

An Empirical Study of the Marketing Dynamics of the Fairtrade Towns Movement

by

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Abstract

This study explores the marketing dynamics of the Fairtrade Towns movement in the United Kingdom and presents unique, empirical insights and understandings of its place-based marketing dynamics. It recognises that Fairtrade Towns, despite their rapid growth and recognition as a major contributor to Fairtrade marketing, still remain significantly under-researched. It also argues that the activities of Fairtrade Towns need to be considered through a marketing lens and presents a comprehensive application of grounded theory, to empirically capture the marketing dynamics of Fairtrade Towns directly from the people and places that socially construct them. This study theorises that Fairtrade Towns have capitalised upon the significance of symbolic interactionism to develop their marketing dynamic. It argues that Fairtrade Towns have embraced consumer culture and have used media not necessarily associated with marketing practices to validate their actions. It theorises that the Fairtrade Towns movement has generated a marketing dynamic built upon both intrinsic and extrinsic validity. Intrinsic validation transpires from better quality products, increased availability and the development of the Fairtrade mark. Extrinsic validity emerges from the strengths, backgrounds, skills, situations and symbolic value of other people, places and social movements. Fairtrade Towns demonstrate an ability to identify spaces and places not normally recognised for their marketing potential. This study explores how Fairtrade Towns transform and develop these spaces and places into media capable of effectively marketing Fair trade products. Fairtrade Towns display increasing consumer citizenship sophistication, achieved through a marketing dynamic, emerging from a collision between sustainable/ethical consumption, place and responsibility. Fairtrade Towns are therefore presented as a place where marketing functions are socially constructed around a 'unique to place' ethos, in which people and places are developed to their full potential in their capacity and desire to increase Fair Trade consumption wherever and whenever possible.

Introduction

This study explores and conceptualises the marketing dynamics of the Fairtrade Towns movement in the United Kingdom (UK). It started from a position that posed no fundamental questions, but followed an overarching objective that was to:

Explore the Fairtrade Towns movement from within, to gain unique empirical insights and understandings of its place-based marketing dynamics.

The Fairtrade Towns movement has grown very rapidly to become a widespread phenomenon, yet it is still subject to little in-depth, rigorous research. The role of Fairtrade Towns and their subsequent dynamics and practices are very much under-researched and lacking empirical insight into their make up, function and dynamic. This is despite Fairtrade Towns being recognised by many people, including Harriet Lamb the CEO of the Fairtrade Foundation, as a major contributor to the successful marketing and mainstreaming of Fairtrade products. This has meant that the subject was ripe for an empirical investigation that aimed to capture, conceptualise and theorise the Fairtrade Towns movement through the experience of those directly involved in it. However, pursuing such an ambitious research project without a specific research question, proved to be naive and had the potential to lead the research process in a manner of differing directions, resulting in confusion and a lack of clear focus for the study. As a result, it was realised early on that an overarching research question combined with a number of secondary objectives needed to be established to steer the study in the right direction. Subsequently, following a literature review of Fair trade marketing and consumption¹ and the development of a chapter dedicated to capturing existing empirical insights and conceptualisations of Fairtrade Towns², a research question and subsequent supporting questions were developed. The study therefore aimed to answer the following research question.

What are the marketing dynamics of a Fairtrade Town and how do they function?

¹ Chapter 1

² Chapter 2

Specifically, in addressing this question it was additionally recognised³ that the study needed to address a number of subsidiary questions, these being:

- What are the meanings attributed to place in Fairtrade Towns?
- How has place been incorporated into the marketing dynamics of a Fairtrade Town?
- How have consumer citizenship and ethical, political and sustainable consumption manifested themselves in Fairtrade Towns?
- How does social capital and actor network function as a marketing dynamic in a Fairtrade Town?
- What is the role of a Fairtrade Town steering group and how do they function?

In answering these questions and embarking upon this explorative research the study presents a comprehensive grounded theory that captures the marketing dynamics of Fairtrade Towns, viewed as a major contributor to marketing Fair trade products. It ethnographically gathered empirical evidence from a growing grassroots consumer movement that was under-researched and had very limited academic insight, research or data devoted to it.

Answers to the research question were pursued empirically through a methodology of grounded theory that quite simply contextualised the question: ‘What’s happening here?’ (Glaser 1979). Thus, asking the aforementioned questions through a marketing lens. This led to a number of component outputs, theories and conceptualisation emerging directly from the Fairtrade Town Movement itself. Therefore, the study’s findings also present:

- An empirical conceptualisation of a Fairtrade Town

³ See conclusion of chapter 2

- A holistic, systemic and component view of the marketing dynamics at work in Fairtrade Towns across the UK.
- Primary empirical theories that explain Fairtrade Towns' use and application of place-based marketing.
- An empirical understanding of symbolic interactionism working as a marketing dynamic for the Fairtrade Town Movement
- Empirical understanding and theories of the dynamics of people and place working towards and maintaining the goal of becoming a Fairtrade Town

In presenting these findings it was hoped that understanding the Fairtrade Town as a marketing dynamic would not only result in academic insight, relevant to the school of marketing, but it would also provide empirical insight into the dynamics of a consumer grassroots movement that uses the social constructs of place as a catalyst for increasing the promotion and consumption of Fair trade across the UK.

This study purposely uses and makes reference to Fair Trade (two words) and Fairtrade (one word) throughout. To alleviate the possibility of confusion it is necessary to clarify their different meanings and the different context of their use. Fair Trade (two words) is used and referred to when the general Fair Trade Movement, its trading and development ethos or economic/political arguments are presented. Fairtrade (one word) is a trademark of the Fairtrade Foundation and the label carried by Fairtrade certified products and places. The Fairtrade Foundation as the governing and awarding body of Fairtrade Towns insists that all promotion, lobbying and consumption in Fairtrade Towns must build around products that carry the Fairtrade certification trademark (Around 2006; Talpin 2009). Therefore, when Fair Trade is mentioned in the context of Fairtrade Towns in this study it is understood and thought only proper that it be referred to as one word, the trademark 'Fairtrade'.

Chapter one: In the absence of literature dedicated to Fairtrade Towns, literature dedicated to Fair Trade, and in particular Fairtrade marketing and consumption was initially turned to, in order to provide both insight and help in establishing a base for informing further enquiry. This step helped to unearth a number of disciplines with the potential to contribute to the study. During the course of the review, Fair Trade literature subsequently led to an emerging relevance of other key academic writings and theories relevant to the study. This process introduced key writings into the review including; social capital, actor network theory, social marketing, social learning, sustainable/ethical and political consumption, consumer citizenship, space and place and geographies of consumption. These threads all emerged from the literature to have a role in what could be described as a rich tapestry of disciplines, from which a more comprehensive, inductive understanding of the marketing dynamics of a Fairtrade Town could be drawn.

Chapter two explores existing empirical insights and conceptualisations of Fairtrade Towns. It documents the historic development of the Fairtrade Towns movement and reviews the limited academic literature that is specifically dedicated to Fairtrade Towns. The chapter identifies the relevant component bodies of literature which are important to this study's aim of developing deeper, conceptual understandings and theories of Fairtrade Town's marketing dynamics. It concludes with;

- An overview of the literature that could augment the theoretical development of the marketing dynamics operational in Fairtrade Towns.
- A number of emergent subsidiary questions set in the context of the research question, which are necessary to comprehend for this study.

Chapter three details and justifies the methodological process and theoretical perspective that was embraced and pragmatically applied in this study. It attempts to give a comprehensive overview of the methodological process and theoretical perspective followed and contextualises their suitability and application to this study. A grounded theory approach, taken from a theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism, is followed primarily for its suitability in generating inductive-based theory from emerging and under-theorised areas. The research process takes an

inductive approach that results in the construction of line-by-line and focused coding from which core categories emerge and upon which the theoretical constructs of the study have been built.

The desire to build inductive grounded theory required the study to concern itself with understanding the social world of the Fairtrade Town, as seen by and lived through and within by those who directly engage in it. This was achieved through four stages of qualitative enquiry. Stage one; ethnographical involvement with a Fairtrade Town group. Stage two/three; semi-structured interviews with participants in Fairtrade town groups. Stage four; interviews with the founder of the Fairtrade Towns movement itself. Each stage helped to secure rich qualitative data from within the movement. This data allowed the building of new theory that contextualised the relevant social situations, views, motives, interactions, interpretations and everyday actions of those directly involved in conducting and carrying out the marketing dynamics of a Fairtrade Town.

Chapter three and four present an analysis of the data sets collected for this study.

Chapter four explores the Fairtrade Towns' complex constructions, applications, functions and symbolic references to 'validity', building a conceptual overview of its purpose, relevance and application to the marketing dynamics of Fairtrade Towns. Chapter three goes on to argue that validity has played a key role in a number of ways that have transpired into aiding the reported developmental success of Fairtrade Towns in the UK. Validity therefore is presented in two distinct ways. Firstly, validity is theorised as a condition that arises from a symbolic association with the products and processes of Fairtrade. Here, several points of reference are used to theorise the importance of The Fairtrade Foundation, Fair Trade products and western consumers whose symbolic significance are all identified for their ability to provide valid foundations upon which the Fairtrade Towns' marketing dynamics have been built. Secondly, validity is theorised as an outcome of the symbolic interaction between individuals, organisation and places. The chapter argues that individual's and organisation's engagement in Fairtrade Town activities have contributed to symbolically augmenting the validity of the Fairtrade Towns movement via the

symbolic values ascribed to the social and intellectual capital that each individual, collective or organisation bring to a Fairtrade Town.

Chapter five presents a conceptual interpretation of a Fairtrade Town as a marketing place. It argues that Fairtrade towns pursue a marketing dynamic conceptualised as ‘marketing through the pluralities of place’. This conceptualisation emerged as a framework to theorise the role of place in the marketing dynamic of Fairtrade Towns. The chapter identifies ten pluralities of place that have been enacted in the marketing dynamics of Fairtrade Towns:

1. The private places of family and friendship
2. Places of education
3. Places of civic authority
4. Places of worship
5. Civil society
6. Community groups
7. The high street
8. Community events
9. Landscapes/townscapes
10. Representatives of place (literature and copy)

The chapter builds a detailed picture of each of the ten pluralities, developing contextualised inductive theory of each, arguing that each has systemically contributed to a unique marketing dynamic that in effect has resulted in a placing of responsibility.

Chapter six is the concluding chapter of this thesis and presents a summary of the theory, developed during the study, outlining its contribution to knowledge and its practical implications for policy makers and marketing practitioners. It ends with a critical reflection of the research process and suggestions for future research that could build further on those presented in the study.

CHAPTER 1

Critical Literature Review: Fair Trade Marketing, Consumption and Consumers

Chapter 1: Critical Literature Review: Fair Trade Marketing, Consumption and Consumers

1.0 Introduction to Fair Trade Marketing

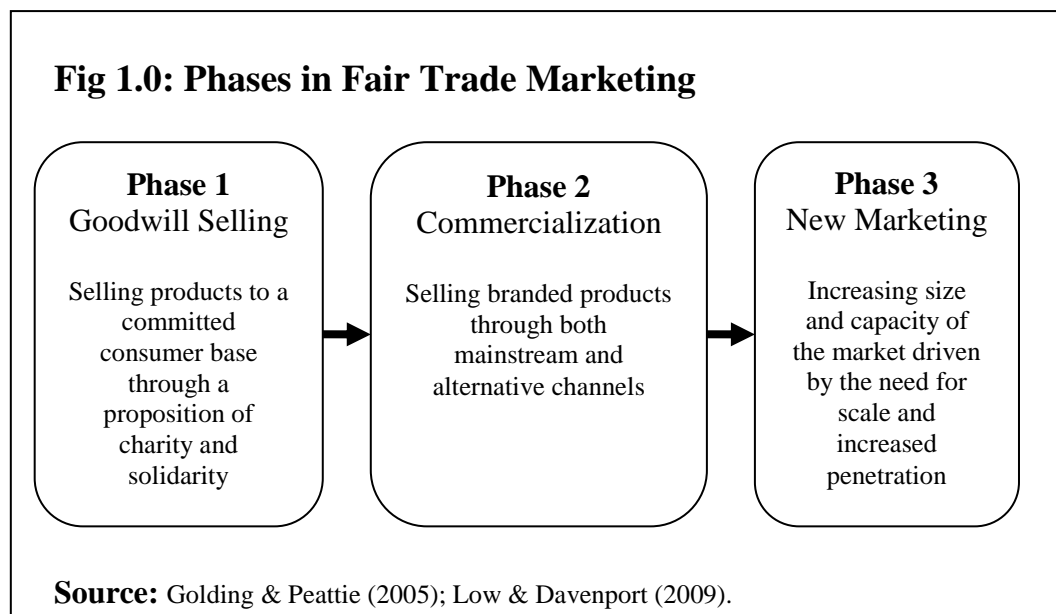
Given that this study's theoretical position is to view Fairtrade Towns as a marketing dynamic, this chapter aims to explore and contextualise key academic literature dedicated to capturing, conceptualising and critically evaluating the marketing consumption and consumer dynamics that have taken Fair Trade from the margins of the 'alternative' to the mainstream arenas of Western consumer society. In its progress it aims to capture the conflicting ideologies, challenges faced and the strategies pursued to establish and achieve continual growth in Fair Trade's market share, product development, availability, education and promotion.

Nicholls & Opal (2005) remain the only authors to present a systemic insight into the ethos, principles and dynamics of Fair Trade marketing based on the assumption that the movement has embraced a holistic view of this key function. Their work contextualises generic marketing literature and the well-established marketing mix of the 4p's; product, price, promotion and place to Fair Trade, helping to present original conceptualisations, theories and findings. The marketing mix, although criticised for being inward looking and for developing categories that are not mutually exclusive, still has unprecedented academic use and acceptance in the broad church of marketing (Watershoot & Van Den Bulte, 1992; Constantinides, 2006) establishing it to be considered as a suitable structural framework to help develop this chapter.⁴ However, following Lubke's (2006) and Golding & Peattie's (2005) recognition that traditional marketing paradigms could limit the developing epistemology of Fair Trade marketing, the context of the review does change the traditional dynamic of the marketing mix to incorporate relevant concepts of consumption, consumer ethics and place. Established in previous chapters of this review is the concept that Fairtrade Towns, in embracing 'place' into their marketing function, have shifted existing marketing paradigms, regarding the use and conceptualisation of place in the marketing mix. Place is normally associated with the distribution of goods and services and is often presented as '*last in the line*' in the marketing mix, a situation

⁴ Using the marketing mix helped add structure to a review constructed from a rapidly emerging and disparate set of schools of thought, resulting in a comprehensive literature review that aims to capture the marketing dynamics of Fair Trade.

that Quelch & Jocz (2012) argue, radically reduces marketing opportunities. Place however, in this study is proven to play a much more diverse and pivotal role in the marketing dynamic of Fairtrade Towns, thrusting it into the forefront of its marketing mix and marketing dynamic.

Managing and articulating Fair Trade to create a desirable marketing proposition whilst maintaining its ethical credentials, has presented the Fair Trade Movement with a number of key challenges. The challenges of conflicting ideologies, and the progression of the Fair Trade Movement have been played out over what Golding & Peattie (2005) determined as phases in the historic development of Fair Trade marketing. These are represented in Fig 1.0: *Phases in Fair Trade Marketing*. Modelling the work of Golding & Peattie, Fig 1.0 demonstrates a time line that has witnessed Fair Trade move from the margins of niche alternative markets to mainstream branded products that are widely available and consumed in the UK.⁵ Contextualising this to Fairtrade Towns, the literature reviewed will demonstrate how ‘place’ has become a major factor in developing and facilitating what Golding & Peattie (2005.157) recognise as ‘*new marketing approaches and new forms of co-operation*’ in Fair Trade marketing.



⁵ At this juncture it is also worth considering Golding & Peattie’s (2005.157) suggestion that ‘*Fair trade is now seen as moving into a third development phase*’ that has sought to increase the size and the capacity of the Fair Trade market.

In support of Golding & Peattie's (2005) phases in Fair Trade marketing, Nicholls & Opal (2005.161) additionally propose a '*the three phases transition*' of Fair Trade marketing as demonstrated in Fig 1.1: *Developing Fair Trade Marketing Communications*. This table also shows that the key to mainstreaming Fair Trade was the commercialisation of its products. However, Fig 1.1 is far more overt than Golding & Peattie (2005), in conceptualising new Fair Trade marketing approaches and it demonstrates an understanding that Fair Trade has to develop deeper and more sophisticated uses of place in its marketing dynamic.

Fig 1.1 Developing Fair Trade Marketing Communications

	Phase 1: Process	Phase 2: Product	Phase 3: Place
Target customer	Global watchdog	Conscientious consumers	Do what I can
Marketing approach	Supplier driven	Market driven	Society driven
Marketing values	Solidarity and trust	Quality and lifestyle	Community and social linkage
Market size	Niche	Multiple segments	Mass market
Distribution	ATOs	National Multiples	Local SMEs and multiples, new Fair Trade businesses, websites
Marketing strategy	Raise issues awareness, establish a core image	Increase product ranges	Localised PR/communications strategy
Marketing actions	Education campaigns, establish Fair Trade mark	New product development, increase supermarket listings	Local education campaigns, Generate 'word-of-mouth interest'

Source: Nicholls & Opal (2005.161)

1.1 Conflicting Ideologies

Golding (2009:160) articulates Fair Trade's conflicting ideologies as an '*analogous debate*' between the Fair Trade '*pragmatists*' who seek to use the prevailing economic system as a catalyst for change and the Fair Trade '*radicals*' who seek to change the prevailing free market trading paradigm.⁶ The Fair Trade pragmatists view the present free market paradigm as a vehicle for Fair Trade to increase its impact and develop its schema via conventional marketing techniques such as branding, promotion, advertising and product development (Golding, 2009). These activities, some suggest, have come to represent the commercialisation of Fair Trade and are predominantly conceptualised in the relevant literature as '*mainstreaming*' (Golding, 2009; Golding & Peattie, 2005; Low & Davenport, 2005; 2005(b); 2006; 2009; Doherty & Tranchell, 2007; Moore et al., 2006; Barrientos et al., 2007; Raynolds, 2007; Barrientos & Smith, 2007; Jaffee, 2007; Nicholls & Opal, 2005). Mainstreaming is used by many as a catch-all term used to define Fair Trade's commercial success in appealing to mass market consumer needs, wants and desires. It is argued that for success to be achieved through the Fair Trade Movement, increasing product quality and availability through large distribution outlets such as supermarkets, and by using the well-established and successful marketing techniques of branding and labelling to confer complex messages helps create positive identity and develop trust in discerning consumers (Doherty & Tranchell, 2007; Low & Davenport, 2005; 2005(b); Moore et al., 2006).⁷

Radicals conversely suggest that the marketing functions of mainstreaming are potentially dangerous for the long term sustainability of the Fair Trade Movement. They suggest that mainstreaming has weakened the Fair Trade Movement's political and developmental message while also appearing to reaffirm free market principles in a way that may conflict with the primary aims of the Fair Trade Movement (Golding, 2009; Low & Davenport, 2005; 2005(b); 2006; Doherty & Tranchell, 2007; Moore,

⁶ Golding (2009) argues that the polarised views of the pragmatist and the radicals manifest themselves in the thoughts and actions of the three phases in Fair Trade marketing presented in Fig 4.0 and Fig 4.1

⁷ Interestingly Renard (2003) presents the systemic ethos of mainstreaming Fair Trade as the creation of commercial success within existing markets, as opposed to developing an alternative market from the outside.

2004; Moore et al., 2006; Barrientos et al., 2007; Raynolds; 2007; Barrientos & Smith, 2007; Jaffee, 2007; Tallontire, 2000; Le Velly, 2007).

Bezencon & Blili (2009) have also considered the differing pragmatic and radical views of Fair Trade marketing and similarly suggest that Fair Trade marketing is at the centre of an ideological debate between the proponents of a market-led and an activist-led system.⁸ The marketing challenges that Fair Trade faces in the light of such conflicting ideologies has been recognized by a number of authors and has been articulated below as questions that the Fair Trade Movement and academics still appear to deliberate upon (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Strong, 1996; 1997; Nicholls, 2002; 2004; Golding & Peattie, 2005; Golding, 2009).

- How do you communicate the triple bottom line elements of sustainability to the consumer?
- How do you establish a commitment from consumers?
- How do you change negative consumer perceptions based on the history of 'low quality' and other 'alternative' associations?
- How do you get more Fair Trade products in the market place?
- How do you deal with the fact that ethical aspects are only one of many factors that play a role in consumer purchasing decisions?
- How do you maintain the ethical meaning and the message of Fair Trade in the mainstream arena?

1.2 First Steps towards the Mainstream

Low & Davenport (2005; 2005(b); 2006) argue that the initial activity that enabled Fair Trade to enter the mainstream was a tonality shift in discourse, changing the term '*alternative trade*' to '*fair trade*.' *Fair*, they argue is a more 'inclusive term' giving mainstream consumers greater understanding and more affinity with the ethos of trade

⁸ Moore et al., (2006) additionally present these conflicting ideologies as challenges and remind us that the challenges of marketing Fair Trade resonates in its ability to maintain its purity whilst also increasing mainstream accessibility and sales.

justice and fair trade, whilst also opening the doors to mainstream retail outlet distribution.⁹ As Low & Davenport (2005.148) argue;

‘From a marketing point of view, more consumers are likely to view themselves as ‘fair’ rather than ‘alternative’. Equally importantly, it is hard to imagine any mainstream business that would not believe itself to be fair, but relatively few would label themselves alternative’.

Following this tonality discourse shift, conventional marketing mix principles and practices are recognised to have played their role in the mainstreaming of Fair Trade. Products improved in quality and the movement embraced the principles of certification, labelling and branding to further connect with mainstream retail organisations (Gendon et al., 2009; Wills, 2006; Davis, 2009; Barrientos & Smith, 2007), and consumers (Osterhaus, 2006; Belz & Peattie, 2009; Giovannucci & Ponte, 2005). Nicholls & Opal (2005) point out that this process took hold in the late 1980s when the Fair Trade Movement united under the realisation that certification and labelling offered the movement an effective marketing communications tool that had the ability to both improve consumer knowledge and help gain mainstream adoption (Osterhaus, 2006(b)). As Tallontire (2006.35) explains;

‘As recently as the early 1990s, fair trade was a relatively unknown movement operating at the margins of development and business. However, fair trade labelling was then beginning to revolutionize how fair trade operated and widen its horizons to more mainstream outlets and partners.’

1.3 The Fairtrade label

Empirical research, conceptual writing and reflective critique on the ‘mainstreaming’ and growth of Fair Trade is consistent in recognising that the process of certification and labelling was the key enabler that helped move Fair Trade from the alternative margins of consumer society into the mainstream commercial arena (Tallontire, 2006; Jaffee, 2007; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Wills, 2006; Lubke, 2006; Wilkinson, 2007;

⁹ These findings are consistent with the work of Lefebvre et al., (1995); Arnold (2009), and Hastings (2007) who all highlight that the tonality of words can play an important role in developing acceptable consumer perceptions that can further influence greater engagement.

Getz & Shreck, 2006; Connolly & Shaw 2006; Smith & Barrientos, 2005; Moore, 2004; Renard, 2003; Steinrucken & Jaenichen, 2007; Loureiro & Lotade, 2005; Moore & et al., 2006; Low & Davenport, 2005(b); Low & Davenport, 2006; Raynolds & Murray, 2007, Taylor, 2005; Davies et al, 2009).

The interpretation of labels in marketing literature is strongly linked to packaging and the point of sale, and presents its function as simplifying complex information, facilitating identification and influencing consumer behaviour (Dibb & Simkin, 2009; Belz & Peattie, 2009; Smith & Taylor, 2004; Arnold, 2009). However, as Berry & McEachern (2005) note, the Fairtrade label is potentially more than just a vehicle to assist knowledge-pressed consumers (Grolleau & BenAbid 2001; Lubke, 2007) to identify Fairtrade products and make an informed choice during the brief time they spend choosing products at the point of sale (Shove, 2006; Crispell & Brandenburg, 1993; Lubke, 2007). Firstly, it is proposed that the Fairtrade label has provided the movement with a semiotic instrument that synthesizes information (Blythe, 2005; Renard, 2005; Low & Davenport, 2006; Moore et al., 2006), to help bridge the consumer information gap concerning the complexity of Fair Trade (Steinrucken & Jaenichen, 2007). Secondly the very fact that the Fairtrade label is referred to in a variety of contexts suggests a development in its purpose and role beyond those represented in traditional marketing literature.¹⁰

These differing conceptualisations of the marketing function of the Fairtrade label infer that in order to develop an more holistic understanding of the role it plays, some academic writing on the subject has contextualised and referred to it as a brand (Low & Davenport, 2005; 2006; Tallontire, 2006; Giovannucci & Ponte, 2005; Nicholls & Opal, 2005). This has produced a discourse that accepts the Fairtrade label's ability to communicate a number of intangible reassuring, and emotive attributes (Renard, 2005, Kotler et al., 2005; Hastings, 2007; Golding, 2009). These attributes have metaphorically given the Fairtrade label a number of associated 'personality traits', affording the consumer the ability to fully experience the meaning of the label (Dibb

¹⁰ For example Steinrucken & Jaenichen, (2007) describe the Fairtrade label as a 'social label', Loureiro & Lotade, (2005) and De Pelsmacker et al., (2003) refer to it as an ethical label, while Belz & Peattie (2009) conceptualise it as a 'sustainability label'.

& Simkins, 2009; Smith & Taylor, 2004; Klein 2000).¹¹ Building on these ideas, a number of authors suggest that the Fairtrade label has a range of communication abilities, these being to;

- inform (Wills, 2006; Jaffee, 2007, Steinrucken & Jaenichen, 2007)
- communicate value (Tallontire, 2006; Golding, 2009)
- offer a 'guarantee' (Low & Davenport, 2006; Moore & et al., 2006; Steinrucken & Jaenichen, 2007; Renard, 2003; Moore, 2004; Wilkinson, 2007)
- instil trust (Tallontire, 2006; Jaffee, 2007; Golding, 2009; Belz & Peattie, 2009)
- entice (Getz & Shreck, 2006)
- establish a reputation (Renard, 2005)
- augment the product (De Pelsmacker et al. 2003; Hatanaka et al. 2005, Jahn et al. 2005)
- provide material symbolism for consumers (Connolly & Shaw 2006; Zadek et al., 1998)

These key statements in the literature present the opportunity to conceptually capture the identified functions believed to resonate within the Fairtrade label. Fig 1.2:

Functionally layering the Fairtrade label, attempts to amalgamate the findings of Wills, 2006; Jaffee, 2007; Steinrucken & Jaenichen, 2007; Tallontire, 2006; Golding, 2009 Low & Davenport, 2006; Moore & et al., 2006; Renard, 2003, 2005; Moore, 2004; Wilkinson, 2007; Getz & Shreck, 2006 and De Pelsmacker et al., 2003 and presents the idea that the Fairtrade label has a series of interdependent layered functions that have the ability to entice consumers and organisation to promote, supply and demand Fairtrade certified products.

¹¹ For example Loureiro & Lotade (2005) argue that the Fair Trade label 'combines and reinforces the functional and emotional message' of social justice and care for the environment.

Fig 1.2: Functionally layering the Fairtrade label

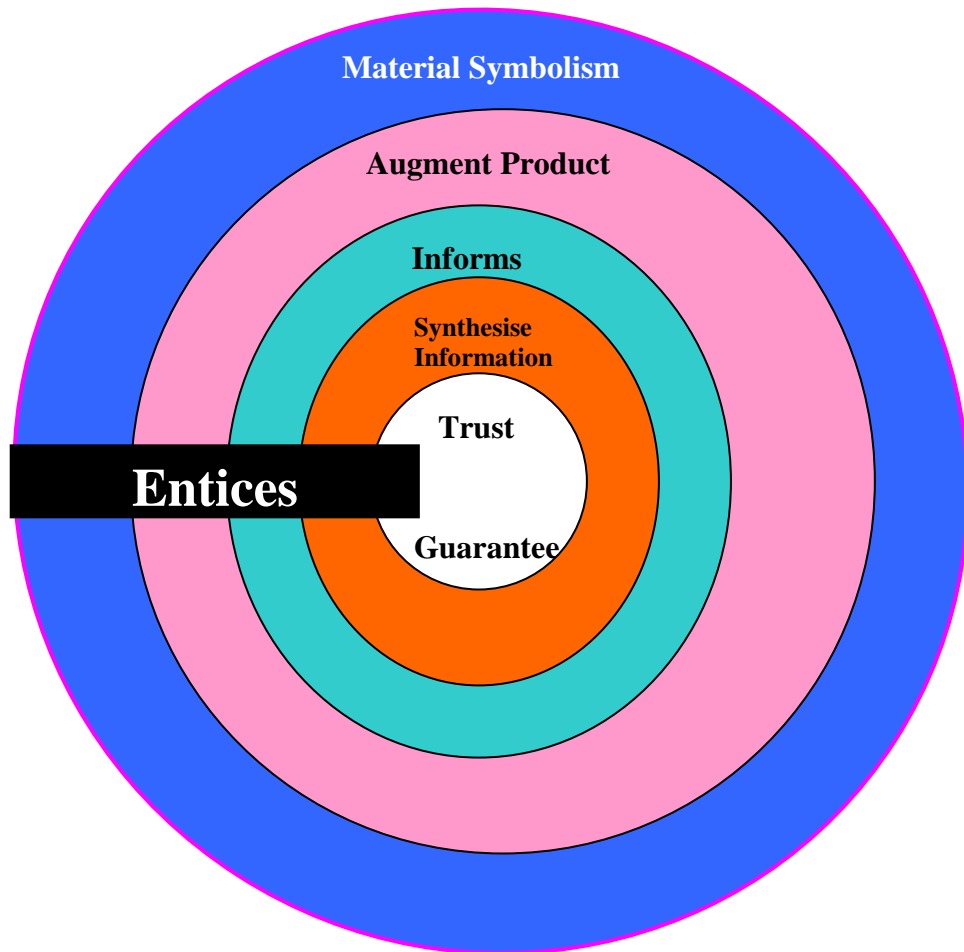


Fig 1.2 suggests that at its core, the Fairtrade label has strong links to the general marketing function of labels, demonstrated in its ability to communicate trust (Tallontire, 2006; Jaffee, 2007; Golding, 2009; Belz & Peattie, 2009), and provide a socially constructed quality guarantee that demonstrates to both consumers and distributors that the development agenda of Fair Trade is being met (Renard, 2005; Low & Davenport, 2006; Moore & et al., 2006; Steinrucken & Jaenichen, 2007; Renard, 2003; Moore, 2004; Wilkinson, 2007). As Steinrucken & Jaenichen, (2007. 203) remind us;

‘Only a Fair Trade label indicates that production and sales have followed the Fair Trade guidelines. By putting their labels on a product, the different Fair Trade organisations guarantee that the production in the country of origin has taken place under the observance of the appropriate social standards.’

Trust and the provision of a validated guarantee are argued to be the core of the Fairtrade labels utility. Both attributes are essential to engage consumer and business buy-ins. Central to the marketing proposition of Fairtrade, is proving that Fairtrade purchasing and consumption led to the international development of producer communities in the South. Communicating trust and guarantees through a single image therefore, proves to be far more complex for Fairtrade than for other branded, fast moving consumer goods.¹² However, tantamount to the Fairtrade labels’ communication success are statistics that state that in the UK, 70% of the population are reported to recognise the trademark and logo, and 64% display an understanding of the concepts behind it (Fairtrade facts and figures, 2009). Following this reported success, Wills (2006) and Jaffee (2007) expound that the label demonstrates the ability to ‘inform’ its audience of the developmental ethos of Fair Trade. The label, it is suggested, synthesises the complexity of Fair Trade by communicating trust and a guarantee, in an instantly recognised symbol that helps both the consumer and distributor to make an informed choice (Renard, 2005; Low & Davenport, 2006; Shove, 2006).

De Pelsmacker et al. (2003) note that the Fairtrade label is sometimes judged as more important than the product’s quality and branding. This suggests that the Fairtrade label has the ability to augment a product and add value to its marketing proposition. This could potentially give the product a competitive advantage that rests in its social, economic and ecological development provenance (Belz & Peattie, 2009).¹³

¹² Section 1.4 Fairtrade certification and labelling: the process helps understand how this has been achieved

¹³ As Hatanaka et al., (2005) outline, retailers, consumers, and social activists will often seek products that are differentiated through production practices, and suggest that labels and certification systems are crucial for providing and validating this information, allowing stakeholders to differentiate products based upon concerning attributes.

Connolly & Shaw (2006) imply that the Fairtrade label further demonstrates an ability to allow consumers to construct a desired personal identity through the act of consumption.¹⁴ It is a common belief that the modern consumer assembles themselves within and around objects that facilitate the communication of their identity in a social context (Miller et al., 1998; Gabriel & Lang, 2006). More notably, Durning (1992) determines that consumption has become a mechanism by which everyone judges their status through associated symbols (products, brands etc). In support, Zadek et al. (1998), quoted in Raynolds, (2002; 415) indicates that the Fairtrade label *'functions as a mirror for the consumer in securing the benefits of self expression and positive social identity'*. Unsurprisingly, when considering the communication power of consumption, the process has been compared to a 'modern language' (Baudrillard, 1998). Consumption conceptualised as a language allows consumers and society to manipulate and translate products so they are able to communicate meaning, send messages and also tell stories (Appadurai, 1986; Argyle, 1987). As Jackson (2005. 13) outlines;

'the symbolic role of consumer goods facilitates a set of vital social conversations about individual and social identity, group cohesiveness and cultural meaning'

Fig 1.2 helps to conceptualise the claim that Fair Trade has embraced the branding and communication ethos of mainstream marketing through labelling and certification. This vehicle has possibly enabled the Fairtrade Foundation to licence a label that is layered with meaning, and whose outer skin demonstrates the potential to entice consumers into a socially constructed, politicised, altruistic self and a fairer world, through the act of consumption and shopping for a better world (Sayfang, G, 2005).

¹⁴ Consumption is regarded by many academics (Kilbourne et al., 1997; Connolly & Prothero, 2003; Jackson, 2005; Gabriel & Lang, 2006), as a highly complex process that not only satisfies material necessity and voracity but also, through the manipulation of symbols, facilitates identity construction, social esteem, and relationships with others.

1.4 Fairtrade certification and labelling: The process

The Fair Trade certification and labelling process follows the principles of third party independent monitoring and certification (Raynolds, 2002; Raynolds & Long, 2007; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Taylor, 2005; Hatanaka et al., 2005, Giovannucci & Ponte, 2005). Raynolds (2002) describes this process as an independent certification that necessitates mediated interaction between producer and consumer through ‘formalised rules, standards and product labelling’. As Deaton (2004.615) describes;

‘Third party certifiers are external institutions that assess, evaluate, and certify quality claims.’

In the UK the process is governed by the Fairtrade Foundation, a non-profit organisation who, in conjunction with The Fair Trade labelling Organisation (FLO), developed a certifying system that ensures that a product, its manufacturing, and supply chain processes meet a specific set of ‘quality’ attributes (Anders et al., 2007; Golding, 2009). These attributes ensure that the economic, social and sustainable standards laid down by the Fair Trade movement have been met (Jahn et al., 2005; Bass et al., 2001; Hatanaka et al., 2005; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Raynolds & Long, 2007; Renard, 2003; Tallontire, 2006). Participation in this process is voluntary (Searl et al., 2004), and traders who successfully complete a FLO audit pay the Fairtrade Foundation a licensing fee¹⁵ to display the Fairtrade label on their products (Nicholls, 2004). Hatanaka et al. (2005) state that this process enables those successful traders who can display the label on their products the ability to provide an assurance to stakeholders that the commodity and its production process have been validated through a FLO supply chain audit¹⁶. Hatanaka et al. (2005) remind us that such attributes communicated through a label are imperative in informing and engaging consumers and organisations in Fairtrade supply and demand. As Goodman (2004.897) argues;

¹⁵ The licensing fee is 2% of cost price.

¹⁶ The logistics of the Fairtrade label’s third party certification process is well beyond the scope of this review, however, it is important to recognise its marketing significance, as many suggest the process has been vital in generating trust (Tallontire, 2006; Jaffee, 2007; Golding, 2009; Belz & Peattie, 2009, Jahn et al., 2005), credence (Jahn et al., 2005), and legitimacy/ validity (Hatanaka et al., 2005, Anders et al., 2007; Nicholls, 2004) in Fairtrade products

‘The logic behind international production standards is to stimulate demand and promote consumer confidence in what fair trade is and means’

However, despite the predominantly positive discourse about Fairtrade labelling and its value from a marketing perspective, there are elements of criticism and notes of caution raised by some authors. (Jaffee, 2007; Tallontire, 2006; Renard, 2003, Barrientos & Smith, 2007; Raynolds & Murray, 2007; DE Pelsmacker et al., 2003; Low & Davenport, 2006; Moore, 2004; Wills, 2006; Lubke, 2006; Hudson & Hudson, 2003). The literature appears to indicate three key concerns with the labelling strategy pursued by the Fair Trade movement.

1. Moore, (2004) referencing the work of Hudson & Hudson (2003), suggests that a proliferation of third party certification labels on ‘ethical’ products has led to consumer confusion and scepticism about claims.¹⁷ However, contradictory to this, Bezencon & Blili (2009) emphasise that among the different social, environmental and organic labels, Fairtrade is one of the most preferred.
2. The Fairtrade label has also been criticised for its inability to provide consumers with the ability to ‘absorb’ the full understanding of Fairtrade.¹⁸
3. Davies et al., (2009) note the potential inequalities of the Fairtrade labelling system that fail to differentiate between organisations which are 100% Fair Trade and those whose commitment is smaller.
4. Barrientos & Smith (2007) warn of the exploitation of the label by supermarkets through the Fairtrade certification of supermarket own-branded

¹⁷ Explorative research carried out by Wright & Heaton (2006) indicates that when a focus group was shown the Fairtrade ‘logo’ the majority felt it failed to communicate well as a ‘silent seller’.

¹⁸ Consequently, the Fairtrade label has been accused of potentially promoting a shallow understanding of Fair Trade (Low & Davenport, 2006; Lubke, 2006).

products. They suggest that the supermarkets' process of outsourcing production passes the Fairtrade certification and labelling responsibility into the hands of the outsourced manufacturer. This, they argue, gives the supermarket a false sense of acclaim, as consumers associate the practice of Fairtrade with the supermarket and potentially could believe that the organisation has incorporated 'ethical' trading principles into its business functions.¹⁹

Jaffee (2007) further elaborates on these issues and suggests that it is possible to imagine a situation where the Fairtrade label has been 'captured' by the dominant merchants of the free market.²⁰

Ultimately, both the positive and negative thoughts presented on Fairtrade labelling being a prime marketing function for the movement, demonstrate the potential challenges surrounding purity and mainstreaming discussed in the introduction of this chapter. However, the literature reviewed suggests that the Fairtrade label is recognised as a major influential marketing tool that has played a successful role in informing, reminding and educating consumers and organisations about the intangible elements and legitimacy of Fairtrade products. Ultimately it has been credited with making a significant contribution to its rapid growth in availability and consumption (Renard, 2005; Low & Davenport, 2006; Belz & Peattie, 2009; Steinrucken & Jaenichen, 2007; Wills, 2006; Loureiro & Lotade, 2005; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Giovannucci & Ponte, 2005; Golding, 2009; Arnold, 2009). As Low & Davenport (2005 (b).507) outline;

'The strategy of creating a system for certifying fair trade coffee, tea and other FMCGs and building fair trade brands has revitalised the fortunes of the movement and taken its message from the fringes to the mainstream'

¹⁹ This brings the notion of fairness in the certification process into question and as Jaffee (2007) highlights, as large corporations enter into the Fairtrade certification process, if not managed appropriately, they may have the potential to weaken the label.

²⁰ This, Jaffee (2007) implies, may render the Fairtrade label meaningless and potentially powerless in the pursuit of trade justice.

The literature reviewed demonstrates that Fairtrade's strategy of labelling and third party certification has unquestionably helped to take Fairtrade from the margins of consumer society and alternative markets into the mainstream arena. However, what is of paramount interest to the study of Fairtrade Towns is Hutchens' (2009.82) suggestion that states:

'Until the certification system emerged, consumers had not been effectively enrolled and were undervalued and unrecognised as a 'huge force' for social change'

Hutchens' work considers the greater systemic potential for the label moving its utility beyond instilling value in consumer goods, by visioning its ability and value to activate and rapidly escalate 'grassroots social change' and facilitate those activities of grassroots community that led Fairtrade campaigning.

Third party certification and labelling is the process that has been established to ensure places can be 'fairly' accredited as a Fairtrade Town. This process has enabled the Fairtrade Foundation to produce a set of standardised 'quality attributes', that make it possible for them to assess, evaluate and certify the claims of a place in relation to their commitment to Fairtrade promotion and consumption (Lamb, 2008). These are referred to as the five goals of a Fairtrade Town and state that:

1. The local council must pass a resolution supporting Fairtrade, and serve Fairtrade coffee and tea at its meetings and in offices and canteens.
2. A range of Fairtrade products must be readily available in the town's or city's shops and served in local cafés and catering establishments (targets are set in relation to population).
3. Fairtrade products must be used by a number of local work places (estate agents, hairdressers etc) and community organisations (churches, schools etc).
4. The council must attract popular support for the campaign.
5. A local Fairtrade steering group must be convened to ensure continued commitment to Fairtrade status.

(Fairtrade Towns, 2008)

Potentially, the successful third party audited town may benefit from some of the positive, and suffer from some of the negative issues regarding Fairtrade labelling that have been outlined above.²¹ Around (2006.14) supports this possibility by indicating that Fairtrade Town certification demonstrates an ability to act as a '*leverage tool for campaigners*' to convince organisations and individual consumers to switch to Fairtrade.

The notion of third party certification for a 'place' is not without its critics, with the main protagonist being Around (2006). She suggests that using the Fairtrade Trade label and certification process to validate a 'campaign scheme' may be inappropriate, exclude alternative traders and promote a shallow understanding of the wider trade justice agenda. Lamb (2008.46) also recognises the challenges of using the same label on a place as on a product and states '*it was a branding –controllers' nightmare and a campaigners' dream come true*'. Despite these tensions, she later accepted that the Fairtrade Towns movement has proved to be a significant marketing tool, recognising it as the '*most effective way to raise local awareness and availability of Fairtrade*'. Third party certification for a 'place' is not as common a phenomenon as it is for products and services. However, many examples can be found through the UK. One example is UNESCO's evaluation and certification of geographical areas such as towns, heritage sites and buildings upon whose third party inspection can be awarded the prestigious title of a UNESCO Town or Heritage Site (UNESCO, 2009).²² Taking a social constructed approach to place one could also argue that the attainment of 'investors in people' for an organisation could additionally be described as a third party certification of a place that is interpreted through the behaviour of the people who occupy its place and time (Investors in People, 2009). These assumptions

²¹ For example the town's population operating to market Fairtrade may benefit from increased levels of trust, credence and legitimacy when promoting and developing Fairtrade consumption within their sphere of influence.

²² Other examples may be the star awards carried by hotels and bed and breakfasts and the validation of sustainable business practices through the award of ISO14001 certification (British Assessment Bureau).

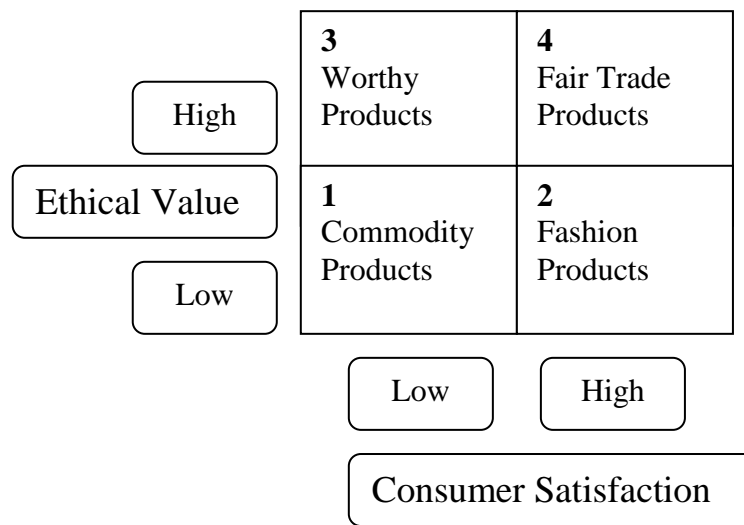
potentially support the notion that a certified Fairtrade Town could also be viewed as socially constructed as it becomes a place that is evaluated through the promotional activities and ethical consumption patterns of its occupiers (both individuals and organisations alike). The concepts and dynamic application of place in relation to Fair Trade marketing and Fairtrade Towns will be further explored in this chapter and chapter 2 as part of the marketing mix.

1.5: Fairtrade: The Product

Nicholls & Opal (2005) use Kotler et al. (1999) to help them conceptualise Fair Trade products, and suggest that by combining function with ethics, Fair Trade products can be viewed as ‘social goods’.²³ Nicholls & Opal (2005) suggest that Fair Trade products viewed as social goods offer the consumer an ability to evaluate them from both their ability to provide personal satisfaction, and to deliver ethical value in terms of their developmental impact. Fig 1.3: *Ethical classification of products* (Nichols & Opal, 2005.155), diagrammatically conceptualises this. Quadrants 3 ‘*worthy products*’ and quadrant 4 ‘*Fair Trade products*’ represented in Fig 1.3 are particularly interesting to this review. Nichols & Opal (2005) argue that early Fair Trade products should be classified as ‘*worthy products*’, suggesting they carried a guarantee of high ethical value but unfortunately were renowned for their low quality and low customer satisfaction, and as such can be justifiably placed in quadrant 3 of Fig 1.3

²³ This proposal may be contentious and it could be argued that at a more simplistic level Fair Trade products are generally private goods with social attributes embedded in them from the production system and trading arrangements behind them.

Fig 1.3 Ethical Classification of Products



Nicholls & Opal (2005.155)

It is well documented that early Fair Trade products such as coffee and tea were notorious for their very poor quality (represented through taste), and as such were only consumed by those hardened activist consumers who viewed their consumption as an ethical gesture that supported the values of the Fair Trade Movement (Lubke, 2006; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Golding & Peattie, 2005; Low & Davenport, 2005 (b)). As Lubke, (2006.75) expounds;

'In the early stages of Fair Trade, its founders and first customers were willing to turn a blind eye to numerous imperfections and inconveniences. Even if a bitter Nicaraguan coffee threatened to burn a hole in one's throat, it had to be consumed, because it served a good cause'

Conceptualising Fair Trade as a 'worthy product' has resulted in a discourse that implies a history of negative consumer perceptions resulting from poor quality goods failing to match consumer expectations (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Wright & Heaton, 2006). De Pelsmaccker & Janssens (2007) build on this discourse and infer that the consumer perception of early Fair Trade products being perceived as low quality has made consumers dubious and less interested in Fair Trade and its developmental agenda. Davies et al.(2009) argue that the Fair Trade movement's awareness of these negative perceptions encouraged one of the main strategies of post 1991 mainstreaming, leading to the repositioning of Fair Trade and helping remove it from

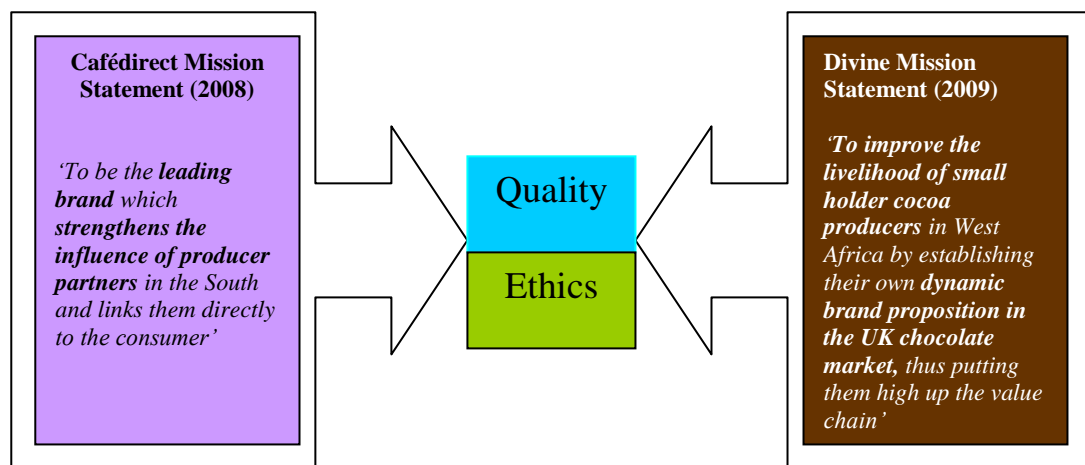
the early ‘charity shop’ poor quality stigma. The concept of Fair Trade as a worthy product is also viewed as a period in time that both Tallontire (2000), and Davies et al. (2009), conceptualise as the solidarity era (1970-1990) and Golding & Peattie (2005) and Nicholls & Opal (2005) refer to as phase 1 in Fair Trade Marketing (see Fig 4.0 & 4.1). During this period these authors appear to agree that Fair Trade attempted to market their products through both a political and producer solidarity proposition. However, as Tallontire (2000) reminds us, over time the limitation of only appealing to the alternative or politically motivated consumer potentially made the proposition less tenable and would have limited the progression of the Fair Trade Movement.

To mainstream Fair Trade it appears that the movement needed to distance itself from its negative guilt-based marketing strategy by developing Fair Trade products and its marketing to fit into quadrant 4 of Fig 1.3 (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Lubke, 2006). Quadrant 4 ‘*Fair Trade Products*’ it could be argued is where the majority of today’s certified Fairtrade products could be placed. Moving Fair Trade products from quadrant 3 to quadrant 4 in Fig: 1.3 appears to be the result of successful product development (quality improvements) and marketing communications that emphasises both quality and ethical credence (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Moore et al., 2006).²⁴ Evidence of this strategy being played out can be viewed from the discourse used by Cafédirect (Cafédirect Annual Report, 2008) and Divine Chocolate (Divine Annual Report, 2009). Fig 1.4: *The Mission of the Fair Trade Pioneers’: Quality and Ethics*, further demonstrates the relevance of brand management in the development of Cafédirect and Divine (Cafédirect Annual Report, 2008; Divine Annual Report, 2009). The diagram supports the work of Davies et al. (2009) and Doherty & Tranchell (2007) by contextualising their findings to the company discourse of both Divine and Cafédirect. As such it is evident that both companies are following a strategy of

²⁴ Examples of this strategy can be seen from the ‘*Fair Trade Pioneers*’ Cafédirect and The Day Chocolate Company (Davies et al., 2009; Barrientos et al., 2007; Lubke, 2006; Doherty & Tranchell, 2007). Both organisations have put a great deal of resource, creativity and effort into the quality of their coffee (Davies et al., 2009), /chocolate (Doherty & Tranchell, 2007), and the development of aesthetically pleasing ‘evocative’ marketing communications campaigns (Wright, 2004; Davies et al., 2009; Lubke, 2006), that attempt to deliver a message of quality without compromising ethics and vice versa (Lubke, 2006; Shaw, 2005; Golding & Peattie, 2005; Moore et al., 2006; Doherty & Tranchell, 2007).

brand strengthening established through the marketing proposition of quality²⁵. In support of the importance of such strategies, Davies et al. (2009) argue that if Cafédirect are to sustain success and remain differentiated they need to ‘*work on the depth of the fair trade message*’. A point that is recognised by Doherty & Tranchell (2007:703) who argue that Divine are ‘*exemplar in how to communicate*’ the human element of sustainability.

Fig 1.4: The Mission of the Fair Trade Pioneers: Quality and Ethics



Emphasising the importance of quality to Fair Trade products, Vantomme et al. (2006) and De Pelsmacker et al. (2005) highlight that this is often the most significant factor affecting the buying decision. Levi & Linton, (2003) further imply that when the quality of a Fair Trade product is divergent from consumer preference it can turn even the staunchest ethical consumer away. As Golding & Peattie (2005) and Raynolds (2002) remind us, potential Fair Trade consumers seek more self satisfaction than ethical value from their coffee through a desire for good tasting, realistically priced coffee that is conveniently available. Both also argue that the mainstreaming success of Fair Trade, evident through brands such as Cafédirect has potentially been built on the traditional principles of consumer-led marketing and the economic theory of consumer maximising utility and not on ethics and sustainability

²⁵ The contextualisation of quality in these works is associated with both the tangible product's taste and the intangible process of building sustainability and ethics into the branding proposition.

(Steinrucken & Jaenichen, 2007). ²⁶ Evidence of this strategy can be seen from a Cafédirect spokesperson quoted in Golding & Peattie (2005.162);

‘We want people to buy it because it’s good quality and once people start buying it because it’s a very good product, then people will start getting the Fair Trade message.... It is not that we wanted to do it that way; it just came out in all the different studies that consumers were more concerned about the quality of the product than the Fair Trade element. So we had to respond to that if we want to carry on in the market basically’

This quote appears to be synonymous with the dilemma many other Fair Trade organisations had when attempting to scale up their operations and take their products to the mainstream. Literature suggests that Fair Trade organisations had to accept the prevailing paradigm of consumption being driven by self interest and not altruistic values (Golding, 2009). This approach ironically, Tiffen & Zadek (1996) argue, has led to the growth of greater consumer commitment to Fairtrade, witnessing semi-ethical and non-ethical consumers now becoming repeat Fair Trade customers.²⁷ As Wright & Heaton (2006.425) posit;

‘Consistent quality should in this sense work alongside altruism as a motivator and not negate it’

1.6: Product Range

Nicholls (2002 & 2004.102) outlines that although Fair Trade products had become an accepted part of the mainstream supermarket offer it still had a very limited product range. He notes that this *‘relative paucity of choice’* could in some way be responsible for the intention-behaviour gap in consumer behaviour that hinders Fair Trade progress, and reminds us;

²⁶ It is possible to infer that the prevailing consumer sovereign environment has necessitated Fair Trade to engage consumers on the basis of product quality after which (post purchase) it then looked to disseminate its developmental message.

²⁷ Davies et al., (2009) support this by arguing that product quality and strong brand identity have proven to be significantly important in Fair Trade products gaining greater market share

‘The public interest in fair trade products is growing and demand has now reached the point where the multiples recognise this as constituting a distinct niche market. However, there is a huge gap between consumers’ stated intention to shop in a way that makes a difference for producers in developing countries and the actual sales of fair trade products. There is a whole complex of reasons for this, but central to the matter is the limited range of widely available fair trade products in the high street.’

Nicholls (2004.116)

Nicholls (2002; 2004) therefore suggested that a consumer market led strategy of new product development was vital to sustain the continual growth of the Fair Trade Movement.²⁸ In nine years it appears the strategy of product development proposed by Nicholls has been successfully implemented. The Fairtrade Foundation (2009 (c)) advise that over 4,500 Fairtrade certified products including, clothes, flowers, beer, wine, cakes, sweets, tea, coffee, fresh fruit and much more are now available in the UK.²⁹

This suggests that the product range of Fairtrade certified goods has experienced accelerated growth by encompassing highly differentiated products from the early ‘food based’ days of the movement into the Fairtrade product portfolio. This strategy has additionally witnessed the introduction of Fairtrade certified composite products such as cakes made from Fairtrade sugar with the remaining ingredients coming from other non-Fairtrade certified sources (Nicholls & Opal, 2005). Additionally, and perhaps more significantly with regards to sales volume and the controversy of maintaining the purity of Fair Trade, has been the influx of major brands seeking to be certified by the Fairtrade Foundation. In 2009 Cadbury launched its Dairy Milk range, Nestle, its four-finger Kit-Kat bars and Starbucks, all its espresso-based coffees as Fairtrade (Fairtrade Foundation, 2009a; 2009e; 2009g).³⁰

²⁸ In the year 2000 only 75 different Fairtrade products were available in the UK (Mintel, 2001), the vast majority being food related (Nicholls, 2002).

²⁹ For example June and December of 2009 further demonstrated two examples of rapid product development with the introduction of Fairtrade melons and Fairtrade beauty products (Fairtrade Foundation, 2009d; 2009f) into the ever-expanding and diverse portfolio of products carrying the Fairtrade label.

³⁰ It is too soon to expect empirical data or academic critique on this strategy. However, the reported failing and market retrenchment of Nestle’s ‘Partners Blend’ Fairtrade coffee in late 2009, may yield

1.7: Fair Trade: Price

The differentiation of Fair Trade products represented through ethical value and increasingly so through higher quality has unsurprisingly resulted in higher retail prices than that of its direct mainstream competition (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Nicholls, 2002; 2004). Nicholls & Opal (2005) state that the premium retail price attached to Fair Trade products can help emphasise its core values and further augment other marketing communications in helping consumers identify both the fair commodity price and the social premium paid to producers. Low & Davenport (2006) on the other hand deduce that there is evidence to suggest that consumers only absorb the fair price element of Fair Trade, suggesting that a focus on price as the message could further extend the problem of limited understanding.

Many academics also caution against the ideal of a premium price for Fair Trade products, suggesting it may be impossible to maintain (Low & Davenport, 2005; 2006; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Vantomme et al., 2006; Lubke, 2006). The ability of Fair Trade products to maintain a high price in mainstream retail outlets appears to be questionable due to the dual factor of supermarkets developing their own Fairtrade product ranges and their preference for competing on price. Consequently Nicholls & Opal (2005) posit that a 'race to the bottom' may become an issue that Fair Trade may face in the not so distant future.

De Pelsmaker et al. (2006) identify the high prices of Fair Trade products as another component in the attitude-behaviour gap that reportedly exists between those consumers who say they would buy Fair Trade products and those who actually do. By considering the power of price to help close the attitude behaviour gap Vantomme et al., (2006) argue that it is easy to perceive how lower retail prices for Fair Trade products could have a positive effect on Fair Trade sales. Alternatively, Lubke (2006) argues that to gain access to the mainstream, different price ceilings for different consumers need to be set. He maintains that while the more loyal Fair Trade

insights into how far the mainstreaming of Fair Trade can go when attempting to include large corporations in the production or distribution of Fairtrade certified products

consumers are willing to pay a '*remarkable extra charge*' for Fair Trade products this willingness '*declines rapidly in the group of non buyers*' Lubke (2006.75).³¹

The literature infers that price may have a dual function for Fair Trade products, operating both as a communication tool whilst also demonstrating an ability to influence consumers to purchase Fair Trade products. This presents the Fair Trade Movement with the dilemma that many traditional mainstream business organisations face, that is to either maintain a high price through a strategy of differentiation or to race to the bottom in an attempt to increase sales via lower more competitive pricing (Nicholls, 2004). One could argue that presently the Fair Trade Movement is more akin to maintain a premium price for a product that carries a bundle of unique selling propositions that can be used to promote its differentiation values (Wright & Heaton, 2006). As Wright (2004.668) outlines;

'the price premium of fair trade in comparison with other brands is presented as having its own reward; a better product, a confirmation of social status'

Interestingly Bondy & Talwar's (2011) research into how Fair Trade consumers have reacted to the Global economic recession indicated that the premium price of Fair Trade food products has failed to result in a significant change in Fair Trade consumers' behaviour. Their research suggested that very few Fair Trade consumers displayed signs of established consumer behaviour norms (becoming more price sensitive) in times of financial difficulties.³²

1.8: Fair Trade Promotion

Nicholls & Opal (2005) and Nicholls (2004) state that the ethical element of Fair Trade must be at the core of all Fair Trade products, and that Fair Trade marketing communications should aim to be commercially viable by 'articulating' social,

³¹ As a result he calls for the movement to consider a more segmented pricing strategy that considers different buyers and different products, thus enabling organisations to get a clear understanding of the upper limits of price difference that is acceptable to each different consumer group or product.

³² Despite this, we should not be ready to ignore Wright & Heaton's (2006) argument that more needs to be done to communicate the premium price benefits of Fair Trade, reminding us of the importance of transparency in justifying to consumers the reasoning behind it.

sustainable and economic connections between producers and consumers. Golding & Peattie (2005) similarly argue that virtue is the starting point of Fair Trade products and central to its marketing communications is the altruistic proposition of 'benefiting others'. This they argue is an imperative in motivating consumers to purchase. Moore & Slack (2006) support the work of both Golding & Peattie (2005) and Nicholls & Opal (2005) advocating that Fair Trade is built on an anthropocentric view of the market and implying Fair Trade promotion should be established through socially constructed marketing discourse based on the human element of sustainability.³³ As Nicholls (2002.15) highlights;

'Fair Trade products need to be supported by marketing communications that allow the individual consumer to feel a sense of making a difference, in order to secure a commitment to regular purchase behaviour and develop brand loyalty. The emphasis on individual producer stories in much fair trade advertising and labelling clearly attempts to fulfil this role'.

Both Goodman (2004) and Wright (2004) also support the need for the developmental and political message of Fair Trade to be its core marketing communication proposition and have conceptualised Fair Trade's developmental raison d'être of linking the producer and consumer through the work of Marx's 1st volume of Das Kapital and the process of 'commodity fetishism'³⁴.

Goodman (2004) argues that Fair Trade has de-fetishised its products by making the process of production and consumption transparent in its marketing communications. However, Wright (2004) in her critique of Cafedirect's marketing communications appears to imply that while Fair Trade has gone to great lengths to de-fetishise its products, ironically the marketing communications used to promote this de-fetishizing process combined with the quality proposition, has resulted in the process of '(re) fetishizing' as the Fair Trade product once again becomes laden with social

³³ Many academics, activists, journalists and marketers unequivocally also recognise the need for the developmental and political message of Fair Trade to be at the core of its marketing communication proposition (Nicholls, 2004; Lubke, 2006; Doherty & Tranchell, 2007; Davies et al., 2009; Low & Davenport, 2005; 2005(b); 2006; Lamb, 2008; Jaffee, 2007; Golding, 2009; Strong, 1997).

³⁴ Commodity fetishism is inferred to as a process that endows commodities with desirable, socially constructed properties whilst concealing the social and economic 'exploitation' involved in the production process (Goodman, 2004; Wright, 2004; Marx, 1961).

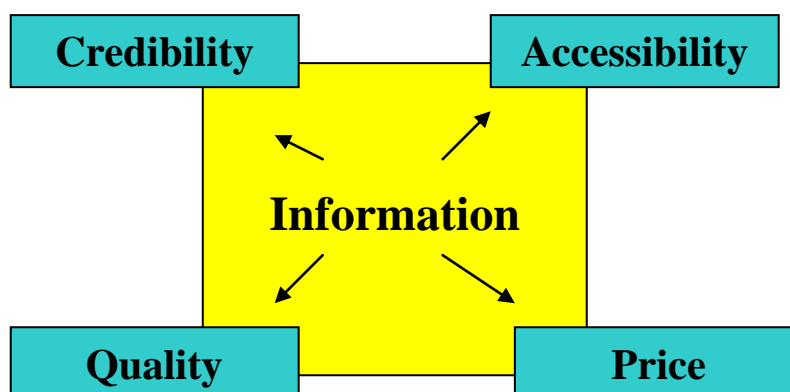
constructed, fetishised meanings based on the principles of altruism and sustainable development. Both Wright (2004) and Goodman (2004) argue that re-fetishizing has contributed to a marketing proposition that has legitimised '*consumer pleasure*' (Wright, 2004.671), through the promotion of self satisfaction that can be achieved by consuming a quality product awash with fetishised meanings. It is precisely these socially constructed 'fetishised' meanings that Wright (2004) and Goodman (2004) argue allows consumers to express their altruistic solidarity for the commodity producer, whilst also engaging in a practice akin to conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 1899).

The marketing communication challenges facing Fair Trade are succinctly pointed out by Davies et al. (2009) who, in interpreting the work of Reynolds et al. (2007) suggest that the message needs to be more than just a fair price paid for commodities. They argue that the Fair Trade message should maintain its transformative, developmental trading system with people and the environment at its core. As Arnold (2009.131) reminds us;

'Fairtrade is the number one ethical value that the new consumer relates to because it's about people. No matter how cold we can be, most of us feel for others.'

Lubke (2006.69) identifies with the above and asks us to view the political and marketing aspects of Fair Trade not as rivals but as '*different sides of the same coin*'. He suggests a link with consumer citizenship, stating that one side of the coin could represent political convictions that may lead to 'related' informed consumers buying Fair Trade. The other side of the coin could symbolise the concept that basic information about trading conditions on the packaging may act as a motivation for consumers to develop further political awareness about the Fair Trade movement. Expanding on this concept, Lubke (2006.74) presents a model that attempts to capture aspects that are crucial to the successful marketing of Fair Trade. The model '*The Magic Squire of Fair Trade Marketing*' can be seen in Fig 1.5. This model presently is the only conceptual model that builds its ideas solely around generic Fair Trade marketing.

Fig 1.5: The Magic Squire of Fair Trade Marketing



Lubke (2006.69)

The four key principles of credibility, accessibility, quality and price have the potential to help conceptualise the various marketing issues the Fair Trade Movement has wrestled with since its conception. What is clear from this model is the correlation it has with the previously outlined marketing issues of creating a marketing proposition that informs consumers of the quality of the product, combined with the verified credibility of its intangible ethics and, in essence, establishes a proposition blended by ethical values and quality.³⁵

The professionalism of pioneering Fair Trade organisations such as Cafedirect demonstrated through the development of quality-related ethical branding is suggested to result in a positive shift in consumer perceptions. Such a positive shift, some agree, has systemically led to a rapid rise in consumer/organisation interest and the supply and demand for Fair Trade products (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Golding & Peattie 2005; Davies et al., 2009; Doherty & Tranchell, 2007). However, Nicholls & Opal (2005) argue that independent Fair Trade brands such as Cafedirect have potentially reduced the movement's ability to develop effective holistic marketing communications. They suggest that these organisations have developed brands that have constructed and communicated their own meanings of Fair Trade therefore resulting in a decentralised

³⁵ One should ask; is this model in Fig 1.5 delivering 'real' originality to the emerging field of Fair Trade marketing? If, for example you consider 'quality' in this model as a mere reflection of product, and 'accessibility' as the consumer benefit delivered by place management, it could be argued that the model is just a half, re-jigged marketing mix that considers consumer-benefits rather than the traditional producer activity-orientated process.

and uncoordinated approach to Fair Trade brand management (Nicholls, 2004). This, they argue has presented the Fair Trade Movement with the problem of potentially disseminating mixed messages about what Fair Trade actually is.³⁶ However, Nicholls & Opal (2005) identify tension between manufactured Fair Trade brands and the role of Fairtrade labelling, suggesting that multiple expressions of Fair Trade branding has the potential to confuse and diminish consumer understanding and trust.³⁷

Others argue that this marketing communications strategy is not without its problems. Moore & Slack (2006) recognise that the complex array of intangible characteristics embedded in Fair Trade products presents marketing communication difficulties when attempting to develop consumer understanding. This potentially highlights the dilemma of how to best use traditional marketing communication channels to educate consumers about the developmental/political ethos of Fair Trade.

As Strong (1996, 1997) reminds us, communicating the ‘human element’ of sustainability was a major challenge for Fair Trade organisations when attempting to mainstream their products. Davies et al. (2009) explains that if this is not undertaken it could lead to developmental qualities of Fairtrade becoming secondary to the message of fair price. Moore et al. (2006) additionally note that this could lead to the Fair Trade message being lost or becoming a form of product augmentation resulting in Fair Trade consumption becoming merely a ‘lifestyle’ choice’ with no real meaning or substance resonating with the consumer (Golding, 2009). This problem has been acknowledged by Low & Davenport (2005; 2005(b)), who imply that the Fair Trade message may have already shifted from engagement in developmental trade reforms to just focusing on a fair price for producers. This, they argue has potentially watered down the developmental message of Fair Trade to appease to the demands of the modern consumer who are now encouraged to shop for a better world (Seyfang, 2008).

³⁶ Some argue that this problem has been eased by the Fairtrade label because it has enabled independent organisations to communicate a brand with a set of unified values by displaying it on their products.

³⁷ Despite these fears, it is suggested that the various Fairtrade certified products available demonstrate evidence of unifying brand values. These brand values, Nicholls & Opal (2005) argue, are unequivocally related to the source/origin of Fair Trade products and deliver messages of quality and ethics.

Above-the-line promotion Lubke (2006); Wenham et al. (2003); Low & Davenport (2005); Golding & Pettie (2005) all claim has presented the Fair Trade movement, its products and most of its organisations with a number of difficulties. Lubke (2006) and Nicholls & Opal (2005) posit that most Fair Trade organisations lack the financial resources necessary to invest in intricate above-the-line marketing communications campaigns. Wenham et al. (2003), Low & Davenport (2005) and Golding (2009) recognise that the intangible complexity of the practices of Fair Trade and the social benefits it bestows can be difficult to portray in the mainstream mass media. This indicates that it needs to take more of an educational approach to promotion (Nicholls & Opal, 2005). They also suggest that above-the-line promotion is limited for Fair Trade products due the fact that both the Fairtrade label and the values of an independent brand are difficult to promote in one copy. Literature thus suggests that above-the-line promotions and the media it uses are potentially economically unviable and ineffective as a communication channel for most Fair Trade products and the organisations concerned. However, one could question these results as organisations such as Cadburys & Starbucks getting involved in Fairtrade certification quite literally buck the trend. Despite such actions by mainstream organisations, Nicholls & Opal (2005) claim that establishing an awareness of Fair Trade and its wider developmental aim is primarily an act of education that, combined with campaigning, has both satisfied immediate market demand and over time increased the size of the market.

Alexander & Nicholls (2006) and Nicholls & Opal (2005) argue that, by seeing Fair Trade marketing as a function needing to provide layers of information attached to products, marketing communications that enable the Fair Trade message to reach the consumer are dependant on a number of actors (nodes) operating in a network. They indicate that this network operates in the spirit of actor network theory and is made up of human and non-human network mediators that weave together the developmental message of Fair Trade and link information and meaning knowledge flows between producer and consumer (Latour, 2005; Law & Hassard, 1999). These networked activities can be conceptualised as facilitating, and on many occasions, actually becoming a marketing dynamic upon which Fairtrade Towns are dependent.

