ENTANGLED TRAJECTORIES OF COUNTER-HEGEMONIC TRANSFORMATION -DILEMMAS AND CHOICES OF FAIR TRADE MOVEMENT IN SOUTH AND EAST ASIA

CHOW SUNG MING

PhD

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

2017

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Department of Applied Social Sciences

Entangled Trajectories of Counter-hegemonic Transformation
-dilemmas and choices of fair trade movement in South and East Asia

Chow Sung ming

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2016

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it reproduces no material previously published or written, nor material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

_____(Signed)

Chow Sung ming

Abstract

While it may seem that "there is no alternative" under the domination of neoliberal globalization, in the past two decades, fair trade has emerged as a promising movement to demonstrate that "another world is possible". Although the character of fair trade has so far been maintained, as a social movement, its original vision is fading rapidly with its enormous market success. The wide acceptance and growth of the **certification and labeling** system, in particular, has generated much complex debate and controversy. More specifically, the system is now seen by many as a form of **mainstreaming and co-optation** by the corporate sector as a move by fair trade from de-commodification to re-commodifying, as well as shifting from a promising counter-hegemonic movement to become another form of corporate hegemony. Fair trade is thus viewed at a crossroads with its foundation severely jeopardized.

Nonetheless, the future possibilities of fair trade are still wide open, albeit continually subject to the strategic choices and competing trajectories of its stakeholders. The different counter-hegemonic trajectories, namely **ruptural, interstitial and symbiotic strategies**, as identified by Erik Olin Wright, offer a good starting point to capture the essentially contested nature of the movement. For one thing, in responding to the challenges and crisis, many not only see that symbiotic strategies may eventually **"hit the ceiling"** and face strong **"limits of possibility"**, but also the promises of new ideas and resources that could be brought along by alternative strategies and transformative trajectories implemented in the recent fair trade movement. It is in such contexts that the current research attempts to capture the continuous transformation of the movement, documenting not only its fluid, contingent nature, but also the processes of muddling through all the tensions and contradictions it has encountered in non-unilinear and non-monistic manner.

This study thus argues that the fair trade movement has been continually entangled with "unfair trade" in the mainstream market. Both fair trade and the

so-called ethical trade (with corporate social responsibility) projects seem to converge as part of an international standardization initiative or private regulation system. However, some fair trade organizations remain active in using fair trade to fight against "unfair trade" and continue to advocate for justice through rebuilding and innovating **mainstreaming, alternative circuits and political campaigning**.

Last but not the least, as indicated by dramatic rise of Fair Trade Town Movement, the **locationality and contextuality** of the fair trade network has seemed to consolidate the collective identity of "citizen-consumers" and their transformative trajectories through injecting new **localized and place-specific values and interactive fair trade practices.** This location and contextual specific interface probably will be the beginning of a new direction for the Fair Trade movement in South and East Asia.

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my advisor David for his stimulating insights, timely interventions and endless patience over the six years course of this research. Without him, I would not be able to initate a late academic career which enormously enriches the second half of my life. With the current thesis as the starting point, a series of publications, real-world engagements and various new initiatives have been resulted, substantial social impacts have been clearly witnessed under the local context. His encourage and endorsement is a key for all these to be realized.

I would further like to dedicate my gratitude towards Anthony, the founder and director of Fair Circle, without whom I might not be able to adopt fair trade as a long term practice, and involve in a number of meaningful projects over the past decade. In addition, as an expert within the concerning field, his comments and advices provides invaluable information on the state of art and critical perspectives for the fair trade movement, thus greatly enhancing the detail and depth of the current thesis.

Among the partners of various projects regarding fair trade, social and solidarity economy, local agriculture and land justice movement, Vince is the key person that vastly broadens my knowledge foundation; Hyphen is the publication partner devoted to social rather than profit missions; Chuk is the devoted activist who exhibits how "re-entanglement with the soil" can be achieved. Last but not the least, Dick is the single critical case that fully demonstrates the possibility of realizing "an impossible dream".

Last but not the least, I would like to express my special thanks to my family. My wife Annie provides enormous support both emotionally and materially so that I can concentrate on my studies and researches. Yung and Ho my beloved young kids, beyond doubt, are the miraculous gifts in my life as well as the prime sources of my inspirations and motivations.

Content

Abbreviations

ATO: alternative trade organization

CSR: corporate social responsibility

FINE: consortium of FLO, IFAT, NEWS! and EFTA

FLO: Fairtrade Labeling Organization International (Bonn, Germany)

FLO-CERT: Fairtrade Labeling Organization Certification (Bonn, Germany)

FMO: Fairtrade Marketing Organization

FTHK: Fair Trade Hong Kong Foundation (Hong Kong)

FTAO: Fair Trade Advocacy Office (Brussels, Belgium)

FTO: fair trade organization

FTUSA: Fairtrade USA (Oakland, CA)

IFAT: International Federation of Alternative Trade (later renamed as WFTO)

IMO: Institute for Marketecology (Weinfelden, Switzerland)

OHK: Oxfam Hong Kong (Hong Kong)

OI: Oxfam International

SEE: social enterprises and entrepreneurship

SSE: social and solidarity economy

WFTO: World Fair Trade Organization (formerly named IFAT, Culemborg, Netherlands)

WFTO-GS: World Fair Trade Organization Guarantee System

WTO: World Trade Organization (Geneva, Switzerland)

I Meta-theoretical foundations: unlearning from post-developemtalist reductionism

A philosopher is someone who goes into a dark room at night, to look for a black cat that isn't there.

A theologian does the same thing, but comes out claiming he found the cat.

Nick Philips, "The Case of the Naked Quark,"
TWA Ambassador Magazine, October 1980.
(as cited in Reggie, 1982)

1. The elephant: and the dialectics with parts of its body

The black cat, the dragon, the elephant and the frogs

John Gerard Reggie started his paper on "Embedded Liberalism" in 1982 by asking whether social researchers mostly resemble the philosopher, the theologian or, as most of us would like to believe, the social scientist - suspecting from the beginning that there is a black cat in there somewhere, and emerging from the room with scratches on the forearm as vindication.

Probably due to my early childhood experiences in a traditional, and rather dogmatic religious environment, it seems that my habitus of a skeptical Christian as well as a cynical sociologist was so naturally inherited as if it is flowing in my blood. I clearly remember when I went to the interview of university admittance, the professor asked me whether I believe in pure, scholarly social science, I boldly responded with a definite no, asserting that no knowledge is meaningful if detached from its social settings. Later I moved to work as journalist and NGO worker for many years. When I finally returned to the university again, what probably striked me most was the unimaginable chaos of ontological and epistemological confusions. They almost completely

deterred me from further studies. My causal comment more than two decades ago could never ever seem truer than it is today.

In Chinese idiom we also have "Master Ip's obsession of the dragon". The story goes as Ip always boosted his admiration for and desire to encounter with dragons. But one day when the dragon showed up, Ip was totally scared and deterred. I would say the dragon as a metaphor edges over the black cat, since historically many social scientists did indeed chase for dragons, endlessly attempting to turn it from merely an idea into a reality, but were altogether threatened when it was finally actualized. Nowadays, as we may see, a significant number of social scientists are still chasing for their ideological dragons.

For sure, social scientists would probably deny, or try hard all the time to deny their chase for dragons, but may think that they can still able to grasp the elephant. In Chinese idiom "The blinds grope for the elephant", a group of blind people attempted to apprehend the shape of an elephant. It turned out that one got the truck, one got the ear, one got the leg, one got the tail…Some social scientists may think they should have already grasped the totality, but actually could only grasp the bits and pieces. Better or worse, the elephant is empirical rather than conceptual or ideological.

Still, we have "the frog lives beneath the well". Many social scientists retreat themselves as frogs under wells, and try to understand the sky through the shape of the well. 10,000 frogs in 10,000 wells will resulted with 10,000 diverse "skys". They refuse the attempt of a holistic elephant (as if it might turn out to be a frightening dragon) and retreat to each of their own private "skys". But for better or worse, from time to time they still cannot resist the temptation to conflate their particular "skys" as others' universal "sky", as the elephant or even as the dragon, resembling with exactly what the original idiom literally intends to tell us.

The well, actually further reminds me for Plato's cave, in which people live chained to the wall, can only see shadows projected on the wall. Plato thought

that philosophers might be the lucky ones who can manage to escape from their chains and able to witness and relay the outside real world. But I am afraid, for most if not all the time, they may merely be the same frogs conflating their own shadows or illusions as others "real world ", conflating their "skys" as others "sky"!

Nowadays, how many social scientists are working on the black cat, the dragon, the elephant, or working as frogs? Or how many social scientists know what they are working on or as? Or, for better or worse, merely pretending as if they don't know? There was a recent book published by Zhou Lian titled *You can never wake a person who pretends to sleep* (2012). The same phase can probably be totally re-phased as *You can never wake social scientists who pretends to sleep!* Scholastic fallacy, as ridiculed by Bourdieu in *Pascalian Meditation* (2000), is the norm of the day. Equally as if it is not the norm of the day. That's the question.

From the Age of Apprenticeship to Envisioning Real Utopias

Tung Kai Cheung was my classmate in high school. During the old days, teenage boys normally preferred sciences rather than arts programme. But both of us loved arts and became the rare species in the school. Later I went to study sociology and he went to study literature. Twenty years after he became a renowned, high-bow novelist in Hong Kong.

His changes in writing style after 2005, however, has further enhanced his sophistication and promoted his fame in the literary field. Commentaries were so positive as if some time he may obtain the Nobel nomination. The motivating factor behind these changes was apparent, he was so moved by the recent re-emergence of social activism among young people in Hong Kong, with himself transformed from an apathetic spectator into a social critic with heavy humanistic concerns.

I started my PhD programme in September, 2010. Just one month before that Tung published his heavy weight masterpiece *The Age of Apprenticeship*, which

is both modeled after and as a tribute to Goethe's Wilheim Meister's *Apprenticeship*. This 700 pages thick novel is full of records of long winded discussions from a study group of university students, going through 12 classics within a year's time, debating about what constitutes an ideal society, as well as applying what they learnt in the realpolitik of counter-hegemonic struggles. That is why the novel is known as "the age of apprenticeship", a transitional status between student and practitioner.

I was so obsessed by the idea of study group that as soon as I began my study, I started to search for classmates and attempted to initiate study groups. But the gap between fiction and reality has never been wider. It could easily imagine how difficult it is to mobilize peers to read books together nowadays - even if it might carry credits! So I have no choice and moved to a well established study group - a research network on Pearl River Delta Social Economy in our department in Hong Kong Polytechnic University headed by Professor Pun Ngai, with participants of both academic and NGO backgrounds.

The research network identified two books as basic texts to read, J. K. Gilson-Graham's *A Postcapitalist Politics* of 2006 and E.O. Wright's *Envisioning Real Utopias*, just published in 2010. It took not long before I found the huge gap between them: the former is cultural while the latter political-economic; the former no longer sociological while the latter still firmly sociological; the former post-structuralist, postmodernist, post-developmentalist and anti-essentialist while the latter structuralist, modernist, developmentalist and essentialist; the former **under-theorized** while the latter as a crucial attempt to avoid **over-theorization**. Last but not the least, I hated the former and loved the latter.

In January, 2011, I myself published a (much light weighted) book called *Pre and Post Eighties*, which also accounted for the current social movement of the young people. The idea of holding my own study group (also as an effort to promote the new book) once again emerged. But the publisher and co-authors were not keen either. It was not until May that year my long term partner in the fair trade projects, and the founder of Fair Circle, the case being studied under the current research, Anthony, who was neither a student of social sciences nor

humanities, suggested that the study group could be organized under the umbrella of the fair trade network, since it could strengthen the theoretical foundations of the work. The resulted study group thus moved outside the university and targeted not only students but also the general public.

Under the free choice of mine this time, Wright was still picked as core reading, together with Polanyi, Bourdieu, Harvey, Habermas, Burawoy, also Tung's novel and my own book,[1] were all together added to the booklist. The welcoming responses totally caught me in surprise. The list was prolonged again and again and the schedule was extended again and again. Another publisher learnt about the study group showed interests in turning the discussions into a new publication.[2] Even the Pearl River Delta Social Economy group and the original publisher also suggested partnership. It seems that this new study group was highly promising and became realizing what Tung formulates in the novel itself.

The huge gap between what was expected and what was going to happen, however, emerged once again almost immediately. It was easy to propose a booklist, read them and present them one-dimensionally. That was all about the basic requirement of a *lector*. But once when you needed to integrate it with a substantive network of concrete actors, a real world enterprise, an ongoing social movement all summarized under the title "fair trade", things suddenly became much more complicated - even if I did not consider myself doing an "action research" in the methodological sense. What needed to be considered is not only intellectual but also political issues; what needed to be read is not only theories but also how they are/to be applied; what needed to be catered are various positions towards globalization, approaches to fair trade, organizations of business activities, practices in everyday life, and of course, the different interests of the stakeholders. Thus you were no longer a *lector* but also an *autor*, to employ Bourdieu's terms.

Dialectics between theories and practices, ideas and actions

---

1 Gibson-Graham, J.K., S. Resnick and R. Wolff, eds. (2001) *Re/Presenting Class: Essays in Postmodern Marxism* was also included in the list mainly because of Resnick and Wolff, but not Gibson-Graham.
2 See further details in Chapter V.

These challenges forced me to start re-reading Wright again, this time have to read it in a hybrid, fluidic, de-centre and complex manner. As a crucial effort to provide an **un-deterministic and non-reductionist** account for social transformation, Wright has already gone a long way departing from his original classical Marxist position. But the remains of the monistic and unilinear Marxist reasoning, with its ideological and teleological tendencies, can still be unmistakably identified in his analysis. While avoiding the problems of empiricism and under-theorization of Gibson-Graham, remains of problems related to **grand narrative and over-theorization** can still be indisputably observed. When applied to the developing Global South, such framework may still bear the risks of imposed transformation characterizing developmentalist dogmatism and imperialism (see Chapter II).

At the historical moment when I started my PhD study, fair trade development was generally regarded to be caught at crossroads.[3] The Fair trade network was once considered as a promising means of counter-hegemonic transformation under neoliberal globalization, even just in a highly gentle and incremental manner. In the forgoing decade the mainstreaming of fair trade has, however, brought about significant pacifying effects. Fair trade operations were becoming highly institutionalized, professionalized and standardized, and virtually became another transnational mega-enterprise. As Jaffee (2007:1) neatly summarizes at the onset in his milestone study on fair trade, "At the heart of fair trade lies a fundamental paradox In its efforts to achieve social justice and alter the unjust terms of trade that hurts small farmers worldwide, fair trade utilizes the mechanisms of the very markets that have generated those injustices."

Fair trade never ceases to be identified as a social movement, but its movement missions have been rapidly fading under its market successes.[4] The original cause of the movement was generally considered to be severely jeopardized.

---

3 See for example, Raschke, M. (2010). Fair trade at a crossroads? Position-fixing between niche existence and mass market. *Stimmen der Zeit, 228 (11)*, 743-752.

4 Gendron et al. (2008) for example, identify the tensions in fair trade as fractions of a social movement. This conception however, deviates from the fact that most actors involve in fair trade may not consider themselves part of a movement, but merely part of a business.

The possible ways out of the impasse, however, have not been much discussed or even mentioned at all. Key stakeholders were still bathing in their sweet dreams of rapid market share expansions. Although there are rather harsh (and probably pessimistic) criticisms mainly from the academic circle, the potential confidence crisis was well known only to the small circle of insiders, but rarely recognized by the general public. The re-adoption of social activism and confrontational strategies was not seen as a pressing issue, at least being witnessed at the moment of 2011, before I completed my first year of study.[5] The complexity and contingency found in fair trade development, accidentally, was becoming the core concerns of my coming research (see Chapter III and IV).

As a practitioner of fair trade for nearly 10 years, I have never imagined it would or should become my PhD research topic; but when I finally became a PhD student, neither could I imagine that the ongoing and emergent events, which were continuously evolving and I have actively taken part, just simply picked up in everyday life, would be decisively shaping and re-shaping not only my own research agenda, but also general academic debates of growing significance. This is what exactly meant by dialectics, I supposed. **The dialectics between the historical totality and the conjunctional specifics. The dialectics between the enduring structures and actors interacting within it.** The dialectics between the elephant and different parts of its body. Highly probably.

And that is, ironically, the main theme Tung actually has already pushed forward in his philosophically and morally sophisticated novel. He even concretely terms the problem as an "antinomy" - the unresolvable tensions and conflicts between the worlds of literature and politics, theories and practices, ideas and actions. As a post hoc reflection, Tung has already foreseen **the problems of real world commitments and political engagements of theorists, academics, or more precisely, intellectuals, who use to work isolatedly with abstract ideas and idealized worldviews, who use to their roles of being *lectors* rather than *autors*.[6]**

---

5   Jaffee (2010) represents the very first attempts to capture the "social movement responses" to mainstreaming fair trade.

6   I have attempted to discuss this antinomy in the book *Ba Shi Chin Hao* as a reflection on the tensions

In Tung's novel, just as in that of Goethe, the brilliant young minds were preoccupied with grand projects of social emancipation, utopian imaginations of the future, and were keen in experimenting them through social activism and political actions. But the cruel reality not only brutally destroyed their dreams, but also transformed their souls fundamentally. Nonetheless the author does not blame the betrayal of the cause, just telling the whole story in a tender, compassionate manner. He positions himself as a detached observer, avoid making judgements on the evolving events. For he merely considers this an age of apprenticeship, the cruel fact that every growing mind supposed to have to encounter.

The age of fair trade apprenticeship. Highly probably.

2. The frogs: temptations to conflate the particular "skys"

From factory in China to the farm in Hong Kong

It was also in the spring of 2011, that I happened to move with my family to some remote villages in Hong Kong. It was exactly where the well-known Choi Yuen Village, being abolished by the construction of the high speed railway, has been relocated. Villagers who insisted to continue their farming activities grouped together and acquired a new piece of land nearby (exhausting all the compensation they fought painfully from the government), living in temporary housing (erected by the railway company) and working in the farms everyday as usual. Although it was not my original intention to study local farmers and local food market, I thought it would be really nice if I could do some farming by myself, in order to gain first hand experience of a primary producer and empathy of their life worlds. Supposedly this might help, I speculated, laying some grounds for future my ethnographic studies of fair trade in developing countries.

---

encountered by the current Hong Kong social movements, but have never ever anticipated it will re-emerge exactly on myself and in this research.

To look backward, the decision of becoming a part time farmer was, actually, also being much influenced by Professor Pun Ngai and Lee Ching Kwan, the latter as a student of Michael Burawoy adopting the extended case method. Pun was also renowned her PhD thesis turned award winning book, *Made in China: Women Factory Workers in a Global Workplace* (2005), based on the participatory observation of the researcher, worked and lived together with migrant workers in an electronics factory for three months. The direct experiencing of the joy and sorrow of the workers, through the developing of intimate relationships and close connections with them in the real world setting, while without disclosing the researcher's own identity, of course, enabled the writing of not only indepth but also realistic stories of the workers. It magnified the normally unheard voices of the workers, and dramatized the the simple and small incidents of normal daily life. This might in turn, as some scholars might favour, be perceived as an empowerment process which raised the social consciousness of this marginalized group in the rapidly growing China.

Perfectly fit, I imagined, that these methods might be applicable to my own research too. The setting could simply change from the factory to the farm, the actors from marginalized workers to marginalized farmers, and the theme from labour right to fair trade. This time, much less out of my theoretical construction "top down", but real world experiences "bottom up", should guide me to what I should observe out there in the field. Preoccupied conceptions of farmers was deliberately "shelved", ethnographic materials were 100% "grounded", to employ anthropological terms, and Wright's themes was "hung" at least for the moment. Everything seemed to assemble perfectly, although my decision of moving home was due to other personally reasons, totally unrelated to my research need at all.

Things turned out, once again, to be totally out of my expectation. Working in the farm every Tuesday and Thursday morning (when I was off classes from the university), I partnered with some local farmers who have been staying on the fields for decades. When I was clearing wild weeds and covering the crops carefully, with sweats dropping all around my head, smell of fresh plants fulfilling

my nose, I suddenly discovered that this was not much different from as if I was heading to a sauna room perfumed with herbs! I was merely an enjoyer of countryside leisure marginally different from a picnicker, a "holiday farmer" though I was not working in the weekend. Rural, it suddenly reminded me of what Raymond Williams once forcefully asserted, is just another wishful construction and paradise imagination of the urban people. Ultimately, I was still merely a consumer, in its full sense, rather than producer in the farm and of food products. I was a middle class academic consuming the rural setting created by the farmers, or to put it more straight forward, to consume the sweat and tears of the farmers. I was merely consuming the livelihood struggles of the marginalized group for the sake of my personal pleasure and fulfillment.

The concentration of my focus on the lived experiences and subjective encounters of farmers, emphasizing the proactive responses of human agencies to the external world, furthermore, singled out the local socio-environmental context rather than the broader, and subtler political-economic context, under which all the actions and interactions took place. This did not imply individual actions must be conflated and conditioned by external, structural forces, nor have the globalization of food products been "top-down" determining the life courses of the farmers, but a simply ignorance of these factors did not assist me to come closer to the actor's real life world.

Post-developmentalism as self-fulfilling prophecy

As David Graeber (2001) told us in his *Towards an Anthropological Theory of Value*, "[Feminism, semiotics, cultural studies...] all were part of a broad left turn in academic life that probably peaked in the late 1970's (just before politics everywhere started veering to the right), but that permanently altered the basic terms of intellectual debate, ensuring that most academics now think of themselves as political radicals, even if as time has gone on it has reduced many to producing what seem like ever more fervent position papers for a broader political movement that does not, in fact, exist."

Graeber's bold and provocative statement of "The Emperor's New Clothes",

written at the onset of the new millennium, can unfortunately be only partially true. For during that year and the years to follow, the "broader political movement" has already been forcefully reviving, especially encompassing diverse actions which can loosely summed under the umbrella of "counter-globalization". It is only the "academics who think of themselves as political radicals" who did not recognize, still producing the kind of "fervent position papers" like mass production that should only be found in electronics factories, without realizing that their mode of production have been totally outdated and detached from the real world context. It seems as if there is an astonishing time lag, in terms of decades, that the intellectual practices of academics may fall behind the empirically rapid changing world. In short, when the world turned left, the academics turned left; when the world turned right, the academics were "left" behind; when the world turns left again, the academics are still "left" somewhere at the far corner of academia, just like frogs comfortably sitting deep down under their wells, thinking about their "skys" as if they were some thirty years ago!

The "broad left turn" in geography, anthropology and development studies, however, manage to ground its roots in the developing world, probably due to the fact that it is less colonized by systemic world (in Habermasian terms) and more remote from the everyday realpolitik. Academics are thus able to initiate utopian experiments and idealist imaginaries in a more secluded and comfortable environment. They are able to find a steady supply of audiences, or informants, or clients, from the relatively peripheral regions, or in short, from " the people". Instead of doing pure scientific research, the academics may also become participants in the communities and engage in development projects. While Marxist theorists of under-development (still by and large fall into the developmentalist regime) may seek to "empower" or even "enlighten" the people who may not well aware of their emancipatory potentials; theorists of post-development, on the contrary, seek to emancipate the people from the revolutionists, from the enlighteners, from the dominations of "grand narratives" of both development and under-development.

There however comes an irrepressible internal contradiction which is universally

20

identified among the post-development theorists: if the marginalized groups are the key agents of endogenous, autonomous self-emancipation, there will be no rooms for these theorists to maneuver. All sorts of "participatory action researches", engagements, facilitations preserve no ground for their own existences, and no more jobs would be offered in the fields of cultural anthropology and development studies etc. But from time to time when the so-called "genuine" voices and choices from the grassroot are to be channeled "bottom up" through the academics, the marginalized groups are doom to subject to the new manipulation and domination, no matter how good or "innocent" intentions the academics possess, and how heavily they invest on the resistance and creative potentials of the marginalized's own. For it is substantially indefensible if power relationships are to be avoided, why then post-development theorists should still be showing up in their fieldwork of the developing world all the time!

Furthermore, the encounters does not end up merely within the fieldwork themselves. Once when research outputs, articulations, "re-presentations" are to be generated, the voices and choices are doom to be translated into the language of the academia, mostly in a peculiar form of modern American English, a specific type of language suffocated with complicated jargons and terminologies, which is the key symbol of imperialist cultural hegemony, particularly tailor-made for academic journals, rather than employing local or at least local-friendly languages that the marginalized group are able to comprehend. The marginalized groups, furthermore, may time and again be introduced into occasions of academic conferences for their "show time", just exactly as if exotic animals may raise "conservation concerns" when being brought to the Ocean Park for public education purposes! It is far too apparent that post-developmentalist theorists are just frogs who refused the attempt of a holistic elephant and retreated to each of their own private "skys". But for better or worse, they still cannot, and far from being able to, resist the temptation to conflate their particular "skys" as others universal "sky", exactly what the original idiom literally intend to tell us.

Critiques of Olivier de Sardan[7]

Olivier de Sardan tries to identify the kind of spirit he names "populist developmentalist complex",[8] commonly found in the post-developmentalist intellectual circles, as a subset of the larger developmentalist family. Both the under-developmentalist and the post-developmentalist (the former still falls into the family of modernization theories) positions may potentially deliver idealized pictures of marginalized groups resistances. The contrasts can, however, never ever be greater. While the former tends to speak for the groups top down, the latter speak from the groups bottom up; while the former speaks for the groups as if their representatives, the latter let the groups speak for themselves; while the former speak of collective interests, the latter challenges who dominate this collective.

However, as Olivier de Sardan powerfully reveals, the secret lineages between post-developmentalists and the under-developmentalists are still easily detectable. For while post-developmentalists tend to speak of diversity and complexity, their intellectual commitment to populist ethos still tend to produce more or less "soft" generalizations; while they tend to refuse overwhelming models, their moral sentiments still tend to offer "loose" models as if there are no models. While they may repeatedly try to avoid the politically sensitive language of "collective" and "the mass", they cannot refuse but replace them with more "politically correct" language of "community" and "the commons" (this is a typical case for the language of the academia, hardly if not totally impossible to obtain any appropriate Chinese translation, not to mention it can be comprehended by daily language of normal people). Though, these are still

---

7 It is highly amazing that the work of Olivier de Sardan is generally overlooked by the Hong Kong academia. His only book translated into English, *Anthropology and Development (2005)*, can only be find in one single library, the CUHK library. As an Anglo-saxon effort to popularize the work of the French anthropologist, Lewis and Mosse (2006) is more readily available to students.

8 For Olivier de Sardan (2005:114), "Development has become a profession, the development world a 'market'. However, within this profession and in this market, the populist ideology is far from marginal. Populism is indeed succeeded in selling a certain type of product on this market. It has produced a body of arguments, practices and institutions which could be called the 'populist developmentalist complex'. (a subset of the developmentalist configuration), whose main particularity resides in the fact that it counters, not without success, and in the view of a certain audience, the theses of the 1950's and 1960's (a period marked by so-called theories of modernization): small vs big projects, adequate vs heavy technologies, subsistence vs commercial crops, peasants vs scientific knowledge, country vs towns, small producers vs rural entrepreneurs, 'women too' vs 'man only', peasant organizations vs agricultural supervisors, NGOs vs bid projects, etc."

employed side by side with the more traditional conceptions of "marginalized", "underprivileged", "poor", "inferior", "subordinate", and in short, "the people", all combined as very vague and highly in-determined conceptual schemes which allows free slippages and academia manipulations for their usages.[9]

It is all too well-understood that populists tend to over-generalize the bright side and over-particularize the dark side of their people. However, again according to Olivier de Sardan (2005:115), "Moral populism, in fact, has two facets - that is, it also has a polemic dimension: to affirm that the poor (the people) exist and that little attention is paid to them implies a condemnation of those who are guilty of this refusal of this disregard, or of those who uphold it. Affirmative moral populism (it is good to discover the people) is usually associated with denunciative moral populism (it is bad to ignore the people)." As a result, there are still many possible occasions for populists to hunt for their witches, which are held responsible for people's sufferings, thus populists may equally tend to over-generalize the dark side of the reality. "The very choice of the word 'poor' is revealing. This is undoubtedly a 'miserabilist' or 'dominocentric' attitude (that is focusing only on the processes of domination), which Passeron contrasts with the populist attitude: populism overestimates the autonomy of the people, while miserabilism underestimates it. Miserabilism is only interested in the mechanisms of domination or in its consequences; it sees the people as victims, and it characterizes their cultures in terms only of an absence or a deficiency. Passeron demonstrates, extremely convincingly, that these are the two poles between which researchers and writers often oscillate." (Olivier de Sardan, 2005:119)[10]

Post-developmentalist approaches to fair trade

---

9 Post-developmentalists tend to associate themselves with the anti-essesntialist positions of postmodernism. However, their populist sentiments inevitably "betray" such fashionable claims and virtually pull them back into essentialist positions. See Chapter II for more discussion.

10 Olivier de Sardan (2005:120) further adds, "This contradiction is in fact inherent in the developmentalist system: on the one hand, development situations imply that the local populations are self-reliant and inevitably rely on an endogenous dynamic, but, on the other, they just as inevitably involve external interveners and assume constant shift and assume that transfers of knowledge and resources will naturally take place. Those who position themselves in the camp of ideological populism will still have to make allowances for external interveners, while those on the miserabilist side of the fence will still have to make allowances for internal dynamics."

If theorists of the developmentalist background are found guilty of delivering bigger or smaller optimistic illusions of fair trade, theorists of post-developmentalism convey much more pessimistic pictures. While their contributions of enriching and broadening the debates about fair trade, as well as drawing our attention to real-world complexity and subtle processes should not be dismissed, there is a general tendency for post-developmentalist studies to dramatize and exaggerate the existing theoretical and practical cleavages within fair trade, particularly through the narrow adoption of selective ethnographic materials. Driven by emancipatory mentalities and fueled by political agendas, post-developmentalists are sometimes over-pessimistic and other times over-optimistic, tends to oscillate between the two extremes, but never ever manage to escape from ideological dispositions as promised. Moberg, Lyon, Luetchford and the like, similarly attempt to associate their intellectual aspirations with Lewis and Mosse, which are also closely connected all the way up to the Manchester School with a strong Marxist touch. However, they also tend to miss some the very core essences of these classic sociological or anthropological approaches of development. In brief, fundamental faults can be identified in many, if not all the studies oriented towards post-developmentalism.

The freshly sung statements of anthropologists Lyon and Moberg (2010:14) can conclusively summarize the current mood of distrust and disenchantment on fair trade, "Not unlike discursive analyses of development, much that has been written of fair trade movement has taken as its point of departure the language of fair trade advocates in the now-developed world. This discourse draws heavily from the 'alternative globalization' and 'decommodification' models elucidated by Fridell (2007), that is, those segments of the movement that challenge the free-market assumptions of neoliberalism and the impersonal nature of market-based relationships...The movement is premised on nothing less than a mixture of traditional and contemporary Christian values, the liberal human and labour rights embodied in the International Labour Organization and the United Nation, and a radical interpretation of the Enlightenment values of social justice. For all the value-laden, indeed moral, discourse surrounding fair trade advocacy, however, comparatively little attention has been paid to the

processes by which these values are to be established among fair trade producers and consumers."

Another key anthropologist working on fair trade, Luetchford (2008), in less harsh terms, neatly summaries in his updated review of recent fair trade studies, "Barratt-Brown (1990), Coote (1992) and Grimes (2005) are examples of works that tend to reproduce popular ideas about fair trade promoting unmediated, unproblematic and wholly beneficial links between producers and consumers, constructed as a mirror image of mainstream commercial relations. More measured studies are provided by Auroi (2000), Conroy (2001), Lyon (2006) and and Thompson (1999), who focus on fair-trade consumption, organizations, labeling, certification and quality norms as potential avenues for development. Alongside these contributions, Murray, Raynolds and Leigh Taylor (2003), Calo and Wise (2005) and Ronchi (2002) have produced useful case studies of coffee-producer groups. These accounts remain generally optimistic; experiences are seen to vary and certain obstacles and problems are identified, but the consensus is that co-operatives and coffee growers benefit from fair trade. Less optimistic contributions have either argued that the alternative commercial relationship is ineffectual in combating local, regional, national and international power relations, such that certification and participation become a form of governance (Fraser, 2003; Mendoza and Bastiaensen, 2003; Mutersbaugh, 2002), or commentators identify contradictions between the ethical and business components of fair trade (Hughes, 2005; Lewis, 1998; Luetchford, 2006; Renard, 1999, 2003; Tallontire, 2000)."

Avoiding "frogian" reductionism

One must recall what Norman Long (2001:3) pinpoints as at the very beginning of his book *Development Sociology: Actor Perspectives*, that "parallel to the way in which constructionism has been misconstrued as privileging cultural representation and the power of language and discourse, so actor-oriented analysis has sometimes been reduced to rational choice theory or criticized for being methodologically individualist. This view seriously distorts the aims and methods of an actor perspective, since the world of social action is never made

up of a series of detached individuals and atomized decision-makers. Persons and their environments are reciprocally constituted." Many of the above fair trade studies of post-developmentalist orientation, while providing empirically substantiated and people-centred evidences of the day-to-day processes in fair trade, however, may bear the potential risks of being too narrowly focused on producers and consumers at the personal and micro-interactional level, bias and selective in adopting ethnographic materials at the local level, in rather isolated and de-historical manner, without connecting them to wider political-economic and institutional-organizational contexts.

As Bernstein and Campling (2006:416) observe in their literature review of commodity studies, "A common feature of all the accounts is their skepticism about the achievements of the various measures introduced to establish, sustain or elevate 'ethical' standards of consumption. This is especially notable in the contributions of a more culturalist inclination when they confront the realities of 'civic' conventions engineered by big food industry and retail capital, and when they are informed by some measure of empirical probing into how 'ethical' initiatives are implemented, and their impact or otherwise on consumers, rather than indulging in the opportunities for discursive play (and distraction) provided by the public relations department (or consultant) of the self-proclaimed 'responsible retailer'." While these skeptical accounts are loaded with terminologies like "politics of consumption", "the relations, forms and practices - including the politics - of farming for export in the 'South' are almost wholly absent, apart from some consideration of the strategies (and machinations) of transnational agri-business capitals, and brief glimpses of what goes on in sites of production at the far upstream end of the commodity chains considered." (ibid: 432).

All in all, these individualist and culturalist accounts tend to be static and mechanical in their analysis, allow real world complexity to be dichotomized and crystallized in simplicity; treat power relationships solely as zero-sum games rather than positive or zero-sum games; without engage in further interrogations of the dynamic, dialectic interactions among the plurality, hybridity of entangled actors across interpenetrating and essentially contested rather than mutually

exclusive terrains.

This is exactly what Harvey (2009:229) attempts to remind, "This creates its own forms of **reductionism**, such that, for example, some anthropologists, geographers and sociologists[11] take the **local ethnographic or regional cultural scale** as the true front of all understandings. In a way, the scale is understandable, since at this scale the intricacies of cultural difference become most readily identifiable, and as a result immensely illuminating and informative work has been produced on cultural differentiation at this scale. The problem arises, however, when it is then inferred that the only way to understand imperialism or neoliberalism is by working through the messiness of local ethnographic details. Since these never provide neat reflections of the larger argument, then, it is presumed, the **macro-formulations** of imperialism or neoliberalism (largely cast in political-economic and geopolitical terms rather than cultural terms) must be wrong."

3. The architect and the bees: muddling through the real world complexities

The world with and without strangers

In June, 2011, I visited PODIE and Selyn in Sri Lanka in a group of 11 practitioners, volunteers and consumers from Hong Kong being organized by Fair Circle. Doctor Alex Chan of Community College, a subsidiary of Polytechnic University, who later in that year becoming the chairman of Hong Kong Fairtrade Foundation, also joined us. This is my first chance to conduct on-site participations and observations in fair trade production sites, particularly involving the interactions between upstream producers and downstream consumers. The site visit functioned as a tourist group though entitling less pleasures and entertainments as it usually contains. The visit "ran smoothly"

---

11 Sociologists, I must further qualify, here refers to those heavily influenced by anthropologists and geographers. For under the proper sociological training of multidimensional reasoning, one should be able to avoid what Harvey pinpoints as reductionism and I would call the fallacy of "conflating among levels of analysis".

and everything encountered were totally under my "personal expectations": for the fair trade organizations, they were not well equipped to answer challenging questions, provided self-contradictory information about the situation, always lost the direction on the traffic route to production sites...for the producers, labour protection was questionable; women empowerment was rarely addressed, production sites were in poor conditions, but for the worst of all, green colour polluted water was draining all its way into the green paddle fields outside a dying plant near Kurunagala, as directly witnessed by all members of the group!

Such shocking experience probably resulted with immediate effects. As soon as after visiting the dying plant, the group was being sent to the end-product exhibiting handicraft shop, decorated with full range of ultra-colourful textile products coming from that plant, with a just 20 minutes ride for shopping! I was so curious how the members will react to the paradoxical situation: they join the trip as fair trade admirers, if not hard core supporters; but the direct encounter in production sites became an anti-climax, everything they expected to see turned out to be just as opposite! I secretly laughed to myself and thought that the most dramatic scenario finally came! I observed all the group members with great care. Some really looked puzzled and hanged around; some just moved to the corner, seemed as if they were disinterested at all. But finally when somebody tried to pick up a few items and moved to the casher, some others started to choose products and within 3 or 4 minutes, the queue grew up and people started shopping normally as usual. Although, as a post hoc estimation, each member only purchased products costed less than HK$100 on average, and some explicitly admitted that they were deterred by the experiences of the dying plant.

Some members of the group, furthermore, started to question whether all such undesirable outcomes were resulted from decisions of the producers or imposed by the NGOs. In another instance, forests in the chili growing area were pulled down for planting this externally introduced cash crop, and drove elephants out of their habitat, which ultimately caused elephants to kill people as revenge. This raised the query of whether fair trade projects, just similar to

the traditional development enterprise, was really according to the interests of the people, or merely driven by the market demand, and ultimately the hegemony of consumer culture. While compassionate group members would think that as long as the community was fully consulted and could participate in the decisions, this should still legitimize the projects as locally embedded. Furthermore, as the capacity of the local people being enhanced, their market knowledge and bargaining power could be promoted, being able to create their own sales channels, and became less dependent on both the NGOs and the preexisting consumer demands. The discussion resembled closely with the post/developmentalist debates and of course, there can be no simple and one-size-fit-all answers to these complicated questions.

Shopping breaks, as it happens in mainstream tourism, are also the must for fair trade site visits. But besides the dying plant negative experiences and all sorts of debates, group members still have other hesitations to buy a lot from the fair trade souvenir shops. "I don't have enough room to cater so many stuffs." "My souvenirs last trip are still lying at the bottom of my case." "I would rather prefer food products which can be eaten." All sorts of consideration implies that consumer demands may not really preexist, it may only be artificially constructed by the fair trade network. Consumers purchases are still, in many if not most cases, not actions based on genuine necessity but just symbolic support for the movement. This unavoidably conveys a similar image of "false demand", which is so fundamental in sustaining capitalist accumulation, can equally and commonly be found in fair trade. Consumerism and commodity fetishism, being heavily criticized in the mainstream market, seem to be the logic that fair trade equally cannot escape from.

Other group members, however, encountered further complications. One said that before she started the trip, friends and relatives have already piled up their "wish lists", lists of local, traditional authentic products to be found in and collectable from Sri Lanka. Ceylon tea (leaves or teabags) easily occupied top positions on the list. Other items included coconut oil and crafts, woodworks, garments and all sorts of food stuff which might not be sourced as fair trade. Even if they were supplied fair trade organizations, ranges and choices of

products might still be limited when compared to the mega-size of mainstream suppliers. The pressures of purchasing and delivering the bulk of souvenirs, again the basic symbol of mainstream tourism and consumerism, which seem to be solidly embedded in the popular culture of Hong Kong people, can still ironically and unavoidably be imposed on and practiced by the fair trade supporters.

Fair trade site visits of middle class consumers are becoming popular as a specific form of alternative tourism. Group members can obtain the satisfaction of indepth dialogue, exotic touch and non-commercialized hospitality that traditional tourism can hardly offer. However, the harsh realities of close encounters may also turn out to be potential disappointments. The face-to-face interactions between the fair trade producers and consumers may be hindered by all sorts of language barriers. These are especially true when local conditions are judged from the perspectives of urban people from the developed world; when local people are still unavoidably be inspected through the developmentalist gaze; when fair trade principles formulated in the Eurocentric Global North are super-imposed onto the varieties of community lives situated in a vast spread of geographical locations.

Logically, it can easily end up with the conclusions by outside visitors that "fair trade is not fair", "fair trade fails its promises", or even "fair trade is flake" and the like. While viewpoints being more merciful to the local NGOs and the marginal producers may, more or less equally, oppose fair trade as "new form of hegemony", "cultural imperialism", or in short, developmentalism. For sure there must be these and that kinds of pitfalls within all fair trade operations. Rules and procedures are being followed to greater or lesser extents. Some practitioners may do better and some may not. It is always all too easy to draw conclusions based on parts of an elephant's body. But these moral judgements, either coming from the developmentalist Global North or the post-developmentalist Global South, may both tend to be over-simplified and tend to miss the target (see Chapter V).

The architects and the bees

The group from Hong Kong, as a rather abnormal practice, conducted debriefing sessions for sharing feelings with each other during the evenings. Even further out of my total surprise this time, the members are not really such critical and antagonistic towards the brutal facts they saw in the visits! Emotionally they might feel uncomfortable with the production situations; but rationally they all knew very well that fair trade could never be perfect, especially under the poor local conditions. Everything was keep changing and adapting to its environmental context, even our visits would be bit by bit modifying the actions of local people, and in return, that the outsiders themselves would also be transformed through the visits. The visit itself did not serve as a outside-in, top-down "auditing", or even "monitoring" in the loosest sense. It was more about a process of promoting communication and mutual understanding. Fundamentally, as one group member suggested, information sharing and transparency promoting would ultimately bring changes, either modifying the problems being observed or modifying the perspectives of how they were going to be observed! Even if changes all of a sudden might not be witnessed at the present moment as commonly expected, transformation would certainly be resulted as information flows become more and more unobscured and uninterrupted.

This is probably what once Appiah (2006) neatly summaries, that the great lessons of anthropology is that **"when the stranger is no longer imaginary, but real and present, sharing a human social life, you may like him or dislike him, you may agree or disagree; but, if it is what you both want, then you can make sense of each other in the end."**

So whether we term it as strategies of social transformation, or strategies of development, the fair trade movement or network is not a matter of copying models directly from the textbooks. Nor can we apprehend the emergent and complex reality in rather static and categorical schemas. The latter constructions are deeply planted in the mindsets of theorists, if not idealists who are basically detached from real world operations. Not only actors of diverse background and varying geographical distances are continuously interacting

with each other, they are also interacting with the institutional environment, as well as all kinds of preexisting cultural and historical settings altogether contributing to the magnitude and direction of complex changes. **Fair trade is, after all, a broad and loose institutional framework consists of complex knowledge/power domains not only encompasses heterogeneous groups of stakeholders, but it also subjects to continuous interpretations and reinterpretations, deconstructions and reconstructions, co-creations and re-creations.** Nothing is and can ever be predetermined, or prejudged, by anybody at the very beginning. To employ the famous concept of Charles Lindblom, it is a continuous movement "**muddling through**" all kinds of tensions and contradictions in **non-unilinear and non-monistic** manner (see Chapter VI).

In short, social transformation and social development can be planned but not predicted, can be projected but not predestinated. Good intentions may bring intended or unintended, desirable or undesirable results. Self interests may also bring zero-sum or positive sum games. But it is the actors, with their reflexive knowledge and proactive capacity, who can at least incrementally adjust against the intermediary results, develop feedback loops, respond to the institutional settings, bit by bit and stage by stage, without knowing when or whether the final judgement will ultimately come. As Karl Marx in *Capital* (1867) has already, in some 150 years ago, put it in such layman words, "What separates the worst of architects from the best of bees, is that the architect erects a structure in imagination before realizing it upon the ground."

