4</sup> For this reason, it is pertinent to look towards manifestations of fair trade places in other national and international contexts, and it is to this subject that the next section now turns.

## WIDER SENSES OF PLACE: CONTESTING THE NATURE OF SITUATED PRACTICES

Building on the contestation of meaning being played out between the Fairtrade Foundation and activists on the ground in fair trade places, such negotiation can also be identified in the wider international context. This has been embodied in the growth of fair trade places in other countries: in mainland Europe, North America, Asia and more recently New Koforidua in Ghana and Poços de Caldes in Brazil. While different national contexts have drawn on the Fairtrade Foundation's experience, there is a wide range of alternative interpretations about how best to develop the discourses and practices of fair trade places – and not least around the selection of supply chain governance models that communities have accepted and prioritized as part of their place-making activities.

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For example, in Australia and New Zealand, the formal recognition of fair trade places is run not by Fairtrade Australia and New Zealand (the Fairtrade International National Labeling Initiative), but by the Fair Trade Association of Australia and New Zealand. This not-for-profit organization self-identifies as the ‘peak agency driving the growth of the fair trade movement’ (Fair Trade Association Australia and New Zealand 20/03/2014). More specifically, they ‘recognize and promote the Fairtrade Mark (managed by Fairtrade Australia and New Zealand), the World Fair Trade Organization, and ... [their] own system, Fair Traders of Australia, as credible fair trade systems’ (Fair Trade Association Australia and New Zealand 20/03/2014). For this reason, fair trade towns are not just about focusing on Fairtrade certified goods. While the local authority ‘should commit to serving Fairtrade Certified™ tea and coffee as the default option’, wider commitments should promote fair trade goods, also including handicrafts endorsed by Fair Traders of Australia (FToA) and the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) (Fair Trade Association Australia and New Zealand 2013).

In the case of the United States, the administration of fair trade towns remains with Fair Trade USA, despite its departure from the Fairtrade International system in 2011 (Tallontire and Nelson 2013; Wilson and Curnow 2013). However, formal governance of these fair trade places is overseen by a National Steering Committee (NSC) made up of campaigners and stakeholders from across the movement (IFTT 2013). Such an approach is described by the National Coordinator as the ‘big tent approach’. Here fair trade places are encouraged to engage with not only Fair Trade USA certified products, but also those certified by Fairtrade America (the newly established National Labeling Initiative of Fairtrade International), the Institute for Marketecology (IMO) Fair for Life certification program and also items sold by members of the Fair Trade Federation.

As was the case with Garstang, the issue of the relationship between fair trade places and local or national agricultural products has remained a pertinent one. In order to recognize this, the schemes in both Belgium and Canada have added a sixth goal of committing to support other forms of sustainable production ‘the Committee believes is in the spirit of Fair Trade Towns’ (Fair Trade Canada 2012, 8). Having said this, in Canada the campaign literature highlights that ‘while you may promote non-certified fair trade products (e.g. from I[n]ternational F[ederation of] A[ternative] T[rade]<sup>5</sup> or Fair Trade Federation member companies) as part of Goal no. 6 or for general education, all [other] specific targets in this campaign refer to Fairtrade certified products’ (Fair Trade Canada 2012, 6).

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In response to the internationalization of fair trade places, there have been efforts to develop an International Fair Trade Towns Committee (IFTTC) – currently composed of representatives from Belgium, Germany, Japan, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States. Taking into account the diversity of international fair trade places, the IFTTC explicitly recognizes the FINE (2001) definition of fair trade, but also the Charter of Fair Trade Principles agreed between the WFTO and Fairtrade International (2009). This is important as among other things, the Charter outlines the validity of both the product certification and the integrated supply chain approach to fair trade practice. This underpinning leads the committee to suggest that while it might be advantageous for new fair trade towns schemes to follow the five goals model (above), ‘Any national campaign should include a whole range of fair trade products in particular both Fairtrade certified (and other fair trade certifiers) products if present and also independently recognized fair trade products (for example, from WFTO certified members) when these are present in the national context’ (IFTT 2013). Furthermore, it is suggested that national campaigns are facilitated by a number of different national organizations or a coalition (IFTT 2013). This therefore devolves the construction of legitimate fair trade activities to individual countries, and, again, this can be seen to contribute to the formal democratic architecture of the fair trade movement.

On the other side of the power dynamic, despite a previous lack of involvement in fair trade places, the WFTO have moved to redress this. Specifically, connections between those developing fair trade towns in Poland and the WFTO in Europe resulted in the initial development of a relationship. In 2013, therefore, the WFTO passed a motion that encouraged its members to participate in fair trade places and established support for WFTO representation within the IFTTC (WFTO 2013). Only time will tell if this decision has a significant impact on feeding into the democratization of place-based fair trade activities.

## BRINGING THE STATE BACK IN? THE ROLE AND POTENTIAL OF FAIR TRADE NATIONS

As identified by Fridell (2010), the fair trade movement of the 1980s was composed of both state and civil society activism for fairer international trade architecture. While local government involvement in fair trade towns has arguably begun the process of reintroducing the state following its wider exit under neoliberalizing forces, the emergence of Fair Trade Nations demands attention as a potential further development.