Nicholls & Opal (2005) note that the Fair Trade Movement viewed as an actor network, demonstrates a marketing shift from the dominant node in the network being the producer and the reliance on the commodity chain, to the dominant node being the retailer/consumer within a commodity network, to the present dominant node being the consumer/retailer. As Goodman (2004.893) explains;

'Fair trade networks work to bring the distant strangers (Corbridge, 1998), of poor farming communities into the world of concern (and pocketbooks) of Northern consumers'

Law (1999. 3) portrays actor network theory as a *'ruthless application of semiotics'* suggesting that entities in a network take form and acquire attributes only as a result of their relations with other entities, arguing that an entity in its own right has no intrinsic worth. Contextualising this, Dubuisson-Quellier & Lamine (2008) claim that Fair Trade marketing and consumer involvement are inspired by actor network theory. They suggest that the Fair Trade market is a dense network of mechanisms and operations (Fairtrade label, products, price, retail space, places, consumers, producers etc.) that allows market actors to coordinate their actions and meanings in order to choose to promote, supply, demand and consume Fair Trade products. This, Whatmore & Thorne (1997.294) view as a strong fabric of social organisation that is durable over a long distance (the space between producer and consumer) and capable of producing *'social and environmental practice in particular times and places integral to the business of network enrolment'* ie Fairtrade marketing in Fairtrade Towns. Actor network theory may therefore provide a useful model to help theorize the marketing function of a Fairtrade Town and both Nicholls & Opal (2005) and Alexander & Nicholls (2006) claim that in a Fairtrade Town, non-human actors such as geographical spaces have become interwoven into the meaning that defines Fair Trade marketing at a community/civic level. Actor network theory contextualised to marketing dynamics said to function in a Fairtrade Town therefore, in the words of Whatmore & Thorne (1997.288);

'depends upon intricate interweaving of situated people, artefacts, codes, and living things and the maintenance of particular tapestries of connections across the world. Such processes and patterns of connection are not reducible

to a single logic or determinant interest lying somewhere outside or above the social fray'

Nicholls & Opal (2005) argue that by viewing the development of Fair Trade marketing through actor network theory, the core concept of Fair Trade (consumer-producer connectivity) has been extended to new market segments. This has been through developing the strategic use of information flows between new nodes within existing and emerging Fair Trade networks. As Latour (2005) expounds, the project of actor network theory is to expand and transform the structure of those (human and non-human) brought together as participants to devise a way to make them act as an effective all-encompassing entity. Latour's ideas are recognised in the work of Nicholls & Opal (2005) and Alexander & Nicholls (2006) who strongly confer to his ideas on actor network theory when conceptualising the marketing dynamic of Fairtrade Towns.

The idea of dominant nodes in a network influencing the marketing ethos and practices of the Fair Trade Movement, appear to complement Golding & Peattie's (2004) phase 3, '*new marketing*', in Fairtrade marketing as represented in Fig 4.0. Phase 3 considers the importance of reaching larger markets via the activities of sympathetic/affiliated consumers, organisations, communities and other places. This suggests that both people and place have become key nodes in Fair Trade's marketing communications actor network. Phase 3 in identifying the role of consumer citizens, organisations and places to develop and facilitate Fair Trade marketing, reinforces the importance attributed to Fairtrade Towns. It shows that they are recognised for developing and executing effective and appropriate marketing communication strategies. This is illustrated in the work of Around (2006), Talpin (2009), Lamb (2008) and Crowther & Human (2011). Fairtrade Towns appear to gift the Fair Trade Movement with a support network that consists of various 'in place' actors/nodes who, when functioning together prove capable of developing effective marketing communications and relationships with other citizens and a wide spectrum of organisations. Such marketing communications and relationships are suggested to be of a wide variety, and sometimes bespoke to place. Furthermore, they are additionally argued to have led to increasing Fairtrade awareness and consumption within specific spheres of influence (Alexander & Nicholls, 2006; Lubke, 2006 Nicholls & Opal,

2005; Davies, 2009; Malpass et al., 2007; Low & Davenport, 2009). Fairtrade Towns are therefore suggested to function as a marketing dynamic by unifying and networking the social constructs of a given place. Thus, Fairtrade Towns are presented by Nicholls & Opal (2005) as a marketing dynamic functioning in the spirit of Actor Network Theory that demonstrates an ability to develop new and dynamic place-based approaches to marketing and promoting Fairtrade consumption. Fairtrade Towns therefore, as an actor network theory are argued to enable *'the right documents, the right devices, the right people'* to be *'properly drilled'* and put together in a structure to develop a relevant marketing dynamic that has both *'durability and fidelity'* Whatmore & Thorne (1997:293). The right documents, the right devices and the right people are therefore suggested to enable Fairtrade Towns to construct a marketing dynamic born from understanding the ethical consumer and the activities of ethical consumption.

1.9: Fair Trade Consumption: The Ethical Consumer and Ethical Consumption.

The limited literature dedicated to the Fairtrade Towns movement demonstrates a number of understandings attributing and conceptualising Fair Trade consumption and Fair Trade consumers through a competing yet complimentary discourse made up of the following:

- Ethical consumers and ethical consumption (Doran, 2010; Doran & Natale, 2011; Adams & Raisbourough, 2010; Low & Davenport, 2007; Malpass et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2010; Alexander & Nicholls 2006; Nicholls & Lee 2006; Connolly & Shaw, 2006; Barnett et al., 2005).
- Sustainable consumption (Golding & Peattie, 2005; Low & Davenport, 2005A; Jaffee, 2007; Golding, 2009, De Pelsmacker et al., 2007; Robins & Roberts 2006; Samuel, 2011; Dubuisson-Quellier & Lamine, 2008; Moore et al., 2006).
- Political consumerism (Barnett et al., 2011; Micheletti, 2003; Holzer 2006; Bryant & Goodman, 2004; Goodman 2004; Low & Davenport, 2005; Malpass et al., 2007; Lyno 2006; Clarke et al., 2007).

- Consumer citizenship (Barnett et al, 2011; Seyfang 2005; Pykett et al., 2010; Clarke et al., 2007).

From these readings, Fair Trade consumption emerges as a multi-dimensional concept, sharing a number of disciplines within the social sciences. This position offers a choice of lenses through which to view Fair Trade consumption and to search for new/further insights and understanding, one study as such cannot necessarily explore all of these. This section therefore identifies important concepts represented in the Fair Trade literature reviewed, that have emerged as relevant to inform and augment the understandings of Fairtrade Towns and their marketing dynamics.

1.10: Fair Trade: Ethical Consumption

Fair Trade is often embodied in the wider complementary, yet occasionally competing, discourses of sustainable, political and ethical consumption. Despite these various representations and categorisations of Fair Trade consumption, many key authors appear comfortable in attaching and using these multiple depictions in their work. For example the work of Low & Davenport (2005; 2005(b); 2006; 2007; 2009) recognises Fair Trade consumption as sustainable, ethical and political. Littler (2009), in an attempt to conceptualise these '*relatively modern terms*' argues that ethical consumption is a conceptualisation that is used broadly, reporting that its discourse demonstrates an ability to capture other phrases (such as sustainable consumption and political consumerism) used to describe the practice of '*consumer driven social action*'.

Fairtrade Towns' 'grassroots' development and function appears by many to be conceptualised as a form of '*consumer driven action*' (Low & Davenport 2005; 2005(b); 2006; 2007; Lamb 2008; Barnett et al., 2011; Littler, 2009; Crowther & Human, 2011; Talpin 2009; Around, 2006). These findings suggest that Fairtrade Towns' dependency to function is driven by various actions of ethical consumerism,³⁸ that are determined and motivated by a desire to 'act at a distance' through ethical,

³⁸ Forms of ethical consumerism attributed to being political, sustainable or citizenship led.

political and sustainable consumption (Whatmore & Thorn, 1997; Micheletti, 2003; Jackson 2006; McGregor, 2002; Malpass et al., 2007; Barnett et al., 2011). Low and Davenport (2007) support this idea in their work on Fairtrade Towns, claiming that the arenas of ethical, sustainable and political consumption are increasingly overlapping. Harrison et al. (2005) and Tallontire et al.(2001) also suggest that ethical consumption and consumers may have political, environmental, social and spiritual motives for choosing what they purchase, but the common denominator is a concern for the effects their purchasing choice has, on both themselves and on the external world that surrounds them. Harrison et al. (2005.2) concur with these understandings by postulating that ethical consumption is;

‘concerned with the effects that a purchasing choice has, not only on themselves, but also on the external world around them.’

Thus, the consumer driven activities of Fairtrade Towns and Fairtrade consumption show evidence of consumption being used as a contemporary tool of globalisation, that enables consumers to take responsibility for the lives of ‘distant strangers’. Fairtrade Consumption and Fairtrade Towns could therefore be viewed through the work of Amin (2004. 219), as a *‘process of time-space compression, global connectivity and world-scape formation’* that defines *‘new topological and heterarchically structured economic space, quite different from the hitherto dominant world system based on territorially organized and state regulated economies’*.

Micheletti’s (2003) work additionally encapsulates consumer activism and political consumerism into the discourse of ethical consumption, affording further dynamism when presenting understandings of the resulting actions associated with ethical consumption. As Barnett et al. (2005) remind us, consumption can be shaped by ethical, sustainable and political motives through the demonstration and process of *‘caring for others and concerns for fairness’*. Barnett et al. (2005) additionally posit that empirical research demonstrates evidence that the ‘ethical consumer’ strives to gain a ‘sense of integrity’ through their consumption. They then consequently use it as a vehicle for moral and political action, a behaviour that is witnessed in Fairtrade

Towns when following the five goals of a Fairtrade Town³⁹. This type of consumer behaviour, Littler (2009.7) suggests, is demonstrated by consumers using their power to endorse goods that have not been produced through *'exploitative conditions, however they may be defined'*. Tallontire et al. (2001.5) in support argues;

'Ethical consumers would, therefore, seek to purchase or use goods and services that can demonstrate social and or environmental responsibility'

The subtle, literal nuances from these discourses imply that Fair Trade consumption is often conceptualised as either sustainable, political or ethical consumption or even a fusion of all three concerns, expressed through what Low & Davenport (2007.338) term as *'shopping for a better world'*. Following the lead of Littler (2009), Harrison et al. (2005) and Tallontire et al. (2001) in previous studies, it is possible to justify using the terms 'ethical consumption' and the 'ethical consumer' in its wider sense. This identifies it as an umbrella for the previously mentioned concepts of political and sustainable consumption as acts of consumer citizenship. The ethical consumer in a Fairtrade Town therefore, becomes synonymous with the activities of promotion and consumption. This considers political, social, and environmental motives and impacts to be all prominent features in the discourse surrounding ethical, political and sustainable consumption, which are represented and contextualised in the literature dedicated to Fair Trade consumption, the Fair Trade Movement, and more specifically, Fairtrade Towns.

3.11 Fair Trade: Sustainable Consumption

Prior to contextualising Fair Trade consumption and Fairtrade Towns as part of the sustainability agenda, it is important to recognise that sustainability-orientated consumption is increasingly perceived as a key concept of sustainable development (Jackson, 2006; Hobson 2002). The most frequently cited 'sound bite' definition of sustainable development derives from The Brundtland Report *'Our Common Future'* (1987.41) and states that;

³⁹ See page... for a detailed breakdown of the five goals of a Fairtrade Town and their construction

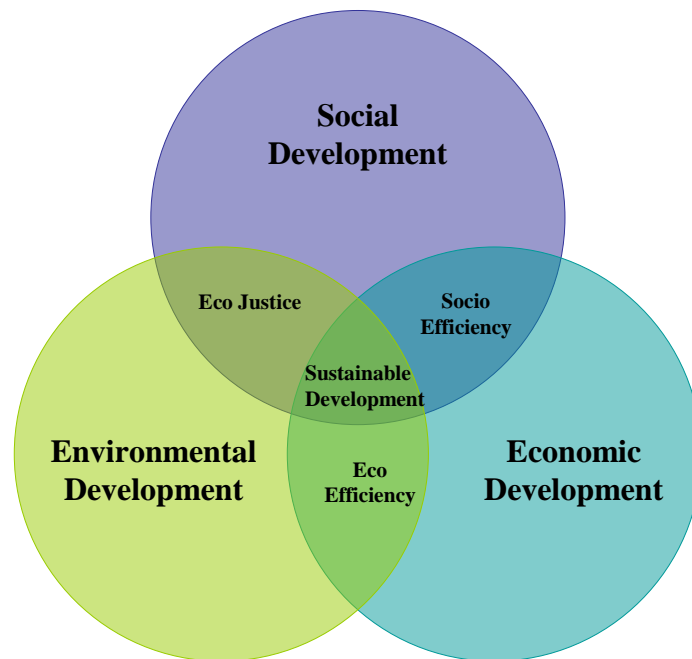
'Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'

In its simplest form, The Brundtland report (1987) amalgamates environmental, social and economic purposes into two key aims:

1. meeting the essential needs of the world's poor through social and economic development;
2. limiting the impact on the ecological environment to enable it to keep meeting present and future needs

These key aims laid the foundations of the present accepted conceptual framework that identifies social, economic and environmental development as the three interrelated pillars and goals of sustainable development (Strange & Bayley, 2008). This conceptual framework is diagrammatically represented in Fig 1.6 (*Sustainable Development: Three Interdependent Goals*).

Fig 1.6 Sustainable Development: Three Interdependent Goals



Sources: Schaltegger et al., 2003; Stranger & Bayley 2008

Seyfang (2005), Jackson (2006) and Amin (2004) all agree that the present consumption habits of Western societies are unsustainable and unfair, resulting in a juxtaposition of material affluence in the richest nations and widespread poverty, inequality, and a lack of basic necessities for life in the poorest. Their work allows a well-documented hypothesis to be presented: If consumption habits can be transformed to embrace the ethos of sustainable development, positive strides towards remedying social, economic and environmental ills are achievable through the act of 'sustainable consumption'. Promoting more sustainable consumption is a key component of strategies for sustainable development. Agenda 21 of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit (UNCED 1992) contributed to defining sustainable consumption and conceptualising the role the consumer needs to play within it. It outlined the importance of better promotion of sustainable products and the need for a better understanding of the consequences of consumption (Jackson, 2006; Sayfang, 2005).

Jackson (2006.4), after analysing a number of established definitions, suggests that the accepted institutional view of sustainable consumption is '*more consumption of more sustainable products*'.⁴⁰ The Sustainable Development debate viewed through the lens of consumption tends towards considering consumption and production systems as relatively holistic and part of a '*global value chain*' (Gereffi et al., 2005.79). For sustainable consumption to take place, consumers are asked to think systemically right back to the economic, social and environmental outputs of the production processes that yield the products and services that they chose to consume, pitting them as agents of change in a networked global world where the connectivity of consumption and production can be used to stretch and deepen spatiality and social relations (Amin 2002; Whatmore & Thorne 1997). This involves consumers factoring the direct and indirect impacts of their consumption choices into their buyer decision-making process (Jackson 2005). As a result, Sayfang (2005) argues that individual consumers are now perceived as 'principal actors' in sustainable development, meaning they are required to make political and environmental choices in their private consumption habits. These are ideas that Fairtrade Towns appear to support and encourage in both their ethos and subsequent marketing practices.

Fairtrade certified products attempt to remove producer communities out of poverty by guaranteeing the consumer that a clear set of sustainable development standards are met as a result of their consumption choices. These standards are identified in Fig 1.7 *What are the Fairtrade Standards?* (Fairtrade Foundation 2010).

⁴⁰ Sustainable consumption therefore does not threaten the dominant economic paradigm for 'growth' in Western economies (Jackson, 2006). However, what it does ask is for consumers to move away from neo-liberal self interest and to consider the social, economic and environmental impact their consumption habits support or create (Hobson, 2002).

Fig 1.7 What are the Fairtrade standards?

Fairtrade standards are not simply a set of minimum standards for socially responsible production and trade. The Fairtrade standards go further in seeking to support the development of disadvantaged and marginalized small-scale farmers and plantation workers. Fairtrade standards relate to three areas of sustainable development; social development, economic development and environmental development.

In summary the key objectives of the standards are to:

1. ensure a guaranteed Fairtrade minimum price which is agreed with producers
2. provide an additional Fairtrade premium which can be invested in projects that enhance social, economic and environmental development
3. enable pre-financing for producers who require it
4. emphasize the idea of a partnership between trade partners
5. facilitate mutually beneficial long-term trading relationships
6. set clear minimum and progressive criteria to ensure that the conditions for the production and trade of a product are socially and economically fair, and environmentally responsible

Source: http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/what_is_fairtrade/fairtrade_certification_and_the_fairtrade_mark/fairtrade_standards.aspx

What is clear from all six of the Fairtrade standards in Fig 1.1 is that, in combination, they appear to embrace the previously identified three pillars/goals of sustainable development as demonstrated in Fig 1.2 *Fair Trade: Sustainable Consumption*.⁴¹

The work of Strange & Bayley (2008); Golding & Peattie (2005); Jaffee (2007); Golding (2009), and De Pelsmacker et al. (2007), also identifies Fair Trade as a model of sustainable consumption due to the very nature of its developmental agenda being achieved through a market-driven commercial model that appears to base an increasing emphasis on the needs and desires of Northern consumers⁴² (Nicholls & Opal 2005). As Jaffee (2007:24) theorises:

⁴¹ In addition, it is clear, and not unsurprising, to see that the key ideas of sustainable development and consumption taken from the findings of the Brundtland Report (1987) and Agenda 21 of the Rio Earth Summit (1992) all resonate within the agenda of Fair Trade production and consumption.

⁴² Although this study is set in the UK and, as such, when discussing and conceptualising the Fairtrade consumer, concerns itself with building relevant discourse predominantly from a view that Fairtrade Town consumers and citizens are from Northern, developed economies, it should be pointed out that this is not an exclusive view. There are, for example, emerging practices and academic work dedicated to Southern social movements who equally desire to build ethical consumers in the developing economies of the world. For example, Wilkinson & Mascarenhas (2007), Renard and Perez-Grovas (2007) and Kruger and Toit (2007) have identified Fairtrade consumer activities in Brazil, Mexico and South Africa retrospectively. In addition, Fairtrade Towns have also expanded out of the UK and in

‘Some consumers are willing to pay more at the grocery checkout to assure that producers receive fair compensation for their labour, while others might forego a bargain in order to stick with a fair-trade product. In this sense, fair trade is about reinserting non-economic values – morality, decency, sustainability, community – into market transactions.’

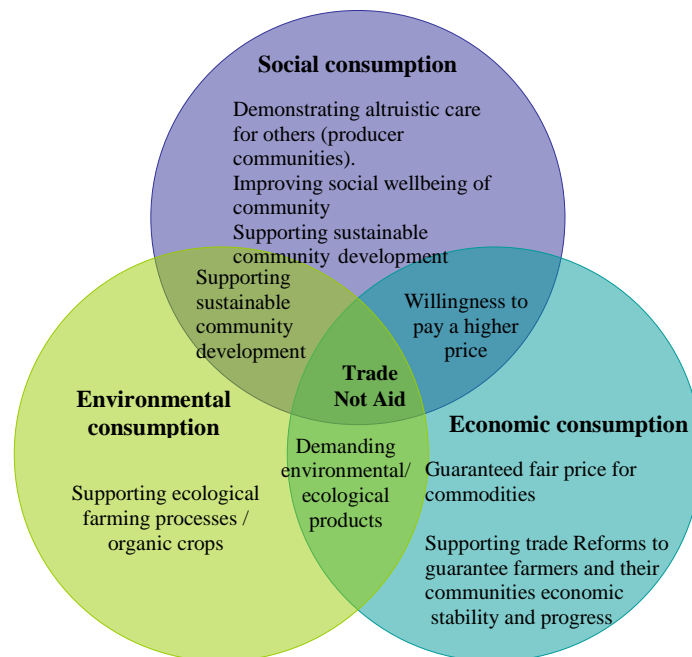
Goodman (2004.893) appears to resonate with Jaffee (2007) and asserts an interesting metaphor linking Fair Trade to sustainable consumption. He posits that Fair Trade offers the consumer a *‘tripartite slam-dunk of social, economic and environmental justice’* built upon a reflective ability to consider the plight of poverty stricken Southern producer communities, while making shopping choices.⁴³

Fig 1.8 *Fair Trade: Sustainable Consumption* attempts to further conceptualise Fairtrade consumption (using Fair Trade literature) as a process of sustainable consumption and uses the established three pillars/goals of sustainable development to contextualise the impacts and motivations of consuming Fairtrade certified products.

2012 were reported to be functioning in New Zealand, Ghana, Brazil and Costa Rica. There is, at present, a dearth of work researching Southern Fair Trade activity presenting gaps in understanding consumer behaviour and activity in developing economies. This presents future research opportunities for both conceptual and empirical research.

⁴³ Although Goodman (2004) does not directly identify Fair Trade as a mechanism of sustainable consumption, the three pillars/goals of sustainable development are clearly considered in his conceptualisations.

Fig 1.8 Fair Trade: Sustainable Consumption



The literature reviewed appears to provide strong evidence to support Fair Trade consumption as an act of sustainable consumption. However, it must be stated that this is not definitive. Whilst it is reasonable to assume that Fair Trade consumption has embraced the ideology of consuming differently, it is clear to see that it fails to represent the competing ideology of consuming less. Fair Trade consumption appears to fit within the discourse of sustainable consumption mainly because of its ability to determine and promote the systemic links between production and consumption. The links between production and consumption, and consumer and producer are consistently referred to in Fair Trade academic and industry discourse. This outlines Fair Trade's desire to ensure people understand that by consuming Fair Trade products they are supporting economic, social and environmental development⁴⁴ (Jaffee, 2007; Bryant & Goodman, 2004; Nicholls & Opal 2005). This is a challenge

⁴⁴ Not damaging them as many production and consumption processes in global value chains are accused of doing. See for example the work of Gereffi et al., (2001; 1994) and Gereffi (1999).

taken on by Fairtrade Towns.⁴⁵ The challenges of Fair Trade and its relevance to the activities of Fairtrade Towns being presented and understood as a contributor to sustainable development are noted by Golding (2009.160), who writes:

'Fair Trade network actors share these goals, in particular, the need to shift consumption patterns in favour of sustainable development, and there is a similar lack of consensus as to how to achieve this goal. This absence of consensus has become a particularly acute marketing problem, as Fair Trade makes the transition from niche to mainstream.'

1.12: Fair Trade: Political Consumption

Holzer (2006) suggests that the activity of political consumerism represents the idea that political objectives can be acknowledged and achieved through the act of buying and consuming. This, he argues develops the economic role of the consumer by affording them an opportunity to assert their power to effect social change. Micheletti (2003.2) clearly sets out her understanding of political consumerism:

'It represents actions by people who make choices among producers and products with the goal of changing objectionable institutional or market practices. Their choices are based on attitudes and values regarding issues of justice, fairness, or non-economic issues that concern personal and family well-being and ethical or political assessment of favourable and unfavourable business and government practice.'

This definition recognises that products can be loaded with political meaning, representation and functionality (Micheletti, 2003). The importance of justice, fairness and the wellbeing of others, Harrison et al. (2005) and Barnett et al. (2011) highlight, is of key importance to politically motivated consumers. Bostrom et al. (2004) propound that political consumerism is the activity of consumers thinking beyond their own individual welfare when they purchase and consume. He further suggests that by conceptualising consumption as political results in an understanding that

⁴⁵ However, one must also be aware of the limits of Fair Trade consumption's contribution to sustainable development because primarily it involves substituting consumption behaviours, not consumption reduction.

consumers are able to demonstrate values traditionally associated with the state, arguing that their actions are associated with attempts to politicize markets in a welfare-oriented way. Bryant & Goodman (2004) further this argument and suggest that because consumers can now be presented with the ability to ‘make a difference,’ everyday acts such as ‘*eating, bathing, shopping or dressing*’ have now become ‘*politicized*.’⁴⁶ This indicates that Fair Trade products demonstrate an ability to be embedded with complex social and political contexts; a concept that Bostrom et al. (2004) and Micheletti (2003) refer to as the ‘politics of products’. The politics of products, Micheletti (2003) argues, affords consumers the ability to reflect on ethical and political concerns prior to them making a purchase or a consumption decision. It is therefore suggested that Fair Trade consumption, viewed through the lens of ‘political consumption,’ is conceptualised as a process whereby consumers attempt to limit their externalities by purchasing and consuming products that are deemed to be ethical or sustainable, a process termed by Micheletti (2003) and Gabriel & Lang (2006) as ‘*buycoting*’. Buycoting, viewed as a consumer process that puts purchasing powers to altruistic use, appears to resonate as an accepted paradigm in literature dedicated to Fair Trade consumption. However, not everyone conceptualises Fair Trade consumption as a demonstration of political participation with some academics preferring other titles such as *ethical or sustainable consumption*.

Micheletti (2003) argues that there are five ‘basic’ reasons that theoretically justify consumption as politics. Each of these reasons shares strong correlations with the various academic literatures reviewed for this study. This has enabled the review to further contextualise Fair Trade consumption and the Fairtrade Towns movement, as political:

⁴⁶ The Fair Trade idea of politicised consumption conflicts with Friedman (1962) whose idea of political responsibility advocated that the only political responsibility of consumers was to use their resources to maximize their own personal utility. However, Friedman’s neo-liberal views relating to political consumerism appear to juxtapose the vast majority of writers in this area, suggesting the accepted discourse is more in tune with the writings of (Micheletti, 2003; Clarke et al., 2007; Low and Davenport, 2007; Bryant & Goodman, 2004; Gabriel & Lang, 2006; Holzer 2006; Harrison et al., 2005; Bostrom et al., 2004; Seyfang 2005; Trentmann; 2007).

1. Consumption offers people a space to work on their political issues helping them exercise influence to solve their problems.
2. Consumption can be used to set the political agenda of other actors and institutions helping to pressure them into negotiation.
3. Products are embedded with classical issues of power relations and the allocation of values in society that, to a large degree, are decided by the private corporations who produce them.
4. Consumption offers people market-based political tools such as boycotts and buycots that can be used to engage in political issues and struggles.
5. Consumption is becoming more political because of the ever changing political landscape and the presence of globalization.

Micheletti's (2003) reasons used to theorise consumption as politics have been modified to create a framework to help clarify the relevance of other academic work to this study. Her work affords Fairtrade Towns to become part of the discourse of the 'politics of consumption.' Her conceptualising moves beyond the act of consumption and considers how consumers can become activated to champion different causes by using consumption to influence, solve problems and set the political agenda of other actors and institutions. As such, her understanding of political consumerism resonates well with the ethos and practice of Fairtrade Towns, an ethos that seeks to increase Fairtrade promotion and consumption whenever and wherever it can. It is suggested that points 3 and 4 of Micheletti's (2003) reasons outlined above can be categorized as consumption, while the discourse from points 1, 2 and 5 should be categorized as consumer activism, all of which, it could be argued, exist in the marketing dynamic of Fairtrade Towns.

Fig 1.9 *Contextualising and Categorising Fair Trade to Micheletti's five theories of consumption as politics* captures the relationship between the relevant literature reviewed, to suggest that Fairtrade Towns and its process of partaking in place-based activities to develop the promotion and consumption of Fairtrade, comfortably conforms to Micheletti's (2003) theory of '*political consumerism*' in action.

Fig 1.9

Contextualising and Categorising Fair Trade to Micheletti's Five Theories of Consumption as Politics

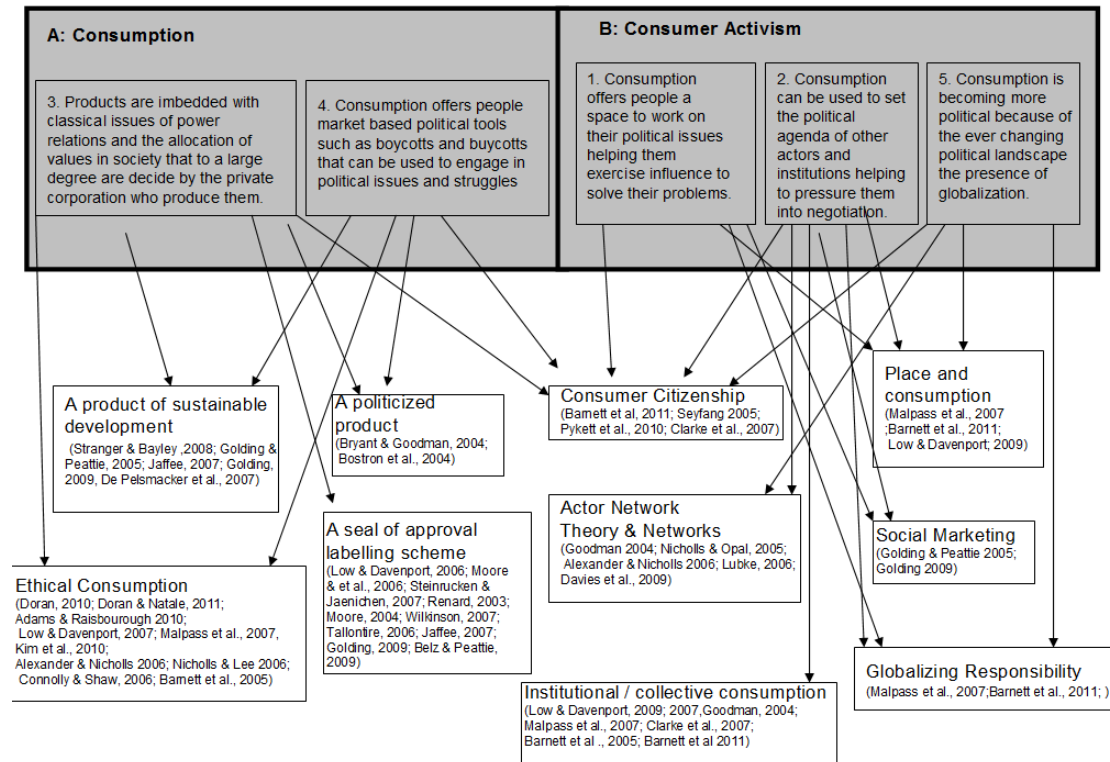


Fig 1.4 demonstrates strong links in academic research and Fair Trade discourse to accept Fair Trade consumption and the Fairtrade Towns movement into the emerging discipline of politicised consumption and political consumerism. Viewing Fair Trade consumption through Micheletti's (2003) theory of '*political consumerism*' complements and adds a further dimension to the ever-increasing research about, and conceptualisations of, Fair Trade consumption, the Fair Trade Movement and Fairtrade Towns. The process indicates a complexity in theorising Fair Trade consumption, and demonstrates the idea that the Fair Trade Movement, including Fairtrade Towns, has created a marketing dynamic that is more complex than consumer sovereignty and the simplistic view that consumers make an ethical vote every time they visit the cash register (Dickinson & Carsky 2005).

The literature reviewed shows embryonic recognition that the limited theories of Fair Trade consumerism and consumption and, more pertinent to this study; Fairtrade Towns, have embraced political concepts of citizenship, place, networks, collectivism, institutions, education and globalizing responsibility into the Fair Trade marketing

dynamic. This section pays significant attention to the political dimensions of consumption viewed via the act (or not) of purchasing for a particular motive. However, it should be noted that exploring the actions of consumers in sharing and using information to further an ethical/political viewpoint has not been overlooked. These areas were thought better reviewed in the following section dedicated to consumer citizenship. Furthermore, the remainder of this chapter explores Fair Trade marketing through a place-based dynamic. As Clarke et al. (2007.585) explain:

‘The explicit focus of fair-trade initiatives is to enhance democratization, empowerment, and participation. This is widely acknowledged in literature on fair-trade in the global South in analyses of the impacts on producer communities. However, the same focus on the civic, political, and social objectives of fair-trade in the global North remains undeveloped, constrained by the persistent view that key actors in these practices are fair-trade consumers. We aim to resituate the analysis of fair trade in the context of debates about civic activism and political participation. Alongside other forms of ethical consumption or political consumerism, we argue that fair trade should be understood as a political phenomenon, which, through the mediating action of organization, coalitions, and campaigns makes claims on states, corporations, and international institutions. Understood in this way, the growth of fair-trade consumption in the global North works to mobilize support, raise funds, raise awareness about issues of global justice, development, and inequality.’

Relevant and contextualised theories and conceptualisations of consumer citizenship are now reviewed to add further value to Clarke et al.’s (2007.585) work, and to further recognise that Fair Trade has embraced political concepts of consumer citizenship into its marketing dynamic.

1.13: Fair Trade: Consumer Citizenship

McGregor (2002) recognises that consumption and citizenship can no longer be clearly separated and the fusion of both has resulted in what Trentman (2007.147) refers to as the ‘coupling of the citizen-consumer.’ By viewing consumption as a

vehicle to develop social justice and fairness in the world, Dickinson & Carsky (2005), interpreting the work of (Dickinson 1996), suggest that ‘consumer citizenship’ depicts the consumer as a person who makes a contribution to the wider social good. The representation of Fair Trade in consumer citizenship literature juxtaposes the populist notion of the banal neo-liberal utility maximising consumer functioning in a consumer culture that pays scant regard to ‘civic-mindedness’(Shah et al., 2007). On the contrary, consumer citizenship is recognised as contributing to a consumer culture that has developed from the republican tradition of collective citizenship, placing community obligations and responsibility at its core (Barnett et al., 2011). In such consumer culture it is suggested that citizens’ responsibility is to first consider the common good and to ask more than ‘am I personally satisfied’ prior to the purchase of goods and services (Aberbach & Christensen, 2005). The work of McGregor (2002), Seyfang (2005), Barnett et al. (2011), Clarke et al. (2007) and Pykett et al. (2010) all apply a traditional ‘republican/collective’ ideal of citizenship to the narrative of ethical/political consumption and Fair Trade.⁴⁷ Seyfang (2005. 291) helps contextualise the notion of ‘republican/collective citizenship’ to the activities of consumer behaviour and consumption. Her idea that consumption choice can be related to ‘*political decisions*’ and influenced by altruistic considerations, displays correlation with the work of McGregor (2002), Barnett et al. (2011), Clarke et al. (2007) and Micheletti (2003). Seyfang (2005.291) suggests purchasing and consumption can be influenced by a ‘*concern for the whole and an orientation to the common good*’ and is therefore increasingly being viewed as an expression of citizenship.

McGregor (2002), contextualising the work of Abala-Betrad (1996; 199) and Kerr (1998) states that the expression and activities of citizenship are played out via consumption under three key themes that can be contextualised to the limited academic writings on the Fairtrade Towns movement:

- **Theme 1.** The Civic; builds on the principal that one should be actively involved in the ‘life and concerns of one’s community’.

⁴⁷ All six authors appear to understand consumer citizenship as a process whereby consumers demonstrate a strong yearning towards shared feelings that result in a consumption choice that embraces an obligation to consider the common good.

- **Theme 2.** The Political; displays evidence of partaking in effective action in public life.
- **Theme 3.** The Social; shows a moral responsibility towards each other.

The relevance of McGregor's three themes adds key value to this study when contextualising them to Fairtrade Towns. Key to this significance is how her work moves the discourse of consumer citizenship, Fairtrade Towns and Fairtrade consumption beyond individual responsibility and actions into influencing and changing consumption in the public and private places and spaces of community and civic life. In effect, consumer citizenship in Fairtrade Towns can be viewed from the prospect of developing consumer practices through a civic concern for justice and sustainability (Trentmann, 2007). As Malpass et al. (2007.634) state:

'We recognise Fairtrade campaigning as a mechanism through which place can become a mobilizing device for collective action.'

Barnett et al. (2011.2) use the Fair Trade movement as a case study to conceptualise consumer citizens' desire to achieve 'common good' through their consumption as a form of '*globalizing responsibility*.' They argue that ethical consumption is additionally concerned with campaigning which is '*a form of political action which seeks to articulate the responsibilities of family life, local attachment and national citizenship into expressing a globalized responsibility for range of global concerns*' Barnett et al. (2011.2). Fair Trade consumption is therefore viewed as an expression of an extended responsibility for other people and places (Barnett et al. 2011, Malpass et al. 2007), and as such is not constrained by geographical proximity (Amin 2002). This is because consumers and producers enter into what Singer (2004.166) would refer to as a relationship of '*mutual beneficial reciprocity*'. In this context, Fairtrade Towns appear able to be considered as the embodiment of socially constructed places that exhibit an extended responsibility which transcends space and encompasses what authors such as Massey (2007) and Malpass et al. (2007) have conceptualised as '*place beyond place*.' The arguments made in contextualising place beyond place into Fair Trade activities and consumption are considered as a mechanism to enable the act of '*globalizing responsibility*' (Barnett et al. 20011). Thus, they are recognised as

being achieved through a form of consumer citizenship that is formed from the people and places that socially construct the social fabric of places such as Fairtrade Towns (Barnett et al. 2011, Malpass et al. 2007, Lamb, 2008). A Fairtrade Town, Malpass et al. (2007) suggest, leads to 'Fairtrade Urbanism' by becoming a 'territory' in which individuals are joined into wider community action, motivated by concerns related to international development. Such community action in Fairtrade Towns, Barnett et al. (2011) and Malpass et al. (2007) indicate, is centred around the act of 'in place' Fairtrade promotion and consumption. This, they argue creates a place, which embodies the conceptualisation of globalizing responsibility for distant others, a concept they refer to as 'embracing the ethos of 'place beyond place.' Fairtrade Towns therefore, demonstrate how consumption has been used as a politics of place that understands the spatiality of globalisation and how their day-to-day activities influence events and happenings on the other side of the world (Amin 2002, Held 1995).⁴⁸ Consumer citizenship in Fairtrade Towns is therefore presented as a concept that embraces a wider sense of place that furthers the possibilities of ethical/political or sustainable consumption. Consumer Citizenship therefore becomes associated with place activity (Barnett et al. 2011) calling for local government, schools, universities, churches, community groups, civil society organisations and public sector organisations all to play a role in the marketing dynamic of Fairtrade (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Alexander & Nicholls, 2006; Malpass et al., 2007; Barnett et al., 2011; Pykett et al., 2010; Clarke et al., 2007; Sayfang, 2005). These processes, although limited in empirical insight and theory, are portrayed in some work, for example Pykett et al.'s (2010) insights into Fairtrade schools. This research posits that Fairtrade consumption, viewed through the lens of citizenship, has allowed the subject of global citizenship to be used by the Fairtrade foundation to encourage schools to include Fairtrade production and consumption on the curriculum. It also argues that, by creating Fairtrade School certification, pupil and teacher led initiatives have changed some schools' consumption habits. This is as a result of Fairtrade education and procurement policies becoming part of the schools audited practices to achieve Fairtrade status.

⁴⁸ These ideas are explored and contextualised in depth in section 1.14 Fairtrade Marketing: Place and in Chapter 2 in 2.6 Fairtrade Towns: Places and Spaces of Consumption.

Despite key literature relevant to this study pointing to an understanding of consumer citizenship from a position of republican collectivism, existing neo-liberal societies, Aberbach & Christensen (2005) argue, are increasingly defined through individualised self-interest, leading to less concern for the collective. Such notions of modern a Western society indicate the need to consider consumer citizenship and Fair Trade from a 'liberal' (Abala-Bertrand, 1996) perspective. McGregor (2002) indicates that Abala-Bertrand (1996) conceptualised 'liberal citizenship' as a society made up of individualised citizens with equal rights that *'cannot be revoked by the state or any social institution.'* The argument is that consumer citizenship, viewed through a neo-liberal lens, leads us to consider consumers as self-satisfaction seekers who pay scant regard to the consequences of where and how products and services are made, or where they come from. Consumption therefore, becomes reduced to just satisfying one's infinite wants and desires (Stevenson, 2002; Bauman, 1998). As Stevenson (2002.307), presents:

'The consumer, in terms of citizenship, is guided by aesthetics rather than ethics, and is not so much concerned with political ideology as by an individualised right to enjoy, not duty to suffer'

Despite Sayfang's (2005.296) claim that *'the neo-liberal conception of sovereign consumer as rational satisfier of wants is in decline,'* there is evidence in the Fair Trade literature dedicated to mainstreaming that such a conceptualisation of consumer citizenship should not be ignored. For example, Lubke, 2006; Nicholls & Opel, 2005; Golding & Peattie, 2005 and Low & Davenport, 2005(b) all agree that the quality of early Fair Trade products limited its growth potential. While Tallontire (2000) argues that Fair Trade products were limiting their potential by just appealing to the alternative, politically motivated consumer. Fair Trade products have therefore needed to become more consumer-focused, emphasising quality as well as ethical credentials in their marketing proposition. CafeDirect and the Day Chocolate Company, Davies et al. (2009); Doherty & Trachell, (2007); Wright, (2004) and Golding & Peattie (2005) argue, provide evidence of Fair Trade consumer-led strategies in action. The movement recognised that to enter the mainstream it had to improve both the quality of their products and change their marketing communication proposition to entice the

more self-satisfying consumer. In addition, Malpass et al. (2007) and Barnett et al. (2011) suggest that Fair Trade consumption can happen without consumer knowledge as a consequence of consumption taking place in some of the places of Fairtrade Towns being governed by what Malpass et al. (2007.634) refer to as *'place jurisdiction.'* Place jurisdiction, they argue, is a result of Fairtrade procurement policies that ensure Fairtrade consumption happens *'whether or not workers, visitors or consumers consciously choose to participate, or even realize whether they are participating in the fairtrade-ness of the city'* (Malpass, 2007.639). Barnett et al. (2011.196) further side with this function of Fairtrade Towns embracing more neo-liberal consumer thoughts and suggest that:

'Whereas ethical consumption is usually portrayed in terms of conscious consumer choice, transforming procurement policy can go so far as to withdraw choice from the consumer at the point of purchase. These days, parents trailing their toddlers around Bristol Zoo who fancy a hot drink to sustain their spirits will have to 'choose' fairly traded tea or coffee whether they like it or not.'

The section of the literature reviewed indicates a need to consider both liberal and republican notions of consumer citizenship when considering Fairtrade Towns and Fair Trade consumption. It additionally leads to the ability to conceptualise Fair Trade consumption, consumers and Fairtrade Towns to the two competing theories (republican/collective and liberal) of consumer citizenship. Johnston's (2008) work, contextualised to the dichotomy of the Fair Trade consumer citizens, helps us to understand them as a *'hybrid'*. The Hybrid consumer citizen presented by Johnson (2008.232) views consumption as;

'a social practice that can satisfy competing ideologies of consumerism (an idea rooted in individual self-interest) and citizenship (an idea rooted in collective responsibility to a social and ecological commons).'

This section clearly demonstrates that the competing discourses of consumer citizenship and ethical and sustainable consumption share similar ideals and theories when considering Fairtrade and when applied to Fairtrade Town activities. This has afforded the study to be able to conceptualise Fair Trade consumption, and identify the dynamics of Fairtrade Towns via all four lenses of ethical, sustainable, political and citizenship consumption.

The consumption of Fair Trade products captured under the title of ethical, sustainable, political or citizenship always appears to consider the role of impacts and motives played out in the consumer decision process. Discourse in the literature indicates that consumption-led studies tend to think in terms of motives (largely framed as ethical/political consumption) whilst sustainability studies tend to worry more about impacts and their sustainability. One thought is that by deliberately considering impacts (i.e. sustainability) on the basis of ethics (right & wrong, good & bad) the consumption of 'responsible' Fair Trade products becomes 'political'. Additionally, it should also be recognised that you can have ethically motivated consumption that is unsustainable due to its impacts. Furthermore, you can have sustainable consumption that is apolitical because it doesn't consider ethics. The three concepts, (ethical, political and sustainability) when contextualised to Fair Trade, appear to be interlinked. They are potentially sympathetic but not synonymous because we cannot say for sure that all Fair Trade consumer motivations, actions and impacts are necessarily aligned.

Given the civic community element that functions in Fairtrade Towns the relevance of consumer citizenship discourse that, in part moves the concepts of consumption from individual responsibility to a wider collective place-based ideal. This appears to have strong significance in helping conceptualise a Fairtrade Town as a place where consumer citizenship, both at an individual and collective level, exists. Implied in the Fair Trade consumption discourse is the understanding that Fair Trade consumers appreciate the value of their collective impact in terms of developmental output. Additionally, it is indicated that Fairtrade Towns understand the benefits of a collective approach to consumption through the movement's determination to penetrate 'institutional consumption' policy and practice. One could argue that the collective strategy of utilising place to develop '*institutional consumption*' appears to

be a key marketing function with a vast capacity for, as Sayfang's (2005.297) research indicates, institutional purchasing power which '*accounts for half of all consumption throughout Western Europe.*'⁴⁹ The role of place in the marketing dynamic of Fairtrade Towns is subsequently referred to in more depth in the following section.

1.14: Fair Trade Marketing: Place

By viewing place as a social construct which facilitates consumer citizenship and becomes part of actor network theory to promote Fairtrade, place, in the marketing mix takes on multiple functions and meanings that move far beyond the marketing norms of distribution.

The marketing dynamics of Fairtrade Towns therefore expand on the conventional marketing principle that portrays 'place' as a function of channel management, existing in an economic space which allows the researcher to consider the multiple aspects of place through the lens of 'real' geographic spaces. This affords the researcher to consider the place of Fairtrade Towns like Cresswell, (2004.22) who suggests place is much more than '*simple points on the map*' positing that '*location is not a necessary or sufficient condition of place*'. The marketing functions of a Fairtrade Town are suggested to have organically galvanised a place-based marketing network that consists of a diverse set of people and places who unite to educate, promote and lobby citizens and organisations within their sphere of influence to supply and consume Fairtrade products (Alexander & Nicholls, 2006; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Low & Davenport 2005; Davies, 2008; Hutchens, 2009). This has resulted in Fairtrade Towns demonstrating a variety of civic-driven Fairtrade marketing dynamics being orchestrated by individuals, local councils, NGOs, Civil society organisations, public/private sector organisations and education establishments (Fairtrade Foundation, 2010; 2010a). Hutchens (2009.83) argues that Fairtrade has rapidly achieved success through this process by '*networking social*

⁴⁹ While the role of place in Fairtrade Towns is suggested to contribute to collective normative behaviour in favour of Fairtrade consumption, questions that concern individual and collective responses to Fairtrade consumption still remain unanswered. For example – in Fairtrade Towns do consumers buy Fairtrade products as individuals believing that they are doing the 'right ethical' thing, or has 'place' as a social construct collectively united consumers to consume Fairtrade products through forms of normative behaviour?

networks to spread the fair trade message'. She argues that the movement didn't need to create new networks but instead tied itself into other established networks to create what she conceptualises as a 'solidaridad super structural node' that networked powerful social networks that were already 'in place' such as churches, schools, sympathetic businesses and other social movements into its project. Utilising and uniting both the people and the fabric of a town (organisations, local authority government etc) to orchestrate Fairtrade marketing activities supports the marketing dynamics of place in Fairtrade Towns being viewed through a social constructionist lens. As Creswell (2004.30) posits;

'To say a place is socially constructed is also to say that the materiality- the very fabric of a place is a product of society too'

Taking a lead from these findings allows the disciplines of geographies, places and spaces of consumption (Mansvelt, 2005; Mansvelt, 2008; Styhre & Engberg 2003; Barnett et al. 2005; Barnett et al. 2004; Goodman et al. 2010; Miller et al. 1998) and conceptualisations of a new branded world (Kline, 2000) to become an essential dynamic of place in the Fairtrade marketing mix⁵⁰. As Goodman et al. (2010.13) remind us:

'Space and place are not merely the stage on, or containers in which, we act out our social and material lives, but rather are actively negotiated, created and changed through all manner of relationships. And, as we... argue, consumption is one of the key relationalities actively constructing and changing spaces and places which in turn recursively affect consumption practices'

Place in the marketing mix therefore extends to encompass the complex dynamics of Fairtrade Towns and as such, could be considered as a process that contributes to, and benefits from, the social construct of place. This reflects an extended responsibility that transcends space to encompass its marketing dynamic. Authors such as Malpass

⁵⁰ This is a position also taken by the four key publications dedicated to Fairtrade towns reviewed in chapter 2; Barnett et al.'s (2011) and Malpass et al.'s (2007) conceptualisation of Fairtrade urbanism and Nicholls & Opal's (2005) and Alexander and Nicholls' (2006) interpretation of Fairtrade Towns functioning as an actor network.

et al. (2007. 634) and Massey (2007.188) have suggested that such places are socially constructed to be *'place beyond place.'* The Fairtrade Town, through its aim to influence patterns and processes of consumption, is consequently considered to be a mechanism for enabling global citizenship, functioning at a private and civic level to act as a marketing dynamic (Barnett et al. 2011; Malpass et al. 2007; Alexander & Nicholls 2006). As Barnett et al. (2011.180) reminds us;

' The fair trade movement mobilizes existing, geographically embedded social networks with the purpose of sustaining a vision of alternative, economic and political possibilities, networks rooted in local alternative economic and political possibilities, networks rooted in local church communities or in localities where local businesses, fair trade activism and willing customers collude to generate a thriving fair trade scene.'

These understandings lead to the possibility of viewing Fairtrade Towns, and their marketing activities, as occurring through two different place-based lenses, presented by Amin (2002; 2002 & 2004 (a)). Firstly, Fairtrade Town marketing activities could be viewed as existing and function from what Amin (2004.33(a)) distinguishes as a mainstream view of place, a place of *'container spaces'* that are made up of *'territorial entities: local economic systems, regimes of regulation, a place called home.'* Surely, one can argue, it is from within this 'mainstream' view of place that Fairtrade Towns' micro and meso level marketing activities exist. Activities, that Hutchens (2009) argues, are generated through local level collective action that networks and results in an accumulation of small community initiatives (Fairtrade marketing). Together, these initiatives produce substantial output. However, one can argue that the acts of a Fairtrade Town only happen because the movement has embraced an understanding of 'place' informed by what Amin (2002.385) refers to as the *'spatiality of globalisation'*. This understanding sees consumer purchase and consumption habits valued for their ability to 'act at a distance' and show a social responsibility for distant others. Fairtrade Towns' desire to increase Fairtrade awareness and consumption could be argued to be tantamount to restructuring scales of social relations. Social relations are stretched over time and space so that consumption and production can be controlled and coordinated in a relational value chain that extends over long distances to make Fairtrade promotion and consumption

at once ‘local’ and ‘global’ (Amin, 2002; Gereffi et al. 2005; Whatmore & Thorne, 1997). In support and developing upon this idea, Nicholls & Opal (2005) and Alexander & Nicholls (2006) also propose that Fairtrade Towns drive community social and civic engagement by encouraging consumers to connect to both local and distant places through actively marketing the ethos and consumption of Fairtrade products. Or, contextualising the words of Mansvelt (2005.1), Fairtrade Towns become ‘*geographies of consumption*’ where ‘*relationships between people, things and places are constituted around the sale, purchase and use of goods and services.*’ Contextualising Mansvelt’s (2005.10) work further, we can appreciate the marketing dynamic of place when considering it through a geography lens. Her suggestion that ‘*place, space and scale can make a difference to how consumption is manifested and experienced*’ presents itself as an opportunity to view the marketing objectives of Fairtrade Towns as developing ‘*place, space and scale*’ for Fairtrade products, in order to make a difference in ‘*how consumption manifests itself*’ in a given locale. This can be witnessed, for example, in the work of Barnett et al. (2011.196) who posit:

‘Successful changes to procurement policy in the local authority, and in other public and private organizations, not only offer symbolic support to fair trade campaigning, but also ensure that employees, local visitors and tourists from further afield will be consuming fair trade products, knowingly or unknowingly, when visiting the canteens and restaurants of these organizations.’

Fairtrade Towns, conceptualised by Barnett et al. (2011.197) as ‘*Fairtrade urbanism*’ indicates that Fairtrade Towns have ‘*two dimensions,*’ both of which share a clear link to marketing discourse. Their suggestion that Fairtrade Towns are, firstly, ‘*educating, informing and engaging residents about shared responsibility of place that stretch beyond the local*’ (Barnett et al. 2011.197) presents a clear indication that the social constructs of place are viewed as key parts of the marketing dynamics of a Fairtrade Town. From a marketing context therefore, it affords an understanding that people in Fairtrade Towns are disseminating messages that expand further than consumer endorsements via word-of-mouth marketing, into what is probably better described as a process of social learning. This is a process that sees ‘*ordinary people*’

(Lamb, 2008.42) encouraging other people and places to become globally responsible (Barnett et al. 2011) through the act of Fairtrade consumption. Secondly, Fairtrade Towns' *'use of jurisdictional power to change collective infrastructures of consumption'* (Barnett et al. 2011.197) clearly has synergies with traditional marketing mix paradigms relating place to distribution strategies. Jurisdictional power viewed as a marketing dynamic in essence is akin to contractual obligations of distribution exclusivity used by large corporations.⁵¹ This process, whilst demonstrating a place's ability to make a difference to what is consumed (Mansvelt, 2005), is accused of limiting consumer choice. Jurisdiction power also demonstrates that Fairtrade Towns understand that marketing dynamics need to move beyond appealing to individuals and, as Styhre & Engberg (2003.115), recognise; *'organizational space is also a space of consumption'*. Understandings of choice editing and jurisdiction power appear to indicate that Fairtrade Towns further demonstrate the dynamics of place in the marketing mix and show stark similarities to the principles of nudging and choice architecture presented in contemporary mainstream literature by Thaler & Sunstein (2009). Contextualising Thaler & Sunstein's (2009) work to the activities of a Fairtrade Town, it is possible to witness evidence of place being used as a marketing resource. Nudging is used by organisations to create *'well chosen default'* Fairtrade consumption options and to develop mechanisms such as policy to implement choice architecture that *'design user friendly'* environments where Fairtrade consumption becomes the norm (Thaler & Sunstein, 2009.9 & 12). As Thaler & Sunstein (2009.6) posit.

'A nudge, as we will use the term, is any aspect of the choice architecture that alters people's behaviour in a predictable way without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives. To count as a mere nudge, the intervention, must be easy and cheap to avoid. Nudges are not mandates. Putting fruit at eye level counts as a nudge. Banning junk food does not.'

Building on the understanding that organisations contribute to the social construct of a place and the marketing dynamics of Fairtrade Towns, Low & Davenport (2009.98)

⁵¹ For example, organisations such as Coca Cola who, when providing distribution support to their buyers (such as free fridges to stock and display products in), insist on exclusivity rights to distributing soft drinks within those establishments.

state that organisations have become a '*distinctive feature of the modern ethical consumer movement*' and '*campaigning for internal changes within business*' to embrace fair and ethical trade in their day-to-day practices is on the increase. Organisations' new role in ethical consumer movements is suggested by Low & Davenport (2009.102), to be categorised as a variation of '*affinity marketing*.' This, they argue, helps develop Fair Trade markets by building upon the potential for 'mission-driven' organisations to align their ethical mission with the marketing and distribution of Fair Trade. Organisation and business affinity to Fair Trade is suggested to further the role of place-based marketing dynamics, presenting opportunities to further influence how and where Fair Trade products are presented and consumed. In addition to this argument, Low & Davenport (2009) also recognise the symbiotic process of this marketing dynamic and suggest that organisations who partake in changing their internal practices to better serve Fairtrade consumption may also view this process as augmenting their ethical credentials through the creation of '*ethical spaces*.' Thus, affinity marketing in Fairtrade Towns could be viewed as contributing to the possibility of creating new 'spaces' for the promotion and consumption of Fairtrade. For example, organisations such as local authorities, zoos, universities or churches who proactively consume and promote Fairtrade in their day-to-day activities (Low & Davenport, 2009; 2007, Goodman, 2004; Malpass et al., 2007; Clarke et al., 2007; Barnett et al., 2005). This, Hutchens (2009) argues has been achieved through the Fairtrade Towns' ability to network established networks and exploit them in entrepreneurial ways to achieve the goal of increasing Fairtrade awareness and consumption whenever and wherever they can. As she reminds us;

'Individual connections and contacts in other arenas have been vital for achieving scale because they trigger new circles of enrolment in completely different or inaccessible worlds.' (Hutchens, 2009.85)

The role of social activities in Fairtrade Towns appears to be voluntarily managed, and orchestrated events are organised and run by community groups, local government, organisations and individuals. These events, reportedly, show evidence of towns working collectively to promote, establish and validate a geographical location and its places through the act of promoting and consuming Fairtrade products (Allen 2007; Talpin, 2009; Around, 2006). As Nicholls & Opal, (2005.160) highlight:

'The importance of support networks in marketing communications cannot be overstated. Whether through grassroots events in churches or town halls, educational input into schools, or co-ordinated action such as the Fair Trade Towns campaign, committed local groups have played a major role in raising awareness at a community level.'

Goodman (2004:900) notes that the outcome of these actions results in attempts to politicise Fair Trade consumption in the everyday lives of consumers through 'consumer education-oriented discourses' disseminated through the consumer's day-to-day activities. Dubuisson-Quellier et al. (2008) posit that this could be referred to as a form of 'green consumerism' (Goodman & Goodman 2001), or individualised collective action (Micheletti, 2003). They claim that local Fair Trade networks have enacted citizens as political actors, making them stakeholders in place empowerment that involves them in encouraging consumers to change their purchasing and consumption behaviours. They imply that this has resulted in a network where the different social identities of consumers as citizens, parents, workers and purchasers are deeply interconnected, therefore potentially adding many more nodes in the actor network theory of Fair Trade marketing (Nicholls and Opal, 2005). The significance of these social activities to the Fairtrade Towns movement and its ability to become an effective community-based marketing network or actor network indicates the relevance of Briceno et al. (2006), who remind us of the importance of understanding the social process of consumption. They suggest that the social process of consumption is an important dynamic to consider in influencing sustainable consumption. Thus, this leads to Brinkmann & Peattie's (2007) understanding that the marketing function of a 'Fairtrade Town' that seeks to collectively promote consumption change is a process that '*can wield considerable power*' when fully mobilised.

Consumers all live in a society 'bound' by social interaction (Latour, 2005), and a plethora of academic thinking recognises that consumption has a social value (Briceno et al., 2006; Jackson, 2004), suggesting that certain consumption is carried out in order to facilitate consumers' desires to belong to, and interact with, specific communities and society (Durning, 1992; Mayo et al., 2006). It is therefore

potentially justifiable to consider that academic research and contemplation could do more to consider and understand consumer behaviour and consumer culture within the context of place and society wellbeing. Barnett et al. (2004) express the importance of acknowledging that consumption is not an individual activity and argues that consumption is carried out within broad *'networks of social relations and cultural codes.'* This allows academic research and discourse to hypothesise that consumer behaviour could be shaped by, interpreted and disseminated through complex social networks. The principal values of care, concern and fairness being attached to consumption demonstrate the potential economic and commercial value of 'social capital' (Halpern, 2005; Putnam, 2000), to the Fairtrade Town movement (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Talpin, 2009). Nicholls & Opal (2005) and Talpin (2009) both indicate that the activities of a Fairtrade Town initiate both the developmental and marketing value of social capital. They suggest that the Fairtrade Town Movement has helped bridge community bonds that are built upon a distinct social link with distant producer communities through the act of Fairtrade consumption. This link bridges both ends of a mutually dependent supply chain built on rational values of social responsibility that connects consumers with producers and vice versa (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Gereffi, 2005). As Whatmore & Thorne (1997:301), when discussing fair trade networks, remind us:

'What is analytically distinctive, however, is how they strengthen relationships amongst formally 'passive' actants in commercial networks; the producer and consumer-through a mode of ordering of connectivity which works for non-hierarchical relationships framed by 'fairness.'

Nicholls & Opal (2005) and Talpin (2009) both additionally infer that Fairtrade Towns further enhance the marketing power of 'bridging and bonding social capital' (Putman, 2000) in two distinct ways:

1. Bridging social capital, Putman (2000) and Nicholls and Opal (2005) argue, on a global scale, is the emotional selling proposition (Aitchison, 1999), attached to all Fairtrade products (Nicholls & Opal, 2005). This invites the consumer to spend a little more to contribute to the social development of participating in Fairtrade commodity-growing communities.

2. Bonding social capital (Putman, 2000), emerges from Fairtrade Towns assembling a diverse group of citizens together to act as a marketing communications network who champion the social cause of Fairtrade. This may help develop relationships and affinity through Fairtrade promotion and consumption and potentially develop a sense of community spirit amongst participating citizens and organisations (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Low & Davenport, 2009; Talpin, 2009).

These two illustrations of a Fairtrade Town utilising social capital to enhance its marketing communications, when fused together, demonstrate the potential to create credible Fairtrade marketing communication champions or ‘mavens’ (Feick & Price 1987; Walsh et al. 2004). Fairtrade marketing mavens in the context of this study share Feick & Price’s (1987:83) definition and are subsequently suggested to be;

‘individuals who have information about many kinds of products, places to shop and other facets of markets, and initiate discussion with consumers and respond to requests from consumers for market information’

Mavens in Fairtrade Towns, it could be argued, symbolically become credible platforms from which to deliver the Fairtrade message (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Around, 2006; Talpin, 2009). These Fairtrade mavens, one could argue, have already fully embraced the emotive ethos behind Fairtrade and are therefore willing and able to credibly promote the understanding of how western consumers can build social capital and community sustainability in remote parts of the developing world through their consumption.⁵²

Jackson (2006) notes that the fact that we are social creatures means that we learn from each other and subsequently model our behaviour on who we see around us. This potentially signifies that disseminated consumer information regarding Fair Trade could be interpreted as a form of social or informal learning and education through conversation that attempts to influence consumer behaviour. Supporting this is Brinkmann & Peattie’s (2007) proposal that the ‘*ethicalness*’ and responsibility of

⁵² Demonstrating further Amin’s (2002) understanding of the ‘spatiality of globalisation’ discussed in detail earlier in this chapter

consumers and the marketing of Fair Trade products are interdependent, suggesting that the Fair Trade 'brand' is created in everyday consumer experience via an unfolding network of information exchanges through the entire supply chain (Alexander & Nicholls, 2006; Smith et al., 2004; Nicholls and Opal, 2005; Gereffi, 2001).⁵³ The clear advantages of generating such high levels of consumer involvement in the brand, Alexander & Nicholls (2006) note, may lead to improved loyalty, higher levels of awareness and greater positive word-of-mouth communication. It is suggested that conversation is central to the process of informal learning but it is often undervalued as a key learning or marketing communications function because it is such a common daily function (Jeffs et al., 1999). For the 'new consumer,' Lewis & Bridger (2001.) argue, consumer-to-consumer promotion spreading through word-of-mouth in either a community or virtual setting is more influential, and therefore more constructive, than any amount of corporate-orchestrated marketing activity. Informal learning and word-of-mouth could therefore be argued are effective and efficient marketing communication opportunities to educate consumers about Fair Trade. As (Lubke, 2006. 71) suggests:

'Regular buyers need to be encouraged to persist in doing so and to be informed about 'success stories' of Fairtrade because they tend to disseminate the Fairtrade message in their own social group or networks very effectively.'

However, before informal learning, and in particular word-of-mouth, can be considered as the most effective form of marketing communications for motivating consumption change in favour of Fair Trade, consideration should be given to Bendura (1973; 1977) who questioned its effectiveness as a key learning tool for influencing behavioural change. Audebrand & Iacobus (2008.4) additionally identify the problems related to the *'gulf between producer's and consumer's views'*, which, they suggest, has the potential to result in consumer promotional discourse being constructed from a limited understanding that could result in the misrepresentation of a product or brand. Further consideration of this marketing function should also be given to Tallontire et al. (2001) who suggest that Fair Trade consumers appear to be dominated by minority groups who are 'untypical' of the population as a whole, and

⁵³ This is also pertinent to Lubke (2006) who recommends that the only promising way to reach a wider audience for Fair Trade will be through long term personal influence.

which, one could argue, may have implications in limiting the network effect of such a consumer-led marketing communications strategy.

A more complex understanding of social learning is presented by Jackson (2004) who argues that the outcome of such learning is new behaviours learned through trial and error, persuasion or through various forms of experimentation. This more comprehensive outline of social learning indicates that experience and observation are also vital social learning tools and as Campbell (1963) suggests, are often viewed as the best way of changing a person's behaviour. Jackson (2004), basing his findings on the work of Bandura's (1973; 1977) '*social learning theory*' concludes that we learn from observing others around us and model our behaviour on what they do or don't do. As previously described, the community events and community-based marketing functions of a Fairtrade Town have the potential to make a significant contribution to introducing and engaging potential consumers to Fairtrade products by providing an environment where effective social learning can take place. As humans, we need to belong, and subsequently much of our consumption is motivated by a desire for approval and the need to interact with our family, friends and community (Durning, 1992; Mayo et al., 2006). Learning through social engagement therefore can develop into social cohesion that can plausibly change consumption intentions and desires (Jackson, 2004). As McKenzie-Mohr & Smith (1999.77) confer:

'Conformity that occurs due to the individuals observing the behaviour of others, in order to determine how they should behave, can have long-lasting effects'

Understanding marketing communication in relation to Fairtrade Towns is therefore more than about understanding deliberative communication efforts controlled by the producer/manufacturer/distributor and the Fairtrade Foundation as 'message sender.' It is more about influencing/managing discourse and relationships amongst stakeholders within the community and beyond. In this way, Fairtrade Town marketing dynamics appear to show early signs of moving towards the community/social and relationship-based paradigms of marketing.

1.15 Social Marketing/Community-based Social Marketing

By conceptualising Fairtrade Towns as a marketing communications function that aims to use place networks to educate, inform and change consumer behaviour through lobbying and informal learning, it is possible to see the relevance of social marketing and community-based social marketing to the dynamics of Fairtrade towns marketing. Golding & Peattie (2005) contend that social marketing and its focus on changing behaviour to increase the wellbeing of individuals and/or society can provide the Fair Trade Movement with an acceptable approach to market development that helps balance the 'social and commercial imperatives' of Fair Trade. This approach, they suggest, could help to resolve the ideological conflict between the purist and pragmatist approaches to Fair Trade marketing. As Golding & Peattie (2005:159) suggest:

'An alternative to relying on the principles of conventional marketing to make FT products more commercial, is to look towards the discipline of social marketing as a means of preserving FT's social mission while also contributing to its commercial success.'

Golding & Peattie (2005); Hastings (2007); Doherty et al. (2009); French & Blair – Stevens, (2005) and Kotler et al. (2006) all posit that social marketing aims to apply marketing concepts to comprehend and overcome barriers to behaviour change that are relevant to a social good. McKenzie-Mohr & Smith (1999) also note that if any form of sustainable behaviour is to achieve wide scale public adoption, the barriers and benefits to engaging in the activity must first be identified. Golding & Peattie (2005); Hastings (2007); and Doherty et al. (2009) argue that the suitability of social marketing to Fair Trade is demonstrated through questioning what is the Fair Trade consumer being asked to buy? Golding & Peattie (2005) suggest that while the core of the Fair Trade offering is a tangible product, what the movement is essentially trying to sell is the norm that consumers think beyond self gratification and factor into their purchase decision the potential benefit to others and global social justice (Doherty et al., 2009; Golding & Peattie, 2005; Levi & Linton, 2003; Barnett et al., 2011).

McKenzie-Mohr & Smith (1999) posit that social marketing is often dependant on media advertising that can be effective in creating public awareness and

understanding of issues related to sustainability, but is limited in its ability to foster behavioural change. In addition, they further imply that most information campaigns that emphasize improving knowledge or changing attitudes often have very limited or even no effect upon behaviour at all.⁵⁴ Stern et al. (1984) identify that many campaigns to foster more sustainable behaviour have failed as a direct result of paying scant attention to the cultural practices and social interactions that influence human behaviour. The practice of community-based social marketing draws upon the discipline of social psychology, which McKenzie-Mohr & Smith (1999) argue, can be used to develop initiatives to promote behavioural change that are usually more effective when they are carried out at a community level involving direct contact with people.⁵⁵

McKenzie-Mohr & Smith's (1999.16) community-based social marketing discourse, recognises the importance of place in developing personal contact, credibility and trust, in order to bring about behavioural change, telling us:

'The techniques that are used by community-based social marketing are carried out at a community level and frequently involve direct personal contact. Personal contact is emphasized because social science research indicates that we are most likely to change some behaviour in response to direct appeals or social support from others.'

They argue that the more credibility a message broadcaster has, the more influential they are in achieving behaviour change, suggesting that the person, or organisation that delivers the message *'can have a dramatic impact upon how it is received'* (McKenzie-Mohr & Smith 1999.89). Like many consumers, the ethical consumer relies on an array of sources of information about the goods or services they may consume. Past consumer surveys have delineated that the most influential contributor to the ethical consumers' decision making is the recommendations of friends and

⁵⁴ At this point it becomes interesting to consider previous research into the failures of campaigns to foster sustainable behaviour, an area that Jackson (2006. 110) argues is *'littered with failures'*

⁵⁵ McKenzie-Mohr & Smith (1999) note that social science research indicates that people are most likely to change some of their behaviours as a direct result of appeals or social support from others, this, they argue, is why community-based marketing techniques are carried out at a community level where personal contact and a sense of place (Cresswell, 2004), is emphasised as a catalyst, able to create behavioural change.

colleagues (Cowe et al., 2000; Walsh et al., 2004; Arnold, 2009). This potentially indicates that neutral sources of information from trusted individuals or groups (McKenzie-Mohr & Smith, 1999), that originate from the places of social settings, for example, family homes, peer groups, work, and many others are vitally important to the credibility and power of marketing communications for ethical/sustainable goods and services (Tallontire et al., 2001; Lewis et al., 2001). In support, Lewis et al. (2001) convey that the greater sense of identity consumers have with an individual or group, the more likely they are to ‘*wear its symbols*’ and the more protective they are of it. In support, McKenzie-Mohr & Smith (2006.95) in the context of community-based social marketing state:

‘Research on persuasion demonstrates that the major influence upon attitudes and behaviour is not the media, but rather our contact with other people.’