4. The methodology: extensions and interface analysis

From actor oriented approach to extended case method

The above personal experiences in my first year study, apparently, reminded me of what Norman Long proposed as the actor oriented approach, an approach introduced by my supervisor David. It seemed to me that the word "actor" here

inevitably creates confusions, which convenes the impression of methodological individualism, subjectivism and anti-essentialism. But as Long (2001:3) himself forcefully clarifies, his approach **"requires we throw our net high and wide. We must encompass not only everyday social practices and language games, but also larger-scale institutional frameworks, resource fields, networks of communication and support, collective ideologies, socio-political arenas of struggle, and the briefs and cosmologies that may shape actors' improvisations, coping behaviours and planned social actions."** The actor oriented approach, I suppose, should best be understood in terms of what Olivier de Sardan (2005:11) terms (and proposes Long as a leading figure) **"methodological interactionism", or "the entangled social logic approach"**.

When I was just writing down the above paragraph, however, the extended case method advocated by Michael Burawoy some years after Long accidentally (once again!), struck into my mind.[12] In fact, the "actor" I bear in mind was not only actors out there in the field, not only actors I observe as an ethnographer, not only actors I call "stakeholders" clustered here and there within the fair trade network. I am myself also an actor totally participating and interweaving in the events, though cannot be qualified with the status of either a producer or a consumer, but rather simple and straightforward as a researcher - a researcher both researching and practicing fair trade. **I am myself neither a superior seeking empowerment and enlightenment of the marginalized, nor just a bypasser detached from the real world operations and ongoing processes. I am just one of the practitioners equally located somewhere within the fair trade network, collaborating with some as well as confronting with others both supporting and challenging the fair trade movement.** It seemed that as a long term comrade of E.O. Wright, the "ghost" of Burawoy was guiding me to engage in a dialogue with Wright, or more specifically, a dialogue with Wright's theory of social transformation. I am studying the fair trade movement as well as studying myself being an integral

---

12 Despite all the differences, Burawoy et al. (2000:16-21) explicitly associates extended case method to the Manchester School of anthropology (which is also where Long originates), as a contrast to the Chicago School. The following sentence is particularly revealing, "Where the Chicago School focused on ethnic adaptation and the functionality of natural areas, the Manchester School began from the class relations of colonial capitalism." (Burawoy et al., 2000:18)

and inseparable component of movement. I am observing the agencies interacting within the fair trade network as well as self-observing my own role as an active agency. I am analyzing others positions as well as self-analyzing my own position within the processes of promoting and constraining social transformation.

I learnt about extended case method in Professor Ben Ku's postgraduate course.[13] Ben mentioned that once when Burawoy attended a conference in Polytechnic University some years ago, he joined the students on a rally against some local government policies as soon as the conference once ended. So the "ghost" of Burawoy seemed always wandering in the streets, rather than staying in the university campus, promoting real world engagements rather than satisfied with idealized worldviews. Theories cannot stand alone but have to pair up with practices. Ideas cannot exist independent of actions. I guess this is the main spirit of extended case method.

The extended case method (Burawoy, 1991) is, by no means, a method. It is a epistemological and methodological approach to social research. Its core principle is the reflexivity of the researcher, how s/he is continuously interacting, mutually shaping and accommodating with the closer and further environment. The main requirement consists of four types of extensions, or **dialogues or dialectics** I would prefer: extension of observer to participant (intervention), extension of observations over time and space (process), extension of micro process to macro forces (structuration) and, extension of theory (reconstruction). These perfectly supply the basic building blocks for my research proposal:

1. Intervention: as both a researcher and practitioner in fair trade, I attempt to connect my dynamic interactions within the field and real world encounters with my research.

2. Process: based on the exploration of a local case study, I attempt to connect

---

13 I must also add my great disaffection of Ben's course, which tends to over-idealize the ethnographer as the savior of society.

this unique experience with other cases directly or indirectly found in Hong Kong and around South and East Asia, as well as those cases in the rest of the world.

3. Structuration: the dynamics of fair trade development, more specifically as strategies of social development and transformation, will attempt to be located generally in the context of the market economic movement and counter-movement, the hegemony and counter-hegemony under neoliberal globalization.

4. Reconstruction: Wright's theory of social transformation targeting capitalist or market economy, will attempt to be further reconstructed in order to promote its relevance and adaptability to real world complexity and emergence.

As Brickell and Datta (2011) conclusively reveal, Burawoy has not lose sight of the importance of locality; rather he offers a multifaceted interpretation for the different faces of globalization through its firm embeddedness in the local. Burawoy's important contribution, however, is his continuous warnings against the potential pitfalls of restricting to research tools which are oriented primarily on micro level. It is in this respect that the extended case method "reaches out from micro-processes to macro forces, connects the local and the global without losing sight of the real experiences of globalization operating in particular localities." However, precisely it is also because of such crucial linkage between the global and the local that "global ethnography misses a crucial opportunity - it does not provide a way to understand the local as situated within a network of spaces, places and scales where identities are negotiated and transformed. Instead of exploring the spaces and scales of the locale, it grounds the local simply as a site of negotiation with the global - a place where globalization is experienced by social actors." (ibid. 2011:5)

Extended case method and global ethnography, then, presupposes what Webster, Lambert and Bezuidenhout (2008:15) identify as "a hierarchical ladder of spatial scales": personal, local, regional, national, global...in which "there is a notion of moving up or down the hierarchy of spatial scales, where the global is

the highest rung and where each scale is seen to be distinct. Using the metaphor of a ladder to understand how spatial scales operate has been criticized as being too structuralist and determinist. Having to conquer the local, the regional, the national, and only then the global, makes it almost impossible to conceive of a global response." The "ghost" of Wright, with its remains of the monistic and unilinear reasoning, still seems to be apparently and obviously accompanying Burawoy in return.

Webster, Lambert and Bezuidenhout thus suggest, similarly to Brickell and Datta, that instead of viewing spatial scale as a ladder, attempts have to be made in the rebuilding the imagery of the network as an alternative metaphor. "Going global does not imply scaling a ladder from local to the global, but place-to-place linkages can form the beginnings of a global response. This understanding of how spatial scale operates resonates with notions of democratic movements, where the model is non-hierarchical, flat open form of networked internationalism which maximizes grassroots participation...However, whereas the metaphor of spatial scale as a ladder is too structuralist, viewing it as a network, i.e. place-to-place links constitute a global response-runs the danger of being too voluntaristic." (ibid.)

In order to fully capture the agency vs. structure problematic, Webster, Lambert and Bezuidenhout assert that the network metaphor is the most appropriate strategic ground for building a place-based movement response towards globalization. However, they equally maintain the importance of conceptualizing "a dynamic interplay between place-to-place global networking and the different levels of the consolidation of power - local, regional, national, global. Each is a potential and indeed necessary field of struggle, through which movement power indeed necessary field of struggle, through which movement power may coalesce. Conceiving networked scale outside of these terrains of struggle is limiting. This conception of the interplay between networks and levels of power provides a more nuanced understanding of how spatial scale operates." (ibid.)

Lapegna (2009:17) further suggests, in his detailed comparison between global ethnography (GE, proposed by Burawoy et. al., 2000) and multi-site

ethnography (MSE, proposed by Marcus, 1995), that if MSE brings sociology and anthropology closer, then GE reinvigorates ethnography within sociology. "GE provides useful guidelines to study global processes ethnographically without accepting the postmodern premises of MSE. In other words, GE offers a toolkit for scholars interested in analyzing global process, allowing them to attend to local meanings without losing perspective of the mediating role of the national state or the impinging forces of global capitalism(s)...Although with parallel inquiries, the two approaches may lead researchers down divergent paths. For instance, a MSE perspective is related to postmodern epistemology and has a parallel stance vis-à-vis participant observation as 'grounded theory'. In contrast, a GE perspective is related to a critical or pragmatic realism and analytic ethnography."

Burawoy himself, in a rather similar manner, outlines his own contrast between extended case method and grounded theory, with the latter also firmly founded on the micro foundations of social analysis associated with symbolic interactionism. "In practice symbolic interactionism, like grounded theory, either ignores or takes social structure as given...The extended case method takes the opposite approach and seeks to uncover the macro foundations of microsociology. It takes social situations as the point of empirical observation and works with given general concepts and laws about states, economies, legal orders and the like, to understand how those micro situations are shaped by macro structures." (Burawoy, 1998:282)

Table 1. Extended case method vs. grounded theory by Burawoy (Burawoy, 1998:280)

	Extended case method	**Grounded theory**
Mode of generalization	Reconstructing existing theory	Discovering new theory
Explanation	Generic	Generic
Comparison	Similar phenomena with a view to explaining differences	Unlike phenomena with a view to discovering similarities
The meaning of	Societal	Statistical

significance		
Natural of totality	Uniqueness is located in a context external to itself, which elucidates society	Abstraction from space and time in a setting, which facilitates generalizations to population of cases
Object of analysis	Situations	Variables
Causality	Indivisible connectedness of elements	Linear relationship between variables
Micro-macro	Macro foundations of a microsociology	Micro foundations of a macrosociology
Social change	Social movements	Social engineering

It is in this turn that Long's contributions can best "re-supplement" Burawoy's approach, just as Burawoy can supplement Long in the first place. While still firmly situated in the sociological tradition, Long can nevertheless fine-tune the remaining structuralist and determinist tendencies[14] in Burawoy with an interactionist approach, especially through the concepts of emergent structures and social interfaces. More precisely, he is able to reformulate "structuration" (the third extension, of micro process to macro forces), as a more natural extension, rather than a sharp break from "process" (the second extension, of observations over time and space).

From participant observation to interface analysis

As Long (2001:64) neatly summaries, "[Concerning] the issue of how to integrate theoretically the analysis of small-scale interactional settings with that of larger institutional or social structures...the arguments suggest that, in order to avoid reification of macro concepts, we should build our understanding of society 'from below'; that is, by documenting everyday micro situations and situated social practices. Macro structures should not simply be conceptualized as aggregates of micro episodes or situations, since many of them come into existence as the result of unintended consequences of social action. Thus, as

---

14 As we shall see in Chapter II, both Burawoy and Wright suffer structuralist and determinist tendencies, which are subjected to fine-tune with Long's actor oriented approach towards the commoditization debates.

Giddens has insisted throughout his writings, the properties of social institutions and of certain global structures are emergent forms neither explicable (nor fully describable) in terms of micro events. Whilst it is true that institutional forms do not strictly speaking have a 'life of its own' - somehow beyond the reach of human agency - and are deeply engrained in everyday social practice, they do nevertheless possess characteristics that cannot be fully comprehended by merely dissecting the minutiae of social encounters."

Long thus proposes the notion of **social interface** as the proper means of understanding issues of social heterogeneity, cultural diversity and the conflicts inherent in processes involving external interventions. "Interfaces typically occur at points where different, and often conflicting, lifeworlds or social fields intersect, or more concretely in social situations or arenas in which interactions become oriented around problems of bridging, accommodating, segregating or contesting social, evaluative and cognitive standpoints...**It may likewise assist in forge a theoretical middle ground between so-called micro and macro theories of social change by showing how the interactions between 'intervening' parties and 'local' actors shape the outcome of particular interventions,[15] often with repercussions on the patterns of change at regional, national and even international levels."** (ibid.)

Although the word "interface" tends to convey an image of some kind of two-sided articulations in face-to-face confrontations, Long stresses that interface situations are more complex and multiple in nature. "While the analysis focuses on points of confrontation and social difference, it must situate these within broader institutional and knowledge/power domains. In addition, it requires a methodology that counterpoises the voices, experiences and practices of all the relevant social actors involved, including the experiential 'learning curves' of practitioners and researchers."

Long's formulation of social interface can thus provide a field strategy for participant observation which is crucial for Burawoy's call for intervention (the

---

15 Long's version of "intervention" provides an interesting contrast with Burawoy's version of "intervention", see Long and Liu (2009).

first extension, of observer to participant). This approach requires focusing on the lifeworlds and interlocking "projects" of actors, and developing theoretically grounded methods that allow for the elucidation of social meanings, purposes and powers. It also resembles what Long and Long (1992) have for long termed as the **"battlefields of knowledge"** that shape the relations between local actors, development practitioners and other interested parties, including the researchers themselves.

"Battlefields of knowledge" is thus able to convey the idea of contested arenas in which actors' understandings, interests and values are pitched against each other. "It is here - in the field of intervention primarily, though not exclusively since knowledge dilemmas and controversies also shape the writing and analysis of policy documents and reports, as well as research findings - that struggles over social meanings and practices take place. It is here too that we see most clearly the emergence of various kinds of negotiated orders, accommodations, oppositions, separations and contradictions. **Such battlefields arise within and across many different institutional domains and arenas of social action. They are not confined to the local scene or framed by specific institutional settings such as development projects or broader policy programmes. Nor do they involve only interactions between so-called 'beneficiaries' and 'implementers'. Indeed, they embrace a wide range of social actors committed to different livelihood strategies, cultural interests and political trajectories."** (Long and Liu, 2009: 71)

"While detailed ethnographic understanding of everyday life and of the processes by which images, identities and social practices are shared, contested, negotiated, and sometimes rejected by the various actors involved is the key strategy, social interface provides the necessary heuristic device for identifying and analyzing the critical points of intersection between different fields and levels of social organization." (ibid.) As already well demonstrated in the site visit mentioned above, it is at these focal points that discrepancies and discontinuities of values, interests, knowledge and power are revealed.

5. Organization of the chapters

Starting with the general methodological approach with extended case method and actor oriented approach in mind, and notions of social interface, interlocking "projects" of actors and "battlefields of knowledge" in specific, attempts will be made in the following chapters to analyze how fair trade movement, as a contest terrain, has been shaping as well as joinly shaped by the practitioners and key stakeholders as a whole. Particularly, Fairtrade Labeling Organization International (FLO) and World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO), the two major global confederations of fair trade organizations (FTOs), as well as Oxfam International (OI) devoted to the combating of "unfair trade", will be conceptualized as the major institutional and knowledge/power domains within which global and local actors interact. At the same time, regional and national supporting networks of fair trade will perform the intervening or intermediary roles of introducing and directing the fair trade principles and practices to the local level, where producer FTOs (mainly coming from the developing world) and marketing FTOs (mainly coming from the developed world) are situated, which in turn also develop interfaces among themselves through trading and other forms of interaction, as the trip of Sri Lanka described above reveals. Fair Circle, a member of WFTO and a FTO I have been actively engaged in over the past decade, will be without doubt the single most crucial case among others.

In the next chapter (Chapter II), a theoretical framework will first be introduced for accounting different counter-hegemonic trajectories, namely ruptural, interstitial and symbiotic strategies, as identified by Erik Olin Wright, offers the overall guide map and pathway for developing the thesis. From Chapter III to V, the major transformation trajectories, institutions and organizations will be examined one by one. In Chapter III, the FLO model characterized by its certification and labeling system will be critically scrutinized as an initiative adopting the symbiotic strategy, with all the debates and controversies related the mainstreaming and corporatization of fair trade being explored. In Chapter IV, the WFTO model characterized by its membership system will be considered

as a major competing model to FLO, thus representing efforts of interstitial strategy and the experimentation of new alternatives. While encountering huge pressures of mainstreaming and competitions from the market of labelled products, many of its member FTOs nevertheless manage to start new cycles of innovations and breakthrough the existing institutional limits. In Chapter V, furthermore, collective mobilization and campaign strategies against "unfair trade", as represented by Oxfam and other organizations, offer a unique version of ruptural strategy both within and beyond the FTOs, thus continuously injecting new energies and filling the gaps unfulfilled by the established fair trade network. The following figure provides a handy summary of major trajectories, institutions and organizations being accounted for in Chapter III-V:
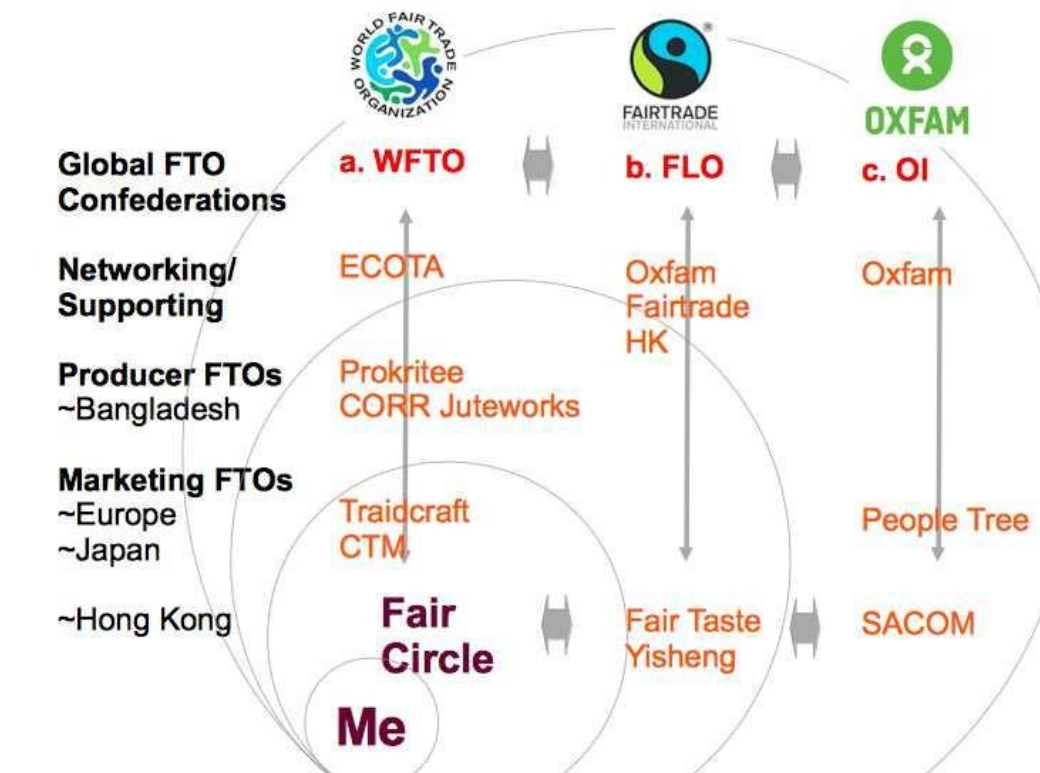
In Chapter VI, furthermore, fair trade town movement which has been growing dramatically in its popularity during the last decade, will be analyzed as a critical case being "extended" from the current research characterizing a "grounded trajectory" beyond the aforementioned transformation strategies. It is founded that within the locationality and contextuality of fair trade network in diverse locations, that the collective identity of "citizen-consumers" starts to configure, and the entanglement of transformative trajectories start to consolidate. Finally,

the concluding Chapter VII will attempt to round up the whole thesis for fair trade as a co-production process of counter hegemony.

6. Concluding remarks

To summarize, whether the current study attempts to comprehend the fair trade movement or network as an elephant groped by the blinds, or the skys as perceived by frogs, or what else? Obviously, the major task at hand will be to avoid the perspectives of frogs, especially those frogs which tend to conflate their particular "skys" as others universal "sky". However, it is equally beyond the capacity of this relatively short term research to escape from the limitations of the blinds, and be ambitious enough to attempt to grasp the holistic picture of an elephant. Even for the longer term and more well equipped researchers, probably they will not claim that they can grasp the elephant as a whole. For sure, even if there is "a substantial elephant" of fair trade movement exists in its totality, it must also be a rapidly growing and transforming one, with its giant size and undetermined shape varying all the time. This is not an elephant simply exists out there. It must be an elephant jointly nurtured by all its stakeholders. To put it in another words, it must be a structure that the architects, probably some of the worst architects who are still in their "the age of apprenticeship", and are currently "caught at the crossroads", still attempting to erect through their imaginations of all different directions.

More importantly, even if I am merely a researcher both researching and practicing fair trade, and how humble and insignificant my role might be in the fair trade movement or network, I am still unavoidably predestinated to be a member of this architects' team. I am equally an active agent interacting with other agents, who may be contributing to or creating hurdles for the movement, or simply doing both at the same time. I was analyzing others positions as well as self-analyzing my own position in the processes of promoting and constraining social transformation. The **extended case method** as proposed by Burawoy and the **actor oriented approach** as proposed by Long, which can be

loosely be qualified as "methodological interactionism", are thus identified as particularly helpful, guiding me through different levels of dialogues or dialectics, starting from myself, with the local case under study, and other cases directly or indirectly found in Hong Kong and around South and East Asia, as well as those cases in the rest of the world.

All in all, the **interface analysis** further suggested by Long offers a field strategy for participant observation focusing on the interlocking "projects" of actors within and across different institutional domains and arenas, which can be perceived as "battlefields of knowledge" in which actors' understandings, interests and values are pitched against each other. These thus become the critical points of intersection between different fields and levels of organization in which the complex and emergent nature of the fair trade movement can be fully explored.

II Theoretical framework: mind the gap of over-theorized determinism

If a "double movement" - the deregulation of the world trade in the nineteenth century, and its re-regulation in the twentieth - can serve as a model, then we may once again be standing at the brink of the "great transformation".

Jürgen Habermas, 2001

It is far from surprising that Karl Polanyi's The Great Transformation, published more than a half-century ago, would be attracting a growing number of admirers in the context of late-twentieth and early-twenty-first century "globalization."… the wrong headedness of the nineteenth century "liberal creed" have been turned to good rhetorical and analytical use against the contemporary purveyors of that creed - the promoters of the Washington consensus and "neoliberal globalization."

Beverly J. Silver and Giovanni Arrighi, 2003

It often seems as if Polanyi is speaking directly to present day issues.

Joseph Stiglitz, 2006

The swift waxing and waning of industries and livelihoods, the sudden shifts of production and capital, the casino of currency speculations - these conditions trigger political counter-movements[16] that challenge the very ground rules of the global free market.

John Gray, 2009

1. Anti-WTO and the fair trade movement in Hong Kong

The "detritus" in history's giant kaleidoscope

---

16 "Counter-movement" instead of "counter-movements" will be employed as an analytical-theoretical concept throughout our discussion, and differentiates from real world plurality of global and local justice movements. As we can further see below, mixing up the two can be potentially conflating and misleading.

When should I start with for the story of fair trade movement in Hong Kong? In his impressive account of Paris as the capital of modernity, Harvey chooses 1848 as his starting point. Following the track laid down by Benjamin in the Arcades Project, he assembles his "giant kaleidoscope" with the "detritus" of history (Harvey, 2003:19), "The fascination of his Arcades Project for me rests upon the way in which he assembled a vast array of information from all sorts of secondary sources and began to lay out the bits and pieces (the "detritus" of history, as he called it), as if they were part of some giant kaleidoscope of how Paris worked and how it became such a central site for the birth of the modern (as both techne and sensibility). He plainly had a grand conception in mind, but the study was unfinished (perhaps unfinishable) and its overall shape (if it was ever meant to have one) therefore remains elusive. But Benjamin does return again and again to certain themes, persistent threads that bring together the whole and render some vision of the totality possible. The arcades (a spatial form) operate as a recurrent motif."

There are many candidates for that potential date, but I think 17th December 2005, when World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference took place in the city, will probably be the single most memorized and revealing moment - one of the "detritus" of history, one of the specific "sky" a frog will probably peep into - to be picked. At that time I was working in the communication team of Oxfam Hong Kong (OHK). We rented a temporary office in the YMCA Hotel in Wanchai District, just some 200 metres west on Harbour Road of the conference location - Hong Kong Conference and Exhibition Centre. Also some 200 metres east on the same road, thousands of demonstrators from diverse backgrounds and all over the world, with peasants from South Korea in particular, entered into violent conflicts with the police in that evening.

I remember so well that when I finished work late in that evening, after completing all the writing and uploading tasks concerning the conference of the daytime, and monitoring closely from the television of what was happening on the streets. But when I managed to get down stairs and have a glance, the absolute silence in the street became the really astonishing and unforgettable

experience to me. Not even a single pedestrian was encountered, not to mention any policemen or demonstrators, during my 10 minutes walk heading further west to the Admiralty Metro Station. It seemed that the most violent outbreak happened in Hong Kong for the last 40 years, just occurring in realtime some 500 metres ahead of me, was totally detached from myself and I could not even claim that I was a bypassing spectator, but rather just an alienated stranger of the scene. The contrast between what was showed on television, and what was witnessed on the location, can never ever be as wide apart as such.

Tung Kai Cheung also accounted for this historical incident in his *The Age of Apprenticeship* (Chapter I), as the student characters in the novel experienced the fames of social protest for the first time, and later organized local protests on their own. It was also at the same night that the boy and the girl fell in love with each other, and started their sexual relationship, echoing subtly with the political passions in the streets. Returning to reality, social activism of young people in Hong Kong also reemerged after 2005, later entered into a series of movements concerning the conservation of Star Ferry, Queen's Pier and finally Choi Yuen Village, the location I began to encounter closely with these young people. The injustice of the global trade was echoed by similarly unfair treatments of the marginalized local communities (Chapter VI). Tung nevertheless looks into the incident in a rather detached and in-passionate manner. His attitude towards the violent conflict and the young people, in a similar mood throughout the whole novel, was highly ambivalent, if not skeptical. There were neither praises nor blames, neither right or wrong. Everything rolled out so naturally and smoothly, as if the painful process of growing up should have to look like that.

A brief history of Fair Circle, and the WTO

Fair Circle, or Hong Kong Fair Trade Power in the social enterprise's full name, was also established during the same month, with Anthony, who made the decision of early retirement from a multinational bank in his early forties, as the founder. He took responsible of not only all the financial commitments, but also

the every single piece of daily operations and activities, including shopkeeping, stock-taking and bookkeeping, all totally by himself. During that time, both the ideas of social economy (or social and solidarity economy, SSE) and social enterprises (or social enterprises and entrepreneurship, SEE) also started to spread, only in a small circle of activists and intellectuals, in the civil society which was still dominated by traditional NGOs and welfare organizations. Anthony, after a year-long wandering of Che Guevara style in South America - but as a solo traveller, decided to start Fair Circle as a social enterprise. This implied not only all the potential profit from the company will not fall into his own pocket in the future, how much salary he could obtain for further his retired life also depended on the decision of other board members.

In his travelogue published in 2007, Anthony summarized his adventure as "blessed are the poor in spirit". The prolonged trip not only allowed him to experience a feeling of deep-rooted loneliness, but also forced him to seriously reflect on the first half of his life. He discovered that people from the Global South, though generally lived in material poverty, managed to maintain a high level of spiritual wealthiness. This created a dramatic contrast with people living in the Global North, who were surrounded by material abundance but forget the true source of happiness and meaningful life. At the end of his book, Anthony accounted for a serious traffic accident he encountered in Nova Scotia in Canada. The car carrying him and his friend lost control on a highway and hard-hit on a wall. One third of the car has smashed into ruins, but the two of them were totally uninjured at all. That miraculous experience further forced him to think about the meaning of death - something that seemed to be so far away but may also be so close to all of us. At that particular moment, he decided to write down his epitaph in advance, and it is "a dreamer who lived earnestly, and never surrendered his dreams."

Started right from the beginning, I was highly supportive of the idea of Fair Circle, but still being a full time staff of OHK in 2005, my participation then was also highly limited in order to avoid the potential role conflicts. It was not until 2008 when I have already left OHK, that I was finally invited to be a board

member of the holding company.[17] Besides Anthony and me, the board also included a social worker, an export merchant and Anthony's brother who was an accountant, all came from Christian faith background. To be frank, my participation was still highly limited to the occasional board meetings. It was only until the study group (Chapter I) gained increasing attention in 2011, that my role in the organization grew gradually. However, all the daily operations were still fully handled by the paid staff, at the time the number have already increased to 6, with 2 retail outlets/showrooms and an annual turnover of around HKD$ 1.5 million.

At the end of 2015, Fair Circle was celebrating its tenth anniversary. By the time the number of full time and part time staff has further increased to beyond 20. The number of retail outlets/ showrooms has increased to 5, including 2 joint ventures. The annual turnover was above HKD$ 5 million. The number of constant volunteers, being honoured as "Companions of Fair Circle", were above 200, the number of participants for the membership scheme. "Friends of Fair Circle". were above 12,000, and the fans of the Facebook group were above 35,000. The product list also extended from coffee, tea, snacks and handbags to a full range of handicrafts, jewelry, gift sets, cooking ingredients, wine and juice, as well as the rapidly expanding lines of health and personal care products. Besides merchandises sourced through the international fair trade network, Fair Circle also attempted to develop its own branded products (Chapter III-V).

Throughout the years, however, advocacy and education, establish production partnership joined sales of products as the three pillars of Fair Circle's core business. Efforts were devoted not only on offering fair trade products to consumers as an alternative to the mainstream market, but also on establishing long term partnership with producer groups in mainland China and South Asia, bringing fair trade concepts and systems to the villagers. Assistances were also offered on their product design, techniques and management. Site visits like the Sri Lanka trip mentioned in Chapter I were also a frequent event. Furthermore,

---

17 The holding company of Hong Kong Fair Trade Power is called Fair Trade Power, which was registered as a limited by guarantee company.

Fair Circle also played an active role in reaching out to the public through media, exhibitions, seminars in schools, universities, churches and NGOs, serving as a platform for the public to learn about fair trade, as well as encouraging people to support producers in action (Chapter V-VI). Products in return would be sold in Hong Kong. According to its mission statement, Fair Circle aims at:

1. **Protect workers and farmers:** ensure a fair return for producers, and build stable and sustainable trading partnerships for their livelihood.

2. **Reciprocal collaboration:** foster collaborations between producers and consumers to enhance mutual help and mutual benefit.

3. **Responsible consumption:** raise consumer awareness of social and environmental issues through advocating ethical consumption, and their understanding that consumption could make a difference.

In the meantime, let us first return to the relatively bigger picture of the "giant kaleidoscope". 10 years backward before the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference, WTO was established in 1995 as a result of the prolonged Uruguay round negotiation started dating back to late 1970's. The new Doha round negotiation started in 2001 as Mainland China, an uprising giant player in the predatory jungle of trade liberalization, was admitted membership during the same conference. Nearly with an equal momentum, global justice movements took root and mushroomed rapidly, and became internationally visible starting from the Seattle Ministerial Conference 1999. World Social Forum was then established in 2001. Oxfam International also launched the world wide "Make Trade Fair Campaign" in the same year. Protests caught further local attentions in the Cancun 2003 and Hong Kong 2005 conferences (Chapter III and V).

Before the millennium, I was mainly working as a journalist on local news, especially related to the handover of Hong Kong in 1997. After the millennium, I devoted nearly a whole decade either working with or for OHK (i.e. either non-paid or paid), and devoted far more attentions to the recent global

developments and controversies. However, my focus was still by and large resting on Mainland China, with Hong Kong merely as a marginal component within the bigger picture. My colleagues have started some pioneer local civil society engagements in the WTO debates. I myself, on the other hand, initiated OHK's fair trade and corporate social responsibility programs in mainland China. However, with the unfortunate early departure from the organization in 2007, I returned myself to the daily life in Hong Kong and was not able to carry forward the projects any further.[18]

In the coming year of 2008, as Mainland China has just completed its 30 years route of market economic reform, the global market economy experienced its most critical turmoil after the Second World War. While the Chinese economy is rapidly emerging and merging into the global market economy, the opportunities and threats as well as the painful lessons of the Western World could equally be learnt. It was also in the past 30 years, that neoliberalism and trade liberalization has created un-precedent growth and tremendous wealth all over the world. Economic globalization, financial expansion, rapid restructuring and deregulating measures have transformed virtually every continent. Its creative and destructive powers could fully be experienced by everybody living in the global village.

2. The Polanyi problematic and the problem of Polanyi, or Polanyians?

Two of the most popular quotable quotes can probably best summarizes the debates and learnings of trade liberalization and economic globalization. Some thirty years ago, Margaret Thatcher prominently declared: "there is no alternative", maintaining that nobody can stand against the overwhelming current of market forces. It was under such claim as if the "ghost" of Adam Smith and free market economy is wandering all over the world. While for the

---

18 One of the very first fair trade partners identified in China was the Rural Construction Centre of Renmin University in Beijing. The project holder Liu Lao Xi has been widely known for his efforts to promote rural development and rural-urban cooperation. He was, however, killed in a traffic accident in 2011, at the age of 43. The present account should be also dedicated to the memory of Liu.

World Social Forum and the global justice movements: "another world is possible", insisting that the unregulated market is not only undesirable, but also doom to be challenged and transformed. History has not yet come to an end but just kicking off a new beginning. It requires people to create and re-create not only consciously, but also conscientiously. The Chinese model of "socialist market economy" has even been, truer or falser, adopted as one of the examples for this potentially another world.[19]

Disembedded market and counter-movement

Well recognized by interpretators of diverse academic and political backgrounds, the conceptual framework of Polanyi has been particularly influential in addressing the problems of neoliberal globalization, which can in turn be simply renamed as the Polanyi problematic or the Polanyi problem (Evans, 2000; Munck, 2006; Webster, Lambert and Bezuidenhout, 2008), and the current period of rapid global economic change as the Second Great Transformation (Burawoy et. al., 2000; Munck, 2002; Silver and Arrighi, 2003; Webster, Lambert and Bezuidenhout, 2008). [20] It states that the creating of a fully self-regulated market economy requires human beings, nature and money be turned into pure commodities. But in fact they are merely fictitious commodities, because they are not produced at all or originally not produced to be sold in the market. For this reason, Polanyi concludes that modern economic liberalism is based on a fiction, a utopian imagination figured out only by the economic liberals.

The fundamental key to understand Polanyi's works is his concept of **"embeddedness"**, particularly laid in his masterpiece *The Great Transformation*[21] - the idea that market is not autonomous, but subordinated to

---

19 Arrighi (2007) for example, adopts "Beijing consensus" as a potential substitute of "Washington consensus". Hann (2009), on the other hand, describes the contemporary China experience as "embedded socialism".

20 Burawoy (2010) is probably the only exception, who terms the current moment as the Third Great Transformation, as a revision of his own earlier formulation (Burawoy et al., 2000).

21 Although, as we shall further see below, some recent interpretators such as Barber (1995), Swedberg (1997) and Harvey et al (2008), tend to challenge the primacy of the concept in Polanyi's original texts. For instance, Harvey et al (2008:3) maintains, "Perhaps one of the strangest 'amplifications' has been Polanyi's idea of embeddedness…This concept is nw probably the single most obvious Polanyi identifier. Yet in *The Great Transformation*, the word only appears twice, is not indexed, and has a quite minor role

social relations. This is a direct challenge to economic liberalism, which assumes that the market automatically adjusts its supply and demand through the price mechanism. As stated in the opening page of *The Great Transformation*, "Our thesis is that the idea of a self-adjusting market implied a stark utopia. Such an institution could not exist for any length of time without annihilating the human and natural substance of society." (Polanyi, 1944/2001: 3-4)

Polanyi further pushes forward that the rise of self-regulated market was never a naturally emergent and evolved process, as claimed by the economic liberals. The staging of the liberal utopia, where markets should automatically regulate people's and society's life and welfare, demands political intervention and legislative changes. Polanyi shows how the liberal utopia needs powerful state action to be set in place. As Olofsson (1995:40) illustratively frames it, "Far from being an automatic, spontaneously social process, a strong and evident hand was required to create the regime of 'invisible hand'," echoing what is probably the most well known statement of Polanyi (1944/2001:140), "While laissez-faire economy was the product of deliberate state action, subsequent restrictions on laissez-faire started in a spontaneous way. Laissez-faire was planned; planning was not."

Polanyi then, demonstrates how society take initiative to protect itself against the disruptive impact of unregulated commodification. This he terms the "double movement" whereby ever wider extensions of free market principles generate counter-movement to protect society. Against the economic system that dislocates the very fabric of the society, the counter-movement is based on the "principle of social protection aiming at the conservation of man and nature as well as productive organization, relying on the varying support of those most immediately affected by the deleterious actions of the market - primarily but not

---

in the overall argument." "It is also curious that Polanyi scholars frequently spea of Poanyi using a concept of disembedded economies. So far as we aware, the term disembedded appears only once in Polanyi." On the contrary, as Olofsson (1995:45) has shown, Polanyi uses various synonyms to describe embeddednes s in *The Great Transformation*, including 'submerged', 'enmesh', 'intertwined', 'absorbed in', 'accessories of', 'compatible with', 'embodied in', 'accessory feature of', 'formed part of', and 'subordination'…All these different expressions are either linguistic varieties of the same concept or they take up partly different specialized meanings of the general concept.

exclusively, the working and landed classes - and using protective legislation, restrictive associations, and other instruments of intervention as its method." (Polanyi, 1944/2001:138-139)

The concept of counter-movement can logically and conveniently be associated with the global civil society, global justice movements, and other social movements dedicated against neoliberal globalization, which have been flourishing in last two decades. Movements struggling for national or regional sovereignty, those seeking to protect the environment and advancing claims for social justice and recognition, are all part of this broad counter-movement. In diverse ways they are bids to re-embed the economy into the network of social relations. Challenging the market movement towards commodification, they seek to decommodify society and reassert social and cultural values (Munck, 2006). To counter balance the hegemony of corporate dominated globalization, a transnational network of social movements emerged as "counter-hegemonic globalization" (Evans, 2000).

With such conceptual tools of **counter-movement, re-embedding and decommodification**, Polanyi can easily be identified as a key icon in the collective actions against neoliberal globalization. He becomes a particularly crucial figure for his perspective has offered a brand new emancipatory vision, which can serve either as alternative or supplement to Classical Marxism, considering the latter has been dominating the leftist ideology for over a century, but was close to be abandoned by many activists of older or younger generations. Strange enough, although theoretical lineages and contrasts between the two can apparently be detected, as shown below, vigorous and systematic comparisons of the two, especially on how they are related to the real world analysis and formulation of movement strategies, can still rarely be found, making Burawoy (2003) and Silver (2003) easily singled out as the most frequent cited sources.[22]

---

22 Burawoy (2003) attempts to establish "Sociological Marxism" employing the contributions of Polanyi and Gramsci, as opposed to Classical Marxism, which he includes Silver as a member. Silver (2003), on the contrary, establishes a contrast between "Marxian type labour movement" and "Polanyian type social movement", maintaining primacy of the Marxist approach. In major works concerning Polanyi problematic, Munck (2006) only indexes Marx or Marxism in 3 occasions; Webster, Lambert and Bezuidenhout (2008) do not index Marx or Marxism at all. While in Wright (2010) and Gibson-

"False optimism" of counter-movement?

The Polanyi problematic, covering such wide range of pressing contemporary, global issues with relative small number of core concepts, has made debates and controversies centred around it simply unavoidable. The recent reflections and criticisms of Webster, Lambert and Bezuidenhout (2008) and Burawoy (2010), also much in the same line with Silver,[23] on the conceptual framework of Polanyi are among the most revealing and representative, which should be taken seriously in greater depth. What is especially crucial will be both are working very much within the Polanyian traditions, and are particularly concerning with the theoretical and political potentials of counter-movement in his thought. For Webster, Lambert and Bezuidenhout (2008:5), **"the problem of Polanyi"** consists of:

1. The society problem: that society as the core concept of Polanyi, its nature was by no means clarified. As Block also points out in a comment sent to Burawoy: "[Your paper] points to the absurdity that sociological tradition has failed for a hundred and fifty years to give us an adequate or useful conceptualization of 'society' - ostensibly the main object of its analysis." (Burawoy, 2003:n11)

2. The spontaneity problem: "counter-movement cannot be seen as spontaneous, practically automatic responses, they are constructed," argued Munck (2004: 257). For instance, Polanyi did not address the issue of how working classes are made and unmade (Silver, 2003);

3. The labour movement problem: over the last three decades, there was almost complete consensus that "labour movements were in a general and severe crisis" (Silver, 2003: 1). How then can the movements perform a major

---

Graham (2006) cited below, both initiate with heavily Marxian birthmarks, mentioning of Polanyi is also sparse.

23 Though, Silver (2003) is still identified as an example of "false optimism" by Burawoy.

role in the counter-balancing the market forces that need to be challenged, when they themselves were suffering from crisis generated by these forces?

4. The power problem: Silver (2003:18) further identifies a central problem that "the concept of 'power' is largely missing from Polanyi…an unregulated world market will eventually be overturned 'from above' even if those below lack effective bargaining power".[24]

For Burawoy (2010:301), on the contrary, Polanyi suffers from a **"false optimism"** in four important aspects:

1. He was **so confident in the prime importance of ideas** that he believed the discredited ideology of market fundamentalism would loose its commanding power.

2. He adopted a confused and **under-theorized notion of society**, which, without any further elaborations on the related processes, managed to constitute its own defense in the face of a market onslaught.

3. Predisposed with his distrust with Classical Marxism - especially toward its theories of history and the centrality of exploitation - he **lost sight of the imperatives of capitalist accumulation** that lie behind the resurgence of markets.

4. In focusing on the market and its counter-movement he too easily **reduced state to society**, missing their complex interplay.

Instead of directly going into these comments one by one, we can still obtain a general impression that the issues at hand as follows: how can the Polanyian "society" (or what Burawoy (2003) qualifies as "active society"), together with the related formulations of self-protection, counter-movement as well as all the attached conflicting beliefs and ideas, etc. as abstract and generalized terms,

---

24 Webster, Lambert and Bezuidenhout (2008:14) further pose a fifth problem - the scale problem. It will be treated in the last section of this chapter.

be more meaningfully conceptualized and operationalized, particularly placed under the context of neoliberal globalization? Or, to employ the words of Munck (2006:xii), the Polanyi problematic requires concretization along several dimensions. One concerns the precise way in which "society" might protect itself from ravages of the self-regulated market. Which social groups and sectors are likely to be responsive to the encompassing trends of marketization and commodification? What are the roles of social movements in the process, which tend to be rather absent in Polanyi's narrative? Another concerns the dilemmas of the world (dis)order and its prospects. Can the dominant groups maintain durable and robust hegemonic institutions and ideologies? Will counter-movement and social protection leads to institutional strain, crisis or even catastrophes, and what are the various possible outcomes? May the counter-movement take progressive form or equally be reactionary? These will be the fundamental questions that need to be effectively tackled, in order to make better sense of the Polanyi problematic.

Well, first let us do fair to Polanyi. In early years he was trained as a lawyer and worked as journalist. With the more mature, academic writings, he could best be identified as an economic historian or economic anthropologist. He was focusing specifically on the rise of economic liberalism and the Great Transformation in late nineteenth century. Although key concepts he employed like embeddedness, double movement or self protection of society have been extremely popularized and seriously reevaluated recent years, Polanyi himself only employed them under highly restrictive historical contexts, and has never attempted to develop vigorous theoretical dispositions or philosophical imperatives around them. What he attempted to provide most of the time was empirical generalizations and factual descriptions of really existing economies and their operating mechanisms.[25]

---

25 Ontologically and epistemologically, we could safely assert, a lineage can be drawn between Polanyi and the more recent Critical Realism and Régulation Approach. Jessop and Sum (2008:306) 's introduction is particularly revealing, "As the spiral of scientific enquiry continues, the elements of the real-concrete are defined with increasing complexity and concreteness. Thus concepts are never introduced once for al at the single level of abstraction but continually refined in the movement from abstract to concrete-acquiring new forms and transcending the limits of their previous formulations. In this sense the objective is the development of concepts and not the verification of a finished theory. ..In order to avoid getting lost in the unstructured complexity of the real-concrete and hypostatizing closed concepts, realist theorists have always to strive for greater precision in the concepts and thus always be producing more concepts that must then be articulated."