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Here again, the initiative originally emerged from the civil society component of the fair trade movement as an effort to expand place-based campaigning. Following on from gaining recognition for Cardiff as the world's first Fairtrade capital city in 2004, the Wales Fair Trade Forum (WFTF) identified the possibility to work towards similar recognition for the country of Wales as a whole. Mirroring the multi-stakeholder group in Garstang, the WFTF was composed of representatives from a range of organizations. Initially, this included Fair Do's (a dedicated fair trade shop), Tearfund, Oxfam Cymru, Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), Christian Aid and the Co-op Group, and later it expanded to include representatives of Fairtrade Towns from across Wales. Another important change to the group's composition occurred when the Oxfam representative moved to work for the devolved Welsh Assembly Government (WAG).<sup>6</sup> This connected the activists' initiative to the power of the state, initially facilitated by support for the idea from a cross-party selection of Welsh Assembly Members. Simultaneously, members of the WFTF approached the Fairtrade Foundation to help develop a form of national-level recognition. However, the Foundation were again reserved: they felt that recognizing an entire country was 'way beyond our remit' (cited in Smith 2011, 104), and, therefore, the WFTF initiated 'discussions with other organizations in Wales to determine the requirements for the Fair Trade Country' (WFTF 2003, 1). Towards the end of this process, it was agreed that the devolved nation of Scotland would also participate to strengthen the initiative and provide a competitive element – and it was at this time that the conceptual representation of the ideas shifted from a Fair Trade Country to one of a Fair Trade Nation (Fisher 2012).

During initial conversations in Wales it was felt that a fair trade place at the national scale should focus on a threefold agenda of international trade justice, promoting Fairtrade goods and also supporting the consumption of 'locally' and nationally produced food. This again offered the opportunity to use the framing of place to gather a range of interests and highlight connections between them. Early discussion included recognition of a range of fair trade governance systems. It was proposed that a certain number of shops accredited by the British Association of Fair Trade Shops (BAFTS) should be required. Ultimately, however, expecting the establishment of new fair trade infrastructure was rejected and developments focused instead on other criteria that could be assessed quantitatively – as well as promoted within a timeframe to suit the political agenda of the WAG. It was agreed that an independent committee made up of key figures from the fair trade movement would assess the criteria. The committee included representatives from prominent UK

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alternative trade organizations (ATOs), such as Traidcraft, development organizations and the WFTO, although no one from the Fairtrade Foundation was involved. Following this procedure the first stage criteria were met first by Wales in 2008 and then Scotland in early 2013 (following the convening of a separate Social Audit Committee, of which the author was a participant). The criteria required:

- 100 per cent of counties/local authorities to have active fair trade groups working towards fair trade status;
- 55 per cent of Local Authority areas to have fair trade status, with 10 per cent annual increase in following years;
- 100 per cent of cities to have fair trade status;
- Minimum 55 per cent of towns (based on the Office of National Statistics and General Register Office for Scotland figures of towns with population of 5000 or more) to have active fair trade groups working towards fair trade status;
- 60 per cent of higher education institutions to have active fair trade groups working towards fair trade status;
- a 5 per cent increase each year of the proportion of the population who know about fair trade (initial target of 50 per cent, ultimately to reach 75 per cent);
- 75 per cent of people to buy a fair trade product every year;
- 40 per cent of people to regularly buy fair trade products.

On first reading, it might be assumed that using the signifier ‘fair trade’ within the Fair Trade Nation criteria implies an open, as opposed to a narrow, approach to defining associated activity. However, while the governments of Scotland and Wales have tended to avoid the use of trademarked signifiers,<sup>7</sup> the requirements of the Fair Trade Nation initiative are still largely focused on Fairtrade certified goods. This is because the majority of criteria are linked to the achievement of certain numbers and percentages of Fairtrade Foundation recognitions for towns and schools and so on. Having said this, however, in addition to the flexibility of the individual schemes (noted above), both Fair Trade Wales and the Scottish Fair Trade Forum (the bodies taking forward the Fair Trade Nation campaigns) promote the discourse of alternative fair trade practices – including those of the WFTO and dedicated FTOs. Furthermore, while the Fairtrade Foundation does provide some limited, although valuable, funding for these coordinating bodies, greater freedom to construct a sense of fair trade place is provided by core financing from the respective devolved governments and other independent sources. For this reason, these national-scale fair trade places are perhaps best

understood as localities in which fair trade activity can continue to be shaped and within which future developments could realistically promote more radical interpretations of fair trade principles. After all, as the people of Scotland wait for the greater autonomy promised during their recent referendum on full independence, members of the fair trade movement are no doubt already reformulating what they expect of an increasingly powerful state, already strongly committed to the idea of Fair Trade Nationhood.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined the development of formally recognized fair trade places in geographies traditionally associated with fair trade consumer markets. As such, these places are understood as offering a response to an increasingly globalized and economically uneven world. The potential for this emerges from an explicitly more-developed sense of historical and economic positionalities, where activities aiming at addressing perceived international social inequalities are explicitly embedded in collective identity.