Both Tallontire et al. (2001) and Arnold (2009) agree that many ethical consumers show a natural distrust of information provided by companies and that they trust, listen, and want to believe people much more (Walsh et al., 2004). As a result, one could argue that academic thought could pay more attention to the powerful activity of social acceptance, belonging and relationships (Murphy et al., 2006), in the incremental development of the Fair Trade consumer. The marketing dynamics and educational techniques used by Fairtrade Towns could be conceptualised as an attempt to develop the social construction of place and the principles of social capital, trust, community-based social marketing and actor network theory. Place therefore, is transformed to become the setting for public and private activity where the marketing dynamics of Fairtrade Towns exist. It is a place where the private and public, civic and civil, individual and collective are united under the banner of a Fairtrade Town in a way that affords consumers frequent exposure to both Fairtrade products and Fairtrade’s developmental message in their everyday social interactions (McKenzie-Mohr & Smith, 2006; Alexander & Nicholls, 2006; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Low & Davenport, 2009; Davies, 2008).

1.16 Place and Distribution

Lubke (2006) reminds us that accessibility to Fair Trade products has been key to the success of mainstreaming Fair Trade.⁵⁶ Accessibility in the discourse of Fair Trade appears to broaden the thinking about what ‘accessibility’ means. This manifests itself in the relevant literature through three perspectives; neither of which is without controversy, these being:

1. Places of distribution
2. Variety and range of products
3. Price and affordability

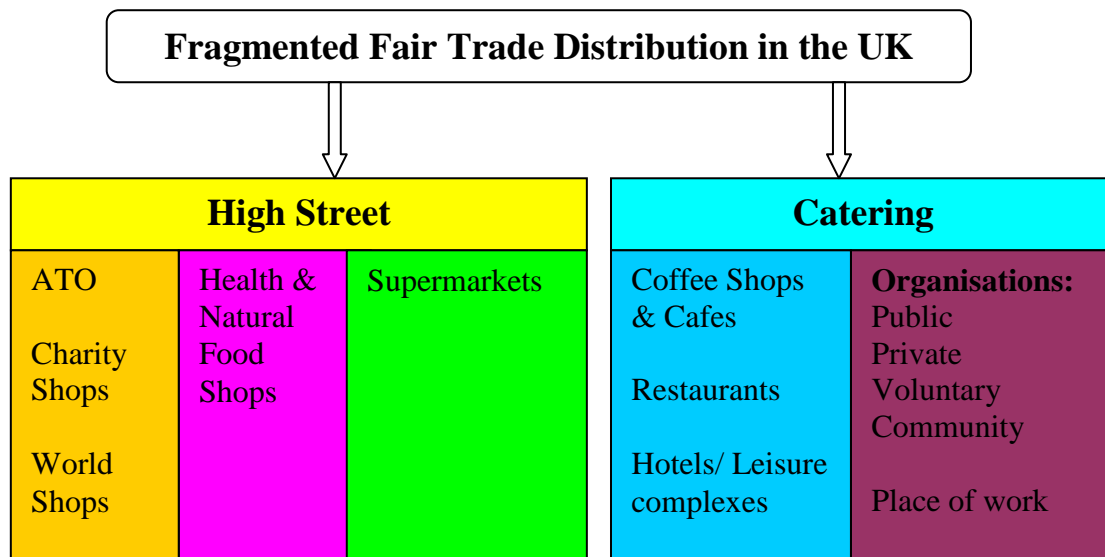
The polarised arguments presented by Moore et al. (2006) and Golding (2009) regarding the struggle of Fair Trade to retain its ‘purity’ whilst increasing its availability, also resonate in the academic discourse on Fair Trade distribution. Bezencon & Blili, (2009), researching into Fair Trade distribution, develop upon these differing perspectives by conceptualising them in the same way as Golding (2009) as pragmatic and ideological. Pragmatic distribution, they argue, attempts to develop mainstream channels of distribution to broaden the consumer base, through a prevailing strategy of market development (Ansoff, 1988). Ideological distribution, on the other hand, takes a more traditional approach to Fair Trade distribution (Nicholls & Opal, 2005) through alternative channels that are committed to, or have a strong affinity with, the political developmental goals of the Fair Trade Movement (Bezencon & Blili, 2009; Low & Davenport, 2009).

Nicholls & Opal (2005) identify four main channels of distribution that are used in the UK to take Fair Trade goods to market. These channels are; high street shops, catering, mail order and the Internet. At first glance this may appear to be a very superficial overview. However, they acknowledge that both the high street and catering distribution of Fair Trade is much more complex and fragmented, necessitating further clarification. Both high street and catering distributions are

⁵⁶ Many other academics, authors and activists support the necessity of the Fair Trade Movement to increase the availability of its products (Lamb, 2008; 2009; Crowther, 2009; Human, 2009; Taplin 2009; Wright & Heaton, 2006; Doherty & Tranchell, 2007; Nicholls, 2002; 2004).

captured in Fig 1.10 *Fragmenting Fair Trade Distribution* that recognises that the distribution of Fair Trade via the ‘high street’ can be classified into three distinct areas and catering into two.

Fig: 1.10 Fragmenting Fair Trade Distribution in the UK



Based on Nicholls & Opal (2005)

1.17: Place and Distribution: The High Street

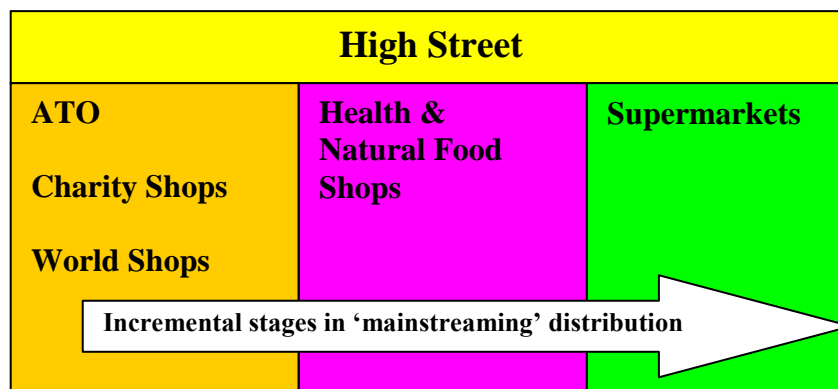
The traditional high street home of Fair Trade, Nicholls (2002) and Nicholls & Opal (2005) argue, is the ATOs, Charity and World shops that reflect the campaigning and charity-based origins of the movement. This is typified by organisations that were totally involved in the ‘movement’ (Bezencon & Blili, 2009; Bowen, 2001), for example Worldshops, Oxfam, and Shared Earth shops (Piercy, 2009; Barrientos & Smith, 2007; Lubke, 2006; Bezencon & Blili, 2009; Low & Davenport, 2006).⁵⁷ Nicholls (2002) and Low & Davenport (2006) suggest that consumers who are introduced to Fair Trade via these ‘traditional’ channels of distribution are much more likely to consume the developmental political message of Fair Trade as well as the product.

⁵⁷ These early methods of distribution appear to have complete synergy with Golding & Peattie’s (2004) and Nicholls & Opal’s (2005) Phase 1 of Fair Trade marketing (Fig 1.0 and 1.1).

Fig 1.11: *The Incremental Mainstreaming of Fair Trade High Street Distribution*, conceptually demonstrates the idea that ATO's, Charity Shops and Worldshops played an important role in the development of Fair Trade markets in the UK. However, whilst it is important to recognise the importance of these organisations to the Fair Trade Movement and their ability to communicate what some perceive to be the right meaning of Fair Trade, Bezencon & Bili (2009); and Low & Davenport (2005b) recognise three key problems with them:

1. The limitations of supply and demand capacity
2. They could reinforce the negative images of 'charity based quality' that has been touched upon earlier in this chapter.
3. Mainstream distribution is putting the traditional/alternative distributors under pressure and this could lead to their loss on the high street, along with the potential loss of Fair Trade innovation and locus of control for the movement in general. This suggests the existence of a 'feedback' loop where the nature of the organisations involved in distribution of Fairtrade can also help shape the nature and perceived meaning of what is being consumed.

Fig 1.11: The Incremental Mainstreaming of Fair Trade High Street Distribution



Based on (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Bezencon & Blili, 2009; Bowen, 2001)

The importance of quality to Fair Trade products has been well documented in this chapter. However, it is additionally suggested that the wider sustainability agenda of Fair Trade has enabled producers to become educated and skilled in organic production methods that have increased the quality and subsequent value of commodity crops (Jaffee, 2007). This could lead to more specialist health and natural food shops wanting to sell Fair Trade products, subsequently introducing it to new, lucrative 'niche markets'.⁵⁸ However, one of the key problems with just expanding into more niche markets is that it still limits the sales growth of Fair Trade and most importantly, potentially limits the developmental capacity of the Fair Trade Movement in general (Piercy, 2009).

Stage three of the incremental mainstreaming of Fair Trade witnessed the introduction of supermarkets into the distribution of Fair Trade, a progression that has come with both strong advocacy and criticism. Lubke (2006) recognises that Fair Trade turnover is reliant on the availability and accessibility of products. In considering consumer accessibility, Barrientos & Smith (2007), contextualising the work of (Taylor 2005), report that food retailing in the UK has become increasingly dominated by

⁵⁸ It could be argued that health and natural food shops offer the potential to improve the message of quality via 'piggy-backing' on the values of specialist retail outlets. This suggests that the distribution medium of health & natural food shops has the potential to symbiotically work with the Fair Trade product and play a role in disseminating a message of quality to the consumer.

supermarkets, with the ‘big four’ (Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury’s, and Morrisons) capturing nearly three-quarters of all UK grocery sales. It appears that many writers and research outputs on this subject agree with the notion that, to significantly develop the scale of Fair Trade it was imperative that the movement penetrated the supermarkets (Barrientos & Smith, 2007; Lamb, 2008; Teather, 2006; Moore et al., 2006; Doherty & Tranchell, 2007; Low & Davenport, 2006; Fridell, 2008). As Piercy (2009.183) argues:

‘If commercial retailers are not involved then the fair trade movement will remain a niche market benefiting only a small number of producers. The growth in trade, which comes with mainstreaming, maximises the impact fair trade has on poverty, affecting far more people than would otherwise be the case’.

Although criticism of supermarkets being utilised to distribute Fair Trade is well documented, (documented in the McFair section of this chapter) some believe that supermarkets themselves have the ability to act as change agents, as they have helped address the problems of poor availability (Nicholls, 2002; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Doherty & Tranchell, 2007; Strong, 1997; Lubke, 2007), and are also suggested to be the main place where scores of consumers are initially reached by Fair Trade. Both Lubke (2007) and Doherty & Tranchell (2007) identify the possibility that supermarket distribution of Fair Trade may synergistically help the demand for Fair Trade in the traditional alternative outlets and vice versa. Lubke (2007) supports the premise that Fairtrade label products bought in a supermarket could act as a catalyst to get consumers interested in Fair Trade, potentially taking them into places (traditional, alternative outlets) that can offer them more information on the movement.⁵⁹ Bezencon & Blili’s (2009) research aimed to discover if Fair Trade’s developmental message was additionally conveyed via the various retail distribution channels it is available through. Their work, although not conducted in the UK, offers an interesting insight into the role of distribution channels in acting as a synergistic function of marketing communication. Their research, like that of Low & Davenport

⁵⁹ Also worth noting here is the widespread understanding that, as brands, the major retailers have a very high degree of consumer trust, and this may in itself have an effect in terms of helping convince the otherwise unconvinced to purchase Fairtrade products.

(2005b) suggests that mainstream channels may be perceived as selling the product without the message, whilst alternative channels of Fair Trade sell the message first and the product second. The diverse distribution channels of Fair Trade, Low & Davenport (2005b:506) suggest, make it possible to conceive of situations where consumers acquire their Fair Trade products from the supermarket but receive the developmental political message of Fair Trade via the '*alternative high street*.' Whilst this may be seen as a novel concept, it is important to state that three mainstream supermarkets (Co-op, Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencer) have embraced Fairtrade labelling and have made significant strides to supply only Fairtrade-certified own brand product ranges in relevant areas such as tea, coffee and chocolate (Fridell, 2009). This move demonstrates the relevance of Low & Davenport's (2009) work on affinity marketing and suggests that these organisations have identified the stakeholder benefits of Fairtrade affiliation to the commercial sustainability of their companies (Fridell, 2009).⁶⁰ Such Fairtrade strategies pursued by large retail organisations go some way to support the suggestion of Nicholls (2002) that retail organisations who offer Fair Trade products can '*benefit from attracting a new and growing market*' and in the process enhance their own brand value.

What appears to be clear from the literature reviewed is that Fair Trade distribution, in embracing mainstream supermarkets, has benefited from vast increases in consumer accessibility and sales. However, some would argue that this has come at the expense of the developmental message of the movement and leads to the irony of the 'biggest' sales volume distributor being the least engaged with the political ideology and principles of Fairtrade. This line of argument suggests that mainstream distribution can result in losing the Fair Trade message to the power of the 'medium' that has been interpreted as both the distribution outlet itself (Low & Davenport, 2006; Bezencon & Blili, 2009; Barrientos & Smith 2007; Renard, 2003; Jaffee, 2007; Davies et al 2009; Fridell, 2008), and the product (Golding, 2009; Moore et al., 2006; Golding & Peattie, 2005).

⁶⁰ The Co-op in particular have featured Fairtrade certified products in their television advertising extending the coverage and potential normalisation of Fairtrade purchase and consumption.

1.18: Place and Distribution: Catering

Fig 1.6: *Fragmenting Fair Trade Distribution in the UK* additionally identifies ‘catering outlets’ as another key market development strategy relevant to Fair Trade mainstream distribution. Nicholls & Opal (2005) note that a marketing strategy to widen catering distribution was important to the Fairtrade Foundation who identified the ‘out of home’ catering market as a major opportunity for sales growth. Nicholls & Opal (2005) identify catering outlets as commercial high street businesses such as coffee shops, restaurants, hotels etc. and organisations from the public, private and third sector that cater for their employees, members, or various other stakeholders. Examples of these include schools, universities, local authorities and churches. This is a strategy that has enabled Fairtrade Towns to have huge potential to increase supply and demand for Fairtrade products and what Hutchens (2009:83) conceptualises as the ‘**solidarid**’ of Fairtrade; a ‘**superstructural node**’ that networks these powerful and prominent organisations into the marketing dynamics of a Fairtrade Town.

For the purpose of this review it is interesting to reconsider Nicholls & Opal’s (2005) interpretation of Fair Trade catering outlets for the two following reasons.

1. The literature reviewed appears to make clear distinctions between high street retail catering businesses and organisations that operate away from retailing and just cater for their workforce, members or other stakeholders through internal canteens, meetings etc.⁶¹
2. The goals of achieving Fairtrade Town status categorises retail and catering in goal 2 of its targets and organisations that are not in ‘retail distribution’ but who have dedicated their support to promoting Fairtrade consumption amongst their stakeholders in goals 1 and 3.

As a result of the two points above it is suggested that, by not classifying non-retail organisations under the banner of Fair Trade, ‘catering’ potentially offers an

⁶¹ For example Low & Davenport (2005; 2007) conceptualise organisations that operate outside of the retail high street as ‘*voluntary ethical spaces*.’ Clarke et al. (2007) additionally refer to them as becoming ‘*spaces of fair trade*,’ whilst others have viewed them as partaking in international development through Fair Trade procurement policies (Fisher, 2009).

opportunity to expand the epistemology of the Fairtrade Towns movement. Taking this into consideration for the purpose of this review, coffee shops, cafes, restaurants, hotels and other leisure complexes that commercially operate on the 'retail' high streets of UK towns and cities will be defined as 'catering outlets' as it is believed this definition clearly conceptualises the functionality of such organisations and allows for clarity and distinction when reviewing the relevant literature.

The coffee shop, whilst experiencing rapid growth on the UK high street and within popular consumer culture, has also witnessed an evolution in the popularity of the branded experience that can be viewed through the proliferation of high street branches of Starbucks, Costa Coffee, Café Nero, etc. These brands have become dominant mainstream actors in catering for UK consumers' desire to consume coffee and café culture in one sitting. Along with these mainstream brands, autonomously owned cafes that are usually small, family businesses also significantly contribute to the market. This is particularly true in the smaller towns and villages of the UK, where it is fair to say they are a major high street provider of 'catered' food and drink. Crowther, in 1997, prior to the conception of the Fairtrade Town, recognised the significance of this market and attempted to get Fairtrade products used in local cafes and restaurants in Garstang (Garstang Fairtrade history, 2009). The importance of this market was quickly identified by the Fairtrade Foundation (Nicholls & Opal, 2005), and later became a key target to achieve Fairtrade Town status.⁶² It has been suggested that from Crowther's initial idea and activities in Garstang, the Fairtrade Towns movement went on to make a significant contribution to the rapid development of Fairtrade availability in both autonomously owned and mainstream branded catering outlets on the UK high street (Around, 2006; Taplin, 2009; Lamb, 2008; Fairtrade Foundation, 2009).⁶³ Jaffee (2007) recognises that the first milestone in breaking into the mainstream 'catering' market came in April 2000 when Starbucks 'capitulated' to activist demands and agreed to sell Fairtrade-certified coffee in its

⁶² Fairtrade Towns set catering outlets providing Fairtrade products with targets; they are set at ½ that of the retail target. For example, a town with a population of 20,000 to 30,000 needs to have six retail outlets and three catering outlets selling Fairtrade products to help towards Fairtrade Town certification.

⁶³ For example, Allen (2009) reports that Keswick, a Fairtrade Town since 2005 and a major tourist location in the Lake District, now boasts approximately one hundred B&Bs and guesthouses that, as a direct result of Fairtrade Town campaigning, now serve up various Fairtrade products such as tea, coffee and fruit juice to their guests.

stores. He suggested that this was a result of mobilised consumer pressure forcing Starbucks the 'icon of corporate coffee bar culture' to supply Fairtrade coffee, proving that transformative change in the industry was possible.⁶⁴ Supporting this move, Lamb (2009), cited in The Fairtrade Foundation (2009) says:

'Starbucks is really setting the pace for the coffee industry by using its global size for good. This move will expand the reach of Fairtrade and deepen its impact on tens of thousands of farmers who are at the heart of the Fairtrade system. Farmers need Fairtrade now more than ever, even though in these difficult economic times, people across the country are staying loyal to their ethical values and to Fairtrade. From today, they can enjoy Fairtrade values over their favourite Starbucks coffee.'

This quote appears to suggest that the pragmatic approach to Fairtrade marketing (Golding, 2009), as defined earlier in this chapter, is appearing to win the argument, as the medium of distribution (Starbucks) offers to maximise sales that should result in the maximum possible benefit to Southern producer communities. It additionally supports the work of Taylor et al. (2005) and Davies et al. (2009) which suggests that corporate interest in Fair Trade shows that the free market does have the ability to reward socially just practices. However, not all agree and the arguments between the medium (mainstream distribution) taking preference over the message (development and trade not aid) continue to resonate (Low & Davenport, 2005; 2009; Fridell, 2008; Jaffee, 2007).⁶⁵ Nicholls (2004), also writes on how the commercial success of Cafédirect has ensured a Fairtrade high street presence in the Costa Coffee chain bars and describes that through a strategy of strategic alliance, Cafedirect now supply Costa Coffee outlets with unbranded beans. This strategy, he argues, has resulted in increased Fairtrade certified coffee sales at the expense of the Fairtrade message. This indicates that the consumer is totally passive when consuming their Fairtrade coffees,

⁶⁴ The 2nd September 2009 demonstrated further evidence of mainstream catering's 'transformative change' when Starbucks stores in the UK and Ireland committed to serving 100% Fairtrade coffee in all their espresso-based beverages, thus becoming the world's largest purchaser of Fairtrade Coffee (The Fairtrade Foundation, 2009; 2009b).

⁶⁵ Fridell (2009) for example, suggests that Starbucks' commitment to Fairtrade is just one aspect of their larger CSR programmes that is purely defensive and shareholder driven. He further infers that Starbucks' interest in Fairtrade is not concerned with promoting social development but with manipulating consumer perception to protect its brand image and enhance its business performance and shareholder value (Fridell, 2009).

leading to the political developmental message of the movement void. One could argue that the long term effects of such actions may extenuate the argument presented in favour of a more 'ideological' approach to distributing Fairtrade Coffee. This is an approach that views the developmental message of Fair Trade as least or more important than the medium of distribution to maximise sales (Nichols, 2004).⁶⁶

1.19: The Problems of Mainstreaming: McFair

Golding (2009) notes that the marketing principles we have witnessed the Fair Trade movement follow, are evidence of a 'pragmatist vision' of Fair Trade that has developed 'commerciality' through strong branding, promotion, advertising and market development that has increased its mainstream desirability for consumers and distributors alike. This is seen as a key strategy in attempting to achieve the movement's goal of elevating Southern producer communities out of poverty. However successful the consumer led marketing strategies have been in increasing market share and knowledge, mainstreaming and the subsequent strategies that have been embraced to achieve it, are not without their critics (Davies et al., 2009).⁶⁷

Jaffee (2007), suggests that the marketing strategies that have enabled the mainstreaming of Fair Trade have resulted in struggles and philosophical differences between two distinct groups; the movement orientated fair trade companies and the large corporations who have recently become interested in Fair Trade. The idea of Fair Trade being infiltrated through corporate dominance has sparked a number of concerns that Low & Davenport (2006:321), identify and describe as the '*oppositional discourses of purity and growth.*'

Fridell (2009) warns us that large corporations such as Starbucks who may initially offer a wider consumer reach for Fair Trade are, in the main, not concerned with promoting Fair Trade but are more interested in manipulating it to enhance consumer perceptions and to protect a brand image that could make them a more desirable proposition. This process, Low & Davenport (2006) argue, is akin to clean-washing

⁶⁶ Fairtrade Towns' pursuit to ensure Fairtrade is consumed whenever and wherever, and their attempts to 'normalise' Fairtrade consumption may become a source of future tension as a result of these issues.

⁶⁷ Many authors, such as Low & Davenport (2005; 2005(b), Moore et al. (2006), Murray et al. (2006), Taylor et al. (2005), Golding, (2009) and Davies et al. (2009) warn of the risk of the absorption and dilution of the Fair Trade Movement as a result of uncritical engagement with mainstream business.

an organisation who really have very little to do with the Fair Trade Movement (Doherty & Tranchell, 2007).⁶⁸ Jaffee (2007), in support, suggests that the entry of large corporate players into the Fair Trade arena poses a significant threat to the viability of the movement orientated fair trade companies as they find themselves up against enormous competitors with huge financial and marketing capabilities. He further infers that the mainstream markets are potentially going to become inaccessible for many of these organisations as they lose their differentiated competitive proposition while also being unable to drop their prices low enough to compete (Porter, 1998). Low & Davenport (2006), also question the limitations of Fairtrade distribution suggesting that Fair Trade products are given limited, specific shelf space in most mainstream supermarkets and, as a result, the message becomes a 'silo' as the rest of the store retains the position of business as usual.⁶⁹

Shopping for a better world has become the dominant message of Fair Trade. However, some argue that Fair Trade products sold via this message and through large commercial organisations such as Tesco allows consumers to buy the product without actually 'buying into the message' (Low & Davenport 2006). This leads to the idea that mainstream dependency has the potential to lose the Fair Trade movement its political clout to challenge unjust trade relations, thus becoming a catalyst to dilute the movements' principles (Low & Davenport, 2005: Jaffee, 2007; Moore et al., 2006, Golding, 2009).⁷⁰ As Davies et al. (2009) put forward:

'Many people within the fair trade movement believed that working with supermarkets was hypocritical. When trying to demonstrate a better way of trading and supporting growers, working with organisations famous for their tight financial control over suppliers was regarded as questionable.'

⁶⁸ It is even suggested that some consumers are actually under the impression that the larger corporations such as Starbucks pioneered the Fair Trade movement (Jaffee, 2007). Whilst this may be good for Starbucks it surely has potential to be detrimental for the effective promotion of the political message of Fair Trade

⁶⁹ However, the Co-op's commitment to Fairtrade may be viewed as a special case that could be put-forward as a case study that straddles such controversy due to its fused mix of mainstream/social enterprise values and operations.

⁷⁰ Another tension that may arise following Fairtrade Towns' marketing dynamic moving further and further into the mainstream.

The issues raised above clearly identify the juxtaposing ideological problems of purity and growth faced by the Fair Trade Movement. However, what is clear is the necessity of mainstreaming to the development of the movement. Even Jaffee (2007) understands the pull of mainstreaming, and suggests that believing that Fair Trade can survive and become more effective as a developmental trading model by just operating in alternative markets that exist in the shadows of the mainstream, is questionable (Golding, 2009). Nevertheless, concerns are evident that the growth of Fair Trade has the potential to water down its political message. This, Golding & Peattie (2005) maintain, is more than product augmentation. It is the virtuous starting point of the Fair Trade proposition and as (Golding, 2009.161) posits:

‘The mainstreaming project is indeed transforming the FT offering from a product with an ethical core to a product concept in which ethics represents a mere augmentation.’

These fears have led to warnings that if the ‘pedagogical’ marketing function of Fair Trade is not managed carefully, the movement has the potential to become just another fast moving consumer goods business that Jaffee (2007), ironically conceptualises as ‘McFair’ (Golding, 2009). However, it is also important to acknowledge at this junction that the vast majority of literature on the subject recognises the importance of mainstreaming Fair Trade to further advance and enable the achievement of its ultimate goals. As Gendon et al. (2009) explain, the necessity of mainstreaming Fair Trade consumer activity and advocating and developing the scale and volume of Fair Trade is essential if it is going to make a significant difference in removing people out of poverty in Southern producer communities. As Lamb, cited in Sims (Guardian 10/10/2009), fervently reminds us:

‘We need the big boys because they can deliver the market changes that we need to take us forward.’

1.20: Early Conclusions

In the main, this chapter has outlined the marketing functions and dynamics pursued by the Fair Trade Movement over the past decade or more. It argues that labelling and a focus on appealing Northern consumer preferences for quality and availability have played their part in taking Fairtrade products from the margins of the alternative consumer markets of the few, into mainstream shopping and consumption arenas frequented by the many. The literature reviewed for this chapter tracks the marketing problems faced by Fairtrade; those of which appear to conflict and compete as a result and desire to maintain Fair Trade's purity whilst also increasing its scale and mainstream appeal. As a result, it appears that all of the marketing functions, principles and practices of Fair Trade are deeply scrutinised for their suitability and ability to maintaining the developmental message and goals of Fairtrade. Therefore it appears that every marketing function and dynamic pursued by the Fair Trade Movement comes with both supporters and critics alike. The chapter suggest that some media are more effective in instilling trust and credibility in Fairtrade, helping to preserve its 'purity' while also increasing sales. It also makes preliminary strides to conceptualise the notion that the Fairtrade Towns movement and its place-based marketing potentially demonstrate a greater ability than other mainstream marketing activities (other than labelling) to maintain and improve both trust and credibility in the Fair Trade Movement and Fairtrade products .

Analysing the incremental development of Fair Trade marketing through its three phases (Golding & Peattie, 2005; Nicholls & Opal, 2005), the chapter suggests that Fairtrade Towns represent a unique place-based marketing dynamic in their own right. Consequently 'place' in Fairtrade's marketing mix emerges from the literature as a multidisciplinary concept that embraces academic insight from sociology, geography, consumption, consumerism and marketing.

Based on a review of academic literature the place of a Fairtrade Town can possibly be conceptualised as both:

- A 'container space' (Amin, 2001), for public and private activity where the marketing dynamics of Fairtrade Towns happen. Fairtrade Towns are subsequently presented as a place where the private, public, civic, civil,

individual and collective are networked and united under the banner of a Fairtrade Town, in a way that affords consumers frequent exposure to both Fairtrade products and Fairtrade's developmental message in their everyday social interactions (Alexander & Nicholls, 2006; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Low & Davenport, 2009; Hutchens, 2009). Implied in the Fair Trade consumption discourse is the understanding that Fair Trade consumers appreciate the value of their collective impact in terms of achieving development goals.

Additionally, it is indicated that Fairtrade Towns understand the benefits of a collective approach to consumption through the movement's determination to penetrate 'institutional consumption' policy and practice.

- A place that demonstrates its responsibility for distant others by understanding the role ethical consumption plays in the '*spatiality of globalisation*' (Amin, 2001). In Fairtrade Towns, consumer purchase and consumption habits are suggested to be valued for their ability to 'act at a distance' and show a social responsibility for distant producers from the developing world. Fairtrade Towns' marketing dynamic is also suggested to demonstrate an ability to stretch social relations over time and space. This is done by driving community, social and civic engagement that encourages consumers to connect to both local and distant places through actively marketing the ethos and consumption of Fairtrade products (Malpass et al., 2007).

Such conceptualisations of place marketing dynamics in Fairtrade Towns additionally raised the importance and relevance of ethical, sustainable, political consumers and consumer citizenship discourse to the study. The review outlines the relevance of empirically understanding the activities of consumer citizenship, arguing that in Fairtrade Towns, consumer citizenship has facilitated the development of individual ethical consumption into a wider embracing, collective place-based marketing dynamic.

The review of literature dedicated to Fairtrade marketing has exposed shortcomings in empirical research and conceptual understandings of Fairtrade Towns. However, despite such shortcomings it has afforded the study the ability to consider the marketing dynamics of a Fairtrade Town from a multidisciplinary perspective.

This is a perspective that this study's literature review now turns to, in order to develop empirical insights and conceptualisations of Fairtrade Towns.

CHAPTER 2

Empirical Insights and Conceptualisations of Fairtrade Towns

2.0: Empirical Insights and Conceptualisations of Fairtrade Towns

2.1: Introduction

This chapter documents the historic development of the Fairtrade Towns movement and reviews the limited academic literature that is specifically dedicated to the subject. The chapter also aims to identify the relevant component bodies of literature which are important to this study's aim of developing deeper conceptual understandings and theories of Fairtrade Town's marketing dynamics. Subsequently it concludes with:

- An overview of the literature that are suggested to be able to augment the theoretical development of the marketing dynamics operational in Fairtrade Towns.
- A number of emergent subsidiary questions set in the context of the research question, necessary in order to comprehend this study.

When this research was undertaken, there appeared to exist, only one academic paper from the discipline of geography (Malpass et al., 2007), one book chapter (Barnett et al., 2011), two consultation documents (Around, 2006; Talpin, 2009) and various newspaper/general publications (e.g. The Guardian, 2007 & 2008) specifically dedicated to the Fairtrade Towns movement. In addition, a limited number of books (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Wills, 2006; Lamb, 2008; Barnett et al., 2011), and journal papers (Low & Davenport, 2005; 2006; 2007; 2009; Alexander & Nicholls, 2006; Coles & Harris, 2006; Doherty & Tranchell, 2007; Wilkinson, 2007; Davies, 2009; Golding 2009; Bryant et al., 2008), have considered the Fairtrade Towns movement within the context of wider research agendas. These range from the academic disciplines of marketing, consumer policy and behaviour (Low & Davenport, 2005; 2006; 2007; Alexander & Nicholls, 2006; Coles & Harris, 2006; Doherty & Tranchell, 2007; Golding, 2009), sustainable development (Low & Davenport, 2005), geography (Low & Davenport, 2007; Bryant et al., 2008) and business ethics (Davies, 2009). They include topics related to the spaces and places of consumption (Low & Davenport, 2007; 2009, Bryant et al., 2008), mainstreaming and the growth of Fair Trade (Low & Davenport, 2006; Doherty & Tranchell, 2007, Coles &

Harris, 2006), consumer producer involvement (Alexander & Nicholls, 2006), the dynamics of social movements, alliances and networks (Wilkinson, 2007; Davies, 2009), ‘*globalizing responsibility*’ (Barnet et al., 2011) and the marketing dynamics of Fair Trade (Low & Davenport, 2005, 2009; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Golding, 2009).

In order to develop an empirical understanding capable of informing and interpreting the marketing dynamics of the Fairtrade Towns movement, it is important to consider its historical development and subsequent role within the broader Fair Trade movement. However, it must be stressed that documenting the entire evolution, roles and activities of the Fair Trade Movement is well beyond the scope and relevance of this review. Therefore, a condensed outline of the Fair Trade Movement relevant to setting the backdrop to the conception and evolution of the Fairtrade Towns movement is presented.

2.2: Fair Trade: Origins, Aims and Ethos

The economic development that characterized the 20th Century was largely based on a belief in free trade and a doctrine of neo-classical economics. This system unquestionably delivered its promises of economic growth, but by the end of the century, awareness of the associated social and environmental costs have become increasingly clearly measured, understood and debated through initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals (un.org, 2011) and the Middle East Association (the-mea, 2011). In Fair Trade literature, the limitations of neo-liberal trade and neo-classical economics have been well-documented as being profoundly unjust to commodity producers from the developing nations of the South (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Jaffee, 2007; Wills, 2006; Barrientos & Dolan, 2006; Steinrucken & Jaenichen, 2007; Osterhaus, 2006; Piercy, 2009; Golding & Peattie, 2005; Renard, 2003). ⁷¹Just as Osterhaus (2006.45) reminds us:

‘The international trading system favours the most cost effective production, and thus, low prices. Today’s prices, however, do not reveal the whole truth

⁷¹ For example, Golding & Peattie (2005) suggest that the present neo-liberal trading paradigm has a profound negative impact on the livelihoods, wellbeing, dignity and independence of over one billion people living in developing countries.

because they do not internalize social, cultural, economic and environmental costs that actually occur. If these costs are passed on to the environment or the society and not incorporated into the price, they are borne by the weakest elements in the chain; the producers, workers and the environment.'

It is precisely these debilitating impacts that the Fair Trade Movement seeks to address (Golding & Peattie, 2005; Young & Utting, 2005; Jaffee, 2007; Ranson, 2006; Osterhaus, 2006; Wills 2006; Piercy, 2009; Walton, 2010). Fair Trade attempts to address the many ills reported with the conventional free trade system (Moore, 2004), by presenting a paradigm shift that allows Southern producers to engage in a 'trading system' that is more direct, socially just and environmentally responsible (Jaffee, 2007; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Wills, 2006; Ranson, 2006; Barrientos & Dolan, 2006; Young & Utting, 2005; Tallontire, 2000; Witkowski, 2005; Golding & Peattie, 2005). The ethos of the Fair Trade Movement is captured by Nicholls & Opal (2005.6) who state;

'The aim of Fair trade is to offer the most disadvantaged producers in developing countries the opportunity to move out of extreme poverty through creating market access (typically to Northern consumers) under beneficial rather than exploitative terms. The objective is to empower producers to develop their own business and wider communities through international trade.'

Fair Trade attempts to protect producers from developing nations from the 'full weight' of market forces (Renard , 2003) and some of the disadvantages of free market conditions, primarily by providing them with a fair and stable price for their commodities (Ranson, 2006; Young & Utting, 2005; Jaffee, 2007; Wills, 2006; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Barrientos & Dolan, 2006) . This price is usually set higher than the market would otherwise dictate and takes into consideration the cost of production, cost of living and the cost of complying with Fair Trade standards (Ranson, 2006; Jaffee , 2007; Nicholls & Opal , 2005; Barrientos & Dolan, 2006; Piercy, 2009; Osterhaus, 2006).

2.3: Defining Fair Trade

However, the Fair Trade movement emerges to be much more than just an economic price guarantee mechanism for Southern developing nation producers. Hayes (2006) suggests that one of the most important, and sometimes under-reported, functions of Fair Trade is the long term commitment of buyers to Fair Trade producers. These findings have led to Moore et al. (2006) crediting the movement with providing a vehicle that enables long term sustainable partnerships to be established (Sueiro, 2006; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Jaffee, 2007; Moore et al., 2006). Golding & Peattie (2005) and Osterhaus (2006) additionally describe Fair Trade as encompassing a wider social and environmental development role, conceptualising it as a model that attempts to fuse economic security with the social and environmental welfare of Southern producer communities. This presents Fair Trade as a mechanism that attempts to transform trade to become a form of international development. (Tallontire, 2000; Osterhaus, 2006; Talpin, 2009).

Activities in addition to the ‘fair price’ paid for commodities have been presented in Table 2.0 below, which offers an interpretation of three key reviews of the literature presented by Nicholls & Opal (2005), Sueiro (2006) and Jaffee (2007) . It outlines the recognition of seven key operations, activities and outcomes of Fair Trade to date:

Table 2.0: Fair Trade: Key operations, activities and outcomes

Fair Trade Operations, Activities and Outcomes	Nicholls & Opal (2005)	Sueiro (2006)	Jaffee (2007)
Advice and assistance	Developing technical assistance		Financial and technical assistance to producers
Longevity and trading partnerships	Transparency and long term partnerships	Long term investment	Long term contracts
		Access to international markets	
Democratic and Ethical working practices	Democratic workforce organisation and empowerment	The empowerment of women	Democratically run producer workplaces
	No labour abuse	Ensuring Labour rights	Safe, non exploitative working conditions

Sustainability	Practice of sustainable production	Environmental Sustainability	Environmental/sustainable production practices
Knowledge and information	Provision of market information to producers		
	Co-operative and not competitive dealings		
Financial	Provision of credit when requested		Advanced credit and payment to producers
			Public accountability and financial transparency
Community Development		Better Living conditions	
		Community solidarity	
		Preservation of traditional cultures	

The seven themes identified in Table 2.0 outline the intention and positive outputs of the trading principles developed by the Fair Trade Movement. Supporting the idea that Fair Trade could be conceptualised as a developmental trading model, Tallontire (2001) and Talpin (2009) place the economic, social and environmental sustainability (Bebbington, 2001; De Pelsmacker & Janssens, 2007; Golding & Peattie, 2005), of developing nation producer communities from the South at the centre of the trading conundrum. Despite the support of many academics and policy makers, it is important for us to note that Fair Trade is not an uncontested developmental panacea. Criticism of the principles and practices of Fair Trade appear to be growing in number (although still sparse), with emerging arguments in the main coming from right wing, neo-liberal free market schools of thought. Sidwell (2008), Henderson (2008), Haight & Henderson (2010) and Booth & Whetstone (2007)⁷² all lean towards conclusions that suggest Fair Trade cannot and does not achieve the developmental goals it claims to do so. Sidwell (2008.13) for example, is fervent in his disapproval and posits:

‘The Fair Trade system, despite its well-meaning intentions, cannot lift poor farmers out of poverty. At best, it makes some slightly less poor at the expense

⁷² All Four sceptics champion the end of trade barriers and support the principals and practices of free trade as the most effective and proven way to lift people out of poverty.

of others, while drawing energy away from the possibility of genuine economic development.'

Jaffee (2007) suggests that the Fair Trade model is a paradox, as its efforts to alter 'unjust terms of trade' and introduce social justice into the trading system depend on the very markets that have generated these problems in the first place. Fair Trade is therefore agreed to be captive to the wills of neo-liberal consumers, functioning in a free market, resulting in the acknowledgement that the Fair Trade market is primarily driven by the needs and wants of Northern consumers (Moore et al., 2006). This is conceptualised through the notion that Fair Trade is a vehicle that manoeuvres 'within, but against the market' (Jaffee, 2007), by generating sustainable trade relations between disadvantaged producers in Southern developing nations and concerned consumers in the North (Witkowski, 2005; Young & Utting, 2005; Coles & Harris, 2006; Wilkinson, 2007; Raynolds, 2002; Low & Davenport, 2007; Lyon, 2006; Piercy, 2009). Fair Trade is therefore said to be dependent upon Northern consumers' willingness to integrate altruistic, ethical and international development principles into their consumer decision making process (Hira & Ferrie, 2006; Low & Davenport, 2006; Moore, 2004; Tallontire, 2000) resulting in the purchase and consumption of Fair Trade products (Golding & Peattie, 2005; Jaffee, 2007; De Pelsmacker & Janssens, 2007).⁷³ As Archer & Fritsch (2010:106) note:

'Buyers or consumers of fair trade labelled products are motivated by their desire to support fair labour practices and development in poorer states. Buyers make purchases based on their commitments to a global justice and social development agenda.'

In support, Wilkinson (2007) argues that crucial to the success of Fair Trade is the emergence of, what he refers to as, the '*politicization of consumer activity*' where consumers' sensitivity to issues of social justice expresses their concerns in their daily purchasing practices and consumption habits (McGregor, 2002; Shah et al., 2007). Fair Trade has therefore been described as an egalitarian trading model that links marginalized Southern producers in developing countries to Northern consumers

⁷³ In other words, becoming ethical consumers, which is explored in depth in Chapter 1.

(Young & Utting, 2005; Coles & Harris, 2006; Wilkinson, 2007; Raynolds, 2002; Low & Davenport, 2007; Lyon, 2006; Piercy, 2009). This represents what Alexander & Nicholls (2006) describe as a new model of supplier-consumer relations that is built on the development of both social and economic capital. This is a view captured in the accepted definition of Fair Trade by FINE, 2001 (source: Moore et al., 2006.331).

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

The fundamental principles of politicizing consumption in the North to achieve sustainable community development in Southern developing nations therefore emerge as the backbone of the Fair Trade Movement (Barnett et al., 2011). It could be argued that this ethos may possibly have set the stage for the incremental development of a consumer, place-led movement in the North (The Fairtrade Town), which appears to have firm foundations in politicized consumerism, community and place. Indications from many academics, industrialists and economic analysts suggest that without the 'proactive' and dynamic Fair Trade consumer, the reported success and rapid rise in Fair Trade understanding, popularity and consumption would never have been achieved (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Coles & Harris, 2006; Doherty & Tranchell, 2007). Leno (2006) also argues that the Fair Trade movement has relied upon, not just consumer interest and demand, but also on the willingness of retailers to supply Fair Trade products. Both increasing the demand and supply of Fair Trade products is therefore accepted as a key function in driving the Fair Trade Movement forward (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Piercy, 2009; Low & Davenport, 2005; 2006; 2007; 2009; Coles & Harris, 2006; Doherty & Tranchell, 2007; Golding, 2009). To trace the incremental development of how the Fair Trade Movement has improved supply and demand in the UK, and to consider its activities in the context of the Fairtrade Town

Movement, an outline of the historical development of the Fair Trade movement is useful to consider.

2.4: The Roots of the Fair Trade Movement

Low & Davenport (2005) suggest there is no singular ‘unitary history’ of the Fair Trade Movement. They claim that it has its roots in four distinct camps all linked by a desire to promote and aid Southern producer communities attain self help, development and social justice through ‘trade not aid’. They identify four key areas from which the Fair Trade movement derived. These have been laid out in Table 2.1: *The Birth of the Fair Trade Movement*, providing a format that helps to integrate the findings of other key authors who have also written on the conception of the Fair Trade Movement.

Table 2.1 The Birth of the Fair Trade Movement

The Birth of the FT movement: 4 Key Areas: Low and Davenport (2005)	Authors in agreement
1. Secular and Faith based perspectives	<p>Wilkinson (2007): <i>‘Charitable organizations linked to religious affiliation’</i></p> <p>Around (2006): <i>‘Faith activists, many within church networks’</i></p> <p>Jaffee (2007): <i>‘Charities usually linked to churches attempting to create markets for products of impoverished and displaced people’</i></p> <p>Witkowski (2005); Oxfam and the ATO movement</p> <p>Nicholls & Opal (2005): Oxfam Post war second world war, <i>‘importing handcrafts from producers in Eastern Europe to support economic recovery’</i></p>
2. Producer consumer co-operatives	Moore (2004); Co-operative movement in late nineteenth century.
3. Alternative lifestyles and ‘counter culture’	<p>Piercy (2009); Post war radicalism leading to the development of Alternative Trading Organizations (ATO)</p> <p>Steinrucken & Jaenichen (2007): Development of ATOs</p> <p>Witkowski (2005); Oxfam and the ATO movement</p> <p>Nicholls & Opal (2005): Oxfam Post war second world war, <i>‘importing handcrafts from producers in Eastern Europe to support economic recovery’</i></p>
4. Utopian industrialists (linking business and social justice)	

Table 2.1 demonstrates an academic belief that the birth of the Fair Trade Movement is, in the main, firmly embedded and driven by ‘grassroots’ altruistic religious/alternative communities (Bekin, 2007), and social groups that seek to challenge the free market paradigms they operate and live in. This suggests that, since its conception, the Fair Trade Movement has been owned and driven by networks (Davies, 2009), of altruistic individuals, groups and organisations who perceive themselves as actively serving society, through supporting and promoting more ethical/sustainable consumption. As Davies (2009.122) reminds us:

‘What this tells us is that informal mechanisms of relationship management have been the historical mainstay of fair trade networks.’

Another comprehensive overview of the conception and development of the Fair Trade Movement is presented by Nicholls & Opal (2005), who note that the development of the movement can be captured in four distinct waves:

Nicholls & Opal’s (2005), Four Waves of Fair Trade Development

1. The concept of Fairtrade began after World War Two with Oxfam driving the ‘trade not aid’ agenda (Witkowski, 2005).
2. The development of Alternative Trading Organisations (ATOs) created and supported by religious groups (Wilkinson, 2007; Around 2006; Jaffee, 2007), or community-based groups (Piercy, 2009; Steinrucken & Jaenichen, 2007).
3. Naturally sympathetic retail organizations such as the Co-op group (Moore, 2004), adopt more and more Fair Trade products. It also witnessed more ATOs releasing mainstream products such as chocolate.
4. This stage is still in progress and witnessing growth in the mainstream retail market and the consistent entry of Fair Trade brands.

The first three stages of the Fair Trade Movement outlined by Nicholls & Opal (2005) are also represented by the various authors included in Table 1.1. Each of these three stages again demonstrates the link with social movements that are driven by activists, ‘normal people’ and organisations who seek trade justice through either political or

community-based activism expressed through consumption. Advancing this argument, Low and Davenport (2006), clearly state that the origins and core of the Fair Trade movement are anthropocentric, requiring altruistic consumers and organizations (Around, 2006; Jaffee, 2007; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Piercy, 2009;) in the North to form networks that have given the movement a competitive advantage (Davies, 2009) in supplying, promoting and subsequently increasing the demand for Fair Trade products.

A significant shift in the management and marketing of Fair Trade occurred in 1997 which saw the movement leaving its 'marginal beginnings behind' (Gendon et al., 2009). In order for Fair Trade to have a significant effect on Southern producer communities it was realised that scale and volume had to be dramatically increased (Gendon et al., 2009). Certification and branding were seen as a key enabler to increase consumer awareness and influence supermarkets to stock Fair Trade goods (Wills, 2006; Davis, 2009). Subsequently, this took the Fair Trade Movement into what Nicholls & Opal (2005), conceptualise as the fourth wave of its development.

Golding and Peattie (2005) contextualise this move by suggesting that the marketing strategy for Fair Trade products, based on the principles of branding, shifted out of what they term 'good will selling' and moved into the commercialised 'mainstream' (Gendon et al., 2009; Doherty & Tranchell, 2007).⁷⁴ In part, the roots of this can be traced back to 1997, when previously splintered groups united with the common aim of improving trade justice by establishing the Fairtrade Foundation. It involved Oxfam, Tradecraft, Christian Aid, New Consumer, The World Development Movement and the Catholic Overseas Development Agency (CAFOD) working to develop a third party Fair Trade audit body and process for the UK. In conjunction with the internationally formed Fair Trade Labelling Organization (FLO) the Fairtrade Foundation went on to develop the Fairtrade certification trademark and logo (Nicholas & Opal, 2006; Wills, 2006).

The trademark and logo is now monitored and awarded by the Fairtrade Foundation who licenses it to over 3,000 products (Fairtrade Products, 2009). Nicholas & Opal

⁷⁴ This, Low & Davenport (2009) suggest, has led to Fair Trade participating in the constant search for new markets motivated by a desire to increase capacity.

(2006) credit the logo and trademark with significant success in providing consumers and organisations wishing to supply Fair Trade with important reassurance. This, they argue, has been achieved through the Fairtrade label's ability to provide authenticating and simplifying communication. It is well documented that public recognition of this trademark and logo is high.⁷⁵ This suggests that the success and continued growth of Fair Trade may, in part, be attributed to a form of brand management (Davis, 2009) that appeals to the semiotic language used and understood by the contemporary consumer (Kline, 2000; Chomsky 2004).

2.5 The Origins of the Fairtrade Towns movement

In 2001 it was to the Fair Trade certification and branding process that Bruce Crowther, the founder of the Fairtrade Towns movement, turned. He proposed the possibility of a place, as opposed to a product, being audited and certified with the Fairtrade trademark and logo. The vision being that, if a town could be a place where there are significant increases in awareness raising activities about Fairtrade, and levels of supply and demand for Fairtrade products reaches a high and predetermined level, it could be officially certified by the Fairtrade Foundation as a Fairtrade Town. At this point, it is important to note the use of 'Fairtrade' (one word) as opposed to 'Fair Trade' (two words). One of the key stipulations laid down by the Fairtrade Foundation to become a Fairtrade Town is that all promotion and lobbying must be centred on products that carry the Fairtrade certification trademark (Around 2006; Talpin, 2009). Therefore, when Fair Trade is mentioned in the context of Fairtrade Towns it will be referred to as one word, the trademark 'Fairtrade'.

The short but dynamic initial history and development of the Fairtrade Towns movement is detailed by Lamb (2008) who paints a somewhat romantic picture while tracing the movement's roots back to the year 2001. She frames the Fairtrade Towns movement as an inspired case of community activism led by the charismatic Oxfam campaigner Bruce Crowther. Crowther, described as a 'Fairtrade legend' (Lamb, 2008), and visionary (Around, 2006), was inspired by the activities of a harvest festival at a local school to organise a campaign group. This resulted in a small group of local people systematically lobbying local retail outlets, organisations and public

⁷⁵ In the UK, 70% of the population are reported to recognize the trademark and logo, with 64% displaying an understanding of the concepts behind it (Fairtrade facts and figures, 2009).

services in the town of Garstang to stock and consume Fairtrade products (Alexander & Nicholls, 2006). These activities helped initiate the mobilisation of various 'ordinary people' (Malpass et al., 2007), the civic authority (Barnett et al., 2011) and a plethora of various organisations to actively partake in a social movement (Davies, 2009) aimed at promoting Fairtrade 'starting in their own back yard' (Lamb, 2008). Alexander & Nicholls (2006) outline the significance of this and suggest that it is important to note that the Fairtrade Towns movement organically developed into what Human & Crowther (2011:89) suggest to be a 'grassroots revolution', organised by a local group of activists in a small market town. They conceptualize this as a grassroots movement (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Around, 2006; Malpass et al, 2007; Talpin, 2009; Human & Crowther, 2011), partly determined by the fact that it was not a 'manufactured' marketing strategy designed by either the Fairtrade Foundation or other alternative trading organizations (ATOs).

Crowther is additionally credited with identifying a further link between Fairtrade and the spaces and places of consumption (Malpass et al., 2007; Low and Davenport, 2007; Barnett et al., 2005; Mansvelt, 2005) based on the understanding that consumption could also be viewed beyond the traditional neo-liberal paradigm and its emphasis on the individual consumer. Crowther's inspiration for this was the paradoxical nature of an event such as a coffee morning held at a local church. He stresses that such coffee mornings raise money for projects in the developing world, but, rather absurdly, use coffee from multinational organisations that pay growers in the same countries a 'pittance' (Crowther; cited in Lamb, 2008). This event helped clarify how the collective consumption of organisations and groups could also make a significant contribution to a place's commitment to the Fair Trade agenda. Fairtrade Towns subsequently, have been identified for their ability to influence and change groups' and organisations' consumption habits. This is a function referred to by Barnett et al. (2011:162) as Fair trade '*initiatives aimed at transforming infrastructures of collective consumption.*' Alexander & Nicholls (2006) explain that Crowther's entrepreneurial activism in linking the various collective social constructs of a place to the Fair Trade movement came from his understanding and respect for social connections that exist within a place, which he viewed as central to the holistic Fair Trade movement. Subsequently, Lamb (2008) describes Garstang as a place that

has Fairtrade ‘woven into the fabric’ of everyday life. Barnett et al. (2011.180) further articulate this by suggesting:

‘The fair trade movement mobilizes existing, geographically embedded social networks with the purpose of sustaining a vision of alternative economic and political possibilities, networks rooted in local church communities or in localities where local business, fair trade activism and willing customers collude to generate a thriving fair trade ‘scene.’

Low and Davenport (2007) have credited the Fair Trade movement with a history of providing voluntary ethical spaces and proclaim that these traditionally were dedicated retail spaces that they refer to as ‘the alternative high street.’ They suggest that the Fairtrade Towns movement has adopted the principle that towns and cities can become ethical consumption places/spaces as a result of a commitment, shown as a community, to the Fair Trade Movement. Weaving Fairtrade into the fabric of a place or space (Lamb 2008, Barnett et al., 2011) therefore, has become a key function of the Fairtrade Towns movement (Low & Davenport, 2007). They, like Barnett et al. (2011), also argue that the creation of ethical spaces of consumption (Barnett et al., 2005) helps to increase Fairtrade sales, reinvigorate the message of trade reform and shorten the physical distances between producer and consumer.

Garstang’s declaration of itself as the first Fairtrade Town originally challenged the marketing and campaigning paradigm being pursued by the Fairtrade Foundation. It set challenges regarding how a place could be credibly certified with the same trademark and equitable auditing process that products have gone through, and how to achieve this without damaging the equity of the Fairtrade label. Crowther accepted the key concerns of the Fairtrade Foundation that were set out in two personal letters. These were primarily related to the ability for a place to keep campaign momentum going (Around, 2006) and also increasing awareness and improving the supply and demand for Fairtrade products in that locality. Agreements were therefore set in place with Crowther and the Fairtrade Foundation that a place’s ability to raise local awareness and availability of Fairtrade in that particular locality (Lamb, 2008), would formulate the basis of the criteria to be met. From this significant event, concrete yet rewarding goals that merited the award (Around, 2006) necessary to achieve Fairtrade

Town status, were set (Nicholls & Opal, 2005) allowing other places to emulate and achieve the certification of a Fairtrade Town (Alexander & Nicholls, 2006).

September 2001 witnessed the Fairtrade Foundation launch the Fairtrade Towns initiative, and in November of the same year, Harriet Lamb, the Director of the Fairtrade Foundation, presented Garstang with their accreditation as a Fairtrade Town (Garstang Fairtrade history, 2009). From humble beginnings in Garstang in 2002 (Lamb 2008; Human & Crowther, 2011), the number of accredited Fairtrade Towns by 2007 had reached well over two hundred (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Allen, 2007). Within one year of its conception, the Fairtrade Towns initiative also claimed the mantle of '*one of Britain's most active grassroots social movements*' (Kelly, 2008). Over a short period of time, it has experienced rapid growth and can be credited with a process of continual development, incorporating a wider spectrum of geographical places into its portfolio. These include Fairtrade countries, Fairtrade counties, Fairtrade islands, Fairtrade zones, Fairtrade cities, Fairtrade towns and Fairtrade villages (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Alexander & Nicholls, 2006). For simplification processes these have been combined and when mentioned as an entity, are referred to as Fairtrade Towns (Garstang Fairtrade history, 2009). The number of accredited Fairtrade Towns in the UK registered by the Fairtrade Foundation in February 2012 stood at 538 (Fairtrade Towns, 2012). Fairtrade Towns therefore seem to be viewed as an integral and rapidly expanding aspect of Fairtrade's growth, yet they still remain an unspecified, under-researched and undefined social entity. This presents an unusual situation as it could be argued that it is very rare to find a movement that has developed and spread so rapidly yet still remains so fundamentally under researched - a situation that this study hopes in part to redress. The UK alone now has 538 accredited Fairtrade Towns that adhere to, and are audited upon, the following requirements:

1. The local council must pass a resolution supporting Fairtrade, and serve Fairtrade coffee and tea at its meetings and in offices and canteens.
2. A range of Fairtrade products must be readily available in the towns' or city's shops and served in local cafés and catering establishments (targets are set in relation to population).

3. Fairtrade products must be used by a number of local work places (estate agents, hairdressers etc) and community organisations (churches, schools etc).
4. The council must attract popular support for the campaign.
5. A local Fairtrade steering group must be convened to ensure continued commitment to Fairtrade status.

(Fairtrade Towns, 2008)

These stipulations necessitate focused community engagement through key stakeholder buy-ins that entwine public, private, third sector organisations, citizens and consumers (Wills, 2006), into a proactive community/place-based network (Talpin, 2009; Davies, 2009). This network formalises attempts to mobilise and empower people (Around, 2006; Lamb, 2008), from all walks of life and all sections of the community (Talpin, 2009; Lamb, 2008), to form a localised social movement whose fundamental aim is to increase the supply and demand of Fairtrade products within a specific locality (Around, 2006; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Low & Davenport, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009; Lamb, 2008; Malpass et al, 2007; Alexander & Nicholls, 2006; Talpin 2009; Davies, 2009). Alexander & Nicholls (2006) suggest that the Fairtrade Towns movement has enacted ‘geographical spaces’ into the Fairtrade Foundation’s trademarks ‘network of meaning’. This, they argue, has helped to define Fairtrade consumption at a civic level, moving it beyond the traditional conceptualization of individual neo-liberal consumer paradigms.

2.6 Fairtrade Towns: Places and Spaces of Consumption.

The six key academic publications that report both researched and conceptual findings related to the Fairtrade Towns movement (Malpass et al., 2007; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Low & Davenport, 2007, 2009; Alexander & Nicholls, 2006), all place significant importance on the concept that the Fairtrade Towns movement has had a significant impact on the development and marketing of the Fairtrade Movement. Making particular reference to the creation of Fairtrade ethical spaces/places and place-based activism that, in some instances, bears many similarities to the work of McKenzie-Mohr & Smith (1999) on community-based social marketing. Community-based social marketing represents a movement which seeks to deliver progress on

social goals within communities through community action prompted and promoted through the application of marketing principles and practices. Fairtrade Towns seem to deliver ‘progress on social goals’ by actively pursuing marketing practices built upon notions of responsibility, for places of production through the actions of those situated in places of consumption, i.e. Fairtrade Towns (Barnett et al., 2011).

Nicholls & Opal (2005) were the first to write a significant conceptual piece on the Fairtrade Towns movement, introducing Fairtrade Towns under the banner of ‘place marketing’. They suggest that the guidelines for achieving Fairtrade Town status have a place dimension that engenders mass market interest in Fairtrade. This is achieved through marketing communications involving local, place specific initiatives and citizens’ word-of-mouth. By focusing on ‘place’ marketing Nicholls & Opal (2005) and Barnett et al. (2011) recognize that a Fairtrade Town clearly emerges as an effective, proactive politicized ‘marketing network’ that links an evolving number of actors (using actor network theory) such as products, producers, spaces, audits, and certification to new and existing consumers. Alexander & Nicholls (2006) emphasize that Fairtrade Towns drive community social and civic engagement by encouraging consumers to connect to their town through actively marketing the ethos and consumption of Fairtrade products.

Talpin, (2009), and Around (2006) argue that the Fairtrade Towns movement demonstrates how familiarity and ‘trust’ as an intangible asset and output of social capital has been used to engage people who may have previously been disinterested or even sceptical about Fairtrade. Putnam’s (2002.19) understanding and work on social capital, defined as the *‘connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them’* has been considered and contextualized to the Fairtrade Towns movement in the work of Nicholls & Opal (2005), Alexander & Nicholls (2006), Talpin (2009), Low & Davenport (2007) and Davies (2009). This research indicates that in a Fairtrade Town, social capital has been both developed (Low & Davenport, 2007), and effectively deployed (Davies, 2009), as a marketing tool to promote Fairtrade consumption. As Around (2006.20) notes:

“The Fairtrade Towns initiative took off with remarkably few resources, outside a tremendous contribution of volunteers’ energy and time.”

Hutchens (2009) also pays significant attention to the importance of social capital in the marketing dynamic of Fairtrade. Her work implies that in Fairtrade Towns, individuals and groups hold great influence and demonstrate abilities to access resources that serve to ‘*diffuse information, knowledge and capacities to facilitate action*’ Hutchens (2009.4). She further conceptualises social capital working to facilitate Fairtrade Towns’ ability to ‘*network networks*’ that enabled the enrolment of other established networks to become a part of the movement’s dynamic. As we are reminded:

‘Fairtrade rapidly achieved scale by networking social networks to spread the fair trade message. The movement did not build new networks, but tied established networks together.’ (Hutchens, 2009.83).

Alexander & Nicholls (2006) and Nicholls & Opal (2005) develop the role that social capital and ‘networking networks’ can play in Fairtrade Towns by conceptualising their application, function and dynamic through the lens of actor network theory.⁷⁶ They argue that civic engagement engendered in a Fairtrade Town that attempts to strengthen the relationship between producer and consumer is facilitated through actor network theory. This enables information and practices (that can be attributed to marketing) to flow between place of consumption and places of production, making them both ‘*interdependent through the flow of goods*’ Gereffi et al. (2001.1). Alexander & Nicholls (2006) present an empirical example of this form of network unfolding in real time and place and identify the fact that many Fairtrade Towns hold events where consumers meet Fairtrade producers as a key promotional activity. This helps further bridge the producer and consumer divide (Talpin, 2009)⁷⁷. This form of marketing, created and communicated from the position and proposition

⁷⁶ Actor network theory presented by key authors such as Latour (2005), Whatmore & Thorne (1997) and Law (1999) is explored in depth and contextualised to the relevance to Fairtrade Towns in Chapter one of this thesis.

⁷⁷ As an individual consumer, no one is going to bring an African farmer into your kitchen / place of work or social life to chat about coffee, but within Fairtrade Towns, that type of personal connection can and is being made.

of ‘mutual dependency,’ shows how the Fairtrade Towns, through an activated network are able to entwine the ethical stance of Fairtrade consumption into a particular place.

Low & Davenport’s (2005) early conceptualisation of the activities and roles of a Fairtrade Town are perhaps somewhat underdeveloped. They outline that a Fairtrade Town’s principal activity is to partake in the process of lobbying local businesses and organisations to pledge to the consumption or sale of Fairtrade products. By attempting to reduce the actions of Fairtrade Towns to the singular activity of lobbying, Low & Davenport (2005) at first, could appear to have failed to consider the wider potential social activities of the Fairtrade Towns movement, by ignoring the Movement’s role in socially influencing the purchasing and consumption habits of citizens within their community. However, Low & Davenport’s (2005, 2006, 2007 and 2009) papers present a building block of knowledge, incrementally developing their conceptualisation of the Fairtrade Town Movement. Like Nicholls & Opal (2005) they support the notion that the Fair Trade Movement’s strategy to pursue ‘new’ markets, also referred to as ‘Mainstreaming’ (Low & Davenport’s 2005; Golding & Peattie 2005, 2006; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Doherty & Tranchell, 2007; Moore et al, 2006), has been pursued through the Fairtrade Towns movement via engaging people as both citizens and consumers to lobby for, promote and support Fairtrade in their locality (Talpin, 2009). Displaying incremental enhancement in their work, Low and Davenport (2006) further suggest that the Fairtrade Towns movement demonstrates the ability to engage people beyond consumption into actively championing the Fairtrade message through their multiple and overlapping identities (Anderson, 1997; Baumann, 1997) as consumers, workers, parents, members of community/faith groups, etc. Barnett et al. (2011.180) expand upon this as follows:

‘The growth of fair trade consumption in the UK carries important theoretical lessons for accounts of civic and political participation... Secondly, it suggests that the key axis of social differentiation, around which fair trade consumption is organized, is not simply income level, but a more complex assemblage of professional expertise, associational life and social capital in which the key

actors are institutions such as churches and schools and trade unions, and in which people participate, not as abstract consumers, but as Christians, or socialists, or teachers, or friends.'

Low and Davenport (2006, 2007) theorise that these activities have been both aided and augmented by the 'alternative high street.' They conceptualize the 'alternative high street' as a place that comprises a broad spectrum of community stakeholders (public/private institutions, associations/community groups and other collectives) who purchase Fairtrade products as a matter of principle. This, they suggest, moves beyond the traditional paradigm of individualized neo-liberal 'ethical consumerisms' to collectively expressed politicized consumption (McGregor, 2002; Shah et al., 2007). This presents an interesting discourse to pursue, as the subject of Fairtrade Towns moves from attempting to encourage individual consumption of Fairtrade, towards a process that aims to influence collective (institution) Fairtrade consumption that in effect edits (Mayo & Fielder, 2006) the choice process on behalf of its stakeholders in favour of Fairtrade. Talpin, (2009.14) pragmatically supports this by stating that:

'Fairtrade Towns ensure a local physical presence for the Fairtrade mark in public places, sometimes unexpected and therefore noticeable, to a higher degree that would be seen elsewhere. This places Fairtrade higher up in the consciousness of local people, who will come across it even if they don't purposefully attend a Fairtrade event or look for it in the shops.'

Low and Davenport (2006) present the case study of various organisations (NGOs, Charities, Schools, Universities, Councils and even the UK Houses of Parliament) as examples of, what they refer to as, 'wholesale adoption' of Fair Trade. Talpin (2009) suggests that the Fairtrade Towns movement has succeeded in introducing Fairtrade into a 'low level legislative mandate' represented in the procurement policies of Local Authorities and in Wales and Scotland, even the central government. The adoption of Fairtrade by such organisations is a key requirement of Fairtrade Town validation, necessitating strategies based on the objective of influencing consumption beyond the individual (Talpin, 2009), and developing Low & Davenport's (2006) 'alternative high street.' The concept of the 'alternative high street' (Low & Davenport, 2006),

incrementally evolves in further literature presented, and becomes defined as ‘voluntary ethical spaces’ or ethical places of consumption (Low & Davenport, 2007). The literature still portrays a strong sense of ethical consumption beyond the individual paying particular attention to institutions and groups creating ‘voluntary ethical spaces’ via their purchasing policies. For example, Crowther’s citizen-led activism (Lamb, 2008; Low & Davenport, 2007; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Allen, 2007; Malpass et al., 2007; Around, 2006; Alexander & Nicholls, 2006) that appears to be the birth and life blood of the Fairtrade Towns movement, has made substantial steps in influencing local councils and various organisations to procure Fairtrade products (Low & Davenport, 2007; Talpin, 2009; Malpass et al., 2007; Barnett et al., 2011). Low & Davenport (2007) conceptualise this process as the creation of ethical spaces, suggesting that occupying these spaces develops the potential to integrate education and advocacy with Fairtrade consumption by moving consumers beyond the simplistic activity of ‘voting’ through the tills. At this juncture, it is interesting to note Low and Davenport’s (2007) use of the term ‘space’ replacing ‘high street.’ This shows a subtle but significant shift in the literature presented to date, taking a line of discourse influenced by geography (Barnett et al., 2005). Space is referred to in a variety of ways, it is presented as an organisation (university, school, shop, church, etc), a section of a supermarket and a Fairtrade Town (Low & Davenport, 2007). As a Fairtrade Town requires the mentioned ‘spaces’ of schools, local authorities, community-based organisations, etc to adopt and promote Fairtrade consumption, defining a Fairtrade Town as a ethical space potentially confuses Low & Davenport’s (2007) definition of what an ethical space is. This is because, a Fairtrade Town, one could argue, is a conglomerate of ethical spaces within one geographically-located place. Questions could therefore be asked of Low & Davenport’s (2007) representation of a Fairtrade Town being conceptualised as an ethical space.

Low & Davenport’s (2007) understanding of ‘space’ and ‘place’ in the context of Fairtrade Towns whilst at first appearing to hold a strong case of simple semantics, has the potential to lead to conceptual confusion when considering the work of Creswell (2004) and Tuan (1997). Both present place as a space that through social processes has been given meaning, as demonstrated by Tuan (1977.6):

‘What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value... The ideas; ‘space’ and ‘place’ require each other for definition. From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa. Furthermore, if we think of space as that which allows movement, then pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place.’

Low & Davenport’s (2007) findings that ethical space can be developed via legislative mandate (Talpin, 2009), or citizen-led activism, both prominent features in all Fairtrade Towns, may be better considered through the lens of Creswell and Tuan and thus be better understood as ethical places, for as Cresswell (2004.10) argues:

‘When humans invest meaning in a portion of space and then become attached to it in some way (naming is one such way) it becomes a place.’

Information and practice developed by Fairtrade Towns are therefore suggested to unfold from what Amin (2002.385) conceptualises as the ‘*spatiality of globalisation*’ and ‘*global connectivity*.’ Fairtrade Towns, viewed through this lens, appear to resemble ‘container spaces’⁷⁸ that are afforded the possibility of extending and intensifying social relations and institutions across space and time (Amin, 2002; Held, 1995; Gereffi et al, 2001). This is achieved through expanding the understanding of ‘mutual dependency’ beyond the globalisation of supply chains that merely talk of value-adding production processes and distribution, into creating a process capable of delivering a different ‘mutual dependency.’ This is born from the understanding that ‘acting at a distance’ can lead to an extended sense of responsibility for ‘distant others’ expressed by the ‘ethical consumer yard’ (Gereffi et al, 2001; Gereffi et al., 2005; Lamb, 2008; Whatmore & Thorne, 1997)⁷⁹. These views express the significance of Fair Trade formulating a number of complex interdependent networks, capable of establishing relationships between producers from the developing economies of the South and consumers prominently from the developed economies of

⁷⁸ ‘*Container spaces*’ is argued by Amin (2004 (a)) to be a mainstream view of place, conceptualising it as a territorial entity that consists of local economic systems, regimes of regulation and the places people call home.