That says, however, the strong moral spirit, humanistic concern and political commitment of Polanyi can still be clearly chased and positioned. The relative consistent and holistic schema he offered, has made it easy for his interpretators to draw powerful theoretical and political resources out of it. The encompassing and loosely defined nature of his work, though, has makes the same interpretators stuck in endless disagreements and confusions. This is particularly complicated by the conflicting normative and ideological agendas behind the interpretators.

As stated at the onset by Dale (2010:6), there are several reasons why Polanyi's writings are subject to such varying interpretations. "In part it is normal consequence of representing a thinker in the singular, when his political views and social scientific postulates alter over time. Although fairly consistent in his views over his lifetime, his approach to some issues did alter - there is, for example, no certified Polanyian position on the questions of economic determinism or social evolution. Another factor…consists in his proclivity to balance between quite different, even antithetical traditions. He has, for example, been categorized as a Marxist, a liberal, a romantic, and within anthropology alone he has attracted the labels empiricist, institutionalist and functionalist."

What Webster, Lambert and Bezuidenhout (2008) called "the problem of Polanyi", or Burawoy (2010) called his "false optimism" should, more preferably, be rephrased as "false optimism" or "the problem of Polanyians". Just exactly similar to the fate of Marx, everybody can draw diverse sorts of optimisms, neutralisms or pessimisms out of Polanyi. Equally true are contrasting comments of radicalism, moderatism or even conservatism on him. He is only the unfortunate elephant in the Chinese idiom "The blinds grope for the elephant" told in Chapter I, which are doomed to be misunderstood - and never be fully understood.

What attempts below is not to apprehend Polanyi as a whole. Instead we need to further smash his works into bits and pieces. It is only through this

"deconstruction" can we clarify "which" Polanyi the various interpretators is talking about. A better starting point is Dale's *Karl Polanyi: The Limits of the Market* (2010), which has recently provided the most comprehensive survey of a wide range of Polanyian and non-Polanyian interpretations of the problems at hand.

3. The "parts of Polanyi" and the problem of conflation and short-circuited theorization

Polanyi the elephant as grasped by the Polanyians

For Polanyi (1944/2001:67), self-regulated market is defined as "an economic system controlled, regulated, and directed by markets alone", but according to Dale (2010:73), "In practice is deployed in three ways: as an **ideal type (or model)** - a system that operates according to its own rules and no others; as an **utopian experiment** carried out by economic liberals but doom to failure because they goal is unrealizable; and as an **actually existing** system. Polanyi rarely feels the need to clarify which of these uses he has in mind."

Is there internal tensions among the three usages? Dale continues, to a degree there has to be. "As ideal type the reference is to a mechanism regulated solely by itself, an impossibility, while as actually existing system it is understood to require continuous state intervention...In *The Great Transformation* he presents the self regulated market as a palpably real institutional form that exerted far-reaching effects upon modern world history. By late 1950s, by contrast, he clearly believes that all markets are instituted in some way or another such that the unregulated market never find ontological reality, it is no more than an ideology, a utopian dream."

Identical comments can equally be placed on the concept of "embeddedness" (Dale, 2010:193), "For at the methodological level there is some uncertainty as to whether the dis/embedded economy is a **descriptive empirical** term or

'**ideal type**' (a **structural-analytical concept** for the purposes of comparisons). Should 'embeddedness' be understood as a **methodological axiom**, that all economic behaviour is enmeshed in non-economic institutions, or as a **theoretical proposition** referring to **differences in degree** of that 'enmeshment'? (Gemici, 2008)." Equally speaking, "embeddedness" can in occasions carry a heavy moral connotation rather than merely as a neutral denotation (Lie, 1991).

In viewing of these issues, the "false optimism" or "the problem of Polanyians" can best be reinterpreted as the confusions among diverse usages and multi-dimensionalities of the very same concepts. It is probably created by the **conflation, unmediated inference or short-circuited theorization**[26] among different levels of abstraction. As mentioned above, for most of the time, Polanyi was working as economic historian or anthropologist, and employed the concepts just descriptively and empirically. However interpretators could not resist but push him further, attempting all means to make him an economic theorist, if not a socio-economic philosopher working fully at the pure discursive, rhetorical level. While Polanyi emphasizes the societal-historical complexity and plurality of market formations, Polanyians simply treat what he said as universally encompassing theoretic-analytical models, pointing towards inevitable trends and irreversible laws of social structures and processes, if not overwhelming normative-ideological beliefs and ideals. A more cautious differentiation and delineation, as well as dynamic and dialectic interpretation among the various levels is crucial.

Weber's classic statements in grounding the foundations of sociological methodology still provide the most useful guiding principles (Portes, 2010:3). In establishing social sciences against nature sciences, he argues that it is impossible for researchers to isolate their values from entering into observations and analyses. The process of selecting research topic is influenced by

---

26 The concept of "short-circuit" is borrowed from Bourdieu (1988). As Swartz (1997:234) neatly summaries, "Bourdieu argues that the connection between position in the class structure and political activity is mediated by participation within fields. He criticizes attempts to derive politics directly from class location as 'short-circuit' effects." This perspective can chase its intellectual roots in Western Marxism's departure from material determinism, all the way up to Gramsci, who maintains that political-ideological practices cannot be directly reduced to the economic base.

researchers' personal backgrounds, interests, and experiences. The interpretation and practical adoption of research results also involves value judgments and moral choices. However, he also maintained that value neutrality should be upheld in the research process. Researchers should not let values influence research findings that are contrary to their beliefs or expectations. Weber's differentiation of ideal type and social fact as well as his emphasis on "vertehen" and interpretative understanding is also crucial reminders for sociologists.

Table 2. Contrasting attempts to "sociologicize" and "relativicize" transformation

The Polanyi Problematic and levels of abstraction

Polanyi as:	Level of abstraction	Market movement	Counter-movement
(abstract-general) Economic philosopher	Value relevant, normative-ideological constructs (ethically desirable)	Neoliberalism, market fundamentalism, neoliberal globalization from above/TINA	Economic justice, counter/alternative globalization from below/AWIP
Non orthodoxy economic theorist	Ideal typical, theoretic-analytical models (theoretical possible)	"Self-regulated", disembedded market, commodity exchange	Regulated, embedded market, self-protection of society, reciprocity
Economic historian (concrete-specific)	Really existed, societal-historical typologies (empirical probable)	Global capitalist economy, global commodity chains	Global justice movement, global civil society, social economy

A contrast between the crucial works of E.O. Wright (2006, 2010a) and J.K. Gilson-Graham (1996, 2006) can demonstrate the point more precisely. Both, being selected by the Social Economy Alliance as theoretical show cases as described in Chapter I, can be considered as important up-to-date efforts of conceptualizing the counter-movement, the multiplicity of pathways leading out of the hegemony of economic liberalism, which seem especially crucial under the background of the fall of state socialism, the general mistrust of state

intervention, the decline of traditional leftist thought and the general absence of emancipatory visions and ultimate solution to current neoliberal globalization. Without doubt, both represent serious attempts to get rid of authoritarian burdens in Classical Marxism and commit to a search for pluralistic and libertarian alternatives. Both initiate with heavily Marxian birthmarks, but attempt to "sociologicize" and "relativicize" the essentialist, reductionist and deterministic tendency. In the broader sense, they also significantly inject substantial Polanyian touches in their theoretical frameworks. However, at the same time, the two trajectories can never be more remote from each other.

Though both do not start with Polanyian positions, but with the conceptual tools of Polanyi or what Burawoy (2003) labels as "Sociological Marxism", we can clearly differentiate the basic differences within the frameworks of Wright and Gibson-Graham. While both have attempted their departures from Classical Marxism, rebuilding the emancipatory potentials of social sciences, demystifying the "invisible hand", revitalizing the "social" in socialism or "repoliticizing" the market in one way or the other, ultimately, one anchors at Sociological Marxism while the other does not. While Wright is able to provide a multi-dimensional, historical specific and overdetermined, institutionally mediated and non-conflated account of multiplicity of alternative economic projects, Gibson-Graham simply fails to do so.

"Voyage of exploration" without predestinated "road map"

In brief, Wright delineates the tasks of "emancipatory social sciences" into three major components: **1. Diagnosis and critiques:** closely connected to questions of social justice and normative theory. **2. Developing alternatives:** elaborated and evaluated by three different criteria: desirability, viability, and achievability. **3. A theory of transformation:** contradictions, limits and gaps in existing systems, which can open up space for strategies of social transformation.

While for diagnosis and critiques so abundantly found in social science literature over a century, Wright actually places his focus on alternatives and transformation. However, he also fully understands the difficulties of constituting

alternatives, in which Classical Marxism has encountered such tremendous failures. "Instead of the metaphor of a road map guiding us to a known destination, we could think of the project of emancipatory social change as more like a voyage of exploration…This approach to thinking about emancipatory alternatives retains a strong normative vision of life beyond capitalism, while acknowledging the limits of our knowledge about the real possibilities of transcending the capitalist system. This is not to embrace the false certainty that there are intransgressable limits for constructing a democratic egalitarian alternative…The key to embarking on such a journey of exploration is the usefulness of our navigational device. We need, then, to construct what might be called a socialist compass: the principles which tell us whether we are moving in the right direction." (2006:104)

Wright then, layouts what he terms as the "socialist compass" for navigating through the three basic forms of economic structure: capitalism, statism and socialism, but maintains that the three should be thought of not simply as discrete **ideal types** but also as **variables**. "The more the decisions made by actors exercising economic power based on private ownership determine the allocation and use of productive resources, the more capitalist the economic structure. The more that power exercised through the state determines the allocation and use of resources, the more the society is statist. And the more power rooted in civil society determines such allocations and use, the more the society is socialist. There are thus all sorts of **complex mixed cases and hybrids**—in which, for example, a society is capitalist in certain respects and statist or socialist in others. The idea of economic structures being hybrids of different power relations is fundamental to the idea of transforming these structures…Our task here is not so much to propose blueprints for the realization of social empowerment over economic activity, but rather to elaborate a set of principles that would tell us when we are moving in the right direction." (2006:108)
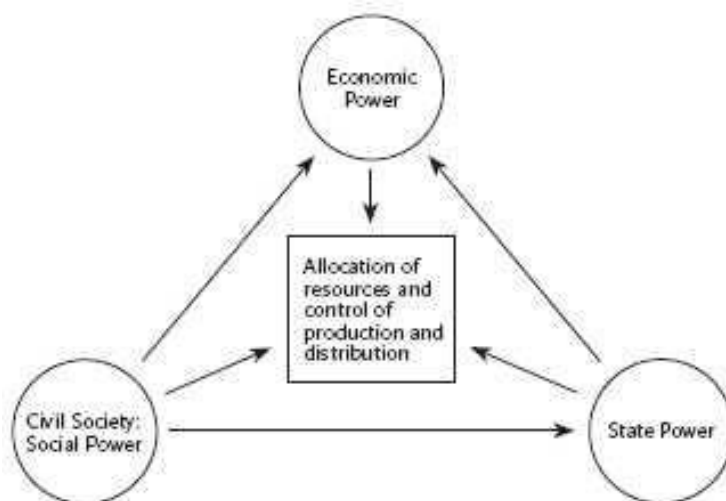
Allocation of resources and control of production and distribution (Wright, 2006, p.110)

Wright further describes and compares the different pathways of social empowerment and the control of economic activities, which are not to be detailed here. What should currently be kept in mind is, rather than offering the **ultimate destination** of transformation, he only layouts the **conceptual tools** for doing so, which are however, flexible enough to cater heterogeneity of social and historical settings, to account for **varying degree and diverse nature** of socialism, without analytically isolating it from capitalism and statism, and without theoretically romanticizing the potentials and merits of social empowerment. With such tools one can enhance the knowledge of "voyage of exploration", but without pretending the "road map" is already at hand. In short, no universal normative ideal. No all-encompassing presumptions. No single best pathway and solution. No predetermined blueprint and final outcome.

Such conceptualization also shares many characteristics of Polanyi's original framework, which highlights the wide open possibilities of complex struggles in the "double movement", the overdetermined and essentially contested nature of interplay between the unregulated market and society self-protection movements. While the power of neoliberalism is predominantly hegemonic in the Gramscian sense, the spontaneity and momentum of counter-movement should also not be understated. All in all, whether the self-regulated market can successfully be "re-embedded" into social relations, is a matter of historical

contingency and political contestation without any predestined end terminal.

Frogs that conflate their "skys" as others' sky

In contrast, what Gibson-Graham offer seem to be just the other way round. For diagnosis and critiques, they simply deny the dominance of capitalist totality and neoliberal hegemony as "capitalocentrism" - a matter of discourse, and attempt to open up and develop alternative languages of emancipatory potentials - "recontextualizing capitalism in a discourse of economic plurality destabilizes its presumptive hegemony". For alternatives and transformation, they refuse any essentialist strategy and organizing centre, discard the dualism of market and state intervention, but simply draw our attention to the diversities of non-capitalist and non-market oriented socio-economic activities that marks a representation of economic differences, a multiplication of possibilities and thousands lines of flights for the articulation of alternative emancipatory strategies, disregarding the societal-historical contexts, the concrete configurations, defining nature and relative distances of such differences.

Gibson-Graham do not simply resting their theoretical account with such fluidity, diversity and complexity. These still rely on categories - in contrary to what they propose. They still need a relatively overarching, if not overwhelming conceptual framework, in order to comprehend and summarize their projects or proposals covering such wide ranges of geo-spatial and multi-cultural settings across the globe, regardless of how loosely defined and logically argued it might be. As a result they anchor at Jean-Luc Nancy and then, once again, Marx. "Conceptualizing a discourse and practice of the community economy, one that could resignify and thereby connect a diverse range of existing activities, has involved stretching concepts originally used in one arena or project to apply to another. We engage in this process of extension first with respect to Jean-Luc Nancy's resignification of communism and community as forms of 'being-with', enlarging while at the same time specifying this notion to embrace the interdependence of economic subjects, sites and practices. Second, we extend Marx's language of class to supply ethical coordinates for negotiating interdependency in actual projects of economic construction. What we are in the

process of elaborating (tentatively yet investedly) is a discourse that might promote self-recognition and foster connection among a plurality of movements, contributing to a counter-hegemonic post-capitalist project of resignification and enactment." (2006:81)

More fundamentally, Gibson-Graham have theoretically identified themselves as Post-structuralists and Postmodern Marxists, especially through two important collaborations with Resnick and Wolff: *Class and Its Others* (2000) and *Re/Presenting Class* (2001). Particularly drawing insights from the postmodern and linguistic turn, they attempt to transform Marxism through the intervention of language, "heeds its twin impulses by speaking a language of class, one that may allow us to retrieve memories and adumbrate possibilities one that can authorize projects, interpellate subjects, and proliferate identities one that can connect gender, race, sexuality, and other axes of identity to economic activity in uncommon ways. Such a language has the potential to liberate a vision of economic difference, outside the theory and practice of capitalist reproduction."(2000:2) But instead of mediating and grounding Marxism in specific contexts and local practices, and resurrecting theoretical axioms from reductionist and deterministic tendencies, it simply defeated the possibility of theory as such. Instead of dialectically relating "class and its others", one could equally suggest "class" is virtually traded off for the unspecified and indefinite "others" (not to say organically mediating the two), instead of "re/presenting class" one could equally suggest "de/presenting class", thus marginalizing economic structure and class analysis into insignificant if not a totally invisible position.

The core concern to suggest here is not, rather as one may expect, that social class or economic infrastructure should maintain its primacy or essential role in sociological analysis, or one should once again trap into the so-called "economistic fallacy" committed both by Classical Marxism and neoliberalism alike. What need to be stressed and is far more crucial here is to reassure dialectically and holistically the multiple levels and dimensions of analysis, and envision the structural, institutional and organizational contexts of social-economic practices, rather than talking about complexity and diversity merely in

abstract and unspecific manner. What Gibson-Graham call for "deconstructing the hegemony of capitalocentrism involves representing the diversity of the 'complex unity' we know as 'economy,' highlighting the multiple registers of value and modes of transaction that make up our heterogeneous economic world, sustaining livelihoods in communities around the world", should be endorsed but only on the condition that the variety of economic actions be studied under concrete societal-historical settings; and should only be upheld without sacrificing our understanding of the dynamic interplays and mechanisms that enable or constrain such diversity and complexity.

At the first sight, the sharp contrast between Wright and Gibson-Graham seems to be one simply between the dichotomized positions of essentialist vs. anti-essentialist interpretation of Marxist legacies. Theoretical fixation vs. generative contingency. Static categorization vs. emergent complexity. Gibson-Graham will probably agree with the Neo-Polanyian critique of Granovetter (1985), that Polanyi (and Sociological Marxism) are faulty for their **"over-socialized"** conception of man, for their underestimation of active coping behaviour of groups and individuals. However, Gibson-Graham have probably also shifted to the other extreme, and share the faults of economic liberalism which Granovetter (1985) terms the **"under-socialized"** conception of man, for their overestimation of human agency and underestimation of historical and institutional constrains.[27]

A close look will lead us to reflect further on what "anti-essentialist" should fundamentally imply, what exactly should be dropped but what necessarily should be still maintained, as basic building blocks of the proper sociological analysis. Instead of merely highlighting the "desirability" of liberating imaginations and creativities from grand narratives (out of an emotional sentiment to avoid traditional leftist biases), it should still be reminded what are the appropriate patterns and processes of theorization. Instead of merely removing ideological incorrect or ideally undesirable components, it should still be told what "viable" alternatives should be provided under an adequately

---

27 Granovetter (1985) argues against both the "over-socialized" sociological and "under-socialized" classical economic conception of man. Apparently both conceptions, being reductionist and conflationary, are equally over-theorized.

mediated and conceptually coherent framework. Instead of merely revolting against the monistic and unilinear Marxian reasoning, it should well be addressed what are the "achievable" pathways out of that dominating paradigm.

All in all, what Gilson-Graham suffers from is **"under-theorization"** in their quasi-theories of community economy or Postmodern Marxism. Without the concrete historical and institutional analysis, only equipped with vague, poorly defined and unmediated concepts, the theorists merely jump into the big sea if not ocean of real world diversities. Without innovating Marxism in an epistemologically meaningful way for sociological analysis, they merely jump into the hopelessly empiricist, relativist and sometimes anarchist positions. But for the worst of all, such problem of under-theorization logically embeds and anticipates, in such paradoxical and ironic manner, an accompanying phantom and complementary problem of **"over-theorization"**, i.e. the ever-recurring idealistic, ideological and teleological tendencies which can be comparable to Classical Marxism, quietly and secretly heritaged through the inputs of Jean-Luc Nancy and Marx. In combination with deconstruction we still find universalistic and overarching assumptions. Together with postmodernism we still identify the absolutist and dogmatic inclinations. The emphasis on economic differences is still accompanied by a desire of counter-hegemony in a generalized sense. Just like "the frogs live beneath the well", they still cannot resist the temptation to conflate their "skys" as others' "sky". What Burawoy identifies as "false optimism" can equally, fully and legitimately be applied on Gilson-Graham.

Some years earlier, Burawoy has already utilized Polanyi' *The Great Transformation*[28], together with Gramsci' *Prison Notebooks*, trying to establish what he labels as Sociological Marxism, as contrast to the commonly known Classical Marxism (Burawoy, 2003; Burawoy and Wright, 2000).[29] According to

---

28 As we can see in the next section, Burawoy (2003)'s reliance on *The Great Transformation* as the main reference implies he is chiefly working on the early Polanyi still under heavy if not overarching Marxist influence, rather than the mature Polanyi as identified by Block (2003).

29 Dale (2010:243) argues that "Whether Marx would recognize himself in Burawoy's sociological mirror is open to doubt…To catalogue Polanyi as Marxist is not completely implausible, but it requires the net to be casted widely-so far , indeed, that Tonniesian or Weberian would be equally appropriate labels. A more accurate and useful approach, it seems to me, is to identify the areas of convergences between Polanyi and Marxism while recognizing the considerable differences." Obviously, "sociological" will be the key concern in the present discussion while for "Marxism", its convergences and differences with both early and mature Polanyi will be treated in the next section.

Burawoy, Polanyi and Gramsci more than half century ago, armed with notions of either "active society" or "civil society", contribute to sociological theorizing in several unique ways (Burawoy, 2003:119). With the above discussion, it is self-evident that Burawoy, Wright and, Polanyi himself for most of the time, tentatively grouped under the same umbrella of Sociological Marxism, are working not only on societal-historical typologies, but also dynamic and dialectic interactions between actors and their social contexts, which provide the proper building blocks of empirical sociological study. On the contrary, Gilson-Graham alongside with Classical Marxists and Post-modernists, are working with towards either ideological over-theorization or empiricist under-theorization, if not committing both simultaneously. For these latter pair, as we shall see further on, suffering from problems of de-historical, de-contextual and in brief, de-socialized analysis is doom inevitable.[30]

The "Wright version" of "emancipatory social sciences", however, should still be scrutinized with greater care. As we shall see further on, his analysis not only quietly preserves scattered remains of Classical Marxism, but also disguises it through "de/presenting class" similar to Gibson-Graham, which implies it also attempts to, at least in critical occasions, adopt an unspecified conception of the "social" or "society" exactly as what many of the Polanyians may have done, and detach institutional-organizational processes from the capillary powers of political-economic structure. Such shortfall, as proposed by Burawoy (2003), would be better supplemented with Gramsci's more sophisticated conception of civil society, as a contested terrain and arena, the platform of "war of positions", and the subtle interplay of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic struggles.[31]

4. The Marxist, Gramscian and late-Polanyian, or the disembedded, disembedding and always embedded economy

---

30 Lewis and Mosse (2006) and Oliver de Sardan (2004) post similar critiques on what they term as "populist" and "deconstructivist" approaches in anthropology of development. See discussion in Chapter I.

31 Wright would be, on the contrary, critical of "Gramsci's ambiguous views on the possibilities of transforming civil society within capitalism in ways that would enhance social empowerment." (2010a: Chapter 10, n11)

Inevitably disembedded or "always embedded economy"?

Now let us turn to the other dimension of the reflections found in Webster, Lambert and Bezuidenhout (2008) and Burawoy (2010). If the foregoing "deconstruction" focuses on clarifying and differentiating various levels of abstraction in a "vertical" hierarchy, what follows will be an attempt to delineate the "horizontal" interactions and contestations across social structural domains. The best starting point can probably be found in the connections and differentiations between Classical Marxism and Polanyi (particularly under the label of "Sociological Marxism"), and how Marxists has, in return, responded to the "mature" Polanyi who engaged in the famous "formalist" and "substantivist" debate in 1950's.

Thanks Block (2003:6) for reminding us, it is Polanyi's shifting relationship to Marxist formulations that explains the core paradoxes in his contribution. The Marxism of Polanyi's writings of the 1930s revolve around the clash between productive forces and social relations, but in his writing of *The Great Transformation*, there leaves few explicit references to this perspective. Terms such as "productive forces" and "ruling classes" are completely absent, and even "capitalism" is used very sparingly. Instead he carefully employs the term "market society" for capitalism. The shift of language is symptomatic of a theoretical shift that distanced Polanyi from the forces versus relations framework. Ultimately, with the new concept of embeddedness, Polanyi challenges a core presumption of both liberals and Marxists. Both traditions rest on the assumption that there is an analytically autonomous economy constituted by its own internal logic. What Polanyi pinpoints is no market economies can actually exist independent of the state management, there can be no analytically autonomous economy. Furthermore, it makes no sense to speak of the logic of the market or economy, because pretending that land, labor, and money are true commodities is both irrational and socially dangerous.

In latter period, Polanyi further develops a distinctive approach to comparative analysis that stressed the substantive institutedness and social embeddedness

of all really existed economies.[32] He distinguishes between a formal definition of economics as rational, economizing behaviour and a substantive definition of economics as needs fulfilling in everyday life. He thus criticized the "economistic fallacy'" which asserts that all economic behaviour is seen as formally rational and economizing, and the properties and dynamics of non-capitalist economies are thereby assimilated to those of market economies (Jessop, 2001: 213). He considers the economy, in its substantive sense, as "an instituted process of interaction between man and his environment, which results in a continuous supply of want-satisfying material means." He adds that, as an instituted process, "The human economy…is embedded and enmeshed in institutions, economic and non-economic. The inclusion of the non-economic is vital. For religion or government may be as important for the structure and functioning of the economy as monetary institutions or the availability of tools and machines themselves that lighten the toil of labour." (Polanyi, 1957:250)

The study of how economies are instituted should start, Polanyi suggests, from how the economy acquires unity and stability, i.e. how the interdependence and recurrence of its parts get secured. And, given his interest in both market and non-market economies, he focused on the dominant principle of distribution of "want-satisfying material means". Polanyi thus identified three such principles associated with economic activities, or mechanism of economic integration, embedded in non-economic institutions: 1. Reciprocity among similarly arranged or organized groupings; 2. redistribution through an allocative centre linked to a political regime; and 3. householding based on production to satisfy the needs of a largely self-sufficient unit such as a family, settlement or manor. These principles of symmetry, centricity and closure contrast with the anarchy of exchange which is totally guided by price mechanism in the disembedding and potentially self-regulating economy. In short, the capitalist market economy is only one model of economic intergration and should not be used as a trans-historical model for interpreting other economies. (Jessop, 2001: 214)

---

32 Block (2003:24) is thus erroneous by saying, "Polanyi lived for another two decades after sending *The Great Transformation* to the publisher; the obvious question is why he did not give his new discovery a more systematic formulation in his later work," due to his neglecting of the conceptual lineage between "embeddedness" and "institutedness". As we can see in the next section, there are apparent convergences as well as subtle differences between these two core concepts of Polanyi.

As Dale (2010:130) points out, Polanyi's basic term of reference is the mechanism of economic integration, set within a Weberian identification of **typologies**, in contrast to the Marxist perspective that envisages a society's institutional arrangements as arising upon the basis of a particular mode of production, integrated within a social-relation-centred explanation of change. This induces major attacks from Marxist anthropologist Godelier (1981). At no point, Godelier claims, does Polanyi really asked why it is that a given institution, or mechanism of integration, prevails in one society rather than another. Rather, he limits himself to describing the matter in which trade, money or markets are institutionalized in societies dominated by this or other mechanism. This enables him to chart the shifting "place of economy" but "without ever really being able to pose the **theoretical** problem of its effect upon the functioning and evolution of societies, and therefore its role in history."

The nub of Godelier's critique is that Polanyi's method in determining the role of the economy in society is **empiricist**: that he never seeks to discover whether the **hierarchy of causes** that determine the reproduction of a social system is the same as the hierarchy of the institutions which visibly dominate its functioning. Polanyi, Godelier argues, "observed different hierarchies of institutions and he then concluded, as an empiricist, that in all these hierarchies, whether dominated by kinship relations, religion or politics, the economy each time played a subordinate role in the functioning and evolution of societies." Not all form of social behaviour are equally decisive in the reproduction or transformation of a social system. Social relations, in short, only play a determinant role at the institutional level if they assume the function of production relations. (Godelier, 1981:67)

So far we have a clearer picture of how the mature Polanyi differentiates himself from the Marxian tradition. Through the critique of the economistic fallacy in Classical Marxism (and economic liberalism), he envisions a dualistic interplay between the economy and society throughout human history, which further manifested and dramatized in form of double movement during the late

nineteenth century. "Society" is thus assigned a fundamental role in his conceptual framework. In contrast, Classical Marxism's over-emphasis on economic infrastructure has in effect forced the state and society into peripheral conceptual positions, thus merely consider them as epiphenomenon. Antagonism and contradictions built in the capitalist mode of production are considered inherent in production relations along class divisions, while conflicts within and out of the state and society are treated as simple reflections of them.

With the concept of embeddedness, Polanyi shifts the theoretical focus out of economic domain and draws on the role of social, political and cultural institutions in enabling and regulating market activities. While at the same time, the potential disembedding tendency of the market economy implies deep-rooted cleavages between economic and non-economic institutions. Polanyi still reserves an important role for class analysis but, instead of talking about class struggle, he stresses all social classes can suffer from the disembedding tendency of self-regulated market and be forced into self-protection.[33] This position is considered to be similar to Gramsci's concept of hegemony requiring dominant class(es) to represent societal interest in general. Tensions and contradictions do not inherent in production relations but instead, develop across domains of economic and non-economic institutions operating under different mechanisms of economic integration.

Up to this point, it can be comfortably asserted that for Classical Marxism, mainly developed in late nineteenth century under the context of primitive, despotic capitalism, the focus has concentrated on the economy, especially the realm of production crucial for class formation. The capitalist or self-regulated market is inevitably disembedded, substantively commmodified and crisis laden, with its self-destructive tendency indispensable. While the capitalist state is a simple reflection of class relations and contradictions, the society is nothing more than a market society. Economic and non-economic institutions alike are powerless in maintaining any meaningful and enduring unity and stability in it;

---

33 Polanyi himself expresses the point precisely by contrasting Marx's account of the role of economy in society "an exploitation theorem-class war", with his own "a market theorem-no class war". See Dale (2010: 132).

For the mature Polanyi, on the contrary, whose perspective mainly developed in the mid-twentieth century under the context of hegemonic, state capitalism, its focus has shifted not only onto the market realm of exchange, but also the "society" where non-economic institutions prevail and counter-movement initiates. It is at this point that Block (2003) discovers the "always embedded economy", which is fully institutionalized and regulated, at least potentially decommmodified and characterized by "heterachy", i.e. self-organization among mutually interdependent actors (Jessop, 2001:218). While the society is a truly independent "active society", the bureaucratic state is highly autonomous, institutionally embedded in the market economy as such, thus prolonged unity and stability can be ascertained.

Table 3. Antagonistic class relations vs antagonistic institutional conflicts -(market driven) disembedded vs (society driven) always embedded?

Stage of thought	Major statements	Examples
Classical Marxism* <1914 Primitive, despotic capitalism	Inevitably disembedded, substantively commmodified, self-destructive tendency of self-regulated market	Silver, Arrighi
Sociological Marxism, Gramsci, Early Polanyi 1914-1944 Historical indeterminacy, contingency	Potentially disembedding, partially de/commmodified, possibly self-/regulated hegemony, historic bloc	Burawoy Harvey, Jessop
Mature Polanyi* >1944 Hegemonic state capitalism	"Always embedded economy", fully regulated, likely to be decommmodified under autonomous/bureaucratic state	Block, Evans, Esping-Andersen

*Both Classical Marxism and Mature Polanyi will be identified by Burawoy (2010) as "false optimism".

Potentially disembedding, partially instituted economy

However, this is by far not yet the end of the story. Both Classical Marxism and

the mature Polanyi merely represent the two extremist, dichotomous positions. At the one end is the inevitable disembedded, self-regulated market, while at the other end the "always embedded economy". At one governed by the anarchy of exchange and at the other fully regulated by non-economic institutions. At one full of crisis and instability and at the other assured unity and stability. They can either be treated as **ideal types** which serve as **analytic-theoretical models**, or can really existed only in extremely specific historical contexts, which can never be considered as "inevitable" or "always" in the normal sense of the words. Careful treatment is necessary in order to avoid the potential reductionist, deterministic and teleological tendencies. Particularly, one should note that there is actually a huge grey area lying in-between the two extremes, allowing sociologicized theorizing basing on more elaborated **societal-historical typologies**, referring to differences in degree.[34]

This is, it can be comfortably asserted, the genuine location of which Burawoy identifies Sociological Marxism, exemplified by Gramsci and young Polanyi in the first half of twentieth century up to 1944, under the context of historical contingency and indeterminacy. For both accounts, market economies may be potentially disembedding, partially instituted, relatively commmodified or discommmodified, and self-regulated or regulated, but what will be more fundamental is, its nature cannot be **historically predestinated** or **theoretically predetermined**. In short, every movement is under dynamic and dialectic processes of "ing" as revealed in the word "disembedding".

Under such conception, although productive forces will still shape the economic infrastructure, concrete class configurations organized as historical blocs will, ultimately depend on the "balance of forces", depend on concrete political formations and historical conjunctures. Hegemony of the dominant class has to be consciously built and rebuilt over the time, relying on shifting combinations of coercion and consent, but its unity and stability is always problematic,

---

34 It is ironic to find in an early work of Block (1991:51), however, already proposes that degrees and characteristics of "marketness" and "embeddedness" as a continuum can be compared among different economic structures. This non-reductionst position is virtually dropped in his "always embedded economy" thesis. The opposition between early and late Block is so great but seldom raise the awareness of commentaries.

provisional and unstable.[35] The instrumental state will enjoy degrees of relative autonomy, but it is still structurally embedded in the particular mode of production. This Gramscian conception of civil society is a **contested terrain** and **arena of struggle**, the platform for **"war of positions"**, also continuously shaped and reshaped by the state as a political society. "Instead of the capitalist economy sowing the seeds of its own demise, capitalism creates an active society or civil society that contains but does not end tendencies toward crisis and contradiction." (Burawoy, 2003:213)

Thus while Gramsci is pessimistic in the ultimate war of movement, heavily based on his analysis largely confined to the Italian national situation, Polanyi is "well aware it makes a world of difference whether this resistance is conducted under the dominance of fascism, social democracy, corporate liberalism a`la New Deal, or a communist regime" (Jessop, 2001:222) - through the disruptive strains of marketization and counter-movement.[36] "Whereas Gramsci has a convincing analysis of hegemony as the organization of class struggle within limits of capitalism, he does not have a theory of counter-hegemony. While Polanyi does not comprehend the power of capitalist hegemony, his displacement of experience from production to exchange creates the grounds for a potential counter-hegemony…Gramsci so appreciates the power of capitalist hegemony that, ultimately, he is at a loss to understand how it can be undermined. Workers don't have the wherewithal-the material resources or

35 To tackle with the exceptionally if not absolutely confusing and controversial concept of hegemony, some advance clarifications may be desirable. In short," hegemony" and "counter-hegemony" for Gramsci (1971), are somewhat realpolitik leadership struggles in totality, in multi-dimensional form, mediating across different levels, emergent and contingent to specific historical political conjunctures or "assemble of relations", rather than statically and mechanically concluded from the economic infrastructure. It is self-evident that with such conception, hegemony would unavoidably become the single most crucial building block of Burawoy's Sociological Marxism. Universalistic, dogmatic and teleological claims on hegemony, usually found in scholaristic, reductionist and one-sided reading of Gramsci, should thus be disregarded.

36 Dale (2010: 69, 227) notes "that disruptive strains spread from the zone of the market and disrupted the political sphere and society as a whole. Driven on by the counter-movement, the former separate spheres of state and industry begin to intertwine, but because the new integration was partial and incomplete a genuinely renewed social order could not result. At the global level, strains within individual nations destabilized the liberal economy, the disintegration of which in turn destabilized the world's political balance…In recent Polanyian theory the four-stage model of double movement in *The Great Transformation* - marketization, counter-movement, disruptive strains, socialist resolution/ fascist irruption - has tended to become reduced to a simpler and different perspective centred upon an undulation between regulating and commodifying trends, a perpetual to-and-fro between regimes that disembed and re-embed the market." Burawoy (2010:332)'s complaint on Polanyi for "counter-movement he too easily reduced state to society", therefore, should evidently pinpoint to these Polanyians rather than Polanyi himself.

access to the means of coercion-to conduct an effective war of position. Polanyi, on the other hand, may not appreciate the power of capitalist hegemony, but he does, paradoxically, supply a more convincing rationale for counter-hegemony. Rather than production, it is the experience of the market that can appeal to all classes." (Burawoy, 2003:213, 230)

Burawoy furthers his elaboration in two interesting footnotes through his comparison with Block on the one hand, and Arrighi and Silver on the other. For Block, "To reduce Polanyi to 'the always embedded market economy' is to reduce his work to a static sociology that is more profoundly expounded in Durkheim, Simmel, and Weber. It fails to do justice to the originality of Polanyi's Marxist analysis of capitalist dynamics, the celebrated "double movement" of market and society. As I will argue…*The Great Transformation*, rather than a break with Marxism, is a novel elaboration of a Sociological Marxism, the perfect companion to Gramsci's Marxism." (Burawoy, 2003:n30)

While for Arrighi and Silver, they "take a different approach, arguing that resources (workplace bargaining power and organizational or associational power) are a key to variations in working-class mobilization over the past century in different countries. To this Marxian view Silver adds a Polanyian moment, namely that capitalism swings between crises of profitability and crises of legitimacy...They assume that the spontaneous interests of labor lie in challenging capitalism—a challenge that will be effective insofar as workers are either driven to the wall or have an abundance of resources. In their daring resurrection of Classical Marxism, there is no interrogation of the interests of labor, or more generally of the way class interests are organized in society (as well as by state and economy)—the project that lies at the center of Sociological Marxism. (Burawoy, 2003:n83)

Needless to say, Burawoy (2010) 's label of "false optimism" may equally be applied to Block, Arrighi, Silver and mature Polanyi, in one way or the other, if not Wright, Gramsci and the young Polanyi.

5. Trajectories of transformation I: their dynamic, dialectic and emergent nature

As already introduced above briefly, Wright (2010a) has already, in his envisioning of "real utopias", drawn our attention not only onto the future utopias themselves, but also how one can or cannot get there, in order to make it real. He differentiates not only the alternatives available, but also the processes and dynamics of transition from the current to the alternative economic structure. He focuses not only on the idealized and hypothetical endpoints, but also stages and mechanisms leading towards or away from these endpoints.[37] He also stresses on the wide open possibilities of embedding vs. disembedding, as well as commodifing vs. decommodifing resulting from the dynamic interplay among diverse social and economic forces, highlighting the complexity and fluidity of the "double movement", and the overdetermined and essentially contested nature of struggles between the unregulated market and society self-protection movements. In short, to employ the Polanyian terminology, he attempts to avoid talking about the **definitely re-embedded** economy, but only **continuously re-embedding** of the economy.

Ruptural, interstitial and symbiotic strategies

For instance, "the central distinction among visions of the trajectory of system-transformation is between the view that any trajectory beyond capitalism will necessarily involve a decisive rupture and those views which envision a trajectory of sustained metamorphosis without any system-wide moment of discontinuity. **Ruptural transformations** envision creating new institutions of social empowerment through a sharp break within existing institutions and social structures. The central idea is that through direct confrontation and political struggles it is possible to create a radical disjuncture in institutional structures in which existing institutions are destroyed and new ones built in a fairly rapid way. Smash first, build second." (Wright, 2010a:303)

---

37 "The critique of society tells us why we want to leave the world in which we live; the theory of alternatives tells us where we want to go; and the theory of transformation tells us how to get from here to there." (Wright 2010a:26)

While "systemic ruptures are implausible strategies for democratic egalitarianism", metamorphosis visions bear more relevance on real world struggles of economic plurality. Within metamorphosis visions of trajectory, there are two further subdivisions: interstitial metamorphosis and symbiotic metamorphosis:

Firstly, **interstitial transformations** "seek to build new forms of social empowerment in the niches, spaces and margins of capitalist society, often where they do not seem to pose any immediate threat to dominant classes and elites. This is the strategy of building institutions of social empowerment that is most deeply embedded in civil society and often falls below the radar screen of radical critics of capitalism...Yet, cumulatively, such developments cannot only make a real difference in the lives of people, but potentially constitute a key component of enlarging the transformative scope for social empowerment in the society as a whole." (ibid.)

Secondly, **symbiotic transformations** "involve strategies in which extending and deepening the institutional forms of popular social empowerment simultaneously helps solve certain practical problems faced by dominant classes and elites...The increase in social empowerment was real, not illusory, but it also helped to solve problems in ways that served the interests of capitalists and other elites. Symbiotic transformations thus have a contradictory character to them, both expanding social power and strengthening aspects of the existing system." (ibid.)

Based on the conceptual framework laid above, Wright (2010b) further asks, in his following up research, whether SSE (within which fair trade network is a crucial component) is a niche in capitalism or pathway beyond, and suggests expanding and deepening SSE practices may potentially constitute to part of a process of transcending capitalism in two specific ways - subordinating capitalism and undermining capitalism:

1. **Subordinating** capitalism refers to ways in which the domain of economic activities within which capitalist dynamics are dominant shrinks. In the middle of

the 19th century there were some anti-capitalists, such as Proudhon, who felt that worker-owned co-operatives could accomplish this: the expansion of co-operatives and federations of co-operatives would, he thought, ultimately crowd out capitalism.

2. **Undermining** capitalism refers to ways which firms that remain formally capitalist become progressively less capitalistic in character. The idea here is that it is not only economic systems which have a hybrid character but also the specific organizational units within an economy. While making profits remains a goal of a less capitalistic capitalist firm, that goal is constrained within much narrower parameters and balanced against other goals through the exercise of non-capitalist forms of power - state power and social power - in the governance of the firm.

While various formulations of SSE (and thus including the fair trade network) undoubtedly fall into interstitial conception of social transformation, symbiotic elements are still obviously inherited, and their complexity and hybridity cannot be simply discarded. As Wright further concludes, "'None of these strategies is simple and unproblematic. All of them contain dilemmas; all of them contain risks and limits. None of them guarantee success. In different times and places, one or another of these modes of transformation may be the most effective, but often all of them are relevant. It often happens that activists become deeply committed to one or another of these strategic visions, seeing them as being universally valid. As a result, considerable energy is expended fighting against the rejected strategic models. A long-term political project of emancipatory transformation with any prospects for success must grapple with the messy problem of combining different elements of these strategies, even though on the ground it is often the case that they work at cross-purposes." (Wright, 2010a: 307)

Entanglement of transformation trajectories

While Wright devotes much efforts in delineating the merits and drawbacks of different trajectories, further detail analysis on their emergent dynamics and

dialectics through mutual interactions, should legitimately deserve greater attention - a crucial and fundamental issue somehow Wright has not proceeded further. In the chapters devoted to interstitial and symbiotic models, Wright attempts to theorize some general and integrated models that potentially contribute to the definite social transformation beyond capitalism. While he finds it feasible to build upon interstitial evolutions for an ultimate rupture or social emancipation from the current system (Wright, 2010a: Chapter 10), the effectiveness of symbiotic strategy is however by far unclear (Chapter 11). But he has not gone further to ask: how interstitial and symbiotic strategies, which are commonly found co-existing in capitalist societies, may dynamically interact with each other? He also does not further investigate, while societal wide, systemic ruptural process may have difficulty to find its place, but occasions of employing ruptural strategy through direct confrontation and radical struggles, can still commonly found even in democratic market societies. May it be considered as a crucial bargaining power of the civil society, which may well reciprocally and dialectically entangled with interstitial and symbiotic strategies?

In short, **Wright is by and large working with a diachronic rather synchronic approach towards the different trajectories, thus singling out only one trajectory as the dominant strategy of transformation in a particular moment of spatial-temporal configuration, and presupposes it may potentially lead to another trajectory of transformation in a later stage**, probably for the sake of ideal typical conceptualization and theoretical parsimony, rather than more substantially interrogating how "they work at cross-purposes".[38]

Wright's description on the evolutionary type of interstitial strategy, in particular, is highly revealing. "The trajectory of change through interstitial strategy will be marked by periods in which **limits of possibility** are encountered and transformation is severely impeded. In such periods new interstitial strategies must be devised which erode those limits. In different historical periods,

---

38 It is legitimate to argue that Wright is working at a higher level of abstraction in the formulation of the three general strategies of transformation as ideal types. But once when the trio are directly applied to real world situations, their complex and emergent nature will have to to be put into consideration.

therefore, different kinds of interstitial strategies may play the critical role in advancing the process of social empowerment...The important idea is that what appear to be 'limits' are simply the effect of the power of specific institutional arrangements, and interstitial strategies have the capacity to create alternative institutions that weaken those limits. Whereas the revolutionary anarchist strategic scenario argues that eventually hard limits are encountered that cannot themselves be transformed from within the system, in this more evolutionary model the existing constraints can be softened to the point that a more accelerated process of interstitial transformation can take place until it too encounters new limits. There will thus be a kind of **cycle of extensions of social empowerment and stagnation as successive limits are encountered and eroded**." (Wright, 2010a: 332-4)

What Wright has not further elaborated then, is once when the limits of specific institutional arrangements are reached, how can the evolutionary type of interstitial strategy cyclically and successively create alternative institutions to weaken them, or may the civil society attempt for symbiotic or ruptural strategies, or a mixture of both, or all three strategies together, in order to effectively weaken those limits.