Within this broad conceptualization, the chapter has drawn on the socially constructed understanding of place and its associated meaning. Analysis has therefore explicitly considered the multiplicities of interpretation and fundamental contestations identified in current research. More specifically, the chapter has focused on some aspects of how fair trade places offer a further arena for the active contestation over what is legitimately accepted as fair trade activity. Indeed, research in this area must be seen as of genuine significance as it is argued that while fair trade places extend the procedural trappings of democratization of meaning, associated processes will inevitably be shaped by surrounding political economies. For this reason, academic analysis has and should continue to highlight the opportunities for stakeholders to influence fair trade in the future.

Reflecting back, it is suggested that stakeholders of fair trade places have engaged in this dynamic on three planes. First, fair trade places have the opportunity to define the scope and methods of fair exchange through consumption and promotion of certain fair trade models. Here place-based campaigns can influence if fair trade should remain associated only with economic inequality of the international system or if it should also consider its relationship with domestic places of production. Second, and more centrally, fair trade towns, schools and nations can cast a vote proportional to their efforts and resources as to which trade practices, and

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therefore accreditations, are acceptable in responding to its positionality in the world. Third and finally, fair trade places also have the opportunity to go beyond consumption and re-contextualize themselves in the trade justice movement, raising wider awareness and agitating for structural change.

Starting with the development of the world's first fair trade town in Garstang, the focus has primarily been on overcoming individualized consumption of isolated actors and creating collective purchasing patterns through more intense consumer coordination. As the idea of a fair trade place first emerged, the perceived best vehicle for this was promotion around the Fairtrade Mark, and it was this approach that was adopted by the United Kingdom's Fairtrade Foundation in pioneering formalized place-based campaigns. However, looking at the practices of individual places within this framework resonates with the comment of Lamb (2008, 46), that the intertwining of a certification label and the concept of place 'was a branding-controllers' nightmare and a campaigners' dream come true'. This is because the practices of different fair trade places show a range of willingness to remain within this initial discursive and governance framing. Although some places have met the expectations of status award and little more, others have found their understanding requires the specific championing of dedicated FTOs and wider awareness raising. Although the case study evidence discussed above is insufficient to draw any representative understandings, it nevertheless illustrates the potential of fair trade places to reconnect with more radical practices of the movement. A key finding of existing research is that more radical and proactive efforts are likely to emerge where communities of practice draw on discursive understandings of fair trade that originate from outside the formal Fairtrade Town Campaign.

This potential for diversity is also well illustrated at the international level by other countries that have adopted formal systems of recognition for fair trade places. While some of these have maintained close alignment with the Fairtrade Foundation's initial model, others have explicitly incorporated other fair trade practices and their accreditations, such as that offered by the WFTO and specific national membership bodies. As recommended by the emerging IFTTC, the independent administration of formal recognition for fair trade places then leaves these to make their own choices about how to campaign: a potential development that the Fairtrade Foundation might consider as a means to escape the inherent tensions of efforts to function as both an advocacy and licensing organization.

At the final layer of democratization, the emergence of Wales and then Scotland as claiming Fair Trade Nationhood, offers perhaps the most

radical opportunity to bring the state back into the fair trade movement. Indeed, the possibility for increasing devolution in Scotland (and Wales), aligned to the continued claim to operate as a Fair Trade Nation, offers an unprecedented opportunity to embed state activities with the principles of fair trade. However, as has been discussed above, the formal criteria for the self-identification as a Fair Trade Nation have thus far remained strongly associated with the wider UK focus of fair trade place on Fairtrade goods. In this sense, individual places (such as East Dunbartonshire, Scotland), other national fair trade town campaigns (such as New Zealand and Australia) and the leadership of the IFTTC, offer important learning for alternative approaches to fair trade place-making at a variety of scales.

## NOTES

1. This classification is drawn from the complementary conceptual constructions of Fridell (2010) and Wilkinson (2007, 223–224).
2. For a more developed ontological discussion see Smith (2013a), and for a discussion of the meaning associated with fair trade see Steven Suranovic's chapter in this volume.
3. It is the intention of the Fairtrade Foundation to alter the requirements of Fairtrade Towns status to a more process-based system, which will mirror changes in producer Fairtrade certification and allow a more self-defined set of benchmarks against which progress is evaluated.
4. Discussions with Fairtrade Foundation representatives over a number of years.
5. IFAT is the previous name of the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO).
6. The Welsh Assembly Government was the previous title of the now Welsh Government, prior to the more recent stage of further devolution.
7. The tendency to replace the trademarked term of Fairtrade with Fair Trade has been primarily to reduce legal risk previously understood to emerge from the prohibition of preferring specific brands by the European Union Procurement Directives. However, an important reform came in 2014 which explicitly allows the specification of sustainability certification.

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