⁷⁹ The various definitions and facets of ethical consumers and ethical consumption are discussed in depth in chapter one of this study.

the North. Fairtrade Towns emerge perhaps as one of these networks, a network that functions as part of a bigger network that facilitates a Fairtrade Town's ability to increase the sophistication and capacity of Fairtrade consumption and promotion in its own 'backyard'. In essence, empirical studies thus far, suggest that Fairtrade Towns allow a place to function as a result of actor network theory that systemically links the right documents, the right devices, the right places and the right people to ensure durability and success (Whatmore & Thorne, 1997; Law 1986; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Alexander & Nicholls, 2006). Talpin (2009) colourfully supports this notion and suggests that Fairtrade Towns demonstrate the ability to bring international development into the locale and everyday life of ordinary citizens through the message of consumption. She asserts that the Fairtrade Towns movement;

'grabs peoples' interest and makes them feel empowered to do something about the world's problems immediately, in their locality and without doing anything extraordinary.' (Talpin, 2009. 13)

A Fairtrade Town therefore appears able to be conceptualised a place that uses the spatiality of globalisation to extend its social, economic and environmental responsibility. This occurs by understanding the power of consumption that exists in its everyday contained space to influence positive events happening in producer communities on the other side of the world (Amin, 2002; 2004 (a); Held; 1995). A Fairtrade Town is thus presented as a place that defines itself through its connectedness with Fairtrade values, displayed through its citizens' contributions towards increasing Fairtrade marketing and consumption within their geographical sphere of influence (Nicholls & Opal, 2005). This is a process that Barnett et al. (2011.181) conceptualize as *'Fairtrade urbanism.'*

Barnett et al. (2011) suggest that Fairtrade Towns' understanding of place reflects a desire to view consumption as something that happens beyond individual consumers. This demonstrates an understanding of how the collective consumption of organisations and groups could make significant contributions to Fairtrade consumption and promotion. It may therefore be suggested that a Fairtrade Town could be better conceptualised as an ethical place that has the ability to market Fairtrade at a civic level (Nicholls & Opal, 2005). Fairtrade Towns therefore appear

able to be conceptualised as a process that has enabled a shift from unconnected container spaces such as homes, schools, businesses or churches, to a connected ethical place united through Fairtrade Consumption.

Supporting this is the work of Nicholls & Opal (2005) and Alexander & Nicholls (2006) that suggests that ethical spaces (Fairtrade Towns) have the ability to create 'social capital' that can challenge mainstream consumer norms and influence ethical consumption. The main suggestion is that while individuals are occupied within such ethical places (given meaning through Fairtrade) *'a collective decision for positive social action through consumption overrides the individual preference'* (Low & Davenport, 2007.344).

Low and Davenport (2009.102) proclaim that the success and continual development of 'civic'-led marketing in Fairtrade Towns has, and will be, further achieved through their variation of affinity marketing described as:

'The critical feature of affinity marketing is that products or services are targeted at an identifiable group of consumers who have an emotional or psychological bond with a particular cause or organisation. We suggest that the fair trade and ethical trade movement can use this strategy to build business-to-business (B2B) affinity relationships that take us out of the realm of individualized shopping for a better world into a sphere of mission-led policy and practice.' (Low and Davenport 2009.102)

Considering the work of both Macchiette and Roy (1991) and Laing et al. (2004) it could be argued that Fairtrade Towns have had some success in creating affinity relationships with organisations who have an emotional or operational connection (Laing et al., 2004) with the ethos of Fair Trade. For example, a café run by the Salvation Army on the high street might feel compelled to serve Fairtrade Coffee as it would be perceived as fitting with the overarching principals of the organisation. This activity, Low and Davenport (2009) argue, shifts Fairtrade consumption into the arena of organisation policy and practice where a procurement policy may represent the market to the people who occupy a given space and point in time (for example a workplace, a meeting at a conference centre, a University or school canteens). As

previously mentioned, this market therefore ensures Fairtrade products reach the consumer, through what some refer to as ‘editing choice’ (Mayo & Fielder, 2006) or ‘fixed systems of provisioning’ (Barnett et al., 2011.196). However, it is important to note that, although Low and Davenport (2009), Nicholls and Opal (2005), Lamb (2008) and Barnett et al. (2011) all recognise that organisations’ procurement and consumption make a significant contribution to a Fairtrade Town, it would be fair to assume that all four would suggest that this is not a replacement but a supplement to the individualised approach to shopping for a better world (Carrigan et al., 2004).

Malpass et al. (2007), Barnett et al. (2011) and others (Alexander & Nicholls, 2006; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Talpin, 2009) all comment on the use of a community’s social capital and recognise that Fairtrade Towns use ‘place’ to mobilise collective action around ethical consumption. Such activity and action, Barnett et al. (2011.183) argue;

‘brings into focus the emphasis on the collective rather than individual espousal of Fair trade.... It shows the importance of ‘emplaced’ rather than seemingly ‘placeless’ consumption of fair trade ideas and goods.’

Malpass et al. (2007) and Barnett et al. (2011) also recognise the link between how social capital has been used to influence, and therefore create, ethical space dedicated to the pursuit of Fairtrade consumption. The work potentially offers a logical advancement to affinity marketing presented by Low and Davenport (2009) in that it recognises the importance of collective action in influencing, not just the demand for Fairtrade on an individual level, but also in lobbying and canvassing organisations to adopt Fairtrade. This, they suggest, illustrates a Fairtrade Town as a place that can become a ‘territory’ in which individuals are joined into wider community action related to international development.

Malpass et al.’s (2007) ethnographic study into the policy making and political process of the Bristol Fairtrade City campaign presents a familiarity with Creswell’s (2004.7) work on space and place. This work suggests that place is socially reconstructed and fundamentally a *‘space which people have made meaningful.’* The paper presents an understanding that a Fairtrade Town is a socially constructed place that has been given meaning through the various processes of ethical consumption

that happen within a given locale. Likewise, Barnett et al. (2011.194) also lean towards a Creswell-like understanding of place when contextualised to Fairtrade Towns, positing:

'Fairtrade Town and City campaigning prizes open a more relational construction of place, developing identity around external relations of responsibility and justice, but it has also had an impact on aspects of the internal political construction of place, raising issues of fairness which transcend any local global divide.'

The work of both Malpass et al. (2007) and Barnett et al. (2011.294) allows Fairtrade Towns (through the process of ethical consumption) to be *'re-imagined'* through feelings and actions of responsibility for the lives of other far-off people and their places (developing nations' producers and their communities). Fairtrade Towns are therefore presented as gaining an identity that is socially constructed from the concept of *'place beyond place.'* The social construction and identity of a Fairtrade Town is therefore suggested to result from its actions that are centred on increasing Fairtrade promotion and consumption in a given locale or *'container space.'* This results in the creation of a Fairtrade *'ethical'* place, namely a fully certified Fairtrade Town (Amin, 2002). As Malpass et al. (2007.633) note:

'The Fairtrade City campaign can therefore be seen to have deployed ideas of place, fairness and local-global relations as scale frames of mobility through which to embed ethical consumption in place, and govern consumption at a distance.'

2.7 Conclusions: Empirical and Conceptual Understandings in the literature related to Fairtrade Towns.

This chapter recognises that the Fairtrade Towns movement is under-conceptualised and has extremely limited empirical academic research solely dedicated to it. These academic limitations predetermined that the research process, from the outset, was unable to depend solely on the existing literature to provide one theoretical framework to follow. Subsequently, an imperative of the research quest was to develop a suitable theoretical framework that was capable of mapping out the necessary *'territory'* that

needs to be investigated (Miles & Huberman, 1984.33). The lack of any one substantially acceptable theoretical framework to follow, additionally acted as a justification to build an inductive enquiry that aimed to develop theory beginning from a position of limited preconceptions or prejudices (Blaikie, 2000). This supports a grounded theory research methodology and follows Locke's (2001) suggestion that grounded theory researchers should enter the research process with as few given assumptions as possible. However, what does become evident from this chapter and the subsequent literature review is that a number of key concepts centred on the academic disciplines of marketing and ethical/sustainable consumption, network theory and place keep recurring through the limited literature that does exist. These have been identified and placed into three relevant areas that are proven to make a significant contribution to empirical and conceptual understandings of Fairtrade Towns in this study:

1. Places and spaces of consumption
2. Consumer citizenship and responsibility through consumption
3. Fair Trade marketing

The process of producing a comprehensive literature review on Fairtrade consumption and marketing and the completion of this chapter helped to further unearth a number of other related disciplines (related to the four above), that emerged in relevance to the study in question. The result of this introduced key writings into the review; social capital, actor network theory, social marketing, social learning, sustainable consumption, consumer citizenship, space and place and geographies of consumption.⁸⁰ All of these disciplines emerged from the literature as a rich tapestry of disciplines upon which a comprehensive contextualized and empirical understanding of the marketing dynamics of a Fairtrade Town has been considered.

Despite the lack of empirical detail available to review, some of the early literature, that sought to conceptualise the Fairtrade Towns movement, implied that it represented a unique approach to place (Malpass et al., 2007) and to marketing (Nicholls & Opal, 2005). This study sought to follow their logic by exploring the

⁸⁰ All covered in depth in chapter 1

movement through a ‘place-based marketing’ lens. Fundamentally, this chapter identifies why the Fairtrade Towns movement needs to be conceptualised and empirically researched through a marketing lens that expands the traditional boundaries of traditional models such as the marketing mix. The marketing functions of Fairtrade Towns empirically and conceptually emerge from both the literature review and this chapter as an entity that has embraced and utilised places and spaces of consumption, Fair Trade marketing and consumer citizenship to form a unique ‘to place’ marketing dynamic.

Emerging from this chapter is a justifiable understanding that a Fairtrade Town represents a unique place-based approach to marketing. This uniqueness requires drawing upon various other academic fields that prove capable of expanding the empirical understandings, conceptualisations and the epistemology of Fairtrade Towns and Fairtrade marketing. Subsequently, the literatures explored in this study helped to add empirical and conceptual insights in the Fairtrade Towns marketing dynamic. Subsequently, this literature review and this chapter have developed a theoretical framework from which this study has been informed. This framework moves beyond traditional marketing paradigms. It identifies the study’s complexity whilst helping inform the research process to theorise the unique marketing dynamics of Fairtrade Towns across the UK. This can be seen in Fig 2.2: Theoretical Framework: *‘Viewing the Fairtrade Towns movement through a Marketing lens.’*

The literature review and this chapter also identify a number of empirical and conceptual shortcomings in the limited academic work produced so far on Fairtrade Towns. Therefore, through the empirical understanding developed in this chapter and from reviewing literature dedicated to other disciplines, as pointed out in Fig 2.2, a number of secondary questions supporting the main research question emerge. These are:

- What are the meanings attributed to place in Fairtrade Towns?
- How has place been incorporated into the marketing dynamic of a Fairtrade Town?

- How has consumer citizenship and ethical, political and sustainable consumption manifested itself in Fairtrade Towns?
- How does social capital and actor network function as a marketing dynamic in a Fairtrade Town?
- What is the role of a Fairtrade Town steering group and how do they function?

Fig 2.2: Theoretical Framework: ‘Viewing the Fairtrade Towns movement through a Marketing lens’



CHAPTER 3

Methodology

3.0 Methodology

This chapter aims to detail and justify the methodological process and theoretical perspective that were embraced and pragmatically applied in this study. It gives a comprehensive overview of the chosen process and perspective followed and contextualises their suitability and application to this study.

3.1 The Predicament: *What Methodological Process to Follow*

The predicament of considering exactly how to conduct research in a field where little has been written, Samuel (2011) argues, is a common problem faced by researchers in embryonic and rapidly emerging fields of study. From the outset, a decision was made that the Fairtrade Towns movement was an unsuitable subject for research using a deductive methodology. The shortfall in academic research in this area suggested that there could be little confidence in the results of any hypothesis testing or deductions derived from a limited knowledge base of, mostly, non-empirical findings. As a matter of course, this also led to the non-suitability of following a quantitative methodology as the nature of enquiry needed to be exploratory, not attempt to be conclusive (Bray, 2008). In selecting a methodology, one of the earliest choices facing any researcher is between quantitative, qualitative or mixed method approaches. Quantitative, questionnaire-driven research is highly prevalent when researching different aspects of consumption, marketing and consumerism. Although questionnaires could well have provided an insight from a large proportion of relevant participants in Fairtrade Towns, such an approach would have fundamentally failed to capture the rich narratives of the lived experiences of those engaged. These experiences were deemed necessary to contribute to the developing epistemology of the subject. Additionally, given there was little or no sound pre-existing theory to test or build upon, attempting to design exploratory questionnaires based on assumptions about the Fairtrade Towns movement or cursory qualitative investigations risked capturing data that could introduce both bias and irrelevance into the study. Therefore, a deductive research strategy that tests theories or hypotheses to generate conclusive findings (Bray, 2008) from quantitative data obtained independently from observation (Blaikie, 2000; Saunders et al., 2000) was deemed unworkable from the outset. Instead, this study required an inductive research strategy with the purpose of interpreting what is going on (Jeon, 2004; Saunders et al., 2000) and letting '*the world appear anew*' (Charmaz, 2006.14). Given the fact that so little was understood and

established about the Fairtrade Towns movement, Blaikie's (2000. 104) suggestion that inductive research strategies are commonly used to pursue '*what questions*' and to '*describe phenomena and establish regularities that need to be explained*' supported the value of an inductive strategy. Therefore, the absence of pre-existing '*rich data*' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and empirical knowledge to work from, combined with the desire to inductively build theory from scratch, meant that data collection and analysis needed a methodological approach that followed an interpretive theoretical perspective. Crotty (1998) and Blaikie (2000.115) both argue that interpretivism contradicts positivism in its attempts to understand and explain social reality because it is concerned with understanding the 'social world' as experienced by 'its members.' As Blaikie (2000.115) describes it;

'the task of the interpretive social scientist is to discover and describe this 'insider' view, not to impose an 'outsider view on it.'

This study followed the interpretivist belief that empirical knowledge from those involved held the epistemological key to understanding the Fairtrade Towns movement's marketing functions and dynamics. Therefore, the study concerned itself with exploring the social world of the Fairtrade Towns movement through the eyes of many of the stakeholder groups involved in its construction. This was achieved by capturing qualitative data from the 'insiders' social situations, views, motives, interactions, interpretations and everyday actions (Blaikie 2000). Consequently, the qualitative research methodology of Grounded Theory appeared to be the most obvious methodological approach for this study because of its generally acknowledged suitability for researching new and emerging phenomena (Samuel 2011; Goulding, 1999), its interpretivist theoretical perspective and its established ability to inductively produce theory directly from qualitative data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

3.2 Grounded Theory: *Suitability of a Methodology*

Grounded Theory, which was developed in 1967 by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, has become one of the most widely used qualitative research methods (Strauss & Corbin 1998; Bryant & Charmaz, 2007), and is ubiquitous across a wide array of academic disciplines. As this study was afforded limited opportunity of

starting from a given theoretical perspective, the application of grounded theory's central principle of deriving theory from data that is '*systematically collected and analysed throughout the research process*' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998. 12) determined that the study started directly after the first point of data collection. This approach ensured a respect to theoretical sensitivity (Glaser 1978) by not allowing preconceived ideas to influence the research process (Day, 2007). Additionally, it provided a structure through which to gather and analyse data to generate emergent, inductive theory informed by 'unfiltered' data. For this reason, Goulding (1999.8) recognises that grounded theory is frequently adopted by researchers when the subject in question has been '*relatively ignored in literature or has only been given superficial attention.*' Stern (1980), argues that the strongest case for using grounded theory is when researching relatively new or unknown areas, which is the case here. The methodology is therefore recognised for its ability to cope with the perceived difficulties associated with researching rapidly emerging fields of study. This would include the Fairtrade Towns movement (Samuel 2011), that has limited empirical data and little in the way of specific conceptualised theories, or established discourse.

Grounded Theory's ability to inductively build theory from data through qualitative inquiry is based on several strengths which were valuable in bringing academic rigour to the research conducted for this study:

1. With its ontological belief that everything you learn in the research field is relevant data (Charmaz 2006), the research was not limited to specific data sets or types upon which to empirically develop theory. This allowed flexibility in data gathering, ultimately helping to conceptualise findings from authentic descriptions of theory, based on the lived experiences of those engaged (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).
2. It allowed the research process to consider the value of serendipitous moments of data collection (Glaser, 1998). This is an important feature for emerging research agendas, as predetermined research strategies for rapidly emerging research subjects can prove difficult to predetermine. Grounded theory provided flexibility when the study was faced with situations that necessitated a change of direction.

3. The integration of data collection and analysis iteratively directed the research's nature of enquiry as the data was used to determine where to go and what to ask next with confidence. This process helped take away the uncertainty of the next step in the research process and added rigour to the process of data gathering and analysis.
4. The application of grounded theory demonstrated an ability to produce theory that, Glaser & Strauss (1967) argue, is more 'real' because it remains as close as possible to the data.

The application of grounded theory spans a wide range of academic and practice based disciplines. It has also created its own historical lineage (Morse 2009) of conflict and resolution regarding philosophical standpoints and its practical application (Walker & Myrick, 2006). Despite different schools of thought emerging over its application, the defining dynamic of grounded theory rests on the assumption that theory can only be generated from data scientifically gained through 'social research' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Goulding, 1999). Strauss & Corbin (1998) argue that because grounded theory formulates theory directly from the research data, it offers 'clarity of insight' into new and only partly understood phenomena, represented in this study as The Fairtrade Towns movement. As McCallin (2003:203) notes:

'One of the strengths of grounded theory is that it explains what is actually happening in practical life at a particular time, rather than describing what should be going on.'

Grounded theory was originally developed as a specific and detailed methodology involving both an underlying philosophy and a distinct set of activities. How much of the philosophy and how many of the activities a given researcher applies, appears to vary in practice.⁸¹ This study represents an attempt to keep as close to the spirit of Glaser and Strauss's vision of grounded theory as the circumstances of the research and the specific procedural demands of undertaking doctoral research allowed.

⁸¹ Whilst some studies represent a 'formal' or more 'textbook' application of grounded theory, others only adopt certain elements to inform and enrich differing types of enquiry.

3.3 Theoretical Perspective: *Symbolic Interactionism*

All social science research has a context to its research process, a context that 'grounds its logic and criteria' and brings with it a number of assumptions (Crotty, 1998.7). The theoretical perspective for this study that shaped the researchers view of the human and social world explored (Fairtrade Towns), needed to engage and generate meaning from those involved in the movement. The understanding and meaning of this study was therefore derived from Fairtrade Town participants' social interactions and interrelationships that existed within their community/places in order to become certified Fairtrade Towns. Subsequently, the research aimed to explore and categorise the social interactions that informed and led to perceptions, attitudes, values and actions of Fairtrade Town participants (Crotty, 1998) in order to see the Fairtrade Towns through the eyes of those who created them. As such, this study takes the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism, which is elaborated upon and contextualised below.

The use of symbolic interactionism used in this study (Blumer 1969) as its theoretical perspective provides a context upon which the techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory can be used. Furthermore, it respects the 'Chicago Tradition' (Hammersley, 1989) of qualitative enquiry. This is a tradition that Robrecht, (1995.170) delineates as researchers observing, recording and analysing data acquired in a 'natural setting'.⁸² It is therefore usual for many grounded theorists to also trace the methodology's lineage back to the Chicago School and symbolic interactionism (Locke, 2001; Charmaz, 2006; Goulding, 2002; Clarke 2005; Starks & Trinidad 2007; Dey, 2007). Grounded theory, it is argued, embraces the philosophical standpoint of symbolic interactionism because it generates conceptually-based meaning (Locke 2001), by inquiring how social structures, processes and symbols influence human behaviour via social interaction (Starks & Trinidad, 2007; Dey, 2007). As Goulding (2002.39) explains:

'Symbolic interactionism is both a theory of human behaviour and an approach to enquiry about human conduct and group behaviour.'

⁸² The lineage of this tradition transcended from student to student, starting with the work of George Herbert Mead's (1934) *'Mind Self and Society'*. Herbert Blumer, a student of Mead, developed upon his work to introduce the theoretical perspective of 'symbolic interactionism' (1969) that subsequently influenced the development of grounded theory led by Blumer's student Anslem Strauss.

The theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism comes from the school of interpretivism (Jeon, 2004). Crotty (1998.67) suggests that empirical data unearthed in this way should display a culturally derived, historically situated interpretation of the '*social life-world*' from which accurate theoretical concepts can inductively emerge. Therefore, individual meanings and values captured through a lived experience become the foundation of the interpretivist's nature of enquiry (Weber, 1970). Forte's (2010.153) suggestion that symbolic interactionism '*examines how meanings attached to symbols emerge during social interaction and how people use shared meanings to do things together,*' helps to clarify symbolic interactionism as belonging to the theoretical perspective of interpretivism. For this study, symbolic interactionism has been used to interpret and theorise the Fairtrade Town and its marketing dynamics as a representation of the lived experience of those actively engaged in it. Informed by Blumer (1969), the study respects that empirical research must consist of people engaged in action. As a result, in order to be valid, the study aims to unearth the nature of social action from the people directly involved in the Fairtrade Towns movement. The study therefore, aims to capture the marketing dynamics of the Fairtrade Town in, what Blumer (1969) would refer to as, 'terms of action' derived from human groups. In addition, the study also recognises meaning as a social product (Blumer, 1969) that is formed via the defining activities of people as they interact with the various social symbols ascribed to a Fairtrade Town (Charon 2001). As Goulding (2002.39) argues:

'Symbolic interactionism is both a theory of human behaviour and an approach to enquiry about human conduct and group behaviour.'

As previously stated, this study's philosophical underpinning is heavily influenced by Herbert Blumer's interpretation of symbolic interactionism published in 1969. Central to his thesis rests the assumption that symbolic interactionism is built on '*three simple premises*' Blumer (1969.2):

1. Humans act towards 'objects' on the basis of the meaning they ascribe to them.

2. The meaning of 'objects' is derived from the social interaction that we have with others.
3. An object's meaning is modified through an interpretive process that people use when they encounter them.

The study starts from the position of recognising the Fairtrade Town as an '*abstract object*' (Blumer, 1969.10). Abstract objects, Blumer argues, can be anything that humans can refer to, and as such, can range from philosophical doctrines to ideas such as justice and compassion.

By viewing The Fairtrade Town as an object it becomes possible to discover 'from within' how participants see, describe and act accordingly while engaged in the social activities that come to represent a Fairtrade Town. To capture such data and in line with the central doctrines of symbolic interactionism, Denzin (1978.99) argues that its theoretical perspective should be used to inform the researcher to take as near as possible the '*standpoint of those studied.*' As Crotty (1998) posits, the researcher needs to put oneself in the place of those studied. This is because '*the goal of this tradition is to understand the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it*' Schwandt (1994.118).

Goulding (2002.39) additionally suggests that methodologically, symbolic interactionism requires the researcher to '*enter the worlds of those under study in order to observe the subjects' environment and the interactions and interpretations that occur.*' As a study therefore, interest is based upon capturing a rich mosaic of data from 'within' that tells us how members of the Fairtrade Town Movement have symbolically interacted with the 'five goals' of the Fairtrade Town to create new meanings, inform plans of action, carry out action and change the traditional paradigms associated with place-based marketing. Therefore, like Jeon (2004), the task of this study was to discover what is going on in the process through which towns become awarded the Fairtrade label. Once again, following the lead of Blumer (1969. 39) the study's methodology and methods used aimed to '*lift the veils that cover the area of group life that one proposes to study*' by getting as close as possible to the lived experience of those involved. This meant that the methods used to gather rich

data needed to; firstly ensure active engagement in the area under study and secondly, not to introduce personal bias. They should additionally capture the lived experiences described and reflected upon by those involved. It was therefore decided that a pluralistic sequential approach to data collection would follow, and the most suitable methods to use were;

- ethnographical participation in a Fairtrade Town steering group to '*put oneself in the place of others*' (Crotty 1998.76).
- semi-structured interviews of Fairtrade Town participants to '*see things from the perspective of others*' (Crotty 1998.76).

The theoretical perspective for this study recognises, like Locke (2001.23), that in order for collective action to take place under the banner of a Fairtrade Town, meaning must be shared via '*communication and common language.*' The Fairtrade Town is therefore researched as a social organisation made up of '*patterns and intertwined lines of action that express common meanings attached to various social objects*' Locke (2001.23).

Despite the study's recognition that knowledge is socially constructed (Charmaz, 2006), from a positivist trajectory, the research does speak of facts that represent the marketing functions and dynamics of the Fairtrade Town Movement (an example of this would be community events that have happened). However, the adoption of a positivist philosophy would have restricted the study to what is directly observable and would thus just come to represent a list of activities with limited conceptual meaning or significance. This is potentially adequate for seeking to describe activities that have been carried out in the name of the Fairtrade Town Movement, but this study wanted to move beyond the descriptive and into a more grounded conceptualisation of the phenomena under study.

In support of symbolic interactionism displaying a logical fit (as defended above) to the theoretical perspective of this study, two additional distinctions also underpin its relevance:

1. One of the fundamental mandates of the Fair Trade Movement that has particular relevance to marketing, and has subsequently been paid a lot of attention, is the desire to bring the consumer and producer closer together. Thus, it could be argued that, in Blumer's world, both the consumer and the producer are 'social symbols' in each others' worlds and the resulting interaction influences how Fair Trade has been socially constructed and marketed.

2. A number of established works relevant to this study and in the academic field of marketing and consumer behaviour⁸³ directly use or imply subscription to the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism, a selection being:
 - Sustainable/Ethical consumption (Jackson 2006, Berry & McEacher 2005, Micheletti, 2003.25; Hogg et al., 2009)
 - Social Movements (Porta & Diani 2006; Oliver & Myers, 2003; Crossley, 2002)
 - Place and Space (Massey, 2005; Tuan, 1977)
 - Actor Network Theory (Latour, 2005; Law & Hassard, 1999, Nicholls & Opal, 2005)
 - Community-based Social Marketing (Mckenzie-Mohr & Smith, 1999)
 - Branding (Schemer et al., 2010)
 - Consumer Behaviour/Psychology (Leigh & Gabel 1992; Soloman, 1983; Cherry et al., 2001)
 - Marketing Systems (Kadirov & Varey, 2011)

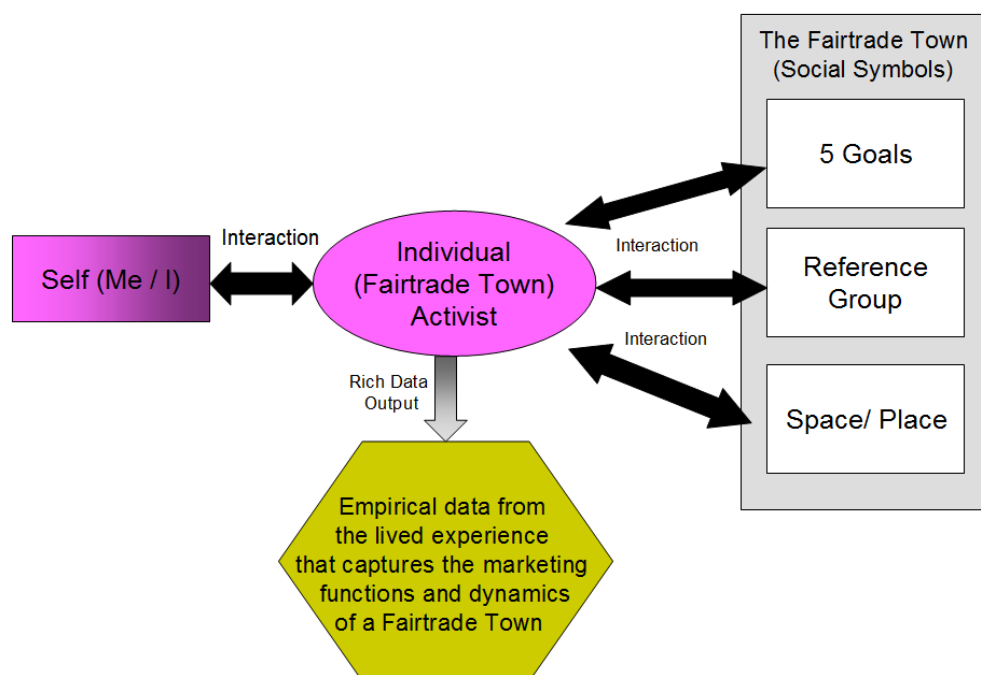
Despite widespread recognition that symbolic interactionism is a sound philosophical fit to the methodology of grounded theory (Clarke 2005), some have questioned its limitations and have subsequently been credited with developing the epistemology of

⁸³ The number of works that use symbolic interactionism as a theoretical perspective for studies into marketing and consumer behaviour are vast. What is presented therefore, are some pertinent and relevant examples of work taken from this perspective.

grounded theory by taking a differing ontological standpoint⁸⁴. Charmaz (2006; 2009), although recognising that symbolic interactionism and grounded theory make a powerful research package, advocates and encourages us to consider grounded theory as a process of developing a theory based on the philosophical underpinnings of social construction. Her argument, that grounded theory develops theories from the way we learn about the worlds we study, offers an ‘interpretative portrayal’ of the studied world, resulting in theories that are ‘constructions of reality’ (Charmaz 2006). Taking a social constructivist philosophy to this study would have effectively provided a valuable framework upon which to build a clear conceptual understanding of a Fairtrade Town. However, the need to understand the more intricate dynamics of the movement would potentially have been compromised, as following this framework would not have revealed data that could determine the dynamic interactions taking place between the people of the movement, the place/space, the five goals set by the Fairtrade Foundation and the individuals themselves in order to establish a Fairtrade Town (As demonstrated in Fig 3.0: Fairtrade Towns; a Theoretical Perspective: Symbolic Interactionism).

Fig 3.0

Fairtrade Towns a Theoretical Perspective : Symbolic Interactionism



⁸⁴ Charmaz (2006) for example, maintains that grounded theorists can take a number of philosophical starting points ranging from feminist theory to Marxist theory.

The three key symbols of the Fairtrade Town represented in Fig 3.0, all stem from the original starting point of this study. The five goals were set out by the Fairtrade Foundation in 1992 as necessary to fulfil in order to become a certified Fairtrade Town. These five goals, for the purpose of this study, have been considered as a *'mutual indicator'* that produces a *'shared meaning'* for a given set of people (Blumer 1969.11). They require a steering group to be set up and it is taken that the activities of the steering group members occur *'predominantly in response to one another or in relation to one another'* (Blumer 1969.7) and the five goals. Given the fact that the actions are also embedded within a specific place (town, city etc), when considering the concept of place from the perspective of a Fairtrade Town, the relevance of Tuan's (1977) work underlines the importance of symbolic interaction. His suggestion, that a place only becomes defined as it is endowed with meaning through lived experiences, is again central to the theoretical perspective pursued and the empirical data needed to fully conceptualise the marketing dynamics of the Fairtrade Town Movement. It was therefore envisaged that by taking an insider's view of the Fairtrade Towns movement, rich data would emerge from understanding how individuals became a collective in their actions via how they symbolically interact with:

- **The five goals set by The Fairtrade foundation:** These five goals (see page 104) are the cornerstone of all Fairtrade Towns. The study therefore has to concern itself with how these goals are interacted with, to inform and enable action.⁸⁵
- **Their reference group and the place:** The reference group is understood to be the Fairtrade Town's steering group and various other stakeholders of the community. Evidence in the literature (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Hutchens 2009) suggests that people interacting with other people (social capital, social networks, actor networks) and further interacting with the facets that socially construct their town has led to the marketing capacity of a Fairtrade Town becoming more powerful than the sum of its parts.

⁸⁵ Action is conceptualised as the marketing functions and dynamics of a Fairtrade Town.

Taking a theoretical position of symbolic interactionism, this study concerns itself with understanding how the reference groups of Fairtrade Towns interact with each other and with the '*container spaces and territorial entities*' of their town (Amin, 2004 (a).33). It is believed that such a theoretical position will provide valuable insights into how Fairtrade Towns have developed knowledge and the capacity to facilitate, coordinate and disseminate their marketing activity (Hutchens, 2009.78).

Locke (2001.25) suggests that grounded theorists who underpin their study with this theoretical perspective aim to enter the research setting to observe and understand behaviour from the participants' '*point of view,*' learning about the '*participants' worlds,*' their interpretations of self and the '*dynamic properties of interaction.*'

Hammersley (1989) helps contextualise Blumer's work of symbolic interactionism as a theoretical perspective to the methodology of grounded theory. This helps to provide a framework that this study follows. His work suggests four areas that demonstrate a link between symbolic interaction, grounded theory and this study, as demonstrated in Fig: 3.1 *Contextualising Blumer to Grounded Theory*.

Fig: 3.1 Contextualising Blumer to Grounded Theory

Symbolic Interactionism (Blumer 1969): Application to Grounded Theory	Researching the Fairtrade Towns movement
Investigation should take place in a real world setting (Hammersley 1989).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnographical participation in a Fairtrade Town Group • Semi-structured interviews of Fairtrade Town activists through the UK
Flexible data collection strategies where decisions about what data to collect and how are made over the course of the research (Hammersley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing nature of Semi-structured interviews. • Serendipitous moments of research included, such as Bruce Crowther and

1989).	Garstang narrated tour
Research should involve the construction and continual reconstruction of a model of the process under study (Hammersley 1989).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis occurring alongside data collection iteratively developing, augmenting or eradicating codes and categories used to generate grounded theory

The study's philosophical stance of symbolic interactionism sitting behind the chosen methodology of grounded theory seeks to validate the research methods used and subsequent theory developed through the empirical world investigated (Locke, 2001; Crotty, 1998).

3.4 Critical Inquiry

Given the fact that this study took a theoretical perspective informed by the school of interpretivism, it could be suggested that its desire to see things 'anew' is, by default, an uncritical form of research (Crotty 1998). The very fact that the study made claim from the outset that it wished to let the data talk, rid the investigation of the possibility of imposing a body of knowledge to reflect critically upon any claims tested or discovered (Tallack, 1995). Therefore, in order for this study to produce an accurate empirical conceptualisation of what is happening, it was necessary not to adopt any preconceived critical theory that went beyond the self-critical nature of the interpretivism tradition in its own right. However, at this juncture, it is important to point out the relevance of Marx in the development of critical theory related to the subject of the Fair Trade Movement. Marx's suggestions that those who hold economic power shape the society of those who do not (Marx 1961), undoubtedly helps critically frame the power and subsequent ills of neo-liberal free market economics, as viewed and experienced by many commodity producers from the developing world. Contextualising the critical theory of Marx to the Fair Trade Movement, one immediately sees the power that Western societies have, through what, and how, they consume (Goodman 2004). This is frequently evident in the discourse of the movement that uses the power of Western consumers' consumption habits as leverage by indicating the positive influence it can have on creating

conditions of economic and social sustainability in the developing world of the Fair Trade producer (Goodman 2004; Trentmann, 2010; Wright 2004).

However, given the fact that this subject was interested in the marketing dynamics of the Fairtrade Towns movement, and not the economic or social ills of the free market system, the theory has limited application beyond helping us appreciate a different view of power and control represented via the free market conditions that have become the dominant economic paradigm of our time. So, whilst this study's research has not used any critical theory to predetermine its desired output, it should be recognised that a Marxist understanding of the system and the power of consumption becoming the defining symbol of Western power undoubtedly sits comfortably in the body of knowledge explored to inform the study. Therefore, it is suggested that the body of knowledge that exists regarding the wider Fair Trade Movement and its function as a promoter of trade justice, implies that power lies with the Western consumer. By the consumer acting more sustainably/ethically in what they buy, the Fair Trade movement claim that the impact of consuming Fairtrade products has been shown to result in positive resonance on the three pillars of sustainability for producer communities in the developing world.

3.5 Methodology: *The Application of Grounded Theory*

3.5.1 Context to application

An initial dilemma facing researchers considering a grounded theory approach is what 'type' to use: the original or 'formal' grounded theory associated with the early work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and further developed by Glaser (1978; 1998) and therefore often termed (*Glaserian or formal*), or the (*Straussian*) approach, which follows the later ideas of Strauss & Corbin (1998), which moves grounded theory away from a very exclusive focus on the data to develop more of a balance between data collection/analysis and formal theory (Walker & Myrick 2006).

The choice between the two forms can appear daunting and confusing to the novice (Samuel, 2011). This study proved no exception as initial choices had to be made

from the start of the process. Although there are technical differences in the way each form approaches the collection and coding of gathered data, as documented by Walker & Myrick (2004), many of the perceived differences appear to reflect subtle nuances of language more than substantive differences in application. Data analysis is possibly the most controversial aspect of grounded theory and has infamously led to academic argument and splits, not only amongst the disciples of Glaser and Strauss, but perhaps more alarmingly between these two key protagonists (Walker & Myrick, 2006). As Goulding (2002) explains, this has resulted in at least two generally accepted versions of the methodology being associated with the original founders: the Formal/Glaserian, and the Straussian approach. While the need to choose one or other form is the accepted norm, it is not uncommon to see more experienced researchers having the confidence to be more pragmatic and develop a hybrid model of grounded theory. Such models incorporate elements of both schools in order to suit the researcher's subject, its particular challenges and other parameters (primarily time, logistics and resource limitations). Despite grounded theory's highly specified processes, it can be more pragmatically adapted and applied. Such pragmatism allows the researcher to consider and choose the appropriate theoretical perspective, data collection techniques, coding paradigms and theory development mechanisms that best suit their research subject.

The solution to this dilemma therefore was to recognise the choice between a Glaserian, or Straussian approach as a false choice and take, like others before, a pragmatic hybrid approach to the methodology that was relevant to the given needs and restrictions of the project. This decision was additionally supported by the fact that the study should not lose sight of its end goal (to inductively produce theory that is grounded in data), by getting caught up in the ever-evolving nuances of the grounded theory debate. As Piantanida et al. (2004:329) suggest:

'A potentially dangerous side effect of these arguments is an impression that one must find and follow the one 'pristine' method of grounded theory.'

However, the one constant across the different conceptions of grounded theory, the necessity to view data collection and analysis as one and the same thing, was never disputed.

‘Both Glaser’s and Strauss’s versions of grounded theory use coding, the constant comparison, questions, theoretical sampling, and memos in the process of generating theory. Moreover, both versions adhere to the same basic research process; gather data, code, compare, categorise, theoretically sample. Develop a core category, and generate a theory.’

Walker & Myrick (2006.550)

Just as Walker & Myrick’s (2006) quotation indicates, this study also adhered to both versions by moving through the process of gathering data, coding, comparing, categorising, theoretically sampling and developing core categories to generate theory.

The application of grounded theory ‘type’ as a research methodology to inductively generate theory for this study was influenced by a number of factors. Firstly, a structured framework had to be followed to conform to the university’s guidelines and criteria for doctoral research. Secondly, personal time limitations for data collection and simultaneous data analysis were identified as a potential problem leading to some pragmatic compromises having to be made (discussed further, below). Thirdly, it faced logistical limitations to securing access to the right interviewees at the right time because they were distributed throughout the United Kingdom.⁸⁶

These limitations meant that a more puristic, formal grounded theory approach to the study was unworkable. However, the methodology’s suitability for effectively researching emerging disciplines and generating new conceptualised theory made it worth adapting and applying in a way that pragmatically fitted the subject and the situation. As such, it is important to note that the study does not claim to be a puristic or formal approach to grounded theory, nor does it subscribe to belong to a specific

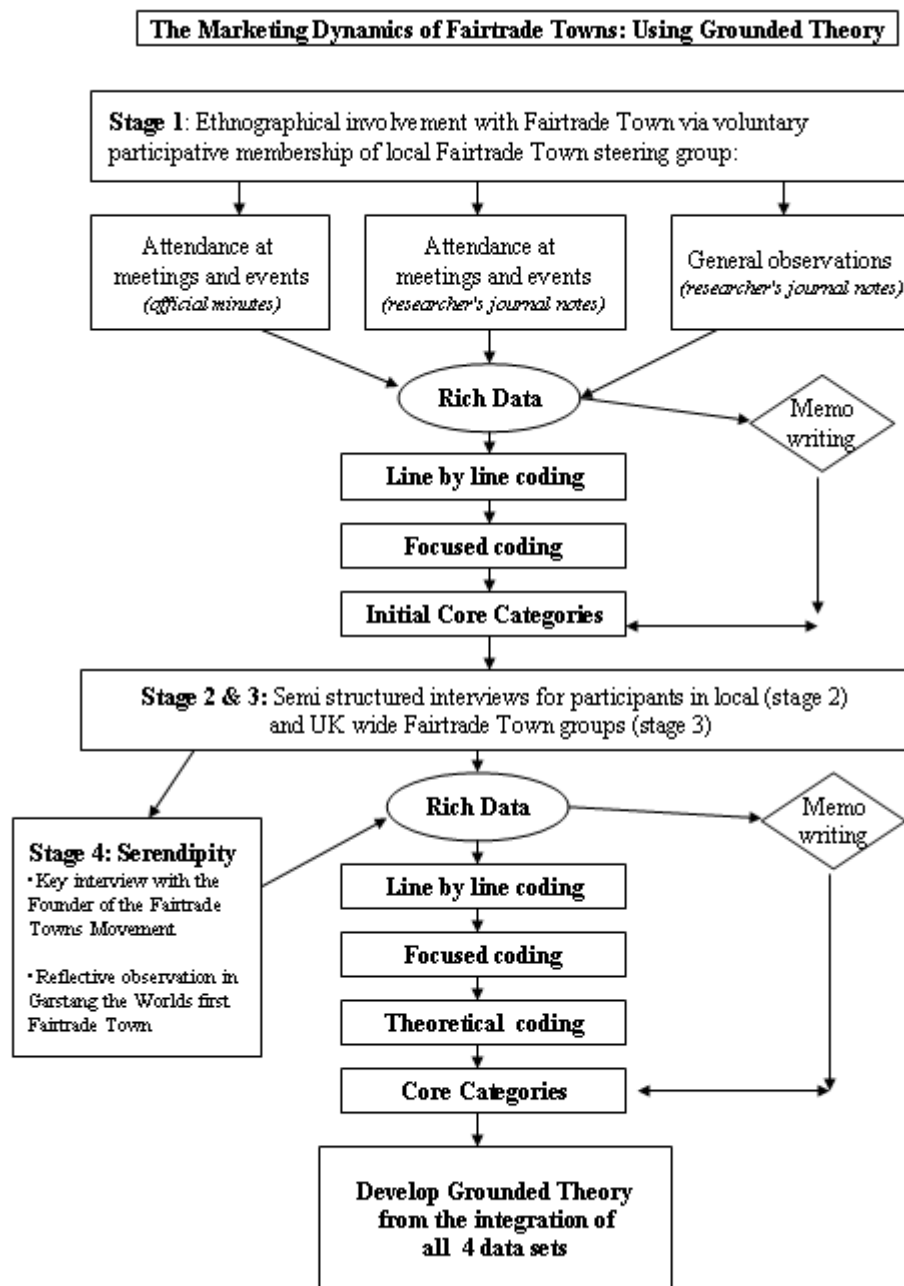
⁸⁶ To some extent, this suits the grounded theory requirement that no pre-determined sample was selected, allowing the data to guide the process (as presented in this chapter).

school. Instead, it reflects a bespoke, pragmatic application of grounded theory developed to suit the nature of the enquiry, its restrictions and limitations.

At the outset, the study took an ontological stance, recognising that the most appropriate way to unearth the marketing functions and dynamics of the Fairtrade Towns would be to glean detailed insights into the behaviour, opinions and functions of those people engaged in the movement. It was the belief that this approach could generate data that resembled thick biographical interpretations of the lived experiences of the people actively involved (Denzin 1989; Vidich & Stanford, 1998). The theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism (Blumer 1969) and a sequential systemic approach to data collection and analysis therefore progressed through a pragmatic and bespoke approach to grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The combined objectives and unique state of play regarding the limited epistemological development of this subject suggested a valid study would require a pluralistic nature of enquiry in order to have suitable triangulation of data. The pluralistic approach deployed, applied multiple research strategies and perspectives through ethnographical participation in a Fairtrade Town group and semi-structured interviews of participating Fairtrade Town activists from around the UK. It is believed that a pluralistic insight via these strategies was essential to develop a rich mosaic of data gathered directly from participating in a Fairtrade Town and capturing the lived experiences of the movement's participants. In addition to the study drawing data from these two key research sources (over a 4 year period), it also became increasingly important to consider other serendipitous moments of data collection (Glaser, 1998) and their ability to augment the study. During the course of this investigation the opportunity arose to spend three days in Garstang with Bruce Crowther, the original founder of the Fairtrade Towns movement, which additionally provided a wealth of relevant rich data.

Figure 3.2 (*Fairtrade Towns: Using Grounded Theory*) illustrates the use of grounded theory in this study and demonstrates how the methodological process acquired data from several sources, all of which were significant in considering '*what is happening here?*' It additionally identifies the evolving process of the methodology and the different coding paradigms used at different stages of the investigation.

Fig 3.2 Fairtrade Towns: Using Grounded Theory



The research followed the ‘*central feature*’ of grounded theory, by making every effort to synchronize data analysis with data collection, thereby facilitating sequential advances in data collection and analysis at each stage of the process. This subsequently informed the study about what questions needed to be asked and to whom (Duffy et al., 2002) at the next stage of the investigation, whilst continually developing emerging concepts and theories along the way.

3.6: Pluralistic Methods: *Ethnographical Participation and Semi-structured Interviews*

3.6.1: Interviews

Grounded theory, and its need to acquire ‘*rich data*’ that reveals participants’ views and actions (Charmaz, 2006), comes with an acceptance that everything learnt in the research field can be classified as data. Such an acceptance, Glaser & Strauss (1967:161) suggest, ‘*extends the range of qualitative serviceable data,*’ offering researchers the opportunity to introduce flexibility (if necessary) and to use mixed data collection methods. Attempts to follow Glaser & Strauss’s (1967) lead and extend the qualitative data available for this study influenced a pluralistic approach to the methods pursued, whilst also allowing for serendipitous opportunities to augment the study’s rigour.

Inductive qualitative researchers mostly rely on interviews and observation which are perceived as proven to be the most useful in understanding human interaction in a variety of contexts (Stern, 2007). Literature dedicated to grounded theory takes this for granted, and its guidance and conceptualisation generally refers to data derived from interviews, see for example the practical ‘how to do’ publications of Strauss and Corbin (1998); Charmaz (2006) and Goulding (2002). The research for this study, following a theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism, took recommendation from Blumer (1969:39) who suggests that the researcher who participates in the social setting being researched will ‘have greater knowledge of it:’

‘The task of scientific study is to lift the veils that cover the area of group life that one proposes to study. The veils are not lifted by substituting, in whatever degree, a pre-formed image for firsthand knowledge. The veils are lifted by getting close to the area and by digging deep into it through careful study. Schemes of methodology that do not encourage or allow, betray the cardinal principals of respecting the nature of one’s empirical world.’

The research methods chosen recognised the need to get involved and capture biographical interpretations from those involved in order to accurately capture from

the inside ‘what is happening.’ The process of data collection was originally anticipated to go through two stages; ethnographical participation in a Fairtrade Town and semi-structured interviews of those engaged in Fairtrade Towns. However, the serendipitous opportunity to interview Bruce Crowther and the pilot interviews generated data which was too valuable to ignore. Therefore, in practice, the process of data collection took four stages:

1. Ethnographical participation
2. Pilot semi-structured interviews from people involved in the Carmarthenshire Fairtrade Town Group
3. Semi-structured interviews of people involved at the ‘grassroots’ of the Fairtrade Towns movement
4. Semi-structured interviews and narrated tour of Garstang by Bruce Crowther.

This has been categorised in fig 3.2 that outlines the ebb and flow of the research process.

The research process therefore, began through ethnographical participation with a local Fairtrade Town steering group in the community within which the researcher works, Carmarthen.

3.6.2: Stage 1: Ethnographical Participation

Despite the dominant research method in grounded theory being interviews, as reflected in numerous studies and practical guides such as Strauss & Corbin (1998), and Goulding (2002), one should not forget that its roots are in fact ethnographical. The ethnographical study of death and dying by Glaser and Strauss published in 1965 ‘*Awareness of Dying*’ is recognised as the indigenous DNA (Timmermans & Tavory, 2007; Stern, 2009; Morse, 2009) of a methodology that has evolved over four decades (Morse, 2009).

Ethnography for this study took its lead from Bray (2008) who suggests that the ethnographical approach to data collection attempts to understand behaviour from within its naturalistic habitat, helping to interpret how people give meaning to experiences within society ‘as it is.’

Over three years from October 2005 to July 2008 the study involved ethnographical participation in the Carmarthenshire Fairtrade Town steering group, ‘recording the life’ of the Fairtrade Town steering group through participation and observation in the situation (Charmaz, 2006). Participant observation, DeWalt & De Walt (2002) argue, is the main data-collection technique used in ethnographic research and requires the researcher’s involvement within the community’s natural environment over an extended period of time. During this three year period, the research process involved going ‘native’ and positioning oneself within the social process of the group. This was to view the empirical world from experience as opposed to mere observation. Therefore, just as Blumer (1969:38) posits; *‘the empirical social world consists of ongoing group life and one has to get close to this life to know what is going on.’* This study therefore aimed to see the actions of the steering group from within. Researching people in their own space and time, Rainbow & Sullivan (1987) suggest, helps the researcher gain a close and intimate familiarity with the people involved and their functions and dynamics.

Ethnographical participation in a Fairtrade Town therefore, helped to develop an understanding from within of how and why people in a Fairtrade Town construct meaning and formulate actions to promote Fairtrade consumption.

‘When observing how actions evolve over time and change situations or when experiencing the corporeal sense of acting in the world, ethnographers have an opportunity to explain the collective patterning of social life.’

(Timmermans & Tavory, 2007:497).

Bray (2008) suggests that ethnographic participation can help researchers make better sense of what is going on. Despite this however, Charmaz (2006) reminds us that the research problem and the social settings of the investigation will have constraints that can determine the type and amount of involvement a researcher has in the field. This study was no exception. One major constraint was recognised from the outset. The logistics of being available to witness and get involved in everything that occurred was not possible. The constraints of holding down a full-time academic position combined with the part-time structure of the study, at first led me to question my

ability to go fully ‘native’ in this investigation. However, it became apparent early on that the majority of members in this particular steering group were experiencing the same problem. This was a voluntary group and many of the members also held down full-time jobs, had families and other community commitments and as a result, like the researcher, were also unable to get involved in everything that happened.

A point of capture, planning and reflection for all activities was the steering group meetings which were usually held bi-monthly. These meetings acted as the main source of data for the first part of this study, where a reflective journal was completed that aimed to document ‘what was happening there’ Charmaz (2006.21). These reflective journals were additionally augmented by observations and field notes taken when actively engaged in community events or other activities such as market research that the steering group organised.⁸⁷

Fig 3.3 (*Charmaz’s: Ethnographical Field Notes*) uses the suggestion of Charmaz (2006.22) regarding what grounded theory field notes, taken from ethnographical observation, might include. It takes each of her seven points and transfers them into a likert scale, contextualising the relevance that the reflective journal and research field notes had from this stage in the study:

Fig: 3.3 Charmaz’s: Ethnographical Field Notes

Charmaz’s: Ethnographical Field Notes (<i>what might you find</i>)	1	2	3	4	5
1. Record individual and collective actions				*	
2. Contain full, detailed notes with anecdotes and observation				*	
3. Emphasize significant processes occurring in the setting				*	
4. Address what participants define as interesting and/ problematic				*	
5. Attend to participants’ language use	*				
6. Place actors and actions in scenes and contexts		*			
7. Become progressively focused on key analytical ideas	*				

⁸⁷ Whilst there was ample opportunity to conduct informal interviews during the ethnographical participation stage of the research, it was decided not to take this opportunity up. It was felt that this stage in the research process was best served as a process that gathered and analysed data from a reflective process. This reflective process would lead to the development of acceptable and effective semi-structured interview questions for stage 2, 3 and 4 of the research process.

Fig 3.3 indicates the resulting strengths and limitations that the reflective journal and field notes had on the data collected and analysed. It demonstrates significant strength from a grounded theory perspective as points 1 to 4 score high and 5 to 6 score low, reflecting the study's interest in the process of what is happening as opposed to being overly concerned with its setting. Whilst it additionally scored low on point 7, recognition must be given to grounded theory's requirement to view data collection and analysis as one and the same thing. Whilst it would be wrong to suggest that the field notes collected at stage 1 show evidence of becoming progressively focused on key analytical ideas, it should be recognised that data analysis through open coding did. Following the suggestion of Charmaz (2006.25) this study's application of grounded theory therefore aimed to; *'seek data, describe observed events, answer fundamental questions about what is happening, then develop theoretical categories to understand it.'*

In addition, another constraint that was recognised from the start was trust and ethics. Ethically, it was necessary from the outset to inform the group of the research interests, intentions and process of this study. This involved drawing up a code of research ethics that considered the subject and subjects under scrutiny and followed Cardiff University guidelines.⁸⁸

Whilst it is recognised that the process demonstrated its suitability to the research question, theoretical perspective and methodology, limitations of the method increasingly emerged during the three year process. Firstly, the limited times and places available in which to immerse oneself in the activity (mostly confined to steering group meetings) resulted in data that was, in essence, interpreted through one's own lens and from one case study. The resulting indications suggested that the data may struggle to claim that it always saw things 'from the perspective of others' (Crotty 1998.76). As Vidich & Stanford (1998.78) argue, ethnography becomes regarded as a *'piece of writing'* and as such, it struggles to either present or to represent an *'unfiltered record of immediate experience and an accurate portrait of*

⁸⁸ Once the ethics committee at Cardiff University approved the format, it was presented to the steering group who subsequently agreed to the research process and its ethics resulting in the Chair signing the research ethics agreement on behalf of the group (see appendix 1).

the culture of the “other.”” Secondly, the fact that data codes were unable to justify a desired state of theoretical saturation meant the research process needed to stay in the field and glean additional data taken directly from the perspective of others (as expected from the outset).

Using an ethnographical research method for this study eventually proved to help develop the initial codes (line-by-line and focused) and core categories that were used to inform the research process of stages 2 and 3 of the investigation. It enabled the research process to eliminate the potential threat of the researcher entering the interview stage with a poor understanding of participants’ (those active in the Fairtrade Town movement) frames of reference (Smith 1981). Having participated in the movement over a period of time ensured an understanding of its cultural paradigms, language and belief systems. This was subsequently necessary to both inform the question design and analysis for the following stages of the research process. Ethnographical participation as a research method for this study not only showed its strength in being able to knit together the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism with the methodology of grounded theory, but additionally acted as a means of enculturation into the Fairtrade Towns movement. The methodology therefore helped guide both the research process and hermeneutic analysis of data generated from subsequent semi-structured interviews in the later stages of the study. As Strauss & Corbin (1998) note, the best approach to designing interview questions is to let them be informed by preliminary field work.

3.6.3: Stage 2 & 3: Semi-Structured Interviews

The second and third phase of the research methodology used open, semi-structured interviews. This allowed respondents the freedom to contextualise their own lived experiences of the marketing of their Fairtrade Town, whilst keeping them focussed and steering them away from considering their personal interaction with the wider Fair Trade movement. The interviews were designed to take around 30-60 minutes, using open-ended questions to draw as much narrative from the interviewee as possible. The questions followed the recommendations of Charmaz (2006) who suggested they must ‘*explore the interviewer’s topic and fit the participant’s experience.*’ The wording of each question was therefore carefully considered to

enable the interviewees to express themselves in a variety of ways, with the specific intention of enabling the interviewee to reflect upon their complete phenomenological experiences of participating in a Fairtrade Town. For example, both Charmaz (2006) and Strauss & Corbin (1998) advocate the use of questions that create an unstructured interview and suggest questions should act as general guidelines only. To achieve this, they suggest questions should begin with terms such as '*tell me,*' or '*what happened,*' (Strauss & Corbin 1998. 2005) '*could you describe,*' '*how did,*' and '*what do you think,*' etc. (Charmaz 2006.30-31). Questions designed in this way helped to ensure that they reflected a symbolic interactionist emphasis in gathering data that built a rich picture of the '*participant's views, experienced events and actions.*' (Charmaz 2006. 29)

Semi-structured interviews gave the research process a suitable degree of flexibility to explore and probe further discussions that were generated during the interviews. Whilst the process entailed entering the interview with a list of predetermined questions, no one interview was the same as the method allowed questions to be omitted, their order to change, and even new questions to emerge in the form of further prompts (Saunders et al., 2000; Duffy et al., 2002). This ensured that the maximum data on specific areas identified as important when attempting to capture 'what is happening' in the Fairtrade Town, could be explored in more depth and was not restricted to superficial, under-saturated responses.

Stage 2: The Pilot

Stage 2 of the study involved interviewing members of the same Fairtrade Towns group involved in ethnographic participation (Carmarthen). A series of interviews were used to pilot questions designed so that any '*imposing preconceived concepts*' (Charmaz, 2006) discovered from my ethnographical participation could be removed. The pilot questions used for this study were as follows:

Pilot Questions Used:

- Tell me about your first experiences with Fairtrade.
- What contributing factors led you to join a Fairtrade Town?
- Could you describe what you believe is the main role of the Fairtrade Town?

- Tell me about your personal involvement with the Fairtrade Town.
- What would you say has been your main contribution to the Fairtrade Town and Fairtrade movement in general?
- What is key to the town's success?
- On reflection, could you describe the main success stories of your Fairtrade Town?
- What, if any, third party support has the town benefited from?
- How has the Fairtrade Town evolved in your time as a member?
- As a member of a Fairtrade Town, what impacts, both positive and negative has this had on your work and social life?
- Tell me how you and the Fairtrade Town have actively promoted Fairtrade products.
- On reflection, what have been the main challenges the Fairtrade Town has faced?
- Describe a typical Fairtrade Town group meeting.
- Tell me how your local community has responded to your actions and activities.
- Have your views on Fairtrade changed since joining the group?

It was initially felt that the majority of questions using open-ended non-obtrusive questioning techniques helped steer interviewees into enriched conversations. However, initial observations displayed the interviewees' desire to communicate via short stories to relay their activities and to help express themselves. This technique was noted and in the spirit of semi-structured questioning was probed further in each of the interviews. The researcher felt that via probing for more stories, richer data were presented and the process helped the interviewees better express their actions, activities, perceptions and attitudes.⁸⁹ These observations led to an additional question being included, one that specifically asked the interviewee to recall their stories of success in their Fairtrade Town in the hope that richer narratives (data) would emerge.

⁸⁹ Pilot interviews from this stage gleaned extensive data from the questions posed, data that were subsequently deemed too important to discard and were therefore used as part of the overall findings of this investigation.

Additionally, it was realised that some questions needed more focus to enable the researcher to actively gain a narrative insight into the key themes that have emerged from the research data so far. It was therefore deemed necessary, and within keeping of the validity of the research method, to make slight modifications to the questions to increase the participants' understanding and to add focus to significant emerging categories in the data. This process is recognised as being in keeping with the methodology of grounded theory that informs us that once key concepts begin to make themselves known it is the responsibility of the researcher to make changes to the interview questions. This is to aid the participant in gaining a clear understanding of the question, in order to gain a richer insight into the conceptual categories identified. A full list of the reworked questions that were used in stage 3 of the research process is as follows:

Reworked Questions after Piloting: Used in Stage 3 of the Research Process

- Tell me about your first experiences with Fairtrade.
- What contributing factors led you to join a Fairtrade Town?
- Could you describe what you believe is the main role of your Fairtrade Town.
- Tell me about your personal contributions to the Fairtrade Town and the wider Fairtrade movement
- What is key to your town's success?
- On reflection, could you describe the main success stories of your Fairtrade Town?
- What, if any, support has your group benefited from?
- How has your Fairtrade Town evolved in your time as a member?
- As a member of a Fairtrade Town, what impacts, both positive and negative, has this had on your work and social life?
- Tell me how you have actively promoted Fairtrade
- Tell me what activities other members of your Fairtrade Town have been involved in to promote Fairtrade.
- On reflection, what have been the main challenges your Fairtrade Town has faced?

- Describe a typical Fairtrade Town group meeting.
- Tell me how your local community has responded to the actions and activities of the Fairtrade Towns movement.

The piloting process, it is argued, developed greater depth in the construction of theory by attempting, where possible, to add more details to the validity of the research data. To this end, the questions evolved within and through the stages of this study. As Charmaz (2006.32) reminds us;

‘researchers need to be constantly reflexive about the nature of their questions and whether they work for the specific participants and the nascent grounded theory’ (Charmaz, 2006.32).

Findings from the pilot interviews, as well as providing rich data, also informed the investigation about whom and where to interview next. Therefore, data collection and analysis at the pilot stage of this investigation initiated the start of theoretical sampling, leading the research process to other Fairtrade Towns across the UK

Theoretical Sampling and Saturation

Grounded theory calls for a different sampling approach to traditional qualitative research methodologies. It argues that data gathering should be driven by the evolving theory that results from constantly comparing data at each stage of collection (Draucker et al., 2008). By viewing data collection and analysis as one and the same thing, the process will tell the researcher who to interview and where to go next (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The process ends when no new information is being gleaned and no new core categories, or relationships between them and their context, are emerging (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Locke, 2001). In grounded theory, this point is termed *‘theoretical saturation’* (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and should inform the researcher when their field work is complete.

For the first two stages of this study, the research process attempted to stay as true as possible to the purist principles of grounded theory, letting the data guide the research. The process of theoretical sampling played out, perhaps not in the purist format which

would have called for a much longer ethnographical timeframe and a focus that was unattainable, but in the way open questions were designed and asked. Therefore, the resulting codes and key areas from ethnographical participation data analysis, that were identified as key to unlocking the topic, were used as a basis upon which questions were designed. The aim was to take the interviewees through a process that sought to add more depth to the data gathered from ethnographical participation. Interviews were set up to enable participants to talk freely about the relationships that existed between the individual, the steering group, the Fairtrade Foundation and the 'place.' The interview therefore, generated dialogue 'from experience' capturing relationships between conditions, consequences, actions and interactions in the process of establishing a Fairtrade Town. This dialogue became what Denzin (1989.32) describes as 'thick interpretations' that provided rich biographical data that further augmented/eradicated or developed new codes and core categories upon which theory was developed. This enabled a systematic investigation of both the people and symbols that would come to represent '*theory*' when conceptualising the marketing functions and dynamics of the Fairtrade Towns movement. However, for stage 3 of the research process a more pragmatic application of the methodology was necessary.

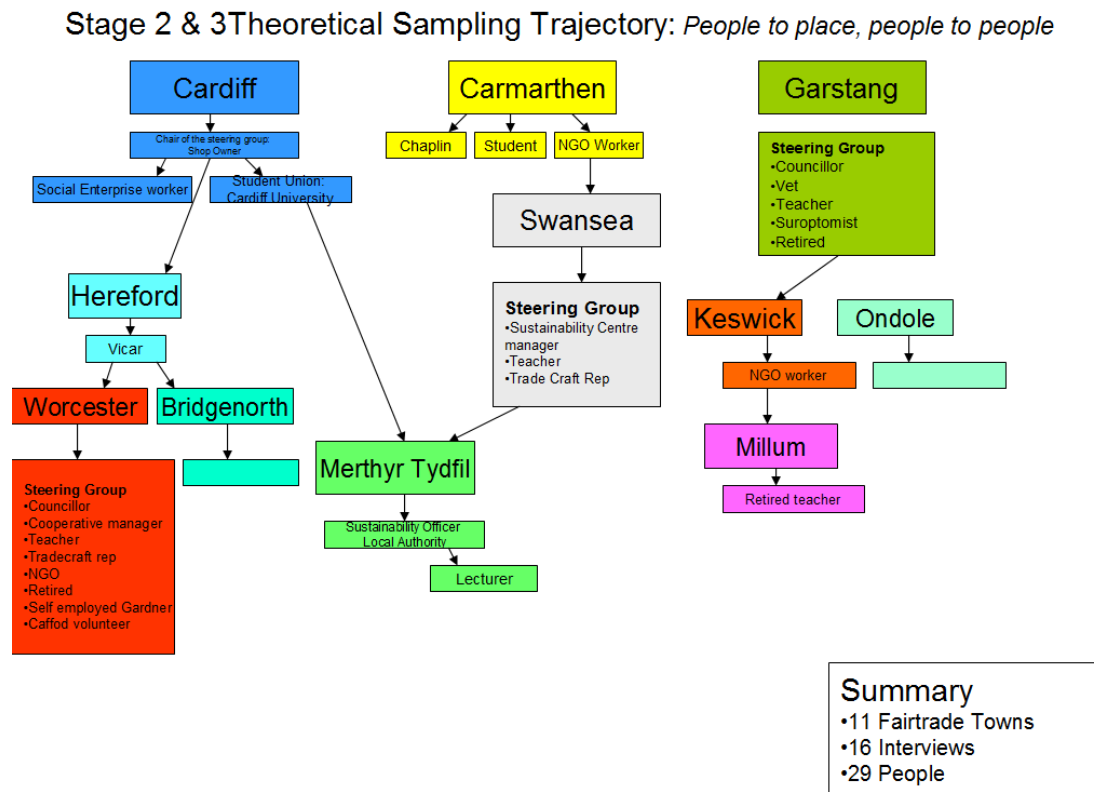
Stage 3

The logistics of travel, costs, time and other life commitments all created constraining challenges when determining who, when and where to interview. As a result, a number of pragmatic decisions were made before stage 3 of the research process began. It was imperative that the systematic development of data collection, analysis and theory continually evolved at each stage of the research and was not compromised. A decision was made to follow the process of theoretical sampling by making minor changes to the questions used in stage two, with a view to further exploring issues that needed more clarification and richer data to fully conceptualise (Draucker et al., 2007). However, at the start of stage 3 it was decided to use the same questions for all the subsequent interviews; it was felt that the questions had potentially taken as much of a lead as possible from data derived from stages 1 and 2 of the research process. By undertaking this subtle shift in theoretical sampling, the research process could confidently decide when theoretical saturation had occurred and data collection could no longer add value to the process of theoretical development (Strauss & Corbin 1998).

In the spirit of letting the data talk, theoretical sampling in stage 3 of the process was used, not only as a guide to the type of questions that needed to be asked, but also to inform the researcher of who to interview next. It therefore offered an inductive sampling technique that helped the research process to demonstrate confidence in where to glean data from that was necessary to develop the emerging theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Warren (2002:87) identifies this as theoretical sampling carried out through the 'snowball process' that locates one respondent who '*fulfils the theoretical criteria,*' and then helps the interviewer locate others. Fig 3.4 (*Theoretical Sampling Trajectory*) demonstrates the way data from interviews were captured to inform the research process of where or who to go to next. It shows the application of theoretical sampling through the trajectory of how the research participants informed the research sample and how this played out in its totality. For example, it demonstrates the Garstang group identifying Keswick as an example of a very pro-active Fairtrade Town and recommendations during the interview stage to interview a member of this town's steering group were made. This, as part of the theoretical sampling method was subsequently followed up. The strength of this approach lies in its ability to let the interviewee, and therefore participant in the movement, inform the research process of where to go next for the richest possible data. By using this process, the data become part of the sampling technique and, in the true essence of grounded theory, help further validate any theory derived from the data as even the process of sampling in data collection is handed over to the participants of the Fairtrade Towns movement.⁹⁰ By participants being afforded the opportunity to recognise the research processes needed to interview participants, they recommend research participants are also engaged in symbolically recognising narratives that they believe need to be explored to augment the empirical value of the study's findings. Therefore, this study's application of theoretical sampling additionally ensured that any resulting theory was grounded in the social context of the participants' world (Blumer, 1969).

⁹⁰ This process, it could be argued, augments the exploratory nature of enquiry and takes the notion of symbolic interaction into the sampling process as the interaction between those involved in the movement becomes recognised as important to the study's aims from the perspective of the participants' experiences.

Fig 3.4 Theoretical Sampling Trajectory



In the case of this study, theoretical saturation for some aspects of the data started to occur early on in the process. Just as Glaser & Strauss (1967) suggest, theoretical saturation⁹¹ arrived via joint collection and analysis of data. Line-by-line coding, constant comparison and free style memo writing confirmed this, with full saturation for all questions becoming evident around the eleventh interview. At this stage the research process was witnessing similar answers over and over again; answers that were also supported by data derived from stage 1 of the research process's ethnographical participation. For example, the importance of schools and young people was a constant and the use of one's own social capital and networks appeared to be a ubiquitous process in Fairtrade Towns with everybody expressing this process directly or indirectly. These forms of qualitative saturation led to what Glaser & Strauss (1997.61) intemperately as an '*empirical confidence*' in the data's ability to fully validate, explain and conceptualise the core categories formed. Having the

⁹¹ In the words of Glaser & Strauss (1967.61) theoretical saturation means '*that no additional data are being found whereby the sociologist can develop properties of the category.*'

confidence to finish the data collection process did, however, prove to be unnerving in practice. The conventional research 'norm' of identifying a certain sample size necessary to give clarity to the data, and the belief that each new interview will bring up new issues to explore, combined to prevent the researcher from taking a decision to finish. This study as a result, probably undertook three more interviews once saturation point had been reached, more due to the researcher's insecurity than to academic necessity.

Interview Logistics

Interviews at stage 3 were originally planned to be conducted on an individual level at a location preferred by the interviewee. Affording the interviewee the opportunity of deciding when and where the interviews would take place, helped overcome the problem of access and availability (Arksey & Knight 1999; Warren 2002). Furthermore, this additionally placed them at ease in an environment in which they felt comfortable and were able to express themselves.

The majority of interviews were conducted at an individual level (13 out of 16 interviews). However, despite best intentions, on three occasions group interviews had to be conducted. Given the 'extra cost' of travelling to interview locations (Gillham, 2000), combined with logistical arrangements being driven by the participants on three occasions, individuals took it upon themselves to invite other members of the steering group to the interview with the view that they could add more value to the event. These situations could have been dealt with in two ways: Firstly, interviews could have been declined or rearranged, or secondly the idea of a group interview could have been embraced as a positive, providing an opportunity to glean narrative data from a larger audience than expected. It was decided, for pragmatic reasons and the need to respect the initial contact and other willing participants, that group interviews should take place. Despite initial fears and the understanding that the dynamics of group interviews are very different from individual interviews, a number of strengths to this process emerged. Just as Bogardus (in 1926) identified, group discussions initiated from open-ended questions appeared to generate a lot of enthusiasm to participate. Furthermore, statements made by one member helped to start trains of thought in others, potentially helping to unearth points that would never have been risen at individual interviews. As a result, the group discussions appeared

to help participants develop new points that may not have occurred to them if being interviewed individually. This strength is also referred to in the more contemporary work of Arskey and Knight (1999:75) who suggest that in group interviews *'things can be discovered by talking with all members together that could not be gleaned through one-to-one interviews.'* However, the group dynamics are not always conducive to the positive. On one occasion, a 'high status' individual, whilst not dominating or inhibiting others in the group, did on occasion dominate the discussion, (a phenomenon observed by Gillham, 2000) and therefore also steered the conversations and responses. Regardless of this one drawback, in general, the positives of this method far outweighed the negatives. Furthermore, the process of synchronising data coding from the process of ethnographical participation and other interviews ensured that this bias failed to make any significant bearings on the resulting grounded theory developed.