It should further be reminded that, the state, market and civil society as laid out in Wright's model are also not simply discrete **ideal types** but also a matter of **variable**. Although he is betting on the civil society as the main engine of initiating transformation, he may equally find the potential social empowerment as resulted highly uncertain and problematic, "Whether or not this potential can be actualized depends on three kinds of conditions. First, it depends upon the extent to which civil society itself is a vibrant domain of collective association and action with sufficient coherence to effectively shape state power and economic power. The idea that social power emanates out from civil society presupposes that there is a power potential in civil society to be translated into other domains of action. Second, effective social empowerment depends upon the presence of institutional mechanisms which facilitate the mobilization and deployment of social power along these routes. Social mobilization without institutional consolidation is unlikely to have durable effects on the overall

configurations of power. And third, it depends upon the capacity to counter the deployment of power opposed to social empowerment. Above all, in the context of capitalist society, this means countering the power of capital as well as those aspects of state power opposed to initiatives and action from civil society." (Wright, 2010a:145)

This last statement virtually conveys a civil society of Gramscian version, and echoes with Gramsci for his original emphasis on its essentially contested nature, as an terrain deeply penetrated by the state to provide a "defensive network of trenches" for capitalist reproduction. This is the fundamental assumption which redirected Gramsci's focus onto the civil society (and comparably interstitial) struggles, distrust in parliamentary (symbiotic) politics and pessimism in the final capture (rupture) of the state, especially under the particular Fascist historical context he has situated. However, in later passages, Wright does not carry on with this sophisticated conception, through judging Gramsci's original view as "ambiguous" and adopting a much purist if not naïve New Left style, Neo-Gramscian version of civil society.[39] Such formulation becomes virtually self-defeating since it tends to idealize civil society and ignores the real world complexity and contingency of power struggles. Such formulation can solely and sufficiently account for the reason why Wright, consciously or unconsciously, accounts for interstitial (civil society) struggles in a relatively isolated style, and avoids a more interactionist view on the different trajectories of transformation and examines how "they work at cross-purposes".

Thus remains of the monistic and unilinear Marxian reasoning, with its ideological and teleological tendencies, which Gramsci has substantively avoided throughout his prolong life of realpolitik struggles and opened up new

---

39 Wright (2010a: chapter10, n.11), "Gramsci argued that in the West, with its strong civil society, socialist revolution required a prolonged 'war of position' before a successful 'war of maneuver' was possible. This means that the period before a rupture is a period of building an effective counter-hegemony. Gramsci's emphasis was on building political and ideological counter-hegemony. While he did not directly discuss the issue of interstitial transformations in the economy and civil society, they could be viewed as transforming key aspects of the 'material bases of consent' necessary for such a counter-hegemonic movement to be credible and sustainable. For a discussion of Gramsci's ambiguous views on the possibilities of transforming civil society within capitalism in ways that would enhance social empowerment, see Cohen and Arato (1994:142-159), section on "Gramsci and the idea of Socialist Civil Society". This latter Neo-Gramscian conception of civil society, however, has been severely criticized by Keane (1988, 2003) or more recently, by Munck (2002, 2006, 2010).

phases for Western Marxism, can still be unmistakably identified generally in neo-Gramscians, and incidentally in Wright.[40] For the latter, the temporal sequences of strategic stages are still prejudged, the logical chains of causation are still presumed. Rupture is too "remote" to think of, but the effectiveness of more "realistic" interstitial and symbiotic strategies are also highly questionable, so they better serve as either preparatory or transitional stages which potentially lead to ultimate ruptural changes in the later stages.[41] What is still by and large missing, however, will be how the three types of transformation strategies - symbiotic, interstitial and ruptural - coexist, interact and co-evolve simultaneously under specific societal-historical contexts: **how the trio can mutually be constitutive or restrictive to each other; how the tensions and contradictions be harmonized or intensified. As positive or zero-sum rather than solely zero-sum games, never being predestinated or predetermined; as dynamically and dialectically interrelated and contested, interpenetrating rather than mutually exclusive processes, all in a complex and emergent manner.** Such conceptualization is, as we can see further on, the fundamental key to our understanding of alternative food networks in general and ultimately, fair trade in specific.

6. Trajectories of transformation II: the dual process of disentanglement and re-entanglement

Disentanglement as "framing" vs. re-entanglement as "overflowing"

---

40 The problems of Neo-Gramscians can justifiably be compared with that of the Neo-Polanyians mentioned above. Both positions can be considered as, in Bourdieu (2000)'s terms, "scholaristic fallacies" which de-historicize and de-contextualize the maestros, academially "harmonize" and "purify" their original positions, and conflate the resulted ideal typical theoretical constructs with really existing social settings. This is also due to the dogmatic, reductionist and one-side reading of Gramsci (and to a large extent Polanyi)'s original fluidic, pluralistic and sometimes confusing writings. For what Boggs (1984:14) calls "the three faces of Gramsci": the revolutionary democratic socialist, the Leninist and the critical Western Marxist traditions within him, "the common tendency to view Gramsci as a singular theorist with one overriding project in mind, whether Leninist or humanist or Hegelian, obscures too much. It conceals not only the originality but the irresolvable tensions in the complex theoretical structure."

41 For sure, Wright also talks about evolutionary interstitial strategy which may potentially induce fundamental transformation of capitalist societies. His elaboration, however, is highly vague and unsubstantiated reflecting his relatively denial of its viability.

The contribution of Callon (1998), as a leading figure of Actor Network Theory, especially through his duo concepts of framing and overflowing, should be treasured and adopted for clarifying the theoretical and empirical issues at hand. For Callon, the concept of framing, drawing from Goffman, denotes the establishment of a framework, or boundary, within which interactions among a network of actors, objects, values and norms are relative independent of their external context. At the same time, framing as such also implies a dual process of entanglement and disentanglement, which means entities inside are thus entangled, being enclosed or connected in the expected interactions while entities outside are disentangled, being "bracketed" off or disconnected from the expected interactions. Although, insightfully pointed out by Callon, the links between inside and outside are not actually abolished, and can never be fully disentangled. The process of framing can result in two opposing responses, "either by emphasizing the closure of the interactions on themselves and the role of players' mutual agreement in creating this closed situation or, conversely, by highlighting the omnipresence of connections with the outside world, and the irrepressible and productive overflows which the latter encourage." (ibid:250)

Callon thus identifies two ideal typical scenarios as resulted. One is **framing** becomes the norm and that overflows are considered as exceptions which must be contained. This indicates a strong consensus and relative stability of the frame, overflows are considered merely leakages due to the minor imperfections of the frame. Another is **overflows** become the norm and framing is considered fragile and very costly to set up. This indicates a general conflict and disagreement about frames and overflows seem unavoidable and even desirable. The conception of property right and externalities in Coase in specific and in Neoclassical economics in general can thus be perceived as a typical case of framing, with "overflows" or **"externalities"** merely treated as exceptional cases. While in sociological and anthropological traditions, the legitimacy of frames are more frequently challenged, such as by the concept of embeddedness in Granovetter.

Besides for what Callon identifies as the constructivist tradition, or what Granovetter may probably agree upon, an analysis at the network-interactive

level, apparently the framing/overflowing duo can equally be applied at Wright's contested trajectories of transformation, which theorizes at the level of collective actors rather than individual actors. Ruptural strategy for Wright may then be re-considered as the legitimacy of frames being more fundamentally challenged. Total rejection or decisive overflows are posed onto existing frames in the capitalist society. Symbiotic strategy, on the other hand, implies more mild and incremental efforts in regulating the processes of continuous framing and reframing. Overflows as leakages due to minor imperfections are to be fixed. Interstitial strategy, finally, implies the establishment of new frames outside existing dominant frames, which serves both as competing models of alternative frames and potential sources of overflows into existing frames. The direct assault towards dominant frames, the bargaining and compromising among stakeholders between frames and overflows, as well as the establishment of alternative frames, all constitute to a complex and dynamic interplays among strategies coexisting and co-evolving the processes of systemic transformation. Callon's framing/overflowing duo can, significantly, provide a more subtle and sophisticated base for Wright's real utopias project, or to a certain extent, Polanyi's formulation of counter-movement and the re-embedding of the economy, thus grounding the relatively vague analysis at a more substantive level.

Mainstreaming, alternative circuits and political campaigning

Wilkinson (2006:113) insightfully recognizes the applicability of Callon's framing/ overflowing duo on alternative food networks including that of organics and fair trade. "To the extent that a market is defined and regulated, externalities are created which subsequently becomes the **terrain of renegotiation**. This is particularly acute in the case of environmental and social externalities and we would argue that Callon's approach is convergent with the 'dialectical' relation we have posited between markets and social movements as a key feature of contemporary economic activities."

Wilkinson, furthermore, discovers a similar argument of Brunori (1999), a scholar from the University of Pisa who, in a rarely retrieved, short piece of

unpublished conference paper, proposed a framework that has NOT YET fully elaborated in further researches. For Brunori, "Agribusiness is permanently searching for new ways of linking consumption and production in terms of immaterial rather than functional characteristics. The alternative networks of social movements, such as organics, fair trade and regional products, have what Brunori aptly describes as **'high symbolic density'** which presents itself as an attraction to mainstream business to the extent that this can be transformed into economic power in the form of premium pricing. The danger is that the alternative products become absorbed as commodities within the differentiated markets of the quality economy." (Wilkinson, 2006:113)

Brunori, borrowing from Bourdieu, thus distinguishes between different resources as the basis of empowerment - social, technological, economic and symbolic. **Mainstream business involves the domination, particularly, of economic power over social and symbolic power. The social movement responses**, in turn, are efforts to **reintegrate different resources and values so that commodification and economic power will be constrained by social and symbolic power**. "In practical terms, this would mean campaigning for higher standards once the original standards have been transformed into conventional criteria, establishing new connections (GMO-free products), integrating an increasing number of alternative characteristics (organic + fair trade + sustainability + local distinctiveness), or developing new distribution channels." (ibid.)

To reframe it in the own words of Brunori (1999:2), "Through actors' interaction, these networks progressively close into 'machines', where routines govern individual and collective behaviour and align all the elements to shared objectives. Routines reduce search, transaction, learning costs, and raise the attractiveness of such practices. Up to a certain level, the greater the number of nodes of the network the greater the utility for their members...Once they are closed into machines these networks become, for all the involved actors, **'black boxes', taken for granted objects of shared knowledge**. Consumers can distinguish organic from conventional products by a label or by a trust relationship with the farmer because they take for granted, be they fully aware

or not, that the label or the relationship with the farmer 'speak for' such a network. It is at this stage that consumer are willing to pay a premium to organic products."

Brunori's formulation thus provides a strikingly relevant application of Long's proposed approach of interface analysis, as outlined in Chapter I. It decisively focuses on the interlocking "projects" of actors and "battlefields of knowledge" which accounts for the dynamic interactions of actors situated in contested terrains carrying diverse understandings, interests and values that pitched against each other. As Brunori (1999:3) further remarks,"Individual actors start interaction with others, creating progressively integration; repeated interaction generates alignment on the purposes of action, until the closure of the resulting network into 'black boxes'. In fact, they can be signified by symbols, so that they allow an easier communication, creating the makings for further adhesions and for an increased rate of individual activity...Once they are transformed into black boxes, alternative networks make a step forward in the process of hegemony. From this point, they can generate new cycles of innovation, and can be incorporated into other networks. The resulting path of development range between two different poles: integration into conventional networks, and integration into new alternative networks."

Furthermore, following upon the lines of argument of Long and Liu (2009:71), "It is here that we see most clearly the emergence of various kinds of negotiated orders, accommodations, oppositions, separations and contradictions. Such battlefields arise within and across many different institutional domains and arenas of social action. They are not confined to the local scene or framed by specific institutional settings such as development projects or broader policy programmes." Again this can be fully witnessed in Brunori's account to the extent that aesthetic, social and environmental values are progressively incorporated into the market, the process of disentanglement and entanglement, or "framing" and "overflowing" as Callon proposes will recur, involving continual negotiation and conflict between mainstream and social movement actors. "It is unlikely, however, that a politicization of the social movement will lead to the alternating cycles of consumer and political mobilization identified by Hirschman (1970) for an earlier period. In the context

of globalization and trans-nationalization it is more likely that the three facets of social movement activity - **mainstreaming, alternative circuits and political campaigning - continue to develop synchronically.**[42]" (Wilkinson, 2006:113)

On the other side of the same token, mainstreaming, political campaigning and alternative circuits, apparently, can also refer to what Wright identifies as **symbiotic, ruptural and interstitial strategies** respectively. More specifically, symbiotic strategy involves a continual process towards integration with the mainstream, particularly through the employment of economic power, promoting the disentanglement or "framing" of new standards and practices, and resulting in the increasing alignment between alternative and conventional markets, as well as the depoliticization and demobilization of social movement. On the contrary, interstitial and ruptural strategies involve the continuous efforts of social movement responses for renegotiation and reassertion, chiefly through the remobilization of social and symbolic power by alternative circuits and political campaigning, aiming at the re-entanglement or "overflowing" of alternative values at a higher level, thus creating new possibilities of social innovation and political articulation. (see Chapter III - V)

Global disentanglement vs. local re-entanglement

Another crucial aspect being highlighted by Brunori (1999) is the localizing strategy commonly found in alternative food networks. Without doubt, Brunori can be considered as what Bowen and Mutersbaugh (2013) classified as a scholar of "Local Agrifood Systems" (Syste`mes Agroalimentaires Localise ́s, SYAL) or the "Mediterranean Europe tradition", which have concentrated on regulatory frameworks like geographical indications (GIs) and social movements like the Slow Food movement, each of which privileges the linkages between the "terroir", taste of place, of particular regions and the foods and drinks produced there. They provides a sharp contrast and alternative to the Anglo-Saxon tradition in the study of alternative food networks, which has historically focused on voluntary labels like organic and fair trade, and on direct marketing

---

42 Hirschman (1970, 1982) provides classic cyclical models of social activism, which is highly insightful but rather mechanical and deterministic, resembles the diachronic approach towards the different trajectories of Wright (2010a).

initiatives such as farmers markets. It can thus be easily understood why, Brunori's important contribution has been so far neglected by the Anglo-Saxon academic world. After all, it is exactly due to his specific background and approach, that a fresh eye and new insight can be offered into dominant fair trade studies in UK and US.

According to Brunori, when comparing to organic and fair trade products, locationally distinctive products which are representative of the local communities and capable of strengthen the identity of territory form another important source of social power, particularly under the socio-political framework of European Union. The recovery and adaptation of local traditional products or processes who are in danger of extinction under global food industry also serves as another crucial source of technological power. Consumption of these kind of products further arouses the ethical identification of consumers and promotes the symbolic power of conserving local diversities. "Whereas globalization threatens the control of place through exogenous mechanisms, an increased **control of place** can reduce domination from external forces. In the meanwhile, powerless actors can reduce their dependence from external forces setting up alliances at a distance. Alternative agrifood networks provide powerless actors with resources to better control their environment." (Brunori, 1999:4)

In a recent and more widely circulated publication, Brunori (2007) further specifies the emphasis of local distinctiveness - the "local turn" in the light of the above "quality turn" among alternative food networks. **"Relocalization"** are commonly adopted to convey strong meanings with the potential attach consumers to alternative food networks. Specifically, Brunori attempts to argue, relocalization can be differentiated into the symbolic, physical and relational forms: **1. Physical relocalization:** encourages producers to reorganize parts or wholes of the production processes within delimited production areas; 2. **Symbolic relocalization:** mobilizes the claim to the cultural traditions and natural characteristics of the place of origin, impart particular qualities to a product; **3. Relational relocalization:** further adopts 'bottom-up' marketing initiatives, such as direct selling, farmer markets, box schemes and consumers'

groups. "Relational relocalization implies a reconfiguring of the membership of the processes of qualification. Various factors may serve to determine whether or not an actor is included in the qualification process. These include not only the boundaries of the production area itself, but also production specifications, quantitative thresholds (as in the case of wine), allowable inputs, and marketing techniques." (ibid.)

With these three forms of relocalization, Brunori further delineates three strategies of relocalization: **1. Local food:** simply refers to a local community, consisting of consumers and producers who are directly or indirectly acquainted to each other within a limited geographical span; **2. Locality food:** is the result of a separation between the world of production and the world of consumption. "Consumers and producers neither belong to the same community nor, in most cases, are they personally acquainted. Consumers choose locality products because they perceive them as coming from a certain place and possessing well defined and differentiated characteristics"; **3. Localist food:** further refers the group of consumers deliberately choose local producers and local products, in order to maintain local identity and particular lifestyles. "The difference between local and localist food is related to the reflexivity of consumption - which is low in the first case and much higher in the second - and to the geographical context of consumption." (ibid)

It is all too obvious that the world famous Slow Food movement in Italy is one of the most typical examples adopting the localist strategy particularly associated with relational relocalization. "Rather than aiming for premium prices, producers pursue value-adding strategies based on internalizing operations which in the past were externalized (such as the example production of inputs), short supply chains on-farm, processing, shared logistical operations (as in the case of many purchasing groups) and replacing certification with personal trust (thereby saving on certification costs)." (ibid.) Undoubtedly, social and symbolic power once again plays crucial roles in constraining the running away economic power of the globalized agrifood system. Efforts are contributed to counterbalance the once disentangled or externalized production processes, so that linkages and bondings among consumers and producers can potentially be locally re-

entangled or re-internalized.

Friedmann and Mcnair (2008), through their further analysis of the Slow Food movement, demonstrate a similar focus on localist food strategy not only as an expression of quality, but also as weapon of counterbalancing the forces of dislocational standardization, "The products of these regions must become commodities to survive, but the effort is not simply to improve their characteristics but to guarantee their embeddedness within unique contexts." Thus Slow Food departed from other Controlled Denomination of Origin projects, which Brunori would have identified as locality strategy in two ways, "First, it does not freeze production techniques. It consisted in bringing together wine producers, restaurants and journalists to plan for renewed commerce based on quality foods...Second, these regions, which have multiplied across Italy and later the world, rarely correspond to political jurisdictions. 'Every single product defines and shapes a space of its own, and together they make up a geographical mosaic with multiple intersections' (Petrini 2001:40)." (Friedmann and Mcnair, 2008:416)

Such and other alternative food networks which may be **locationally specific** on one hand, or **trans-locally entangled** on the other, equipped with all their complexity and subtlety, may not actually transform the agrifood system immediately, and may be even "on an edge of absorption, cooptation and the like, and many fall over. Yet others arise and recover. They thus require constant vigilance and self-correction, experimentation and mutual learning." Their multiplicity and plurality, as the Friedmann and Mcnair (2008:430) further remark, unmistakably resembles with what Wright's identifies as interstitial social transformation. "Interstitial social transformation is an idea that invites us to depart from a polar divide between autonomous oppositional movements on one side, and cooptation by powerful corporations and states on the other. It is a muddy terrain into which one can sink at any time, yet perhaps also one from which one can renew and redirect the journey as swamps are mapped."

Such conceptualization, as being fully revealed in the above discussions, does not uncritically and unilaterally privilege the local over the global dimension, as

post-developmentalists may often attempt to, but focuses on the dialectics and dynamic interactions of the local and the global forces in a rather complex and emergent manner. Drawing on the ideas of Castells (1996), Oosterveer (2007:47) demonstrates that "the contrasting logic between timelessness, structured by 'space of flows', and multiple, subordinated temporalities, associated with the 'space of places' creates a tension in contemporary society between the global and the local levels. Although people must still preserve their space as places based on which they can securely build their identity, their world is increasingly dominated by the 'space of flows', forcing them to orient their lives simultaneously to global processes."

Applying such a framework on the global food system, the originally **place-specific** production and consumption processes tend to be marginalized under the overwhelming forces of global commodity flows. Attempts to organize governance of food in the "space of flows" requires governance arrangements to be global and abstract, and as much as possible devoid of specific characteristics of place or time - **placeless and timeless**. On the one hand, the missing link between the local producers and the global networks thus constitutes a **"black box"** that obscures our understanding of the system. On the other hand, alternative food networks and new governance initiatives emerge as crucial efforts to reassert "space of places" into the system (Bush and Oosterveer, 2007). Once again, the dynamic interplay between global disentanglement and local re-entanglement is being highlighted. (see Chapter V - VI)

Value contest and strategic bargaining

After all, the above formulations of Brunori (1999, 2007) very much echo with Long (2001:107)'s treatment on the commoditization also of food systems, especially through the analysis on "contest of values", in which "commodity relations and values are generated and challenged, through the active strategizing, network building and knowledge construction of particular producers, retailers, consumers and other relevant actors. Such perspective underlines an important point that commoditization is promoted, defined or

contested by the actions of specific actors. It is not a disembodied process with its own 'laws of motion', nor can it be reduced to some abstract notion of 'market forces' that propel people into gainful economic actions or impoverish them." Rather, for Long the commoditization processes are shaped by a diverse set of interlinked social actors and are composed of specific constellations of interests, values and resources. "Commoditization has no given and necessary trajectory, except that negotiated by the parties involved, and as a process it is never 'complete'. It constitutes a label we apply to ongoing social and discursive struggles over livelihoods, economic values and images of 'the market'." (ibid.)

Commodity and non-commodity issues, then, are matters of continual contention and bargaining among actors of heterogeneous background. For Long "they involve actors' differential interpretations of social significance of particular people, things and relationships. Hence we must recognize the multiplicity of social values and the coexistence of different and competing 'theories' of social value. An actor oriented approach focuses, therefore, on the elucidation of alternative actor theories of social values and how they interrelate, rather than on the search of a single 'new' theory of value. From this point of view there can never be a single theory of social value - whether Marxist or non-Marxist oriented; we can only have actor-generated value notions that form part of the mental or moral maps of individual and collective actors, and which crystalize within the encounters and negotiations that take place between them." (ibid.)

7. Concluding remarks

The concepts of **counter-movement, re-embedding and decommodification** developed by Karl Polanyi (1944/2001) offer some of the most widely adopted conceptual tools for interpreting the dynamics of neoliberal globalization and counter-globalization. They nevertheless suffer from the fate of an elephant as groped by the blinds, and arouse confusions among diverse usages and the conflation, unmediated inference or short-circuited theorization among different levels of analysis. Efforts are thus needed to "sociologicize" and "relativicize"

the encompassing framework. The works of E.O. Wright, in particular, are recognized as important contemporary contributions which provide the proper building blocks and are flexible enough to cater the heterogeneity of social and historical settings and the multiplicity of pathways of social transformation. It is hoped that the problem of "false optimism" as labelled by Burawoy, or various biases towards ideological over-theorization of Classical Marxists or empiricist under-theorization of Post-modernists could hopefully avoided.

Specifically, in his envisioning of "real utopias", Wright (2010a, 2010b) identifies **symbiotic, interstitial and ruptural strategies** as the major trajectories of counter hegemonic transformation, which offer a good starting point to capture the overdetermined and essentially contested nature of the fair trade movement, inarguably a major component of the contemporary counter-globalization movement. However, it must be further reminded that these trajectories are by far clear cut and their fluidity and hybridity should well be alerted. While Wright focuses on delineating the merits and drawbacks of different trajectories, rather in a mechanical manner, the current study raises the need for further detail analysis on their emergent dynamics and dialectics through complex interactions. While Wright mainly works with a diachronic approach, thus singling out only one trajectory as the dominant strategy of transformation in a particular historical moment, the current study raises the possibility of a synchronic approach interrogating how "they work at cross-purposes".

As a result, in order to supplement Wright's framework, the contributions of Callon (1994) and Brunori (1999, a rarely retrieved, unpublished conference paper), as first recognized by Wilkinson (2006), worth special attention for their applications at the more substantive level on alternative food networks in general and the fair trade network in particular. Callon's duo concepts of **framing and overflowing**, as well as Brunori's three facets of **mainstreaming, alternative circuits and political campaigning,** are found to be especially useful for capturing the movement dynamics of **disentanglement and re-entanglement**, as well as providing a strikingly relevant operationalizaton of Long's proposed approach of interface analysis, as outlined in Chapter I.

Furthermore, Brunori is also worth noted for his analysis on the dynamic interactions between the forces of **global disentanglement and local re-entanglement**, pinpointing to how **relocalization** strategy and **place-specific** responses are commonly adopted by alternative food (and fair trade) networks as opposed to the mainstream market. They also constitute to another major dimension of value contest and strategic bargaining among the key stakeholders, after all, jointly crafting the trajectories of fair trade in a complex and emergent manner.

III Symbiotic strategy: the tensions and dynamics with FLO

The neoliberal ideology, its classical emphasis of the theories about the market, sees this as a spontaneous order, self-sufficient in its dynamic auto-regulatory. The market, in this view, is enough to itself because it self-regulates by its own internal dynamism. The dogma of the indivisible and self-sustaining market is not content with partial self-regulation. It aims to total self-regulation and that is a fiction. It only implies to players who are in the game, but do not take into accounts the "excluded" of this self-regulation...This is the crux of the urgent construction of another market, fair market for all. Organizing the hope for a different market means not to surrender the conscious solidarity options to any self-regulatory system.

Francisco VanderHoff Boersma, 2015

Fair trade is presented as a classic Polanyian countermovement, as a challenge to the dominance of abstract economic principles and a move to reembed international trade within social relationships...While fair trade can be seen as a coherent countermovement with a powerful narrative and agenda, its principles have been institutionalized in three quite distinct and at times conflicting ways.

Laura T. Raynolds, 2012

The use of Polanyi's notions of embeddedness has attained growing popularity among grassroots movements like the fair trade network. However, these movements have generally accepted market society as a given, and as such do not envision the prospect of reembedding as Polanyi originally intended it.

Gavin Fridell, 2007

Yet where should we place fair trade on this continuum between the hypothetical poles of full marketness and full embeddedness? Some observers have stated unequivocally that fair trade reembeds market transactions in social relations. However...fair trade purchasing occurs within the commodified realm

of the grocery store or the retail food co-op, where products come wrapped in recognizable, branded packages...

<div align="right">

Daniel Jaffee, 2007

</div>

Among activists, proponents and many early academic researchers of these forms[43], there has been a tendency to celebrate social embeddedness - particularly in the guise of social familiarity, trust, civic engagement and the like - and to minimize any evidence of marketness or instrumentalism on the part of actors...Too often, marketness and instrumentalism are seen as the currency only of powerful, but faceless players in distant reaches of the dominant global system.

<div align="right">

C. Clare Hinrichs, 2000

</div>

One must recognize that the incursion of militant action in the economic arena is not without risk, and that commercial logic may alter social movements. However, the opposite is also true: the market can be transformed by the arrival of new actors responding to different market logic and free from a typical economic rationality.

<div align="right">

Corinne Gendron et. al., 2009

</div>

1. FTHK: from fair trade to Fairtrade in Hong Kong

"An Icarus flying above waters"

What was the exact date did I start my data collection for the current research? I remembered very clearly that my field work did not commence until 21st May, 2013. In that morning, a heavy rainstorm swept Hong Kong and caused a lot of damages and flooding in the urban area. Sitting in a conference room 24th Floor high above the financial district of Admiralty, glancing into the narrow streets of remote Wanchai through the full size glass windows, I could only sense little more than nothing regarding to the troubles and chaos encountered by the

---

43 These insightful statement of Hinrichs (2000:297), though employed in the discussion of local food systems, is widely cited in later literature of alternative food networks including fair trade.

vehicles and pedestrians. The famous words of Michel de Certeau, in his beginning of "Walking in the City" in *the Practice of Everyday Life* (De Certeau,1984), gently creeped into my mind, "To be lifted to the summit of the World Trade Centre is to be lifted out of the city's grasp. One's body is no longer clasped by the streets that turn and return it according to an anonymous law; nor is it possessed, whether as player or played, by the rumble of so many differences and by the nervousness of New York traffic. When one goes up there, he leaves behind the mass that carries off and mixes up in itself any identity of authors or spectators. An Icarus flying above these waters, he can ignore the devices of Daedalus in mobile and endless labyrinths far below. His elevation transfigures him into a voyeur..."

Well, just an elephant's trunk may be. That is still most likely what the blinds can grope. It was just another normal weekday in May, though which also fell within the Hong Kong Fair Trade Fortnight 2013. That event, launched on 11th May 2013, has been shifted from its original schedule of early March to mid May for the second consecutive year. The first Saturday of May is designated by World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) as the Fair Trade Day since 2012. Ironically, the decision to shift the event from March to May has nothing to do with WFTO. It was mainly an administrative decision of Fair Trade Hong Kong Foundation (FTHK), so that the preparation work can be expected to be more well organized with the two extra months, considering the limited manpower available and staff turnover problem of the host of that event. Specifically, instead of being connected with WFTO, FTHK is a strategic affiliate of Fairtrade Labeling Organization International (FLO). The latter two actually signed a Fairtrade Marketing Organization (FMO) agreement in mid-2012, when FTHK starting to become the marketing arm of FLO in Hong Kong and mainland China region (while Taiwan applied to be a separate FMO also during the same period).

Formally speaking, FTHK itself is not a fair trade organization (FTO). Ten organizations launched the first Fair Trade Fair in Hong Kong in 2007, and turned out to be the founding organizations of FTHK in 2008, which later incorporated into a private company limited by guarantee, and registered as a

charitable organization in 2010. FTHK is thus a non-profit that advocates fair trade, and identifies fair trade as a practice that "minimizes the exploitation of producers, provides a safe workplace for workers and farmers in developing countries and ensures a fair return for their labour, and enables a respectable livelihood, creates a balanced relationship between producers and businesses, reduces environmental degradation and enables a sustainable, just society." (FTHK, n.d.) The major missions of FTHK include raising the public awareness, establishing a platform for sharing and communication, as well as creating demand for fair trade products. These are expected to be realized through public education and awareness building programmes, engagement and support of the trading partners, as well as fair trade related research and development in Hong Kong. As it will further be elaborated in this chapter, its strategic choices and organization positioning has never ceased to create paradoxes and dilemmas not only within itself, but also to the fair trade movement in Hong Kong as a whole.

Just for a minute reminder, there is a rule governing the research degrees in Hong Kong Polytechnic University, stating that the research student cannot start collecting data before obtaining the confirmation from the department on the research. 21st May, 2013 has already been 18 months passed my confirmation. I chose to started on this particular day without any concrete reasons more than just a ritual to fulfilling the requirement of the university. As have already been told in Chapter I and II, I have been engaging in the fair trade movement in Hong Kong and Mainland China for more than 10 years, just exactly as what Burawoy names as "extensions" in the extended case method - the entanglement of actors and organizations, events and fields cutting across each other, encompassing vast time and spaces, as if Harvey or Benjamin's "detritus" (Benjamin, 2006) of history all mix up in the "giant kaleidoscope" (Harvey, 2003), or an elephant's tail connected with its entire body, or a mess of spaghetti winding around on the plate...Well, how can I really figure out exactly when to start with?

"Logo-ization of care"

"Spaghetti men" is actually the nickname coined by its members to the WFTO logo. It is a circle carrying five human figures twisting and turning against one another, attempting to convey an image of how people all over the continents can be swirled together under fair trade. Although its design is highly abstract, the figures can still unmistakably be identified as human bodies, each of them fully equipped with heads, arms and legs. The logo was officially called the Fair Trade Organization Mark, which came into existence in 2004 when the International Federation of Alternative Trade (IFAT), as a world federation of FTOs being established since 1989, was renamed as International Fair Trade Association, before it was further renamed as WFTO in 2009. The new logo was adopted as a sign to represent alternative trade organizations (ATOs), or what they calls 100% FTOs. It thus highlights the fact that the endorsed organizations uphold their missions to advocate fair trade, maintain fair trade as their core business, and are mainly operating outside the mainstream market. They thus preserve strong social movement character and work against the hegemony of global market economy.

On the contrary, the FLO logo, or more officially called the Fairtrade Mark, consists of two curve shapes blending towards each other, as if two blue and green fishes are swimming at one another's tails in a square pond of black colour. Since FLO was founded in 1997 as a federation of 17 national initiatives in Europe, the logo has been adopted to serve as certification mark representing products labelled by FLO, instead of organizations working on fair trade. In other words, any organizations, including non-FTOs and transnational corporations, can sell fair trade products as long as the products are certified and labelled. Furthermore, it modified the two words "fair trade" into a single word "Fairtrade", with the capital letter "F", as if it is a trademark for brand products commonly found in the mainstream market. WFTO/membership and FLO/certification, as we can see further on in this and next chapter, represent the two major and contrasting models in the worldwide movement of fair trade.

Fair trade symbols

FLO   WFTO

These images, as "semiotic manipulations of cultural politics" being identified by Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman (2012: 203), further reminds me about the design of FTHK logo. Instead of highlighting the "F" word, it adopts an icon of two leaves as a graphical replacement for the capital letter "T", thus making it looks like "FAIR T RADE". To a large extent, the two leaves, dividing other alphabets into both sides, may also unintendedly imply the visual effects of a balance scale, attempting to achieve a level between the "FAIR" and "RADE". Fortunately or unfortunately, the emphasis put on the "T" may, however, implicitly denote "TRADE" could possibly be prioritized over "FAIR". After FTHK signed the FMO agreement with FLO in mid-2012, it also carries a FMO logo as a symbol of co-branding, with the latter as a transformed version of the original FLO label, by now looks much more like a Taichi pattern!

FAIR TRADE HONG KONG 香港公平貿易聯盟

FAIRTRADE HONG KONG 香港

In a rather not so similar manner, the logo of Fair Circle, as one of the founding organizations of FTHK, also makes use of the symbol of a balance scale, a mass measuring instrument which could be found since ancient times, and a symbol commonly employed to represent fairness. However, the fulcrum in the middle adopts the form of a man-shape, bearing two masses on each side of him. The whole figure, together with three star shapes (representing the major missions of the organization, as mentioned in Chapter II), are further embedded into a circle of deep brown colour. Once again, a human body, clearly with his head, arms and legs sketching out, is adopted instead of a symbol of other creatures from nature.

Anyway, it was at noon of 21ˢᵗ May, 2013, that a lunch box meeting (serving dishes from a nearby social enterprise) was organized between FTHK board members and Andrea, the New Market Manager of FLO, who flied over from Germany to join the Fair Trade Fortnight in Hong Kong. Out of my surprise, she was only wearing a very causal T-shirt, and did not looked or dressed like "a marketing person" at all, at least judged from the local standards. After FTHK signed the FMO agreement with FLO, a staff was sent for training at Bonn in 2012. In this turn, it was Andrea who came and monitored the progresses one year afterward. The whole meeting was, after all, about marketing, or more specifically, about FMO promotion materials and activities, as one could simply expect. Almost the whole meeting was devoted to graphics and designs - how the logos should be correctly utilized, what are the proper approval procedures, what are the puzzles and concerns of the licensed traders, and what are the right images and styles which can successfully "hit" the consumers, etc. It is widely well-known among FTOs that FLO concerns about the use of its logo really really seriously. All designs worldwide placed on each single product have to be approved by the head office at Bonn in their greatest details. And these designs normally demand weeks of negotiations and amendments before they can be finalized.

FTHK, since its establishment in 2008, also favoured the employment of cartoons, artworks and other innocently fanciful, tenderly colourful, or sometimes deliberately childish figures, instead of photos with men and women in its promotional materials. Say, in the Fair Trade Fortnights of recent years, local artists were invited to create hand-drawings of images of human figures, instead of employing pictures of real world producers and customers. In 2012, for instance, the cartoon figure of a trendy girl giving a hug to a big blue chicken, as well as other agricultural products was adopted, in order to covey a rather dramatized image of a responsible consumer. In 2013, a similarly

colourful cartoon attempted to sketch producers and consumers coming from different races, engaging in various activities related to fair trade. While in 2014, on the contrary, a very colourful cartoon with great details was used to demonstrate the varieties of not only agricultural fair trade products, but also happy faces of farmers producing these products. The main character was a middle age peasant driving his ox to soften the soil across the field.

Although, with a little bit more critical mind, one might equally query, it is in which country and which production site that fair trade farmers are still employing ox as the traditional farming technique? Or, is these merely the creative imagination of the artists themselves? Does it serve merely to "hit" the consumers or as a more genuine representation of real-world fair trade operations?

"Celebritization of fair trade"

Equally habitual was the invitation of celebrities as key figures in major events. Well-known local artists and celebrities like Anthony Wong or Karina Lam, as long-term supporters of the local fair trade movement, were the unsurprising and unexciting choices. In the opening ceremony of Fortnight on 11th May 2013, for instance, Anthony Wong became the guest of honour for just another consecutive year. Their charming faces, instead of the faces of ordinary farmers or consumers, were employed to convey the messages of fair trade. It was as if with their healthy images and popularity among the "fans", potential consumers from the general public would be encouraged by their actions to support fair trade. As usual, reporters were gathered to conduct photo taking as well as question and answer sessions. Instead of asking their views on fair trade, reporters were mainly interested in their personal or career related stories. Pictures of artists would normally be published on entertainment pages of the next day. Fair Trade Fortnight would be barely mentioned in the reports.

Equally common for FTHK was its emphasis being invested onto the focal events.The opening ceremony Anthony Wong participated was, once again, located at the podium of Discovery Bay Shopping Mall for just another year.

New World Development, the real estate corporation lent the venue to FTHK for free as a corporate social responsibility (CSR) project. In return, the staff of FTHK devoted much of their preparation efforts for that single day in that single location, and attempted to generate as concentrated media and public attentions on it as possible. The idea of organizing evenly distributing events of smaller scales in different locations throughout the city, which might potentially connect with multiple partners according to the diverse nature of the activities, were time and again turned down from the agenda.

After the focal events took place, newspaper advertisements, officially termed "advertorials" which could normally be bargained with a high discount rate, will further be published within a few days to round up all the features and stories of the events. Group photos including government officials and corporate representatives for major ceremonies, as well as close ups of the participating artists, would without any doubt become the highlights. Pictures for products, accompanied by the Fairtrade label, would further be supplemented to elaborate the cause. While for the written text, it would be all about the recent events, together with news and organization updates for FTHK. Finally, a few more lines were reserved to explain what fair trade actually might be all about. Once again and expectedly, nothing would be mentioned about the ordinary producers and consumers.

Group photo and "advertorial" of Fair Trade Fortnight in 2013.

As an ex-staff of OHK, even partly held responsible for its public communication arm, I could simply and certainly understood very well about the logic behind all these shows and galas: a routine "toolkit" or "manual" for running annual events; maximizing existing resources (for example free venues and free guests!) at hand; play safe in offering a generally acceptable and consistent public image; avoid sensitive and controversial issues, local and international alike; do no harm; business as usual...These were, to be certain, not original inventions of FTHK, nor were they initiated by OHK, but were actually imported from other Oxfams and ultimately, FLO itself, especially from Europe with huge sales volumes in the "mature markets". These were, nevertheless, also highly standardized procedures so commonly found in the local charity and NGO scenes. It seemed as if "path dependency" can be the single most legitimate explanation.

The heavy loading of OHK in FTHK, however, could still be never underestimated. Although I have already left OHK in 2008, and did not involve in any of the founding processes of FTHK, OHK as the single most crucial patron of FTHK was by far too apparent. Up to 2014, not only most of the fundings guaranteeing FTHK's survival still came from OHK, at least running up till the end of 2014, but also the OHK staff responsible for fair trade as well as the OHK board chairman himself, both still served as board members of FTHK since its very onset in 2008. The heavy reliance on FLO's version of Fairtrade,

emphasizing a single "authoritative" interpretation of trademarked Fairtrade, as to be further discussed below, also started with OHK rather than with FTHK itself. Although there were still other NGOs and foundations, like Cedar Fund, working on related projects in Hong Kong, most people will still logically and easily associate fair trade with OHK.

The "path dependency" of FTHK events, furthermore, seemed to be also reinforced by additional dynamics of "institutional innovation", which was highly related to the recently increasing involvement in Fairtrade among marketing professionals and social entrepreneurs, who usually carried heavy corporate backgrounds. Among the board of directors of FTHK, Alex Chan the chairman and I, both coming from Polytechnic University, could be considered as based in the academic field, while I was further representing Fair Circle as one among other major traders. There were however a few others, for example Kee and Clara, coming from commercial and especially marketing professions. They actually represented another broad current of social enterprise and entrepreneurship (SEE) prevailing the society in the last few years. How did these trends related or "entangled" with the recent developments in fair trade will further be detailed in Chapter VI.

2. From FTO to FMO: the potential risks of disentanglement and re-commodification

Prioritizing "trade" over "fairness"?

Needless to say, all the above tendencies of "marketing turn" or "marketization", being witnessed in FTHK, can easily and directly be associated with the "political ecological imaginary" as suggested by Goodman (2004). All the catchy and buzz wordings and harsh if not embarrassing critiques, like the "(re)fetishization", "spectaclization", "logo-ization of care", "celebritization of fair trade", "virtualization of livelihood, labour and care" (Guthman, 2002; Goodman, 2010; Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman, 2012: 211-220), can

obviously and unmistakably be identified in the everyday operations of FTHK, as the above accounts have already fully demonstrated. After all, "One of the key component of fair trade is the set of visual and textual imaginaries it creates and circulates throughout its networks."(Goodman, DuPuis and Goodman, 2012:203) And by now "the once ubiquitous image and descriptions of the fair trade farmer have been successively replaced by the images of quality drawn from touristic landscapes and endorsements by fair trade celebrities and the current emphasis on the 'tools of the trade', such as baskets, shovels, and hand clippers..." (ibid: 200) If fair trade's effort is to restore the symbolic and social power in regulating the market, such new trends can probably be considered as moves of potentially defeating the root causes. If fair trade is conceived as effort of re-establishing the **connection, embeddedness or entanglement** between producers and consumers, such tendencies can be considered as potential risks of **disconnection, disembeddedness or disentanglement**. In short, the prioritizing of "trade" over "fairness" implies a potential trend of **re-commodification.**

But what might be equally if not more important is, our attentions can further be paid on broader institutional and knowledge/power domains, which also play significant roles in developing "social interfaces", consciously and unconsciously guiding actors in shaping and reshaping of their "political ecological imaginary" in a much fluidic and contingent manner than Goodman et. al. (2012) describe. Value contest takes place, in a rather much more complex and emergent mode, through the strategic bargaining and dynamic interactions among actors. More specifically, FLO and FTHK could be conceived as "'intervening' parties and 'local' actors that shape the outcome of particular interventions" and the "marketing turn" as "commoditization processes shaped by a diverse set of interlinked social actors and composed of specific constellations of interests, values and resources", as well predicted by Long (2001). Thus the granting of the FMO status, as well as the incorporation and indoctrination of its relevant functions in FTHK in 2012, might actually trigger magnifying effects on the potential disentangling and re-commodifying tendencies, rather in an unintended manner, particularly under the local context of fair trade business.

Global vs. local "account management"

In more than one decade after its founding in 1997, FLO mainly consisted of two organizational arms, producer networks and labeling initiatives (not to include FLO-CERT, the independent auditing arm working parallel with it, see Chapter IV). Now equipped with the brand new FMOs, FLO transforms itself into a three-legged chair - a recent development rarely caught the attention of observers and commentators in the Global North. Although until then, still only producer networks and labeling initiatives are considered as full members of FLO, FMOs are yet to be granted with voting rights, and can only join as observers in the annual general meetings. After the first inception of the concept in 2009, so far FLO has already registered 9 FMOs throughout the world, when compared to the 25 established labeling initiatives, which totally concentrate in Northern countries, and the 3 producer networks, being found in Latin America, Africa and Asia respectively. In July 2012, FTHK acquired the FMO status after its counterparts in South Africa, Czech and South Korea, but South Africa has also transformed to become a labeling initiatives recently, making the number of FMOs up to 3 at that moment. Brazil, India, Kenya, Philippines, Slovakia and Taiwan were later added onto the list after Hong Kong.

The FMOs were established under FLO's new "Global Strategy of Fairtrade" first being introduced in 2008. Although the main theme was "focusing on the producer", it equally emphasized that "traders and retailers are crucial to improving market access for Fairtrade producers. To attract new partners we have improved our support services and strengthened our marketing of the Fairtrade label. A new global marketing strategy reduces the barriers for international companies to work with Fairtrade." The new strategy addressed the need of better global coordination for the scaling-up of operations, "Fairtrade's marketing operations today are largely managed by national members, labeling initiatives. This approach has been extremely successful and will continue to link producers and consumers. But Fairtrade certified goods are gaining an increasing share of multinational markets and our marketing must respond to that. The strategy will provide a unified, streamlined marketing operation which will position Fairtrade products globally." And as part of this

new, unified strategy, "A Global Account Management team will help strengthen relationships with major business partners that handle a variety of products in different markets. A single, integrated service will minimize administration involved, making it easier for partners to work with Fairtrade." Initially, the Global Account Management team has engaged with 28 mainstream companies, including Ben and Jerry's, Starbucks, Cadbury/Kraft Foods and Divine Chocolate. On the one hand, FLO provided a "one-stop shop" for these giant brands and on the other, promoted the development of new markets to make more products available to more consumers around the world.

Under the FMO agreement between FLO and FTHK, however, nothing was being mentioned about Global Account Management team. FTHK was only held responsible for handling the locally licensed traders, or the "local account management" if you might wish to term it! According to the mutual agreement, FMO "has the responsibility for promoting awareness of, and support for, Fairtrade with the goal to gain new licensees and to increase the sales and awareness of Fairtrade products and creating a good image for Fairtrade in the home territory." Accordingly, FTHK enjoyed the right to use the trademark for promotional purposes by the organization itself and certified operators "as long as the use is approved by Fairtrade International for the duration of this agreement." In return, FTHK would obtain a share of licence income from the Fairtrade sales of local licensees. "Licence income is considered funding to the FMO and all income will be spent on the main purpose of the organization, namely promoting awareness and support of Fairtrade...FLO agrees not to contract with any other body for services defined for a FMO in the home territory without the agreement of FTHK."

FMO's license income from local traders

After all, FTHK was established under the heavy patronage of OHK. Administration and activities of the former were mainly supported by the grants of the latter, on cyclical bases of three years. It was also clearly laid down in the Strategic Plan, as agreed upon by OHK, that FTHK would start to explore its

own fundraising opportunities during period of 2011-2014.[44] Actually a new fundraising committee has been set up so that long-term financial independence might hope to be achieved. And in the Strategic Plan for 2014-2015, FTHK was supposed to set more concrete targets of funding generation, which could at least partially achieve income diversification and reduce its total reliance on OHK. At the first glance, FTHK was merely a non-profit that advocates fair trade, which enjoyed all the privileges of all other charities in making public appeals for donations. However, such positioning has unavoidably and fatally be jeopardised due to its die hard commitment to marketing and sales promoting activities, as well as the heavy involvement of marketing professionals and social entrepreneurs with strong corporate backgrounds. It simply conveyed a confusing image of whether FTHK is profit-making or non-profit making, and whether it should be economically self-sustained or relying on external funding support.

With the signing of the FMO agreement in 2012, license income naturally became a new and promising means for future fundraising. Under the agreement with FLO, FTHK was granted the authority to license local traders for the sales of Fairtrade products, and 2% of the total volume for local sales could be collected as licensee fee. FTHK would entitle to 80% share of that income, while the rest 20% would go to FLO. The amount being obtained by FTHK in 2013 and 2014, however, was barely over HKD$100,000 per year, which not only fell short of the original expectations, but could also only cover slightly above 5% of the total expenditure of FTHK. Specifically, 70% of the license income was contributed by Kaikoo Sugar, the mainstream market leader in Hong Kong which has recently started to experiment in the Fairtrade market. The rest of the licensed traders, though comparatively more devoted to fair trade, their sales volumes were still relatively small and do not contribute to a significant amount of income. Sales generated from transnational corporations and giant brands under the Global Account Management team, by then commonly found in supermarkets in Hong Kong, would solely generate license income reserved to FLO rather than shared by FTHK.

---

44 This is normally termed as "exit strategy" by OHK or other development agencies for the necessary measures required to retreat their funding support.

FTHK's affiliation with the FLO label

The acquiring of the FMO status, furthermore, created an additional incentive for FTHK to co-brand with FLO, and heavily tie its future development onto the wagon of FLO. Such step forward was officially recognized as a milestone for the movement in Hong Kong, as well as a breakthrough for FTHK since its establishment in 2008. Together with the optimistic expectation for its income generating power, much resources of FTHK have been invested into new functions, derived from its status as a FMO, rather than an organization that advocates fair trade in a more general sense. Efforts have to be made not only on capacity building related to all the FLO related rules and regulations, but also on negotiating with existing and potential licensees for the complicated contractual terms. FTHK started to work more closely with corporate partners, especially with those carrying stronger market influences. With their contributions of the 2% licensee fee, traders would also expect a whole lot of "services" to be provided by FTHK. Soon not only the FLO logo proliferated in all promotion and education materials, but also the products FTHK featured in its activities and events were increasingly dominated by FLO certified types. This step actually conveyed a strong message that FLO was the unique representative of fair trade, and its certified products as the only "legitimate" fair trade products.

The even more tricky issue was, as time and again raised by myself as a board member, that it was clearly laid down in the Strategic Plan of FTHK, that its mandate should be "the promotion of fair trade logos", the plural form of "logos" implied that there were a variety of logos, rather than just the FLO version of Fairtrade label. Until recent days, it was still written black and white on FTHK's website that "since the first Fairtrade label was introduced by Max Havelaar in 1988, the general consumers could easily identify the Fairtrade products on the packaging and make sure that they comply with the Fairtrade standard. They are also informed with where the raw materials of the product come from. Nowadays, the most recognized Fairtrade certification systems are: FLO and

WFTO." [45] Whether fair trade should rely on certification and labeling was already a highly controversial issue, the over emphasis of FTHK as a FMO, and its affiliation with the single FLO label, might even potentially violates its original purposes and mutual understandings among its organizational members.

Other board members, especially those from OHK background, tended to defend such "single label approach" not in principle but in practice. They attempted to argue that this was a provisional rather permanent measure. The main reason was this could have offered a simple and straight forward means for promoting fair trade, especially when consumers and the general public did not have much knowledge about it yet. They claimed that we were still in "level one" of the fair trade movement, and it takes time "to educate the consumers". Efforts should be devoted to publicize more direct and authoritative messages, so as they could more ready and easily be digested by the consumers. FLO certified products could also be more visible and instantly available through a wide range of distribution channels. My responses, along with many others, were that the movement has already started since 2002, and with more than a decade has gone, we should not be still "studying at level one"! All in all, there was totally no such need to wait for "level one" to be totally completed before starting "level two" and "level three" etc. Different levels of understandings and the complexity of messages concerning fair trade were not mutually exclusive, and it simply depended on which groups of target audience you were talking about. It was just too naive to assume all consumers and the general public in Hong Kong were still idiots of fair trade!

In the late 2014 annual general meeting, held in the same conference room on the 24th Floor in Admiralty, Alex Chan stepped down as the chairman of FTHK. Miranda an ex-colleague of OHK ran for the election. As will be detailed in the next session, OHK was the original source of this selective, if not bias position towards FLO certified products. I have much worry that her ascendance to the chair position would only further reinforce such dangerous trend. I have become the only member that raised my concerns during that meeting, and warned her

---

45 Such a statement actually delivers the wrong message that WFTO is a a kind of certifications system, nor does it the single word "Fairtrade" starting with a capitcal letter "F".

seriously to adopt a more balanced track for future development, and to return to the proper direction provided by the Strategic Plan. "The roles of FTHK as being agreed upon long before and the more recent functions of FMO should carefully be demarcated, especially in viewing of the emergent controversies surrounding the FLO label." I complained, "Anyway, it is just unwise for FTHK to place all its eggs into one single basket!" However, especially under the increasing domination of commercial and marketing professionals, my voice has already become so marginalized that any further efforts would doom to be in vain.

3. Oxfam: pivotal role of the agenda and trend-setter

The role of fair trade in combating unfair trade

Oxfam was founded as an international relief and development agency in UK in 1942. Throughout the decades, it has acquired a special status among other international agencies with its unique approach of "helping people to help themselves" in addressing world poverty problems. It did not only deliver the help to feed the poor, but also provide the necessary support for helping them to become self-sufficient. Furthermore, it conducted researches and advocacies on how public policies might better promote development. During the 1980s, Oxfams from various countries started to focused on how institutions of global economic governance were managed, which favoured the Global North, rather than catering the world's poor in the Global South. The famous philosopher economist, Amartya Sen, was invited to be Oxfam's honorary President. He was well known for challenging the longstanding thinking about development, which was by then still dominated by the developmentalist theorists, who claimed that with foreign aid, Southern countries could follow the step of the Northern ones. Sen believed that countries and people were poor not because capital is scarce, but because the people lack access to productive resources. He provided a normative framework for how human rights could guide the development process and in turn, international institutions be designed to foster development.

Oxfam International (OI), as a federation of 12 national member organizations, was officially formed as late as in 1995 - exactly in the same year when WTO was established. Its affiliates started working more closely to address what they identified as the "structural causes of poverty and injustice". They noted that for people to exercise their rights, "opportunities must be created so people can participate in governing their lives and they must have the capacity to organize and take advantage of those opportunities." (Oxfam International, 2000) The Strategic Plan that reflected Oxfam's new mission has shifted its focus, from providing relief under emergencies and capacity building for self-sufficiency, to an upgraded version rooting in a "rights-based approach" to development. In particular, Oxfam recognized that "equity is central in the realization of these rights. Equity is about making the rules fair for poor people and ensuring that justice prevails." (ibid.) Although OHK was based in Hong Kong, by then still a British colony waiting for its final reversion to Mainland China, OHK managed to acquire the status of a national member organization representing the Greater China region in the Oxfam International governance structure. At the year 1995, OHK was also the only one among the 12 affiliates that was located in Asia.[46]

Before long, Oxfam International launched its "Make Trade Fair Campaign" in 2001. Coincidentally, Mainland China was also admitted membership to WTO in Doha Conference during that year. Such simple fact has virtually put OHK into a particularly significant role of the campaign. In 2002, the Oxfam International's Report: *Rigged Rules and Double Standards* (Oxfam International, 2002b), a comprehensive study on the impact of trade rules upon the poor, was published. The report claimed that trade liberalization under WTO failed its promises to developing countries including the open up of markets for products they exported. It accused the trade system as full of double standards, which made it look like the system was rigged against the interest of developing countries. As Aaronson and Zimmerman (2006) forcefully conclude, "While many critics of globalization lauded Oxfam for its thoroughly researched analysis and suggestions, many of globalization's traditional allies were openly dismissive of Oxfam's broad-based and balanced approach to these issues. In contrast with

46 Later Oxfam Japan and Oxfam India from Asia also joined Oxfam International as affiliates.

Oxfam, trade critics were also reluctant to support trade in general or any aspect of the WTO regime...It was condemned by the left for 'allowing the movement's demands to be diluted', and co-opted by the British government."

To Oxfam, unfair trade rules has to be effectively challenged in order to achieve fair trade. But fair trade did not only serve as the ultimate end that "Make Trade Fair Campaign" would like to achieve in the distant future. Fair trade was also by itself an instant and effective means to achieve that end. Oxfam attempted to demonstrate how fair trade could really work out, hand in hand with all the efforts to condemn what it considered as unfair trade. More specifically, Oxfam Great Britain has been one of the pioneers of fair trade, or in early days more popularly known as alternative trade, for over 50 years, and played a crucial part for the development of fair trade movement in Britain. It formally established Oxfam Activities Ltd. in 1964 and Helping by Selling in 1967 respectively to coordinate its growing trading activities, in particular through the mushrooming Oxfam Shops during that period of time. Later it also helped founding the fair trade coffee company called Cafédirect in 1991, which ultimately became the UK's sixth largest coffee brand in the recent decade. It also involved in setting up the Fairtrade Foundation which started to provide certified fair trade products in Britain in 1992, which in turn became one of the founding organization of FLO in 1997.

The ambivalence of the "Make Trade Fair Campaign"

It was also exactly in the early 2000s, that the world coffee market fell into deep crisis. The price of raw arabica beans has dropped to its 30 years low level. Many coffee growing communities and regions in the Global South have virtually run into bankruptcy. Oxfam sensitively tapped the opportunity and further supplemented the "Make Trade Fair Campaign" with a "Coffee Wedge" - a specific campaign focus at that particular stage,[47] precisely targeting the international brands and so-called "Big Four" roasters - namely, Nestle, Kraft, Procter & Gamble and Sara Lee - for the blames of monopolizing the market

---

47 The Coffee Wedge was followed by Labour Wedge which was considered as much more politically sensitive in Hong Kong due to its association with the Beijing Olympics. See Chapter V for further discussions.

and driving down the purchasing prices. According to the Oxfam Report: *Mugged: Poverty in Your Coffee Cup* (2002a:2), "Despite the stagnant consumer market, the coffee companies are laughing all the way to the bank. In the free market their global reach gives them unprecedented options. Today's standardized coffee blends may be a mix of coffees from as many as 20 different coffee types. Sophisticated risk management and hedging allows the companies, at the click of a computer mouse, to buy from the lowest-cost producer to mix these blends." Oxfam called for a Coffee Rescue Plan to make the coffee market working again "for the poor as well as the rich". Among other suggestions, it essentially demanded the roaster companies to pay farmers a decent price so that they could send their children to school, afford medicines and have enough food. It also called for commitment to increase the amount of coffee they buy under fair trade conditions to 2% of their volumes.

Oxfam further pinpointed at Nestle, the largest roaster companies in the world, and successfully raised an email protest supported by 40,000 people worldwide, accusing the largest coffee buyer in the world for failing the famine stricken Ethiopia. In December 2002, fearing a consumer boycott of its products across Europe, Nestle agreed to retreat its demand for a USD$ 6 million payback from the Ethiopian Government, and promised to invest any money it received from Ethiopia back into the country. Since then, as Pemberton (2011:78) notes, "Many back-and-forths were initiated between Oxfam and Nestle on Fairtrade in the mainstream, all made public on Oxfam's 'Make Trade Fair' website. This dialogue indicates a willingness on the part of both to engage in constructive conversation about mainstreaming Fairtrade." Slightly earlier, campaigns in US also successfully forced Starbucks, the largest specialty coffee roaster (by then still quite small in comparison with the "Big Four"), to accept the demand to buy fair trade coffee and enter into negotiations with FTUSA, the Fairtrade certifying body in the US. The two announced that Starbucks would make fair trade coffee available in both whole-bean and brewed form at all of its US stores, although the volume was left undefined. As Jaffee (2010:272) notes and will be further discussed below, "The corporatization of fair trade arguably began in the 2000s, perhaps ironically as the result of an activist campaign targeting the multi-billion-dollar specialty coffee giant Starbucks."

Aaronson and Zimmerman (2006), furthermore, find the "Make Trade Fair Campaign" implied a subtle step departing from the systemic analysis as outlined above, and concentrated its efforts more narrowly on the unfair nature of the trade system only, "By focusing on fairness, rather than on developing systemic ways to coordinate globalization, human rights and development, Oxfam may have missed an opportunity to collaborate with both the economists and lawyers that advise on and make trade and development policy...The notion that human rights and development are mutually reinforcing seems easier for economists to accept than to simplify the problem as the system is rigged or unfair. After all, markets as well as the regulations designed to govern them, are by their nature unfair." Provided with the systemic analysis it has laid down, Oxfam seemed to avoid some of the most crucial issues for a systemic approach to poverty, development, trade and human rights. "These questions include: what rights must governments protect to stimulate development? How can the existing international institutions of governance help governments progressively realize these rights? These questions should be both asked and to some degree answered before policymakers accept advocate a human rights approach to trade and development." (ibid.)

On human rights and other relatively politically sensitive issues, it was far too obvious that OHK has adopted a much different position when compared with other Oxfam affiliates. According to the constitution of Oxfam International, any national member organization could reserve its "sovereignty claim", and veto any decisions that have direct effect on one's home country and may potential oppose its interests. Obviously, issues connected with Mainland China, as the emergent giant in the global economy, was unavoidably highly sensitive and easily aroused much political controversies. For OHK, it was far too simple and straight-forward that with its huge number of programmes, investments, partners and even in-house staffs located inside Mainland China, any confrontational gestures that might anger Beijing have to be decisively eliminated before they came into existence. OHK was, by then, even formulating its "Corporate China Strategy", exploring the long term possibilities of renaming itself as Oxfam China and relocating its head office to Beijing. It

would be totally out of question that "Make Trade Fair Campaign" should cast any potential uncertainties on this process. For other Oxfams from Europe and North America, they also remained patient enough to passively observe, at least for a while, whether OHK could successfully and effectively liaise with the Beijing authorities, and be able to bring trade issues in through much lower profile lobbying, rather than putting the authorities directly under media exposure and public pressure.

All in all, in the case of "Make Trade Fair Campaign", as well as the "Fair Coffee" project to be described below, it could be so forcefully demonstrated, once again, that the fair trade movement was not just a matter of copying the ideal typical models directly from the textbooks. Nor could we apprehend the complex and emergent reality in rather static and categorical schemas. One might simply accuse OHK of distorting the "original purpose", or even "betraying the cause" of the movement, owing to its special position associated with Mainland China. But equally true would be, as Long forcefully argues, it is the contested terrains in which actors' understandings, interests and values are pitched against each other. It is the battlefields of knowledge "arise within and across many different institutional domains and arenas of social action...Indeed, they embrace a wide range of social actors committed to different livelihood strategies, cultural interests and political trajectories." (Long and Liu, 2009: 71)

Fair Coffee's "brief stop" at Hong Kong

According to the description of FTHK, fair trade officially arrived at Hong Kong in the year 2002. It was also exactly the same year that I joined OHK as a full-time staff, and soon found myself becoming a team member of the "Make Trade Fair Campaign", in particular, addressing policy issues related to the Doha round negotiations of WTO. At the end of that year, the so called "Fair Coffee" (rather than Fairtrade Coffee, a name virtually suggested by myself) started to be sold throughout the city. Such a historical account, however, tended to omit the fact that during the 1950s, Hong Kong has already been one of the first exporting regions of alternative trade handicrafts, produced by mainland refugees fleeing to the colony, by then under the initiatives of Oxfam Great

Britain. Though the scale of operations was extremely limited, Hong Kong has still made its mark in the history of worldwide fair trade movement. The Catholic Church also initiated fair trade sales of small scales well before 2002, mainly concentrated in Saint John's Cathedral, where the headquarter of the local parish was located. Although, it could still be totally legitimate to argue, fair trade has become much much more popular in Hong Kong after 2002 under the effort of OHK's campaign.

In late 2002, OHK made a crucial decision to take Fair Coffee merely as a campaign and education tool, implying that its sales would continue for no more than just a few months, and would cease to operate after the "Coffee Wedge" terminated. Such decision was mainly due to internal organizational considerations, so as the potential administrative and financial burdens of starting a new business or even a new team could be preempted. By then OHK has devoted much of its efforts on public campaigning and media work, as well as developing network connections and lobbying channels in Mainland China. Great care has been taken on assessing the potential political risks induced by the campaign. Furthermore, "Make Trade Fair Campaign" was still in its infant stage and much learning and strategizing still remained to be completed. The "Fair Coffee" project, comparatively, was placed into a much lower priority. The logistics of ordering, shipping, packing and distributing and the like were, even found by myself, kind of cumbersome job not so many colleagues willing to devote to.[48]

By 2002, OHK has celebrated its 25th anniversary and already emerged as a huge civil society conglomerate with more than 100 full time staff, hundreds of organization partners in Hong Kong, Mainland China as well as all over Asia, and a management board consisted of members from diverse backgrounds, including successful elites from commercial background and people closely connected with the Hong Kong Government. Strong bureaucratic inertia and complicated office politics towards new ideas and experimental projects could easily be anticipated. Worries among the financial experts and fund-raising

---

48 The one-off nature of Fair Coffee sales induced criticisms on OHK did not genuinely support or even believe in the fair trade model.

managers were further amplified due to the fact that over 80% of OHK's funding was contributed by individual donors, who were normal citizens usually donating some $50 or $100 on monthly bases. Engagement in new business operations bearing high financial risks, although fair trade in nature, could still unavoidably trigger accountability issues and confidence crisis, and might even induce a potential risk for donors to drop out by speculating that OHK could sufficiently generate its own income through fair trade sales in the future.

Equally alarming for OHK was Oxfam Great Britain's trading arm, by then renamed as Oxfam Fair Trade Company, decided to terminate its operations in late 2002. Although the reason for the sudden close down was still far from clear, it seemed that the more traditional ATO model relying on the sales of handicrafts has continued to encounter a rapid decline. "Oxfam recognized that the food sector looked likely to emerge as an important market for fair trade. But the dilemma for Oxfam Trading managers was that Oxfam Shops did not seem well-positioned to expand their range of fair trade food products. Despite stocking tea and spices from the late 1970s and supporting Cafedirect from its launch in 1991, a survey conducted in 1996 found that only 3% of shoppers knew that Oxfam sold food," remarked Anderson (2015:35) in his detail account of fair trade history in UK. However, business decline did not seem to fully explain the dramatic shifts in Oxfam's fair trade operations. "Oxfam's involvement with fair trade had always been closely connected to its campaigning agenda, and operating a trading company had successfully allowed Oxfam to engage in longer-term development work...Oxfam's ambition was that by empowering producer groups and assisting with product development, producer groups would develop the market knowledge and business skills required to deal with commercial buyers independently from Oxfam fair Trade. But assessments found that there was little sign of this diversification and many producer groups remained dependent on Oxfam for at least half of their sales." (ibid.:37, see further discussions in Chapter VI)

By then, OHK was also running two Oxfam Shops in Hong Kong. They have for decades operated as second hand shops - accepting free second hand stuff from the public, and selling them at discount rates to generate income as a

minor funding source of OHK. The shops could equally serve as windows at which OHK continually be made visible to and kept direct contact with donors and supporters. However, it would be technically far more simple in terms of the managerial and financial requirements for second hand shops, which virtually did not bear any costs for their product supply, when compared with shops catering food products of high depreciation and turnover rates. Rather than becoming a replicate of the case of Oxfam Fair Trade in UK, Oxfam Shops in Hong Kong were finally assigned the roles of selling a small amount Fair Coffee, as least to demonstrate their ritual support for the "Make Trade Fair Campaign", but the sales volume was still minimal when compared with other outlets.

From "Make Trade Fair" to "Make Coffee FLO"?

In retrospect, since OHK's commitment on fair trade operations was a fatally short term one, it would logically prefer products more ready to enter the market and less risky for the one-off sales. FLO certified products, as already be commonly endorsed, widely purchased and distributed among other Oxfams, in particular Oxfam Solidarity in Belgium and Oxfam Great Britain since the late 1990s, would simply become the natural choices for pioneering and experimenting fair trade products in a new market like Hong Kong. It would not only be administratively cost ineffective, but also induce high uncertainties in developing some other original product lines. In particular, as the single most widely known fair trade product, FLO certified coffee was only readily available from the European and North American markets, and could not directly be sourced from Asian producers during that early stage of development. Although, it must be added, by then OHK has already built extensive partnership networks in that region, and already started a large number pro-poor business projects which might be more or less similar to fair trade by nature.[49] Moreover, importing Fair Coffee from European Oxfams implied an indirect shipping route that simply did not make sense in terms of traveling distances.

---

49 One of such initiatives was called "the bamboo project" started by the Vietnam office of OHK which helped farmers to promote bamboo products in the mainstream market.

On the positive side, FLO certification would make it rather simple and straight forward, and demanded much less effort for OHK to explain what fair trade is, how it should be defined, and what should be included or not included on the product list...so as to avoid a wide range of queries and challenges that might not only confuse, but until today still confusing partitioners, consumers and the general public all over the world. With all the physical and symbolic assets ready at hand, including the whole set of product packages and marketing instruments, already widely circulated and tested in the Northern countries, OHK could convey a clear and specific message of fair trade just by translating the English (or Dutch for products from Belgium) materials into Chinese. The same advantages equally applied on other local partners which might potentially engage in the campaign. The entry barrier could be very low and anybody could soon get involved into the business relatively easily. Many grassroots non-profit organizations of diverse backgrounds, a large portion naturally coming in as OHK's funded partners, were also able to participate without much hesitations. This further contributed to the rapid spread of fair trade messages throughout the community in a very short period of time.

The contingent decision of relying on FLO products being made by OHK in 2002, accidentally and dramatically, turned out to lay the fundamental track and cast deep impact on future developments of the fair trade movement in Hong Kong. OHK's forceful endorsement of FLO certification and Fairtrade labelled products was largely resulted from its administrative and accountability concerns, and has nothing to do with the sorts of debates on whether the certification should be monopolized by FLO or not, not to mentioned whether fair trade products should go through the certification and labeling processes at all. OHK as the pioneer and "market mover" in Hong Kong, and its funding partnership with grassroot organizations in the local civil society, together with its heavy resource commitment on the worldwide "Make Trade Fair Campaign", as well as its crucial agenda-setting and trend-setting role, could however ironically, covey an unintended consequence for general public perception that "fair trade products = Fairtrade products" and "fair trade = FLO certification".

Such "all-in-one package" or "model answer" style of fair trade, guaranteeing

short term security and success in promotion and education programmes, nevertheless, created unnecessary tensions and complications for the movement in the long run. By adopting such an extremely narrow definition, a single authoritative "capital letter F" version of Fairtrade, this approach not only tended to be potentially monopolizing and discriminatory, but also based itself on an uncritical, selective, if not biased perspective towards the fair trade movement. To employ the words of Brunori (1999), the **"high symbolic density"** as a legacy of the movement has been voluntarily dropped, even though it was not a result of commercial or other external pressures. Contrast with the much boarder horizon of "Make Trade Fair Campaign", such movement component has virtually degraded as "Make Coffee FLO Campaign"! Fair Coffee, originally served as a campaign and education tool for OHK, turned out to generate potentially anti-educational effects. As the preconceptions of the public have be strongly modeled as such at the very beginning, efforts to move forward and to opt for more balanced and sophisticated understanding of fair trade in the future, unavoidably, would encounter exceptional difficulties to work against. Much additional work has to be done in balancing the already well-established preconception.

"Thin commitment" and "fast food" style fair trade

Echoing with the "thin description" of marketing and promotional techniques as mentioned above (Goodman et al., 2012), such narrow version of fair trade may also be termed a "thin commitment" approach to fair trade. "Thin" in the sense that any FTO or whatever organizations involved did not necessarily take up the issue at hand seriously, and could merely attempt to perform basic gestures and deliver simple services of supporting fair trade. It was not an attempt to "do the right thing", but merely an attempt to "do things right", upholding a certain degree of political correctness and preempting the potential criticisms of indifference and inaction. This would be particularly true for non-FTOs, be they originated from for-profit or non-profit sectors, which have already been fully preoccupied with other functions and responsibilities, or well developed into highly institutionalized or bureaucratic structures, tended to generate strong reactions towards new ideas and programmes, could still manage to ritually

demonstrate their commitments on fair trade. It would be the FLO certification that could probably offer the best "operational procedures" or "business solutions" for, and work in harmony with such "thin commitment" approach of fair trade, at least within a short period of time.

Instead of integrating the new operations into its own organization structure and promoting fair trade further by itself, in return, OHK committed to support its local partners to continue the movement after the "Make Trade Fair Campaign". While pre-existing non-profits may play a part in the process, a number of newly established social enterprises and non-profits, more specifically devoted to the visions and missions of fair trade, started their operations as FTOs in Hong Kong in the following few years. Among the organizations jointly launched the first Fair Trade Day in Hong Kong in 2007, and in turn co-founded FTHK in 2008, including Fair Circle, were predominantly coming from such background. The Fair Trade Fortnight first appeared in Hong Kong in 2009, and have been becoming the FTHK flagship programme for a couple of years. Another major event, the Ethical Consumption Month, was further introduced in November 2012, through collaboration with the wider local network of SEE (Chapter VI). Besides these two focal events twice a year, the "fair trade workplace" and the "bring fair trade to school" programmes were also launched in 2009 and 2011 respectively, aiming mainly at private companies and high schools as their respective targets for promoting fair trade.

I was elected as a FTHK board member as late as in fall 2011, representing Fair Circle as one of the three major traders in the federation. Besides me and other board members coming from OHK and academic background, as well as professionals mainly coming from the business and marketing field, there were also Phoenix of Fair Taste, who was my another ex-colleague of OHK, and Josh, an Australian being living in Hong Kong since adolescence, coming from the international aid organization named Crossroads International, both were representatives of traders. Phoenix served as the founding chairlady of FTHK from 2008 to 2012, up to the moment when the FMO agreement was signed, and then succeeded by Alex Chan. As Alex did not involve in any fair trade operations, he was expected to inject a more neutral image into FTHK as a

general promoter of the movement in Hong Kong. But his leadership role could not last for more than merely two years, partly due to his increasing workload back in the Community College, but also partly due to his subtle tensions with the more business minded fair traders and marketing professionals. Phoenix once again partnered up with Miranda, the new chairlady, and resumed her more high-profile role in FTHK.

4. Contested trajectories of FTOs: the importer, product developer and direct trader

FTOs as non-profits, social enterprises or for-profits

The story should, once again, return to its starting point a decade before, when Phoenix began to invite several OHK colleagues to establish Fair Taste in 2004, so as to continue the fair trade movement on personal rather than official bases, after OHK has made clear for its reservation on long term commitment towards fair trade operations. At the very beginning there was no budget at all, and everyone were asked to become volunteers or to contribute a share as the initial investment. I was also being invited by Phoenix to be a shareholder of Fair Taste, but later I decided to join others to form what later has known as Fair Circle.[50] My choice of not partnering up with her, in retrospect, was totally a contingent one. Since early I have been working with her during the "Make Trade Fair Campaign" and on the "fair Coffee" project, we both have been heavily involved in starting experimental projects related to WTO and fair trade under the new Beijing office as well. Phoenix was an extremely skinny lady, always keeping very short hair, was really tough and highly willing to take up new challenges. We have been working happily together for a while. But whatever reason it might be, Fair Taste and Fair Circle turned out to become two highly segregated entities, and designated to jump into very different trajectories of further development.

---

50 Other shareholders of Fair Taste mainly consist of also ex-colleagues of OHK.

A key contradiction for the fair trade movement is that it operates "in and against the market", depending on market channels to open up new opportunities for items produced under more favorable social and ecological conditions, at the same time working against the mainstream market forces that has created such economic inequalities (Raynolds 2000). Fair trade, while bearing all its values and beliefs in economic justice, is after all, a matter of trade. It is a business that relies on commercial operation, market competition and income generation to ensure its survival and development. It is the successful "business model(s)" that can ultimately prove not only the practical, but also the moral foundations of the movement. It is the trading arms which can conclusively demonstrate how it can be considered as fair, regardless of whether fair trade is still maintaining its minimal scale of marginal, interstitial existence, or being able to intrude into a symbiosis with the mainstream market and join hands with the transnational corporations. The continual generation of sustainable resources, be it in pure economic form or not, should and could only be consistently supplied from consumer support and consumption behaviour. The success and failure of the movement, whether one likes it or not, would have to be indicated by the sales volumes and balance spreadsheets of fair trade products, at least as one of the key performance indicators.

FTOs, more specifically, can exist in various legal and institutional forms, more or less determined by their foundational financial arrangements. It can be, as in the cases of OHK and FTHK, registered basically as non-profits (i.e. under the current legislation of Hong Kong, either as "social organizations" or as "limited by guarantee companies"), which are originally designated for charity, public interest or other non-business activities. Crossroads International, principally working on international aid, also falls into the same category. While there are another batch of organizations which can, attempting to strive a middle ground between non-profits and for-profits, by and large be identified as social enterprises. Since there is currently no relevant local legislation similar to the "community interest companies" in UK, the legal status for social enterprises in Hong Kong is still highly unclear. They can roughly include a cluster of FTOs, usually still involve in profit-making, however do not deliver all or a large proportion of their dividends to the shareholders.The income generated by

social enterprises can thus be reserved inside the organizations, remaining faithful to their causes rather than becoming personal gains of the shareholders. Fair Circle and Fair Taste fall into this loosely defined category. This batch will also normally include organizations more likely to be 100% FTOs, mainly due to the founding purposes and procedures during their establishment. The third probable cluster of FTOs, in contrast, register simply as private companies, and well preserve all the basic features just as the usual for-profit businesses in the market economy. Under the context of Hong Kong, many of these are companies originally working on organic and healthy food, like Yisheng Organic to be introduced below, manage to identify fair trade as a natural extension and good complement for their product ranges.

The complexity and multiplicity of organizational forms, however, can by far be more confused and complicated than the tripartite typology just described. The study of Huybrechts (2008, 2010) on a wide range of Belgian and European FTOs, for instance, demonstrates not only a steady shift of organizational forms, from predominantly non-profits and volunteer groups in early 1990s, to relatively privately owned and business oriented varieties in the last decade, but also a dynamic process of institutional isomorphism and entrepreneurship. It suggests how fair trade practitioners involved in continual innovations of governance structures and "business models", essentially resulted from the changing core concerns and key issues encountered by the key stakeholders. FTOs, at the same time, were also more and more closely knitted together through heavy networking and under the umbrellas of national wide federations. The current scene of fair trade in Hong Kong is arguably a strong replicate of the forerunning experiences in Belgium and Europe.

The focus of the current study, however, is nothing related to the taxonomy of FTOs and how organizational forms influence their development and business practices, as Huybrechts has fully illustrated. The key concern here, rather not related to the intrinsic organizational features, will be more on the processes of mutual adaptation with the external environment. This will be especially related to the dynamic interactions among FTOs as well as with their supply chains. Needless to say, they represent the interlocking "projects" of actors and

contested terrains in which actors' understandings, interests and values pitched against each other. To once again employ Long's concepts, "Social interface provides the necessary heuristic device for identifying and analyzing the critical points of intersection between different fields and levels of social organization." (Long and Liu, 2009: 71) As examples below can fully reveal, fair traders may even exhibit strong capacities and occupy relatively autonomous spaces in their differential treatments and deliberate manipulations of supplier and customer relationships, regardless of their profit or non-profit, voluntary or private backgrounds. It is a matter of entrepreneurship and strategic decisions for key players in their envisioning of what fair trade is and how it can be implemented.

FTOs with varying supply chain models

As mentioned, both Fair Circle and Fair Taste were involved in organizing Hong Kong's first Fair Trade Day in 2007, and subsequently became the founding organizations of FTHK in 2008. Since 2009, both FTOs have emerged as the focal spots during the Fair Trade Fortnight of FTHK every year. Many of their products are also publicized as "Star Products" in this major event. Later, since 2011, a new brand called Yisheng Organic, a producer, processor and exporter of organic tea originated from Mainland China, began to enter the scene and soon managed to achieve an exceptionally high level of publicity. These organizations were arguably the most representative ones as identified by FTHK among its trader partners, when compared with other also quite active FTOs like Crossroads International, Chopsticks and Bon Cafe etc. In below, I will employ the trio as examples for illustration and comparison purposes.

The elephant's ear, trunk and ivory. Maybe.

Fair Circle

Since its founding in 2005, Fair Circle dedicated to balance among its three major pillars of core business: namely advocacy and education, establishing production sites, and the sales of fair trade products (Chapter II). Except an early on project funded by OHK on rural development (and producer capacity

building) in Mainland China, Fair Circle did not receive any further subsidies and has to rely on its own efforts to achieve financial self-sustainability. It could easily be imagined, for the first two pillars, they were highly costly but not income generating at least in the short run. They actually casted heavy resource and administrative burdens for a new start up engaging in a new business. Ultimately, it was not until 2010-2011, especially after a new retail shop was set up in Jordan District, that Fair Circle started to strived a balanced recurrent account.[51] In recent years, with the rapid increase of sales volumes at annual rates of 20-30%, together with the further expansions of its retail outlets, the organization contrarily found it challenging to maintain a high level of advocacy and education activities.

During the early years, Fair Circle has once attempted to develop its own brand of FLO certified organic tea from a Vietnam partner named Betterday. Unfortunately, the partner failed to maintain stable production and ceased to operate in 2011. Afterwards Fair Circle stopped to explore FLO certified products under its own brand name. But even until recently, Fair Circle was still selling a lot of food products bearing the FLO label, including Divine Chocolate, as well as fruits, nuts and snack bars from Tropical Wholefood, and has showed no intention to drop Fairtrade stuffs on its product list. FLO or non-FLO certified, certified or non-certified fair trade products in its full varieties have been equally promoted and delivered by Fair Circle. However, many similar food items, especially for those sourced from other European FTOs, like biscuits and cocoa from Traidcraft in Britain, honey from CTM Altromercato in Italy as well as coffee, tea, sugar quinoa, muesli, wine and juice etc. from Oxfam Fairtrade of Belgium have been increasingly working with the innovative brand company model (Hutchens, 2009; see Chapter IV), rather than the traditional FLO certification model.

The recent strategic re-orientation of Oxfam Fairtrade of Belgium was particularly revealing. Before 2014, it was still one of the most active Fairtrade merchandisers within the Oxfam family, and was the major supplier of FLO certified products for Fair Circle and other FTOs in Hong Kong. However, in

---

51 Church, sales lady

viewing of the series of incidents related to FLO (including the dramatic split with FTUSA as discussed below), and the increasingly controversial image of its label, Oxfam Fairtrade made a bold decision to drop the FLO model, and worked with producer FTOs through its own system. With the strong distribution network and consumer bases being developed over decades, Oxfam Fairtrade has acquired the necessary capacity of gaining independence and detached itself from the established certification and labeling system (Oxfam Fairtrade of Belgium, 2014). This would also allow Oxfam Fairtrade to enjoy greater flexibility in fine tuning the rules and regulations according to the specific conditions of the producer FTOs. After all, although the FLO label was dropped from the products, they were still the same products carried full descriptions about the fair trade principles being upheld, the standards still being observed, and all the information about producers in even great detail than before. The effects on the sales performance of Oxfam (as well as their distributions going through Fair Circle) were barely observed.

In the decade long development of Fair Circle, an important milestone was its admission as a member of WFTO - Asia in 2009 (later renewed as a full member of WFTO). Since then, further efforts have been made to engage in international fair trade policy discussions and debates. Direct and strong links have been effectively built with export oriented FTOs and producer groups throughout Africa, Latin America and South Asia (especially those in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and India). The product range of Fair Circle has substantively extended towards spices, handicrafts, accessories, jewelries and more recently, body and health care products, like soap, shampoo, essential oil, lotion and cream etc. These latter categories, in particular, provided a powerful engine of the recent sales growth for the organization. The huge diversity of products carrying Fair Circle's own brand name has been also greatly enhanced. Rather than just a passive importer of fair trade products, Fair Circle has always tried to develop close working relationships with other WFTO members over the regions. The range of collaborations included product design and development, trainings on techniques and management, rural and community development as well as field visits of stakeholders and consumers (Chapter I, IV and V).

When compared with other locally active FTOs, Fair Circle has also devoted far more resources to set up its own retail network. On the one hand, such network, together with a well managed membership system and a wide range of educational activities, provided the most crucial platform for building firm connections and lasting loyalty among its customers. On the other hand, rental burdens especially under the Hong Kong context could induce huge financial risk. But so far the 5 retail outlets (including 2 joint ventures) have recorded satisfactory performances above expectation. One of the secrets of success seemed to be their locational advantages related to churches, clustered around the neighbourhoods of Jordan, North Point and Ma On Shan. Many customers with faith background habitually dropped by the shops before or after attending the churches. They mainly consisted of young working females predominantly coming from the middle to lower middle income strata.

Fair Circle, furthermore, has upheld its unique status among FTOs for nurturing strong bondings with social movement, grassroot organizations and the SSE sector in the local civil society. Specifically, Fair Circle played a significant role in the formation of Hong Kong Social Economy Alliance in 2012, which aimed not only at promoting fair trade, but a much wider range of alternative economic practices including co-operatives, social enterprises, ethical consumption, organic farming, traditional craftsmanship and even hawker markets, with the grand vision of promoting social innovation and upholding economic justice. As we will further see in Chapter VI, besides advocacy and education activities, the members of the alliance have devoted much efforts in founding WECONS, a second floor retail platform as a joint venture among 8 organizations including Fair Circle in late 2014. At the same time, Fair Circle also maintained a relatively close relationship with the field of social enterprises. It has first joined the DBS social enterprise enhancement scheme in 2012, and later successfully acquired the Social Enterprise Endorsement Mark issued by Hong Kong General Chamber of Social Enterprise.

Fair Taste

Fair Taste, established slightly more than one year before Fair Circle, provided every bits and pieces of interesting elements for comparison between the two FTOs. Unlike Anthony who devoted almost all of his time to Fair Circle, Phoenix still maintained her full time job and worked on Fair Taste only in an amateur manner. Organizational development remained slow and unstable in the first few years. It was not until 2007 that Fair Taste recruited a consultant to improve its business strategy, and later officially registered as the first FLO licensee among the Chinese communities. With the help of Social Business Angels in 2009, Fair Taste successfully opened up the corporate gift market and introduced its first eco-friendly Fair Trade Christmas hamper. The operational deficit was thus greatly reduced. Finally, the business model of Fair Taste was getting clear, and since then, its core business was evenly divided into three areas: retail and catering outlets, corporate, and holiday gift hampers.

Until recently, Fair Taste was employing 4 full time staff - much smaller in organizational size than Fair Circle. In addition, rather than governed by a board, Fair Taste was held accountable to a group of 7 shareholders, including the Chairman of OHK (who was also a board member of FTHK). Unlike Fair Circle which was registered as a limited by guarantee company, Fair Taste also structured itself as a social enterprise, with its profit distribution policy clearly stated on its website as follows: "Not less than 25% will be given back to the producers; not less than 50% will be maintained as working capital, staff welfare and development fund; not more than 25% will be given out as shareholder dividend". Also different from Fair Circle, Fair Taste tended not to disclose its detail financial situations to the general public.

Starting from the onset, Fair Taste has been a keen developer of new products, predominantly food products, under its own brand name. By far the most important signature product was the Fair Taste Coffee series it developed together with a local roaster. It also worked with local social enterprises such as The Green Shop to make cashew brittles, and Caritas for moon cakes to be placed into the Mid-Autumn Festival hampers. For most of the time, Fair Taste would try to insist on using Fairtrade certified raw materials. Comparatively, a much larger portion of Fair Taste's imported products were also FLO Labelled.

Though, its should equally be added, that the organization never attempted to avoid non-certified products and equally imported many non-FLO labelled products from Divine Chocolate, Traidcraft and Tropical Wholefood etc., similar to the case of Fair Circle.

Besides its emphasis on the status as a FLO licensee and a retailer of FLO certified products, Fair Taste also tended to work with large corporate partners and attempted to promote its products through mainstream channels - a sharp contrast with Fair Circle which preferred to operate its own shops, and systematically avoided private sector collaborations. For instance, Fair Taste used to worked with locally famous restaurants and fast food chains, namely Spaghetti House and Cafe de Carol (with collaborations under the name of FTHK), and launch their wine and tea products through joint marketing campaigns. The co-branding between non-fair trade partners and the FTO, just on occasional bases, could actually drew rather substantial public attentions comparable to many successful CSR projects. On the contrary, Fair Taste preserved much less connections with local social movement organizations and the SSE sector, as it was in the case of Fair Circle.