Glaser & Strauss (1967) recommend not recording interviews but instead capturing them in field notes. Their argument being that this way, only significant data will be collected, eliminating irrelevant points at the start of the process and helping to reduce a potential mass of data to wade through. However, for this research a decision was made that, being an inexperienced researcher, more would be lost than gained from this process. Digitally recording each interview presented a number of strengths that far outweighed the problem of accumulating masses of data. The work of Bucher & Fritz (1956: 3-11) suggests that recording interviews is ideal for exploratory research as its ability to recreate the interview in its verbal entirety ensures large amounts of significant unanticipated data are not lost. They claim that a third to a half of the total material from interviews is lost when written notes take preference over recording. Additionally, and very pertinent to this study, they argue that recording interviews eliminates a *'major source of interview bias'* in using field notes to document the interview, that of the *'conscious or unconscious selection'* of what is significant on behalf of the interviewer. Whilst these strengths expose the vulnerability one may be placed in by only taking field notes at the interview, recording them additionally helped give full attention to the interviewee, as note taking may have interrupted the natural ebb and flow of the interview process. As an inexperienced researcher, reflecting on the interview after the process by being able to listen to it again also afforded the opportunity to review how the interview was influenced by the verbal

activity of the interviewer. As soon as possible, each interview was typed up verbatim by the researcher, '*keeping the data fresh and alive*' Goulding (2002.109), by reintroducing the researcher to the data to gain a reflective understanding of what the data were saying.

In the true spirit of grounded theory, further attempts to try to stay as close to the data as possible were also demonstrated in the coding process. Despite the potential of software such as NVivo and MAXQDA to help code and analyse qualitative data, a decision was made to complete the process in person and by hand as recommended by Glaser (1979.59) who states '*always code your own data.*' This process enabled the researcher to code data immediately after transcription reducing the possibility of forcing and fitting data into preconceived categories. Coding by hand enabled the process of data analysis to stay fluid and iterative helping to continually form, merge and discard categories and codes upon which the grounded theory for this study was built.

3.7 Data Analysis and Coding For Theory

The process of data analysis in grounded theory offers an array of procedures to choose from. Despite highly specified procedural routes presented by some, a more pragmatic adaptation can be applied, as was the case for this study. Pragmatism allowed the researcher to consider and choose the appropriate coding paradigms and theory development mechanisms that was felt best suited the study.

Data analysis in grounded theory involves a set of coding processes that begins with '*open coding*' (Walker & Myrick 2006; Goulding, 1999). This allows concepts to be identified by breaking down data into '*distinct properties and dimensions*' (Strauss & Corbin 1998; Goulding, 1999). For this study, open coding took the form of line-by-line coding, analysing each line of data by asking the key grounded theory question, '*what is happening here?*' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Just as Goulding (2002.76) suggests, every line of the transcribed data was searched for '*key words or phrases*' which gave some insight into the marketing dynamics of the Fairtrade Towns movement. For an example of this process see fig: 3.5 (*Line-by-line Coding*).

Fig: 3.5 Line-by-line Coding

Line by line coding	Carmarthenshire Fairtrade Steering Group Meeting 4 (19 th October 2006)
Welsh FT Forum disseminating information and advice	Today's meeting was started by The Wales FT Forum who has the objective to make Wales the first FT country.
Case studies used as best practice to follow	Mark presented case studies of successful groups in Wales ranging from towns that were successful in getting FT status to Universities. For Wales' FT Forum to achieve their aim, they needed every county in Wales to have FT status. A general observation; the group are now becoming part of three or four key different objectives, all interrelated FT Wales, FT Towns and FT County and FT organisations. It appears that one goal can help all the others show a uniformed integrated approach to creating FT communities.
Interrelationship of agenda to achieve FT status for Towns, organizations and Wales	Mark suggested ideas to get case studies of FT towns and communities started. The idea of launch event was very popular amongst all members; all agreeing it could be the way to get the ball rolling by influencing people from the general public and various organisations. Mark suggested we should take a look at other groups who
Launch event is a good idea and has worked for other towns	
Use FT website for advice	
Event would allow all members to get involved	
One day launch event best option	

Flexibility in event to allow anybody who wants to go.	have run events for ideas and made reference to the FT Foundation website as a great resource. The idea of the launch event was commended for the opportunity it would allow all members to help out. Due to the group being made up of volunteers, much discussion centred on the amount of time members could dedicate to the activity. The one day launch event was viewed as the best option. A drop in idea was also brought upon allowing flexibility for anybody who wanted to find out more about FT in Carmarthenshire. Market day (Wednesday) in Carmarthen was seen as the best (busiest) day and the plan was to take advantage of this to maximise public awareness.
Busiest day in town to be taken advantage of.	For the event, members were in agreement to be able to have the FT grower from overseas to speak at the planned FT event as it could be a real motivation for people to attend the event and to make a more relevant example with 'real' impact on the day. A decision was made to hold the event during FT fortnight when PR was at its maximum nationwide, it was felt this could compliment the promotion of the event.
Need for FT person from developing country to help educate and add reality to FT message	
Event to run during FT fortnight to benefit from promotional activity during this time	
Direct mail invitation to attend the event Link to the goals of local authority in its object to become a more sustainable county	
Education and well as promotion needed for FT	
Need to get people to get involved to reinforce FT message and objectives of group	

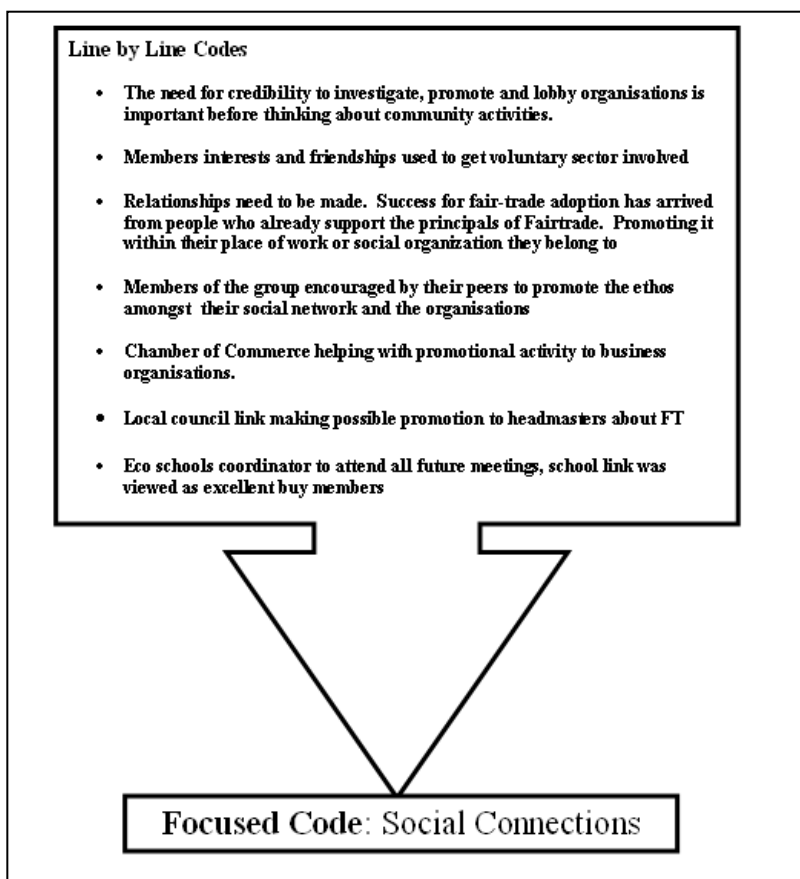
This process ensured a critical perspective on the analytical process of both data collection and analysis. It also helped, as Charmaz (2006) suggests, to unleash the shackles of being too immersed in the respondents' world so as to accept it without question. The benefits of this form of coding also helped conceptualise and classify events, acts and outcomes and the subsequent codes and categories that emerged to become the root and branch of the developed theory. As Strauss & Corbin (1998. 66) argue:

'Doing line-by-line coding through which categories, their properties, and relationships emerge automatically, takes us beyond description and puts us into a conceptual mode of analysis'

The next step followed was '*focused coding*,' this helped '*condense*' the data in order to be able to comprehend the data as a whole by constantly comparing experiences, actions and interpretations across all data sets collected (Charmaz 2006). Focused coding helped the research process conceptualise how previous line-by-line codes relate to each other (Strauss & Corbin 1998; Glaser, 1978; Charmaz, 2006). For

example, Figure 3.6 (*The Process of Focused Coding*) demonstrates how focused coding helped to determine relationships within line-by-line codes drawn from data gathered about Fairtrade Towns' marketing. It shows how several line-by-line codes were identified as synergistically linked on the theme of social connections, although at first glance they appear to be all about lobbying individuals and organisations to consume and supply Fair Trade. The process of focused coding enabled further relationships in the data to emerge and helped to identify the use of individuals' social connections as imperative to the process of lobbying.

Fig 3.6 The Process of Focused Coding



In addition to focused codes, the production of '*memos*,' as described by Glaser (1998), played a key role in facilitating the evolving process of data collection, analysis and theory building. Memos were used to capture thoughts, facilitate contrasts and identify connections within the data (Charmaz, 2006). Such memos, created after each stage of data collection and analysis, offered the researcher the ability to transform both field notes and codes into theoretical accounts of what is

going on (Montgomery & Bailey, 2007). Memos therefore became the bridge between data collection, analysis and draft writing and helped to initiate data analysis and coding throughout the research process (Charmaz 2006). Combining the coding process with memos under the overarching principles of the constant comparative method of data analysis, helped to provide validity in the conceptualisation process. An example of the construction of a memo for this study can be seen in fig 3.7 (*Memo*)

Fig: 3.7 Memo

<p>Memo: Key codes taken from stage one of the research process point to validity as a key overarching constant theme relevant to the actions, activities and functions of the FT group.</p> <p>Early comparisons in the data appear to determine that competency from both a positive and negative perspective are key issues in developing credibility to influence and change the consumption habits of the place served. Positive competences that have helped the group become more trust worthy by the community it attempts to influence appear to start with the dependence of members to use centrally provided resource packs and information from the FT Foundation. This assistance appears to operate on various levels. The findings demonstrate that members use and refer to the resources available to support the Ft movement. This information appears to act as a promotional resource used by the group but perhaps more important it is also used as an educational resource by members. On considering the axels of this data the data starts to expose the potential 'necessity' of this central resource because without which it may prove impossible for members to firstly have a standardised understanding of FT, this is proving from the data to be a fact that has yet to be achieved., with members not only having differing perceptions of FT but also differing in their understanding and expectations, and role of the group. The group reliance on a centralised standardising control system appears to be imperative, it also appear that those centralised resource is also acting as an agent to introduce the group to other groups and thus the successful activities they have partaken in. It appears that via these two roles from the central FT foundation the group's confidence and subsequent competences have the ability to develop and improved, there is also evidence of this in some of the activities the group has undertaken. The group itself has recognised its need to learn from others and the data also point to the fact that on occasions the group itself has questioned the need for credibility when addressing members of the community with the main intention of getting them to change their supply and demand habits in favour of FT. Observation that have been coded from the data also suggest the result of members having different perceptions and attitudes to not only Ft but also issue relating to their plac, commerce and other personal ethical concerns could lead to members to having a standardised familiar message to disseminate to the community. Thus this has the potential for the group and the movement to lose some credibility as 'mixed' messages are disseminated thus having the potential to confuse the population and reduce the credibility of not only the individuals within the group but also the group and the wider movement in general. This therefore starts to show that if the credibility of the group is brought into question this could have a detrimental effect upon the competence of the individual, group and the wider social movement. Further to the issue surrounding competence the fact that the Local council and various other members of the group are drawn from accountable and professional positions in the community the perception of competence could be improved as a result. There is evidence in the data that suggest the group are aware of the importance of credibility and the data suggest that credibility is viewed through the lenses of 'achieving competency' in the activities it deems necessary to pursue. This opens up the data further in the respect that credibility in the community can perceivably aid competence and competence can have a positive effect on credibility both of which are intrinsically linked to the wider issue of the community not just trusting the group but trusting the group's messages enough to influence a change in their behaviour.</p> <p>The above capture as much of the early findings relating trust to the competence of the FT group in addition to this the concept of trust also appears a</p>
<p>key component of the FT brand / label. The movement has come into criticism from a variety of corners, Economist, Adam Smith foundation, main stream press to name a few. The first the issue of competence in delivering the social objectives of the movement appear to have become a key part in the heritage and equity of the movement that is subsequently transfer into the value added of a product. To develop this some sophisticated marketing activities have been played out. Producers that have witnessed both their lives and communities develop as a result of the FT movement have been mobilised to tell their story to the towns and villages at the for front of the FT movement. Initial observation points to the fact that the group have a belief that the producers 'story' told to people in communities across the UK adds to the perceived competence of the group by the community through vividly exposing them to actual actors in the supply chain. The aim appears to be to move the audience from the product and the consumption of it towards considering the impacts of such behaviour. Due to the fact that the majority of consumer behaviour could be related to a more pluralistic activity that denies the consumer access too knowledge of the effects of such consumption, consumer could be perceived as completely ignorant to the</p>

Pulling together all the data strands (data codes and memos) of a study helped to produce a holistic depth to the research output and facilitated the production of accurate '*core categories.*' Glaser (1978) indicates that theory is generated around core categories and Holton (2007) indicates that their primary function is to integrate theory and '*render it dense and saturated.*' Core categories therefore conclude the process of data analysis by generating core variables (Holton, 2007) upon which

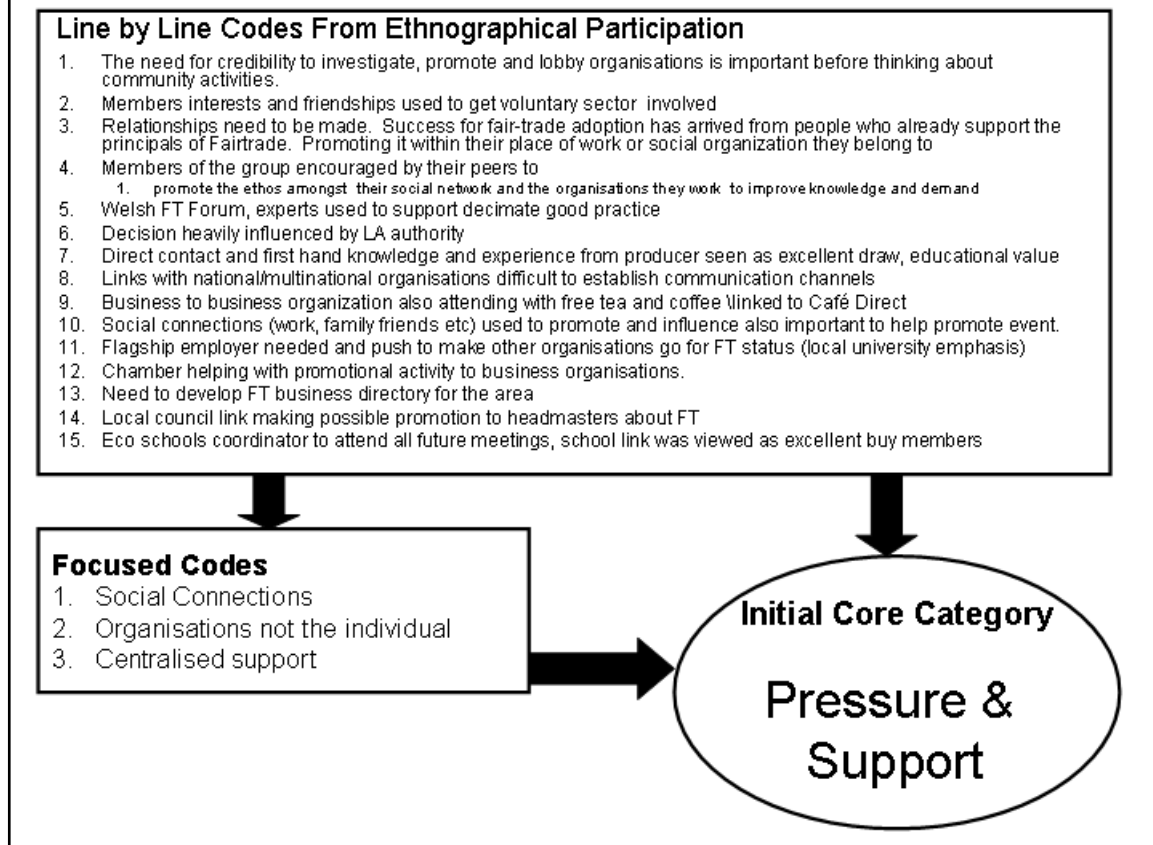
emergent grounded theory can be inductively conceptualised (Dey 2007; Hallberg 2006). This process allowed for differing perspectives to emerge and, as new data was interpreted, it served to change, augment or even discard previously constructed codes, core categories and the subsequent conceptualised theory.

3.7.1: Data Coding Ethnographical Participation: Stage 1 in the research process

As mentioned previously, this stage of the study involved ethnographic participation in a local Fairtrade Steering group. During this period, reflective journals were completed after every meeting and significant event, to capture what ‘*was going on.*’ Each journal entry was recorded and subsequently line-by-line coded. However, data collection via this method took time to build up to the necessary depth. Only once ten journals had been completed was there enough rich data to provide meaningful comparisons, focused codes and early approximations of core categories. Therefore, in the spirit of data analysis occurring in line with data collection, only line-by-line coding and the construction of short ‘*memos*’ occurred straight after each event and Fairtrade Town steering group meeting.

Once the ten journals had been both line-by-line and focused coded (see Figure 3.5 and 3.6) some significant developments occurred in the investigation. A number of initial core categories began to emerge, and some of the key areas of literature that needed to be reviewed also became clear. This marked a breakthrough as the methodology started to fulfil its promise. Figure 3.8 (*Coding for a Core Category*) shows an example of how the coding process led to the development of initial conceptualised core categories. The diagram shows how constant comparison identified fifteen line-by-line codes that shared a unifying similarity; these codes subsequently generated three focused codes that conceptualised relationships in the line-by-line-codes. Both coding processes ultimately led to the conceptualisation of an initial core category, ‘*pressure and support*’. Arriving at a core category with the confidence that it was inductively conceptualised directly from the data, enabled early conceptualisations of theory development, whilst additionally informing the research about where and what to look for next (Glaser 1978).

Fig 3.8 Coding for a Core Category



Some of the initial core categories that emerged naturally from the constant comparisons within the first stages of data collection suffered from over-simplification. When attempting to develop conceptual models and theories, some of the codes appeared to have synergistic qualities, in turn, creating overlaps when data analysis was being transformed into memos. This challenged the epistemological value of some codes and revealed their lack of depth in addressing ‘*what is going on?*’ It then led to a reworking of the initial core categories, and by staying faithful to the codes derived from the first stage of open coding, the following five initial core categories emerged:

1. Community-based relationship marketing
2. Pressure and support
3. Validation/credibility and trust
4. Synergies
5. Dependency

Each initial core category was subsequently further developed by the constant comparative analysis of data codes, free writing (memos) and conceptual diagrams to tease out nuances and meaning in the data. These activities helped further unlock the data to generate early conceptualisations of theory that contextualised the '*lived experiences*' of those engaged in the Fairtrade Towns movement in relation to marketing.⁹²

3.7.2: Data Coding Semi-Structured Interviews: Stage 2, 3 and 4

Data coding for all semi-structured interviews (including that with Bruce Crowther) for the subsequent stages of the research process followed a familiar pattern to that documented, with a few exceptions and additions. Line-by-line open coding was conducted after each interview, allowing, as Strauss & Corbin (1998.65) suggest, data analysis to help relive the interview by listening '*closely to what the interviewees are saying and how they are saying it.*' Coding interviews as soon as possible after the event affords the researcher a more intimate interpretation of what participants have said, helping to identify both explicit statements and concerns by allowing the data to speak (Charmaz 2006; Strauss & Corbin 1998). Using this form of data coding allowed for previously developed categories such as 'pressure and support' from stage 1 of the research processes to be further enriched by new data from a different source. This approach allowed the research process to 'stick with' previously defined categories to make them richer and more dense (Charmaz 2006.51). It additionally helped to start the process of refocusing previously formulated categories by starting to question if their definitions truly captured what the new data were trying to say. This helped to better refine both focused codes and core category. This process ensured theoretical comparisons were a constant part of the analytical process helping to identify variations in patterns discovered in the data (Strauss & Corbin 1998).

The additional step of '*theoretical coding,*' attempted to bring the fractured parts of the data back together to conceptualise how the open codes relate to each other as '*hypotheses to be integrated into a theory*' Glaser (1978). This step was undertaken when all data had been line-by-line and focused coded. This process followed two

⁹² This process additionally informed the development of appropriate questions for stage 2 of the research process and helped direct the literature review.

‘coding families’ taken from the work of Glaser (1978.74-75) ‘The Six C’s’ and ‘Process.’ Line-by-line and theoretical codes were further analysed with the view to help maintain a conceptual interpretation when developing theorised writing based on the various forms of rich data gathered throughout the process (Glaser,1978). The coding family of ‘The Six C’s’ standing for causes, contexts contingencies, consequences, conveniences and conditions, is referred to by (Glaser 1978.74) as the ‘bread and butter theoretical code.’ Its application in this subject insured that codes that emerged from open coding were analysed to look for consequences, dependant variables, causes and their ‘process.’ Process therefore became the second family of theoretical coding used, as it demonstrated an ability to help further develop precision, clarity, coherence and comprehension (Charmaz, 2006) to the emerging core categories. Applying both coding families to theoretically code data helped to identify what got ‘done’ and what happened as a result of the causal-consequences of the symbolic interactionism between the individual, the steering group and the Fairtrade ‘place.’ An example of how Glaser’s six C’s were used in this study can be seen in fig 3.9 (*Using Glaser’s Six C’s*).

Fig 3.9 Using Glaser’s Six C’s

Core Category: Validity

Causes	Context	Consequences	Contingencies	Covariance	Conditions
Primary role of group to gain FT status for community	Early acknowledgment of poor quality linked to FT products	Opportunity to further promote FT as part of job role and key to NGO mission.	An ability to respond to supported centralised calls to action	The growth of the movement and availability of more products leading to a feeling of ‘making a difference’	Workplace and job role integral in introducing participant to FT.
Desire to make all trade fair and equitable	Getting FT status		Good will of FT organisations use	More knowledge than others	Interest and experience of FT coming from University course.
Getting people to try FT products to influence further purchase	Individual skills being utilised	On-line investigation inspired by producer improvements as a result of FT	Putting peoples’ minds at rest about the negative press of FT	Community group perceived as intermediate between high level ideology and changes on the ground.	Introduced to FT as a student through Christians and chaplains who were promoting it pre FT mark.
Key people who can influence people on the ground seen as key to movement	Supply FT products for trial	Success perceived as moving FT to the mainstream		Failure from FT application acting as a demotivator for the group	Recognition of oneself as a consumer and the importance of this link to understanding FT.
Councils to pass a resolution perceived as a big plus	Contribution of experience of NGO work to the group	Attending meeting seen as important to success.		Need to be more influential than investigative	Helps to have a target
Reliance on County Council for introductions to schools and groups	Community group perceived as intermediate between high level ideology and changes on the ground.	Enthusiasm perceived as important for success		The FT movement should not be seen as just ticking a box but something that can change hearts and minds.	The FT movement should not be seen as just ticking a box but something that can change hearts and minds.
Use of producer key to develop understanding and add realism to FT	Helps to have a target	Key role to personally purchase FT and encourage others (always)		Forum being use by others to help promote FT	Confusion with role of group
	Use of central assistance with producer and FT fortnight being used as a promotional vehicle	Key people who can influence people on the ground seen as key to movement			Need to have focus on attainable goals
	Promotion of FT in church	Use of producer key to			

Despite appreciating Walker & Myrick’s (2006) suggestion that the process of theoretical coding can be difficult to follow, it was felt that without such a process the validity of emergent core categories could be questionable as too much emphasis

upon them may lead to exclusivity in the resulting theory. It was therefore recognised that theoretical coding could reduce this risk by determining the significance and relationship each core category has to each other (Goulding 1999), producing a much denser grounded theory.⁹³

The sequential nature of this study in collecting and coding different data sets iteratively produced a set of three core categories (reduced from the original five) around which the generation of theory has been build (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin 1998):

1. Pressure and support.
2. Marketing through the pluralities of place.
3. Validity.

The development of each of these core categories required the judgement of ‘the theorist,’ who in this case was the researcher (Dey, 2008.111). This judgment was based on core categories being chosen for their credibility and ability to encapsulate the large variety and quantity of empirical data collected and analysed during this study (Locke 2001). Therefore, each core category was conceptualised or named to represent what Strauss & Corbin (1998.121) outline as ‘*the variations in data by grouping similar items according to some defined properties.*’ The suitability and subsequent naming of each core category showed respect to the recommendations of Day (2008) who, based on the work of Glaser (1978), suggested that core categories must be central, stable, complex, integrative, incisive, powerful and highly variable. Day’s suggestions can be seen in the conceptualisation of core categories for this study that display evidence of:

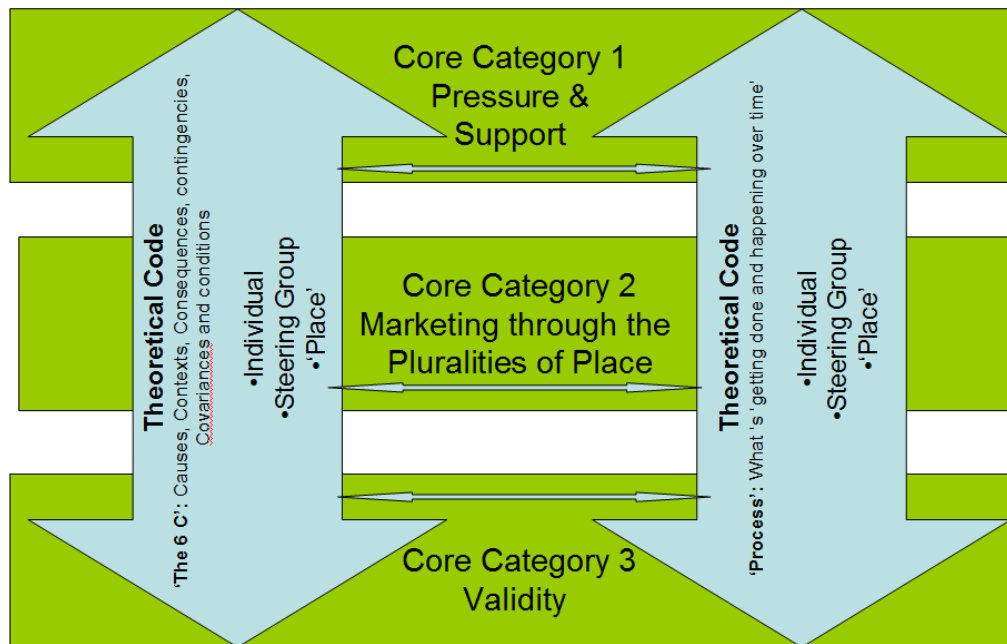
- Conceptualising the variations of data relationships and recurrent patterns under one statement
- Showing complexity and variable sensitivity in saturation

⁹³ As Glaser (1978. 72) notes, theoretical codes prevent data analysis from being ‘bogged down’ in data and help to conceptualise how open codes and core categories relate to each other as ‘*hypotheses to be integrated into a theory.*’

- Being incisive when setting out the implications for developing theory
- Being powerful enough to analyse and draw inclusive conclusions

Fig 3.10 (*Coding For Theory: Core Categories and the Application of Theoretical Coding*) provides a diagrammatic overview of the final outcome of the data analysis, demonstrating how conceptualisations and theory has inductively emerged into three core categories united by two interlinked, theoretically coded families. Findings and theory are subsequently developed and presented in two chapters: Chapter 3; '*Validity*' and Chapter 4; '*Marketing Through the Pluralities of Place.*' In order to further assist in setting analytical bounds (Dey, 2008), that formulate the findings and analysis section of this document, both chapters 3 and 4 integrate the findings of the other core categories of pressure and support. Despite the role of pressure and support emerging from the data as central to the marketing dynamic of a Fairtrade Town, it was evident that these functions were occurring in the context of the marketing dynamics conceptualised in the other two core categories. It is evident in the findings (described in rich empirical detail) that pressure and support occurred as part of the process of Fairtrade Towns' attaining and utilising validity as a marketing dynamic, and as part of the marketing functions operating within the pluralities of a Fairtrade Town's place.

Fig 3.10 Coding For Theory: Core Categories and the Application of Theoretical Coding



3.8: Reflective overview

Throughout this study, grounded theory as a methodology juxtaposed fear and confusion with clarity and confidence. Grounded theory's fractured epistemology, conflicting applications, and its necessity for data collection and analysis to be viewed as a single activity, led to difficult decisions at the very start of the research process. To fit the restrictive conditions of this investigation, a pragmatic hybrid approach to grounded theory was necessary, requiring confidence that its application could provide the academic rigour necessary to defend the resulting research outputs. As the study took a sequential approach to data collection, the data gathered and systematically analysed at each stage of the process naturally fed into the next, (see Figure 2). Core categories and theoretical developments were continually constructed from a systematic, interconnected (staged) nature of enquiry until theoretical saturation was reached. Theory was therefore inductively constructed from a block-by-block (data set by data set) conceptualisation of a socially constructed reality that captured the lived experiences of those actively engaged in the Fairtrade Towns movement.

This chapter has outlined the justification and use of grounded theory as a valid methodology to explore the burgeoning and rapidly emerging subject of the Fairtrade Towns movement. The experiences, conflicts and dilemmas experienced have highlighted a number of key issues that could prove to be relevant when considering its suitability, application and rigour within this field of research.

The ethos of grounded theory is based on the assumption that theory is inductively produced from data and as a result, when conceptualised, can portray a very accurate description of reality. This ideology and the process of coding provided the researcher with two key reassurances of the validity of the resulting theory:

1. The development of theory is embedded in the research process and can therefore be traced directly back to the data collected.
2. Theory is not presented as a personal interpretation of reality; it is socially constructed from the people and processes that have been investigated.

As the Fairtrade Towns study started from a basis of very little (if any) academic knowledge about the subject, knowing how to develop an appropriate enquiry that asked the right questions, of the right people, and reviewed the appropriate literature, was challenging. Grounded theory helped to overcome these challenges by directing the research and helping to construct appropriate questions, identifying who to interview and what bodies of literature to consult. The methodology's encouragement to use serendipitous moments of data collection also played its role by allowing the inclusion of key sets of data that augmented the theory developed. When researching emerging disciplines, having a clear data collection research path at the start of the process can potentially limit the investigation. Grounded theory in this case provided both direction and flexibility in data collection which helped to construct a saturated picture of what was happening. Such direction and flexibility in data collection is invaluable when conducting research into embryonic and rapidly emerging phenomena.

Data analysis in grounded theory is dependent upon the process of coding. The systematic application of different coding methods takes time and practice to

understand and effectively apply. However, the ability of coding to provide an analytical process that developed theory directly from data, inspired confidence in the resulting research outputs as a clear systemic path to its development could be traced back to the original data collection which '*let the data talk.*'

This grounded theory study systematically generated theory from data that were collected directly from ethnographical participation and semi-structured interviews with people engaged within the appropriate social setting of a Fairtrade Town. The resulting process and theory developed, demonstrates the application of theoretical sensitivity in two ways. This study was classified from the start as an emerging area of research activity that had very little, if any, predetermined theory that could influence the research process or subsequent theory developed. This situation meant that even the conceptual framework for the study was itself inductively produced as part of the research methodology. Both these situations suggest that the study's application of theoretical sensitivity was a default position from the outset. As Glaser (1978.2) posits:

'The first step in gaining theoretical sensitivity is to enter the research setting with as few predetermined ideas as possible especially a logically deduced prior hypothesis.'

Additionally, Walker & Myrick (2006.552) suggest that Glaser's belief that '*sensitivity is attained through immersion in the data*' allows the research process to analyse data directly from '*what the subjects themselves are saying,*' Glaser (1992.50). This study's determination to inductively build 'up' theory without influence and from within the Fairtrade Towns movement is indicative of its desire to apply theoretical sensitivity in its approach. In addition, the documented application of constant comparisons in data to generate core concepts through the activity of open and theoretical coding also demonstrates the traceability of generated theory right back to the participants of the Fairtrade Towns movement, therefore demonstrating the generation of theory from the data itself. These reassurances are significant when researching emerging disciplines as research outputs generated under these circumstances need additional validation and demonstrable rigour to be academically accepted.

3.8.1: An Overview

To conclude this chapter, the constituent parts of this study's research process and practical logic are mapped in accordance to Crotty's (1998) 'Four Elements' of the research process: Fig 3.11 (*Four Elements of the Research Process*).

Fig 3.11 Four Elements of the Research Process

Objective of the Study	To understand the marketing dynamics of the Fairtrade Towns movement
Epistemology	Constructionism: Social
Theoretical Perspective	Interpretivism : Symbolic Interactionism
Methodology	Grounded Theory: A bespoke hybrid application
Methods	Ethnographical Participation: In a Fairtrade Town Group Semi-Structured Interviews: Activists from within the Fairtrade Towns movement including Bruce Crowther: Founder of the Fairtrade Towns movement

CHAPTER 4

Validity

Chapter 4: Validity

4.0 Introduction

Grounded in data, the core category of ‘validity’ emerged to conceptually represent the foundations of the Fairtrade Towns’ marketing dynamic. This chapter explores the Fairtrade Towns’ complex constructions, applications, functions and symbolic references to ‘validity,’ aiming to build a conceptual overview of its purpose and application to the marketing dynamics of the movement. In its construction, codes generated via the grounded theory approach to data analysis are used (line-by-line, focused and theoretical) along with field work notes and interview transcripts to both build and frame the theory of ‘validity’ presented. Although the chapter uses participants’ direct quotes, comprehensive use of this raw data is limited to playing a supportive role, as the purpose is to conceptualise the collective discourse of the Fairtrade Towns movement. Conceptualisation is emphasised through the lens of participants’ ‘lived experiences’ and subsequent symbolic interaction with Fair Trade, Fairtrade the trademark/label, and the actions carried out by individuals, steering groups and organisations rooted in the ‘place’ of a Fairtrade Town.

4.1 Introducing The Conceptualisation of Validity

The Fairtrade Towns movement informed by the five goals set by the Fairtrade Foundation unequivocally supports the findings of Malpass et al. (2007.633) and determines its purpose as promoting and embedding the consumption of Fairtrade (one word trademarked) certified goods in the social day-to-day activity that socially constructs one’s town.

“The Fairtrade Town’s job is to promote the Fairtrade mark and that’s all it is, you know, without seeing the bigger picture, but I think the majority of people that I work with see the bigger picture and that’s what we aim for.”

Chairman Fairtrade Town (Garstang)

Steeped in the research discourse is an underwritten and previously ignored physical and symbolic recognition of the role validity has played in developing the necessary conditions upon which the objectives of Fairtrade Towns are achieved. Data suggests that the Fairtrade Towns movement required a valid context upon which to perform its marketing function. As such, the necessity to validate Fair Trade as a digestible marketing proposition has been recognised as a requirement upon which the

marketing dynamics conducted to achieve and maintain Fairtrade Town status have been built. Validity in this context has been conceptualised through the development and mainstreaming of the products and processes of Fair Trade. This conceptualisation makes several points of reference to the importance of The Fairtrade Foundation, Fair Trade products and Western consumers whose symbolic significance has been identified as providing the basis of Fairtrade Towns' marketing dynamics.⁹⁴ Validity in this context is viewed through the development of the '*products and processes of Fair Trade.*' Validity in the context of this study is used to capture and group a number of common themes in the data. These are themes that resonate in the understanding that the marketing dynamic of the Fairtrade Towns movement has both developed and benefited from various situations, people, place, spaces, actions and activities that have added value, improved credibility and validated its processes.

The Fairtrade Towns movement's ability to engage with a wide spectrum of individuals, organisations and representatives from civic and civil society (Alexander & Nicholls, 2006) to promote Fairtrade consumption is additionally credited with developing validity as a consequence of action. For the purpose of this study, this has been conceptualised as '*validity through the other,*' indicating that individuals and organisations' engagement in Fairtrade Town activities symbolically augments the validity of the Fairtrade Towns movement in two ways:

1. The symbolic meanings and values ascribed to 'the other,' whether that is an individual, a collective or an organisation reveals itself to both endorse and augment the perceived validity of the marketing dynamics of The Fairtrade Towns movement.
2. The social and intellectual capital of each individual, collective or organisation 'other' viewed as the skills and social connections they bring to the Fairtrade Towns movement is commonly recognised for determining its marketing dynamics and capacity.

⁹⁴ These key contributors when combined concur to Nicholls and Opal's (2005) work on actor network theory, suggesting they are key nodes that when functioning together attribute to a unique Fair Trade marketing dynamic.

To fully explore the complex marketing dynamics that symbolises ‘validity’ to the Fairtrade Towns movement, data analysis points to a number of key emergent properties relevant to both ‘validity through products and processes’ and ‘validity through the other.’ These properties, whilst independently representing a smaller part of the bigger picture, warrant compartmentalised theory to be developed and from the sum of each part, a systemic conceptualisation of ‘validity’ in the context of this study has been constructed.

4.2 Validity as a Condition: The Products and Processes of Fair Trade

4.2.1 The Product

The establishment of a context to validate Fair Trade products is thought to be an essential element of the Fairtrade Towns movement’s marketing dynamic. Research participants’ symbolic interaction with Fairtrade products demonstrates a dual view of validity. Validity in Fairtrade products is symbolically referred to in two distinct ways. Firstly, it is viewed and judged through a consumer lens, where quality and fitness for purpose set the context. Secondly, it is viewed through an activist lens, where the international development outcomes of Fair Trade consumption set the context. This section reveals several points of reference that participants commonly recognised as the ‘originators’ of validity in Fair Trade products. It explores the symbolic significance of these ‘originators’ and the necessity and consequences of the Fairtrade Towns movement having a ‘validated’ Fair Trade product to promote.

Explanations given regarding early Fair Trade products are consistent in contextualising them from the perspective of a consumer, associating them with ‘*low quality*’ and a questionable fitness for purpose. Just as Lubke (2006); Nicholls & Opal (2005); Golding & Peattie (2005) and Low and Davenport (2005(b)) suggest, the consequence of this ‘low quality’ correspondingly reveals itself in the data as responsible for the limited mainstream appeal Fair Trade products once had. A symbolic association with early Fair Trade coffee for example, infers that it was an ‘*endeavour*’ to drink. An endeavour that for some appears to have demonstrated a

symbolic display of religious values related to self-sacrifice as indicated in the quote below:

“My first experiences with Fair Trade was before the Fairtrade mark was around and it was rather disgusting Nicaraguan coffee. I was a student and I think the people who were really into it were Christians and chaplaincy who maybe sold it and drank it but it wasn’t very popular because it was poor quality and it certainly wasn’t as good as standards are now, so it was quite an heroic endeavour. It was actually like drinking brown sludge.”

University Chaplin (Carmarthen)

Low product quality in respect of consumer preference, whilst demonstrating symbolic validity amongst the ‘hard core alternatives’ or early mainly religious based consumers, is recognised in the data as a condition that was addressed in order to gain the validity necessary to take the message to the mainstream.⁹⁵ Low quality as well as playing a role in limiting consumer demand, is also recognised as playing a key role in limiting the development of product ranges and expanding the distribution of Fairtrade products. Expanding upon the work of Nicholls (2004.102) that suggested the limited ‘*mainstream fair trade offer*’ resulted in significant problems in ‘*translating consumer willingness to buy fair trade products,*’ participants additionally recognised these conditions as limiting consumer opportunities to validate Fair Trade products in their everyday activities.

Improvements in the quality of Fair Trade products in this study and like many before (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Moore et al., 2006; Vantomme et al., 2006; De Pelsmacker et al., 2005; Golding & Peattie, 2005) has been identified as the catalyst in developing greater consumer endorsement and subsequently increasing the validity of Fair Trade products in highly competitive markets. Improvements in Fair Trade product quality and availability, combined with incremental growth in consumer acceptance, is consequentially recognised as providing the conditions that bred confidence in motivating ‘*ordinary people*’ (Malpass et al., 2007) and organisations to unite as a place (Fairtrade Town) that consumes and promotes Fairtrade products in its every

⁹⁵ This finding is not presented as a new concept but supports the work of Lubke (2006); Nicholls & Opal, (2005); Golding & Peattie, (2005) and Low & Davenport, (2005(b)) presented in the literature review.

day activities.⁹⁶ An important qualification to draw from this is that the validity of Fair Trade products appears, in part, to be identified through the symbolic connection of mainstream acceptance. The value ascribed to Fair Trade products is therefore based on consumer validity and, in this study, appears, in part, to be symbolically represented through Fairtrade certified products' ability to live up to the desired standards and widespread acceptance of Western consumers:

"I have to say I cannot remember pre-2000, I cannot remember, buying for example, CafeDirect or any Fairtrade bananas, I can't remember that, maybe we did, but I certainly didn't engage with it."

NGO worker (Keswick)

The importance of product quality is highly prevalent in Fair Trade literature (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Moore et al., 2006; Vantomme et al., 2006; De Pelsmacker et al., 2005) with data from this study supporting and further contextualising its importance. Participants make strong reference to Fairtrade products' *'vast improvement'* playing a defining role in the inception and incremental growth of the Fairtrade Towns movement. The consequences of improvements in Fair Trade product quality and the consistent reports of Fair Trade's rapid market growth appear to be recognised as key enablers in the incremental development of the Fairtrade Towns movement. Explanations given and observations made, indicate that greater significance needs to be attributed to the improvements in the quality of Fair Trade products. It is accepted in the data from this study and others (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Moore et al., 2006; Vantomme et al., 2006; De Pelsmacker et al., 2005) that improvements in quality has increased consumer confidence and demand. However, explanations given also imply that it has played a role in instilling a confidence in various actors to move beyond the process of individual ethical (Harrison et al., 2005), sustainable (Jackson, 2006) or political consumption (Micheletti, 2003), into what Barnett et al. (2011.185) describe as *'novel modes of collective action.'* Such collective action is represented through a willingness to move from individual Fairtrade purchase and consumption into engage in promoting and developing Fairtrade consumption opportunities as a Fairtrade Town participant. This is a process that McGregor (2002) may argue is akin to developing ethical consumers into

⁹⁶ A dynamic that Lamb (2008) suggests is akin to weaving Fairtrade into 'the fabric of a place.'

consumer citizens as they *'display evidence of partaking in effective action in public life.'*

There is however, another context to validity evident in the interview dialogue of this research. Validity is additionally systemically viewed through the resulting developmental impact Fairtrade consumption has in producer communities in the developing world. This demonstrates that Fairtrade Town participants understand that consumption choices enable them to *'act at a distance'* (Whatmore & Thorne, 1997).

"It was the principle of actually being involved in the sense of actually supporting more directly producers in third world countries which was kind of the thing that drew me in."

Vicar (Hereford)

The validity of Fair Trade consumption therefore is symbolically recognised through achieving its development agenda. This is an understanding that appears imperative in motivating the commitment and actions of Fairtrade Town participants. Discourse in the data appears to further emphasise the importance of Golding & Peattie's (2005) suggestion that marketing the developmental impact of Fair Trade is an imperative in motivating consumers to purchase, suggesting it has also played a role in motivating people to move from individual consumers to become part of a wider consumer movement by becoming active in a Fairtrade Town.

"By buying the products, you are helping to keep families and communities sited where they belong so they can sustain their lifestyles in that community without them having to be exploited or move away into situations where they're not safe, they're not secure and they can be exploited. By keeping them where they belong, in a sense, they have a better chance of a happy life."

Soroptimist (Garstang)

The validity of Fairtrade products is therefore imbued with a commonly recognised dual discourse of quality that accepts meeting the needs and wants of the modern consumer whilst also making a significant contribution to the sustainable development of producer communities in the developing world. Both these contexts are understood to offer Fairtrade Towns a sense of validity in increasing their activities. Just as Wright & Heaton (2006) state, the importance of quality working alongside altruism to act as a motivator to buy and consume Fairtrade products is symbolised through consumer approval and the development agenda, both of which are indicated as helping validate the actions of Fairtrade Towns campaigners.

“It was years of supporting Fair Trade in terms of seeing the market grow and the range available grow from Alcafee, which is horrible, to things like the first CaféDirect coffee which was only available in ground coffee and then went to instant. Then, you had tea and sugar and chocolate. It grew and the feeling that Fairtrade products were making a difference to benefit peoples’ lives in the developing world and I thought that being part of a community group would be a way of promoting Fairtrade and increase the consumption of Fairtrade products.”

University Chaplin (Carmarthen)

The dual discourse of Fair Trade product validity symbolically reveals itself as a hybrid of developmental campaigning and consumer-led endorsement. Findings demonstrate that validity in Fair Trade products is perceived to resonate in its ability to bridge the work of the development activist to the world of the consumer. Validity is strongly judged and conceptualised through the need for mainstream acceptance, symbolically represented in a product’s consumer-based quality and availability. What is significant in the explanations given, is that although the development agenda of Fair trade is recognised as a catalyst for Fairtrade Town participation, it is not the exclusive route to collective participation one might naturally assume. It appears that participation in the Fairtrade Towns movement is additionally receptive to the importance of consumer endorsement and the growth of demand in Fairtrade products. The symbolic significance of seeing the market share for Fairtrade products grow in size and gratify consumer expectation appears to help participants see themselves as ‘*making a difference*,’ thus increasing their willingness to participate in the Fairtrade Towns movement.

However, whilst it is respected that developmental issues are at the heart of why the Fairtrade Towns movement exists, participants also reveal the importance of consumer endorsement in validating the quality of Fair Trade products in initiating confidence in their involvement. As a result, it is recognised that the marketing dynamics and development agenda of the Fairtrade Towns movement has been built upon a confidence and ability to promote ‘consumer validated’ Fair Trade products that have evolved in quality and availability through a process of consumer-led product development and demand. This suggests that the process of mainstreaming, as well as being credited with helping the wider Fairtrade movement further its developmental impact (Gendon et al., 2009; Lamb 2009), has also played a pivotal

role in validating the marketing functions of Fairtrade Towns. In addition, it also questions Low & Davenport's (2005) suggestion that mainstreaming has potentially led to a separation of the medium from the message.

Data from this study indicates that the medium of product quality and mainstream accessibility has acted as a catalyst in getting 'ordinary people' involved in Fairtrade Town activities. Product quality is identified as providing a valid platform that has helped expand existing conceptualisations of individual ethical/sustainable consumption into practices more akin to McGregor's (2002) ideas of a more pro-active consumer citizenship 'partaking in public life.' Consumer citizenship therefore becomes more than an act of consumption, as Fairtrade consumers united under the label of a Fairtrade Town become confident enough⁹⁷ to be pro-active in promoting and developing further opportunities for Fairtrade consumption through the social fabric that socially constructs their town.

4.2.2 The Trade Mark (label)

The marketing dynamics of the Fairtrade Towns movement is therefore recognised as being dependant upon the incremental development of the quality of Fair Trade products being symbolically linked to two validating conditions:

1. The developmental outcomes from consuming Fair Trade products
2. Mainstream consumer endorsement and availability of Fair Trade products.

These two validating qualities have become symbolised in the Fairtrade Foundation's label and trademark Fairtrade. Research indicates a general acceptance and support for previous academic research (Wills, 2006; Jaffee, 2007, Steinrucken & Jaenichen, 2007; Tallontire, 2006; Golding, 2009; Low & Davenport, 2006; Moore & et al., 2006; Renard, 2003; Moore, 2004; Wilkinson, 2007; Pelsmacker et al., 2003) that the Fairtrade (one word) trademark and its semiotic label displayed by certified products

⁹⁷ Confidence is facilitated by the quality of Fairtrade products due to its ability to both satisfy consumer tastes and achieve its developmental goal.

carries a symbolic meaning that validates Fairtrade products from both the perspective of consumer values and its developmental outcomes.⁹⁸

“When the actual Fairtrade mark was launch 15 years ago, I felt I was already very much in agreement with the whole ethos of it.”

Church/Community representative (Ondule)

“I’ve met people who have basically benefited from Fairtrade, I think it’s an excellent standard...it does what it says on the tin really...it is Fairtrade. It means some people in the developing world can send their kids to school and get clean water in their villages and basically raise their standard of life.”

Sustainability Officer (Merthyr Tydfil)

Supporting the work of Steinrucken & Jaenichen (2007), the symbolic value of the Fairtrade label is judged by participants to have given Fairtrade certified products the necessary pedagogical validity in its developmental outcomes to prosper in extremely competitive western consumer markets. Underlining the belief of most Fairtrade Town participants is recognition that for the movement to have any developmental impact on elevating poverty, it was necessary to have a verified digestible message to communicate in their town. Data clearly qualifies the Fairtrade Towns movement’s recognition of the pedagogical value and role the Fairtrade trademark and label played in validating its activities and determining the context from which its marketing dynamics are informed. This was pointed out on a number of occasions during interviews and observations:

‘The mark is all central to this, always, for mainstreaming, and so the Fairtrade Towns movement has always been, not about promoting Fairtrade as an alternative, but about the mainstreaming of Fairtrade.’

Chairman of Fairtrade Town (Garstang)

The Fairtrade Towns movement subsequently recognises that its own developmental mission is dependent upon the promotion of Fairtrade certified goods alone. The sole agenda of promoting only products that carry the Fairtrade trademark/label is, in the main, supported and has been commended by participants for its ability to validate a standardised discourse of what Fairtrade represents.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Refer to figure 4.2 (*functionally layering the Fairtrade label*)

⁹⁹ In some Fairtrade Towns, tensions existed around only being able to promote the consumption of Fairtrade certified products. Some Fairtrade Town members were keen to support what they perceived

'The Fairtrade Town movement is about, it's about mainstreaming, and the mark is the vehicle to do that. There can be no other vehicle, you know, if there is, tell me what it is because I don't know anything else that can mainstream Fairtrade, it's got to be the mark.'

Chairman of Fairtrade Town (Garstang)

The grassroots dimension of the Fairtrade Towns movement is suggested to have resulted in the meanings ascribed to Fair Trade being individually social constructed, resulting in a fear that mixed messages about its product quality and developmental outcomes have somehow confused potential consumers. The resulting findings suggest that, in many situations, Fair Trade has failed to be communicated as a standardised marketing proposition. The consequence of Fair Trade generating multiple meanings is considered by many to lead to misunderstanding and confusion amongst both Fairtrade Towns and potential 'new' consumers. These misunderstandings are thought to manifest themselves in consumers questioning the validity of Fair Trade as both a 'quality' consumer good and a tool for international development. The Fairtrade mark guidelines have been used to help The Fairtrade Towns movement solve discrepancies in participant semantics, producing an accepted narrative that is directly derived from the Fairtrade Foundation and believed to be symbolically associated with the trademark and label. The trademark and label guidelines were consistently referred to as a validating benchmark for developing an appropriate standardised discourse to be used in all campaigning and marketing activities carried out by Fairtrade Towns. Additionally, expanding on the suggestion of Connolly & Shaw (2006) that the Fairtrade mark can provide material symbolism for consumers, the symbolic presence of a trademark and label in this study was also credited with creating confidence in Fairtrade Town participants (commonly referring to themselves as 'normal' people) when disseminating the message of Fairtrade.

'I think its been absolutely right to focus on Fairtrade one word, because Fairtrade one word is recognised by many, it's a symbol, it's a brand, it means something very specific, and I can say it...give me 30 seconds and I'll tell you what it means. I can say that right, somebody said to me well what

to be fairly traded goods that were non-certified. However, provenance guarantees provided by the label on most occasions proved to be the tipping point in convincing members to follow the Fairtrade Foundation guidelines for Fairtrade Town status.

about fair trade two words well that takes me probably 5 minutes..... its getting people to buy into a system which has its own integrity about which you can say some very specific things. I can't say anything very specific about trade craft jewellery, except the producers get a fair deal you know, but what does that fair deal mean? You know with the Fairtrade mark, I can say what that fair deal means. I can be quite explicit about it so I think that narrow focus, if you want to call it that, it's been absolutely right'

NGO worker (Keswick)

The trademark and label have undoubtedly afforded Fairtrade Towns grassroots participants the opportunity to unite behind one common understanding of Fairtrade. This is indirectly viewed by many of the participants of this study as a mechanism that provides the movement with validity through compendious pedagogical messages or, as one participant described it, *'all singing from the same hymn sheet,'* when campaigning or carrying out marketing functions under the banner of a Fairtrade Town.

The marketing communication value of the Fairtrade Trademark and its label has resulted in the Fairtrade Towns movement demonstrating a belief in the symbolic validity consumers give to products that carry trademarks and labels. The movement's strategy to achieve its developmental aims via promoting only Fairtrade certified products to mainstream markets, demonstrates an acceptance that its aims are achieved through the validity consumers afford to Fairtrade products. Here we witness the importance of the Fairtrade label as a *'strong fabric of social organisation,'* (Whatmore & Thorne, 1997.294) in a marketing dynamic functioning through actor network theory (Nicholls & Opal, 2005).

Evidence in the data attributes the Fairtrade label's ability to develop what is understood to be:

'The most visible thing that we do in the community is to promote products with that symbol on it that people can recognise. So, on your bananas and on your coffee and so on, so look for the mark. That has been so important to us and will continue to be so in terms of, if you like, our popular campaigning.'

NGO worker (Keswick)

4.2.3 Fairtrade Town Certification

From the inception of the movement at Garstang,¹⁰⁰ the need for an identifiable process of attainment and validation for other towns to emulate was recognised (Lamb 2005). Like any certification awarded, validity is perceived as central to its ability to command respect and sustained success. Becoming a Fairtrade Town therefore, needed an administration process that could provide such rigour. Given that the Fairtrade Foundation had started to make an impact as a recognisable and standardised certification process (as guided by FLO) for Fairtrade products, its validating expertise and synergies with this burgeoning movement were recognised. The Fairtrade Foundation was subsequently called upon by Crowther to help develop a process that could validate a town based on its developmental commitments achieved via promoting Fair Trade consumption. The embryonic start of a validating process is captured in letters written from the Fairtrade Foundation to Crowther dated 25th May and 5th July 2000.

“We agree with your need to keep the momentum going on this campaign. Hopefully, this is just the beginning of a process which will eventually see shops, schools and local councils all stocking, using and promoting Fairtrade products. Without this development, of course the term Fairtrade Town would be almost meaningless, bringing no benefit to the producers as I’m sure you recognise” Fairtrade Foundation, 25th May 2000.

“The town should be a place where there is significant increased awareness raising activities about Fairtrade and thus higher sales than elsewhere’
Fairtrade Foundation, 5th July 2000.

From this, a process of attainment was agreed around a town achieving five goals before they could be validated by the Fairtrade Foundation as a Fairtrade Town. These five goals have been referred to on numerous occasions in the literature review (see page 104) and needless to say, have been symbolically referred to by the participants in this study as the catalyst to validating and informing the marketing dynamics of the Fairtrade Towns movement.

“We have to show that we fit into those five goals and that we’re constantly improving those five goals, which we are doing.”
Retired community member (Garstang)

¹⁰⁰ Garstang is the world’s first validated Fairtrade Town

The attainment of Fairtrade Town certification for a steering group is, without question, perceived as valuable, suggesting that the process of validity through certification is the *'means to an end.'* A 'means to an end' in this context reveals the Fairtrade Town's acceptance that, by increasing the consumption of Fairtrade certified products in a given town, its developmental goals of *'elevating poverty'* in producer communities are realised and symbolically associated with the attainment of Fairtrade Town status.¹⁰¹ This meaning is succinctly demonstrated in the statement quoted below.

"Well, the main role was to get Carmarthen registered as a Fairtrade Town. But hopefully, that was just a means to an end to get people in the community involved in Fairtrade and to raise their awareness of Fairtrade and to ensure there are more Fairtrade goods in the shops and being used by the community." NGO worker (Carmarthen)

Fairtrade Town status is accomplished through an application process that is guided and assessed by the Fairtrade Foundation who validates the process based on the evidence of a town achieving all five goals set. It is accepted that, to be valued, the attainment of Fairtrade Town certification needs rigour in terms of stipulated, focused attainable goals and targets.¹⁰²

Despite some concerns, many positive consequences related to both the process of becoming and maintaining validated Fairtrade Town status have been commonly expressed. Operating under the *'certified banner'* of Fairtrade and being a Fairtrade Town appears to lead to participants viewing themselves as part of the marketing communication process of the Fairtrade Towns movement interpreted through the symbolic act of addressing others. Whilst addressing others with the aim of promoting Fairtrade, they indicate an increased confidence in their address, citing the validity of

¹⁰¹ The recognition of Fairtrade Town status elevating poverty in far off producer communities of the developing world could be compared to Amen's (2002.386) understanding of place/space relations. Offering us the possibility to view Fairtrade Towns and the act of Fairtrade consumption as development achieved through a *'rise in routinised' action at a distance and global connectivity of flow.'*

¹⁰² Around (2006) suggests that Fairtrade Town goals needed to have rigour for them to have value and meaning and to increase activist motivation.

the movement as symbolically creating a '*credible platform*' to operate from.¹⁰³ This platform has also been credited with being able to '*open doors*' and improve the movement's access and communication powers to consumers, organisations and groups within a given locale.

"I think it has given me and other people a platform within, to say, "Look we are hoping Carmarthenshire will become a Fairtrade County, we are a major employer, it would be good for us to go for this."

NGO worker (Carmarthen)

Fairtrade Town certification is also credited with developing civic pride. This is believed to resonate from Fairtrade consumption's link to sustainability. In addition to Alexander & Nicholls' (2006.1243) suggestions that civic engagement in Fairtrade Towns '*is the key mediator that connects the network to the third group of consumers,*' civic engagement in this study is also symbolically linked to civic pride. This is recognised by participants through the symbolic validity of a place attaining Fairtrade Town status. Civic pride symbolised through Fairtrade Town status has the potential to act as a powerful platform from which others, within a given locality, can be influenced. This has been symbolised by participants as an additional validation process that moves the marketing dynamics' reliance upon trademarks and labels to a deeper civic '*contractual obligation*' to uphold one's duty to their place of residence and belonging. These findings demonstrate a similarity to aspects of community-based social marketing and appear to follow the same belief as McKenzie-Mohr & Smith (1999.77). When contextualised to this study, they appear to accept the power of conformity at a civic level and follow the suggestion that '*conformity that occurs due to individuals observing the behaviour of others in order to determine how they should behave can have a long-lasting effect.*'

"I think it's a pride Cardiff can have, which is different to other cities, they can push forward, they can say this is what we agreed to, therefore you can push people who might not know about Fairtrade. So, you know, we are now a Fairtrade city, this is what we've agreed to, could you have a think about introducing more Fairtrade products, and we do that in shops. Wherever I go,

¹⁰³ These findings demonstrate stark similarities to work published by several authors such as Tallontire (2006); Golding (2009); Low & Davenport (2006); Moore et al., (2006); Renard (2005); Belz & Peattie (2009) and Jaffee (2007) who suggest the Fairtrade label on products can offer a guarantee and instil trust in consumers. Evidence in this study also suggests that 'normal people' who, when operating under the Fairtrade Towns label, believe themselves (just like Fairtrade certified products) to be perceived as trusted, credible (guaranteed) and more effective.

anywhere, every restaurant I go to, I ask have you got Fairtrade coffee and even if they don't, it raises the question, why haven't you got it."

Social Enterprise Manager (Cardiff)

However, the process of Fairtrade Town certification has been criticised as being too officious and, on occasion, limiting the progress of the movement by generating more investigative than influential marketing activities. This has led to participants symbolically referring to themselves as '*researchers*,' indicating that their role was reduced to '*quantifying application data*' in order to achieve validation from the Fairtrade Foundation.

"When we started out, it was about let's go out and count how many cafes are selling Fairtrade, because that's what you need to meet the criteria."

Vicar (Hereford)

Additionally, the process of keeping a Fairtrade Town validated after it has achieved the status, has been identified as challenging. Once the five goals have been met and validated it appears that some towns develop a basis for inertia resulting in participants' recognition that the town's Fairtrade status can contribute to '*forgetting the ongoing needs of Fairtrade promotion*.' Therefore, some view the attainment of Fairtrade Town status as '*static*' and, to some extent, even detrimental to the longevity of the campaigning process. Furthermore, some members symbolically associate validation from the Fairtrade Foundation as the '*job been done*.' In support, participants also claimed that it can be difficult to keep the momentum and motivation going for the reapplication process.

"Obviously, the hard work of all the individuals and the groups involved pushed it towards Fairtrade city status and sometimes there is a danger that once you have got that, where do you go from there? And obviously, you have to maintain that status. But there is not such a push behind it from other people when something has already been achieved"

Student Union (Cardiff)

"Actually trying to keep the enthusiasm going is always a bit of a pain. Once you've achieved the mark, it's always easy to let it slip... Once you've got the status, it's relatively easy to take your foot off the accelerator and think, oh well we're alright now, and toddle on for the next so and so."

Vicar (Hereford)

Fairtrade Town certification is acknowledged to be the mainspring upon which the Fairtrade Towns movement's marketing dynamics are built.¹⁰⁴ The five goals of attainment are identified as providing the context to inform the movement's participants about what and how they should develop in relation to the demand and supply of Fairtrade in their town.¹⁰⁵ The consequences of having goals to achieve are symbolically referred to as validation processes in their own right and are valued for their role in reassuring participants that they are doing *'the right thing.'*

However, covariances in opinion occur when Fairtrade Town status needs to be renewed. Many participants show concern with not being able to understand the process of re-application and, as a result, find the steering group *'losing their way.'*¹⁰⁶ This indicates that the direction given by the Fairtrade Foundation, whilst having many strengths, can still result in participants becoming too dependent upon a validation process that, to some extent, can be accused of *'holding the hand'* of the activist. The lack of direction in the reapplication process appears to consequentially have the possibility to dilute the activities of the movement, as participants appear to question what is expected of them.¹⁰⁷

4.2.4 The Fairtrade Foundation

It is common to see participants show an underlying respect for the role of the Fairtrade Foundation in supporting, facilitating, developing and awarding the status of Fairtrade to towns. Participants are keen to indicate the value of having 'central support' to help validate and augment the actions and activities of a Fairtrade Town. The Fairtrade Foundation resources have been identified as helping Fairtrade Towns both to administer themselves and to effectively promote Fairtrade. Promotional literature and online access to information resources is recognized as *'professionally*

¹⁰⁴ This resembles the work of many academics for example Nicholls & Opal (2005); Jaffee (2007); Renard (2003) and Moore (2004) whose findings attribute the Fairtrade label with being the catalyst for mainstreaming Fairtrade products.

¹⁰⁵ Whilst telling 'activists' what and how to do things may appear a little strange, most participants welcome the direction and support and appear to take a pride in attaining recognition of their actions through the certification process.

¹⁰⁶ Some groups even reported becoming inactive for long periods of time.

¹⁰⁷ Whilst the study presents many positive associations attributed to achieving Fairtrade Town status, both achievement and renewal ironically point to more negative systemic outcomes that question the long-term resilience of some Fairtrade Towns.

produced’ and subsequently relied upon as message disseminators within public and private places, such as, town halls, schools, universities, work places, libraries, retail outlets, restaurants and cafes. It has therefore become the norm within most Fairtrade Towns to use Fairtrade Foundation posters and leaflets to validate and ‘professionally’ communicate the aim of the Fairtrade Town group and those organisations that support it. Just as Golding (2009) conceptualises the pedagogical value of the Divine Chocolate company web site, the Fairtrade Foundation’s web site is also commended for its ability to provide valid ‘pedagogical’ information that is used for both personal learning and to facilitate ‘*valid*’ communication.

“I’m constantly checking in on the Fairtrade Foundation website and any resources that I need, any information I need, if there is something I need to know more about. I was on it the other day looking for sports equipment to try and give links to the sports department, to just have a look and say, please look and if there is anything you want I would possibly order, so I use it as my main resource for information.”

Teacher (Garstang)

Acknowledgment is additionally given to the Fairtrade Foundation’s administrative resource guides. Standardised policies and practices have been credited with helping Fairtrade Towns increase their validity by providing administrative support to organisations who wish to embrace Fairtrade. For example, participants point to the use of organisations adopting a Fairtrade policy because templates produced by the Fairtrade Foundation helped convince them it’s ‘*that easy*.’ Fairtrade policies and other administrative documents are therefore perceived as, not just tools for monitoring progress, but are additionally credited with helping the Fairtrade Town lobby and keep organisations focused on their commitment to Fairtrade. The use of policies to govern organisations’ consumption in favour of Fairtrade, adds further dimensions and empirical insight into Micheletti’s (2003) understanding of political consumption.¹⁰⁸

“It’s because it has to happen because of the policy, it makes it a little bit easier.”

Student Union (Cardiff)

¹⁰⁸ The development and application of Fairtrade policies add empirical value to Micheletti’s (2003) conceptualisation of political consumption. Evidence in the data shows how policies are used to ‘*exercise influence*’ in work ‘spaces’ helping ‘*solve problems*’ in distributing and promoting Fairtrade products in Fairtrade Towns (Micheletti, 2003).

“Personally, I think it’s helpful because, when I go to a place that hasn’t got Fairtrade I have something behind me to say, hey aren’t you going against the policy etc. It’s like, you have something behind you to say, where there isn’t Fairtrade, shouldn’t you be looking at it.”

Trade Craft Rep (Swansea)

Addressing the shortcomings of academic research and conceptualisation devoted to Fairtrade Fortnight, a consistent flow of data recognises its significance to the marketing dynamic of the Fairtrade Town. Davies (2008.119) suggests that Fairtrade Fortnight ‘*can provide a much greater exposure for fair trade*’ and this study expands on his understanding. Several points of reference in the data sets of this study contextualise Fairtrade Fortnight as a marketing event organised and facilitated by the Fairtrade Foundation. They further suggest that it sets conditions that have symbolic reverberations as an annual point in time that validates many of the marketing functions and dynamics of Fairtrade Towns. It is common for participants to identify Fairtrade Fortnight as a time when ‘*successful*’ events aimed at promoting wider Fairtrade consumption in Fairtrade Towns happen. Events ranging from fashion shows to producers presenting life stories mostly appear to have taken place during this annual fortnightly window, usually around the end of February and the beginning of March.

“Basically it started with Fairtrade Fortnight coming up some months ahead and we thought, well what can we do? Who’s going to bring this to the attention of school children? We decided on a poster competition, so some of us went to various schools to ask them if they would like to come, and we would talk about Fairtrade and then we will have an opportunity for you all to make some posters, do the logo and most, quite a few individuals, took up on this and then they got the children to do the doing.”

Co-operative Manager (Worcester)

“I think the most conspicuous success was a conference that we held in St Peter’s Hall in Fairtrade Fortnight the year before. That was very well attended by the public and various groups. We had a lot of people from various groups, students from the college came along and helped out and everybody who came seemed to think it was a very worthwhile exercise and left rather more enthused and interested in Fairtrade than before they walked through the door.”

Student (Carmarthen)

“Fairtrade Fortnight is always a really good one, we always try and organise a series of events and raise awareness that way. We started off just having stalls in supermarkets but we have done all sorts of things; Fairtrade Fashion Show, a music thing, that was really good.”

Sustainability Centre Manager (Swansea)

Fairtrade Fortnight in the context of this chapter has been conceptualised as a ‘valid point in time’ that the Fairtrade Foundation and Fairtrade Towns use to legitimise the synergistic marketing potential of a commercial social enterprise with a consumer movement. Fairtrade Fortnight is additionally credited with establishing validity in the Fairtrade Towns movement by establishing a credible public relations platform in the mainstream national media (television, broadsheet and tabloid)¹⁰⁹ that is synergised with local ‘below the line’ marketing activities carried out under the banner of a Fairtrade Town.

“We did the bananas thing for Fairtrade Fortnight and were able to get the council to give us a display unit so we were in the main town square. We were giving out bananas and we were getting our photos taken and we were on BBC Hereford and Worcester and we were able to say this is happening here.”

Vicar (Hereford)

Participants are also keen to recognise the legal validity the Fairtrade Foundation provides for Fairtrade Towns. A key part of Fairtrade Town activity is identified as participating in, or organising events within a given locality. The voluntary make up of Fairtrade Town groups is identified as posing personal litigation risks for those involved in organising or attending such activities. The Fairtrade Foundation is credited with providing insurance for Fairtrade Town steering groups to organise and participate in ‘community events.’ The fact that the Fairtrade Foundation provides insurance for such events is recognised as a key resource that would be unaffordable by the groups themselves and whose absence would result in events not being attended and organised. Therefore, the Fairtrade Foundation’s provision of insurance is identified by the movement as eliminating personal risk when engaged in activities for The Fairtrade Town. Inspiring a confidence for the ethical consumer (Harrison et

¹⁰⁹ Managed centrally by The Fairtrade Foundation or other organisations like Fair Trade Wales

al. 2005) to get involved in deep ‘social action’ (Low and Davenport 2007), as the Fairtrade Town provides a legal validity that would otherwise be unattainable.

“I noticed also the Fairtrade Foundation are helping out groups by offering reduced and subsidised liability insurance for events so things that have in the past, we, I have helped to put on events. I have managed to get liability help from the council, but a lot of events you have had to say, it’s a brilliant idea but you can’t do that because you haven’t got any liability insurance. I think that’s going to be a big one for them. I think if it’s a town of less than 20,000 people it would only be £25 for a year or more than that about £100 per year which, although quite a lot on a small budget, if it means the difference between putting on a couple of big events or not. I think it could make the difference to really pushing Fairtrade more that way.”