"Fair Corporations". On the Chinese version of Fair Taste's website, you could even find these words which seemed to imply some big names have virtually "converted" themselves into FTOs. Credit Suisse, Asian Financial, Hysan, New World Development...Even the Hong Kong Electric owned by Li Ka-shing was on the list! But with a more carefully surf around you would found that in the English version, it was actually referring to "Fairtrade Workplaces" - another project once again jointly launched by Fair Taste and FTHK, which aimed at lobbying companies to stock up Fairtrade products, eg. coffee, tea and snacks in the pantries of workplaces, or to arrange handicraft workshops or coffee courses as staff benefits and leisure activities. In such way, it was hoped that the staff and visitors could access to and learnt more about Fairtrade on daily basis. At the same time, the corporations might also tap these as achievements on CSR with marginal inputs.

Furthermore, based on the determination to re-position itself after 2007, Fair

Taste attempted to place a much bigger emphasis onto its design and branding, in particularly with the assistances of professional designers. The visual appearance of its products and promotional materials were greatly unified and harmonized, with brown and white as the main colours, thus being able to convey a relatively cool image with a slight touch of exoticism. Media exposure was also the cutting edge of Fair Taste, facilitated by its good and wide connections with the corporate sector and media workers. Apparently, the FTO tended to target at customer groups with a slightly higher socio-economic status when compared with Fair Circle. This can also be reflected in the pricing strategies of Fair Taste products in general.

Short supply chain, "deep" penetration, but "narrow" base

Yisheng Organic

Yisheng Organic, the newcomer into the fair trade market, demonstrated quite a different trajectories of development. Founded as early as in 1996 by a university professor in Wuhan, Yisheng started 3 organic tea plantations in Fujiang, Heibei and Yunnan and was dedicated to become a direct producer of high quality organic tea, mainly targeting at the high end export market in North America. Initially, it has achieved impressive business successes with its high quality products. But it soon found that the communities it works with, especially those located in remote mountain areas of Hubei and Yunnan, have suffered from extremely poor living conditions and problems related to environmental degradation, Yisheng naturally started to combine its production operations increasingly with poverty reduction and community building elements. A portion of its profits was invested into the local tea federation for non-commercial purposes, though, by the organization nature, it is still for-profit company throughout all these years.

Originally, Yisheng Organic was only concentrating at international organic certifications, which have for long been widely accepted by the Western markets and consumers. Started from 2006, it started to apply for the FLO label and experimented the Fairtrade market. Since Yisheng has always worked

directly with the tea producing communities, and acquired first hand knowledge about them, it simply took minimal efforts to fulfill the requirements of certification. In 2011, FLO labelled tea under Yisheng's own brand name began to be sold in Hong Kong. Obviously, organic tea bags was and will be the single product Yisheng selling, which however covered quite a wide variety of tastes of Chinese and Western tea. Due to the emphasis in quality and the elite market it was focusing, Yisheng Organic Tea could only be found in very few high-end supermarkets and restaurants in Hong Kong. Undoubtedly, it was targeting at an upper-middle class customer strata, which was rather different from the customers both of Fair Circle and Fair Taste.

Though with its limited channel of market distribution, Yisheng Organic however has demonstrated a very different model of FTO brand company. As a private company, it could, especially through its political and economic power accumulated in Mainland China, manage to develop a business model of "integrated business line", virtually covering the whole supply chain and under its direct control, working much closer with the primary producers in the marginalized communities, as well as building much more direct connections between the producers and consumers. Communication could hopefully be facilitated with the least number of intermediaries. This was also what Fair Circle aimed to achieve through establishing production sites at the onset. It seemed to offer a relatively promising model of how fair trade might operate in future.

The effectiveness of such model, however, remained to be further explored and verified, and at the moment it would be rather unique and difficult to replicate. It seemed that starting rural development projects and working with new production sites was a particularly complicated task, demanding the special skills and social backgrounds that Hong Kong people could hardly possess. The heavy investments into particular regions might also be highly risky and not be rewarded with positive outcomes even in the longer term. There was still a lack of concrete evidence for whether Yisheng Organic was fully adopting such idealized model and utilizing its strengths, taking fair trade really seriously as it publicly claimed, and may even gradually deepen its commitment on the fair

trade model, potentially incorporating producers' voices into its governance structure, as other FTO brand companies may have already attempted in Europe (Hutchens, 2009; Smith and VanderHoff Boersma, 2014; Boselie, 2007; see Chapter IV). After all, direct trade could by no means simply and directly be equated with fair trade. Much more work still has to be done before any solid conclusions could be delivered.

Another major pitfall of the Yisheng Organic model was, in contrast to its strong and direct link at the upstream and its solid foundation in the supply chain, the penetration further downstream was particularly weak. The company not only relied heavily on mainstream distribution channels, but also limited itself to an extremely narrow niche market. This would, on the one hand, restrict its contact with a limited size of audience, and casted much difficulties for Yisheng to build a critical mass, which should not only be customers with high affordability for quality products, but also committed supporters for fair trade values. Even more challenging was, its market performance would totally depend on specific retail partners of corporate background, strictly limiting its bargaining power on the contractual terms, and virtually forcing Yisheng into a highly passive position. Unless the retailers considered this partnership as a CSR project and invested extra resources on it, the profit maximizing nature will sooner or later squeeze Yisheng's market spaces. The reliance on mainstream retailers, paradoxically, may enhance the sales volume of fair trade products in a relatively efficient manner, but equally creating a dependent relationship that the FTOs could hardly escape from in the future. After all, the "deep" penetration and "thick" commitment of the Yisheng's model was yet to be matched by its somehow "narrow" scope of customer engagement.

If the model of Yisheng Organic might only serve as an exceptional case for reference, then Fair Circle and Fair Taste demonstrated two possibilities that could more realistically be practiced and replicated. Comparatively, Fair Circle, carrying within its founding mandate, tended to maintain a "deeper" penetration into the supply chain or "thicker" commitment to the production sites and the empowerment of producers. It naturally developed a much closer connections with the producer groups, first started with Mainland producer groups, and later

throughout the WFTO network and direct connections among the Northern and Southern FTOs. The original birthmarks of alternative trade and social movement origins can still be clearly identified. As we will see further in Chapter IV, WFTO membership and its bondings with worldwide FTOs has been serving these purposes effectively, which might not be what FLO certification could never ever deliver. On the contrary, Fair Taste chose to rely on imported Fairtrade Labelled ingredients, but attempted to work with local workers for further processing, showed another potential model of fair trade - a type of localized or domestic fair trade which will further be discussed in Chapter VI.

5. FLO and FTUSA: the mainstreaming and co-optation of Fairtrade

From charity trade to alternative trade

What some activists may term as "deep" and "shallow" approaches, or I prefer to call the "thick" and "thin" commitments to fair trade as discussed above, constitute to a continuous movement muddling through all kinds of tensions and contradictions, and demonstrate the strong tendencies of complexity and emergence throughout its history. Fair trade, or alternative trade as it was more commonly referred to in early days, has emerged as part of the global justice movement that connected the alternative market model with the political agenda to "transform traditionally exploitative global production and trade relations." (Murray and Raynolds, 2000) The origins of alternative trade can be traced back to international relief agencies in the post-World War Two era. Such "charity trade" model developed by Oxfam, among others, embraced the principles of self-help rather than challenge the injustice created by socio-political institutions. The starting point of a more politicized movement, "development trade", was founded in late 1950s when Dutch activists started to sell cane sugar with the message "by buying cane sugar you give people in poor countries a place in the sun of prosperity" (Kocken, 2003). In the 1960s and 1970s, new ATOs mushroomed across the Global North that shared the common missions of reforming the international trade system under which the

poor and disadvantaged from Global South were heavily exploited.

The movement was, however, highly diversified and consisted of complex networks of activists and ATOs, laying the foundations which later evolved into part of what is now known as the "counter-globalization movement" or the "movement of many movements" (Klein, 2001). From the late 1970s, FTOs worldwide began to meet informally every couple of years in conferences, later formally led to the foundation of European Fair Trade Association (EFTA) in 1987 and IFAT in 1989. EFTA was a federation of the 11 importing organizations in Europe; while IFAT was a global network of 180 FTOs aiming to improve the livelihoods of disadvantaged people through trade, and providing a forum for the exchange of information and ideas. Later the Network of European World Shops (NEWS!) was also established in 1994, representing around 3.000 world shops in 15 European countries. Throughout the years, different networks have been established under FLO, IFAT, NEWS! and EFTA. They started to meet in 1998 and, when they work together, are known by their acronym, FINE. "The aim of FINE is to enable these networks and their members to cooperate on important areas of work, such as advocacy and campaigning, standards and monitoring of fair trade." (IFAT, 2004) The widely cited definition of fair trade as agreed by the umbrella organization FINE (FLO, IFAT, NEWS! and EFTA) is: "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." (WFTO and FLO, 2009)

Alternative trade, as fair trade in its earlier form, was created and sustained by appealing to its generic supporter constituencies: faith-based groups, leftist organizations and Northern groups empathetic to the Global South. But by the end of the 1980s, growth in the numbers of new ATOs and in the volume of sales of alternatively traded products came to an end (IFAT, 1999). On the supply side, the global free trade agenda led to tariff reductions for handcraft products and as a result, as Humphrey (2000:7) notes, "Fair trade companies lost their 'unique selling proposition', or USP, as more companies began to sell

similar goods." On the demand side, the global recession in late 1980s caused Northern consumers to become less extravagant. Fair trade consumers also became more demanding for justifications and guarantees from the movement (EFTA, 2001). The remedies for the new situations included attempts to reorganize ATOs by adopting more "professional" marketing practices, employing full-time staff instead of volunteers, re-designing the shops, catalogues as well as developing new product lines. While there were wide varieties of coping strategies, a common theme emerged - the need to move away from reliance on conventional alternative models and to seriously engage mainstream retailers on their grounds (Low and Davenport, 2006).

From alternative trade to fair trade

The turning point of history emerged in 1988, when the Dutch development NGO Solidaridad established its new partnership with a local coffee co-operative in Mexico, attempting to create a more robust market for coffee. For this purpose Solidaridad created a label - Max Havelaar, named after a fictional Dutch character who opposed the exploitation of coffee pickers in Dutch colonies - which could be attached on any brand that met its criteria of certification. These criteria were fourfold: payment of a firm floor or base price representing a "fair wage" for smallholders; prepayment or credit to farmers in advance of the harvest to avoid indebtedness; an additional premium payment for social development projects; and long-term trading relationships with democratically organized producer organizations (Jaffee, 2012). The labeling initiatives gradually spread all over Europe, with certifications also applied to other like cocoa, sugar and cotton. National fair trade associations in each consumer country certified producer organizations and licensed qualified traders to use their labels on the products.

Francisco VanderHoff Boersma, creator of the Max Havelaar label, delivered a presentation at the WFTO Biennial Conference in Milan, 2015. (WFTO, 2015)

Max Havelaar, the first Fairtrade label in 1988.

Fairtrade certification and labeling proliferated throughout 1990s, with licensing bodies eventually covering 17 European nations. In 1997, faced with the rapid market growth, all of the European licensing bodies decided to join hands and homogenize standards and administer certification under the new federation called FLO. As Pemberton (2011:71) points out, the unification of the Fairtrade labeling standards under the FLO also unified the goals of what were once many, loosely connected ATOs. The result was a re-orientation from alternative trade, a direct challenge to the conventional market - to fair trade, a goal to influence business from within the market, which prompted considerable backlash among those who continued to identify with the earlier goals of the fair trade movement. Soon formal certification also arrived in the United States in 1998 and quickly marked a major departure from the European model. The new certification body, FTUSA, joined FLO and quickly adopted a mutually agreed strategy to increase the volume of sales through mainstream channels and under existing commercial brands. However, as Jaffee (2012:104) remarks,

"While the certification structure in the United States officially resembles that of the European licensing bodies, FTUSA's relationship to the social movements from which it emerged is notably different. The European initiatives include formal representation from trade unions, development NGOs, and other groups."

Moreover, as Low and Davenport (2005:147) insightfully recognize, "Highlighting the interchangeable and often confusing use of the terms 'alternative trade' and 'fair trade' from the early days of the movement is more than just a matter of semantics. The term 'alternative trade' carries with it a constellation of meanings and we particularly draw attention to connotations of providing a practical and theoretical alternative model to commercial free trade. Quite crucially, 'alternative trade' allowed the marginalized Southern producers a means of accessing Northern markets without having to deal through commercial 'middle-men', brokers and wholesalers. Having brought the goods from the global South to the global North the process remained 'alternative', using avenues outside the commercial mainstream to reach consumers." Traditionally, specific market channels of world shops, organic shops, church and community organizations etc were adopted. The new narratives on fair trade, however, substantially departed from ideas of uniting in solidarity or being alternative, and replaced with a focus on paying 'fair price' to producers.

"The primary association of 'fair trade' with 'fair price' is not surprising, since fair trade labelled food products are predicated on a minimum 'floor' price paid to the producer group for the commodity, which is above the 'free market' price. Paying a 'fair price' to producers, a much debated concept, becomes the consumer's way of ensuring that a higher proportion of the sale price goes directly to the producer...The subtle but significant shift in emphasis is important because the term 'fair', even if used without the nuances of meaning suggested above, is more inclusive than the term 'alternative'. 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." (ibid.) One signifiant example of this trend was IFAT, which has

been established since 1989, renamed itself from the International Federation for Alternative Trade to IFAT - the International Fair Trade Association in 2003. It was, however, soon further renamed as WFTO in 2008.

In a similar manner, Lekakis (2013) portraits a trail to be drawn from the initial conceptualization of "campaign coffee" to the present normalized state of fair trade coffee, characterized by symbolic compromizes that have been made in the course of widening access to fair trade, marketing it to the mainstream and involving big businesses, "While 'campaign coffee' remained a beverage of choice of a few, 'fair trade' coffee reaches a wider caffeine-thirsty audience. There are seemingly striking differences in product quality between 'campaign' and 'fair trade' coffee. The persistence in the emphasis of quality over politics has been understood as another symbolic compromise in the process of mainstreaming fair trade (Raynolds, 2009). In terms of product quality, the interviewees were aware of the stark distinction between the qualities, 'Was it called campaign coffee? That's what is was called, and awful lot of people said it was ghastly...I mean I'm not a coffee drinker but I've never heard people complain about coffee that is on sale now.'" (Lekakis, 2013:34-5)

For the general consumers, the "feel good" factor of Fairtrade consumption, just like donating a few coins to charities, may deliver an illusion of political harmony in the highly contested terrain. It may have not only fetishized the product itself, but also fetishizing cause it upholds. As Lekakis (2013:43) further put it, "For coffee activists, the immediacy of consumption allows for the notion of completion of responsibility and does not demand further action. In this checklist mentality, the potentials of engagement in coffee activism is exhausted in its market-based enactment...The concerns of activists varied about the potential 'silencing' of the historically evident, more justice-oriented element of these narratives. These concerns echo anti-consumerist accounts of the conniving tactics of consumer culture which have scrutinized the manipulation of branding to elicit the illusion of value, quality, origin, choice, satisfaction and emotion."

The Metamorphosis of Fair Trade

Rudi Dalvai

President, WFTO

At the beginning, the ethical sensitivity of fair traders and consumers was "the driving force" through which self-development opportunities for small and marginalized producers had been created. Gradually the "ethical demand" by mainstream consumers assumed primacy. The difference is subtle and radical at the same time. Subtle enough not to be perceived as a risk by the FTOs and radical enough to change the nature of Fair Trade. A central role in this process was adopted by the Fair Trade labeling initiatives.

> ➢ *Originally, the aim was self-development of the producers; gradually the objective became guarantee against exploitation;*

> ➢ *Originally, the excluded and marginalized communities were the final beneficiaries of fair trade; gradually the demand of the consumer became more and more important, almost to the point of being the main need to satisfy;*

> ➢ *Originally, the concepts of partnership, direct contact, awareness-raising and equal exchange were the means; gradually the market, ethical standards setting and the certification bodies became the means.*

The new form of fair trade is often oriented to develop and promote a particular certification label and to satisfy the "ethical demand" of the consumer, thus offering the kind of guarantee against the exploitation requested by the consumer. It is a new concept that is introduced to the market, but it is certainly different from the concept expressed by Fair Trade pioneers which is centered on the process of development and partnership with small and marginalized producers, not simply that they are free from exploitation.

(As cited in Rudi Dalvai, 2012)

Mainstreaming: dancing with the devil?

During the coffee market crisis in early 2000s, when millions of poor farmers and their coffee growing communities were hard hit by the price dip, consumer activism and threats of boycotts managed to cast huge pressures on global coffee traders. Since then, there have been a gradual incorporation of fair trade sales into the mainstream market, but the strategies and responses of the key players were highly mixed and varied. In 2001, Starbucks bought around 0.6 million pounds of certified coffee, and agreed to buy one million pounds the next year, which was still below 1 percent of its overall supply. In 2005, the Fairtrade Foundation in UK announced that Nestle would obtain the Fairtrade label for the minor product line called Partner's Blend. Yet by 2010, fair trade still covered no more than 0.0025% of Nestle's total coffee volume. While Nestle did promise to enlarge its Fairtrade purchases in future, the Fairtrade Foundation's deputy director acknowledged that the firm had so far failed to do so: "we have got an agreement about continued increase, we've got targets, [but] they're not legally enforceable." (Jaffee, 2012:106)

According to the Oxfam Coffee Report (2002:41), initially, the mainstream coffee traders objected strongly to the term "fair trade", due to its implication that other products were traded unfairly. Nestle went so far as to produce a leaflet countering the fair trade claims. This was quickly followed by switches in attitude of "if you can't beat them, join them", and moves by some companies to buy a small percentage of their coffee from fair trade producers, or at least to pay a premium over the market rate. As clearly witnessed by Lekakis (2013:29), corporative responses were manifested either in terms of nominal, specific or total participation in fair trade. "Nestle's nominal involvement in fair trade was typical of the 'Big Four' global coffee retailers, while its notoriety goes back to its entanglement with the promotion of an infant formula in the least developed countries. This constitutes the case of a company which has known a lot of controversy then assimilated into fair trade by exerting minimum effort in wholly participating in the cause. Further participation could entail committing to adhere to fair trade standards for other or more products, or promoting awareness and campaigning."

While for Fridell, Hudson and Hudson (2008:16), A wide range of options was open to corporations in their responses to the fair trade movement. "At the one extreme, corporations could do absolutely nothing, while at the other they could sell 100% of their coffee as fair trade. In general, companies are much closer to the 'do nothing' end of the spectrum as even the two companies that have introduced a Fairtrade certified product over time, P&G and Nestle, are limiting Fairtrade beans to niche market products...While the 'Big Four' initially tried to ignore fair trade, the roasters' extension of some new benefits to producers followed on the heels of pressure from the fair trade movement." P&G and Nestle started to work with fair trade on limited scale. Corporate policy changes in Kraft and others resulted from fair trade pressure. Nestle, Kraft, and P&G sponsored development programmes in producing communities. Nestle, Kraft, and Sara Lee became members of the Social Accountability International. Kraft, through its Rainforest Alliance-certified Kenco brand, also attempted to respond to environmental concerns. "These proliferating corporate policies do not meet fair trade grievances, but do constitute feints in the fair trade direction. They can be understood not merely as rational economic actions based on the strategic imperatives of maintaining brand value and expanding market share, but as a corporate countermovement." (ibid:21)

Under the detail account of Pemberton (2011:66), on one hand, as the world's most boycotted company, Nestle gained the legitimacy that the Fairtrade certified label offered with the certification of Partners' Blend. On the other hand, the Fairtrade label gained symbolic access into the world's largest coffee conglomerate at a time when mainstreaming was the primary goal of FLO. "Yet while both actors benefitted from their partnership at the start, Nestle has benefitted to a much greater degree. Fairtrade certification has allowed Nestle into the Fairtrade 'club', although 99.97% of their coffee remains uncertified. Nestle was able to adopt a facade of sustainability without making substantive changes to its business practices." While changing norms and positive publicity do partially explain why it opted to go with Fairtrade, Nestle repeatedly pointed to consumer demand as the central motivating factor. Despite uninterrupted growth before and after the release of Partners' Blend, Nestle has not continued

to exploit this new market. In 2010, Nestle further announced its famous Kit Kat chocolate bar had been certified Fairtrade, mirroring the same image-mastering in the chocolate industry. "The fact that consumers have continued to demand Fairtrade from the market while Nestle fails to increase its percentage of Fairtrade sourced coffee speaks to the company's lack of true commitment to the principles promoted by the Fairtrade brand. A greater commitment to Fairtrade could have been demonstrated by the conglomerate by increasing the number of Fairtrade certified coffee producers, rather than simply capitalizing on a similar niche in a separate commodity market." (ibid:84)

Nestle's nominal involvement to fair trade, nevertheless, could hardly be a typical one. As Lekakis (2013:30-31) further adds, "Demonstrating constricted yet specific participation, most companies have sought to become a part of this market, as its promotion grows and its reception becomes more positive. A different approach came from Starbucks, 'the company that many people love to hate' (Wild, 2004). Howard Schultz, the founding father of Starbucks (notorious among the realm of anti-corporatism) advocated a balance between 'the fragility of capitalism and a social conscience', alongside the company's brand culture and strong appeal to lifestyle...Co-branding is a potent branding strategy often employed by companies. This technique associates them with something else from which they draw authenticity. Social and environmental causes appear to be the latest other to brand with. By gaining a hold over consumer desire for ethical trading, the Fairtrade mark operates as a commanding brand in affirming that the product and the company that carries it also carries its ethics. As such, Starbucks could be cleansed of its contested trade history."

Coffee and Farmer Equity (C.A.F.E.) Practice, a pilot programme introduced by Starbucks in 2001, was of particular significance given both the size and visibility of Starbucks, and the scope of the programme's ambition to transform relations of production and trade throughout its supply chain. The set up of C.A.F.E. was linked to two central goals: on the supply side, to ensure sustainable source of quality coffee to meet the company's rapid grow; on the consumer side, to develop a systematic response to increasing consumer awareness on both the product "origins" and the social and environmental

standards. Under the account of Macdonald (2007:801), C.A.F.E. Practice did reflect an improvement of increased corporate responsibility on key elements of worker and producer well-being. "The specific supply chain practices developed in response to such responsibilities are, however, less extensive in many respects than those within the Fairtrade system. Producers generally receive lower prices from Starbucks than from Fairtrade, and the failure of Starbucks to prioritize support for producer and worker organization has significantly limited its ability to generate multiplier effects by harnessing wider resources and opportunities in support of sustainable rural development."

With the different principles being embedded in the two systems, the tendency of Starbucks to downplay the gap between C.A.F.E. and Fairtrade "has the potential to 'water down' empowerment outcomes achieved at production sites by diverting consumer purchases from 'alternative' to corporate supply chains." However, as Macdonald (2007:802-3) tries to argue, "While in the short term such forms of 'brand competition' tend to generate competitive dynamics between Fairtrade and Starbucks. In the longer term, the principles of relational and transnational responsibilities promoted by Fairtrade are positively reinforced by Starbucks. Its prominent in-store images and marketing around 'commitment to origins' reinforces recognition of both the interconnection and the responsibility of Northern populations to producers of goods and services they consume, thus amplifying through the infrastructure of Starbucks stores the general message of transnational connectivity and responsibility promoted by Fairtrade."

Within the same year when FTHK was founded, Starbucks joined another a new partnership with FTUSA and FLO in September 2008, which symbolized a further big step forward for the mainstreaming of Fairtrade. Starbucks promised to increase its purchases of Fairtrade coffee to 40 million pounds per year, roughly doubling its original purchases, raising Fairtrade purchases to over 10% of its total volume and making it the world's largest single buyer of Fairtrade coffee. According to the announcement, the deal positions FTUSA and FLO as "key partners in the Starbucks Shared Planet commitment to ethical sourcing" (Starbucks 2008). Such partner relationship between the two parties with

contrasting backgrounds, however, unavoidably bolsters further criticisms for "the certifier has lost distance and independence from the large commercial firms that represent an increasing proportion of fair trade volumes (and certifier revenues), even while sourcing only a small proportion of their total supply at fair trade terms. The prospect of increased integration between the independent, third-party Fairtrade standards and Starbucks' own first-party C.A.F.E. Practices standards also raises other concerns, including the possibility of the weakening of the former." (Jaffee, 2010:268)

Co-optation: compromising the standards?

One of the greatest concern expressed by FTOs was, without binding commitments to volume growth of certified products, big players could manipulate the Fairtrade label, promote their images and sidetrack consumers' attentions from their overall business practices, without substantially transforming those practices. The danger of the Fairtrade label to be utilized for "fair-washing" was acknowledged by the licensing bodies. Another much disputed issue involved the extension of Fairtrade certification into the new arena: waged laborers in plantation agriculture. "The 'hired labor modality' was originally intended as a minor adjunct for crops such as tea and bananas, but increasingly since 2003, FLO and FTUSA have expanded the range of products produced by agribusiness plantations, arguing that this represented an opportunity to change the behavior of large firms with historical reputations as 'bad actors'. After substantial lobbying within FLO by farmer groups and FTOs, four fair trade certified commodities - cocoa, coffee, honey and cotton - remain for the moment limited to smallholder production only."(Jaffee, 2012:108) Consequently, in September 2011, FTUSA made a dramatic move by declaring its departure from the FLO system, and created its own new standards that allowed unlimited certification of plantation products (FLO, 2011). Under such arrangements, large roasters such as Starbucks could become 100% fair trade certified without altering their supply chains. Alternatively, FLO set up Fairtrade America to carry on its own labeling initiative in the US.

Social Regulation in Action: FTUSA's Departure from FLO

Why is FTUSA leaving the FLO system? FTUSA answers this question on its website by championing its new "Fair Trade for All" effort: "Fair Trade USA will introduce innovations that will extend the benefits of Fair Trade to millions more farmers and workers, and U.S. businesses will have more supply options, offering them more opportunities to do more good for more people" (FTUSA, 2012). In addition to consolidating its control, FT USA wants to expand supply by certifying farmers who are not members of co-operatives, plantations in sectors like coffee which is restricted by FLO to small producers, and US producers. The labeling agency believes that by growing the market and increasing mainstream corporate participation, more producers will benefit from Fair Trade prices and premiums. From this market vantage point, sales volumes define Fair Trade success.

FLO is understandably dismayed to see an affiliate leave the international Fairtrade system, particularly one that built on Europe's efforts to forge the world's second largest market. Myriad questions remain regarding how standards, producer relations, and labeling arrangements will be affected. But what is clear is that FLO is not ceding Fairtrade principles or markets to its former US affiliate. Instead FLO plans to promote the international label in the United States. As the FLO Board Chair states, "Fairtrade is about more than premium or prices, it's philosophical. It's about making a difference in producers' lives. Volume of product sold does not necessarily equal producer impact and we will work to ensure that growth of the system is consistent with greater producer impact and involvement" (FLO, 2012).

A number of US fair trade organizations, movement groups, and mission-driven companies are entering the fray, reaffirming their movement vision of Fair Trade. WFTO and activist groups like the United Students for Fair Trade have publicly condemned FTUSA's action. Numerous US groups have formed the North American Fair Trade Stakeholder Council to clarify the movement's position and promote its social justice goals. Equal Exchange (2012) has

> *launched an online campaign, stating "It is time to reaffirm our commitment to the authentic fair trade movement that we have collectively built for 25 years in which small farmer co-operatives play a central and vital role. The corporate, plantation model put forth by FTUSA is not Fair Trade." The Authentic Fair Trade campaign acquired close to 4,000 signatures in two months, primarily from politicized consumers.*
>
> *(As cited in Raynolds, 2012)*

FTUSA released its new strategy, "Fair Trade for All", preceded its departure from FLO, and reveals key differences in perspective between FTUSA and FLO on fair trade. FTUSA's new approach claimed to eliminate inconsistencies in the application of fair trade, seek to involve farmers that are not yet organized into co-operatives and also to extend sourcing on fair trade terms from estates for crops that have, to date, been the preserve of smallholders (coffee, sugar and cocoa), thus enabling companies' access to a wider range of producers and products. Supporters of this position note that there have been certified plantations in tea and bananas since 1994 and FLO has a standard for contract farming for a small number of crops in South Asia, so FTUSA's "inclusive" strategy is not completely new. They also highlighted how the current standards exclude many producers who could potentially benefit. As Tallontire and Nelson (2013:38) identify, "The detailed analysis of this particular event - the split of FTUSA from FLO - reveals the narratives and underlying visions that underpin these strands in fair trade, but also the tensions that already existed within FLO itself and among other approaches to fair trade. Differences in approaches to fair trade are not new: for example, product labeling of FLO is distinct from the organizational focus of WFTO (Davenport and Low, 2013)."

The insistence of FLO for not further opening up its system towards estates could, on the contrary, be understood through its stakeholder relationship and organization structure. "Governance structures vary between FLO and FTUSA: the former is a membership organization and the latter is a NGO. FTUSA is thus more of an autonomous body which chooses to have relationships with outside bodies than the consultative, democratic, multi-stakeholder structure and

procedures of FLO. The primary scale of engagement with producers varies: FLO works with umbrella organizations that represent a large number of groups organized on a geographical basis, whereas while FTUSA does work with groups of organizations (e.g. in Rwanda), its engagement has been more frequently at the primary level. (FTUSA, 2011)" (Tallontire and Nelson, 2013:38) FLO has placed increased weight on the role of producer organizations since the split. Producer representatives joined the board of FLO since 2003 and the roles of the producer networks have been enhanced since 2006 (Lyon, 2008), but in recent public statements the multi-stakeholder governance structure has had even greater resonance: "We are proud of the increasingly prominent role of producer organizations in our governance and decision-making bodies"(FLO, 2011).

However, it took not long for FLO to launch its own equally, if not more controversial system of Fairtrade Sourcing Partnership in 2014, mainly releasing the restrictions originally set on composite products. Contrast to the current Fairtrade certification, which asked that every possible raw materials must be Fairtrade certified, and followed the "All-That-Can-Be Fairtrade must be Fairtrade" rule, the new system focused only on raw materials rather than end products. A new Fairtrade Program Mark (instead of the original FLO logo or Fairtrade Mark) could be used on pack as long as 100% of the designated ingredients (eg. cocoa or sugar) on that product has been purchased as Fairtrade, there would be no need to certify all the other raw products. FLO explained this was because in the past, producers were not selling enough on Fairtrade terms, and current and prospective partners will not increase their Fairtrade sales under the current product certification model. Fairtrade Sourcing Partnership offered farmers significant new sales opportunities and the potential to deliver major impact in their farms and communities. But as DiMarcello III, Hooker and Marconi (2014) note, "This programme offers businesses an alternative to creating and marketing traditional 100% Fairtrade certified products...A company looking to ethically source ingredients sets quotas through the programme and is allowed to distribute the ingredients across any number of products. In turn, these products are allowed to bear the Fairtrade Program Mark. Just as FTUSA's divestiture and adjusted standards widened its

market, FLO is betting its programme will do the same."

6. Concluding remarks

Starting in late 1980s and early 1990s, WFTO/membership and FLO/certification emerged as two major models of the worldwide fair trade movement. Through my own first hand experience of working with or within the non-profits of FTHK and OHK, with specific references to the social historical contexts under which fair trade was being locally incorporated, it could easily be understood how **certification and labeling** has managed to dominate the movement direction in Hong Kong. Such emergent trend resembled closely with what was identified as **mainstreaming and corporatization** of fair trade at the global level. The originally **"narrowly thick"** commitment with strong movement character was in effect transformed into **"boardly thin"**, "fast food" style of fair trade operations heavily involved by the corporate sector. At the same time, one must equally add, that FTOs such as Fair Circle still managed to maintain their unique features of alternative trade, heavily influenced by the WFTO/membership model, and the original promises of **connections, embeddedness or entanglement** between producers and consumers were still continuously and consciously strived for.

It has been all too obvious that, throughout the past two decades, FLO was being accused of marketizing, corporatizing, and ultimately recommodifying fair trade which was once designated as a tool of decommodification. Fair trade emerged as a promising counter-hegemonic movement against the neoliberal globalization, turned out to became itself a new form of corporate hegemony. It

should however be reminded that, before the 1990s, fair trade, or alternative trade as it was more commonly referred to, has been rapidly losing popular support and out-competed by the market. The alternative network as whole has virtually forced into a passive position of struggling for survival. The proliferation of Fairtrade certification and labeling, throughout the 1990s, not only greatly enhanced the sales volume of Fairtrade products, but also served to spread the messages to a much wider audience of mainstream market players and consumers.

In early 2000s, the huge successes of campaigns against mainstream coffee traders, accidentally, forced the major brands to enter the fair trade market. While in some cases it was nothing beyond a gesture of "fair-washing", others saw it as an emergent niche market with high profit potentials. The split of FTUSA and FLO in 2011, in particular, fully demonstrated the enormous impacts of mainstreaming and co-optation on the movement. It also symbolized Fairtrade certification and labeling was formally entereing a new era of "balkanization" (Chapter IV). All these dramatic changes jointly constituted to a continuous evolvement of fair trade movement and demonstrated the strong tendencies of complexity and fluidity throughout its history.

All in all, as Wright (2010a:324) points out in his framework of counter-hegemonic transformation, that the trajectory of change through symbiotic strategy will sooner or later **"hit the ceiling"**, and "will be marked by periods in which limits of possibility are encountered and transformation is severely impeded. In such periods new interstitial strategies must be devised which erode those limits." Apparently, the two decades of mainstreaming and recommodification has virtually casted strong **"limits of possibility"** on the fair trade movement. Once again, alternative strategies and transformative trajectories have to be derived and new ideas and resources to be injected into the movement. To conclude, again in Wrights own words, "The important idea is that what appear to be 'limits' are simply the effect of the power of specific institutional arrangements, and interstitial strategies have the capacity to create alternative institutions that weaken those limits." (ibid.)

154

IV Interstitial strategy: the dilemmas and choices of WFTO

1. Rio: a mega-puzzle of "small pieces of homeland"

A small room on the opposite side of the earth

My journey of fieldwork soon leaped forward from Hong Kong to the opposite side of the earth - Rio de Janeiro in Brazil - in just less than a week after the FLO meeting at Admiralty (Chapter III), in attending the WFTO Biennial Conference on 26th to 31st of May, 2013. The event included above 200 delegates from more than 50 countries. This was certainly the biggest international occasion I have participated after the 2005 WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong. Although the 2005 WTO event was undoubtedly a multi-governmental or meta-governmental one, involvements of international NGOs like the Oxfams were still apparent. On the contrary, the 2013 WFTO event, though unmistakably fell into the realm of global civil society or global justice movement, the heavy involvement of the Brazilian Government could still not be underestimated. Not only the host of the event Faces of Brazil a semi-governmental arm, being set up under the Ministry of Trade and Solidarity Economy founded by former Workers' Party President Lula, but also a half day of the conference was delegated to an official ceremony organized by the government.

The hotel many delegates chose to stay, including myself, was a modest 2-star hotel close to the landmark of Metropolitan Cathedral, some 20 minutes walk south of the conference venue - a more decent but pricy hotel located in Rio Centro. That was why most of us chose to walk rather than to pay more. The price level of Rio was so high, that even representatives from US felt it extremely expensive. Rio has been designated to host the FIFA World Cup Final in 2014 as well as the Olympics in 2016, and the whole city looked like a construction site of exceptionally gigantic size. The livelihood situations has

been worsening ever since the Rousseff Government came into office. In fact inflation problem has actually led to a national wide protest of grand scale later in June 2013. When I arrived at the hotel counter lately at evening, the staff of the hotel seemed to be highly impatient to arrange me a bed - shared with another unknown delegate coming from some other corner of the earth. I was stuck there for at least more than half an hour.

It was the first time I met Ana Asti, a little, charming and energetic Brazilian lady. By that moment, I still did not recognize she was the head of the Faces of Brazil, which was also the chairlady for the six-day event. She efficiently and decisively instructed the hotel staff with speedy Portuguese, and my trouble was sorted out in less than three minutes! My feeling of alienation and anxiety of being thrown into helplessness on the side of the earth was much remedied. Later on and in other occasions of WFTO, she was equally an active participant and devoted activist of WFTO. Although, quite confusingly, she was actually a civil servant of the Brazilian Government. The culture, and also institutions, of the social and solidarity economy (or SSE) with fair trade as a part of it, has already been so prevailing and deeply integrated into the governmental institutions. There was even a national fair trade system in place. That is something commonly practiced in Latin America, but still hard to be found in the Northern countries, not to mentioned the so-called market economy like Hong Kong.

Admission to the Rio Biennial Conference, 2012 offered by Faces of Brazil, rather than by WFTO.

The global scale of WFTO Conference as a "mega-event", to employ the causal terminology of Hong Kong Government officials, casted new insights for me on the dynamics of globalization, or more specifically, the dynamics of global spatial configurations. Supposedly, representatives from all the continents were packed into a relative small conference room in the hotel at Rio Centro, encountering in extensive and intensive face-to-face contacts for the next six days and nights, the sense of "global village", the sense of worldwide bonding, could never ever been stronger. At the same time, however, Rio as a particular city in Brazil, though an exceptionally metropolitan one, is specifically situated in the continent called Latin America, which is in turn located in the south atmosphere, thus providing an equally strong sense of locality and ethnicity for the conference.

Besides representatives from WFTO Latin American network, all the other delegates have to flied dozens of hours before being able to get into this small conference room. The opening conversation for anybody greeting anybody else will most likely be: how long did you need to fly to Rio? Or, how many stops have you made on the way? It suddenly seemed that the time-space compression, to use Harvey (1989) 's words, was well contained by an enormously expansive and diverse geographical span. Everybody were "carrying", both literally and substantively, a "small piece of homeland" with him or her from all over the continents, traveling thousands of miles across the oceans, combining them as small components loosely fitting or unfitting into a "mega-puzzle", just exactly what the WFTO logo of "spaghetti men" has looked like.

Such images cast new lights on the hierarchical or network views of global-local dichotomy (Chapter I). Undoubtedly, the existence of WFTO as a worldwide entity, with its global, regional and national three-tier framework, is grounded solidly in its governance structures and institutional domains composed of hierarchical levels. However, the network mode of connections and interactions is equally if not more relevant. There will probably be two imaginary options that could likely be able to integrate these two contrasting views. The first one will be

a nowadays popular virtual 3-D puzzle - some stuff producing the visual feeling exactly like the 3-D movies. This would predominantly maintain the essence of a network of small pieces, merely 2-D in its material form, conveying a 3-D illusion of hierarchical imagery. In contrast, there is also something called a real 3-D puzzle - that is when the minute paper pieces are composed together, it will become a building or ship or that sort of things. Such 3-D puzzle then, though still being built from a network of minute components all the way up from the ground, the hierarchical imagery of globality will be much more overtly visualized.

The adoption of the metaphor of puzzles, as the adoption of any metaphors in social sciences, could be inherently problematic. In order to make it more concrete and substantial, the small components of the puzzle, the "small pieces of homeland" under the context of this specific WFTO event, nevertheless, could best be materialized and visualized as the handicrafts or other products bearing intensive ethnic touches. Exactly as Petrini (2001:40) describes in his account for Slow Food, "Every single product defines and shapes a space of its own, and together they make up a geographical mosaic with multiple intersections." After 4 days of indoor conference, a further 2-day World Fair Trade Fair followed immediately on Rio's five-star beach of Copacabana. Under the temporary structure of a huge tent erected on the sand, small counters were sub-divided to cater exhibition booths according to the national and continental origins of various FTOs. Be they wild plants, agricultural products, handicrafts, jewelries or cloth products, all of them carried unique tastes of authenticity, ethnicity, rawness and localness, and none of them displayed the usual, popular, plastic, mass produced styles. However, it turned out that an image of striking harmony and unity could still manage to emerge among the diversities and heterogeneities of people and products.

Two kinds of harmony and unity

This harmony and unity might, however, be interpreted from two contrasting or virtually opposite perspectives. On the one hand, it reflected how people have for centuries struggled, survived and flourished connecting with their homeland,

bonding with the mother earth, practicing farming or crafting in a more or less similar manner, though scattered around different parts of the world. On the other hand, such unity might also reflect the dominant tastes of fair trade market at the moment, still mainly occupied by Northern consumers, most of them white middle class living in metropolitan areas, which successfully command a highly imaginable pattern of supplies throughout the fair trade network. In particular, two specific types of products could forcefully demonstrate such sharp contrasts.

First was the Fair Trade Fashion Show that accompanied the fair. Models from different ethnic backgrounds dressed up with trendy and stylish clothing, however conveyed a strong sense of coherence with naturalist, minimalist, authentic and non-pretentious touches, which anyone could easily identify whenever browsing through the websites or catalogues of People Tree, Pachacuti and Earth Tree or Twine from Taiwan, to name just a few among others. Just like Wilson (2010:178) notes, in his study of fair trade craft production and indigenous economy, "It is here that ATOs many contribute to the local performance of globally constructed acceptable indigeneities, where the guidelines governing fair trade practices influence the organizational strategies of many indigenous groups, contributing to the solidification of normative forms of indigenous behaviour." Equally revealing, however, was that the models were overwhelmingly young, female and not surprisingly, skinny, all seemed to be pinpointing certain aesthetic standards and gender stereotypes of the Northern culture. Since some models have dressed in rather revealing manner, which could be considered as absolutely "normal" in mainstream market, nevertheless raised the complaints by the representatives of the India delegation.

Photos of Fair Trade Fashion Show. (WFTO, 2012)

On the contrary, a similar or rather not-so-similar item, tended to bring a very different mood of harmony among other products to the fair. It could simply be considered as a higher level of unity that carried richer symbolic values that has transcended the normal consumerist tastes (Burner, 1999). They were the T-shirts produced by different FTOs, carrying all the symbols and slogans of social and political struggles, though most of them were in Spanish or Portuguese (which I could not clearly differentiate), still managed to convey a "common language" or "common identity" among the different cultures. Although in this turn, these products carried a heavy smell of factory machinery, in their material sense. They could still conveyed, through the power of graphics and words, a strong message of solidarity, or **"thick commitment"** among and towards people in different parts of world, especially for those being marginalized and underprivileged. And it was ultimately through the maze of T-shirts, that seemed to have facilitated the "small pieces of homeland" be finally fitting into the "mega-puzzle" of fair trade. These offered strong comparison, ironically, with all the cartoons and designer images that FTHK produced, which I was so familiar with and memorized so well, even with my current location on the other side of the earth.

According to the Code of Ethics for Research Involving Human Subjects of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, "Informed consent should normally be

obtained from all human subjects who are to be involved in the research. Consent is informed when it is given by a subject who understands the purpose and nature of the study, what participation in the study requires the subject to do and to risk such as the possibility of injury, loss of income, or damages, and what benefits are intended to result from the study." What I would very much like to do is to obtain the informed consent from the some couples of thousands of visitors in the World Fair Trade Fair. But with a second thought, who are the human subjects included or excluded from the current study? How will this boundary of participant observation be drawn? Where are the limits of the extensions to be set by Burawoy? What will be the nature of boundary for what he terms "ethnography unbounded" (Burawoy, 1991)? As I do not think that informed consent is technically feasible, I simply dropped the idea all at once.

2. From FLO to IMO? Contested trajectories of certification and labeling

Certification vs. common sense

By far the most important agenda item of the Rio Biennial Conference was the final endorsement of the ground-breakingly new WFTO Guarantee System (WFTO-GS).To meet the increasingly intensive competition among other fair trade models, this was considered to be a bold and even risky step taken by WFTO. Not only the future destiny of the organization would more or less be tied on the wagon of this new system, its success or failure would also, certainly to a significant extent, determine the future track of worldwide fair trade movement at its crossroads. What a historical moment for fair trade development and global justice movements, just like the 2005 WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong, in which I could directly get involve and fully witness the whole process, exactly as "an Icarus flying above these waters...", to recall Michel de Crete's words once again. Just how lucky I felt I could be.

Before WFTO-GS was to be launched, the "balkanization" of Fairtrade

certification and labeling systems have already continued for several years. With the gradually declining creditability of FLO, as well as its dramatic divorce with FTUSA in 2011 (Chapter III), new or peripheral systems have found golden opportunities to cut into the contested terrain and boost their popularity and market share. Some of the stronger contenders included the Institute for Marketecology (IMO) based in Switzerland, and ECOCERT based in France, both were originally organic certification systems and maintained close relationship with each other. Another major force in North America was the Small Producer Symbol (SPP, for the acronym in Spanish) created by Latin American and Caribbean Coordinator of Fair Trade Producers (representing 300 organizations in 21 Latin American nations), being owned and administered by its Mexico City-based NGO, FUNDEPPO. Not to mention the much more commercial ones like UTZ, Rainforest Alliance and numerous private certification systems.[52] WFTO-GS, emerged under such context, could be considered as a natural extension of such market fragmentation process, while at the same time, could also be a crucial step for guaranteeing survival of WFTO, or at least not to be further marginalized in the worldwide fair trade market.

Ruediger Meyer, the CEO of FLO-CERT - the independent auditing arm of FLO, was invited as a keynote speaker in the Rio Biennial Conference. Equally present were representatives of IMO and ECOCERT who came to introduce the different certification systems. Ruediger opened his speech with a rather shocking story, "Two weeks ago I was in Kenya, on trip with a journalist and an auditor, conducting an audit in a coffee co-operative business as usual.The atmosphere was relax and the people were nice. Everything seemed to be running in their normal situations. But suddenly in the next morning, we encountered a 10-year old boy head on, carrying a sack of 15kg coffee beans on his shoulder. Journalist + child labour = headlines in the newspapers! I was suddenly awaken from the holiday mood, and was totally running into panic. It came up with, however, the experienced local auditor, who probably have encountered such occasions before, patiently said, 'Let's just check it out what's

---

52 Such private certification systems are generally considered as a CSR rather than fair trade programmes, although the demarcation is rather thin and always confusing. See further discussions on ethical trade in Chapter V.

going on?' Soon we arrived at the boy's house and greet his parents. They explained that they have asked their 17 year age elder son to carry the coffee beans. But he escaped from duty and secretly shifted the burden onto his poor little brother. This was the simple reason contributing to the story."

"Will you consider this child labour? Will you verdict this as a violation of Fairtrade regulations? Do you think the co-operative should be sanctioned for breaching the standard? How will you sort out this situation?" Ruediger kept asking the audience. "The answer for me is plainly simple: tell the parents not to allow it to happen again! Then everything will be just settled. I think this will be exactly how the certification system should work. It is not a matter of monitoring and sanctioning, but a process of encouraging and empowering. Ultimately it is all about the concept of development, rather than that of management. That is the whole set of values and beliefs working behind our system. Minimum price, community premium, organizational development, sustainability, entrepreneurship..."

Apparently, Ruediger was attempting to argue that: content matters, form does not matter - or at least not so much as content does. But the tricky issue is, if content is essentially advantaged over form, why then should we have certification and labeling systems at all? Why then do we not just devote all our efforts on developing more direct linkages with the producers, and paying more attention on what is really happening in the production sites? Why then do we not just stick to the membership system of WFTO, which is more informal, much less costly, built on trust and mutual help rather than the red tapes and bureaucracies of certification and labeling systems? Why then do we not just stick to the **"thick description" and "thick commitment"** approach which obviously concerns more about content than form? Is it just a self-defeating statement, challenging the very fundamental theoretical foundations and legitimacy of the system, that Ruediger has been all the way contributing to?

Equally apparent was, Ruediger could be considered as a skillful, if not too clever speaker. His story was passionate and impressive. His solution was neither controversial nor debatable. But what he was supposed to address the

200 plus audience in the conference, after all, was the principles and practices of certification and labeling as a system, not merely as common sense. What his role as the head of FLO-CERT, was to formalize and institutionalize all the rules and regulations which should be free from grey areas and causal discretions. It just seemed as if he was coming from another planet, talking totally with another language. "If anything comes up can be settled by common sense. Step A common sense, step B common sense, step C common sense...then everything will add up as a huge disaster - no certification system exists any more," privately remarked by one representative from Bangladesh.

For sure, common sense still plays an important part in any systems, or for anybody who is still capable of being an independent thinking agent. Just exactly like Durkheim (1895/1982) once famously remarked, "Every contract contains extra-contractual terms." But as Callon (1998) forcefully reminds us, in case if overflows are not longer merely leakages due to the minor imperfections, and induce general conflict and disagreement about existing frames, then new frames will be chased for to replace the old ones. Equally, if a certification system is full of loopholes, and everything coming up can be settled just informally, causally and contingently, then for certain its legitimacy and creditability will soon break down. The above story of Ruediger could be considered to be a highly alarming example, revealing the dilemmas and choices that FLO has been facing. It strongly reflected the tensions and dynamics that FLO has encountered, negotiated and compromised again and again. That was exactly the reason why FLO was severely criticized and challenged, not only by die-hard fans of fair trade, but also by partners engaged fair trade as business. Ruediger's precisely calculated story, far from accidentally, turned out to deliver a reading as a slip of the tongue.

"Too much successes in supermarkets"

Ruediger was invited as a honorable guest, and did not received much open assault from the floor after the speech. WFTO representatives, though activists attempting to uphold justice throughout their whole lives, anyway, were also traders.Throughout the Rio Biennial Conference, however, there has never

been short of criticisms placed on FLO. Rudi Dalvai, the President of WFTO, happened to be one of the most outspoken figures. He cited the observation by one participant who said that there was no fair trade coffee served in the conference, referring to the fact that fair trade products under WFTO, including coffee, were actually non-labelled, but even the partitioners themselves were habitually checking for labels all the time! "There must be something wrong in this case, FTOs, with fair trade as the core of their activities, are no longer recognized as doing fair trade any more!" Citing this example, he urged members to give a new vigor in promoting their own fair trade identity, as differentiated from the mainstream Fairtrade labels. "Fairtrade products has been successful in the mainstream market, particularly in supermarkets, and in some way it has succeeded a little bit too much!" Rudi further remarked.

With his Italian tongue, Rudi always employed simple words to express strong views. His outright rejection of the labeling systems caught me quite in a surprise. Exactly as what Smith (2013) has described, "Due to the initial aim to provide accreditation for non-commodity goods such as craft products, WFTO has only required the recognition of minimum prices where FLO has made them available; and for the remainder required the payment of 'fair prices' reached through transparent negotiation. The key to the legitimacy of this perspective has been that although FLO certifies individual product lines commercialized by any organization, WFTO has primarily only accredited whole organizations dedicated to fair trade activity. It is for this reason that the WFTO has proactively contested the constitutive rules of fair trade by specifically stating that it represents '100% authentic fair trade...' (WFTO 2011), therefore undermining the claims of others to be practicing the generic concept."

Nevertheless, to think a bit more carefully, Rudi was by far more critical about "the successes in mainstream market and supermarket", and the entry of big players which diluted the movement orientation of fair trade, rather than "the habits of checking for labels", or the monitoring and certification systems themselves. Well, even fair trade partitioners are ourselves unreflexive and passive followers of labels. Not to mentioned general public, who will certainly be even much more passive consumers of labels. It might be very difficult to

modify the retail network of fair trade products, but it would be even more difficult to alter the prejudices and preconception of the people. Precisely it is the labels that serve as frames, to recall Callon and actually Goffman once again, so that our queries and doubts about the products can be "bracketed" off, as least for a while. It will also be highly common sensual that, even for the most devoted supporter of fair trade to be "ethical enough" to chase the sources of whatever cup of coffee he drink is fair trade or not!

Traditionally, as a worldwide federation of ATOs mainly focusing on handicraft rather than food products, and witnessed the "successes in supermarkets" of certification and labeling systems in the past two decades, WFTO was fatally forced into a passive position to reform itself, even though it might not necessarily follow the similar tracks of FLO or other certification systems. The recent trend of "balkanization" or market fragmentation, rather than viewed as a new opportunity, simply posted additional pressures on WFTO to transform its practices. Sooner or later, WFTO would find itself surrounded by a forrest of Fairtrade labels, with ever greater difficulties for consumers to differentiate itself from all the other systems. On the positive side, for sure, the multiplicity of Fairtrade labels will force consumers to stop and ask, as least for a while, "Hey, which labels are the genuine labels? What are the actual meanings behind them? Shouldn't we pay more attention on the operations behind them?" On the negative side, however, it will also demand far more effort for WFTO to explain why it is "100% authentic fair trade", but without a single label found on all the products!

The "Balkanization" of Fairtrade certifications

Anyway, first let us return to the labels for a while. Which labels are the genuine Fairtrade labels? The same question also puzzles me a lot throughout the years. As mentioned in Chapter III, for controversies concerning FLO, FTUSA and other systems, **1. Governance structures, commitments of big players to volume growth**, **certification of plantations and waged labour and restrictions on composite products** are among the much debated domains which fundamentally outline the contested terrains and shape the cleavages

among the certifying bodies. In addition, the other major lines of fracture include: **1. Fairness along the supply chain:** to what extent the commodity supply chain should be encompassed by fair trade standards; **2. Minimum prices and pre-payment:** the levels of the fair-trade minimum prices and premiums, particularly for coffee and the payment of pre-harvest financing to producers; **3. Certifier's relationship to market:** licensing fee structure that may lead to the lack of independence, creating disincentive for carefully regulating high-volume licensees.

Other less mentioned but equally important issues under debate include: **4. Cross recognition of certification systems:** harmonization among essentially equivalent certification systems to minimize costs and maximize sales volume; **5. Long-term collaborations and contracts:** long-term buyer-producer relationships built on trust and mutual respect; **6. Market transparency and provision of information to producers:** direct, transparent purchases and provision of update market information to producers; **7. Promote consumer education; 8. Sustainable production methods**. (Jaffee and Howard, 2015; Doherty, Davies and Tranchell, 2013; Fair World Project, 2010; see also Smith, 2013; Jaffee, 2010).

Thanks for the detailed accounts of Jaffee and Howard (2015), we can have a highly schematic and up-to-date picture for comparing the more technical aspects of various certification and labeling systems (though only limited to those operate in US: FTUSA, FLO, IMO, SPP). One of the most contested terrains in Fairtrade is: whether plantation production may be certified. Besides FTUSA, Fair for Life allows unlimited plantation production of any crop, but it is also characterized by the full-chain auditing policy which deters most transnational corporations. "FLO so far has kept closed to plantations the key crops produced by small farmer groups...Of the three seals with hired labor standards, FLO's are the most rigorous and specific. Beyond recently strengthening labor rights protections, it has also moved to codify living wage standards, making FLO the only US label to include such stipulations (FLO, 2014). Fair for Life's hired labor standard was also recently strengthened and is fairly detailed (Bio Foundation, 2011). FTUSA's farmworker standard, on the

other hand, is the most general and least rigorous." (No. 1 above, Jaffee and Howard, 2015)

Another highly controversial domain is the minimum prices and pre-payment. FTUSA, for instance, adopts the FLO minimum price levels and premiums as it was before 2012. The price floors however, particularly for coffee, are widely considered by producers as by far too low, despite of their increases recently. IMO/Fair for Life "does not specify exact minimum prices, leaving buyers and sellers to negotiate prices, although it does mandate that contracts include a farm gate price, an element missing from the other systems. On the issue of pre-harvest payment to producers, FLO, Fair for Life, and SPP all stipulate that prepayment is mandatory when requested by buyers, but a key question is whether organizations feel sufficiently empowered in their negotiations with buyers to insist on this provision." (No. 2, Jaffee and Howard, 2015)

Smith (2013), specializing his research on the market newcomer IMO/Fair for Life, further points out that Fair for Life has followed FLO in shifting towards the position that Fairtrade status should require multiple nodes in the supply chain and Fairtrade as a supply chain process. This is because Fair for Life offers certification both for for producer organizations and handling operations. "Indeed, in order for a product to obtain certification, the initial producer organization, initial buyers and perhaps most significantly, the company that owns the product brand, must all be Fair for Life audited...Although up front credit has been dropped from the model operated by FLO as part of encouraging stable and long term relationship, Fair for Life reinforces this constitutive rule of Fairtrade operation: as buyers are required to provide smallholder producers with a 50% credit payment where requested (Bio Foundation 2011:20). In addition, Fair for Life requires buyers to submit a Fairtrade sourcing policy and to develop of partnership framework or Memorandum of Understanding with producer partners: and this inclusion counters trends elsewhere towards the backgrounding of long term relationships as a significant constitutive rule of the fair trade concept (Doherty et al. 2012)." (No. 1, 5)

Fair for Life also supports capacity building as buyers and processors are expected to provide direct support for producers in terms of production, management and marketing. "Indeed, alongside the transfer of maximum financial returns to the developing world, this is arguably the primary requirement for supply chain governance aiming to facilitate significant structural changes. However, as with WFTO accreditation, no specific requirements are set or suggested, and how such an expectation is evaluated will be strongly mediated by individual interpretation...A final area in which Fair for Life reinforces more longstanding constitutive rules on the status of fair trade, is by mandating that intermediaries are involved in the wider fair trade movement, by providing honest information to customers about products, producers and impact (Bio Foundation 2011:21) - although the actual expectations here are not described. As part of this reconnection, companies certified by Fair for Life are also listed on the organization's website, and stakeholders can obtain information about the location, the products offered and contact details for the company."(No. 6-7, Smith, 2013)

In addition, Fair World Project (2010) provides further analysis on FLO and IMO/Fair for Life systems. Comparatively, Fair for Life adopts a holistic local approach for a producer FTO that, unlike FLO, is flexible in handling any mix of products and commodities produced. However, like FLO, IMO stipulates that prices paid to producers at a minimum cover the costs of production and provide a reasonable profit to farmers and processors. IMO includes a cost, price and wage review of a specific project in its local context in their annual inspections. Regarding to the cross recognition of certification systems and the costs of auditing and licensing, in meantime FLO totally relies on FLO-CERT for its third-party auditing, while Fair for Life recognizes FLO audits and also consider other certification systems case by case. At the same time, Fair for Life only charges for auditing and certification fee, but does not charge licensing fees as a portion of sales volume like FLO, thus hopefully avoiding the regulatory biases resulted from financial disincentive. (No. 2-4)

The FLO practice of licensee payment, while rarely touched upon by academic researches, was also one of the most controversial domains of its system.

Besides the license income being collected from traders and retailers, its revenue is equally generated through the certification payment charged upon the producer co-operatives. Originally, license income covered all the certification costs, which subsidized producers to gain access to the Fairtrade market. But after the subsidy has been terminated, such cost became an increasing burden for small scale producers and an obstacle for market entry. Such move has been criticized as improving the cost effectiveness of FLO at the expenses of fair trade principles. As Hutchens (2009:117) comments in her detail analysis, "FLO certification, particularly since the creation of FLO-CERT, has become more bureaucratic, complex and anonymous, displacing FLO's founding producer-oriented prerogative and organization. As was articulated by by Francisco VanderHoff Boersma, one of the founders of Max Havelaar, 'the market driven approach of FLO at almost all costs has created many questions in the field for producers who feel left out and of FLO's system and funneled into a market approach they are struggling against.'"

Table 4: US Fairtrade Certification Dimensions: Pricing, Payment and Audit Policies

Who's the fairest of them all? The fractured landscape of U.S. fair trade certification

Table 1 U.S. fair trade certifications: governance dimensions; pricing, payment, and auditing policies

	Fair Trade USA (FTUSA)	Fairtrade America (FTI)	Fair for Life	Small Producers' Symbol (SPP)
Year first certified products sold in U.S.	1998	2012	2006	2012
Parent organization and location	Fair Trade USA (Oakland, CA)	Fairtrade International (FTI, formerly FLO) (Germany)	IMO Group AG (Switzerland)	FUNDEPPO (Mexico)
Certifying body	SCS Global Services	FLO-Cert	IMO Swiss AG	Multiple certifiers
Selected major licensee firms	Green Mountain Coffee; Starbucks; Dole; Hershey; J.M. Smucker	Divine Chocolate; Ben & Jerry's; Starbucks; Wholesome Sweeteners	Guayaki Yerba Mate; Dr. Bronner's; Theo Chocolate	Equal Exchange; Discovery Islands Organics; Dean's Beans; Just Coffee
Governance representation by organized small producers?	No	Yes (50 % of assembly seats; 36 % of board seats)	No	Yes (100 %)
Establishes minimum or floor prices?	Yes (FTI minimums)	Yes (FTI minimums)	No[a]	Yes[b]
Requires pre-harvest financing?	Organized producers only (if requested)[c]	Yes (60 %, if requested)	Yes (50 %, if requested)	Yes (60 %, if requested)
Code or auditing to screen out firms with labor/environmental violations?	No	No	Yes	Yes
Auditing of firms' business and labor practices along entire product chain?	No	No	Yes	No

[a] Negotiated sales prices must cover costs of production. Allows but does not require a base price for hired labor operations
[b] SPP minimums are above FTI minimums for coffee and other products
[c] Fair Trade USA states that it is following FTI standards for organized smallholders for the time being
Sources Bio Foundation (2011a, b, c, 2013), Fair World Project (2014a), Fairtrade International (2011, 2012, 2013a, b, 2014a, b, 2015), Fair Trade USA (2012, 2013a, b, c, 2014), Fundeppo (2013a, b, 2014a, b), IMO (n.d.), French Fair Trade Platform et al. (2015)

Table adopted from "Who's the fairest of them all? the fractured landscape of U.S. fair trade certification". (Jaffee & Howard 2015)

Table 5: U.S. Fair Trade Certifications: Labeling, Ingredient, Plantation, and Hired Labor Policies

Table 2 U.S. fair trade certifications: labeling, ingredient, plantation, and hired labor policies

	Fair Trade USA (FTUSA)	Fairtrade America (FTI)	Fair for Life	Small Producers' Symbol (SPP)
Requires minimum level of fair trade purchases for firm to use seal?	No	No	Yes (10 % of total volume)	Yes (5 % of total volume, rising by 5 % per year to 25 %)
Multi-ingredient products: minimum % fair trade content to use modified seal on product package	20 % minimum	20 % minimum[a]	80 % minimum	50 % minimum
Mandates that all commercially available FT ingredients be used?	No (except for coffee, tea, cocoa, quinoa)	Yes[a]	Yes	Yes
Permits certification of plantation products?	Yes (all products)	Yes (except coffee, cocoa, sugar, cotton, rice, honey)	Yes (all products)	No
Hired labor standards for farmworkers	General labor standards based on ILO conventions, SA 8000 standards	Detailed labor standards incorporating ILO conventions; 2014 revisions strengthen right to organize, collective bargaining[b]	Detailed labor standards based on ILO and other conventions; strengthened 2013. Point system to achieve certification	No hired labor certification.
Allocation of FT premium in plantation settings	Fair Trade Committee (labor & management representation) allocates premiums	Fairtrade Premium Committee (worker majority; nonvoting management minority) allocates premiums	Worker assembly or Premium fund committee allocates premiums (no management representation required)	(Not applicable)
Living wage standards for laborers?	No binding requirement	2014 revisions mandate progress toward living wages	No binding requirement	(Not applicable)

[a] FTI's "Fairtrade Sourcing Partnership" (for cocoa, sugar, cotton, gold) has no requirements for minimum FT content or using all commercially available FT ingredients. FSP products use a modified version of the FTI seal on packaging, but this is not permitted in the U.S. and Canada
[b] Also strengthens protections against discrimination and child/forced labor
Sources Same as Table 1

Table adopted from "Who's the fairest of them all? the fractured landscape of U.S. fair trade certification". (Jaffee & Howard 2015)

Table 6: Comparing Approaches and Key Provisions of FLO and IMO Standards

Comparing Approaches and Key Provisions of FLO and IMO Standards

Control Point	Issue / Rationale	FLO	IMO
Type of Producer	Identifies marginalized groups and appoints them as primary actors or beneficiaries of fair trade	Trade between growers and buyers virtually limited to smallholder co-ops and large plantations w. hired labor. Buying from individual farmers, informal groups or wild collectors (contract production) not permitted for almost any crop.	Allows manufacturers to buy from co-ops, individual farmers & informal producer groups. Each scenario is subject to specific requirements, depending on the target beneficiaries. Mission-driven companies may take on key responsibilities where no prior structure exists.
Minimum price and fair trade premium	Ensure that producers & processors can make a profit when market mechanisms fail	FLO sets global or regional floor prices & FT premium involving extensive research and consultation. Premium administered by co-op or workers' assembly.	Requires and verifies that prices guarantee profitability of farms. Premium use decided upon by committee representing all stakeholders in the local value chain.
Labor laws	Ensure that compensation and working conditions for agricultural and production workers along the supply chain are fair (compensation, no child labor, safe working conditions). Equal pay and treatment for women.	Focus on "hired labor" in plantations, less emphasis on workers in downstream processing, unless conducted by farmers groups.	Focus on "hired labor" in plantations or other hired labor situations, or social standards focused on "producer groups". Hired Labor focus extends to all key steps in value chain.
Inspection of Value Chain	Ensure that all major players along the value chain act socially responsible rather than just seeking a seal for marketing purposes	Focuses on agricultural producers and processors in developing countries. Limited review of contract processors in country of origin and of product flow and brand holder in country of destination.	Review of all key steps in value chain, including contract processors and brand holders. Contract processors who process only small fractions of FT products are not subject to full standards but must show compliance with labor laws.
Composition of multi-ingredient products and Labeling	Ensure that fair trade products contain relevant amounts of certified materials and consumers understand the label	FLO-certified FT ingredients must be used unless not commercially available; regardless 50% FT content minimum for "whole product" FT certification; 20% for "made with single/some FT ingredients" certification. The latter "fair trade lite" logo looks exactly like and may be placed on the front label exactly like the "whole product" logo: consumer beware.	FT certified ingredients must be used if commercially available, incl. those certified under other programs. Regardless 50% FT content minimum for "whole product" FT certification; 20% for "made with single/some FT ingredient" certification. IMO FT seal shown only on front label of "whole product" FT products; the IMO seal may only appear on the back of "fair trade lite" 20% products.
Cross recognition between essentially equivalent certification programs	Cross recognition between essentially equivalent programs allows committed manufacturers to purchase the maximum amount of FT materials and get credit for it. Also allows addition of country-specific recognized labels w/o need for additional inspections and certification	Currently does not recognize other programs as equivalent, thereby effectively lowering the composition requirements for multi-ingredient products	Recognizes FLO-certified products. Case-by-case evaluation of other certification programs.
Cost of inspection, certification and licensing	Needed to finance certifiers operation. May also serve to promote marketing of FT products.	Charges producer groups, processors and key processors in receiving countries for inspection and certification. Key handler (e.g. coffee roasters or brand company) pay license fee per wholesale price of product for use of FT logo.	Charges for inspection and certification of the key operators in value chain. No licensing fees.

Table adopted from "Comparing Approaches and Key Provisions of FLO and IMO Standards". (Fair World Project 2010)

Which Fairtrade is "fairer"?

How can we make sense of all these detailed comparisons among various certification and labeling systems? Is Fair for Life substantially "fairer" and may edge over other certification and labeling systems? Jaffee and Howard (2015) once again provide a systematic framework for performance evaluation. The authors compare and contrast various Fairtrade systems, and conducted content analyses of their key standards documents. An emphasis is put onto identifying differences related to the key debates described above. Another emphasis is the correspondence of the standards with the WFTO's 10 Principles of Fair Trade (WFTO, 2013). Based on their framework, the authors forcefully draw on the conclusions that Fair for Life and SPP have substantially establishing higher benchmarks, with their seals being "read as a countermovement by two key segments of the fair trade movement - movement-oriented retailers and organized small producers—that have been opposed to the weakening of standards. At least at the present moment, the rigor of these four certifications is more or less inversely proportional to their scale." (Jaffee and Howard, 2015)

The conclusion of Jaffee and Howard (2010) very much echo with what Brunori (1999) has hypothesized. As certification and labeling system can essentially be conceptualized as a "black box", a taken for granted object of shared knowledge being temporarily "enclosed" within an alternative food network. "Consumers can distinguish organic from conventional products by a label or by a trust relationship with the farmer because they take for granted, be they fully aware or not, that the label or the relationship with the farmer 'speak for' such a network. It is at this stage that consumer are willing to pay a premium to organic products." Such "black box", however, will be much easily be manipulated and dominated by mainstream business, particularly, through economic power over social and symbolic power. As Brunori (1999:3) further argues, "An 'organic' or 'fair trade' or 'protected denomination' label are signifiers for complex networks

governed by well defined rules: when they buy, consumers don't need to be informed of details of how these networks are organized, as they repose their trust on the label..." However, this is by far the end of the story. Just exactly the opposite, the enclosure of the "black box" virtually stirs and "opens up" another round of movement dynamics, and mobilizes new efforts to reintegrate social and symbolic values which has been systematically ignored and excluded from the "black box". "From this point, they can generate new cycles of innovation, and can be incorporated into other networks," Brunori conclusively remarks.

3. The challenges of WFTO-GS: second dance with the devil?

A difference between a guarantee and a label?

Rudi Dalvai, the President of WFTO, and Alessandro Galardi, the chief consultant responsible for designing the new WFTO-GS, are both Italians, and part of the success story of CTM Altromercato, one of the largest fair trade enterprise in Europe. With his long, thick grey hair and beard, Rudi looked physically strong and tough. On the contrary, the pale Alessandro looked exceptionally thin and little, their pairing up in many occasions during the Rio Biennial Conference automatically generated comic effects. However, every time when Alessandro initiated speeches, he habitually shouted it out particular loud, "Can you hear me? Can you hear me...?" repeated again and again, and then amusedly concluded, "Now everybody are waken up!"

Besides the pair, there were seven other members in the working group of WFTO-GS, including representatives from the WFTO secretariat, member organizations of different continents, as well as an expert sent from IMO (instead of FLO!). Since its first inception in 2008, under the name of Sustainable Fair Trade Management System (SFTMS, for which everybody found its acronym really hard to remember and pronounce!), and its official endorsement in the Mombasa Biennial Conference 2011, WFTO-GS has already gone through its 10 pilot projects, and came up with its version 3.5 at

the moment. As a completely new fair trade monitoring and assessment system, WFTO-GS was comparable but also significantly differentiable from the other certification and labeling systems. The version 3.5 presented in Rio, however, still seemed to have created more questions rather than providing the concrete and solid answers for the WFTO members.

What is the difference between a guarantee and a label? That is probably the most amazing question I could have heard during the conference. Normally, when an organization or a product is effectively monitored or successfully certified, say under a particular set of principles, standards and guidelines, then a label will be accredited as an explicit recognition. This is the case not only for Fairtrade labels, but so are the organic labels, eco-friendly labels, quality labels, etc. which have been growing rapidly since 1990s under many private regulatory frameworks and international standardization initiatives. One again, common sense. A guarantee and a label should seem to be the two sides of the same coin, to appear always hand in hand, and cannot exist independent of each other.

But how about if a guarantee is being assured under proper rules and procedures, just without a label overtly being attached? For a label is, after all, merely a medium to convey a message, a form for content, a signifier for signified. Say for example, a Fairtrade label signifies a product being produced based on fair trade standards. How about, if the label, as the simplest manifestation of the standard assurance, however cannot convey the message as effectively as one might expect? Or the message being distorted and misinterpreted supposed to be communicated by the label? How about, if this message can still be communicated, not by the label but through a different means? So as the audience of the message, say the consumers for a fair trade product, instead of just identifying what label it carries, may better be informed through an alternative medium, or even be able to obtain more comprehensive and sophisticated messages? Consumers may be capable of learning more not only about the label, but even additional knowledges beyond the label?

Supporters of Fairtrade labeling, including the majority of stakeholders within

OHK or FTHK, will always argue that the label is just a first step in promoting the movement. It performs as the gateway that facilitates the first contact between fair trade with its consumers. Supposedly, this will not only never prevent, but also highly likely facilitate the second step, third step...Ladder theory. Communication rules. Marketing principles. But how about if fair trade has arrived in the city for more than ten years? How about there already existed a critical mass of solid supporters? Should we still prevent ourselves of starting and trying to climb at least another little step on the ladder? (Chapter III) It seems all too obvious that everybody have already fully accepted, that labels are not only identified as recognitions for certifications, carrying all the values and principles of the movement, but also serve as brands for commodities. Thus brands seem to be becoming more important than the certifications. Labels more important than messages. Form more important than content. Signifier more important than signified...After all, social and environmental labels have been fetishized, as if they are just another batch of brands, just like any one of them to be found in the mainstream market.

WFTO members in general, apparently favoured relatively **"thick descriptions"** - and the more or less accompanied **"thick commitment"**, and less favoured the relatively "thin descriptions" or "thin commitment" of the FLO/certification fashion like me, nevertheless, did not show open antagonism towards the new WFTO-GS. This was of course partly because the debates have been lasted for years, and they were already settled. By then in 2013 it was the time to get things done and move forward. Even more significant, however, it was also because people perceived a guarantee in enormously diverse perspectives. They have various kinds of imaginations and expectations on it. Many WFTO member organizations, after all, have already been operating over decades. Many were even prestiged as founding bodies of the worldwide fair trade movement. It seemed, rather ironically, now that they have to climb the ladder starting from the ground all over again! But at the same time, this could not and should never be a matter of retreating or compromising. For there could be much more that a guarantee can offer, well beyond merely a piece of label.

FIFTY YEARS OF FAIR TRADE

A brief history of the FAIR TRADE movement

The International Fair Trade Association (IFAT)

June 2004

Fair Trade today

The fair trade movement today is a global movement. Over a million small-scale producers and workers are organized in as many as 3,000 grassroots organizations and their umbrella structures in over 50 countries in the South. Their products are sold in thousands of so-called World-shops or fair trade shops, supermarkets and many other sales points in the North and, increasingly, in sales outlets in the Southern hemisphere. The movement is engaged in debates with political decision-makers in the European institutions and international forums on making international trade fairer. And fair trade has made mainstream business more aware of its social and environmental responsibility. In short: fair trade is becoming increasingly successful.

Where did it all begin?

There are many stories about the history of fair trade.

Some people say that the Americans were first with Ten Thousand Villages (formerly Self Help Crafts) who began buying needlework from Puerto Rico in 1946, and SERRV who began to trade with poor communities in the South in the late 1940s. The first formal "fair trade" shop, which sold these and other items opened in 1958 in the USA.

The earliest traces of fair trade in Europe date from the late 1950s when Oxfam UK started to sell crafts made by Chinese refugees in Oxfam shops. In 1964 it created the first fair trade Organization. Parallel initiatives were taking place in the Netherlands and in 1967 the importing organization, Fair Trade

Organisatie, was established.

At the same time, Dutch third world groups began to sell cane sugar with the message "by buying cane sugar you give people in poor countries a place in the sun of prosperity". These groups went on to sell handicrafts from the South, and in 1969 the first "Third World Shop" opened. World Shops (or fair trade shops as they are called in other parts in the world) have played a crucial role in the fair trade movement. They constitute not only points of sales but are also very active in campaigning and awareness raising.

During the 1960s and 1970s too, NGOs and socially motivated individuals in many countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America perceived the need for fair marketing organizations, which would provide advice, assistance and support to disadvantaged producers. Many such Southern FTOs were established and links were made with the new fair trade Organizations in the North. These relationships were based on partnership, dialogue, transparency and respect. The goal was greater equity in international trade.

Parallel to this citizen movement, the developing countries were addressing international political forums such as the second UNCTAD conference (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) in Delhi in 1968, to communicate the message "Trade not Aid". This approach put the emphasis on the establishment of equitable trade relations with the South, instead of seeing the North appropriate all the benefits and only returning a small part of these benefits in the form of development aid.

The growth of fair trade (or alternative trade as it was called in the early days) from the late 60s onwards has been associated primarily with development trade. It grew as a response to poverty and sometimes disaster in the South and focused on the marketing of craft products. Its founders were often the large development and sometimes religious agencies in European countries. These NGOs, working with their counterparts in countries in the South, assisted to establish Southern FTOs that organize producers and production,

provide social services to producers, and export to the North. Alongside the development trade there was also a branch of solidarity trade. Organizations were set up to import goods from progressive countries in the South that were both politically and economically marginalized.

Crafts and food

At the beginning, FTOs traded mostly with handicrafts producers, mainly because of their contacts with missionaries. Often, crafts provide "supplementary income" to families. Most of the Northern FTOs focused on buying these crafts and sold them through World Shops. The market for crafts through these World shops was wide open and for many FTOs sales grew and grew!

In 1973, Fair Trade Organisatie in the Netherlands, imported the first "fairly traded" coffee from co-operatives of small farmers in Guatemala. Now, almost 30 years later, Fair coffee has become a concept. Meanwhile hundreds of thousands of coffee farmers have benefited from fair trade in coffee. And in Europe more and more consumers drink fair coffee. Right now between 25 to 50 % of turnover of Northern FTOs comes from this product.

After coffee, the food range was expanded and it now includes products like tea, cocoa, sugar, tea, wine, fruit juices, nuts, spices, rice, etc. Food products enable FTOs to open new market channels, such as institutional market, supermarkets, bio shops.

Market access and Fairtrade labeling

In the 1980s, a new way of reaching the broad public was developed. A priest working with smallholder coffee farmers in Mexico and a collaborator of a Dutch church-based NGO conceived the idea of a Fairtrade label. Products bought, traded and sold respecting fair trade conditions would qualify for a label that would make them stand out among ordinary products on store

shelves, and would allow any company to get involved in fair trade. In 1988, the "Max Havelaar" label was established in The Netherlands. The concept caught on: within a year, coffee with the label had a market share of almost three percent.

In the ensuing years, similar non-profit Fairtrade labeling organizations were set up in other European countries and in North America. In 1997, the worldwide association, Fairtrade Labeling International, was created. FLO is now responsible for setting international Fairtrade standards, for certifying production and auditing trade according to these standards and for the labeling of products. The range of labelled products, which now counts seven, will soon be expanded.

Fairtrade labeling indeed has helped fair trade to go into mainstream business. Currently, over two-thirds of fair trade products, are sold by mainstream catering and retailing.

Parallel to the development of the labeling for products, IFAT has developed a monitoring system for FTOs, which should strengthen the credibility of these organizations towards political decision-makers, mainstream business and consumers. The IFAT Fair Trade Organization Mark will be launched in January 2004. It is available to IFAT members that meet the requirements of the IFAT standards and monitoring system. IFAT is working with FLO to find a way to provide an "on product" Mark, such as the FLO Fairtrade label for craft items.

...

This version of the History of Fair Trade was written by Marlike Kocken, Manager of EFTA, with the input of various pioneers in Fair Trade.

(As cited in European Parliament, 2006)

WFTO-GS: from self-assessment to guarantee system

Since WFTO, formerly known as IFAT, was established in 1989, a system of self-assessment has gradually been developed as a monitoring and accountability process, basically founded on principles of participation and peer review. The main objective was to build trust both internally and externally. As it has always been emphasized, self-assessment did not only focus on the compliance with standards, but also attempted to promote solidarity, democracy, self-reflection and mutual learning. Starting from the mid-1990s, WFTO members drafted a Code of Practice for FTOs. In 2002, they adopted the Standards for FTOs, a three step monitoring process was subsequently developed. The major purposes of the system were (Davenport and Low, 2013):

1. To build trust in fair trade among consumers, political decision makers and mainstream business.

2. To contribute to the growth of fair trade markets for marginalized producers.

3. To provide FTOs with a system of control, requiring stakeholder dialogue, that allows them to measure how well they meet fair trade standards.

4. To help FTOs improve their working practices.

5. To distinguish FTOs from commercial trading bodies that are involved in fair trade through the purchase of products labelled under the FLO certification system, and to protect them from unfair competition.

In 2003, WFTO introduced the Fair Trade Organization Mark for organizations that met the requirements of the monitoring process. The Mark was then officially launched during the World Social Forum in India in January 2004. It could only be employed by FTOs that were committed to 100% Fair Trade. It set them apart from commercial as well as other Fairtrade businesses, and provided a clear signal to retailers, partners, governments and donors that their core activity is fair trade. The accompanying monitoring process was based on a two-tier process (WFTO, 2004):

1. Self-assessment: members assess themselves against standards developed from the Code of Practice, using the self-assessment guidelines and regionally developed indicators.

2. The mutual review: the FTOs send their Self Assessment Reports to their trading partners allowing for comments and feedbacks in a process that encourages accountability and transparency.

As Davenport and Low (2013:97-98) recently note, WFTO struggled, in the late 2000s and early 2010s, with the implementation of the externally verified WFTO-GS - by then still known as SFTMS, "The system, focused on organizations rather than products, was trialled and granted certifications for a small number of WFTO members who had taken part in the pilot. There was considerable internal debate about the desirability and potential costs of the SFTMS and the open system was ultimately seen to have the potential for "free riding" by larger commercial interests. The membership and Board decided, in 2011, to move away from an open system to focus on developing a (closed) certification for members, based on peer guarantee and external verification. This new system, based on the existing WFTO Fair Trade Standards, is now in pilot stage."

It was exactly during the Rio Biennial Conference, that became the moment that a lot of critical decisions and strategic choices has to be made. I remembered so clearly how the puzzles were still hanging on the face of Alessandro all the time. Anyway, he was very quiet, patient and slowly dismantled the queries and challenges raised by other members. One basic agreement came up was, as just mentioned, the new WFTO-GS would be reserved solely to WFTO members as an internal system. At the same time, it was further assured that such monitoring and assessment would be absolutely organization based, and not to be applied on individual products at all. WFTO members which passed the WFTO-GS process would still be granted a WFTO Guarantee Mark, which however always bore the organization name on it, clearly signifying it is a product of that specific 100% authentic FTO. The mark might also be paired up

with its organization logo to convey a co-branding image, and that would be all about the system. Equally, non-FTOs could still sell the products for these FTOs, but would never be able to exploit the mark for their own organizations and branding purposes, since the mark only refers to its owner as that particular FTO rather than its products.

A big retreat from its original ambition

This was actually a big retreat from the original SFTMS ambition, which was laid down by Paul Myers, the former president of WFTO, and was initially intended to open its doors to a much larger external market. Paul still showed up during the Rio Biennial Conference, but obviously adopting a much lower profile than before. By then the almost finalized WFTO-GS version 3.5, predominantly, inclined to erect as many barriers as possible to differentiate FTOs from non-FTOs, and preferred to preserve the unique collective identity of the former. Or, to place it back into the bigger picture, the WFTO-GS system explicitly refuted the certification and labeling approach that FLO and other certifiers has been so "successful" to popularized and compromised. WFTO would rather, on the contrary, insist on a trajectory of fair trade development which would still be by and large insulating the influences of the mainstream market.

Perhaps such subtle shift in WFTO's positioning towards the new system was totally not surprising. All in all, its was a membership organization structured by direct democratic mechanisms, with strong representations among members from the Global South. Although there have been many clashes of interests and perspectives on fair trade development, especially between those coming from the North and the South, the institutional arrangement was still able to channel the tensions and pressures, be it effectively or not so effectively. As an unidentified delegate insightfully remarked, "After decades of collaboration in a big family like this, we have already built a strong solidarity and sense of belonging. Even though the external environmental challenges are huge, they were always huge and the sky has never collapsed. Internal cohesion and reaffirmation of organizational values should always be prioritized. WFTO-GS is designated to focus more on internal capacity building and knowledge sharing, rather than external brand building and marketing."

For sure, devils were still in the details. Even the basics and the fundamentals of WFTO-GS have been settled, there were still a lot of "bugs" - technical and practical problems remained to be resolved after the Rio Biennial Conference. One of the key challenges was it seemed as if on top of the 10 core principles, an 11th one was added to address "fairness on the supply chain". Traceability and transparency along the whole commodity chain was highlighted. This has casted substantial grievances especially among producers organizations which have traditionally and overwhelmingly worked on handicrafts rather than food products. There were always bits and pieces of small components necessary for assembling into the final products. Many of these components consisted of raw materials which might not be locally produced and have to sourced from the external market. Obviously, it was almost impossible to trace the origins of all these components and check whether all the raw materials were produced according to fair trade principles.The requirement of "fairness on the supply chain" is not only costly, but also technically highly difficult to meet.

The 11th fair trade principle?

According to the WFTO-GS version 3.5, for producer organizations, the guarantee mark might not be used on products bought from unverified suppliers who were not working directly with producers. Equally, the producers of any direct suppliers should be fully protected by fair trade principles. While for marketing organizations, they were also expected to purchase the majority of their products from verified suppliers (members of WFTO, or certified according to an approved fair trade certification system). Other products on their list which were not specifically fair trade and therefore excluded from the use of the mark, should still be expected to originate from sustainable and responsible production methods and from a supplier who does not act contrary to the values of WFTO. Subsequently, the finalized WFTO-GS has still by and large preserved such principles of supply chain compliances, but to a certain extent made it more flexible and realizable. The bulk of responsibilities was shouldered through an internal monitoring system, under which all the "tricky" cases on the supply chain should be constantly monitored, so as to minimize the potential risks of violation of standards. It served more as a precautionary measure rather than a proactive verification instrument.

4. FTO brand companies: campaigning for higher standards

Fair Circle: the dual structure

As already being accounted for in Chapter III, Fair Circle became a member of WFTO-Asia in 2009. But ever since its establishment in 2005, Fair Circle has adopted a fair trade approach highly resembled the WFTO model. Specifically, it has chosen to adopt a dual organization structure similar to many FTO brand companies in Europe: the holding company was named Fair Trade Power, a non-profit entity; while the social enterprise being named Hong Kong Fair Trade Power, 100% owned by Fair Trade Power and under the leadership of its board of directors. Up to ten consultants from academic, social services and business backgrounds were also recruited under the holding company. In turn, Hong Kong Fair Trade Power operated the shops, promoted the products through the brand name Fair Circle, as well as handling all the concerning administrative and financial functions. So far the holding company itself was not organizationally active, and did not carry out any concrete tasks except the occasional board meetings.

The design of such a dual structure at the onset, however, was not without careful thought and long term considerations. It was originally intended that Hong Kong Fair Trade Power was the "trading arm" of Fair Trade Power. The profits and losses of income-generating activities would totally be limited within the social enterprise itself. While at the same time, the holding company as a non-profit could enjoy enormous flexibilities to explore different fields of activities, which might range from, for instance, advocacy and public education, local and international networking and exchanges, rural development and property reduction, researches and publications, etc., all of which were fair trade oriented, but none of them were directly related to trading activities. Legally and financially, it could also acquire the charity status, accept donations and might even enjoy tax exemptions.

The idea of Fair Trade Power to initiate its own non-profit projects and activities has so far not realized. The reasons could be rather complex and contingent.

Among them would be although the board of directors have already come to such a consensus since the early days, they never consolidated a strong collective view and took a proactive roles in making it happen. I myself, supposed be responsible for this area of work, has drafted some plans but was also not keen to push them forward, merely limiting my participations to occasional publications and seminars. Furthermore, since the year 2010, Fair Circle started to enjoy a relatively stable sales growth, and the nitty-gritty of trading operations have virtually exhausted all the paid staff in the social enterprise, including the founder Anthony himself. Last but not the least, an even more deep-rooted reason may be the combinations of skill sets. The business success of Fair Circle naturally imply "trade" oriented knowledge has gained an upper hand, able to lay down a proper track of development and nurture a related corporate culture. While for "fairness" oriented knowledge which would be crucial for the non-profit, still could not established its own well defined domain. The movement to promote fair trade city (Chapter VI) could likely be one of the possible moments, for which the non-profit could properly plan and implement its own agenda. But without any pressing need and will so far, the plan was still temporarily frozen.