Student Union (Cardiff)

The ‘combining effect’ of the Fairtrade Foundation and the people and places of the Fairtrade Town movement has been credited with the growth of the Fairtrade Town movement over the last decade. These findings demonstrate that the combining effect of people within place (Fairtrade Town) centrally guided by an organisation (Fairtrade Foundation) become what (Whatmore & Thorne 1997:294) would describe as a ‘strong fabric of social organisation,’ a fabric from which the marketing dynamics of a Fairtrade Town function.

“I think one of the reasons why Fairtrade continuous to grow is because of the combined effectiveness of the Foundation as an institution and the movement as a movement of people....I think these two working together, the two movements working together, you know, the citizens movement just being there, and being a campaigning movement as well as marketing and the Foundation working in the way that it does, I think this has been the key.”

NGO Worker (Keswick)

4.3 Validity through the Other: The Individual/The Steering Group

“It’s about people, it’s about friendship, it’s about real people, and that’s what’s at the heart of it all.”

Chairman of Town (Garstang)

4.3.1 First Introductions

Acknowledgement of the setting where participants were first introduced to Fair Trade points to either a workplace, a social setting (friends, family, respected others), a community-based organisation (church) or an education establishment (university). These introductory conditions associated with one’s symbolic interaction with a ‘place’ or ‘people’ appear to indicate early influences on validating Fair Trade’s credibility long before the Fairtrade label and the Fairtrade Towns movement began.

Narratives in the data suggest that the perception of Fair Trade has been augmented with the symbolic meaning of ‘validity’ ascribed to the people and places that have introduced it.

“Think I met it about 20 years ago when I was at university and a member of the Methodist church, and they were doing Fair Trade coffee. I suspect it wasn’t very nice, so that put me off for a while and then I had a few friends who were into it, and probably using Fair Trade now for 15 years.”

Shop Owner (Cardiff)

“It goes back to the early 1980s when we started using Fairtrade teas and coffees and friends that I was involved with in university, were into the Fairtrade thing, and mostly Christian groups, and that must be when I left university in 1984.”

Vicar (Hereford)

“I was a student and I think the people who were really into it were Christians and chaplaincy who maybe sold it and drank.”

University Chaplin (Carmarthen)

The above quotes strongly infer memorable introductions to Fair Trade firmly rooted in specific places, and with a specific set of people referred to as ‘friends,’ both of which, one can argue, have strong symbolic meanings ascribed to them. As a result, explanations provided indicate that validity as a function of Fair Trade marketing has been historically rooted in the symbolic value and trust one ascribes to the people and

places that promote it. These findings concur with, and develop upon, both academic thought and practical application of community-based social marketing presented by McKenzie-Mohr & Smith (1999) and concepts of honesty and trust ascribed to social capital presented by Putnam (2000). Community-based social marketing is evidently recognised in this study through what McKenzie-Mohr & Smith (1999:54) would identify as group commitment. This is where *‘individuals care how they are viewed by other members of their group’*, resulting in the validity of Fair Trade marketing and consumption becoming symbolically linked to norms of behaviour associated with particular groups. The concepts of honesty and trust *‘embedded in personal relationships’* (Putnam, 2000: 136) in this study sets a different context and use to that previously described by Putnam, developing the role of social capital into a marketing function that participants identify as a contributing factor in both validating Fairtrade Town activities and Fairtrade products.

4.3.2 Different Representation and Activism

The coming together of individual *‘key people’* from *‘all walks of life’* is accepted as a key ingredient in the resulting success of the Fairtrade Town movement. Encouraging membership from different backgrounds (age, profession etc) is suggested as important to eradicate the limitations of exclusivity and believed to add to the validity of Fairtrade Town campaigning.¹¹⁰

“I think it’s so interesting as well that people can come from all backgrounds, it’s not something that’s not exclusive to churches, it’s actually something we have in common, that most people that meet at Fairtrade are from different backgrounds. They have this view in common that this is a good solution, and that makes it much more interesting. Because if it’s just a small church group, what do you call them ‘goody two shoes’ it’s not interesting from that point of view. It’s interesting from the fact it might solve a problem very well.”

Volunteer (Bridgenorth)

¹¹⁰ This finding resonates with the research work conducted by The ESRC Centre for Business Relationships Accountability Sustainability and Society at Cardiff University on sustainable communities. Findings by the research group indicate that the importance of getting the core ideas beyond the usual participant is dependant on *‘all voices’* being heard (BRASS: Sustainable Communities, 2012).

Viewed through a marketing lens, individuals are symbolically identified as bringing a unique set of values to the movement, part of which is their own personal validity. This is a validity that appears to be viewed as an extension of one's social capital and is determined by the symbolic representations of who and what they are, and know. The diversity in Fairtrade Town members' social capital and skill sets appears to consequentially help validate what marketing functions the Fairtrade Town is able to carry out, whilst also determining the role that each individual or organisation may play. In choosing the 'right person for the job,' Fairtrade Towns demonstrate an ability to validate their marketing activity through the symbolic and practical significance ascribed to the particular member who completes it. For example, teachers may be asked to produce learning materials and link with schools, council officials may produce letters and distribute them via their database and community development workers may volunteer to address community groups and organise community events, employees of The Co-operative and Christian Aid may provide free samples of Fairtrade products along with promotional material produced by their organisation. In essence, what is being witnessed in the data is an expansion of Nicholls & Opal's (2005) contextualisation of actor network theory to marketing Fairtrade. New nodes (people who represent or have skills sets) appear to gain functional meaning and significance due to their ability to effectively apply their representation or skills to specific marketing dynamics, thus helping to symbolically validate many of the actions conducted by Fairtrade Towns.

"I'm just one member of the group really, I don't think that I have taken any leading role more than being part of the group. But informally, through the meetings I have been able to contribute our experiences at Christian Aid to the group... I have more information than some of the others on how it affects the poor. Hopefully I can contribute that way."

NGO worker (Carmarthen)

Members' skills, interests and connections are thus recognised as a key resource for the group that helps maximise membership dynamics to underline a personal validity in the marketing activities of Fair Trade Towns. These activities are significantly characterised in the use of member's social capital to recruit and to determine who should 'nudge and push' and who to influence to achieve greater supply and demand of Fairtrade in their town. These activities appear to fuse together academic thinking and practical applications of social capital (Putnam 2000; Nicholls & Opal), nudging

(Thaler & Sunstein (2009), mavens (Walsh et al., 2004), community-based social marketing (McKenzie-Mohr 1999) and collective activism (Clarke et al., 2007) in validating effective and trustworthy activities conducted by Fairtrade Towns.

This process appears to be strengthened by the movement's attachment to place, as steering group representation is sorted to represent, as close as possible, the social constructs that come to uniquely define the given town in question. Members therefore identify the validity of the group as a representation of '*all walks of life*' from their '*place*.'

"I never said we are defining the community, not in those words because who can define what a community is? And it is very different from place to place. But what a Fairtrade Town tries to do, and I think to an extent succeeds to do, is it actually reaches out to the whole community, not just a part of it."

Chairman of Fairtrade Town (Garstang)

Adding empirical depth to the suggestion of Malpass et al. (2007.637) that Fairtrade Town campaigns rely on '*particular devices and discursive strategies through which actors can 'speak for the city*' the Fairtrade Towns movement's achievements in connecting Fairtrade consumption to the organisations and groups specific to a given town is often identified. This unique connectivity to place is attained through the dynamic role played by Fairtrade town steering group members who, by contextualising their understanding of the social makeup of their town, are able to identify and connect with individuals and organisations whose symbolical representations are credited with socially constructing its meaning. For example, Keswick is singled out by participants and the national press (Guardian) as a very successful Fairtrade Town because it has understood the activities that construct its town's identity; tourism.

"So Keswick for example, is a tourist town, ok, so they brought Fairtrade into tourism."

Chairman of Fairtrade Town (Garstang)

This has led to the steering group actively pursuing the support and membership of tourism related ‘organisations’ such as tourist attractions, hotels, bed and breakfasts, and restaurants to supply Fairtrade products within their establishments.

“Well, because this is a tourist town, we certainly wanted to work with the tourism sector, and we have worked with the tourism sector. My hope would be and I suppose this would be the hope for all of us, although I don’t think we’ve ever written this down as a target, that every guest house and hotel in Keswick, offered Fairtrade tea and coffee, and every café and restaurant and coffee shop and tea shop all offered it. That would be absolutely wonderful, now it will never happen but we are probably getting on for half way there, so that’s not bad. I think in the space of, we’ve been campaigning for 6 years, now, in case that sounds like ticking a box, in case that sounds like a numbers game, its more than that, because what you hope for is that if a business or an establishment engages with Fairtrade, they do so because they have some understanding of what this trading system does, and why it is necessary. It isn’t about, oh yes we’ll do it, its, oh yes we’ll do it because. So that is an aspiration because it does open opportunities to switch Keswick and our tourists on to Fairtrade.”

NGO Worker (Keswick)

Despite the acknowledgment of multiplicity in Fairtrade Town membership helping to develop a valid socially constructed coherence to its activities, participants express concerns for membership commitment and growth. It is common for Fairtrade Towns to experience members ‘coming and going’ resulting in, what is identified as, a lack of a cohesive group identity created by members ‘not knowing each other.’

Additionally, participants perceive a need for ‘new blood’ to develop the dynamic of the group, which is usually identified as younger people. Younger people appear to be perceived as underrepresented and are symbolically identified as having a different set of skills and social connections that could validate new ideas and open up new connections upon which to develop the marketing dynamics and capacity of the Fairtrade Town. There appears therefore, to be an underlying worry that a key node in Nicholls & Opal’s (2005) actor network is underrepresented and, as such, these conditions may limit the potential of new dynamics emerging from new interactions becoming possible. These findings develop upon the work of Tallontire et al. (2001) by suggesting that Fairtrade Towns, just like Fair Trade consumers, are to some extent dominated by alternative and aging people.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Such demographic limitations could have negative repercussions on the resilience of some Fairtrade Towns as recruitment and ideas may become static and dominated by the few. It may additionally

"It would be nice to have some new people, that's always a goodie. Young people would be good because it gives it more flexibility....Just getting new people to pick up and run with the agenda will be a good thing."

Vicar (Hereford)

"Get another 50 members and become younger. We have talked about the make up of the group and we have attracted younger members to the group but they don't stay. I think once a group stays together for a long time to a certain extent it becomes self-perpetuating and it becomes difficult to get new people in. We have had difficulty recruiting new people and we have had brainstorming sessions about how we can get more people."

Self Employed Business (Worcester)

"I don't think we have any problems with members being fully committed. That is not a challenge. But I think the challenge is to get more people to represent more areas."

NGO Worker (Carmarthen)

The validity of individual steering group members is also symbolically attained through them acting as an ethical consumer and *'doing as they ask.'* In other words, its members perceive themselves as both the ethical consumers that Harrison et al. (2005.2) would recognise as *'concerned with the effects that a purchase choice has, not only on themselves, but also on the external world around them'* and a member of a Fairtrade Town. Doing as they ask is a common response in symbolising validity through one's action, which in this case means consuming Fairtrade products whenever possible. Members' validity to promote Fairtrade consumption within their town is thus symbolically validated through their own purchase and consumption behaviour.¹¹²

Members consistently share stories of personal Fairtrade consumption with each other and within the context of their role as a Fairtrade Town member. This biographical story telling helps to augment validity in not just the message but also the media, i.e. the story teller becomes a symbolic representation of what the Fairtrade

present the movement with tensions if a Fairtrade Town fails to become a 'fair' social representation of its people. Both these issues present worthwhile further investigation that is beyond the scope and remit of this study.

¹¹² These findings demonstrate the importance of ethical consumption to a Fairtrade Town and recognise its symbolic value as an addition to *'shopping for a better world'* Low & Davenport (2007.338).

Town movement wishes to achieve. Fairtrade Town participants' recognition that their behaviour as consumers is being observed to the point that it can affect their own validity in promoting Fairtrade consumption indirectly implies conformity to techniques explored in McKenzie-Mohr & Smith's (1999) work on community-based marketing. Data bears witness to Fairtrade Towns contextualising McKenzie-Mohr & Smith's (1999:77) work through participants belief that '*individuals observing the behaviour of others*' can be a determining factor in influencing '*how they should behave.*'

"I use every opportunity I can to talk about it to other people. Interestingly I was on a question time panel in our church on Sunday night and I was introduced as the chairperson of the local Fairtrade Town steering group and the vicar who was doing the introduction also said that I act as his conscience when it comes to things like this and somebody else made the same point. So, I think people are aware that I'm very keen on the whole idea behind Fairtrade and so I talk about it whenever I can. I make a point of buying Fairtrade things in the shops and asking for them if they're not available and if I go into cafes or bars."

Community Representative (Ondule)

"As an individual, we are all consumers and try Fairtrade products where possible and ask questions about trying to get hold of products"

Student Union (Cardiff)

Members additionally attribute volunteerism to the cause of promoting Fairtrade as having more validity than mainstream sales techniques or people paid to carry out the function. The very fact that people give up their 'free time' to partake in the activities of a Fairtrade Town is again perceived as a symbolic representation of validity built through one's willingness to devote '*unpaid*' time to '*spread the word.*'¹¹³

"If Nestle had an idea like this they would put millions into it...It wouldn't work because... that's the strength, when there's a debate on Fairtrade, Nestle send a representative, they're doing that in overtime, they're getting paid, they want to clock off as soon as they can and get to the pub or whatever. The campaigner goes there, doesn't get paid, it's in their spare time, but that passion comes out and that's the strength... Somebody once said to me about... you are a really good sales person and I said no, I'm not a good sales

¹¹³ Although not evident in the data, one could easily perceive a counterargument to this finding, one that would pose the question; if you are 'amateurs' promoting Fairtrade do you have less validity?

person, I passionately believe in what I'm doing and therefore I can sell it to you because I believe in it."

Chairman of Fairtrade Town (Garstang)

4.3.4 Validity through the Other: The Organisation

Goal 1 of a Fairtrade Town stipulates that the local council must pass a resolution to support Fairtrade. Dominant in the data in reference to goal 1 is a range of discourse that reflects upon the symbolic interaction Fairtrade Towns have at a civic level. In the main, civic commitment is pronounced as representing a number of strengths that have helped to underline the validity of the movement at a local level. Following Barnett et al.'s (2011.184) suggestion that '*Local authority jurisdiction opens doors*' this study also credits them with providing kudos to the establishment of a Fairtrade Town by showing commitment to civil society at a civic level.

"You can again have civil society and the local authority working together"

Shop Owner (Cardiff)

However, this commitment appears to vary from town to town with some councils and authorities viewing the process as a part of its wider commitment to sustainability while others pay it scant regard and do the minimum to comply.¹¹⁴

"I think a lot of this stems from the city council. If you've got them on your side and they're enthusiastic, it makes a tremendous difference.....and it doesn't matter how good your committees are, if you haven't got the support from the council."

Councillor (Worcester)

Respect is afforded to those councils that are proactive, indicating its support has resulted in a power and connectivity at a civic level that would be impossible to emulate. Just as Barnett et al (2011), Malpass et al. (2007) and Alexander & Nicholls (2006) have shown, this study also demonstrates recognition of local authorities and councils to underline the validity of a movement. Such institutions are associated with large scale dominance, presence and influence in the villages, towns and cities of the

¹¹⁴ Whilst it wasn't the intention of this study to identify tensions in the Fairtrade Town movement it is worth noting that in some Fairtrade Towns, gaining civic level support was reported to be very difficult. Political tensions (sometimes suggested to be economically ideological, for example the support of free market principles) in some Fairtrade Towns proved difficult to deal with and the cooperation and level of support given by local councils in some instances were said to depend on which political party was in power at the time.

UK. Having this civic support is thus referred to as helping increase the kudos, power and subsequent development of Fairtrade Towns.

“Merthyr has given this commitment to sell Fairtrade products in all its outlets, which took quite some doing to get that through. Whereas now we have got members of our group onto the town centre partnership and they are taking up these questions directly... Why aren't you buying into what the council have agreed to do? ... so it's slow but it's getting there and we are chipping away at it slowly.”

Sustainability Officer Merthyr Tydfil

Whilst civic engagement is perceived in the main as adding kudos through its standing, connections to other organisations are also prominently referred to as providing symbolic validity to the Fairtrade Town. Places of education, prominent retail outlets, community groups, religious establishments, commercial businesses, public services and tourist attractions are all additionally respected as powerful symbolic associations that validate the activities of the Fairtrade Town. For example the brand power of organisation such as Marks and Spencer and The Co-operative is often referred to in the dialogue of this research, and on many occasions, their ‘affinity’ and resources have been turned to for support in Fairtrade Town events. It is common for participants to respect the validity that such *‘large, well respected organisations’* can provide for the actions of the Fairtrade Town. These results indicate a possible expansion of Low & Davenport’s (2008.102) *‘variation’* of the role and use of affinity marketing for Fair Trade products, beyond distribution and into marketing communications and symbolic validation.

The result of an organisation’s desires and commitment to becoming involved in the Fairtrade Towns movement also further develops Low & Davenport’s (2006) conceptualisation of the alternative high street as new, validated place-based platforms (schools, universities, churches, community organisations) are created to develop and promote Fairtrade consumption.

“Another area I’ve gone into recently is libraries, and some others have gone into libraries as well, and that is another way to raise profile with talks and stalls. I suppose when you talk then if Swansea being a Fairtrade town but again, I don’t know if this has come from the forum or from us just talking through friends that was part of your earlier question. I have friends who work in a couple of libraries so they are the ones who sort of said, come and

set up something or whatever in the library. To actually be allowed to sell in a library seemed quite a change in philosophy really. We were in central for Fairtrade fortnight not that we sold anything but we had a sample there. They have allowed me to sell both food and crafts in three different libraries.”

Teacher (Swansea)

Just as Malpass (2007.640) reminds us of how *‘the original emphasis of the FTF, on ‘far off’ producers had to be speedily reviewed in the light of the experience of the first Fairtrade Town,* questioning Fairtrade Towns’ validity is the voice of local industry. Just as in Garstang in 2002 (Malpass 2007), interviewees expressed the concerns of local businesses (particularly farmers) resulting in them frequently questioning, or requesting more localised campaigns to support their businesses and producers.

“I think the important thing was trying to get over to the community what does this really mean and having to keep re explaining to them what Fairtrade was all about. Because there was a bit of sinicism from some quarters about how Fairtrade was trying to out do local retailers. So we had to make it clear from the start that we were not in competition with local retail trade rather that we wanted them to take part in what we were doing.”

Retired Teacher (Millum)

This is of particular prominence in the biographies of those participants from rural Fairtrade Towns as they identify with Singer’s (2004.169) suggestion that it *‘is possible to see obligation to assist one’s fellow citizen ahead of citizens of other countries’* and reference such issues as both undermining and supporting the validity of Fairtrade Towns. Participants are aware of the symbolic role local issues and the plight of local business has, on the campaigning dynamics of a Fairtrade Town, and some identify this as producing tensions in people’s willingness to be responsible for local issues and those that are seen as problems that exist *‘far away from home.’* Whilst some make reference to experiencing clichéd *‘charity begins at home’* feedback being detrimental to the validity of their campaigning, others have sought to embrace the ‘local’ by recognising the symbolic synergies (economic, social, and ecological) that exist between local and developing world producers.¹¹⁵ These symbolic synergies (usually related to price reduction as a consequence of power in

¹¹⁵ These tensions could be attributed to Fairtrade Towns experiencing what Amin (2004 a) refers to as the *‘mainstream view of cities and regions,’* a view that considers territory, local economic systems and regimes of regulation as *‘a place called home.’*

the supply chain) have been identified as helping build the validity of the Fairtrade Towns movement through contextualising local issues to those of producer communities in the developing world, creating what Amin (2004) refers to as ‘*spaces of emotional attachment*’ that are subsequently used to develop marketing communication discourse.

“They have raised, not just the profile of Fairtrade, but they’ve raised an understanding of the wider issues, within their community, and they’ve done it very cleverly by linking Fairtrade with the locale. When they started their campaign at that time when there was a foot and mouth crisis in Cumbria, and communities were terribly badly affected, and this particular group decided that they would draw wherever they could, parallels between the problems of local farmers here and farmers in developing countries. And so they sang right from the start, from the hymn sheet, if you like, of Fairtrade local, and this earned them enormous credibility and respect.”

NGO Worker (Keswick)

This approach can be witnessed in the marketing communications of many Fairtrade Towns across the UK. For example, in Wales, Fairtrade Towns have been encouraged to actively promote the slogan ‘*Use Your LOAF*’ an acronym for local organic and Fairtrade (Fair Trade Wales, 2011).

“I believe that, particularly in the context of emerging awareness, of climate change, sustainability and so on, that we absolutely have to be talking about Fairtrade and local. You know, if we’re going to talk about sustainable local economies, we’re going to talk about sustainable domestic farming, then we as Fairtrade campaigners, within a bigger picture have to be talking about Fairtrade and local.”

NGO Worker (Keswick)

4.3.5 Validity through the Other: Social Movements and Causes

Connecting the Fairtrade message to agendas pursued by other social movements appears to play a role in augmenting the validation of most Fairtrade Towns. Many members are linked in to other social movements that are strongly associated with campaigning that encompasses issues that have strong relationships with the ‘triple bottom line’ of sustainability.¹¹⁶ It is not uncommon therefore, for Fairtrade Town group members to be active in social movements that campaign to improve the

¹¹⁶ See figures 3.0 Sustainable Development Three Interdependent Goals

environment (Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Transition Towns etc.), alleviate third world debt (Make Poverty History), use more local and organic produce (Slow Food Movement, Friends of the Earth, Transition Towns) and human rights (Amnesty International). The Fairtrade Towns movement has developed strong synergies with these causes by identifying Fairtrade's relevance in the various contexts of other social movements. Participants proudly identify their links with other social movements indicating that the validity of these 'other' social movements carry their own symbolic associations that have helped augment Fairtrade Towns' marketing dynamics. It is therefore indicated that the Fairtrade Towns movement has developed a symbolic association with other social movements and the value that is symbolically ascribed to them, in part, is believed to have helped germinate ideas and concepts around Fairtrade that relate to its wider impact and associations to the 'triple bottom line of sustainability' and social justice.¹¹⁷

"Friends of the Earth complement, I think, anything to do with organic gardening usually complements. I think you can think like the local Amnesty group, I think that complements as well, because I think that it's about human rights and of course it's about the human right to a sustainable living."
Volunteer (Bridgenorth)

This is indicated by Fairtrade Town members attempting to construct more systemic and valid marketing propositions in different settings enabling the context of other social movements' agendas to validate and expand the Fairtrade Town beyond a single agenda movement. The Fairtrade Town, for some, appears to have morphed into a multi-agenda movement whose members promote sustainability through Fairtrade consumption gaining validity for its activities through the symbolic value ascribed to other social movements.¹¹⁸ The value of this link with other social movements is additionally credited with providing an opportunity to contextualise the message of Fairtrade consumption with reference to the agenda of other social movements that campaign for sustainability and social justice, once again expanding upon Low & Davenport's (2009.102) 'variation' of affinity marketing.

¹¹⁷ As described in detail in figure 3.2 Fair Trade : Sustainable Consumption

¹¹⁸ Fairtrade Towns' ability to link with other social/ economic and ecological movements has helped establish their activities as part of another rapidly emerging academic field; sustainable place. Whilst Fairtrade Towns appear suitable to be conceptualised as a part of a 'sustainable place,' further exploration down this academic pathway is well beyond the scope and remit of this study. It is recommended that this line of enquiry and the academic lens of a suitable place may prove to serve as an interesting Fairtrade Town study in its own right.

“I was in the world development movement, Greenpeace and all those organisations and Oxfam of course, so when Fair Trade came along it was just another piece to becoming environmental and Fair Trade fit together perfect.....That’s why I say there is a green issue, there is a core of us that really push green issues.”

Teacher (Worcester)

“I think the Transition Town is more about local produce and local relation to things and I think some of the ideas behind it are quite similar to Fairtrade ideas and obviously, we can’t locally grow bananas, so if we’re going to continue to use those things then Fairtrade seems to be the answer, so certainly in terms of Fairtrade craft and some of the ideas in the Transition Town and the World Development Movement, all of those things are very much connected with the Fairtrade Town.”

Community Representative (Ondule)

“Christian Ecology Link, and other organisations related to work, because my interest is environmental, it overlaps a lot, there are a lot of environmental forums in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot I’m involved in, voluntary sector stuff, lots of environmental stuff. It’s quite interesting being involved in Fair Trade and environmental stuff because they are different people, although most of the Fair Trade people are interested in environmental issues, but they have decided for their own reasons to be more Fair Trade-focused and environmental people will be interested in Fair Trade issues, but choose to be more environmentally focused. So it’s quite a lot of overlap of the different things.”

Trade Craft Rep (Swansea)

4.3.6 Validity through the Other: The Producer

Fairtrade producers’ ability to personally validate the developmental benefits of Fairtrade consumption (through their own lived experiences) is held by members of the Fairtrade Towns movement with unequivocal reverence. The Fairtrade Towns movement is understood to have made maximum use of Southern producers within their locality to ‘*tell their story.*’ It is widely believed that the symbolic interaction between Southern producers and Northern consumer communities makes the Fairtrade message more ‘*real*’ and subsequently helps to underline the validity of what the Fairtrade Towns movement is attempting to achieve.

“We had a partner from overseas who was able to share with us what a difference Fairtrade makes to people on the ground. You know, it wasn’t just an idea in the sky, it was real and there was this person there saying Fairtrade

is making a difference to us. That is always a good influence because people can see then that what you are doing is worth doing."

NGO Worker (Carmarthen)

Fairtrade certified producer stories of developmental gain that are regularly disseminated first hand in various events and organisations in Fairtrade Towns are recognised for their ability to add a 'real' dimension to the marketing dynamics of the movement and as such, are symbolically perceived to hold great sway in validating the Fairtrade Towns campaigning credibility.

"I've been closely involved with two cocoa farmers from Ghana who visited Merthyr as part of Fairtrade Foundation producers and this year we had a banana grower from the West Indies come to Merthyr...So, speaking to them and learning directly from them has been fantastic. This year, we took the banana grower from Dominica to local schools, one of which is a Fairtrade school and one is ready to go. So she just spoke to the kids about growing bananas and how basically them buying Fairtrade products, directly improves their lives...it was great."

Sustainability Officer (Merthyr Tydfil)

"Because he's quite a charismatic speaker and has quite a presence about him and was able to link people to the sense in which, actually, the small producers in the West Indies were battling with this that and the other, he could make that connection with people."

Vicar (Hereford)

Producer tours of Fairtrade Towns appear in the main to be organised by a number of Civil Society organisations such as The Fairtrade Foundation, Fair Trade Wales, Christian Aid or Tradecraft and are symbolically recognised for their ability to make the link between producer and consumer 'real' as opposed to just depending on the symbolic act of consumption. Validity is therefore born from making Whatmore & Thorn's (1997.287) abstract spatial imagery of a 'shrinking world' a tangible reality. This is a reality that functions as a marketing dynamic where consumer and producer meet and turn a Fairtrade Town into a social gathering that gains its validity from being 'at once global and local' (Whatmore & Thorn, 1997.289). Participants recognise the validity of the producer as a marketing communications media and subsequently identify their symbolic worth as a validation of Fairtrade consumption's developmental impact. In the main, this is reported to be achieved through Fairtrade certified producers disseminating messages that build upon their personal testimonies

of positive development due to ethical consumption choice promoted by the Fairtrade Towns movement.

“what has been very, very valuable for our campaign, but in quite a unquantifiable way has been our link with a coffee farming community in Ethiopia, because that has bought the reality of the life of coffee farmers who sell into the Fairtrade market to our community. It was, in particular, when two coffee farmers came to Keswick last year that people met them and that in itself was a hugely beneficial process, not only for the coffee farmers, but also for our community and we want to build on that and we want more, and more people to participate in the experience of the link.”

NGO worker (Keswick)

4.4 Conclusion

The conceptualisation of ‘validity’ as a marketing dynamic of the Fairtrade Towns movement has been symbolically recognised through the mechanisms employed to increase the demand and supply of Fairtrade products in a given place. The Fairtrade Towns movement recognises the significant contribution product development and The Fairtrade Foundation has had on developing its validity. Participants indicate that quality improvements in Fair Trade products and the semiotic development of the Fairtrade mark have been the foundation for the movement in its campaigning and in recruiting members who are willing to participate in activities to achieve its agenda. The Fairtrade Foundation’s understanding of the value consumers put on labels is also symbolic and seen by participants as a key validation requirement that helped the Fairtrade Towns movement succeed in breeding a confidence in its members to go out and champion Fairtrade in their ‘own back yard.’ Significance is given to the symbolic importance participants pay to consumer acceptance, recognising that The Fairtrade Foundation and its validation of Fair Trade through labelling was a necessity for the movement to flourish. Data suggests that the Fairtrade Towns movement needed the support of the previous marketing functions of the Fairtrade Foundation in order to motivate participation and help the Fairtrade Towns movement present a valid marketing proposition that they themselves believed in from the perspective of an activist and a consumer. In light of the significance attributed to the Fairtrade Foundation as an agent central to the validity of the Fairtrade Towns movement, the conditions attributed to them have been conceptualised as ‘intrinsic conditions’ without which the movement’s validity would possibly be questionable.

However, it is not just the ‘intrinsic conditions’ generated by the Fairtrade Foundation that provide Fairtrade Towns with validity in promoting Fairtrade. This chapter identifies that the Fairtrade Town has utilised the symbolic value of others to the benefit of the movement’s agenda. Individuals who are engaged in the movement have gifted Fairtrade Towns their social capital that is credited with providing additional means of validating the activities and agenda of the Fairtrade Town. In addition, organisations who have ‘*thrown their weight behind*’ Fairtrade appear to have augmented the validity of Fairtrade Towns through the symbolic value people assign to them. Fairtrade Towns also identify the value of their place’s social capital to help validate their function in promoting and developing Fairtrade consumption in their town.

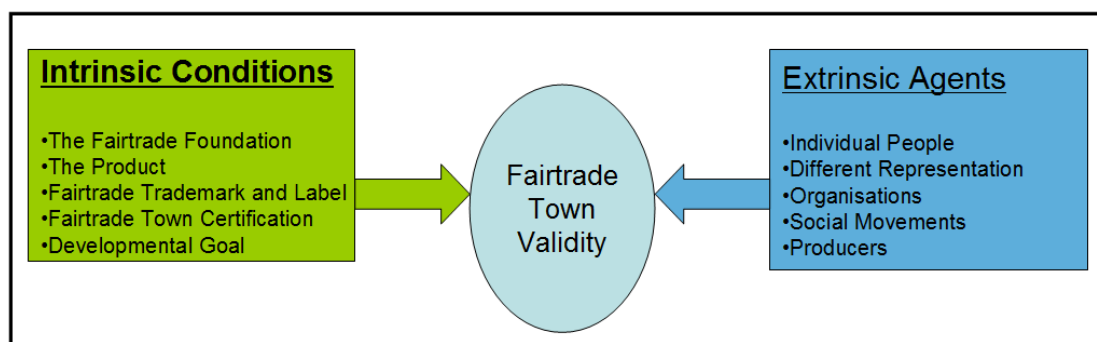
The symbolic social value ascribed to individuals and organisations within a particular place is recognised as valid media in their own right. Such media are recognised as providing symbolic validity in the community, a validity that is perceived to validate further the marketing activities of Fairtrade Towns. In addition, other social movements have been recognised for their synergistic qualities and ability to add validity to the aims of the Fairtrade Town. In addition to utilising a place’s specific resources (people or organisations) to increase the validity of a Fairtrade Town, it also is credited for its ability to introduce consumers to producers and provide ‘real life stories’ that can further validate the consumption of Fairtrade products. It is therefore suggested that the Fairtrade Towns movement has generated a marketing dynamic of extrinsic validity by utilising the strengths, backgrounds, skills, situations and symbolic value of the other.

These findings add empirical evidence to Nicholls & Opal’s (2005) understanding of actor network theory functioning as a key place-based marketing dynamic for Fair Trade. Empirical interpretation resulting from this study recognises key entities or nodes in the actor network of a Fairtrade Town (such as people and places) take symbolic form resulting from their interactions, just as Nicholls & Opal (2005) argue. Prevailing interactions which ‘*zig zag*’ (Latour 2005.75) between people and people, and people and places not only function as key message disseminators and product distributors in Fairtrade Towns but also prove to generate many different positive

attributes ascribed to ‘validity’ as outlined in this chapter. Through empirical analysis the attribute of validity resulting from interactions that exist in Fairtrade Towns clearly subscribes to Law’s (199.39) portrayal of actor network theory as a *‘ruthless application of semiotics.’* Validity conceptualised as a core category resulting from symbolic interactions existing in Fairtrade Towns is therefore presented as a key attribute used by, and associated with, the marketing dynamic of Fairtrade Towns.

The Fairtrade Towns movement recognises the need to validate its entity for it to effectively function and achieve its developmental aims. This chapter identifies that the marketing dynamics of the Fairtrade Towns movement is dependent upon a number of intrinsic conditions centrally provided by the role of the Fairtrade Foundation. Additionally, it demonstrates how the Fairtrade town movement has developed its validity through a number of extrinsic agents conceptualised as ‘through the other.’ These extrinsic agents are recognised as representations developed through the symbolic interaction one has with other people, organisations and social movements. Through this symbolic interaction, the perceived validity of individual people, organisations and social movements is extrinsically associated to the activities of a Fairtrade Town and, as such, are recognised for playing a role in extrinsically validating the marketing dynamics of Fairtrade Towns. Fig 4.0 (*Validity in the Fairtrade Towns movement*) demonstrates the intrinsic conditions and extrinsic agents the Fairtrade Towns movement ‘itself’ has recognised as validating its identity and functions within the context of its role to promote and develop Fairtrade consumption in a given town.

Fig 4.0 Validity in the Fairtrade Towns movement



Validity is argued to exist as a result of the interactions of an actor network and is found to contribute to the '*mass of currents*' (Whatmore & Thorne, 1997. 290), that have enabled Fairtrade Towns to confidently develop their place-based marketing dynamic. Fairtrade Towns' ability to gain validity from both the intrinsic and extrinsic sources identified in this chapter (see Fig 4.0) appear to afford the movement a foundation to instil confidence and ability to utilize '*place belonging*' (Malpass et al. 1997), as central to its marketing dynamic. The deployment of place in a Fairtrade Town's marketing dynamic is conceptualised further in the findings of this study as 'marketing through the pluralities of place' and is explored in depth in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Fairtrade Towns: Marketing Through the Pluralities of Place

Chapter 5: Fairtrade Towns: Marketing Through the Pluralities of Place

5.0 Introduction

All Fairtrade Towns carry the place name they represent, for example, Carmarthenshire Fairtrade Steering Group, Garstang; the World's First Fairtrade Town and Cardiff; the World's first Fairtrade Capital City. Place names contextualised in the discourse of this study emerge to represent existing surroundings and settings of social interaction¹¹⁹ Furthermore, they are credited with developing a marketing infrastructure capable of promoting and increasing Fairtrade consumption in the various towns, cities and villages across the UK. The study's qualitative nature of enquiry, like Barnett et al. (2011) and Hutchens (2009), identified that participants recognised the marketing of Fairtrade as being embedded in the physical and symbolic interactions of the 'everyday routines' that exist in the established private and public places they live, work and socialise in. The marketing dynamics of a Fairtrade Town therefore demonstrate a familiarity with the work of Hutchens (2009.25) who conceptualises this process as a group-centred and process-orientated dynamic born from a '*Power with.*' 'Power with,' Hutchens (2009.25) argues, derives from establishing connections in interconnected social units (families, friends, workplaces or organisations) to create opportunities for '*expanding and nurturing a supported philosophy.*' This is a philosophy that is based upon a Fairtrade Town's marketing dynamic that seeks to promote and develop opportunities to increase Fairtrade consumption from within 'their place.'

Malpass et al.'s (2007.634) understanding that Fairtrade Towns deploy place in the role of '*mobilizing device for collective action*' clearly displays an emergent abstract understand of the role of 'place' in the Fairtrade Towns movement. However, data from this study further contextualises the role of place in the marketing dynamic of Fairtrade Towns by identifying a Fairtrade Town to, what Massey (2007.184) describes as '*an arena for action to change the global.*' Place as a conceptual framework for this study, and as a Fairtrade Town has therefore emerged as a social construct (Cresswell, 2004), existing in an infrastructure of unique pluralities that

¹¹⁹ A view of place that is akin to what Amin (2004 (a).33) refers to as '*mainstream*'. Place therefore is conceptualised as '*home*' and represents '*concepts of territorial entities, local economic systems and regimes of regulation.*'

transform lived experiences and interactions into marketing dynamics woven from *'humble everyday forms of social life'* (Whatmore & Thorne, 1997. 288).

"I do think it is just to keep the issues alive in our local community, to promote the issues to as many different groups as we can... We think our role is to keep promoting it through different groups locally and to keep putting on events and just to keep the presence locally and to put pressure on any new organisations that come into the town."

Volunteer (Bridgnorth)

In recognising that the marketing dynamics of Fairtrade Towns are played out through participant ownership, symbolic interaction and lived experiences, this study's data confirms the findings of Barnett et al.(2011) and considers participation in Fairtrade Towns as much more than an act of ethical consumerism. Participants' clear understanding of *'place belonging'* (Barnett et al., 2011. 189) and being *'in place... mobilizing devices for collective action'* (Malpass et al., 2007.634), sees them aligning their actions and thoughts much closer to the conceptualisations of political consumerism (Micheletti, 2003; Clarke et al., 2007; Nicholls, 2010), consumer citizenship (Dickinson 1996. McGregor, 2002; Seyfang, 2005), and community-based social marketing (Mckenzie-Mohr, 2000 and Mckenzie-Mohr & Smith, 1999). Just as Barnett et al.'s (2011) research suggests, Fairtrade Towns in this study also demonstrate themselves as an arena of consumer citizenship by moving beyond the traditional marketing paradigms of promoting to individuals, through developing and promoting activities that exist in the everyday actions that occur in collective public places.

"More broadly and probably more significantly, it's about raising awareness of Fairtrade across different sectors to consumers and schools, community groups in colleges, to help people to be more aware of what they need to drink or be more aware about harmful and beneficial effects."

University Chaplin (Carmarthen)

However, furthering the work of Barnet et al. (2011), Fairtrade Towns in this study also demonstrated an application of community-based social marketing as participants were consistent in emphasising the importance of personal contact and social support (Mckenzie-Mohr & Smith, 1999; Hutchens, 2009), to be able to deploy its marketing dynamics.

"I would say our main role is to promote and encourage people to promote the use of Fairtrade whenever possible. I think that's it in a nutshell."

Student (Carmarthen)

The prevailing marketing dynamic of the Fairtrade Towns movement is therefore recognised by participants for its attempts to converge the pluralities of place to the plight of developing world producer communities through the bonds of Fairtrade consumption. This place-based dynamic shows evidence of Fairtrade Towns understanding the '*spatiality of globalisation*' (Amin 2002.34) as their activities are understood to stretch and deepen social relations across space and time (between producer and consumer) through day-to-day activities (Fairtrade consumption) that influence events on the other side of the world (Held, 1995).¹²⁰

"I think its promoting awareness of Fairtrade and justice in trade relationships. Pointing out to people questions about where our food comes from or where our clothes are made and the conditions they are produced in effect the livelihood of many people whose names you don't know and lives we are ignorant of. It's the first step towards a wider understanding of the need for justice in the trade relationships. Try to raise peoples' awareness and try to realise that their choices can affect the lives and livelihoods of lots of other people."

Community Representative (Ondule)

Central to the perceived success of this 'convergence' is participants' recognition that lived experiences within a particular place can be used to contextualise and create dynamic marketing functions from everyday life that exist in the private micro and public meso level places that socially construct a Fairtrade Town. Pluralities of place subsequently, are conceptualised from the private micro and public meso places active in the marketing dynamics of Fairtrade Towns. They also build upon previous conceptualisations of Fairtrade Towns presented by Alexander & Nicholls (2006.8) who recognise them as; '*geographical spaces and identities becoming interwoven in the meanings that define fair trade marketing at a civic level.*'

"Fairtrade towns has made it easier you might say, to be part of a local campaign, you can actually feed into it, there's an identity there, you know, and that's the strengths of it, that's what's really made it, what it is, I'm quite sure, that's what's made it popular."

¹²⁰ Whatmore & Thorne (1997.292) would further conceptualise Fairtrade Towns as understanding their ability to '*act at a distance*' through global networks.

Sustainability Centre Manager (Swansea)

These findings also further contextualise Malpass et al.'s (2007) suggestion that Fairtrade Town campaigning '*gets into place*' as is evident in the different pluralities of a Fairtrade Town that are frequently recognised in the data as ten distinct abstract 'places.' These places are identified in the data for their marketing activities that demonstrate a commitment to advancing Fairtrade promotion and consumption in, and through, their day-to-day social and operational practices. The ten pluralities of place that enable the existence of a Fairtrade Town are identified as:

1. The private places of family and friendship
2. Places of education
3. Places of civic authority
4. Places of worship
5. Civil society
6. Community groups
7. The high street
8. Community events
9. Landscapes/townscapes
10. Representations of place (literature and copy)

Building on Malpass et al.'s (2007.634) suggestion that Fairtrade towns are a campaigning mechanism '*through which place can be mobilized for collective action,*' this chapter aims to conceptualise the marketing function of the identified pluralities of place. It presents an empirical understanding of how place has been organised, developed and arranged at a macro and meso level to function as a key marketing dynamic to advance Fairtrade promotion and consumption. The chapter recognises that the variety of interactions resulting from the 'pluralities of place' of a Fairtrade Town represents and becomes its key marketing dynamic. Subsequently, it presents an empirical insight informed by the theoretical position of symbolic interactionism to determine how Fairtrade Towns have attempted to apply pressure and support to

develop Fairtrade consumption from a '*placement of practice*' (Amin, 2002.391)¹²¹ within the everyday lived experience that socially constructs it.

"What a Fairtrade Town tries to do and I think, to an extent, succeeds to do is by putting the five goals together it actually reaches out to the whole community not just to a part of it.... It involves the whole community; each community has to do what is so special about their community."

NGO Worker (Keswick)

"Cardiff is a also a small and friendly city and I think it links well into that image and the fact that the group was started by so many different people from across the city not just the council people but local organisations and individuals, shows that it's a city that is, sort of leading the way in, sort of ethical consumption and it's a great thing to put on a flag as well."

Student Union (Cardiff)

A Fairtrade Town's ability to develop its marketing dynamics through the pluralities of place emerges as being shaped by the form and functioning of the Fairtrade Town steering group.

5.1 The Fairtrade Town Steering Group

Despite recognition of the role the activists (Brown, 2011), normal people (Lamb 2008), social capital (Davies & Ryals, 2010), networks (Davies 2009), consumer involvement (Dubuisson-Quellier & Lamine, 2008; Alexander & Nicholls 2006), social movements (Wilkinson 2007), stakeholders (Davies, 2007) and even the Fairtrade Town (Nicholls & Opel, 2005; and Barnett et al., 2011) play in the success stories of Fairtrade, only one paper at the time of writing (Malpass et al., 2007) explicitly mentions the Fairtrade Town steering group. This is a surprising omission given the emerging importance attributed to them in this study and their necessity to form and stay active in order to become or maintain Fairtrade Town status.

"We have to maintain the 5 goals and improve on them, so if we lose our steering group, we cease to fill the criteria for the fifth goal, which is having a steering group, so if we don't have a steering group, if I stand down and there is no chair, and there is no steering group, we cease to become a Fairtrade town, simple as that... .It's the job of the steering group is to make sure we continue to show improvement."

Teacher (Garstang)

¹²¹ Placement of practice is presented by Amin (2002) as the folding of things in the human world resulting from interactions between things and bodies that are placed in particular locations.

The Function of the Fairtrade Town steering group is recognised for its ability to link Fair Trade ideology and the work of the Fairtrade Foundation to the '*day-to-day changes*' that can be made at a '*local level*' to increase the understanding and consumption of Fairtrade. This recognition suggests that Fairtrade Towns understand their role in influencing '*placements of practice*' Amin (2002.391) to develop social interactions in particular places for the purpose of promoting and consuming more Fairtrade products.

"I see the role of the steering group as being that intermediate between high level stuff and on the ground stuff, because that is the only way things are going to change."

University Chaplin (Carmarthen)

"To raise awareness for Fairtrade and how you can change trading patterns with other less developed countries."

Social Enterprise Manager (Cardiff)

Narratives that emerged from the data represent a belief that steering groups are the catalyst for any Fairtrade Town's success. Steering groups are subsequently identified as the '*instigators of action*,' connecting the macro level ideology and certified products of the Fairtrade Foundation with the micro and meso day-to-day life that exists within the social confines of their 'place.' These findings build a strong case for viewing this process as the result of actor network theory and support the work of Nicholls & Opal (2005) and Alexander & Nicholls (2006) who suggest that geographical spaces at a community and civic level have become interwoven into Fairtrade marketing. Further recognition was also afforded to steering group members who were credited with the responsibility for achieving the objective of increasing '*awareness*,' '*knowledge*' and '*consumption*' of Fairtrade in their '*own back yard*.'

"To get people in the community involved in Fairtrade and to raise their awareness of Fairtrade and to ensure there is more Fairtrade goods in the shops and being used by the community."

NGO Worker (Carmarthen)

The steering group as an entity was occasionally referred to as the '*engine*' of any Fairtrade Town and just as Lamb (2008.42) describes the powers of the unique alliances of organised consumers and producers as '*the beating heart of Fairtrade*,'

participants appeared keen to be recognised in the same symbolic way. The narrative cultural norms outlined by the executive director of the Fairtrade Foundation appear to have permeated into a form of self-recognition and identity leading to steering groups being frequently identified in interviews as ‘*the beating heart of the Fairtrade Town.*’ Fairtrade Town steering group activity is therefore recognised as manifesting itself in creating, developing and deploying marketing functions and dynamics aimed at achieving greater awareness, knowledge and consumption of Fairtrade within a given place name. In essence therefore, a key component of the marketing dynamic of a Fairtrade Town is recognised and determined by ‘ownership’ of the marketing function. Narratives in the data signify that, in part, the marketing function of the Fairtrade Foundation and the certified products that carry its label have been relinquished to the ‘*concerned citizens*’ who make up the Fairtrade Town steering group.¹²²

Consumer sovereignty and the power ascribed to ‘new consumers’ is increasingly playing a pivotal role in most organisations’ marketing dynamics through the active pursuit of developing ever more active ‘mavens’ (Feick and Price, 1987; Walsh et al., 2004; Lewis & Bridge, 2001), nudgers, (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008), and diffusion strategies (Rogers, 1962). However, the activities of Fairtrade Towns present a further shift in consumer engagement in the marketer dynamic, creating what Low & Davenport (2006:325), conceptualise as ‘*social change.*’

This study indicates that Fairtrade Towns’ acceptance of empowerment in the marketing dynamic is played out through steering groups interpreting, owning, designing and executing Fairtrade marketing strategies within the social confines of their ‘place.’

Such activity demonstrates once again a commonality with, and a fusion of, previous work presented on politicised consumers (Micheletti, 2003; Clarke et al., 2007; Nicholls, 2010) and community-based social marketing (Mckenzie-Mohr, 2000 and Mckenzie-Mohr & Smith, 1999).

¹²² Concerned citizens is a phrase taken directly from the data and one that could be interpreted as a transformation of the individual ethical consumer into a consumer citizen who becomes more involved in the life and concerns of one’s community (McGregor, 2002).

“I think there is a kind of ownership of the whole notion of Fairtrade and the whole agenda of activities that we’re involved in, so again that’s a kind of quality thing, it’s a quality thing and it’s a depth thing.”

Retired (Millum)

Research discourse acknowledges that the individuals who make up Fairtrade Town steering groups take on the role of *‘local marketers’* and *‘information brokers’* for the Fairtrade Foundation and Fairtrade certified products.¹²³ In undertaking such a duty, participants identified with their application of what Barnett et al. (2011.23) describe as their *‘thicker personal identities’* that became used to help engage their micro and meso level social capital in the marketing process of Fairtrade Towns (Halpen, 2006; Clarke et al., 2007). Consequently, it is the dynamism of the group in understanding and connecting the pluralities of their *‘place’* that appears to be the context upon which the marketing functions of a Fairtrade Town are sought to be *‘in-situated.’* The dynamism of Fairtrade Towns therefore supports Hutchens’ (2009.80) suggestion that a *‘resources-deficient group’* can exert considerable power *‘through strategic networking that engages those necessary and the numbers necessary to trigger change.’*

5.2 Plurality 1: The Private Place of Family and Friendship

At the micro level, there is a clear view that a steering group member’s social capital, attained through both close bonds such as family and close friends, and bridges to friends and acquaintances (Putman, 2000), creates social places of innumerable interactions (Amin, 2002), where the message of Fairtrade consumption becomes the context of social and symbolic interaction. These views both support and develop upon the work of Nicholls and Opal (2005) who were the first to recognise the role of social capital in Fair Trade marketing.

“I use every opportunity I can to talk about it to other people.”

¹²³ The identified fusion of politicised consumption and social marketing that has emerged from the Fairtrade Foundation’s empowerment of Fairtrade Towns ironically points to what could be conceptualised as a Marxist approach to marketing. Conceptualising Fairtrade Towns as a Marxist approach to marketing comes from a well-established discourse that pronounces that the main economic power shaping today’s Western societies is consumption and consumerism, see for example Jackson (2006 & 2009). Therefore, the devolution of power of certain marketing functions to Fairtrade Town steering groups appears to manifest itself comfortably in a Marxist context.

Community Representative (Ondoul)

Within their private place it is common for participants to recall various formats of interaction amongst close family, friends and acquaintances that have afforded them the ability to *'broker information'* and market the benefits of Fairtrade consumption. Narratives in the data indicate various dynamics of social interactions that are enacted to become one of the vehicles used by the Fairtrade Towns movement to market Fairtrade consumption at a micro level. The many forms of social and symbolic interaction members have, with and amongst, family, friends and acquaintances is thus accepted to act as an opportunity to increase awareness, education and consumption of Fairtrade amongst those who construct the bonds, build the bridges and provide the links that constitute partaking individuals' social capital.

"I think with Fairtrade, as a whole, it's to continue to promote and to continue to purchase the products and to continue to encourage other colleagues, family and friends to keep purchasing Fairtrade products and not to let it slide."

Student (Carmarthen)

The bonds, bridges and links that exist within Fairtrade Town steering groups are therefore recognised as a key part of the marketing communication strategy deployed by Fairtrade Towns. Fairtrade Town steering group members showed they are receptive to introducing the dual benefits of Fairtrade consumption as a quality consumer product and tool for international development into the important and banal day-to-day conversations and *'things they do'* with family, friends and associates. This is very reminiscent of the findings of Barnett et al. (2011) in relation to politicised consumers. Promoting Fairtrade consumption through everyday conversations and *'things they do'* is judged and conceptualised from the data as steering group members using the right moments of interaction to pressure or support their micro level social connections into the act of Fairtrade consumption.

"All the time to the point of badgering people sometimes... With my family it was a bit more of an uphill struggle, but I pushed it to the fact that even my ninety year old grandmother will seek out a Fairtrade product in a supermarket above anything else because she recognises the idea behind it. The big leaps that have come on in the last few years with regards to availability have made it an awful lot easier for them to be able to do that sort of thing."

Participants show a willingness and ability to use the resulting ‘places’ of their micro level social capital to market Fairtrade consumption. Such an approach has been recognised through activities that move beyond traditional marketing theories associated with word-of-mouth, mavens, nudging and diffusion, but shares more in common with community-based social marketing. Mckenzie-Mohr & Smith (1999.96) suggest that: *‘The adoption of new behaviours, such as recycling and composting, frequently occurs as a result of friends, family members or colleagues introducing us to them.’* Fairtrade Towns demonstrate an understanding of the importance of such a process and this has led to the application of a marketing dynamic that uses both ‘pressure and support’ that is deployed through the vehicle of steering group members’ social capital in five distinct ways:

1. The art of conversation
2. The giving of gifts
3. Symbolic displays and fetishisation
4. Self-identity and symbolic interactions
5. Bridging the powerful

“We’re always nudging and pushing, trying to encourage. It’s encouraging through people you know.”

Self Employed (Worcester)

5.2.1 The Art of Conversation

Conversations that exist between steering group members and their close (micro) social connections are commonly referred to as marketing dynamics in their own right. Narratives in the data suggest that Fairtrade Towns make every effort to embrace the social capital of their steering group as a vehicle to create numerous opportunities where conversations can be transformed into word-of-mouth marketing and social learning. Conversations witnessed and described, appear to have suggested a number of distinct properties that are used to put pressure on recipients. Firstly, consumer-led conversations, best conceptualised as word-of-mouth marketing are often centred around the quality of Fairtrade products and the ease of brand switching.

Secondly, more ideological conversations are also instigated around the developmental agenda of Fairtrade consumption. These conversations are best conceptualised as social learning as their desired outcome is to engage in the debate around the existing ills of free trade or to make recipients aware of the various developmental success stories resulting from Fairtrade consumption. The various dynamics and differing contexts of these conversations indicate steering group members' understanding of both the importance and context of their social connections in helping them determine the context upon which their micro level conversations can be transformed into marketing opportunities for the Fairtrade Towns movement. These findings demonstrate an appreciation of using the common daily function of conversation as an effective marketing dynamic that attempts to draw upon personal influences to create a space for informal learning and word-of-mouth marketing to take place (Jeffs et al., 1999; Lubke, 2006; Lewis & Bridger, 2001).

“As an individual, I tend to go around enthusing people and I’m one of these people that wherever I go and if I tend to see people drinking Nescafe or not Fairtrade goods I will point out about the other goods and ask people why they are not using Fairtrade goods.”

Student (Carmarthen)

“I went out for dinner last night and talked about Fairtrade chocolate and Fairtrade coffee, and immediately I got a reaction and I knew it would prompt a reaction.”

Soroptimist (Garstang)

The art of conversation demonstrated in the activities of Fairtrade Towns is not unique by any means and appears to resemble well-documented, but perhaps under-conceptualised, acts of ethical, political or citizen consumption previously researched.¹²⁴ It is also something observed within community-based social marketing (Mckenzie-Mohr, 2000; Mckenzie-Mohr & Smith, 1999:102) and its application to foster sustainable behaviours in which social marketers are advised to ‘*where possible, use personal social contact to deliver your message.*’

¹²⁴ See for example the work of Jackson (2005 & 2006); Lubke, (2006); Micheletti (2003); Sayfang (2005) Barnett et al., (2011) and McGregor (2002).

5.2.2 The Giving of Gifts

Research for this study indicates a strong possibility that close family and friends of participants in Fairtrade Towns have received, or will in the future receive, a Fairtrade gift. Important days in the social calendar (such as birthdays, Easter and Christmas) appear to provide an opportunity to change the context upon which participants would normally give a gift. The giving of gifts by Fairtrade town participants is potentially moved from the traditional idea of giving what the recipient may want or desire to an opportunity to further promote Fairtrade certified products, or to combine the two. It is evident in the data that Fairtrade gifts, just like any other gifts, '*communicate meaning and emotion*,' Gabriel & Lang (2006.54) suggest however that in Fairtrade Towns the process is also credited with becoming an opportunity to further promote Fairtrade certified products.

"I do badger people a lot and they all get Fairtrade presents for Christmas and their birthdays because I like to think that it keeps it in their minds like that. Even my Mum will go into Marks and Spencer's and buy the Fairtrade tea which is I think was a milestone for myself."

Student Union (Cardiff)

Data indicates that participants who give Fairtrade gifts consider the action as having the potential to introduce members of their close social network directly to Fairtrade products in the hope that such introductions may result in further Fairtrade consumption by the recipients of the gift. These findings show a consistency with the work of Brown (2011) in participants' understanding the symbolic power of Fairtrade goods as gifts as powerful mechanisms to create further conversation and expose people to the ethos of the Fair Trade movement. However, despite such optimism amongst research participants Brown (2011.136) provides a precautionary sting in the tail by suggesting that the moral imperative of Fair Trade is '*less likely to pass on to the recipient*' of Fairtrade gifts.

Despite Brown's precautionary warning, what is significant is the rapid growth in Fairtrade product ranges and the strategic commitment shown by organisations such as Divine to product development relevant to the gift market. What is therefore pertinent in this study is the notion that both Fairtrade companies and Fairtrade Town participants appear to follow the findings of Gabriel & Lang (2006.54), who remind

us that: *'Gifts must not be regarded as a small class object and exchanges at the margins of consumption. From the 'treats' indulged by parents in deserving children, to flower bouquets dispatched by inter-flora, to the purchasing of rounds of drink or the holding of parties, to corporate hospitality, to the generalised consumer delirium as Christmas approaches, gifts are an important feature of Western culture and a cardinal feature of many others.'*

5.2.3 Symbolic Displays and Fetishisation

The symbolic displays one communicates when consuming Fairtrade in a social setting, such as dining out or generally eating and drinking when in the company of others, is credited in the context of Fairtrade Towns as being an opportunity to promote Fairtrade. The visual display of Fairtrade products, whether during consumption or in the demonstration of their packaging in the home suggests that participants understand the marketing value of symbolic displays and the fetishised meaning ascribed to Fairtrade certified products. Data for this study indicates the importance and development upon what Wright (2004) and Goodman's (2004) have identified as the *'fetishised meaning'* of Fairtrade. Their suggestion that Fairtrade products are laden with fetishised meaning is witnessed in action, transforming a number of participant's social and symbolic interactions into marketing opportunities. Recognition is given to the power of visually displaying Fairtrade products in the home. The display of Fairtrade wine bottles, coffee jars, bananas etc are considered as opportunities to *'fly the flag'* of Fairtrade within the confines of one's home to family, friends and associates who may visit. The use of Fairtrade products in this way appears to identify with a belief that they can become valued as much for their function of promotion as consumption. Fairtrade Towns appear to bear witness to the practical application of Wright (2004) and Goodman's (2004) contextualisation of Fair Trade fetishisation. The data bears witness to participant understanding and accepting that the application of their own fetishisation of Fairtrade products has become a marketing dynamic born from the social and symbolic interactions that happen within the confines of their own home.

"People can see Fairtrade tea and coffee in the house but when I've had my stall, I've handed out a few free samples to my family which has gone down well and on a personal level I'll say...have you tried this? It's quite good stuff and my mother-in-law likes Fairtrade cookies."

Implied in the research discourse is an understanding that central to the process of Fairtrade product fetishisation and the marketing significance attributed to the symbolic displays of Fairtrade product is the visibility and widespread recognition attributed to the Fairtrade label. The material symbolism consumers afford to the label outlined in the work of Connolly & Shaw (2006) and Zadek et al. (1998), appears to further resonate in Fairtrade Towns. This study bears witness to an implied understanding that the Fairtrade label is the instrument that allows Fairtrade Town participants to fetishise Fairtrade products for the purpose of ‘at home’ promotion and self identity.¹²⁵ The activity of fetishisation in Fairtrade Towns demonstrates the movement’s belief in that we learn from observing others and base our behaviour on what they do or don’t do (Jackson, 2004).

5.2.4 Self Identity and Symbolic Interactionism

Identity through consumption is a well-documented theory¹²⁶ and this study is no exception. Fairtrade Town members’ attempts to ensure that Fairtrade ‘*can be embedded in what you do,*’ played out in the frequency of everyday social events appears to have helped to reinforce, and perhaps more pertinently develop upon, pre-existing notions of identity and consumption. Fairtrade Town participants recollect that the process of embedding Fairtrade in ‘*what you do,*’ has led to a change in the dynamic of many ‘*normal*’ interactions they have with people in their close and wider social network.

Participants recall various symbolic interactions that have resulted from prior recognition of their engagement in Fairtrade Town activities and their own personal consumption habits. What is significant is how Fairtrade Town participant’s actions in their town take on symbolic significance and play a role in generating conversations and acting as a symbolic reminder of Fairtrade consumption in their own right.

¹²⁵ These findings add empirical insight and develop on Hutchens’ (2009:44) claim that consumers’ homes have become ‘*saturated with brand logo.*’ The suggestion that such a saturation becomes used for Fairtrade marketing communication purposes that presents an ‘*idealised version of reality.*’

¹²⁶ See for example Gabriel & Lang (2006); Jackson (2005, 2006, 2009); Connolly & Prothero (2003).

“I was on a question time panel in our Church on Sunday night and I was introduced as the chairperson of the local Fairtrade town steering group and the vicar who was doing the introduction also said that I act as his conscience when it comes to things like this and somebody else made the same point. So I think people are aware that I’m very keen on the whole idea behind Fairtrade and so I talk about it whenever I can.”

Community Representative (Ondoul)

It is therefore possible to conceptualise that Fairtrade Town participants, when interacting with their own social network as being in some way symbolically ‘branded’ with the Fairtrade label, enough for it to start a conversation, require justifications or answer questions all related to Fairtrade consumption. As a result, some members recall various symbolic interactions with people in their close and wider social network that have:

- Positively questioned the products they receive from them. *‘I hope this is Fairtrade?’*
- Proudly informed them that the products they are being offered are Fairtrade. *‘This is Fairtrade!’*
- Questioned the products members consume. *‘Hope that’s Fairtrade?’*
- Asked. *‘Where can I get Fairtrade.....?’*

“The decorators came in and you know, and I sort of said help yourself to tea and coffee, ‘it is all Fairtrade of course?’ they asked. But that wouldn’t have happened five years ago...there’s no package there to show, they’re all in jars, but it is all Fairtrade.”

Chairman of Fairtrade Town (Garstang)

Facing and answering these conversations and questions is recognised as a possibility to further cement one’s ability to promote Fairtrade and support those who wish to ‘do more.’

At a micro level, participants identify the bonds, bridges and links of their social capital as a prevailing context upon which subtle, yet sophisticated marketing dynamics are played out. The symbolic interaction that results between Fairtrade Town steering group members and their close family and friends is recognised for its ability to set the context upon which the benefits of Fairtrade consumption can be

brokered. Information brokering resulting from the consequence of such interaction subsequently appears to have been developed into forms of ‘pressure and support’ channelled through one’s social network with the aim of developing Fairtrade consumption and understanding. The various activities of pressure and support identified as mechanisms for marketing Fairtrade at a micro level can be conceptualised as Fairtrade Town participants exacting light pressure on their close social network. Light pressure is understood to positively influence people by *‘helping them’* understand the consequences of Fairtrade consumption at a macro level and to conform to the desired behaviour prevalent in a Fairtrade Town. In addition to applying light pressure, Fairtrade Town participants also identify with being placed in situations which are better conceptualised as supportive. Participants are receptive to *‘helping’* answer questions posed by those in their close social network about product availability, quality and Fairtrade aims; a process that resembles word-of-mouth (Alexander & Nicholls, 2006; Lewis & Bridger, 2001) and social learning (Jackson, 2004; Lubke, 2006) marketing activity.

Significance in these findings resonates in a Fairtrade Town’s ability to mobilise micro level social capital to connect the marketing dynamics of Fairtrade to the private place of family and friendship active in the micro marketing dynamic of Fairtrade Towns. However, Fairtrade Towns’ ability to expand the pluralities of place from a micro ‘private place’ to meso level public places (previously mentioned) reveals itself as the key to identifying the unique marketing dynamic of this movement. Hutchens (2009.83) conceptualises this process as *‘networking networks,’* suggesting that the Fair Trade movement has benefited from *‘rapidly achieving scale by networking social networks to spread the fair trade message’* at a meso level.

5.3 Bridging the Meso.

Fairtrade Town participants’ social capital is additionally recognised for its ability to ‘bridge’ the Fairtrade Town function with people who can *‘get things done,’ ‘open doors’* or *‘provide help and assistance.’* These findings support an understanding that Fairtrade Town participants value the potential of ‘distant acquaintances’ (Granovetter, 1973), to further ‘bridge’ their marketing activities. It additionally resonates with the ideas of Putnam (2000.21) who reminds us that; *‘bridging networks are better for linkage to external assets and for information diffusion.’* It is common

in steering group meetings to hear members voluntarily declare their links to relevant people they may tenuously know and believe can add value to the latest activity of the Fairtrade Town. As such, prevalent in the narratives of this study are indications that the ‘distant acquaintances’ of Fairtrade Town participant’s social capital have resulted in ‘bringing in’ new people who have benefited, supported or resourced the marketing dynamic of Fairtrade Towns. The social capital of many Fairtrade Town steering groups represents a number of opportunities that have helped bridge the function of the movement to:

- People of symbolic significance such as local councillors, town mayor, MPs, MBEs, local personalities etc.
- People who belong to, work for or have strong affiliations to other organisations such as schools or churches.
- People with practical significance who may be able to access resources, use their skills for example in design or provide opportunities to professionalize and publish press releases.

*“a member of staff from ***** school, which is one of the bigger employers in town and has been very supporting in terms of printing leaflets and providing tables for Fairtrade markets and publicity.”*

Shop Owner (Cardiff)

Data suggests that whilst ‘these people’ may not always be an active presence in the Fairtrade Town steering group, access to their social, economic or personal capital has played a role in enabling and accessing the many other ‘pluralities of place’ responsible for the marketing activities carried out in Fairtrade Towns across the UK.

On a meso level, steering group members’ social capital, recognised through the bonds they have and the bridges and links they can facilitate within workplaces, organisations and their ‘place’ reveals itself as a key marketing resource for all Fairtrade Towns. Acknowledgement is afforded to Fairtrade Town participants’ affiliations and links to a variety of different organisations and groups functioning in their town. Participants acknowledge that their social capital has been used as the context to help bond and bridge the functions of a Fairtrade Town to the work of specific organisations or groups and vice versa. These activities support the work of

Hutchens (2009.85) who states; *‘individual connections and contacts in other arenas have been vital for achieving scale because they trigger new circles of enrolment in completely different or inaccessible worlds.’* Whilst it is evident to see the marketing activities of a Fairtrade Town attempting to increase individual knowledge and consumption of Fairtrade, greater significance is attributed to the role played by organisations and groups. These organisations and groups represent a meso level place-based (Fairtrade Town) marketing activity functioning in towns, cities and villages throughout the UK.

“The first thing is perhaps to bring interested groups together because you can do so much more together than separately on your own little patch. So it brings a group together so there is strength in that and then as a group you would want to promote Fairtrade as much as you can from working together.”

Shop Owner (Cardiff)

Three out of the five goals necessary to achieve Fairtrade Town status clearly direct steering groups to influence and establish organisations to engage in Fairtrade promotion, supply and consumption in a way that fits within the purpose and function of their activities. Research participants show a clear understanding of these three goals and have subsequently identified with a marketing dynamic that shifts from focusing on the individual to attempting to attract and engage the collective.

“If you can get them to see that Fairtrade is part of active citizenship, which I,s whether it’s local or global, you are much more likely to succeed, but it does involve you stretching your own imagination, to look at other peoples, not just the individual’s agenda but other organisation’s agendas.”

NGO Worker (Keswick)

In its attempts to connect people and places through the promotion and consumption of Fairtrade, recognition is given to the role that different organisations and groups can play in order to make a significant contribution to the marketing activities of a Fairtrade Town. This has resulted in the activities of relevant organisations being capitalised upon to set the context whereby organisations and groups become significant parts of the pluralities of a Fairtrade Town’s place. The ten pluralities of place identified as the conditions that have enabled the marketing dynamic of a Fairtrade Town to function and flourish identify the value of meso organisations and groups (represented in this study as pluralities 2 to 7) to the movement’s marketing

dynamic. By meso level organisations and groups *‘doing what they can,’* they have been identified as playing an active role in a number of different marketing contexts. These include supporting, educating, promoting, supplying and consuming Fairtrade products, and are subsequently recognised as major facilitators¹²⁷ in the marketing functions and dynamics evident in practice in Fairtrade Towns across the UK.

“I haven’t been asked that question before, but it is to promote the buying and the selling of Fairtrade products which means working within our community, working within our community groups as well as working with retailers and working with wholesalers, so working with the supply side and working on the demand side to promote it. To raise awareness of it, and what it does and therefore to educate the community as a whole, and to make sure also that the profile is maintained all within the context of trade justice... so that what our role is, it’s kind of nudging and shoving and talking and singing, if I can put it that way, and also getting others to do the same as well.”

NGO Worker (Keswick)

This strategy is recognised by participants to demonstrate an understanding that organisations as well as individuals are able to consume, educate, promote and supply Fairtrade products, creating what Malpass et al. (2007) refer to as *Fairtrade Urbanism*.¹²⁸ Seven different types of organisations, including some referred to as belonging to the *‘alternative high street’* (Low & Davenport 2006.325), are commonly referred to in the data, all of which demonstrate their ability to connect their day-to-day functions to the marketing agenda of a Fairtrade Town. These different types of organisations have been conceptualised as part of the pluralities of place and are represented from 2 to 8 in the resulting list on page 209.

“So I would say they switch because they are made more aware from Fairtrade Towns and campaigns, they get leaflets that make them more aware, and then they go with it because they generally support it, some of them are switching over because it’s the right thing, its good for business, or it’s good for the council image, and then it’s simply public pressure. I mean if a council believes it represents itself on behalf of serving the people, if the people support the Fairtrade Town initiative, it shows then the council should respond to the will of the people. That happens in some places and again it

¹²⁷ They may also be conceptualised as nodes in an Actor Network Theory (Nicholls & Opal, 2005)

¹²⁸ Fairtrade Urbanism (Malpass et al., 2007), conceptualise the utilisation of both people and organisations of a town to orchestrate Fairtrade marketing activities.

doesn't happen everywhere, so that's why I think...there are three ways there."

Chairman of Fairtrade Town (Garstang)

"It's about grassroots to people, it's about communities, it's about the whole community, it's not about any one part, it's not about churches, it's not about schools, it's not about councils, it's about them all coming together, so it's that community coming together and it's about people...empowering people, about education in this country, it's about empowering and education in this country."

Retired Teacher (Millum)

5.4 Plurality 2: Places of Education

Schools, colleges and universities have all been identified as places that have an ability to create a unique set of marketing dynamics based around the principals of education, and a number of identified opportunities to increase the supply and consumption of Fairtrade products on their many premises. Research data is significant in identifying the important role places of education have played in connecting a town, city or villages population to Fairtrade.

Schools, colleges and universities are symbolically identified by participants as places of education and as such are recognised for their ability to '*connect younger people*' to Fairtrade through the power of education, belonging and loyalty. Just as Pykett et al.'s (2010.499) work identifies '*young people as the future*,' so this study's data pays significance to them. Explanations given are receptive to Nicholls & Lee's (2006.371) posit that today's young people '*are likely to have a major impact on the future success of Fair Trade itself, when they become the primary purchasers for themselves and their households.*'

Fairtrade Towns therefore demonstrate a keenness to situate Fairtrade into the 'classroom' and subsequently into the pupil/student's learning environment. Concepts of global citizenship and sustainability now form part of most educational establishments' curriculum. These, as the work of Pykett et al. (2010) suggests, are often used as a '*route in*,' to deliver in person (Fairtrade Town participants) or through the relevant academics, lessons and lectures on the wider sustainability issues

of Fair Trade. Lessons and lectures are additionally recognised for their ability to link the value of consuming Fairtrade products to the agendas of both sustainability and social justice.¹²⁹ The process of education and learning evident in the discourse of this study is contextualised through consumption choices and consequently could be argued to have changed the conditions of some learning environments. The development and delivery of learning in these environments appear to be understood by Fairtrade Town participants as opportunities to enter a captive marketing arena where the promotion of Fairtrade products is the prime context upon which lectures and lessons are built around.

Beyond the formal learning processes participants frequently recall various Fairtrade activities and events taking place within the confines of schools and universities that they have been an active part of. These vary from Fairtrade exhibitions, producer presentations, selling products, fashion shows, story and poetry writing to art competitions and poster designs. What is significant about many of these events is the ability for Fairtrade Town steering group members, students and staff to become involved in their development and delivery. Explanations given, indicate that Fairtrade Town members have themselves consciously designed activities to ‘*get the schools involved*’ and it is evident in the research data that they have managed to be invited into schools to give talks and facilitate events on Fairtrade to staff, students and even catering managers.

“Well as I said, I’m on the committee and on the stall in the local church. I’ve sold a reasonable amount of goods in the last two years and next year I will be doing it again because on the BTEC syllabus there’s managing an event so the students will be organising another stall again which will be part of their management unit.”

Lecturer (Merthyr Tydfil)

Fairtrade Towns have also facilitated the distribution of school resources/guides developed by the Fairtrade Foundation and other organisations who have demonstrated strong cultural and strategic affiliations to Fairtrade products and subsequently Fairtrade Towns (for example The Co-operative). In many Fairtrade

¹²⁹ This demonstrates an acceptance by places of education that Fairtrade products are viewed through the lens of sustainable consumption, contributing to the process of sustainable development (see Fig: 3.0 & 3.2)

Towns, it appears to be a prevailing convention that as many ‘places of education’ as possible receive professionally produced resource packs and guides to help them embrace Fairtrade in their day-to-day practices.¹³⁰

These various approaches of engaging places of education in the marketing dynamic of Fairtrade Towns support what Pykett et al.(2010.491) describe as ‘*a commitment to invest in young people’s perceived potential to change society for the better.*’ The importance of engaging schools and universities into the marketing dynamics of Fairtrade Towns has subsequently been recognised by The Fairtrade Foundation’s action of stretching their labelling to encompass schools and universities. Following the lead set by the five goals of a Fairtrade Town; schools, colleges and universities who comply with a number of conditions can themselves now be awarded with the Fairtrade label. These conditions require schools, universities or colleges to:

- Formulate official policies ratified by senior management or other authorities.
- Ensure that a variety of Fairtrade products are readily available in retail outlets across the campus.
- Have Fairtrade tea and coffee served in meetings and drunk in staff rooms.
- Formulate an active steering group involving a cross section of internal stakeholders (staff and students).
- Teach about Fairtrade where and when appropriate.
- Hold a number of promotional events dedicated to Fairtrade occur during the year.

Fairtrade Schools (2011)

Significance is attributed to the importance that places of education have to the social make up of a Fairtrade Town, and participants are keen to reinforce a belief in their ability to connect Fairtrade education and consumption to the lived experiences of those who interact within its boundaries. This is reflected in Fairtrade schools, universities or colleges becoming places where both education and consumption is steered towards ‘championing’ Fairtrade. The advent of the six goals of a Fairtrade school, university or college is suggested to have provided a number of mechanisms

¹³⁰ A marketing dynamic that is in tune with developing ‘brand equity’ at a central level.

that have helped Fairtrade Towns recruit ‘new younger members’ to its fold, whilst also providing a legitimate ‘lobbying tool’ to insure these places ‘do what they can’ to promote and consume Fairtrade products.

The advent and take up of the Fairtrade schools, universities or colleges labelling scheme appears to have helped expand the role places of education play, shifting beyond education into reinforcing the importance of institutionalised consumption of Fairtrade. This strategy appears to show Fairtrade places of education following the advice of Kotler et al. (2001), whose work on social marketing points out that education cannot work on its own because it is primarily only one (promotion) of the four P’s in the marketing mix.

*“At the very beginning, when I went to ***** High School, I used to go there every year, and talk to the children about Fairtrade, and you say, ok that’s great, fantastic, and then you go to the staff room and you’re offered a cup of Nescafe, and I said, well this is hypocritical, you’ve got to change that, and that was the point that made the difference. Not educating the children on Fairtrade, but the point of making that change, the action, and it doesn’t matter how much they’re consuming, it’s the message that’s giving to the kids, it is not good telling them that Fairtrade is good, and then they see their teachers drinking Nescafe.”*

Chairman of Fairtrade Town (Garstang)

The institutionalisation of Fairtrade consumption in places of education has been achieved primarily through both students and workforce engagement in attaining the six goals necessary for Fairtrade status. Steering groups appear to have been instigated by a number of different stakeholders, whilst some data points to the action of the students, others point to it being led by management or even catering units. Whilst no conclusive evidence can be drawn from this study regarding key instigators, what is evident is that steering groups in places of education are recognised for their similarities to that of Fairtrade Towns and are also made up of concerned stakeholders from within the place.¹³¹ Of significance to this study is the link between steering group members from places of education and Fairtrade Town participation. Fairtrade Town participants in this study who belong to places of education appear to use a discourse that encompasses their activities on both Fairtrade Town and places of education steering groups as part of the same agenda.

¹³¹ It wouldn’t really make sense to involve concerned individuals from somewhere else.

The resulting policies drawn up and incorporated into Fairtrade places of education are thought to symbolise an organisation's commitment to Fairtrade promotion and consumption.

"We keep on top of all our drink; tea coffee and stuff and all of our particular areas of the workplace is all Fairtrade and the Student's Union as a whole is Fairtrade. There's Fairtrade available in all the outlets and the University within the greater organisation as a Fairtrade university Fairtrade is available."

Student Union (Cardiff)

Perhaps more significant, is the belief that Fairtrade policies (see example in appendix 2) help officiate and make sure the various activates necessary for organisations to claim Fairtrade status keep happening, as one participant articulates; *'making sure it has to happen because of policy.'* Fairtrade policies, and the various other activities that have been credited with helping *'engraining Fairtrade into the culture of a place'* have led to a belief that all internal stakeholders in Fairtrade places of education can become involved, or at a very minimum, come into contact with Fairtrade via a number of different channels, that have been identified as:

- Educational and promotional resources accessible and on display.
- Learning experiences taking place as part of the curriculum.
- Fairtrade events run throughout the year.
- Availability of Fairtrade products to purchase on campus.
- Fairtrade tea and coffee used by staff and at meetings.

Fairtrade policies driven by Fairtrade steering groups in places of education appear to manifest themselves as documents capable of initiating pressure on decision makers to keep the institution's commitment to Fairtrade dynamic and sustainable. The symbolic interaction resulting from Fairtrade policies being presented and followed ensues in management at various levels becoming what Thaler & Sunstein (2009) call; *'choice architects.'* Choice architects, Thaler & Sunstein (2009.3) suggest, demonstrate *'responsibility for organising the context in which people make decisions,'* a dynamic that is given recognition as a positive contributor to the distribution and availability of Fairtrade products in places of education. Participants impose a clear view that this

strategy has enabled Fairtrade consumption to become a form of normative behaviour due to the creation of default or no choice consumption positions (Malpass et al., 2007), in many places of education.

“It’s sort of engrained in the culture of the place now that Fairtrade is the way forward which is great to see that it’s not even a permanent thing that people have to think about because it’s available for them straight away. I think in one way obviously, of any big institution, Fairtrade is in their purchasing policies for the catering and for the Student Union retail its engrained there that their purchasing policy says they must seek out Fairtrade as the first choice as far as when they are buying in their contract. That almost keeps it going without anybody thinking about it because it’s there in black and white.”

Student Union (Cardiff)

Despite the positive significance given to a Fairtrade presence in places of education, the literature points to ethical concerns relating to branding education and learning. Kline (2000.87) stresses the importance of keeping places of education ‘unbranded’ in order to keep their independent integrity and keep a focus on the real mission of learning and education, insisting they should play no part in developing consumerism and the promotion of goods and services. She says:

‘In many ways, schools and universities remain our culture’s most tangible embodiment of public space and collective responsibility... They are the one place left where young people can see a genuine public life being lived. And however imperfectly we may have protected these institutions in the past, at this point in our history the argument against transforming education into a brand-extension exercise is much the same as the one for national parks and natural reserves: These quasi-sacred spaces remind us that unbranded space is still possible.’ Kline (2000.105).

Should the Fairtrade Town therefore be concerned with potentially receiving criticism for attempting to act like the larger more aggressive commercial corporations and brand learning?¹³²

¹³² This could become an interesting research question for a future study.

5.5 Plurality 3: Places of Civic Authority

Barnett et al. (2011.195) suggest that by the Fairtrade Town *‘recruiting the local authority actors, the fair trade movement embeds fair-trade into place-identity and placed systems of governance over local provisioning.’* Data collected and analysed for this study reinforces this theory, and articulates the prominence and importance of local councils and local authorities becoming a part of a Fairtrade Towns marketing dynamic.

“The local council did get involved because the chair of the county council got involved and put his weight behind it, so that helped.”

Sustainability Officer (Merthyr Tydfil)

The first goal that needs to be achieved to become a Fairtrade Town clearly indicates that local councils have to be ‘involved,’ requiring them at a minimum to serve Fairtrade tea and coffee on their premises and at all official council meetings.

“Well they must have a supportive council”

Self Employed (Worcester)

Building upon Barnett et al.’s (2011) and Alexander & Nicholls’ (2006) work, narratives in the data are consistent in identifying civic authority’s role in helping gain a town’s acceptance and adoption of Fairtrade. Participants recognise the symbolic and physical significance attributed to local council support and involvement. Narratives in the data indicate that many local councils have been lobbied by Fairtrade Town participants to convince them of their role in this movement. Interviews indicate a belief that councils have responded to ground swells in local Fair Trade activity, and having been approached by people from their constituency, were democratically obliged to embrace the Fairtrade Town campaign into a local civic mandate.

“Then the campaigning here heated up and that we never thought of doing it before, but that made us contact the town council who have been tremendous. We just renewed our status now for the third time and they are still very supportive and speak on our behalf.”

Volunteer (Bridgenorth)

Fairtrade Towns are therefore seen as an extension of the democratic process of local government, which is thought to have helped ‘connect’ Fairtrade marketing activities to local agendas and vice versa.

“I mean, if a council believes it represents its town on behalf of serving the people, if the people support the Fairtrade Town initiative and it shows then the council should respond to the will of the people. That happens in some places and again it doesn’t happen everywhere.”

Chairman of Fairtrade Town (Garstang)

Proactive councils are viewed as essential to Fairtrade Towns and are often referred to as key members of Fairtrade Town steering group. They are also credited with being an active dynamic of a Fairtrade Town by backing, facilitating and even creating marketing opportunities. Local councils are credited with having a formal role in the Fairtrade Towns movement and their backing is consistently recognised as key to connecting Fairtrade with the place it represents. Their role is also implicated in the many Fairtrade Town success stories unearthed during this investigation.

“I think a lot of this stems from the city council. If you’ve got them on your side and they’re enthusiastic, it makes a tremendous difference.”

Cafod Volunteer (Worcester)

“It doesn’t matter how good your committees are, if you haven’t got the support from the council.”

Teacher (Worcester)

Research attests to the respect given to many a ‘proactive council’ who are credited with contextualising the Fairtrade Towns movement into part of their wider sustainability agenda. This has resulted in local council representation in Fairtrade Towns becoming linked to sustainable development job roles and the department’s agenda.

“Well basically I was put onto it by part of my job really.”

Sustainability Officer (Merthyr Tydfil)

With the added pressure of Agenda 21 and local councils now having to implement sustainability policy, Fairtrade Towns have ‘made it their business’ to connect Fairtrade consumption to these agendas. This strategy is judged to have paid

dividends as many Fairtrade town councils now remain committed to promoting and consuming Fairtrade because it has been contextualised as an integral part of sustainability policy drivers.¹³³

“some councils do that, it ticks their local Agenda 21 box, but I would like to think some people are doing it because they start to understand the issues and they want to support it, you know...the majority of people are decent people...But where Fairtrade Towns are concerned, I think these organisations and businesses are switching because again it’s coming from the grassroots movement, that’s what it’s done.”

Sustainability Centre Manager (Swansea)

Fairtrade Town steering group members’ ability to connect Fairtrade consumption to the wider and increasingly more important sustainability agenda of many local councils, has been formally recognised in many council’s sustainability policies that link and subsequently promote Fairtrade and local consumption through the same voice.

“Fairtrade can actually be a part of active citizenship... You know if we’re going to talk about sustainable local economies, we’re going to talk about sustainable domestic farming, then we as Fairtrade campaigners, within a bigger picture, have to be talking about Fairtrade and local. And we have to be engaging with these issues of sustainability, and we want to do that.”

NGO Worker (Keswick)

This has helped the Fairtrade Towns movement to be viewed by local councils and themselves as a key dynamic in assisting local councils to becoming more sustainable. For example, Carmarthen council presented seven pledges to make Carmarthen more sustainable, one of those being to ‘shop ethically’ and ‘buy Fairtrade and locally produced goods’ (Carmarthenshire Sustainability, 2011). Ironically, such a policy in practice could be seen as taking the movement back to its roots in Garstang where it was always the intention to promote local and Fairtrade with the same voice (Garstang Fairtrade Town, 2011).¹³⁴

¹³³ Fairtrade Towns, from these findings, appear to be viewed at a civic level as an integral part of a sustainable place. This presents an interesting shift in how we interpret sustainable place meaning, and points to local councils showing signs of considering sustainable places from a global perspective. A perspective that Amin (2002.387) suggests; ‘involves time-space distancing, that is, the stretching of social relations over time and space so that relations can be controlled or coordinated over longer periods of time and over longer distances.’

¹³⁴ This is an interesting finding as it demonstrates how tensions between local and global issues have been resolved through a process of mutualism that respects sustainability as a global responsibility.

In addition to the symbolic and political significance of local council support, observations and participant interviews attest to their ability to offer a Fairtrade Town access to a variety of resources that enable many Fairtrade Town activities to take place.

“I think one of the other big achievements was working in partnership with Cardiff council because that’s brought a huge strength to it. You know, it’s the local authority working with civil society in a real partnership and achieving something together which couldn’t have been done separately. It’s certainly increased the awareness of Fairtrade in Cardiff. It’s increased the use of Fairtrade and it’s meant that certain things have been possible that wouldn’t have been possible otherwise. You know, promoting Fairtrade at big events, having access to the council’s sort of press department for things that are happening. So I think that’s so far what it has done. Some of the things it should do, I mean, ideally every person who lives and works in Cardiff should know that it’s a Fairtrade City, but that is not the case so we have still got a long way to go.”

Shop Owner (Cardiff)

Recognition is given to councils that have provided physical, capital, administrative and structural support to aid the functions of Fairtrade Towns. Several points of reference in the data indicated that local councils’ ‘connections’ and resources at their disposal ‘opened doors,’ and created opportunities for a number of Fairtrade Town marketing activities to perform admirably. Local council involvement is recognised for providing various marketing communication opportunities where Fairtrade consumption is promoted.¹³⁵ For example, councils have been credited with developing and forwarding press releases, producing and distributing advertising copy, funding and placing town signs, creating specific display units and even planting flower beds in the design of the Fairtrade label.

“Hereford Council are supportive of Fairtrade, they’re supportive of us trying to do things that promote Fairtrade, so the last time we put a gazette of who’s producing what, it was done under the hospice of the council so they were able to pay for it, so we got colour production.”

Vicar (Hereford)

¹³⁵ These marketing communication channels are recognised by participants as being ‘normally unattainable and not for promotional use.’

“Our local council itself have funded us twice with a good sum, so that has given us a lot of kudos. The one thing the council did do after we paid, they gave us the money after it took us 3 years to get the highways commission to put up Fairtrade Town signs on our entrance into the town which cost £850 and the council funded it so that was good.”

Retired Teacher (Millum)

“The council have planted a Fairtrade flower bed outside the castle, so it’s in the shape of the Fairtrade logo... nothing was paid for, the council agreed to do it and its very nice and it’s there, slap bang outside Cardiff castle, which is probably over the millennium stadium the biggest icon in the city, as far as tourism goes.”

Student Union (Cardiff)

“They print all the Fairtrade outlets in the council magazine which goes out to every resident in the city so that’s useful.”

Shop Owner (Cardiff)

In addition to the visual and print aspects of marketing communication, local councils are also credited with providing resources to support the various Fairtrade Town events that occur within their town. The prevailing convention in many Fairtrade Towns is for physical resources such as town halls, and various other public meeting places owned by the council to be provided at no cost and to run Fairtrade community events such as public conferences and producer tours all designed to increase Fairtrade awareness and consumption.

“Obviously we are influencing the community because what is happening in ST Peters Hall is a Fairtrade event sponsored by the Town Council.”

NGO Worker (Carmarthen)

Some participants also indicated that the benefits of operating under the mantle of a Fairtrade Town provided them with the opportunity to trade (Fairtrade goods) at farmers’ markets and various other local events that are council-controlled at a significantly reduced rental rate.

Ok, there might not be cash but actual funds to do things you know, and so, for example, the sustainability unit of Hereford City Council where most of our links are, you know, they can put us up a big banner, so when we’ve got a stall, which we do at the Herefordshire Food Fair every year, you know, we have a Fairtrade stall, where it’s mostly local producers of fruit and veg, wine and cider and meat and things like that. But there’s a national dimension and

there's a Fairtrade banner saying this is part of who we are because we recognise that we are connected to that global community. So, it's very useful to have the resources of being able to, you know, get hold of a display unit. You know, so we've got the council people to come and tow it onto the main pedestrian area.

Vicar (Hereford)

There appears to be however a number of variances in how, and to what level, local councils become involved, leading to data indicating a number of polarised illustrations that range from, as one town suggested; *'taking over'* to what another describes as only giving it *'lip service.'*

"Good councils really embrace this and see this as a way to get the council to do something positive with the community, sometimes they go too far the other way, they go to a point where the council are running it, and they see it as their campaign, that is a mistake...It has to be community and council engaging together, it mustn't be one or the other, we've just got the community without the council really playing their part. In some places you get the councils running it completely, and it's not involving the community, and that's just as bad of a problem, it needs to be the two together, and that works in most places, that's what's happening."

Chairman of Fairtrade Town (Garstang)

However, the success of getting civic institutions to become part of a Fairtrade Town and subsequently commit resources and instigate policy to favour Fairtrade consumption cannot be underestimated. The Fairtrade Town's ability therefore to understand the power of local democracy and government policy at a national level combined with the connections these have to Fairtrade is also testament to the sophistication of Fairtrade Towns' function. These functions have created numerous marketing opportunities from the democratic process of lobbying a council at a local level. The various layers of local council interaction, internal when *'serving tea and coffee at meetings,'* or *'having it in the office,'* to *'implementing policy'* or external, in publications, are viewed as marketing opportunities that promote and increase the consumption of Fairtrade products.

"Actually in the work place in the council, if you have tea or coffee then that's all Fairtrade."

Sustainability Officer (Merthyr Tydfil)

This, it is argued, is a unique set of marketing principals that, to date, are yet to be replicated. Fairtrade Towns appear to demonstrate an adoption and possible expansion of McGregor's (2002) work on consumer citizenship by developing a marketing dynamic that utilises and builds upon her three key themes of civic, political and social engagement. Expanding upon Nicholls' (2010.242) suggestion that *'Fair trade represents a distinctive politicization of ethical consumption in the UK,'* Fairtrade Towns demonstrate a clear sense of how proactive citizenship has put Fairtrade consumption habits on the political agenda. Fairtrade Towns' attempt to democratise consumption choice through the inclusion of local, civic political support in their marketing dynamic has, as Wilkinson (2007) suggests, the potential to expand established conceptualisations of politicised consumption (Micheletti, 2003).

"People working as part of the county council, working on policy and so on that has been good... In terms of those who work for the county council, in terms of driving through the resolution through various committees, that has been good, we have been dependant on a key person who has been good."

NGO Worker (Carmarthen)

5.6 Plurality 4: Places of Worship

Places of worship (represented in this study as Christian faith-based churches) have been credited by Around (2006), and Human & Crowther (2011) as playing a multifunctional role in Fairtrade Towns across the UK. Jaffee (2007.12) additionally posits that churches have played a pivotal role in the Fair Trade movement, outlining their proven ability in 'developing markets' for Fair Trade products. However, each of these authors stop shy of detailing the micro role churches play in promoting and distributing Fairtrade products. Data from this study builds upon the aforementioned work by documenting formal 'religious' activity and informal social interaction that exists within these 'places of worship' that have become recognised as a valid part of Fairtrade Town activity. The multifunctional role of churches in Fairtrade Towns is recognised for contributing to:

- Fair Trade and Fairtrade awareness/education (promotion).
- Fairtrade product availability (distribution).
- Increasing consumption opportunities within its confines.

Participants indicate that churches have become distribution/‘retail outlets’ for Fairtrade products. Fairtrade stalls that sell and demonstrate various Fairtrade product ranges are recognised as a prevailing convention in most churches that belong to a Fairtrade Town. Churches appear to operate as distribution centres for Fairtrade products on two levels: Firstly they allow Fairtrade stalls to set up and trade on days of worship;

“on an individual level it’s gone in terms of being involved with running a Fairtrade stall at a church in Gloucester when I was living there.”

Vicar (Hereford)

Secondly, they are recognised for opening their doors to host Fair Trade markets.

“The church have very kindly agreed for us to use the premises of the church on a Saturday for these two Saturday’s a year, to have a Fairtrade market.”

Volunteer (Bridgenorth)

“All Saints has a Fairtrade stall every couple of weeks, you know, on a Saturday and they do have regular trade with regular people... it is about offering to folks that wider choice.”

Vicar (Hereford)

“They have a Fairtrade sale in a local church at the end of the town centre.”

Community Representative (Ondoul)

Church member’s roots in Tradecraft often come to the forefront in interview narratives, indicating that Tradecraft’s established distribution patterns of selling its products via agents/representatives in churches have been built upon to incorporate the distribution and sales of Fairtrade certified goods. Tradecraft representatives are therefore identified as key distributors of Fairtrade certified products in many of the churches in Fairtrade Towns.

“Well, in the church there has been a old lady that has done a Tradecraft stall and she has done it for 10 years ever since it started. I guess seeing that, once a month I think she does it, and she never did it with a lot of advertising, it was just the fact that it was there I think that’s very powerful. People do what they think is the right thing to do, and it was there after church so people would go there on a Sunday and if they didn’t have coffee at home, or if they haven’t got any Muesli or any sugar you know, she would have a nice selection of gifts, and yes I think that was very strong.”

Despite recognition afforded to churches' roles in distributing (selling) Fairtrade products, this activity appears to be viewed primarily as a marketing communications exercise, helping introduce individuals to Fairtrade products. Participants indicate a belief that Fairtrade products being sold in the confines of places of worship afford opportunities of symbolic interactionism that move beyond the obvious instant responses of purchasing. The symbolic interaction resulting from people introduced to Fairtrade products in churches via product sales are viewed more for their marketing communication value than sales revenue. These understandings demonstrate how churches in Fairtrade Towns have functionally linked the competing conceptualisation of pragmatic and ideological Fair Trade marketing presented by Golding (2009). This functional link is represented through churches' 'ideological' distribution of Fairtrade products manifesting itself as a marketing communication function that sets the context to connect people to mainstream retail outlets that are 'pragmatically' perceived to be able to offer wider Fairtrade product ranges and the ability to make a 'significant difference.'¹³⁶ Additionally, these findings support the work of Nicholls (2002), and Low & Davenport (2006) who suggest that 'traditional' channels of distribution (including churches) for Fairtrade products are much more likely to result in the developmental message of Fair Trade being received and understood.

"As a church organisation, we are not actually encouraging people to buy anything in our church, we encourage people to go out to the shops and buy it because by doing that you increase the availability of Fairtrade products for everybody. If you just buy it in the church you're not going to have that effect on other peoples choices, but if you ask at your local Tesco's or Sainsbury's or whatever; Morrison's, which have got much, much better to supply these products, they will do it and other people will see them."

Trade Craft Rep (Swansea)

Just as Doran & Natale (2011.6) identify '*many examples*' of faith based organisations '*incorporating fair trade into their social and ceremonial activity.*' Participants in this study also admit to communicating the development agenda of Fairtrade consumption through the formal religious activity of the church.

¹³⁶ This is based on the capacity of supermarkets and larger stores to generate far more sales and offer greater choice of Fairtrade product ranges than Low and Davenport's (2006) 'Alternative high street.'

“I know in our church she really encourages, in fact she sort of makes a point you know, you haven’t bought your Fairtrade.”

Trade Craft Rep (Swansea)

Church leaders and elders are understood to be receptive to introducing Fair Trade ideology and links to Fairtrade consumption choice in sermons, preaching and prayer when deemed appropriate. Church leaders and the religious platform they are given can therefore be credited with becoming a promotional media used to encourage Fairtrade consumption.¹³⁷

“I quite often preach on Fairtrade as an ethical issue as a response to other gospel readings and a call for social justice. In fact, I did it on Sunday. I just mentioned it obliquely in a Harvest service I was giving. I was talking about rising food prices and the global food crisis at the moment and how the price of rice has doubled in some countries over the last year and so forth, and I was trying to get the congregation to think about their own behaviour as consumers and how they might be able to help producers in developing countries who themselves may be struggling to feed their families and so on.”

University Chaplin (Carmarthen)

In addition to distribution and promotion, places of worship in Fairtrade Towns are also viewed as institutional consumers. Fairtrade churches impose a clear mandate that, while carrying out their day-to-day functions, be it official business or socialising within the confines of its grounds, Fairtrade products (that in the main are identified as tea, coffee, biscuits and even wine) should be the default choice.

“When I take chaplin we have refreshments and I make sure it’s Fairtrade and I mention it to people, not in a blow a trumpet way, but to suggest this is important Two years ago at a Harvest festival I talked specifically about Fairtrade and took along a basket of Fairtrade products and talked about the benefits of Fairtrade and equally the ill effects of drinking your Nescafe and eating your Cadbury’s chocolate and the potential to make a positive difference.”

University Chaplin (Carmarthen)

Following these successes, participants demonstrate a desire to attract more places of worship to contribute to the marketing dynamics reported. Thoughts are consistent in recognising that places of worship could do more, or become more engaged with their

¹³⁷ This act could be further conceptualised as promoting Fairtrade consumption as an extension of the collection plate and turning the church leader into a proactive consumer citizen (McGregor, 2002).

Fairtrade Town. Consistent with the story of Garstang becoming the world's first Fairtrade Town (Human & Crowther 2011), interviews indicated that many places of worship can be hard to reach and on some occasions even hard to convince to become involved.

*"I would also like to see a much greater involvement of our churches in Fairtrade, this is the extraordinary thing, that I don't feel enough of our churches in ***** are involved. In fact we've got lots of churches and attendance is really good. I don't feel that they engage in a way that I think Christians ought to, but it surprises me, so it still surprises me that there is some sort of reluctance, in some to do this."*

Retired (Garstang)

Participants, when probed further on the problems they have encountered when trying to recruit places of worship into Fairtrade Town activity, expressed a disappointment in some church leaders and elders who were against the use of places of worship to *'blatantly promote specific businesses and brands.'*

"I've had people say to me in church, that you can't advertise a particular grocery chain but I do simply because I support, you know when it comes to Fairtrade Fortnight, right this is Fairtrade Fortnight coming up and there's this and this and this happening and at the Co-op 20% off during the Fortnight so go there and buy, so a lot of these say you can't do that...I say, well I do...so stop me afterwards and tell me I'm wrong."

Cafod Volunteer (Worcester)

Despite these problems, several points of reference in the data indicate an expectation of places of worship to embrace Fairtrade. Following Pope Benedict XVI's (2009) lead in proclaiming; *'it can be helpful to promote new ways of marketing products from deprived areas of the world'* (Doran & Natale, 2011), participants demonstrate a belief that the values expressed in Fairtrade consumption display a symbolic link to many religious doctrines and beliefs. This, they further believe ought to act as a catalyst for places of worship to become involved in their Fairtrade Town.

"I mentioned earlier the problems that we have is getting churches on board. If you think of individual churches as organisations, as entities in our community, getting churches on board has been hugely more difficult than I ever imagined. Giving what I said before about the imperative of the gospel it just amazes me that it's been so difficult, now, this isn't to say that we haven't got some who are absolutely on board. The Methodists, the Catholics and the Quakers are absolutely firmly on board, but some are sort of a bit wishy

*washy about it, and some are not on board at all. We have one church in
***** which I think doesn't even engage with it or maybe two that don't
engage with it at all, so that in itself has been surprising."*

Chairman of Fairtrade Town (Garstang)

Places of worship in Fairtrade Towns can be conceptualised as a place where Fairtrade marketing dynamics are played in both a pragmatic and puristic form (Golding, 2009). These dynamics include the ability to recognise synergies in the functions of a place that has been given meaning through the act of worship. Promoting, distributing and consuming Fairtrade products through the day-to-day social activities happening in of places of worship appear to be recognised as a key marketing dynamic functioning in many Fairtrade Towns.

"Fairtrade...well I guess it was always involved in the church"

Social Enterprise Worker (Cardiff)

5.7 Plurality 5: Civil Society Organisations

Oxfam, Christian Aid and Trócaire are consistently recognised for a number of roles they play in Fairtrade Towns. However, it is unsurprising that these particular civil society organisations (CSO) play an active part of this movement given their initial role in the set up and establishment of the Fairtrade Foundation (Nicholls & Opal, 2005). Participants appear to show an appreciation for the support of these CSO, indicating a number of key roles they play in the marketing dynamics of the movement. Recognition is firstly given to the knowledge and skill sets CSO workers have in campaigning and lobbying. There appears to be an acceptance that the campaigning knowledge and skills of CSO workers can, and has been used to, develop the sophistication of Fairtrade Towns. CSO workers are keen to express their ability to disseminate the '*right information*' in appropriate ways while also suggesting their existing close and extended relationships with interested parties have been used to '*open doors*' and '*spread the word.*' These findings share a familiarity with Davies (2008.115-116) and reinforce their point that the Fair Trade movement has succeeded from alliances with organisations whose human resources offer '*intellectual capital*' to further the '*intellectual development*' of the wider Fair Trade movement.¹³⁸ Fairtrade Towns appear to also make the most of '*intellectual*

¹³⁸ CSOs appear to show signs of being a key node in an actor network, helping the durability and functionality of Fairtrade Towns. They appear to be recognised as part of a '*strong fabric of social*

capital' belonging to some CSOs, which is thought (as part of an actor network) to help improve access to audiences, disseminate the right information and generally improve marketing communications channels.

“By attending the meetings, hopefully, I’m able to share informally the issues that Christian Aid is involved with and how important Fairtrade is to the partners we are working with. Maybe I have more information than some of the others on how it affects the poor. But informally, through the meetings, I have been able to contribute our experiences at Christian Aid to the group.”

NGO Worker (Carmarthen)

The consequences of having Fairtrade affiliated CSOs take an active part in Fairtrade Towns is suggested to have additionally contributed to helping keep steering groups focused on only promoting products that carry the Fairtrade Mark. For example, when reflecting on the role of one member in the group who belongs to a CSO, the following was stated:

“Some are very keen on doing things properly, he is very keen that we must stick to the Fairtrade logo and that everything is not necessarily fairly traded or ethically, it must always carry the logo and kite mark.”

Student (Carmarthen)

Consequently, the data suggests that CSOs have helped the *‘ideological development’* (Davies 2009.118) of Fairtrade Town campaigns by embedding Fairtrade Foundation guidelines and only promoting products that carry the Fairtrade Label. It is therefore possible to argue that one vital role of the CSO in Fairtrade Towns is to act as a policing mechanism to settle variances in opinions regarding campaign messages by keeping Fairtrade Town steering groups focused on the remit set by the Fairtrade Foundation. Despite Around’s (2006) fears that this strategy can lead to promoting a shallow understanding of the wider trade justice agenda and her concerns of excluding alternative traders at the expense of mainstreaming, there appears to be a common understanding amongst participants that the Fairtrade mark offers a guarantee of *‘fairness’* that non-certified *‘ethical’* goods can’t provide (Renard, 2005; Low & Davenport, 2006; Moore et al., 2006; Steinrucken & Jaenichen, 2007; Jafee, 2007; Golding, 2009).

organisation’ which Fairtrade Towns depend upon for central support, help and guidance (Whatmore & Thorne, 1997.294).

“Yes, I think in the UK it works, it was about mainstreaming. Fairtrade Towns is about mainstreaming, so it was always about the mark because I saw rightly or wrongly, and I have questioned myself and still think it’s right, the best way to mainstream Fairtrade, to bring it into the full mainstream is through the Fairtrade mark. I can’t see at the moment and I’m open to ideas, you know, if someone could come to me and say there’s a better way, fine, at the moment I can’t see another way, that’s the best way. But there’s a problem, if, like I said before, if we get funnelled into it, it becomes about the mark and that becomes the means to the end. The mark is a vehicle to mainstream Fairtrade in order to end poverty, so we’ve got to look at the ultimate aim; it’s not about making the mark the most recognised mark in the world. If we can end poverty or get Fairtrade mainstream without the Fairtrade mark, we’d do it.”

Chairman of Fairtrade Town (Garstang)

CSOs have additionally been credited with providing numerable resources including the time of their employees, access to Fairtrade products to use in events, access to Fairtrade promotional material such as posters or post cards and lastly, access to their network of campaigners and supporters. Christian Aid, Oxfam and Tradecraft are recognised for being receptive to helping out at events organised by Fairtrade Towns whether it be in the form of providing a stall to demonstrate Fairtrade products or providing a speaker to present on Fairtrade consumption.

*“We have had some people coming in to get some Fairtrade materials to sell that we do on a sale or return basis. An example of that was the ***** group where I went to speak to the mothers’ union and the church of course, as I always do, I take a selection of Fairtrade goods with me and they get to buy and taste it and hopefully they buy it in the shops next time.”*

NGO Worker (Carmarthen)

Fairtrade Towns appear to recognise the value of physically displaying the diversity of Fairtrade products available to purchase and subsequently benefit from a capacity to turn to CSOs who have the resource to provide tangible Fairtrade products for displays and testers at Fairtrade Town events. The research discourse indicates participants’ understanding of the value of encouraging people to symbolically interact with Fairtrade products. Fairtrade Towns attempt therefore to use the many opportunities resulting from day-to-day activities to introduce future and existing consumers to Fairtrade products. It is believed that by increasing Fairtrade introduction opportunities, it will develop peoples’ understandings and desires. Many participants, just like Jackson (2004), indicate a belief that such product introductions

can influence consumers when later confronted with a choice of Fairtrade certified products the next time they find themselves in a mainstream retail outlet.

“I’m able to get Fairtrade goods to people to try them out and then they can go to the shops and supermarkets to buy them. That’s our main role here, is to get people to try Fairtrade because people are anxious sometimes, is it good quality? Will I like the coffee? You know. And if we can encourage people to try out the products then they might go to the supermarket and buy it the next time.”

NGO Worker (Carmarthen)

Fairtrade Towns’ connection with the role and activities of relevant CSOs can be conceptualised in four ways. Firstly, they provide a supporting role to help develop and police a clear framework that helps Fairtrade Towns ‘*stay on course*’ by only promoting Fairtrade certified products. Secondly, they have a workforce whose ‘knowledge and skills’ provide Fairtrade Towns’ staff and support networks with campaigning knowledge, and experience. Thirdly, just as Low and Davenport’s (2008) findings suggest, fair and ethical trade has utilised the process of affinity marketing. CSOs are recognised for helping forge an affinity between their existing supporters and Fairtrade Town activity. The affinity derived from CSOs and utilised by Fairtrade Towns appears to resemble Macchiette & Roy’s (1991) understanding of affinity marketing indicating that Fairtrade Towns benefit from ‘*a unique exchange process, in which value-expressive products and services (Fairtrade products) are marketed to reference groups with cohesiveness, common interests, and/or values, usually in return for the group’s (CSOs) endorsement.*’ An example of affinity working within a Fairtrade Town is expressed below:

“Christian Aid has also been very much on this and I can remember we ran a campaign where we had to collect till receipts from all the shops that we were shopping in and I had, I can’t remember quite what shop it was, but it was about the challenge that all this money has been spent on goods and then why not Fairtrade. I can’t remember quite how it was shaped, but I remember it being organised in our church...so there has been pressure from other places obviously...other organisations.”

Retired Volunteer (Worcester)

Finally, CSOs provide Fairtrade Town events access to Fairtrade products and promotional material that augment promotional events with professional marketing

communication leaflets and posters and products that allow perspective consumers to *'try before they buy.'* Each of these four contributions manifests themselves in the assumption that Fairtrade Towns' alliance with the aforementioned CSOs adds structure, kudos, professionalism, affinity, meso level social capital, campaign momentum and tangible value to Fairtrade Town activity.

5.8 Plurality 6: Community Groups

The activities and day-to-day functions of community groups whose diversity ranges from nationally recognised institutions such as The Women's Institute and Scouts to the more local such as a cycling club, local history society and village pension groups, have all been targeted for their potential to contribute and develop the marketing dynamic of a Fairtrade Town. These groups have been credited for being an important part of a place's social make up and their operations and day-to-day functions are recognised for presenting a number of contexts where Fairtrade can be introduced, promoted and consumed. Narratives in the data indicate a desire for Fairtrade Towns to get as many community groups as possible involved in Fairtrade in *'any way they can'* and where possible, further connect the role of the group to Fairtrade promotion and consumption. For example, The Women's Institute's role in many Fairtrade Towns appears to follow Barnett et al.'s (2005.31) suggestion of *'turning oughts into cans,'* by promoting the use of Fairtrade certified ingredients in their baking.

"Scouts, for example, Cubs and Scouts, what are Cubs and Scouts, how can they engage with it? Well, they do various badges that connect with, you know, active citizenship, or you know, sustainability, or whatever it may be. So if you can introduce Fairtrade to them, through that sort of engagement, which is already on their agenda, then you're going to make it much more possible... You are much more likely to succeed, but it does involve you and stretching your own imagination, to look at other peoples, not just the individual's agenda but other organisations' agendas."

NGO Worker (Keswick)

The actions and day-to-day activities of community groups, just like places of education and places of worship, have also become identified as spaces where Fairtrade can be promoted and consumed. The prevailing convention in Fairtrade community groups is to instigate a policy that follows Adams & Raisborough's (2010.258) conceptualisation *'governing of consumption.'* Governing of consumption

is represented in a time and spatial context, regarding community groups where information and consumption choice is regulated by the group when they meet to favour Fairtrade consumption (tea, coffee, etc), once again helping turn ‘*oughts into cans*’ (Barnett et al. 2005.31).

The sheer volume and diversity of these groups, although presenting steering group member with many challenges, is primarily recognised for the opportunity they present. The main objective of Fairtrade Towns appears to be to get as many community groups as possible to make Fairtrade consumption (particularly tea and coffee) the default choice of the group when they meet.

“We responded to local groups we had contact with for example the women’s institute, the soroptomists there were a lot of other groups, rotary and gradually I suppose, what happens is once you have done a presentation, the other groups hear about you and we went as far as a 20 mile radius.”

Retired (Millum)

This, it is argued, presents new communities of consumption that support attempts to influence consumption choice beyond individual to collective choice, shifting Fairtrade consumption into community groups’ practices (Low & Davenport, 2009). Symbolic significance of this achievement is represented in groups indicating their commitment through signing a ‘unique pledge’ (administered by Fairtrade Town steering groups) that outlines their commitment to their Fairtrade Town, through what they consume when occupying the given space and time of where and when community groups meet (Low & Davenport, 2009).

However, despite initial optimism in the potential community groups can bring to Fairtrade Towns, participants are prone to accept that not all community groups can be reached. It is thought that the sheer number and diversity of community groups can make them difficult to contact and hard to pressure into changing their collective consumption habits in favour of Fairtrade.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ This is reported in the data to arise from political and local vs. global tensions resulting from some community groups not sharing a political affinity with the activities and beliefs of a Fairtrade Town. These can be attributed to some groups supporting free market ideologies and others demonstrating a desire to be more concerned with ‘local’ issues, not necessarily related to consumption.

“How do you connect with community groups because even though CAVS is an umbrella organisation, they only have so many links with community groups. I think we need to have face to face links with community groups it’s a challenge because there are just hundreds of them within the county.”

NGO Worker (Carmarthen)

5.9 Plurality 7: The High Street

Expanding out of Low and Davenport’s (2007) *‘alternative high street,’* mainstream high street organisations including retail outlets, cafes, post offices, dentists and tourist information centres are identified for their ability to promote, supply and consume Fairtrade products. Following the lead of goal 2; *‘a range of Fairtrade products must be readily available in the town’s and city’s shops and served in local cafes and catering establishments’* (Fairtrade Foundation 2011). High street organisations’ commitment to a Fairtrade Town appears to be judged both visually, through increased product offerings & greater choice, and symbolically, through the demonstration of pledges indicating Fairtrade as a time and spatially driven consumption choice of employees in the organisation.

“We asked people to do what they could, to sell Fairtrade products if you can, if you can’t then just drink it on the premises, it’s very simple.”

Teacher (Worcester)

Securing a significant amount of product availability in Fairtrade Town high streets, either in the form of fast-moving consumer goods, or as part of the total product offering of services such as cafes, restaurants and hotels has been identified as a key priority in the *‘early days’* of Fairtrade Towns.

“Maybe, even if it’s just down to badgering your local shop and supermarket to stock more things, which is how it sort of starts, because people will only buy things if they can access them, they are not going to go miles out of their way to buy a Fairtrade version of something. So, maybe the challenge is to keep getting local shops and other organisations that don’t stock them to keep going really.”

Social Enterprise Worker (Cardiff)

Participants reveal a number of activities they have been involved in and indicate as helping them *‘achieve’* this objective. The necessity to document Fairtrade product availability in a town’s high street has required steering group members to use their *‘shoe leather’* and visit high street organisations as part of an audit trail. Fairtrade

audit trails, when reflected upon, appear to take on a symbolic significance and to all intents and purposes expand Goodman et al.'s (2010.16) '*guerrilla shoppers*' into a marketing function in its own right. Each unique visit is symbolised as a chance to interact with high street organisations, setting a context whereby Fairtrade steering group members are afforded the ability to pressure and support organisations into supplying and consuming Fairtrade products for the first time, or to increase their commitment by '*doing more.*'

Participants credit the auditing process with creating an opportunity to inform businesses of changing consumer preferences in favour of Fairtrade and additionally creating the context for pedagogical discussion regarding the developmental agenda of Fairtrade along with its commercial benefits.¹⁴⁰ High street 'audits' are augmented by steering group members distributing promotional/lobbying literature of different formats (depending on the circumstances) that have been professionally produced by the Fairtrade Foundation. Fairtrade Foundation literature is associated with being a visual cue that helps Fairtrade Towns pressure and support high street retail outlets to commit to start or to sell more Fairtrade products. The literature is respected firstly for its ability to add pedagogical depth to participants' visits helping them better express the business case for selling Fairtrade products. Secondly, the literature is indicated to provide tangible support, helping participants put consumer pressure on organisations by them leaving Fairtrade 'calling cards' that project a consumer-led discourse asking to be able to purchase Fairtrade products from the organisation in question. The process of participants using their own '*shoe leather*' to visit high street businesses shows evidence of both individual pressure and support being exerted on organisations in attempts to increase Fairtrade availability in the high streets of Fairtrade Towns.

"I remember the people who were involved in the first Fairtrade directory that we did, and they were going around to local businesses asking if they were using Fairtrade. They talked to a company that was doing catering and sandwiches and the guy hadn't even thought about it but she left him some leaflets and said I live around the corner and I'll call in and so on. She got a really good thing going on with him to the extent that in the end the centre

¹⁴⁰ Suggesting that once again the power of conversation to develop opportunities for social learning is not undervalued (Jeffs et al., 1999) in Fairtrade Towns' activities.

actually used him for our catering, because he was doing Fairtrade and organic and locally sourced stuff. That was a real success and that came from the city status from going around and talking to business. We have had quite a few businesses that have gone on to the Fairtrade things as a result of the Fairtrade town. So it's quite a nice story."

Sustainability Centre Manager (Swansea)

The symbolic interaction between steering group members armed with Fairtrade Foundation literature and high street organisations appears to be able to be conceptualised beyond Goodman et al.'s (2010.16) '*guerrilla shopper*,' and be seen more of a war of attrition becoming a media from which consumer and pedagogical context of increasing Fairtrade availability is promoted directly to mainstream distributors.

"Number one is always going to be, I think, badgering and asking shops why don't you stock this and would you think about stocking this. I know the Fairtrade Foundation have produced printed postcards that say, 'Dear store manager I would like to buy this at your shop please.' And if they are responsive to customers, the manager is not going to just ignore them. That has definitely, I think, increased the amount of Fairtrade products available in shops and the same with cafes and things like that. But if you go in and say, 'Have you got Fairtrade tea or coffee?' And they say no I go, 'Have you thought about stocking it?' And then I end by choosing something like a bottle of water rather than go for that. I think this does send a clear message to them that people are asking them for it. It's definitely got impact I think. The one thing I always tell people is that if nothing else they should always ask for that. Because it's amazing if a few people ask, the person might think so why don't we stock that? Retailers, at the end of the day, their job is to look at the bottom line for profit and they will make a profit on whatever they can sell and if it's Fairtrade they are happy to do that as long as they know the demand is there for them to stock it in the first place."

Student Union (Cardiff)

The recently reported success of mainstream brands such as Cadbury Dairy Milk, Kit Kat and Tate & Lyle carrying the Fairtrade mark combined with major retail outlets moving some own brands to Fairtrade and pledging to only stock Fairtrade bananas (The Co-operative, Marks and Spencer, Sainsbury's and Waitrose) has resulted in an acceptance that high street retail outlets are no longer auditable. It is thought that the task of auditing Fairtrade product availability in a town has become both irrelevant and impossible, as every outlet that sells fast moving consumer goods is now perceived to be selling Fairtrade products, if not through choice then by default. This is an issue that will have to be addressed by the Fairtrade Foundation as goal 2 of a

Fairtrade Town technically becomes ‘defunct’ and unable to reflect any difference between a Fairtrade Town high street and any other.¹⁴¹

“Goal 2 for example, is totally defunct now, you know, when you have Cadbury’s Dairy milk in every petrol station or whatever, you know it doesn’t mean anything anymore.”

Chairman of Fairtrade Town (Garstang)

However, despite these concerns, Fairtrade Towns still appear to be willing to question other sections of their high street offerings and appear to still pursue a marketing dynamic of consumer pressure and support on those organisations that are able to ‘do more.’ As such, organisations that would not normally be associated with public consumption have also been enacted as part of the drive to increase Fairtrade consumption and understanding in a town. Organisations such as dentists, post offices, hairdressers and solicitors have thus been approached by participants to ‘pledge’ their support to ‘their’ Fairtrade Town by using Fairtrade products on their premises in whatever capacity they can. For example, if you have your hair cut in Garstang the tea or coffee you will be offered will be Fairtrade. Likewise, if you drop into the Tourist Information centre the staff will be drinking (during their tea break) Fairtrade tea or coffee, while the optician will be eating Fairtrade bananas as a snack and so on.

“It doesn’t matter initially how you consume, it’s the principle, the principle is more important than anything, because once you’ve got that principle it’s an attitude change. What we do with our pledges for example, the optician, they can’t pledge anything because they don’t drink tea or coffee, so they pledge that all the bananas that they eat will be Fairtrade bananas, and it’s to get people to do what they can, not to ask them to do more than what is possible for them to do. It’s asking them to do what they can, and then we ask them to renew the pledge ever year, and hopefully they’ll strengthen it, so it’s that action that is the most important.”

Teacher (Garstang)

¹⁴¹ This situation, many suggest, is starting to develop an understanding that some Fairtrade Towns have reached a point where their activities must become more than promoting Fairtrade. Some participants as such demonstrated a desire to become more political in their actions and messages, a politic that some fear could result in the Fairtrade Foundation resembling an NGO as opposed to a pro-active social enterprise.

The very fact that participants view a Fairtrade Town high street as more than retail distribution suggests an understanding and contextualisation of the high street to Fairtrade distribution and consumption that follows Goodman et al.'s (2010.13) suggestion that: *'Space and place are not merely the stage on or containers in which we act out our social and material lives, but rather are actively negotiated, created and changed through all manner of relationships. And as we ... argue, consumption is one of the key relational ties actively constructing and changing spaces and places which in turn recursively affect consumption practices.'* A point that is further supported in Fairtrade Towns' management and organisation of events, discussed below in Plurality 8.

5.10 Plurality 8: Events

Organising Fairtrade events and piggy backing Fairtrade on the various social and cultural events that happen throughout the year in the places and spaces (workplace, town centres, markets etc.) of a town appears to be the norm. Despite the five goals of a Fairtrade Town making no specific obligations for Fairtrade events to occur, narrative in the data demonstrates an acceptance that both organising and utilising existing events to help promote Fairtrade is an accepted norm, particularly during Fairtrade Fortnight. Fairtrade Towns are therefore credited with developing appropriate conditions where a wide variety of Fairtrade-specific events can take place in a wide array of spaces and places. These events are symbolically recognised for their ability to further urbanise Fairtrade (Malpass et al. 2007), by transforming existing spaces and places such as town halls, lecture theatres, theatres, cinemas, high streets, pubs, school halls, village greens, town squares, community centres, parks, libraries, open spaces and many more, into meaningful places that become defined for a period of time¹⁴² on account of them promoting and consuming Fairtrade products.

"Some of our most successful events have been the quizzes that we run, which have nine or ten rounds of questions, two of which are Fairtrade. People come because they like quizzes and it is a good night out... I think Fairtrade events are known to be good fun, because we made a strategic decision some time ago, to run events that we had good fun at ourselves. Because sometimes we stand on the High Street in the cold, and you fear, you just preach to the converted... we had a drumming event once and we got a lot of young people come. They came for the drumming, not for the Fairtrade, but you know we

¹⁴² Particularly around Fairtrade Fortnight.

sell Fairtrade beverages and snacks, and you know it's about just trying to get the message over. I think, in that sense, we contribute to our community by running community events that people can come to and they can get the message and not in a preachy way, but in a 'this is part of our community too' sort of way."

Community Representative (Ondole)

Many Fairtrade Town events captured in participant narratives and observed have been deemed successful because they have been '*designed for the community*' suggesting that the general perception of some events is to support those '*locally*' who are interested in '*making a change*' or wanting to '*do more.*' Many events are reported to operate as soft introductions to Fairtrade products and Fairtrade suppliers for both organisations wishing to use more Fairtrade in their day-to-day practices and for individual consumers wishing to find out more. Events therefore, are often designed to facilitate the introduction of organisations and groups to companies that supply Fairtrade products for wholesale and commercial use. Consequentially, it is common practice in events to witness Fairtrade suppliers exhibiting and providing free samples of various Fairtrade products and distribution technologies such as Fairtrade vending machines. In addition, Fairtrade Town events proactively demonstrate and sell Fairtrade products that have been sourced from CSOs (previously mentioned) or have been donated by retail organisations that fully support the Fairtrade Town agenda. In particular, The Co-operative is identified as a consistent contributor providing products such as Fairtrade wine, chocolates, fruit etc. for raffle, viewing and consumption. Fairtrade events reveal themselves as being able to negotiate new spaces of consumption (Goodman et al., 2010), and expand Low & Davenport's (2006:324) conceptualisation of the '*alternative high street,*' as consumers are introduced to Fairtrade products in places not previously identified with shopping and consumption.

Considerable significance is attributed to events that set the context for affording Fairtrade producers the opportunity to tell their '*real life stories*' in person '*directly to the consumer.*' The Fairtrade Foundation and other supporting organisations mentioned such as Fair Trade Wales and previous CSOs mentioned (Christian Aid, Tradedcraft) are commended for their ability to bring Fairtrade producers from

developing countries into Fairtrade Towns to *'tell their story'* and meet the people, organisations and groups in their *'own back yard.'*

"At Fairtrade Fortnight we had a Sri Lankan visitor. We hosted a farmer, a spice farmer actually from Sri Lanka for the week here. It was fabulous, he was a very personable guy, and we had quite a large programme of events as you could imagine, which included a public reception with the mayor, and bits of presentations, and a talk, and he went to the schools and he went to Wolverhampton University, you know, which we organized, and he went to Harper Adams College, which is an agricultural college, it was on the radio. I mean he was received very well, and we had a presence on the high street, in the street market all day, on the Saturday. So he was able to talk to the local community there and in the coffee shop."

Volunteer (Bridgenorth)

Having Fairtrade producers connect directly with UK consumers and present their Fairtrade *'story'* to a town, for this study, appears to be best conceptualised through the resulting symbolic interaction that occurs between producer and Fairtrade Town. This interaction is claimed to facilitate the process of de-fetishising Fairtrade (Wright 2004; Goodman 2004) by using *'reality'* as both a media (in person) and an emotional selling proposition expressed through the *'real life'* consequences of Fairtrade consumption.

The *'reality'* of producer tours and visits to Fairtrade Towns appears to be judged for its ability to further the Fair Trade ethos of reducing the space that exists between producer and consumer (Nicholls & Opal 2005). Participants infer that this process has the ability to address Strong's (1997:35) *'barrier of consumer recognition'* by introducing the provenance of a *'real'* human/social element into the *'marketing agenda.'* Indications also suggest that the producer/consumer meets demonstrate Fairtrade Towns fulfilling requests made by Nicholls (2004); Lubke (2006); Doherty & Tranchell (2007); Davies et al. (2009); Low & Davenport (2005; 2005(b); 2006;) and Golding (2009) to place the developmental and political message of Fair Trade at the core of its marketing proposition.

"I've been closely involved with two cocoa farmers from Ghana who visited Merthyr as Fairtrade Foundation producers and this year we had a banana grower from the West Indies come to Merthyr... Speaking to them and learning directly from them has been fantastic. This year we took the banana grower from Dominica to local schools, one of which is a Fairtrade school"

and one is ready to go, so she just spoke to the kids about growing bananas and how basically them buying Fairtrade products, directly improves their lives...it was great."

Sustainability Officer (Merthyr Tydfil)

It is therefore argued that producer events in Fairtrade Towns maximise opportunities to introduce producers directly to consumers in the belief that the impact of '*learning first hand*' about real life Fairtrade experiences helps educate and subsequently pressure consumers and organisations to '*make the move*' and embrace Fairtrade consumption.¹⁴³

"It means...well essentially I've met people who have basically benefited from Fairtrade, I think it's an excellent standard...it does what it says on the tin really...it is Fairtrade. It means some people in the developing world can send their kids to school and get clean water in their villages and basically raise their standard of life."

Sustainability Officer (Merthyr Tydfil)

"It is always useful for people who don't perhaps have the chance to travel to see these individuals even if they are not necessarily involved with Fairtrade at least it makes people aware of how people live in the country."

Volunteer (Bridgenorth)

Fairtrade Town events viewed through a marketing lens appear to have much in common with conferences and exhibitions, as the activities that take place resemble aspects of pressure and support that exist in the traditional formats of such events. For example, the demonstration and opportunity to try and buy Fairtrade products and the creation of a place where organisations and groups are introduced to commercial Fairtrade suppliers comfortably resembles a commercial exhibition. Producer presentations and question and answer sessions are recognised for contextualising the lived experiences of Fairtrade producers and are considered to follow a conference format not too dissimilar to a keynote speaker with greater emphasis placed on applying pressure on both individuals and organisations to support Fairtrade consumption.

Whilst significance is given to specific Fairtrade conferences and exhibitions, narratives in the data reveal a number of events that have taken place within specific

¹⁴³ These events, Whatmore & Thorne (1997:301) would argue '*strengthen relationships amongst formally passive actants in commercial networks – the producers and consumers through a mode of ordering connectivity which works from non-hierarchical relationships framed by fairness.*'

places. Schools, colleges and universities have held Fairtrade fashion shows, hosted Fairtrade producer lectures and run a number of demonstration and awareness raising events.

“Basically, it started with Fairtrade Fortnight coming up some months ahead and we thought, well what can we do? Who’s going to bring this to the attention of school children? And we decided on a poster competition so some of us went to various schools to ask them if they would like to come. We would talk about Fairtrade and then they would have an opportunity to make some posters, and do the logo. Quite a few individuals took up on this and then they got the children to do the doing and then we said we’ll arrange for the Mayor to select the final three, and then we would, the winning poster, we’d have printed off and then we’d distribute it around about a one hundred and odd outlets.”

Councillor (Worcester)

Workplaces have run Fairtrade days where canteen menus are devoted to products made from Fairtrade ingredients. Community groups have provided opportunity for Fairtrade Town steering group members to present and chair discussions. Libraries, tourist information centres and other public spaces such as leisure centres have provided space where Fairtrade product sales, displays and promotional material has been disseminated and displayed.

“We have also worked quite closely with the waterfront museum. We have held quite a few events. For the past two years we have held Fairtrade fashion shows there and we had one this year that was run by a student.”

Sustainability Centre Manager (Swansea)

These events demonstrate Fairtrade Towns’ ability to enact everyday spaces and places not normally associated with sales and consumption, to become a media that connects everyday life in a place to Fairtrade consumption. These findings concur with Goodman et al.’s (2010.13) suggestion that consumption has the ability to; *‘actively construct and change spaces and places which, in turn, recursively affect consumption practice.’*

“Another area I’ve gone into recently is libraries and some others have gone into libraries as well and that is another way to raise profile with talks and stalls... To actually be allowed to sell in a library seemed quite a change in philosophy really. We were in central for Fairtrade Fortnight, not that we sold anything, but we had samples there. They have allowed me to sell both food and crafts in three different libraries.”

Teacher (Swansea)

Fairtrade Towns have also created a 'place' for themselves in the various social, cultural and heritage events that occur within most towns. Several narratives reinforce the value attributed to Fairtrade '*having a presence*' at these events, expressing them as offering an opportunity to increase awareness and support consumers who wish to find out more about Fairtrade product availability and taste. Many Fairtrade Towns have set up stalls in farmers' markets, global markets and other community fetes etc.

"Local produce markets are one place where they are open to us having a stall and the conditions are right to do so."

Sustainability Officer (Merthyr Tydfil)

The justification for having these stalls is never associated with making money, the idea is that they act as a supporting role and offer consumers exposure to Fairtrade products, and advice on what they can buy and from where. It is a shared belief amongst participants that this exposure will result in consumers making small changes in their purchasing behaviour the next time they shop in the supermarket.

"We've got a stall in the farmers market which is once every month, so we are able to sustain that though...it doesn't pay for itself in terms of the money it makes on its own, which goes to charity. But through the help of Fairtrade Wales and the local authority we have been able to maintain the presence in the town centre and it's done once a month, which is quite a high profile thing, which is good, I think to definitely get the message out."

Trade Craft Rep (Swansea)

Having a Fairtrade presence at the various events that occur within most towns across the UK is therefore seen as an opportunity to support interested consumers by affording Fairtrade Town groups the opportunity to offer pedagogical advice on Fairtrade product ranges and local availability. One can conceptualise the marketing dynamic of this function as a form of 'referral,' whereby potential consumers once introduced to Fairtrade products are subsequently referred to other distribution outlets where they can '*easily*' change their purchasing and consumption habits in favour of Fairtrade. These practices are akin to a marketing dynamic primarily concerned with social learning (Jackson, 2004) and community-based social marketing (McKenzie-Mohr & Smith, 1999) as the value of demonstration and personal communication is

respected for its ability to change consumers' behaviour. In supporting a multitude of Fairtrade distributors, Fairtrade Town participants appear to understand the holistic value of a networked approach to marketing, an approach that they believe helps maximise the developmental impact Fairtrade consumption can have on 'distant' producer communities.

"Well I'm sure the stalls we did with the tasters, we have, over the years, done quite a lot of tasting stalls and I think we have introduced quite a lot of people who would buy Fairtrade in Worcester."

The Co-operative Manager (Worcester)

Several sources point to Fairtrade Towns demonstrating innovation in transforming spaces that had no particular meaning ascribed to them such as the countryside and the pedestrian walkways of many a high street into meaningful places defined through the context of Fairtrade promotion. Garstang for example, have incorporated a Fairtrade Town trail and Fairtrade treasure hunt into the town's well-established walking festival. While other towns have run Fairtrade taste challenges in their high street enticing potential consumers into choosing 'their favourite' between Fairtrade and non-Fairtrade products. Event testimonials indicate a recognition for their ability to provide an opportunity to promote Fairtrade consumption and support organisations that sell and produce Fairtrade products. This is an activity that, in the main, results in new, existing and interested consumers being directed towards other local distributors functioning in a Fairtrade Town's network.

These events are suggested to have created marketing opportunities by giving particular 'event places' a new Fairtrade meaning resulting from participants being able to interact with Fairtrade products, people and places. For example, going on the Garstang Fairtrade walk during the annual Garstang walking festival you will be introduced to a member of the Garstang Fairtrade Town steering group and the places where significant events in Garstang's recent Fairtrade history took place, you will also be given some Fairtrade chocolate. These interactions are recognised for creating new places where Fairtrade can be marketed through an association, to activities that are deeply rooted in the socio cultural activities and history of a 'place.'

5.11 Plurality 9: Landscapes/Townscapes

Fairtrade Town status is thought to have enabled conditions that have resulted in a change of context for some of the physical artefacts and specific spaces of many townscapes. Road signs, flower beds, poster and banner displays and Fairtrade flags flying from various organisations are all inferred to have become effective media for promoting and sponsoring both the Fairtrade Town and its objective of increasing Fairtrade consumption.

Some Fairtrade Towns ‘*proudly*’ present their Fairtrade status on road signs that greet travellers at the entrances of towns, cities and villages across the UK. These signs now carry a further statement that indicates that it is a Fairtrade Town people are entering. Indications suggest that it is not an uncommon sight to see many Fairtrade Towns demonstrate their commitment to the movement by displaying it on road signs, usually preserved to identify a given location and its history.

“I think that it brings a little sense of pride to some people, we have been lucky enough to persuade our town council to put a big sign at every entrance to every road into the town. I think that is six roads into the town, and we got a massive sign saying first Fairtrade town in Shropshire, which is quite an accolade really.”

NGO Volunteer worker (Bridgenorth)

Flags, banners and even flower beds in the design of the Fairtrade label are referred to as a common sight in many Fairtrade Towns and participants indicate their role as a media to visually remind ‘*us*’ of a town’s commitment to Fairtrade. These findings support the suggestion of Barnett et al. (2011.191) and it is clear that participants view the display of the Fairtrade logo in their town’s landscapes and signs as ‘*a symbolic re-evaluation of the campaign and its success to residents and visitors.*’

“We received our status on the 8th March 2005, and I think in early June somebody emailed me and said have you been into Hope Park in the last few days? I went to a particular part of the park that I had been directed to and there was a flower bed laid out with the Fairtrade symbol. I was just completely gobsmacked by that, and I was so excited and I thought, ‘I have to find a gardener.’ And so it was late in the morning so I fished around in the park and walked all over the place and found a gardener. I said to him, ‘I’ve just seen that flower bed.’ and I said, ‘who did it?’ He said, ‘I did.’ So I

thought, 'you know, it was only 2005,' but I thought, 'we've come a long way.' Here are the Hope Park gardeners working on their own initiative."

NGO Worker (Keswick)

However, despite such commandeered displays of civic pride being expressed through different media to promote Fairtrade, Kline (2000.35) pens a precautionary note reminding us that this can be taken too far and disapprovingly conceptualises the process as *'the Branding of the Cityscape.'*¹⁴⁴

"Fairtrade in Keswick, when you walk down a street with tea shops and coffee shops and there are signs in the window, there is one particular street, you know, where it isn't just one or two, you seem to come across the sign all the way down the street. Now that's an overstatement, you can't miss it. Then you walk along the street, where there are guest houses, and the Fairtrade symbol that's in the window, so it is true if you keep your eyes open you can't miss it."

NGO Worker (Keswick)

However, the prevailing sense of social justice associated with Fairtrade appears to help avoid the pitfalls described by Kline (2000)¹⁴⁵ and therefore the aforementioned media of landscape appears to act as a symbolic visualisation of the connection a place has to Fairtrade consumption.

"I suppose it provides certain things that you wouldn't have otherwise. One example is the flower bed with the Fairtrade mark outside the Castle. And that is really good because it's an official sort of thing."

Shop Owner (Cardiff)

Additionally, 'media of landscape' are also suggested to act as a visual cue that can apply civic pressure to increase conformity to Fairtrade consumption through a combination of *'place belonging'* (Barnett et al., 2011.189), and community-based social marketing that motivates Fairtrade consumption via visualising *'what those around them do'* (McKenzie-Mohr & Smith, 1999), as a marketing dynamic in its own right.

¹⁴⁴ Kline (2000.38) argues that corporations' aggressive pursuit of brand identity has resulted in the *'branding of entire neighbourhoods and cities'* suggesting the process can result in a *'lose lose situation'* due to people feeling a *'sense of alienation'* from the areas and events they once belonged to.

¹⁴⁵ We should also note that Kline's work is based on a phenomenon that is driven by corporations and not the community. This may also prove to be another important factor in the acceptance of the Fairtrade label permeating a town's landscape.

“I was taking photos the other day, the council have planted a Fairtrade flower bed outside the castle, so it’s in the shape of the Fairtrade logo and it’s just coming into bloom now and it looks very nice there. It’s very much, nothing was paid for, the council agreed to do it and it’s very nice and it’s there slap bang outside Cardiff Castle, which is probably over the millennium stadium the biggest icon in the city as far as tourism goes. So, that’s really good to see. I think there is obviously the publicity side of things, which is always good in a city that obviously seeks out tourism and seeks out that kind of trade. To have the publicity of a Fairtrade city, we are the first one and it’s a city that takes that into our heart, defiantly. I think that can give a very good positive impact on people and they may think, ‘that’s nice that that city does that,’ whereas nobody else may do and then obviously for businesses in the city if they are selling Fairtrade and finding that’s a boost to them as well. I think it all sort of links into boosting commerce in the middle of the city as well.”

Student Union (Cardiff)

5.12 Plurality 10: literature and copy

The prevailing convention in many Fairtrade Towns appears to be their ability to create and instigate a number of marketing communication displays, copy and literature that contextualises Fairtrade promotion to a specific ‘place.’ Literature and copy produced by Fairtrade Towns is understood to help reinforce the promotion and consumption of Fairtrade products through traditional marketing communication media such as websites, leaflets, posters, adverts and public relations.

Many Fairtrade Towns have their own online presence, which varies in context to reflect the unique makeup of the place it represents. Websites, although varying in function and sophistication, are recognised to offer a wealth of pedagogical information that connects the political message of Fairtrade to what can and has been achieved in a specific town. Websites are sought to become a media that supports the many organisations who actively participate in Fairtrade Towns, helping promote their Fairtrade actions and activities to anybody who visits the site.

Many Fairtrade Towns appear to have produced Fairtrade directories that offer organisations who supply Fairtrade products in a Fairtrade Town the opportunity to be listed for free thus supporting their venture both online and in print. Fairtrade directories are recognised for their ability to identify Fairtrade suppliers in a particular town and are noted for their ability to inform people who wish to seek out where to get certain Fairtrade products locally. However, despite this recognition, many

participants have questioned its marketing value and have identified printing costs, distribution problems, constant pressure to update and the continuing question regarding who should be included, as potential barriers to continuing the process. It is understood that the mainstream adoption of Fairtrade by companies such as Cadbury, Starbucks and Tate and Lyle has made Fairtrade directories impossible to manage and they are becoming a redundant process as a result of Fairtrade's own success.

Whilst it is recognised that some printed promotional materials are problematic, many have a wide circulation in Fairtrade Towns, much of which, as previously mentioned, are those produced by the Fairtrade Foundation. Fairtrade Towns are understood to use the central support of The Fairtrade Foundation to provide printed promotional material that supplements many other place-based marketing campaigns. Many of the public spaces and places that make up a Fairtrade Town are receptive to displaying posters or window stickers produced by the Fairtrade Foundation.

"You walk down the street and you will notice this shop that's proudly displaying its Fairtrade sign in the window. You think, 'wow I wouldn't have expected to see that here.'"

Student Union (Cardiff)

These displays connect Fairtrade consumption to a specific place (café, restaurant etc), and are suggested to offer instant Fairtrade recognition that goes someway towards promoting a normative consumer behaviour that favours Fairtrade consumption resulting from being 'in place.' Displays in Fairtrade Towns appear to also help consumers when 'in place' visualise *'what those around them do'* McKenzie-Mohr & Smith, (1999), suggesting that this process is once again akin to what McKenzie-Mohr & Smith (1999) would attribute to a community-based social marketing dynamic.

"I was very pleased to see, when I came for my interview, to see a Fairtrade sticker saying we support Fairtrade."

Student Union (Cardiff)

Public Relations (normally press releases) that subsequently get published in the local press are regularly sought and successfully disseminated in Fairtrade Towns. The volume of so-called '*free local publicity*' that appears in the local press is recognised for its ability to effectively link Fairtrade stories '*occurring locally.*' Public relations in Fairtrade Towns appear to have the ability to generate mass through networked networks (Hutchens, 2009), with the local press and are known to contextualise in copy, Fairtrade consumption and promotion to the day-to-day events that occur within the town.

"If you read the local paper you can't miss Fairtrade, because there is always something to read about it, if you want to read it."
NGO Worker (Keswick)

Many towns produce promotional literature aimed at attracting visitors or informing visitors of what to see and do while in the vicinity which are usually described as 'visitor guides.' It is indicated that many Fairtrade Towns have managed to have a presence in these guides, informing readers of the connection between Fairtrade and the place they are visiting. This suggests that marketing communications that aim to promote the uniqueness of a specific place have been seized upon by Fairtrade Towns who have managed to connect the developmental meaning and message of Fairtrade consumption to the sense of place promoted to tourists and visitors alike.¹⁴⁶

5.13 Conclusion

Fairtrade Towns appear to demonstrate an ability to identify spaces and places that previously may not have been recognised as having any potential to function as a marketing dynamic. The ten pluralities of place theorised in this chapter demonstrate the Fairtrade Towns movement's ability to enact these spaces and places to become media capable of effectively marketing Fairtrade.

Indications in the data suggest that the only way many of these 'pluralities of place' have been enacted to function in such a way is through the social capital Fairtrade Town members have. The chapter signifies that only 'locals' with deep-rooted

¹⁴⁶ One can see this strategy also being conceptualised as a community-based social marketing tool, as visitors being 'in place' (Barnet et al., 2011) as close as possible to what those do around them do (McKenzie-Mohr & Smith (2009).

connections in the place they call home¹⁴⁷ could achieve access to resources, spaces and places to achieve what many Fairtrade Towns have. Pertinent to this study therefore is the fact that Fairtrade Towns have offered participants the ability to be empowered to promote the consumption of Fairtrade as best suits the place they represent. The marketing dynamics of Fairtrade Towns presented in this chapter appear to operate in a number of unique ways that are afforded by the advantage of ability to becoming embodied in the social construct of cities, towns, villages and even nations. Fairtrade Towns' understanding and practical application of a marketing dynamic that is conceptualised as 'embodied in place' has benefited from a local entrepreneurial dynamic (Hutchens, 2009) to develop social, physical and knowledge-based resources, along with a visual presence well beyond the access and scope of mainstream marketing consultancies and other commercial organisations.

This chapter empirically demonstrates how Hutchen's (2009) suggestion that the power of grassroots micro level activity and social capital to network in '*highly advanced entrepreneurial ways*' is played out through a place-based marketing dynamic (Nicholls & Opal, 2005). A Fairtrade Town's marketing dynamic emerges from this chapter as uniquely utilising the '*container spaces*' of the place people call home (Amin, 2004 (a)) to expand the role of Harrison et al.'s (2005) individual ethical consumer into acts of consumer citizenship. These acts witness 'normal people' in Fairtrade Towns performing marketing functions by using the places they occupy to proactively partake in effective public action and to get involved in the life and concerns of their community (McGregor, 2002). As such, the marketing dynamics of a Fairtrade Town conceptualised through the pluralities of place emerge as a unique multidiscipline concept outlining that Fairtrade Town's marketing dynamic operates through place and in the spirit of actor network theory (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Whatmore & Thorne 1997) and community-based social marketing (McKenzie Mohr & Smith 1999).

Just as Hutchens (2009) suggests, this study further supports the fact that Fairtrade Town participants' locally rooted connections have gifted the Fairtrade Towns movement with social capital and the ability to network networks, helping Fairtrade

¹⁴⁷ Home is conceptualised at this junction from the perspective of Amin (2004.33 (a)) who describes it as '*container spaces for territorial entities, local economic systems and regimes of regulation*'

Towns scale up or enact for the first time each of the ten pluralities of place represented in this chapter.

As well as discovering how Fairtrade Towns have enacted the ten pluralities of place into their marketing paradigm, this chapter also outlines how each of the ten pluralities of place has individually functioned as a marketing dynamic. Findings in this chapter therefore present a unique empirical insight into each plurality of place. However, what the chapter also reveals is a number of key dimensions emerging that demonstrate what each plurality of place contributes to the marketing dynamic of a Fairtrade Town. The chapter identifies eleven different marketing dimensions functioning to promote and consume more Fairtrade products in the pluralities of place in a Fairtrade Town:

1. Physical Location: Data from this study specifies how the marketing dynamic of a Fairtrade Town is dependent upon employing the physical spaces and places that people occupy, move through and create, to generate Fairtrade promotion and consumption opportunities. This chapter bears evidence to support an understanding that Fairtrade Towns utilise what Amin (2004.33) conceptualises as '*container spaces*' of territorial entities, these being economic systems (the high street, supermarkets, cafes, town centres etc.), regimes of regulation (council offices, public buildings, churches, schools etc.) and homes to market Fairtrade.

2. Social Connections: Just like the work of Hutchens (2009) and Nicholls & Opal (2005), this chapter concurs with the understanding that social capital has been networked to its maximum to facilitate marketing action, diffuse promotional information and increase Fairtrade Towns' marketing capability. The chapter gives an empirical insight into how 'normal people' through their social capital and distant social connections have used their influence to promote and valorise Fairtrade products and helped Fairtrade Towns gain access to places, resources and knowledge to further its '*capacity to facilitate action*' (Hutchens, 2009. 78).

3. Valorisation: Both the people and places active in Fairtrade Towns marketing dynamic emerge from this study to show signs of being able to valorise Fairtrade consumption and promotion. The valorisation of Fairtrade products and Fairtrade Towns marketing functions emerges firstly from the trust people have in each other at a local level as professionals (teachers, church leaders or civil society organisation workforce) or professional places (schools, universities or church etc.) It is additionally found to be valorised through the symbolic support and democratic process of civic society (Alexander & Nicholls, 2006; Malpass et al., 2007), and the support at a national level by high street businesses such as supermarkets and other retail outlets.

4. Consumption opportunities: This chapter provides empirical insight into how places in Fairtrade Towns have been developed to maximise Fairtrade consumption. Consuming Fairtrade products is found to, not only add to the revenue and developmental objective of Fairtrade, but it is also recognised for its ability to introduce new consumers to partake in further and future Fairtrade purchasing and consumption. Many of the pluralities of place mentioned in this chapter are therefore agreeable and even proactive in encouraging Fairtrade consumption to happen '*whenever and however it can*' within the confines of their place.¹⁴⁸

5. Purchase or sales opportunities: A key and obvious marketing function of a Fairtrade Town is to develop distribution outlets and sales opportunities for Fairtrade products. Fairtrade Towns as such, make every effort to improve the availability of Fairtrade products, moving their marketing dynamic beyond the traditional high street (Low & Davenport, 2007). This study identifies that Fairtrade products are sold in places not normally associated with retail commerce.¹⁴⁹ It additionally identifies that Fairtrade products are available to

¹⁴⁸ For example, Fairtrade Town members are serving Fairtrade tea in their homes, school meetings are serving Fairtrade flapjacks and Fairtrade wine is being used in church communion services.

¹⁴⁹ Places identified in this study were churches and libraries.

purchase in public buildings, workplaces,¹⁵⁰ farmers markets and at various other special events.

6. Education: The Fairtrade Town that emerges from this study understands the power of education to promote the developmental message of Fairtrade consumption. In its quest to connect the message of Fairtrade to the populous, Fairtrade Towns are reported to introduce Fairtrade education and social learning into some of the relevant pluralities of place that emerged from this study. As such, this study discovered that some of the ten pluralities of place represented in this study host and facilitate the process of education in a number of ways. Empirical findings describe places where ideological conversations, social learning, sermons and formal lessons centred on the topic of Fairtrade take place. These activities have been conceptualised in this study as a marketing activity, as the desired response from these activities is to ultimately lead people into becoming proactive consumer citizens (McGregor, 2002), who both consume and champion Fairtrade products whenever and wherever they can.

7. Communication: Communication regarding the personal¹⁵¹ and developmental benefits of consuming Fairtrade is again viewed as a marketing dynamic that Fairtrade Towns use to lead people into becoming proactive consumer citizens (McGregor, 2002). Communication in this chapter is represented in a variety of ways, taking place in each of the pluralities of place identified in this chapter. Communication as a marketing dynamic is conceptualised in this study, not only as informal conversation akin to word-of-mouth marketing, but also as acts of symbolic displays of fetishisation, formal written communication, the physical display of poster, pledges, Fairtrade flower beds and many more.

8. Policy and governance: This study shows how Fairtrade Towns have used organisation policies and procedures to make Fairtrade consumption happen

¹⁵⁰ For example, Fairtrade coffee vending machines were reported to be found in council offices and Fairtrade bananas were sold in the school tuck shops

¹⁵¹ Personal benefits are viewed through the lens of a consumer satisfying their individual needs and desires through consuming a product they deem fit for purpose.

within the confines of its place and its operations. Fairtrade policies are used to govern Fairtrade consumption and promotion within the confines and duress of participating organisations. These policies are discovered to act as a means of organising and governing the context in which people '*when in place*' make their purchasing and consumption decisions (Thaler & Sunstein, 2009). The various organisations mentioned in this study who have adopted Fairtrade policies are therefore attributed with becoming '*choice architects*' within the confines of their place by editing purchase and consumption choices for their workforce, visitors, customers or students in favour of Fairtrade (Thaler & Sunstein, 2009; Malpass et al., 2007).

9. Physical and knowledge based resources: This chapter demonstrates Fairtrade Towns benefiting from steering group members' '*place belonging*' amplifying the capability of their social capital to access a network of physical and knowledge based resources¹⁵² that facilitate and augment its marketing dynamic (Putnum, 2000; Hutchens, 2009).

10. Normalising behaviour: Just as policies and procedures (mentioned above) are used to shepherd consumers into normative behaviours of consumption when they find themselves in particular places, more subtle forms of marketing thought to achieve this position are also prevalent in Fairtrade Towns. Data in this study suggests that the constant promotion of Fairtrade in-situated in specific places presents Fairtrade purchasing and consumption as the normal thing to do there. Constant promotion of Fairtrade in places is argued to happen on a number of levels, for example the visual presence of Fairtrade in a town's landscape or the display of a window sign or poster in a café. However, both are believed to have the ability to lead to normalising behaviour. Evidence in this study suggests this happens as a result of people symbolically interacting with the places that present these forms of communication and interpret their meanings as a signal that purchasing or

¹⁵² Social capital and networks are found to afford the movement access to a number of specific resources capable of increasing the capacity of a Fairtrade Town's marketing dynamic. These range from people's personal time, people with specific skills and knowledge, places, premises, locations and landscapes to databases, shared experiences and Fairtrade products.

consuming Fairtrade products when in certain places (towns, cafes, schools etc.) is a cultural norm.

11. Time and occasion: A number of time-place findings emerge from this study to suggest that place and time are intrinsically linked to some of the marketing dynamics operational in a Fairtrade Town. There are many examples of the importance of time becoming part of a place's ability to promote and consume Fairtrade. Fairtrade Fortnight for example is mentioned in dispatches as a point in time when many places organise events. Lunch times and meetings in many businesses, schools and universities create the opportunity to sell or to consume Fairtrade products. Days of worship become times when faith-based organisations can disseminate the message of Fairtrade. Even special occasions such as birthdays and Christmas are thought to create a marketing opportunity in the 'private places' of Fairtrade Towns through the giving of Fairtrade gifts.

Whilst each of the eleven dimensions introduced above are explored in depth in the relevant sections of this chapter, Fig 5.0 *The Dimensions of the Pluralities of Place in Fairtrade Towns' Marketing Dynamic* attempts to outline the significance attributed to each dimension by summarising the shared and different contributions that each pluralities of place contributes to the marketing dynamic in a Fairtrade Town. It subsequently compares and rates all of the eleven dimensions above to each of the ten pluralities of place, identifying their significance in contributing to the overall marketing dynamic of a Fairtrade Town.

Fig 5.0 The Dimensions of the Pluralities of Place in Fairtrade Towns Marketing Dynamic

Dimensions Pluralities Of Place	Physical location	Social connections	Valorisation	Consumption opportunities	Purchase / sales opportunities	Education	Communication	Policy/ Governance	Physical/ Mental resources	Normalisi ng behaviour	Time/ occasion
The Private places of family and friendship	Significant Home	High Significance Family, friends & acquaintances	Significant Trust through who you know & social capital	Low Significance Giving of gifts Serving of Fairtrade products in house	No Significance	Low Significance Ideological conversations and social learning	Significant Symbolic display of Fairtrade Consumer lead conversations Word of mouth	No Significance	Significant Personal time	No Significance	Significant Giving of gifts on special occasions eg: birthdays and Christmas The Everyday
Places of education	Significant Schools Universities Colleges	Significant Meso level Steering group	Significant Through education and institutional acceptance	Significant Fairtrade served in canteens / meetings etc	Low Significance Fairtrade sold in shops and by pupils	High Significance Connecting Fairtrade to younger audiences (consumers of the future) Fairtrade taught in lesson under sustainability and global citizenship	Significant Fairtrade activities such as promotional events like fashion shows, stalls etc.	High Significance Fairtrade policies governing Fairtrade consumption and promotion	Significant Teachers and school resources such as classrooms and	Significant The sole supply of Fairtrade in many day to day situations Consistent promotion of Fairtrade presenting it as the normal thing to do. Student/ pupil lead	Significant Fairtrade Fortnight for events School meal times and meetings for consumption

Places of civic authority	<p>Significant</p> <p>Council offices and other public offices</p> <p>Council owned centres such as theatres, community centres etc</p>	<p>Significant</p> <p>Using their link with the wider community</p> <p>Opens door to other resources and organisations at a meso and macro level</p>	<p>High Significance</p> <p>Symbolic support</p> <p>Democratic response as a result of grass roots development</p> <p>Opens door to other resources and organisations at a meso and macro level</p>	<p>Significant</p> <p>Fairtrade served in canteens / meetings etc</p>	<p>Low Significance</p> <p>Fairtrade sold in council canteens</p>	<p>Significant</p> <p>Linked to sustainability policies and development aims.</p>	<p>High Significance</p> <p>Support/organisation / running of events</p> <p>Newsletters and web pages disseminated to population</p>	<p>High Significance</p> <p>Fairtrade policies governing Fairtrade consumption and promotion in council offices and other premises</p>	<p>High Significance</p> <p>Data bases</p> <p>News letters</p> <p>Sustainability officers / employees</p> <p>Premises</p> <p>Finance</p> <p>Locations in town</p>	<p>Significant</p> <p>The sole supply of Fairtrade in many day to day situations</p> <p>Consistent promotion of Fairtrade presenting it as the normal thing to do.</p> <p>Citizen/ council lead</p>	<p>Low Significance</p> <p>Fairtrade Fortnight for events</p> <p>meal times and meetings for consumption</p>
Places of Worship	<p>Significant</p> <p>Churches</p> <p>Chapels</p> <p>etc</p>	<p>No Significance</p>	<p>Low Significance</p> <p>Church leaders and congregation adding validity</p>	<p>Significant</p> <p>Fairtrade served in meetings, worship groups etc</p>	<p>Significant</p> <p>Fairtrade sold in church through stalls and Tradecraft reps</p>	<p>Significant</p> <p>Linked to the teaching of the Gospel in sermons and teachings etc</p>	<p>Significant</p> <p>Symbolic through consumption of chaplains</p> <p>Word of Mouth</p>	<p>Significant</p> <p>Fairtrade policies governing Fairtrade consumption and promotion in places of worship</p>	<p>Significant</p> <p>Churches and their grounds</p> <p>Church staff and men of the cloth</p>	<p>Significant</p> <p>The sole supply of Fairtrade in many day to day situations</p> <p>Consistent promotion of Fairtrade presenting it as the normal thing to do.</p> <p>Congregation / Chaplin lead</p>	<p>High Significance</p> <p>Days of worship (Sunday)</p> <p>Fairtrade Fortnight</p>

Civil Society	No Significance	Low Significance Established connections of Civil Society organisations used.	High Significance The support of key well established Civil Society organisations such as Christian Aid etc	Low Significance Fairtrade products / stock (for promotion) at events	Low Significance Fairtrade products / stock (for promotion through trial) at events	Significant Share experience and knowledge of campaigning Presentations to groups and lobbying powers	Significant Share experience and knowledge of campaigning Piggy back opportunities for Fairtrade for example on leaflets etc Placing Fairtrade logos etc into landscape	No Significance	High Significance Share experience and knowledge of campaigning Data bases of donators and volunteers Staff and volunteers support and engagement Fairtrade products / stock (for promotion)	Significant Keep campaign focus on Fairtrade certified products	Significant Fairtrade Fortnight Various other campaigns such as Make Poverty History or Child labour awareness
Community Groups	Significant Where group meets	No Significance	No Significance	Significant Fairtrade served in meetings and events etc	Low Significance Fairtrade sold or sampled in some meetings and events	No Significance	Low Significance Group discussions and Fairtrade presentations	Significant Consumption governed by group	No Significance	No Significance	Low Significance During meetings
The Mainstream High Street	High Significance High street stores Supermarkets Catering (café etc)	No Significance	High Significance Branded support of Fairtrade products Increased availability and visibility	High Significance Increased available in high street catering establishments	High Significance Increased availability in terms of products, and places.	Low Significance Via point of sale	High Significance Increased in store visibility through wider availability in terms of products, and places.	No Significance	Significant More floor / shelf space given	No Significance	Low Significance Fairtrade Fortnight promotion is increased

Community Events	Significant In Towns	No Significance	High Significance Meeting Fairtrade producers Trying Fairtrade products	Low Significance Trying Fairtrade products	High Significance Sales for education and communication purposes (to refer interested consumers to other stores)	High Significance Meeting Fairtrade producers and others. Opportunities to discuss and be presented with the developmental message of Fairtrade	High Significance Trying Fairtrade products Fairtrade presence in most Town events (even if not that related)	No Significance	Significant Fairtrade producers Civic / Civil Society supported via insurance reduced rates physical help stalls etc	No Significance	Significant Fairtrade Fortnight Farmers markets Other key dates when towns hold their events and festivals
Landscapes/ Townscapes	Significant In Towns	No Significance	Significant Demonstrates Towns support	No Significance	No Significance	No Significance	High Significance Symbolic displays of Fairtrade Logos and support of town	No Significance	Significant Town signs on roads Gardens Workforce (for example gardeners)	No Significance	No Significance
Representations of place	No Significance	No Significance	No Significance	No Significance	No Significance	Significant Public Relations in local / regional and national press On-line Fairtrade Directories Public Relations in local / regional and national press	Significant Fairtrade communicated as part of the Towns marketing proposition in Promotional leaflets Cultural leaflets On-line Fairtrade Directories Public Relations in local / regional and national press	No Significance	Significant PR Copy writer volunteers Local authority publications Local authority web site	No Significance	No Significance

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

6.0: Conclusion

This study began by outlining academic shortcomings in understanding and theorising Fairtrade Towns, suggesting that the area, despite its rapid emergence was under-researched and suffering from exceptionally limited empirical insights. It proceeded to suggest that the activities of Fairtrade Towns need to be conceptualised as a unique marketing dynamic, recognised for making a significant contribution to advancing Fairtrade awareness, demand and consumption across the UK and beyond. As such, the literature review began by reviewing literature dedicated to Fair Trade, paying particular attention to academic research dedicated to Fairtrade marketing. Chapter 1 and chapter 2 demonstrate an incremental reviewing process that helped unearth a connection to a number of emergent disciplines that proved relevant to the study. This process introduced a number of key concepts and theories into the review and made early strides in contextualising their ability to function as part of a Fairtrade Towns marketing dynamic. These concepts and theories included work dedicated to areas including; social capital, actor network theory, social marketing, social learning, sustainable consumption, consumer citizenship, space and place, geographies of consumption, and new consumer movements. These all emerged from the literature review process to become threads in, what could be described as, a rich tapestry of disciplines and concepts upon which a comprehensive, inductive, empirical understanding of the marketing dynamics of a Fairtrade Town was developed.

The literature review confirms that the Fairtrade Towns movement is both under conceptualised and has extremely limited empirical insights devoted to it.

However, chapter 1 and the early empirical insights and conceptualisations of Fairtrade Towns presented in chapter 2 are subsequently suggested to aid epistemological advancements and originality to the emerging academic field of Fair Trade marketing, consumption and Fairtrade Towns.

Chapter 1 amalgamates for the first time, Fair Trade literature dedicated to capturing, conceptualising and critically evaluating the marketing functions and dynamics of Fairtrade. It synthesises, in one body of literature, the conflicting ideologies, challenges faced and marketing strategies pursued by the Fair Trade Movement in attempting to mainstream Fair Trade consumption. As such, the chapter determines that many of the marketing functions, principles and practices pursued by the Fair Trade movement are deeply scrutinised for their suitability and ability to maintaining

the developmental message and goals of Fair Trade. The chapter suggests that some media are more effective in instilling trust and credibility in Fair Trade, helping to preserve its 'purity' while also increasing sales. It also makes preliminary strides to conceptualise the notion that the Fairtrade Towns movement and its place-based marketing potentially demonstrate a greater ability than other mainstream marketing activities (other than labelling) to maintain and improve both trust and credibility in the Fair Trade Movement and Fairtrade products .

Analysing the incremental development of Fair Trade marketing through its three phases (Golding & Peattie, 2005; Nicholls & Opal, 2005), chapters 1 and 2 also suggest that Fairtrade Towns represent unique place-based marketing dynamic. This is a dynamic that emerges from the literature as a multidisciplinary concept of 'place,' one that embraces academic insight from sociology, geography, consumption, consumerism and marketing. Fairtrade Towns are subsequently presented as a place where the private, public, civic, civil, individual and collective are networked and united under the banner of a Fairtrade Town in a way that affords consumers frequent exposure to both Fairtrade products and its development message in their everyday social interactions (Alexander & Nicholls, 2006; Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Low & Davenport, 2009; Hutchens, 2009). By viewing place as a social construct used to promote Fairtrade consumption, it is argued that place in the marketing mix is evolving into a multiple of functions and meanings that move far beyond the marketing norms of distribution and a simple point on a map. Additionally, the literature leads us to understand that Fairtrade Towns realise the benefits of a collective approach to consumption, through the movement's determination to penetrate '*institutional consumption*,' policy and practice (Malpass et al, 2007; Barnett et al., 2011). Drilling down further to develop early conceptualisations of Fairtrade Towns, chapters 1 and 2 also suggest that Fairtrade Towns can be viewed as a place that demonstrates its responsibility for distant others by understanding the role ethical consumption plays in the '*spatiality of globalisation*' (Amin, 2001). Chapter 1, for example, uses the literature to argue that consumer purchase and consumption habits in Fairtrade Towns are valued for their ability to '*act at a distance*' (Whatmore & Thorne, 1997), demonstrating a social responsibility for distant producers from the developing world.

Empirical evidence synthesised in chapter 2 of this study argues that conceptualisations and understandings of place in the Fair Trade marketing mix needs to be extended to encompass the complex dynamics associated with the functions of a Fairtrade Town. The literature is used to argue that the dynamics of a Fairtrade Town affords place to be conceptualised for its role and ability to extend its responsibility through marketing dynamics. This shows evidence of influencing patterns and processes of Fairtrade consumption at private, public and civic levels. Such conceptualisations of 'place' marketing dynamics in Fairtrade Towns additionally raised the importance and relevance of ethical, sustainable, political consumers and consumer citizenship discourse to the study. Chapter 1 outlines the relevance of empirically understanding the activities of consumer citizenship, arguing that in Fairtrade Towns, consumer citizenship could be viewed as a vehicle capable of facilitating the development of individual ethical consumption into a wider-embracing, collective place-based activity as represented in its marketing dynamic.

The review of the literature and early empirical insights and conceptualisations exposed shortcoming and a lack of contextualised empirical research and conceptual understandings of Fairtrade Towns. However, despite such short comings, the first two chapters of this study afforded the study to consider the marketing dynamics of a Fairtrade Town from a multidisciplinary perspective. This perspective was synthesised in chapter 2 to create a theoretical framework¹⁵³ that identified three key overlapping academic disciplines; Fair Trade marketing, ethical and sustainable consumption and place. Each of these academic disciplines all proved insightful and relevant in developing detailed empirical understandings of Fairtrade Towns' marketing dynamic and proved necessary to explore further through the seven secondary research questions that emerged from the process. It is to these questions this conclusion now turns, synthesising them to provide a systemic concluding overview of the study's unique findings and contribution to knowledge. This conclusion subsequently embraces the theoretical framework developed in chapter 2 and the inductively produced core categories detailed in chapters 4 & 5 of this thesis.

¹⁵³ See Fig 2.2 Theoretical Framework: *'Viewing the Fairtrade Towns Movement through a Marketing lens'*

6.1: The Place of a Fairtrade Town

In this section the secondary research questions are synthesised and considered to present conclusions based on empirical research that delivers new academic insights, interpretations, conceptualisations and theories.

- What are the meanings attributed to place in Fairtrade Towns?
- How has place been incorporated into the marketing dynamic of a Fairtrade Town?
- What is the role of a Fairtrade Town steering group and how does it function?
- How have consumer citizenship and ethical, political and sustainable consumption manifested themselves in Fairtrade Towns?
- How do social capital and actor network function as marketing dynamics in a Fairtrade Town?

The study's understanding of place as a social construct led to the development of a core category; '*marketing through the pluralities of place.*' From this core category emerged a subsequent number of theories offering both original insight into the marketing dynamics of Fairtrade Towns and new 'conceptual renderings' (Charmaz, 2006), of place, viewed as a unique marketing dynamic that expands established understandings of place in the marketing mix. Meanings attributed to place functioning as a marketing dynamic for Fairtrade Towns confirm, in part, the work of Amin (2002 (a)); Hutchins (2009); Malpass et al. (2007); Barnett et al. (2011) and Nicholls & Opal (2005) discussed in the literature review. Place viewed as a Fairtrade Town firstly emerges as a number of associated private and public 'container spaces' (Amin 2001 (a)), used to promote and develop Fairtrade consumption. Subsequently, the study presents a theory that the marketing dynamics of a Fairtrade Town is played through a number of sequences and dimensions in a town's 'container spaces' that has been conceptualised as ten different 'pluralities of place.' Each of these container spaces are presented as places given that they are empirically interpreted as areas where the social processes (Creswell, 2004; Tuan, 1997) of Fairtrade promotion and consumption defines their meaning and application in the context of this study and the marketing dynamics of Fairtrade Towns. The ten 'pluralities of place' that empirically

emerge to shape the marketing dynamic of a Fairtrade Town are subsequently conceptualised as:

1. The private places of family and friendship
2. Places of education
3. Places of civic authority
4. Places of worship
5. Civil society
6. Community groups
7. The high street
8. Community events
9. Landscapes/ townscapes
10. Representatives of place (literature and copy)

In identifying these ten pluralities, the study theorises that Fairtrade Towns have demonstrated an ability to identify spaces and places that have not been previously recognised for their potential to function as a marketing dynamic. Based on empirical research, the ten pluralities of place are understood to demonstrate a capability to enact everyday social processes that exist in the spaces and places of Fairtrade Towns into unique marketing dynamics. These dynamics are capable of effectively developing Fairtrade promotion and consumption however possible.

Empirical investigation additionally suggests that the ten 'pluralities of place' become active in the marketing dynamic of a Fairtrade Town through the social capital and networks of their steering groups and other associates. These findings signify that only 'locals' with deep rooted connections to their place could possibly achieve access to people, resources, spaces and places to reach the heights that many Fairtrade Towns have. Reflecting upon this, it is argued that, the success of Fairtrade Towns is built upon participant empowerment and an understanding that place belonging and understanding can develop a marketing dynamic to best suite the unique properties of the towns they personally represent. Thus, the 'unique to place' social processes found in the towns, cities and villages across the UK are empirically argued to contribute to the dimensions and processes that determine the marketing dynamics of a Fairtrade Town. Furthermore, Fairtrade Towns' marketing dynamic is understood to draw strength from becoming embodied in the unique 'sense of place' of cities,

towns, villages and even nations. Furthermore, it benefits from a ‘local dynamic’ capable of developing resources, visual presence and action well beyond the access of mainstream marketing consultancy and other commercial organisations. Fairtrade Towns’ marketing dynamics are therefore conceptualised as functioning through ten pluralities of place. When combined, these pluralities of place demonstrate an ability to connect the social processes of its citizens to contribute towards developing Fairtrade marketing and consumption in their town. Fairtrade Towns are therefore empirically presented as a place where people, products, spaces and places are networked around a number of ‘unique to place’ activities that prove capable of developing a capacity and desire to promote and consume Fairtrade products.

This study indicates that Fairtrade Towns’ acceptance of empowerment in the marketing dynamic is played out through the steering groups interpreting, owning, designing and executing Fairtrade marketing strategies within the social confines of their ‘place.’ Empirical research identifies Fairtrade Town steering groups to be key nodes in an actor network, connecting the macro level ideology and certified products of the Fairtrade Foundation with the micro and meso day-to-day life that exists within the social confines of one’s place. As such, findings in chapters 4 and 5 consider Fairtrade Town marketing activity in the context of participants evolving the activities of the ethical consumer beyond the realms of individual purchasing activity into becoming proactive in determining a place’s commitment to Fairtrade. Both chapters subsequently add empirical depth, new conceptualisations and context to existing understandings of politicised consumers (Micheletti, 2003; Clarke et al., 2007; Nicholls, 2010), consumer citizenship (McGregor, 2002), networking networks (Hutchens, 2009), actor network theory (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Whatmore & Thorne, 1997) and community-based social marketing (Mckenzie-Mohr, 2000; Mckenzie-Mohr & Smith, 1999).

This investigation therefore supports and builds a detailed empirical picture of Hutchens’s (2009.80) suggestion that the networked dynamism of Fairtrade Towns’ steering groups has transformed a ‘*resources-deficient group*’ into a powerful marketing dynamic built from ‘*strategic networking that engages those necessary and the numbers necessary to trigger change.*’ Consequentially, it argues that this success is based on the dynamism of Fairtrade Town steering groups deploying a marketing

strategy derived from ‘place belonging.’ This ‘belonging’ is argued to further increase Fairtrade Towns’ capacity and ability to use participants’ social capital to network networks and influence individuals, organisations and the consumer behaviour of ‘entire towns’ to favour Fairtrade consumption.

Empirical insights further conclude that the marketing dynamics of a Fairtrade Town emerge from the increasing sophistication of the networked consumer citizen whose confidence and success depends upon a number of validating nodes functioning in an actor network. Indications from both the literature review and the findings, suggested that the media used to promote Fair Trade is of significant importance in helping the underlying validity in Fairtrade promotion and consumption. This study presents empirical evidence to theorise that Fairtrade Towns have consciously and unconsciously capitalised upon the significance of symbolic interactionism to develop their marketing dynamic. It argues that Fairtrade Towns’ ability to embrace mainstream consumer culture and to actively use a combination of mainstream, diverse and even prosaic marketing communication strategies not always associated with marketing practices, have facilitated the emergence of validating confidence and regard in their actions.

The study questions those who have criticised the mainstreaming of Fairtrade and theorises that the mainstreaming strategies of Fair Trade helped to create a valid environment where Fairtrade Towns and the activity of consumer citizenship could flourish. It suggests that without The Fair Trade movement’s desire to become more consumer-driven,¹⁵⁴ Fairtrade Towns would have struggled to motivate grassroots activity to the successful level it has. It additionally argues that without these mainstream marketing activities, Fairtrade Towns would have found it difficult to present a valid marketing proposition capable of uniting a place in its desire to promote and consume Fairtrade. Significance is therefore afforded to the symbolic power associated to the Fairtrade label, not just for its ability to resonate positive messages with the mainstream, but for also validating the marketing dynamic of Fairtrade Town members who exude a confidence when developing marketing strategies and operating under it. The study also empirically supports the fact that

¹⁵⁴ Evident in improvements in Fairtrade product quality and the success in ‘brand’ building through the Fairtrade label.

Fairtrade Towns have utilised the symbolic value of people and places to the benefit of the movement's agenda. It presents a theory that the social capital gifted by those engaged in Fairtrade Towns demonstrates an ability to further validate the activities and agenda of the Fairtrade Town. This is in order to, in essence, use one's social capital to instil trust in marketing activities (Putnum, 2000). It additionally theorises that organisations who have '*thrown their weight behind*' Fairtrade have also augmented the validity of Fairtrade Towns through the symbolic value people assign to organisations themselves. For example, the religious value ascribed to churches and the democratic values related to local councils. The symbolic social value ascribed to individual organisations and other social movements are theorised in this study for their ability to act as valorising mediums in their own right, gifting their own symbolic validity to the marketing dynamic of Fairtrade Towns. Fairtrade Towns are therefore argued to have generated a marketing dynamic built upon intrinsic and extrinsic validity. Intrinsically, validation is empirically valued from activities associated with the governance of the Fairtrade Foundation and mainstreaming activities such as producing better quality products, increasing availability and developing the Fairtrade mark. Extrinsically, validity in Fairtrade Towns empirically emerges to be built upon the strengths, backgrounds, skills, situations and symbolic value of other people, places and social movements. These findings have been used to add empirical value to Nicholls & Opal's (2005) understanding of actor network theory functioning as a key place-based marketing dynamic for Fair Trade. Interpretation from the study recognises people and places as key nodes in the actor network of a Fairtrade Town, informing us of their symbolic value resulting from their interactions. Prevailing interactions facilitated by steering group members between people, places, processes, products, labels and social movements are argued to generate a host of positive attributes ascribed to 'validity.' Such interactions in the spirit of actor network theory are argued to have helped forge a marketing dynamic capable of successfully promoting and developing Fairtrade consumption.

More specifically, the marketing practices born from the interactions of Fairtrade Town steering group members' social networks and the ten pluralities of place in a Fairtrade Town, have been conceptualised as 'pressure and support.' The use of various forms of pressure operating as a marketing dynamic appears to be built on

Fairtrade Town steering group members individually and collectively, using their social capital and social networks to credibly access and lobby people and places to adopt Fairtrade consumption habits. Empirical evidence is presented where steering group members' direct lobbying has actively instigated consumption change in the everyday places they occupy. The study concurs that it is common practice for steering group members to actively steer change in the places they are social connected to¹⁵⁵ via lobbying techniques that encourage a form of normative behaviour that favours Fairtrade consumption. Such techniques are reported to include poster campaigning, holding key meetings with management, designing and initiating Fairtrade policies and spreading the message via word-of-mouth and various other activities such as product and label displays viewed as a form of fetishization. Fairtrade Towns additionally see themselves as providing support to the ten pluralities of place identified in this study. This is empirically evident as steering group members become active advisors on how to source Fairtrade goods and help promote organisations who do. Fairtrade Town steering groups, as such, act as a gateway or portal for information that can be used by individuals seeking advice, or organisations wishing to develop their business or embrace Fairtrade consumption policies and practices. Fairtrade Towns' ability to support organisations is demonstrated by steering groups operating as a point of contact available to support and help places who wish to develop their Fairtrade offering in their daily processes. Empirical findings therefore indicate that the support of Fairtrade Towns is perceived as a validated¹⁵⁶ function that individuals and organisations contact for specific knowledge and advice to develop their commitment to Fairtrade consumption.

The Fairtrade Town is additionally theorised as a place-based marketing dynamic that provides a holistic, socially constructed landscape that has enabled the transition of promoting sustainable/ethical consumption to individual consumers into a dynamic that further develops the understanding of consumer citizenship expressed through an embodiment of collective, institutional and civic consumption. Consequently, the ten pluralities of place and the dimensions forged by Fairtrade Towns¹⁵⁷ to enable them to

¹⁵⁵ This may be a work place, a private home, a store or high street they frequent or a local council

¹⁵⁶ Validation comes from operating under the Fairtrade trademark.

¹⁵⁷ See fig *The Dimensions of the Pluralities of Place in Fairtrade Towns' Marketing Dynamics*.

become a marketing dynamic that is woven into a place's very own fabric, are conceptualised as a marketing dynamic that enables a 'place(ing) of responsibility.' Fairtrade Towns are subsequently, empirically argued to have contributed to the transformation of social relations within place. Such transformations are argued to resonate in place itself being used as a marketing dynamic as it interweaves situated people (consumers and producers), artefacts, codes and organisations into a '*particular tapestry of connections*' (Whatmore & Thorne, 1997) that enables territorial entities of local economic systems, regimes of regulation and private homes to recognise their global reach and ability to '*act at a distance*' (Whatmore & Thorne, 1997). By revealing this and empirically detailing place dimensions and contributions to the marketing dynamic of a Fairtrade Town, the study builds a detailed, empirical picture capable of advancing Nicholls & Opal's (2005) and Alexander & Nicholls' (2007) conceptualisation of actor network theory functioning as a marketing dynamic for Fair Trade.

Fairtrade Towns are therefore suggested to have successfully enabled the transition of ethical/sustainable consumerism from individual interactions within space to become architects of a validated 'labelled' place, a Fairtrade Town. This study subsequently presents new conceptualisations of the place-based marketing dynamics of Fairtrade Towns. Empirically, it has therefore discovered, interpreted, contextualised and conceptualised Fairtrade Towns' actions of fusing together consumption, people, place and responsibility to embed a plac(ing) of responsibility for 'distant others' by promoting and developing individual, collective, institutional and civic Fairtrade consumption in '*our town.*'

6.2: The Application of Grounded Theory

In addition to this study's contribution to new knowledge from the empirical investigation and discovery, its application of grounded theory is also argued to provide epistemological development in the application and understanding of qualitative research methodologies. The unique challenges of researching a field where very little research or writing exists, proved to provide the perfect context in which to apply the methodological processes of grounded theory to the study. The study benefited from a unique yet 'proper' application of grounded theory, used to research Fairtrade Towns, sustainable consumption and place. The resulting

methodological process received recognition in the publication '*Grounding Rapidly Emerging Disciplines: The Fairtrade Towns Movement*' Samuel (2011. 120-136). The research methodology chapter of this study and resulting publication outlines the challenges and suitability of using the methodology for researchers investigating rapidly emerging disciplines in the field of sustainability and, more pertinently, sustainable consumption. Furthermore, it also presents a model and critical overview of the method in action. The publication resulting from this scholarly activity is suggested to offer further epistemological insights into the application of grounded theory and, in particular, builds an argument for a more pragmatic approach to the discipline. It builds an argument that suggests that choosing a particular type of grounded theory that is 'formal' or Straussian is both daunting and confusing and can act as a deterrent to its use (Samuel, 2011). The study's solution to this 'false choice' was to take a hybrid approach to the methodology. This approach subsequently proved suitable to the constraints of the researcher and his environment without straying from the core, fundamental doctrines that give this methodology its ability to develop inductive theory.

6.3 Policy Makers: Implications and Use

The study provides policy makers with a blueprint that, whether in part or full, can help inform policy and future actions to develop successful sustainability consumption initiatives. It is argued that initiatives concerned with changing consumption habits to increase consumer demand for products and services that incorporate altruistic concern for economic, social or environmental good into their consumption habits, can learn from the successful dynamics at play in Fairtrade Towns. More succinctly, distinct areas that may benefit from using such a blueprint may include:

- Places that wish to foster a greater commitment to sustainable behaviour.
- The marketing of products, organisations and events that are environmentally, economically or socially responsible in their value chain processes.
- Services provided by social enterprises that help address many social ills may also be able to adapt some of the marketing dynamics unearthed and

conceptualised in this study to drive issues of social justice further into the mainstream.

6.3.1: The Use of a Label

The success of the Fairtrade label in instilling consumer trust and validity into Fairtrade products tells us nothing new and is well documented in the Fair Trade literature reviewed for this study. However, the success of the Fairtrade label being extended to validate places; specifically towns, cities, villages, counties, islands, zones and even countries is where key, social and theoretical significance lies. The study's empirical discoveries and theories underline the importance of consumer confidence in driving sustainability into the hearts (through compassion for others), head (through personal or commercial benefit) and bellies (though a fit for purpose quality) of both the mainstream consumer and those who supply them. Key to developing such mainstream consumer confidence, is argued to be derived from the ability of a grassroots movement to operate under a valid and well established banner, otherwise known as the Fairtrade Foundations Fairtrade label. The study theorises that, by operating under the Fairtrade label, grassroots participants are afforded a symbolic sense of 'validity,' that is recognised to result in validating their actions both internally (providing a form of self-confidence) and externally (proving their validity to other organisations and places). For the policy maker, it is therefore suggested that consideration be paid to the importance present post modern consumer societies afford labels and brands. The ability for a place to be awarded a label of distinct worth and validity is suggested to be the foundation of the success of Fairtrade Towns. Subsequently, this may offer other economic, social and environmental sustainability initiatives, important lessons in how labels can help generate interest, achieve a sense of belonging and motivate operational change at an individual, collective, institutional and civic level.

6.3.2: Symbolic Interaction: Knowing Your Media

The study also empirically concurs with theories presented by McKenzie-Mohr & Smith (1999) suggesting that media used to disseminate messages that champion sustainable behaviour play a significant symbolic communication role themselves. Media used to promote Fairtrade empirically demonstrated a communication power of their own, with positive attributes of validity and trust transcending from the

communication media itself. For example, the trust and kudos one gives to friends and family, school, universities and churches they belong to, the organisation they work for, or other social movements they sympathise with appears to add symbolic value to Fairtrade products through the very people, places and processes that are used to promote them. Such symbolic interactions are subsequently suggested capable of helping policy makers understand the full systemic output of the media they choose to use. The study therefore provides empirical insights for policy makers into understanding the suitability of certain media and how they can be utilised to symbolically project the right perceptions and validate the systemic benefits of behaviour change.

6.3.3: Place: Embracing its Social Construct

This study outlines the benefits of policy makers viewing place as a social construct, to fully understand, explore and engage individuals, community based organisations, business, public sector and civic/civil society's potential to participate in sustainable behaviour change. It additionally informs policy makers with a case study (Fairtrade Towns) illustrating how the many facets of place can collectively become engaged in influencing accepted behavioural change; a change that is influenced by a greater understanding of one's global connectivity and their ability to extend a responsibility (individual or collective) for local and global, social, economic and environmental justice.

6.4: Critical Reflection and Limitations

The five years since this study began have proven to be challenging, fruitful, learned, eventful and emotional. The initial process of starting research into a subject (Fairtrade Towns) that in 2006 was just taking hold in UK society, but subsequently grew at a rapid rate over the five years during which this study took place, proved challenging. Fairtrade Towns in the UK, during this period, grew rapidly from around 10 in 2006, to 478 in 2010, to its present figure of 535 in 2011. It additionally became an exported model and the idea has since been emulated in other towns and cities across the world. Canada, USA and other European countries all now boast established Fairtrade Towns. Additionally, as previously stated, when the study began, Fairtrade Towns as an academic subject was under-theorised and lacking in

empirical understandings. As a result, the study was unable to draw on an established body of literature or conceptual framework to help theoretically clarify what the research intended to achieve (Leshem & Trafford, 2007:97). Both these situations proved challenging for a fresh-faced researcher, but perhaps more pertinently presented the opportunity to enter a research landscape ripe for empirical exploration.

6.4.1: Suitability of Grounded Theory

Key to the success of this study rested on finding a suitable methodology that was capable of assisting the emergence of a workable conceptual framework. The study also needed a methodology that was capable of providing a rigorous research process that, when tested, would be recognised for its ability to develop accurate research findings and conceptualisations. Chapter 3 of this study presents a comprehensive overview and critical evaluation of the methodology followed for this study; grounded theory. Chapter 3 should subsequently be referred to, in order to understand how the author critically deliberated on what methodological process to follow. Additionally, it comprehensively outlines the suitability of inductive research and the methodology of grounded theory to this study, and affords the reader a critical step-by-step guide to how the methodology was specifically designed and used for this study. Over the five year period, the author has learned much about grounded theory; its misconceptions, sometimes superficial use, competing discourses, fractured epistemology, application and suitability to qualitative enquiry. To this end, confidence in the proposition that grounded theory has been used ‘properly’ for this study is high, despite an understanding that the purists may still dispute that claim given the failure to follow only one particular disciple of the movement (for example, Strauss, Glaser or Chamaz) or one particular method (formal or Straussian)-in its purest form. Choosing instead to take a hybrid approach to grounded theory, which ironically could be argued to be the true nature of the methodology, considered the needs and constraints of the study, the research environment and the output necessary for a doctoral award. In support of this hybrid approach, one could argue that the resulting methodology used for this study took what was deemed to be the most suitable aspects from grounded theory’s warring epistemology.

6.4.2: Managing and Developing the Literature Review

Grounded theory has frequently generated controversy; one controversial element is the perceived role of the literature review. The positivist research tradition, given its deductive need to test theory, (Saunders et al., 2000) places the literature review as the fundamental starting point from which research questions and hypotheses are generated. Glaser & Strauss (1967) by contrast, suggest that completing a literature review prior to conducting any field work potentially contaminates both data collection and analysis. They argue that researchers need to embark on projects with '*no preconceived theory in mind.*' The concern about conducting a prior literature review is that it has the potential to curtail freedom and flexibility and to hinder creativity if it comes between the researcher and their data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Instead, Strauss & Corbin (1998) suggest that initial research questions should be framed in a way that frees the researcher to explore the phenomenon in detail and acts as the catalyst for the investigation. The logic is that field work should commence before the literature review, allowing concepts to emerge from data collection and informing the researcher of which literature need to be reviewed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Goulding, 1999). The idea of research without preconceptions or prejudice is inviting, and creates a vision of genuine, exploratory research without boundaries. However, it was recognised that taking this step added to the potential risk of leading the research without a clear purpose, definition or end point. As a relatively inexperienced researcher undertaking doctoral research, the prospect of embarking on fieldwork without having yet to consult the literature, may seem to some too high risk a strategy to be realistic, presenting too great a perceived risk of failure. This played out in the mind of the researcher who grappled with challenging academic convention, which necessitates the use of a literature review to understand what is '*not yet known*' in order to influence the research process and develop knowledge (Locke, 2001). Conceivably, this process presents a parallel with creative disciplines like drama or music where the few exceptional performers can improvise and create something meaningful from scratch, but for the rest of us, a script or score to work from is important. Given that the study into Fairtrade Towns started from a very limited body of knowledge, the default position of the investigation had little choice but to follow the guidelines suggested by Glaser & Strauss (1967); Strauss & Corbin (1998); and Goulding (1999). It is therefore noted that the traditional and accepted norm of the literature review informing the starting

position of the research and subsequently informing the research questions was unworkable for this study. Although the grounded theory purists might argue against using a literature review to start the research process, there are perhaps more pragmatic approaches. Goulding (1999) notes that it is difficult to conceive of a situation where the researcher starts with a completely blank sheet. She argues that individuals' ontological influences from previous work and interests, combined with their existing knowledge, can aid interpretation during the research process. Goulding's suggestion that the researcher brings with them previous interests cannot be ignored and as a matter of course it needed to be accepted that this study adopted a conceptual framework built around the academic discipline of marketing, an area that the researcher has several years of academic interest in.

This debate also creates an artificially clear delineation of the literature review as a single activity undertaken at a specific time. The practical reality of most research is that it evolves. As it does so, what is perceived as relevant literature will be subject to change. This study proved no exception, and as interest into the wider Fair Trade movement developed so too did academic and industry-led research and publication. However, at the close of this study, despite the Fairtrade Towns movement experiencing rapid growth, academic research and publication dedicated to its marketing dynamics is still exceptionally limited. The perception that consulting the literature potentially limits the research through preconception can be matched by a perception that failing to consult the literature may also limit the research. Without consulting the literature, will the researcher know what to look for, or recognise what they see for what it is, or may represent? It is therefore claimed in this study that it was not the researcher's role when conducting grounded theory to ignore the relevant literature, but instead to question when to refer to it and how to make appropriate use of it (Strubing, 2007). It is inevitable that during the course of research in rapidly emerging disciplines, the relevant literature that can inform the study will evolve. During the course of this study, Fair Trade literature rapidly emerged in a number of academic disciplines thus presenting the relevance and potential of different and more established academic disciplines and theories to be reflected upon. In particular, Nicholls & Opal's (2005) contextualisation of actor network theory and social network theory to Fair Trade marketing were both considered for their suitability in the early stages of this study. Both were seriously considered as a foundation for this

study at the beginning, as it is evident they have much to contribute to the understanding of the field. However, the decision was instead taken to try to develop a new and complementary lens through which to view Fairtrade Towns by using a grounded approach and developing a theoretical framework that represented the lived experiences of the key actors within the movement. As the study progressed, it expanded to embrace different academic insights from a number of previously unthought-of schools embracing a multidisciplinary approach to the literature. It is argued that such an approach stopped one school of thought dominating and potentially compromising the study's ability to gain a systemic overview of Fairtrade Towns' marketing dynamics.

6.5: Limitations and Future Studies

6.5.1 Limitations

Like all research, this study bumped up against a number of clearly unavoidable limitations. These ranged from the academic constraints/norms placed on doctoral studies and logistical practicalities to the ever shifting sands of the research topography under enquiry.

The study's logistical limitations to securing access to the right interviewees at the right time because they were distributed throughout the United Kingdom. The result of this limitation was that some Fairtrade Towns identified through the grounded theory process of theoretical sampling failed to be included, Exeter, Amanford and Manchester unfortunately became the 'towns that got away.' However, despite the regret of these towns not being included in the study's data, other towns naturally emerged from the research process to act as suitable substitutes. Personal time limitations led to some pragmatic compromises having to be made in the data collection and simultaneous data analysis, and these are critically evaluated in chapter 3. The structured framework that had to be followed to conform to the university's guidelines and criteria for doctoral research, also meant that a puristic formal grounded theory approach to the study was unworkable, and to some, this could be perceived as a weakness in the resulting output. However, the methodology's suitability for effectively researching emerging disciplines and generating new conceptualised theory made it worth adapting. Therefore, its application to this study is a relative strength, as without compromising the study's validity, the doctrine of

grounded theory was pragmatically followed and adapted to fit the subject and the logistical dynamics of the researcher's operational landscape.

During the period of this study, Fair Trade as both an academic discipline and a movement achieved widespread, mainstream recognition and support resulting in unprecedented growth in Fairtrade products, their availability and their market share. It additionally witnessed the accelerated advancement of Fairtrade Towns, not only in the UK, but on a global scale. As such, and perhaps pertinent to this study's theories and conceptualisation, they need to be viewed in the context of representing Fairtrade Towns' emergence between the period of 2005 and 2010 when the research was being undertaken. Additionally, the increasing mainstream success of the Fairtrade label; evident from the proliferation of Fairtrade certified products and its adoption by some of the UK's best known brands such as Cadbury, Kit Kat, Starbucks, Marks & Spencer, The Cooperative, and Tate & Lyle to some extent, could be argued to represent a very different landscape from the one that was researched. However, despite such limitations it is argued that the landscape that was researched was one of what could be conceptualised as a 'golden period' of Fairtrade growth, therefore adding significance to the research output that potentially helps us understand, in part, how the present Fairtrade market has come to be embraced and established in the mainstream.

6.5.2: Future Studies

No one PhD thesis can address all the potentially interesting research questions relating to a topic of the breadth and complexity of Fairtrade Towns. Furthermore, a grounded theory approach to a subject will inevitably throw up new avenues for future research, as well as generating insights into the proposed topic. Therefore, a subsidiary outcome from the research is some insight into further future research that could be conducted to extend elements of this thesis's. This study has identified several opportunities for future research relevant to Fairtrade Towns. Below are some examples of potential topics befitting advancements of this thesis.

- The resilience of Fairtrade Towns is considered in this study, with early indications pointing to the fact that Fairtrade's rapid expansion into the mainstream, may at some stage result in the movements' members becoming complacent and, as suggested, consider the '*job to be done*.' Future studies

could test the resilience of Fairtrade Towns across the UK in the context of a number of issues that could include mainstreaming, the present economic downturn or wider sustainability concerns such as climate change or localisation.

- The study presents an understanding that Fairtrade Towns have actively enabled collective and institutional consumption of Fairtrade. A further study could aim to contextualise¹⁵⁸ and test the suggested hypothesis of Jackson (2006: 120) that states:

‘Consumers are also employees. As employees, people are immersed daily in certain sets of behaviour, values and logics. In particular, they are exposed to a variety of environmentally significant practices... There is evidence to suggest that behaving in certain ways in one context can have a knock on effect in another context. If I’m encouraged to recycle at work, it is more likely that I will attempt to recycle at home.’

Testing such a hypothesis could be related explicitly to the notion of spill over behaviour aiming to discover whether Fairtrade consumption, as a behaviour adopted in the work setting can lead to other forms of ethical or sustainable consumption in ones domestic life.

- During the course of this study, Fairtrade Towns went global with 563 towns now active in twenty two countries across the globe, made up of:

Ireland	48
Belgium	116
Italy	42
Sweden	46
Australia	6
USA	26
Norway	30
Canada	15
Austria	73
Denmark	5
France	33
Netherlands	22
Finland	6

¹⁵⁸ To Fairtrade / sustainable consumption instead of recycling.

Spain	5
Germany	72
Brazil	1
Costa Rica	1
New Zealand	2
Luxembourg	10
Japan	1
Ghana	1
Czech Republic	2

<http://www.fairtradetowns.org/about/> (21/02/12)

Each of these countries, although following the general ethos of UK Fairtrade Town status, follows different systems. This suggests that they may function differently, meaning their resulting activities and dynamics are yet to be researched. It is argued that the conceptual framework used for this study could easily be transferred to conducting similar studies in different countries across the world. In addition, comparative studies of different Fairtrade Town models or different cultural practices could also add value to the emerging debate.

- As this study progressed Fairtrade Towns also evolved, becoming a fully active social network, <http://fairtradetowns.ning.com/>. This network, whilst not having any formal objectives, demonstrates early signs of becoming a global '*community of practice*' (Wenger, 1999), where participants engage in collaborative learning and shared practices amongst Fairtrade Town members across the world. It is argued that <http://fairtradetowns.ning.com/> could become a suitable place to conduct a digital ethnographical study that would potentially further evaluate and augment the findings of this study.
- Fairtrade Fortnight emerged from this study as a key point in time where many Fairtrade Towns organise Fairtrade activities and events. The study suggests that this annual period in time is a catalyst for many Fairtrade events to happen and a time when Fairtrade Towns become very proactive. However, despite such prominence this has not been the subject of rigorous research. This study's conceptualisation of Fairtrade Fortnight demonstrating the ability to enact and validate time into a marketing dynamic may also prove to be an

interesting set of issues to study. It additionally leads to a suggestion that Fairtrade Fortnight itself would benefit from empirical insights.

- Despite several suggestions towards the importance of social network theory (Nicholls & Opal, 2005) and actor network theory (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Dubuisson-Quellier & Lamine, 2008; Alexander & Nicholls 2006) in Fairtrade, marketing the nuances and key actors in such networks still remains under-conceptualised and under-defined. It is therefore suggested that following the lead of those papers and taking some value from this study, Fairtrade Towns would benefit from an actor network and social network model that is able to identify, understand and evaluate the power bases at play in Fairtrade Towns.
- The study showed some limited recognition¹⁵⁹ of a third strand of validity to consider, i.e. the collectivism aspect of Fairtrade Towns. Some research into ethical consumption indicates that people don't always make ethical consumption choices because of their low perceived consumer effectiveness, see for example the work of Bray et al. (2011). The thought of individual consumer choice making a difference to the lives of distant others, proves for many, a difficult concept to understand and is suggested to hinder consumer perceptions and behaviour to favour ethical consumption. However, questions could be asked that if the whole town are consuming Fairtrade products in a Fairtrade Town, then perhaps individual consumer perception and behaviours change as they understand their role in the systemic collective thinking that they are also part of a collective and therefore, more able to make a difference. Future research could attempt to further develop hypotheses around the notion of collective action in Fairtrade Towns reducing the barriers to participating in individual ethical consumption.

¹⁵⁹ Not enough to establish theoretical saturation.

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APPENDIX 1

Research Ethics

**CARDIFF BUSINESS SCHOOL ETHICAL APPROVAL FORM:
PHD THESIS RESEARCH**

(For guidance on how to complete this form, please see <http://www.cf.ac.uk/carbs/research/ethics.html>)

For Office Use:	Ref	Meeting
<p>Does your research involve human participants? Yes</p> <p>If you have answered 'No' to this question you do not need to complete the rest of this form, otherwise please proceed to the next question</p>		
<p>Does your research have any involvement with the NHS? No</p> <p>If you have answered Yes to this question, then your project should firstly be submitted to the NHS National Research Ethics Service. Online applications are available on http://www.nres.npsa.nhs.uk/applicants/. It could be that you may have to deal directly with the NHS Ethics Service and bypass the Business School's Research Ethics Committee.</p>		
Name of Student:	Anthony John Samuel	
Student Number:	0639033	
Section:	BRASS	
Email:	a.samuel@trinity-cm.ac.uk	
Names of Supervisors:	Prof Ken Peattie and Dr Sue Peattie	
Supervisors' Email Addresses:	peattie@Cardiff.ac.uk and peatties@Cardiff.ac.uk	
Title of Thesis:	The role and activities of Fairtrade Towns in influencing sustainable/ ethical consumption	
Start and Estimated End Date of Research:	Start October 2006 end September 2011	
Please indicate any sources of funding for this research:	Self, Trinity College, Carmarthen and BRASS contribution	

1. Describe the Methodology to be applied in the research

It is proposed that in order to conduct a valid empirical investigation into Fairtrade Towns and communities it will be necessary to both **accumulate and analyse qualitative data sourced from a variety of sources, stakeholders and written documents**. To best capture relevant **qualitative data** a **systemic nature of enquire needs to be adhered to** (see flow chart appendix1). For the purpose of this study it is pertinent to consider the value of a research methodology that allows the researcher to develop new theory derived from the collection and analysis of qualitative data. **Grounded Theory described by Strauss & Corbin (1998)** as an inductive process where theory is developed and modified from data collection appears to lend itself favourably to this investigation.

The suitability of using Grounded Theory as a research methodology for this study primarily derives from the fact that so little 'rich data' (Strauss & Corbin 1998) and empirical knowledge if any presently exists on the subject. Grounded theory (Goulding 1999) suggests is frequently adopted by researchers when the subject in question has been 'relatively ignored in literature or has only been given superficial attention.' **The researcher therefore suggests that theory relating to Fairtrade Towns / Communities needs to be constructed, and the most suitable inductive qualitative**

methodology that allows this is Grounded theory. As Struss & Corbin (1998.12) suggest Grounded theory is 'theory derived from data.'

Stage 1 of this study involves the researcher in **actively participating in a Fairtrade Towns steering group and constructing reflective journal notes based on observation and the activities of the group.** These notes will then be subsequently coded and used to generate qualitative data helping lay the foundation to my study and start to answer the main grounded theory question.

2. Describe the participant sample who will be contacted for this Research Project. You need to consider the number of participants, their age, gender, recruitment methods and exclusion/inclusion criteria

Journal notes will be scribed at 10 meetings of the Carmarthenshire Fairtrade Steering group made up of various members of the Carmarthenshire Community. Further details of membership can be supplied on request.

3. Describe the consent and participant information arrangements you will make, as well as the methods of debriefing. If you are conducting interviews, you must attach a copy of the consent form you will be using.

Consent for the researcher to take journal notes and subsequently code and analyse them has been requested at a steering group meeting. The group were provided with the attached research ethics specific to this activity (appendix 2). This was agreed to by the group and has been signed by the Carmarthenshire Fairtrade Chairman Rev Ainslie Griffiths and the sectary Mrs Julia Holt. Who can also be contacted if any concerns are raised.

4. Please make a clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the research and how you intend to deal with them throughout the duration of the project

Please refer to appendix 2

PLEASE NOTE that you should include a copy of your questionnaire

NB: Copies of your signed and approved Research Ethics Application Form together with accompanying documentation must be bound into your Dissertation or Thesis.

5. Please complete the following in relation to your research:

		Yes	No	n/a
(a)	Will you describe the main details of the research process to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b)	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c)	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d)	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e)	If you are using a questionnaire, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
(f)	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(g)	Will you offer to send participants findings from the research (e.g. copies of publications arising from the research)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X

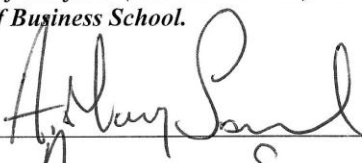
PLEASE NOTE:

If you have ticked **No** to any of 5(a) to 5(g), please give an explanation on a separate sheet.

(Note: N/A = not applicable)

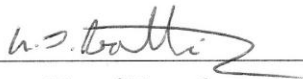
There is an obligation on the lead researcher to bring to the attention of Cardiff Business School Ethics Committee any issues with ethical implications not clearly covered by the above checklist.

Two copies of this form (and attachments) should be submitted to Ms Lainey Clayton, Room F09, Cardiff Business School.

Signed 
 Print Name ANTHONY SAMUEL
 Date 02/07/08

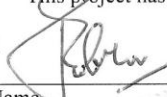
SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

As the supervisor for this research I confirm that I believe that all research ethical issues have been dealt with in accordance with University policy and the research ethics guidelines of the relevant professional organisation.

Signed 
 Print Name NEW RATTIE (Primary supervisor)
 Date 6/7/08

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

This project has been considered using agreed School procedures and is now approved.

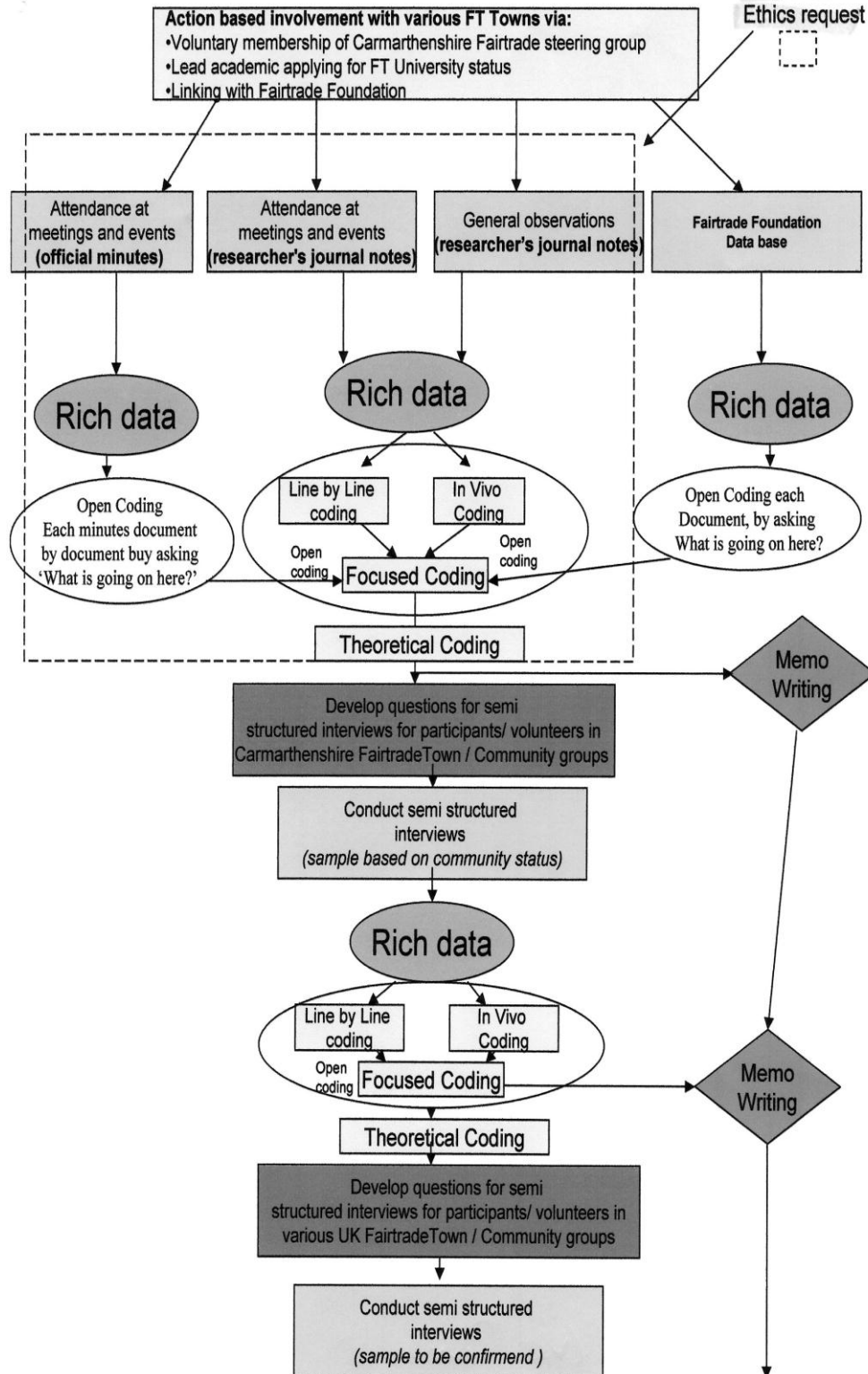
Signed 
 Print Name Jill Solomon (Chair) (Chair, School Research Ethics Committee)
 Date 2/9/2008

Using Grounded Theory (flow chart)

Appendix 1

Stage 1

Ethics request



Anthony Samuel

PhD Research Ethics proposal to the Carmarthenshire Fairtrade Steering group.

Over the following 5 years I propose to research the social movement of Fairtrade Communities. My research aims to look at:

The role of place based communities in influencing sustainable/ethical consumption and citizenship with particular reference to Fairtrade Towns

The second part of my study has the following objective and subsequent activities;

Objective

Inductive research to discover the make up, level of social/ civic engagement and social marketing activities of Fairtrade Town steering groups. This area of research will also explore initiatives, barriers overcome, issues confronted and achievements attained.

Activity

- Action based research (reflection on) participation in Carmarthenshire Fairtrade Steering group.
- Semi structured interviews with sample of representatives from Fairtrade towns steering group (sample based on geographical location and role)
- Analyses of minutes from meeting of above sample
- Semi structured interviews with FT communities representatives from around the country
- Semi structured in-depth interview with Bruce Crowther (founder of Fairtrade Town initiative)

As indicated above it is my intention to produce a reflective journal and analyse the minutes from The Carmarthenshire Fairtrade Steering Group's meeting and activities over the coming years.

As part of this request it is my obligation to conduct myself in accordance to the research ethics of the Business School at Cardiff University, more details available at, (<http://www.cf.ac.uk/carbs/research/ethics.html>)

If granted permission from the group I will also abide by the following research ethics that have considered the uniqueness of this study.

1. Participation is voluntary and if any member wishes to be excluded their input during meetings will not be recorded.
2. At any stage of the process any members of the steering group have the right to request the withdrawal of my research activities.
3. Anonymity of participant and organisation will be applied and no names or organisations will be mentioned in the research process and final document.

4. In the interest of transparency personal journal notes taken from the meetings will be available for any member of the steering group to peruse.
5. Information taken from official minutes will again take into consideration the anonymity of participant and organisation. This again will be applied by not reporting or including individual names or organisations in the research process and final document.
6. In the interest of transparency notes taken from the official minutes will be available for any member of the steering group to peruse on request
7. If at any stage during the meeting confidentiality is an issue, no reference of that discussion will be recorded or used as research data.
8. It is my intention to reference the fact that I belonged to the Carmarthenshire Fairtrade Steering and to therefore use the title of this group in research documents.
9. All work produced will be available for any member of the steering group to peruse.

The Carmarthenshire Fairtrade Steering Group accept the above research ethics of Anthony Samuel and give consent for this research to be conducted under the above research ethics.

Signed *J.M.A. Griffiths*

Julia Ault

Role..... *Secretary*

Chair

APPENDIX 2

Fairtrade Policy

Trinity College Carmarthen

Fairtrade Policy

Trinity College Carmarthen, an associate college of The University of Wales has both a strong Christian and community centred ethos. It therefore wishes to further express these values by committing its support to promoting the consumption of Fairtrade products on its campus.

Trinity College's commitment will be demonstrated through adhering to the Fairtrade Foundation's five goals for a Fairtrade University.

1. Fairtrade foods are made available for sale in all campus shops and catering outlets wherever possible. Where at present this is not possible Trinity College is committed to using Fairtrade products as soon as possible.

2. Fairtrade products (tea, coffee and biscuits) are made available wherever possible via hospitality and catering to all directorate, committee, faculty and school meetings. Trinity College also aims to increase the use of Fairtrade products by making tea and coffee available in all staff kitchens. Trinity College's future goal is to offer Fairtrade products as an additional option for third party conferences and events.

3. Trinity College and The Student Union will promote the sale of Fairtrade products via:

- Fairtrade Foundation materials will be displayed on campus including the Student Union and particularly in locations where Fairtrade products are sold.
- The Student Union and Trinity College are committed to running promotional events through the academic year to include Fairtrade fortnight.
- The Fairtrade mark (once Fairtrade University status has been achieved) will be promoted in appropriate publications such as Trinity College's prospectus, website and any other publications deemed suitable.
- Articles will also be generated for the website, internal publications and community press on attainment of Fairtrade Status for Trinity College.

4. A Fairtrade Steering Group will meet at least once a term. Its role will be to monitor and improve Trinity College's approaches to Fairtrade consumption. The Steering group will have representation from:

- Senior Management
- Commercial services
- The Student union (Executive)
- Appropriate Student Union Societies

- Student population
- Academic / support staff
- Marketing & Recruitment
- Development Unit

5. This policy will be communicated through Trinity College and a continual commitment to support Fairtrade will be strongly encouraged amongst all stakeholder groups.