Anyway, Hong Kong Fair Trade Power or Fair Circle, while devoting much efforts in the sales of products, still managed to maintain advocacy and education as well as to establish production partnership as another two pillars of its core business. Although, as it has been raised in Chapter III, such an arrangement could be highly demanding and challenging. By simply judging through its website, one can easily found that it was further subdivided into two mini-sites: "Fair Circle" the online shop and "Hong Kong Fair Trade Power" the corporate profile. One may, however, be astonished by the fact that, the latter mini-site has actually devoted to become a public education resource centre. This may be the normal case for OHK, but seldom found in FTOs even among WFTO members. Except some background information about the social enterprise itself, the mini-site was virtually filled with education materials. Such design was actually highly similar to the website of Traidcraft, which will be further discussed below.

Figure 2. Site map of Hong Kong Fair Trade Power.

Extract of the Hong Kong Fair Trade Power website. (n.d.)

Under the topic "Education Resources", one could easily find a whole series of downloadable files both created by Fair Circle itself or other FTOs. But even in the online shop, one could still find the item "Education Materials". They included cards and posters, foam broads and display stands for exhibitions as well as a number of books for loan or on sale. Online video lectures were also jointly produced in collaboration with Excel 3 of University of Hong Kong. Another frequently adopted means of communicating fair trade is the blog. Topics of blogs could range from detail product information, producers stories, personal reflections of the staff to commentaries on current issues. The varieties of content were not only highly educational, but also conveyed a strong sense of identification with the causes. Consumers could thus comprehend the messages of fair trade beyond the products, and associated themselves with all the issues and debates clustered around the products. They could also gradually develop a sense of community, jointly with worldwide supporters of fair trade working collectively for a better world. Undoubtedly, the "sharing" of such messages through social media provided consumers with a further opportunity to enhance their co-ownership of the fair trade movement.

After the success of the study groups and the field trip to Sri Lanka in 2011 (Chapter I), I have started to collaborate with a number of new friends and wrote series of articles concerning fair trade, social economy, social enterprises and ethical consumption. In some occasions, the records of seminars and forums were also transcribed into texts. One of such projects was handled by my student Catherine Yeung, an intern coming from our Polytechnic University. The transcripts was further complied by a publication house of Christian background, with its manager also highly interested in issues related to social in/justice, happened to visit Anthony and negotiate joint ventures of book

publication. As a result, Catherine's transcripts was published, together with my additional inputs, as a book called *Buying Brings Changes* in early 2012, the first book being published by Fair Circle. It was a sociological account of the fair trade movement, both local and international. Many of the debates and discussions within it (for example, the debates concerning Wright and Gibson-Graham) were also featured in the present PhD dissertation.

Starting from that book, Fair Circle and the publication house further worked on a number of titles, including *A City of Marketplaces (2012), A Metropolitan of Stolen Spaces (2013), Sharing Cities / Sharing Hong Kong (2014)* and *Rice from Fields: Sustainable foodways in Hong Kong (2015)* (see Chapter VI). Most of the titles were collaborations of my companions, who have either identified with the missions of fair trade and ethical consumption, or were partitioners based in various organizations carrying these kind of projects. Accompanying with the book publication were normally a range of activities, including book launch events, reading groups and promotions in the book fairs. Customers thus not only received messages from the books, but also personally be connected with Fair Circle in all these occasions of face-to-face encounter. It seemed that book publication was not only a means of public education, but also itself becoming promising products to be promoted to consumers. Although the full costs of book production were not easily covered in the short term, even though all the writers were working as volunteers and did not received any remunerations (except sample copies of the books), the long term publicity and propaganda effects could never be underestimated.The publications virtually built an interesting co-brand and offered a comfortable "marketing mix" locating

side by side of other fair trade products. The food and handicrafts serving immediate material consumptions are effectively supplemented with books of **"high symbolic density"** (Brunori, 1999), thus potentially enhancing and enriching the experiences and satisfactions of ethical consumption.

The Producers "Being Disappeared"

Anthony, Director of Fair Circle
Aricle in Go Green Column, 22.12.2013

Many friends may still believe, there are still very few shops for fair trade products in Hong Kong. But as our survey this summer reveals, in the three different communities of Central, Monkok and Tsuen Wan, in retail outlets or supermarkets selling healthy food and personal care products, around 30% of them are selling at least one type of fair trade product.

There are actually quite a lot of retail outlets for fair trade products.Why do the public still find it difficult to locate these products? On the one hand, it may due to the knowledge level of the public. On the other hand, it may also due to the practices of the retail outlets - litte or no information about fair trade has been provided. Even on the price tags, consumers cannot find any messages about fair trade.

Fair trade products and their producers are not only "being disappeared" in many retail outlets. In recent years, as more and more big brands started to source a few fair trade items among their numerous products, the problem of fair trade "being disappeared" is even more serious. Fair trade started as alternative trade or solidarity trade in the 1960s and 1970s, its central idea was to promote consumer education, demanding consumers to reflect on their buying habits under capitalism, especially on their alienated relationship with the producers under commodification.

FTOs established at that time paid a lot of efforts to highlight the producers

---

stories. They adopted multiple channels to deliver producer information to their supporters. Besides leaflets and posters, the more direct means is to print them on the product packages. With the rise of the internet, more detail information can also be provided on their websites.

In recent years, there is a certification and labeling approach of fair trade movement, which allows the mainstream traders including transnational corporations to join. Although some of them are genuine supporters of fair trade, many others may participate chiefly as responding to public pressures or discovering the market potentials, and adopt fair trade products selectively and strategically. That is the reason why some popular brands, especially specialized in food, start to source and sell products certified by FLO, IMO or Eco-Cert. But what can be commonly found is, except the fair trade label, nothing is mentioned about fair trade or the producers.

Many friends may think that packaging is not a big deal. But actually it is highly crucial. Frankly speaking, producers "being disappeared" on the packages implies a betrayal of the fair trade movement. From the perspective of big companies, delinking there products from specific producers also implies their power - to scale up their production flexibly, to reduce dependence on particular suppliers and to control costs effectively.

Fair trade movement has gone through a history of more than sixty years, and is becoming more and more diversified. For sure, there are always pros and cons for different models. We are not discarding some models like the engagement of big companies. however, as supporters of fair trade movement, we understand the principles and rationales of different models. Although all of them may improve the livelihoods of farmers, but how it is worked out may be extremely dissimilar. We should choose more carefully from which we would like to support most.

(Translated from the original Chinese article)

"Companions" and "cell groups"

190

Throughout the years, a stable group of Companions of Fair Circle has been developed. Normally, besides volunteering routines like those related to packaging, stocktaking as well as promotional events they performed, the Companions also set up their own teams to arrange educational activities through churches and schools. There were a few mission groups affiliated with a church, which performed the functions as a cell group but attempted to integrate fair trade messages with religious teachings. There was even a parental group active in a secondary school practicing fair trade and collective purchase. Since the year 2011, student interns have played an important role in assisting many of the marketing and educational activities. Summer interns, joined by other Companions, could further tap the opportunities of various fairs and festivals, and deliver fair trade messages to a wider general public. Equally, interns also involved in independent projects ranging from policy research, curriculum development and packaging design. All these activities not only facilitated individual development, but also strengthened mutual learning and organizational capacity building.

The ideas of "companion" and "cell group" have been core to Fair Circle's understanding of its education activities in specific, and the movement of ethical consumption in general. Under such perspective, consumers are respected and treasured as reflexive agents not only capable to learn, evaluate and exercise their consumption choices autonomously, but also able to further build their "ownership" of fair trade values and the movement, gradually "scale up" their levels of participation, and finally appropriate the roles as activists themselves with **"thick commitment"** to the movement. As a long term objective, it is expected that these "companions" and "cell groups" will become independent of Fair Circle, explore their own trajectories of development and become self-organizing communities or networks on their own. Undoubtedly, such a vision share striking similarities with many of the emergent projects under the fashionable trends of sharing city and sharing economy - a contemporary version of social economy that tends to appear in network form (as being introduced in the books *Sharing City and Sharing Economy*).

It will also be fair enough to say, that such ideals are still a very long distance away. In the earlier stage, the Companions serve still more like volunteers of the traditional style, rather than activists on their own. The "cell groups" are more like interest-oriented group purchasers, rather than the relatively cause-oriented collective purchasers. But sooner or later, as the network of "companions" and "cell groups" perpetuate, the interpersonal bondings and mutual reinforcements among themselves strengthen, their commitments will bit by bit be **thickening.** Obviously these are not one-off conversions, but a incremental process of interstitial transformation, as termed by Wright (2010). These are step by step progresses without any shortcuts, and much enduring efforts have to be inputed before significant effects can be witnessed. It seems that not only much resources have to be invested to nurture their development, but continual innovations (including the utilization of up-to-date information technology) also have to be generated for mobilizing and organizing new audiences.

FTO re-innovations by the pioneers

Under the current framework of WFTO-GS, besides the well-understood producer and marketing FTOs, there is actually a third category of member organization named non-trading organization, which was oddly abbreviated as "NTOs". They refer to the WFTO members that are not involved in trading as their main activity. Two major sub-categories under it are the fair trade support organization and the fair trade network. Obviously, if FTHK as being detailed in Chapter III so happened to become a member of WFTO in future, its role of a federation will be identified as a fair trade network. Many fair trade organizations at the national level also fall into this group. While for OHK, which focuses on advocacy and public education, will comfortably fit into the sub-category of fair trade support organizations. In reality, so far only 4 among the above 500 WFTO members from more than 75 countries identify themselves as fair trade support organizations, including Crossroads International from Hong Kong. However, some major marketing FTOs in the Global North, while not classifying themselves as support organizations, still deeply involved in essentially similar functions, offering both meaningful comparisons and important insights for Fair Circle.

Being noted in Chapter III, by the mid-1990s, ATOs' traditional approaches of development-through-trade were, in general, increasingly out-competed by the mainstream market. Not only ATOs were proved to be financially unsustainable, but brand power was also well entrenched and brand value was on the rise. Perceiving these structural changes, a few radical ATOs began to adopt a more commercially oriented form in the 1990s by focusing more seriously on consumer relationship. As Hutchens (2009:151) forcefully argues, "While this story of reinforcing monopoly structures in the market (though static adaptation) tells of a more predominant market pattern, innovative adaptation is nevertheless a more noteworthy, and potentially significant, subject of analysis. It takes the form of testing new innovations in the market to refine knowledge, and to re-innovate on the basis of the insights gained." Jeroen Douglas of Solidaridad interpreted FLO's growing weakness in these terms, "the stronger people within FLO know what the limitations of their own model are...The imperfection of models is a law of nature. Any models have to live with that - that its not the model." The pioneers' creation of new fair trade brand models in response to FLO's "limits" demonstrates the innovator's prerogative to re-innovate in the face of model limitations (ibid).

As the history of fair trade movement has already shown, its pioneers forcefully exercised market leadership throughout all these decades. At the end of th 1980s, several game players in the movement acknowledged the then prevailing alternative trade model of non-profit trade shops has a limited market. While the Max Havelaar system was subsequently created by fair trade pioneers to overcome this limitation, the pioneers have innovated again in the wake of this system's weakness for producers empowerment in international markets. "The fair trade pioneers are free from constraints of FLO's system to continue innovating despite - and because of - FLO's stagnation. Fair trade brands have aimed to succeed commercially with radical business structures and missions in order to retain market leadership in setting the terms of market competition. Since their commercial models are not designed to rely on, but rather compete directly with conventional brand companies, fair trade innovators are at liberty to pursue this more radical mission with their business

models, undeterred by transnational corporations's more conservative interest in fair trade." (ibid:153-4)

Traidcraft

Ultimately, the core questions for innovative fair trade brand companies were, as Barnett, Cloke, Clarke and Malpass (2005) attempt to ask, "What kinds of practical devices are addressed to the consumers? In what contexts and in what network forms are these devices inculcated? What kinds of performed practices emerge, and in what ways do such practices reflect or display a caring 'beyond the self' or 'at a distance'?" The authors employ Traidcraft, a fair trade pioneer and also founding member WFTO (formerly IFAT) and Cafedirect, to illustrate the probable answers to these questions. Traidcraft was founded on a mission of fighting poverty through trade, paying the poor people fair prices, and establishing partnership with suppliers. It was set up as two interconnecting organizations pairing up in partnerships. First, Traidcraft Exchange is the charitable arm working to promote fair trade and to promote public awareness about trade issues. Second, Traidcraft plc performs as the trading arm, providing consumers a full range of choices to purchase fair trade products.

While Traidcraft plc concentrated in business development, Traidcraft Exchange helped producers to access and participate in trading activities through the provision of supporting services. These included overseas development, producer support as well as policy and advocacy programmes. They particularly targeted producers "that require support beyond what can reasonably be provided through the fair trading relationship" (Traidcraft Exchange, 2012:14). While Traidcraft plc relied on these programmes for supporting its producer suppliers, it also offered them opportunities of direct trading relationship, and guaranteed long-term commitment to the producers. Traidcraft was well-known for developing its unique Social Accounting system (Dey, 2007), and has predominantly selling its own brand products rather than FLO certified ones. Traidcraft plc set up a variety of retail pathways for the products. Its retails were channeled through four different avenues: mail-order catalogues, online shopping, a network of Fairtraders and retail venues including small shops and big supermarkets, thus covering a wide range of consumers from diverse backgrounds. In 2015, Traidcraft plc recorded a £ 11.7 million turnover, with £ 3.4 million value of purchases from overseas producers and some 680,000 beneficiaries were helped through Traidcraft Exchange.Barnett et al. (2005:10) employed various Traidcraft examples to neatly illustrate the interconnections between campaign and trade, "This relation is demonstrated by the huge success of a new Traidcraft catalogue launched to coincide with Fairtrade Fortnight in March 2003 (sales were lifted to levels usually only experienced in the pre-Christmas period), by the use of Fairtrade Fortnight to launch the new cranberry Geobar; and by a recent campaign by Trade Justice Movement which invited consumers to detach the fair trade mark from the wrapper of any purchase and attach it to a provided postcard to the Prime Minister. In this way, individual acts of buying are directly connected to wider practices of campaigning. This common device of providing a ready-made vehicle for individual protest mediates between the individual consumer and a more corporate ethical movement, thus bringing together a localized purchase with a nationwide campaign, and ultimately with international forms of care."

A Traidcraft poster of the Trade Justice Movement.

Furthermore, Traidcraft was well-known for spreading its local operations through the extensive network of Fairtrader representatives who organize the sales of products in their church, workplace or community centre and to family, friends and neighbours. Representatives served not only volunteers but were paid commission on sales, but normally they just donated it to Traidcraft Exchange or made concessions to consumers in lower prices. Fairtraders thus performed the roles of local agents in articulating consumer choices, "not only representing committed activists seeking to influence other consumers, but also personally modeling the government of the consuming self and displaying the kinds of dispositions and competencies expected of an ethical consumer...The seemingly simple task of ordering in and selling Traidcraft products actually becomes a dynamic search by representatives for innovative practices, niches and opportunities to get the message, and the products, across."(Barnett et al, 2005:11) For example, a typical Fairtrader representative works in the setting of a local church, and manages to deploy a range of practical devices to encourage fellows to buy fair trade products. A permanent table or trolley is all it required to establish a served or self-serve Traidcraft outlet for periodic use on the location.

CTM Altromercado

CTM Altromercado, another founding member of WFTO first established in 1988, offered interesting and useful comparisons with Traidcraft. CTM, the acronym of Cooperazione Terzo Mondo, was the name given to the Italian co-operative union, while Altromercado is the chain of fair trade World Shops it operated throughout Italy. In sum it contains 114 member organizations together operating over 300 World Shops, recruiting 27,000 members and 6,000 volunteers, covering 60% of the local fair trade market. At the same time, it involves 170 suppliers accounting for 60,000 artisans and 430,000 farmers in 50 different countries, and was considered by far the largest FTO in Italy for size (about 100 employees) and turnover (€ 47 million in 2014), as well as the world's second largest FTO, next to Gepa of Germany. Because of the long-standing consumer trust in CTM's brand, the company did not taken up any certification for its fair trade products. CTM has also extended its retail network

through the supermarkets, although such decision has raised significant internal controversies.

In addition to trading, the World Shops undertook active consumer education about fair trade and trade-related issues. They also participated in decision-making processes as they hold shares in CTM. According to the Italian general Assembly of Fair Trade (Agices), CTM members spent €1,810,697 and 8,074.5 hours on education and information activities in 2012 (Costantino and Micotti, 2015). Furthermore, since the early 2000s, CTM has accelerated its engagement in broader social and political issues. It became part of the Social Forum Movement and benefitted from civil society's closer attention to issues such as imbalances in global trade, human rights and poverty in developing countries. Fair Trade was considered as a major component of the movement because it puts the motto "another world is possible" into practice. Thus it could also tap the opportunity to access consumers outside its original niche. (Becchetti and Costantino, 2010:183)
An Altromercado World Shop.

In 2005 Agices endorsed its own Charter of Fair Trade Criteria. According to Becchetti and Costantino (2010), the main differences between the Italian Charter and WFTO principles were: 1. The Italian charter is much more strongly oriented towards civil and political justice, while WFTO is more concerned with technical and economic issues; 2. FTOs in the Italian Charter should be non-profit making (a constraint absent in the WFTO document); 3. The Italian charter makes reference to sustainable tourism and acknowledges the important synergies between tourism and sales of fair trade products. "This difference in principles and legal forms is reflected in practice in a general orientation towards the production of intangible social values such as solidarity, consumer sobriety, participation, grass-roots political action, and a special attention to the quality of partnerships between importers, producers and workshops. This last goal is pursued through numerous participation mechanisms." (Costantino and Micotti, 2015) In essence, in comparing with other countries, the Italian edge was that the World Shops (with its members including volunteers and consumers) exerted an exceptional influences, extending all the way to the

traders and producers.

Of prime importance to CTM was the central role of the World Shops. In order to promote the sales of fair trade products and to extend its market shares, distributing through supermarkets and shifting to corporate-dominated models would be an important strategy. If, however, the emphasis is on the social goal of promoting all the above-mentioned intangibles (solidarity, participation, social justice), the World Shop is a meeting rather than a selling place and therefore represents the arena in which this broader goal can be more effectively achieved. The role of World Shops as places which educate people about fair trade and alternative economics in general (ethical finance, responsible tourism, etc.) is particularly strong in Italy." (Becchetti and Costantino, 2010:185)

Deliberate choices of "genetic variation"

Hutchens (2009), in her detailed analysis of FTO brand companies, calls these innovation oriented pioneers the "game players". They utilized decentralized and egalitarian modes of networked business organization, maintaining governance modes conductive to their unique role and purpose as innovators. Their organizations parallel the small "organic", "disintegrated" networks comprised of "weak ties" that commonly associated with, and seen as necessary for, innovations. Hutchens (2009:150) goes on to argue, "From a Darwinian perspectives of economic evolution, innovation is a trigger for

potential diversity (competition) in a process similar to genetic variation: in any given industry (environmental niche), variation is stimulated when a firm adopts an innovation (such as a new technology) and then competes with rival firms in a struggle for survival. Those firms that do survive the struggle are the 'fittest'; they have adopted best practice...the Darwinian assumption that all firms will move to mimic new varieties is erroneous. For instance, the fair trade pioneers' radical ownership structures are their innovation. Adopting this innovation would not simply require change to the design of, or addition of a label on, a product. On the contrary, it would require significant restructure - actual transformation - of traditional ownership structure and legal mandate of the modern corporation. The insight here is how issues of deliberate choice and politics in organizational design are missing from an evolutionary account."

Besides the Traidcraft and CTM Altromercado models, Hutchens (2009:154) further elaborates her account on examples undergoing more fundamental governance reform. "Yes the pioneers did not stop there. Following the innovation in the first fair trade brand, Cafedirect, the pioneers continues to experiment in producer empowerment through fair trade. The result was more radical company ownership structures in subsequent fair trade brands designed for other industries, such as Divine Chocolate Ltd. It has experimented with, and shown the viability of, a more unorthodox governance structure than Cafedirect. As Tranchell [of Divine Chocolate Ltd] found, 'What was different about our model was that we were the next model along in that producers were actually going to own shares. So although Cafedirect was set up for the benefits of farmers, it wasn't owned by them, they weren't empowered by it, they were merely financially rewarded by it, which obviously didn't empower them in the same way.'"

While according to another pioneer AgroFair, a fair trade fruit company co-owned by farmers, "With the traditional players you can see a trend: Western companies are integrating the supply chain, getting closer and closer to the global South. They do not focus only on selling bananas - they also dominate production and logistics. What AgroFair is doing can be called 'reverse supply chain integration': the Third World producer is integrating the supply chain in his

own interest. The producer is dedicated not only to growing product, but to organizing logistics, and having at the same time a voice and vote in the sales strategy. In contrast to normal opinion, AgroFair has shown that involving Third World producers in business structures, making them co-responsible for the marketing strategy, is a viable aspiration." (Nicholls and Opal, 2005:91, cited in Hutchens, 2010:86)

Alastair Smith, a researcher from Cardiff University (which was briefly quoted above), was also invited as a guest speaker in the Rio Biennial Conference of 2013. Instead of delivering a speech of himself, he conducted a two-day workshop inviting participants to join a "Ketso stakeholder engagement exercise". The physical tool is comprised of a "baseboard" and a series of notation cards onto which participants can record their thoughts and ideas. The tool is embedded with the metaphor of organic and natural growth, featuring a central "tree trunk", a card where the primary theme of the discussion is recorded, and then a series of different colour "leaves", where each colour represents a different theme of ideas. In this particular workshop, Smith asked participants to focus on three main themes: 1. The positives or achievements of the movement (brown leaves to represent soil and foundations of growth); 2. The problems and tensions of the movement (grey leaves to represent clouds that block sun light); 3. Responses to issues or possible future developments for the next generation of fair trade (green leaves to represent new growth). Participants were asked to share their ideas, locating leaves of different colours on various branches, so that ideas could be clustered and interpreted around themes.

The idea of Ketso, actually reminded me of the metaphor of elephant, which I have already laid down in my research proposal during 2011. The branches and leaves were just like the ears, legs, trunk or the tail of an elephant, which the blinds can grope as individuals. With such a larger group of "blind stakeholders", there would be a higher chance of tailoring into a bigger picture. However, this could still by far be the "whole picture" of fair trade movement, I personally speculated. This specific "tree of fair trade" might be just one among thousands in the "forest of fair trade"!

Anyway, the result of the exercise was still highly revealing. The "tree of fair trade" demonstrate the "collective wisdom" of that specific group of "blind stakeholders". According to the written report of Smith on the second day, participants came up with the consensus that one of the greatest strengths of fair trade was its values of "fairness", "equality" and "justice" could be effectively communicated to people at all levels of knowledge and at all ages. "Fair trade movement has promoted the application of these values in discourse and trade relationships between consumers, intermediaries and producers; particularly, the overt application of fairness to the understanding and practice of prices and wages. The concept of 'living wages' was also raised as a welcome introduction that has emerged through the fair trade movement. The concept of a Social Premium for investment in development projects was highlighted as a key strength of existing fair trade practices; and the use of trade relationships to build the capacity of producers, in a 'development approach to trade' was seen as a positive of the movement..."

The summary of Smith of the workshop, or the group of participants, casted a highly unusual perspective on fair trade, a refreshing view that throws substantial new insights on me. Under this perspective, fair trade is no longer viewed as a system or an institution as such. Nor should it be understood as a tool of encouraging and empowering, like what Ruediger would like to claim in the conference. It is virtually a medium or a platform of mutual learning and support, not only for the "capacity building" of the producers, but also for the consumers and intermediaries, and all the stakeholders that have joined the

movement from diverse backgrounds with contrasting motivations. "This is especially considered to be true for the generation of connections between Northern and Southern stakeholders, and within this, the growing recognition by consumers of the conditions and challenges faced by those who produced the goods they consume. Fair trade is considered to provide a mechanism for active, and not passive mutual support and solidarity, and in the wider sense, as a useful means to educate people more generally about global poverty and its facilitating factors," Smith conclusively remarked.

Placeless and timeless re-entanglement?

One element, which have been commonly found across the movement responses, as efforts to mitigate the disembedding and disantangling effects of FLO/certification model, is to reconstruct the connections between producers, consumers and all the stakeholders, supposed to be so fundamental to the fair trade movement. Some may focus on reembedding producers into the governance structures. Others may aim at the re-entanglement of passive consumers into reflexive agents, or as we will see later on, citizen-consumers (Chapter VI). Equally speaking, it will still be fair enough to conclude, through strategic decisions, institutional innovations, organizational and governance restructuring etc., all those aforementioned projects share the rough ideas of **"deep penetration" and "thick commitment"**. At the same time, they share a "political ecological imaginary" of **"thick description"** bearing strong social and symbolic values among the stakeholders. In the words of Long (2001:107), it is a "contest of values" in which competing values are continuously generated and challenged. Or according to Brunori (1999), whether it is organics, fair trade or regional products, after all, It is the **"high symbolic density"** that fueled their transformative power.

One must, however, be highly cautious that all such efforts of **reconnection, reembeddedness or re-entanglement**, initiatives that aim at shortening the distances of value chains, or reconstructing the direct linkages between the producers and consumers, so far do not carry any spatial or geographical connotations within them. The concepts of long or short, direct or indirect, etc.

all tend to rely on an abstract imagery of commodity flow and value chain. Specifically, geographical distances, actual locations, spatial distributions and territorial configurations, after all, are not seriously taken into account. In the terms of Oosterveer (2007), following Castells (1996), instead of emphasizing the **"space of places"**, and the **place-specific** production and consumption processes, the researches and practices of fair trade, as a whole, are still focusing on the "space of flows", devoid of specific characteristics of place or time - it is by and large a kind of placeless and timeless fair trade.

All in all, as being forcefully argued by Bowen and Mutersbaugh (2013), the researches of alternative food networks of Anglo-Saxon tradition, with fair trade network as an integral component, "tends to frame the local not as anchored in place, but rather as a positionality established by relationships within specific food commodity chains or networks." While on the contrary, the Mediterranean Europe tradition of Local Agrifood Systems for which Brunori as a member of it (Chapter II), tends to "utilize significantly different conceptualizations of the 'local'. We argue that this difference matters; the notion of locality in all of its senses - historical, environmental, and economic - shapes and is shaped by the relations along food chains and the power dynamics that suffuse them. The Local Agrifood Systems literature views the environmental (soil, microclimate) and cultural (local knowledge, production and consumption patterns) conditions of particular, socially constructed territories as conferring distinctive characteristics to the foods and drinks produced there."

"To summarize, most alternative food networks understandings of locality emphasize spatial proximity, social ties, and interaction in ways that are not necessarily tied to the particularities of the environmental and social histories of the places in which they are embedded. We argue that although alternative food networks are certainly ''localized'' just as local agrifood systems are, the alternative food networks approach tends to understand what it means to be local in largely self-referential terms. Because of this, Feagan (2007:24) argues that advocacy centered on reconfiguring the 'place of food' within the Anglophone literature would benefit from a 'deeper engagement with the

geographical concepts inherent in these treaties' and a focus on re-spatialization.'' (Bowen and Mutersbaugh, 2013) Such issues of spatial reconnection, reembeddedness or re-entanglement will further be tackled in the next two chapters.

5. Concluding remarks

The study of Huybrechts (2008, 2010) on organizational forms in Chapter III, and the above study of Hutchens (2009, 2010) on institutional innovation, both offer valuable theoretical insights and rich empirical evidences for the dynamic interactions of key stakeholders in fair trade movement. While sharing vast similarities, the current research would, however, further emphasizes on the fluidic and contingent nature of transformation, muddling through all kinds of tensions and contradictions in non-unilinear and non-monistic manner. So far, this perspective has already guided us to some of the very core observations of the study. While the FLO/certification model was generally considered to result with extensive effects of **disembeddedness and disantanglement**, the movement sector in general, and WFTO member organizations in specific, encountered huge pressures of mainstreaming and competitions from the market of label products. The crisis and challenges, while perceived from heterogeneous groups of actors, managed to stir up differential reactions and generate contrasting outcomes.

In this chapter, WFTO-GS was being highlighted as a new model, among others, to counterbalance the influences of FLO/certification and to identify new positions under the era of "balkanization". Whether WFTO-GS may become a successful model remains to be proved in future, what seems highly certain is that movement dynamics was stagnated rather than terminated by the FLO/certification model. Successions and cycles of innovations can easily be anticipated, and WFTO-GS is inevitably just one among numerous others. New models, in combination with diverse strategies, either gradually undermine FLO/certification or force it to further improve itself. For instance, some of the more successful marketing FTOs, all strongly associated with WFTO, pioneered

one or another kind of brand company models, could be considered as crucial efforts of **reconnection, reembeddedness or re-entanglement.** The cases of Traidcraft and CTM Altromercado in Europe, specifically, offered important insights and prospects which might equally be practiced by Fair Circle in Hong Kong. As empirical evidences have sufficiently shown, problems related to the over-reliance on FLO/certification could be substantially remedied.

In the account of Wright on interstitial strategy, the comparison between its revolutionary and evolutionary anarchist versions, in particular, is highly revealing. "Whereas the revolutionary anarchist strategic scenario argues that eventually hard limits are encountered that cannot themselves be transformed from within the system, in this more evolutionary model the existing constraints can be softened to the point that a more accelerated process of interstitial transformation can take place until it too encounters new limits. There will thus be a kind of **cycle of extensions of social empowerment and stagnation as successive limits are encountered and eroded**. Eventually, if this process can be sustained, capitalism itself would be sufficiently modified and capitalist power sufficiently undermined that it no longer imposed distinctively capitalist limits on the deepening of social empowerment." (Wright, 2010a: 332-4)

What Wright does not further elaborate, but the current research attempts to demonstrate, will be how an evolutionary model of interstitial strategy manage to fuel the "cycle of extensions and stagnation", in which "successive limits are encountered and eroded" through the dynamic interactions among key stakeholders, as well as the dialectic interplay among contrasting and competing trajectories, in a complex and emergent manner. For fair trade is, after all, a broad and loose institutional framework, consists of complex knowledge/power domains, and subjects to continuous interpretations and reinterpretations. As we will see further on, spatial configuration and place specificity will play a crucial part in this process.

V Rutural strategy: the co-operatives and factories in Bangladesh

1. Dhaka: experiencing the aesthetics of anarchy

The "traffic rules" in Bangladesh

Group photo at Saidpur, field trip to Bangladesh in 2012.

The first and foremost thing you can never forget in traveling in Bangladesh is its road traffic. Whether in the huge urban sprawl of Dhaka, or on remote rural dust roads, the experiences are equally astonishing. In the Dhaka extended metropolitan area populating over 20 million people, there is virtually no traffic light at all. Buses, trucks, cars, motor tricycles, rickshaws and even horse carts squeeze into every inch of space from all directions, everything seem to be running into fatal chaos and gridlocks. Traffic jams occupy all the streets from east to west, from dawn till late, but sooner or latter, when you are just falling into deep despair, spaces suddenly open up in the front and you will still manage to arrive at the destination just on time - which, one must

be reminded, is locally defined as not exceeding one hour from the original schedule.

In rural Bangladesh the situation is even worse. Almost all of the roads, including essential highways serving as artilleries of the whole country, are basically wide enough to hold just one way traffic. Therefore, firstly, it is highly difficult for one vehicle to get pass another vehicle in the front. The driver has to twist cleverly in order to exploit the limited space on the road side, and speed up suddenly to beat the equally fast moving obstacle, just exactly as what F1 racers always attempt to do. Second and most problematically, there are always head on traffic from the opposite direction. They are equally employing the same techniques and performing the same horror show. There are, totally in an highly expected manner, chances of serious crash within the next few minutes. And actually you can always find vehicles turned upside down lying on the road side everyday.

This was eye-witnessed by a group of ten visitors from Hong Kong, who visited CORR Jute Works and Prokritee in Bangladesh in June 2012, one year after the Sri Lanka trip as mentioned in Chapter I. Four of us were also the same members who have headed for Sri Lanka. This was a completely different traffic experience when compared with that of the neighbouring country one year before. Although we might have similar traffic encounters some tens of years ago in mainland China, that were just fading memories as if they have happened centuries ago. Everybody were soon frightened by these new hair-raising traveling experiences. But surprisingly, just within the first few days, everybody have already get "adapted" to such "normal" situation, either fell into asleep or concentrating on one's MP3 during the trips, seemed to be totally ignoring what was happening just outside the bus windows.

Shan, one of the groupmates, was frequently sitting in the front seat just beside the driver. In one day, he saw three dead dogs and one dead lizard on the way of the prolonged eight-hour drive. He even found a zebra crossing somewhere in a small town! "If you are taking the zebra crossing seriously,

you are just committing suicide!" he said. But sooner or later, when Shan watched the driver continuously displaying his supra F1 racing skills, he began to appreciate the recurring patterns or even aesthetics of the traffic game. Everything seemed to be so chaotic were also running in close to perfect harmony. The seemingly anarchic road situations were governed by informal but explicit rules. From time to time, the close-to-crash incidents were well managed within safety zones. Vehicles swung slightly in the last 0.1 second and edged past each other within inches wide distance. Everything carried on fine as long as the driver did not fall into sleep. "I am not sure, honestly, whether this kind of system are more, or less dangerous than our traffic systems at home. It is just another kind of traffic system different from that of ours."

Shan continued to explain the observations he found in common throughout the trip, "In such a remote country, you apparently see the great gap from what you normally have in Hong Kong, or in other metropolitan areas in developed countries. Cultural shock is every minute and everywhere. But once when we encounter more and more, we simply understand that we cannot judge their behaviour with our standards. The common sense we develop at home is simply not the common sense here. Then we start to adjust ourselves, slowly learning from the situations and at the same time producing minute feedbacks to them. Through bit by bit and piece by piece, we gradually gain mutual understanding with each other and feel a sense of commonality and empathy, may be ultimately a sense of togetherness or fellowship. The ice wall between cultures seems sudden break up and the gap seems no longer significant. Just like when sitting next to the driver, I am both in a kind of inspect and respect for his work, my minor body gestures show my concern and support for him, but at the same time alerting him to observe road safety more seriously, though, with and only with his own means and techniques."

Such interesting experience made me recalled what Harvey (2009: 107) called the "banality of geographical evil", painfully pointing towards Western liberalism, in fact served as a disguise of neoliberalism, when time and again

being imposed onto the developing world, and geographical and anthropological knowledge is systematically neglected. Worst off, it is opportunistically appealed to in order to discredit unfavoured or promote favoured universal positions. "It happens to be convenient that the facts of geography, anthropology, and history can be mustered so specifically as to be hard to refute. While the general theory would suggest one outcome, the particularities in this place and time are so special and so strange to generate something entirely different. In this way the principles of general theories, like the standard 'structural adjustment' prescriptions of International Monetary Fund (to say nothing of all the standard teachings in the social sciences), can endlessly be protected against refutation at the same tie as the failures can be plausibly explained away as local aberrations."

The subtle example of road traffic, a sort of rather trivial interpersonal dynamics, can certainly also apply to the fair trade organizations, I personally guessed. We are coming to Bangladesh both inspecting and supporting their works.

The "unfair trade" in a fair trade trip

Unlike the trip to Sri Lanka in 2011, in this trip we did not visit scale up production lines of fair trade like Selyn. Instead, through the arrangements of CORR Jute Works, we managed to visit a mainstream garment factory among thousands that can be found within and around Dhaka soon after arriving in Bangladesh. Milton Suranjit Ratna, the Project and Development Manager of CORR Jute Works, seemed to be as eager to demonstrate what "unfair trade" look like in Bangladesh, in parallel to the fair trade projects we were looking for. The Basundhara Garment Ltd. was located at Central Dhaka. There was a total of 750 workers, over 90% were female (supposed to be) aged between 18 to 59, working for 10 hours per shift. They were migrant workers migrating from the rural areas all over Bangladesh. Only managerial and technical roles were preserved for men. Importing countries for Basundhara are mainly located in Europe including Germany and France. Around 200 thousand pieces of garment were exported per month, each piece costs around USD$

6.

The first things that came into our eyes were all sorts of posters exhibiting the codes of conduct being practiced to protect employee's rights, decorating all walls on the two sides of the wide staircases in Basundhara. Lengthy descriptions could be found concerning policies on minimum wages, maximum working hours, safety precautions, sick and maturity leaves, as well as the forbiddance of child labour, etc. I visited many similar factories in Mainland China before and these were the standard scenes supposed to be found in the export industrial zones. However, the posters being found in China were anyway written in Chinese, the posters in Basundhara were all written in English, which simply implied that their readers could only be the visitors especially coming from foreign countries like us, rather than the women workers who were unlikely to be able to read English at all!

The official minimum wage for Bangladesh was supposed to be 2,500 takas in 2012. It is just around 40% when compared to Guangdong area in Southern China, which has for long been considered as the centre of the "world factory". The seemingly limitless supply of cheap labour from rural China finally approached its limits, and was then replaced by the seemingly limitless supply of even cheaper labour in South and South East Asia. In order to maintain their so-called competitiveness in the throat-cutting battle of cost reduction under globalization, low-end industries especially like garment rushed into these regions without any delays. However, the legal and policy instruments regulating such emerging businesses were still far lagging behind. As to be discussed below, under the great pressure of anti-sweatshop movement starting from the 1990s, transnational brands were forced to initiate their own CSR or ethical trade programmes as measures of maintaining the social and environmental standards along the supply chains (Oxfam Hong Kong, 2004).

The aesthetics of anarchy, for sure, does not always result in happy endings. Ten months after our visit to Bangladesh, Rana Plaza located at Savar District in Dhaka collapsed and killed 1,133 people working in the garment factories. It

was considered as one of the worst industrial disasters in the world history.

2. The small "fair trade" and big "Fairtrade" in Bangladesh

The "semi-fair trade" of Aarong

After the visit to Basundhara, we still got some spare time before dinner, and Milton brought the group to one of the many "Aarongs" in Dhaka, in order for the members to appreciate a wider range of traditional handicrafts in Bangladesh (both garment or non-garment), just exactly like the shopping stops for souvenirs in the Sri Lanka trip in 2011 (Chapter I). "Aarong" literally means "bazaar" and was unmistakably characterized by its ethinic touch of Bangladesh local culture. It is a subsidiary of Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), considered the largest NGO in the world working on poverty issues in Bangladesh. The first Aarong was established in 1978, shortly after the independence of Bangladesh and the formation of BRAC in 1972, and was until recent mainly serving the local market. Aarong worked as the marketing arm of BRAC which generated income and revitalized traditional culture through working with the most disadvantaged groups of artisans, of which 85% of them are women. Nowadays, apart from its own production arm (named Ayesha Abed Foundation (AAF) Centres after the BRAC founder' wife) which operated more than 600 production centres, Aarong also sourced 800 other independent suppliers, thus creating more than 60,000 job opportunities in total (Choudhury, 2010).

Undoubtedly, Aarong exhibited key contrasts with the export oriented, mass producing industries in Bangladesh. It demonstrated the potentials of localized or domestic fair trade, producing traditional customs and handicrafts targeting the local rather than foreign consumers, many of which could even be considered as coming from "the bottom of the pyramid" market. Instead of scale up the production sites, Aarong tended to decentralize production sites and dispersed them into the rural areas. It created possibilities for women

workers who did not possess the capacities, or simply were not willing to work inside the factories, thus allowing them to stay close to their families or even made handicrafts at home, outsourcing from the production centres or suppliers. Although principles of fair trade were recognized by Aarong, it was by far not a focal concern of the already well developed organization. It seemed that the concept of "fair trade" was more relevant only to its export component, targeting consumers mainly in Britain and Canada. Social accountability and social audit was mainly managed by Aarong internally, rather than going through third party or collaboration with other FTOs. With its gigantic size, Aarong simply develops a unique business model totally on its own feet, which could be comparable to the FTO brand companies discussed in Chapter IV.

However, this particular model of Aarong was not without controversy. Instead of working with more the democratically managed co-operatives, Aarong mainly worked with privately owned small enterprises. With its vastly spread of production sites, monitoring and regulation was an inevitably huge challenge. To ensure all the suppliers to compile with social and environmental standards could be an extremely complicated task. According to Choudhury, the Social Compliance Unit was just formed when he was working as an intern of Aarong in 2010, and was participating in formulating the policies of the organization. "I have worked for three months and on that time found some of the problems that Aarong suffering...to work with making policies I had to work with other departments. Especially with the quality control and merchandise order departments. I found lack of communication between those departments with other departments. I worked closely with the producer for conducting social audit. Most of them have problems with the costing. With the current costing system they cannot afford to produce quality products...Foundation managers are always in production pressure. That's why they are reluctant to implement the compliance activity in the field level. Without any representative it is really difficult to implement compliance activity in field level." (Choudhury, 2010)

Such observations were roughly echoed by Milton, who brought us for

shopping in Aarong. Puzzled by the size of the mall and the wide range of merchandises, group members found the trendy and fashionable Aarong looked more like a mainstream department store, rather than fair trade shop of the normal type.When being asked if the products sold in Aarong is fair trade in nature, Milton replied with a definite "no" accompanied by a cunning smile. He thought that Aarong has already transformed into profit chasing entity, provided with its exceptional commercial success for over three decades. The management has also been independent from BRAC in order to preserve financial flexibility. In other words, the business operations were no longer reporting to the governance bodies of BRAC, which imposed much stricter internal controls and were held accountable to its donors and supporters. Just like many of the Grameen mobile phone outlets in Dhaka, being established by the famous Grameen Bank, Aarong also started with a civil society and social economy background but the boundary between it and the mainstream corporations has become increasingly blur.

Producer FTOs of diverse trajectories

CORR Juteworks

Whether Milton was delivering a more fair or bias judgement on Aarong remains an unknown to us. What seems to be certain is CORR Juteworks represents a very different path of fair trade practices, and the diverse trajectories of development were also apparently witnessed during our visits to CORR Juteworks and Prokritee - the two major trading partners of Fair Circle in Bangladesh. CORR Juteworks was founded by Caritas and Prokritee founded by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), both carrying heavy Western religious background and initiated operations soon after the independence of Bangladesh. Just like Aarong, both have specialized in handicrafts and devoted to women empowerment, continually involving in fair trade for 40 years already. However, the cultural lag between the organizations and the so called international standards of fair trade, as well as between the two organizations themselves, could still unmistakably be identified and the contrasts never be greater. Could such a diverse batch of

people and organizations and institutions, principles and practices, still be meaningful placed under the loose umbrella of "fair trade"? That was the key question puzzling us during the trip.

Comparing with Prokritee, CORR Juteworks was by far a more traditional FTO, carrying significant birthmarks inherited from NGOs. It also seemed to be less business oriented but more development oriented. This can be forcefully demonstrated by the sheer fact that it was until the last day of visit, when everybody in the group were packing busily inside the Juteworks' own hostel for our return trip to Hong Kong, Milton suddenly recalled his memories and reluctantly told us that we have forgotten to visit their showroom, just one floor downstairs, decorating with all the organization's finest handicrafts, containing most categories we have not yet even seen before. Everybody rushed downstairs all at once, and ran into chaos for checking out for the products. But price tags were seriously lacking and when members rushed to pay for all sorts of souvenirs they grasped at the greatest speed from the selves, the casher became panic and virtually could not handle all the transactions properly. Many of us, who were running out of time and have to rush to the airport immediately, simply left the showroom empty handed! One must be reminded that as a FTO, CORR Juteworks has been independent of Caritas and not receiving funding any more for many years. It was supposed to have to maximize their sales volume besides upholding the virtues of social development and social justice!

The capital letters CORR actually refered to "Christian Organization for Relief and Rehabilitation", and since the formation it served as a rehabilitation program under Caritas Bangladesh. Until recently the Board of Trustees still consisted of 3 members of Caritas background, including the chairman Dr. Benedict Alo D'Rozario, and also the Lifetime Member and Founder, Father Richard W. Trimm and Sister Mary Lillian. The remaining 6 members included 5 representatives from different artisan groups, elected by the artisans with a three-year term. The last member was Bertha Gity Baroi, the current Director of CORR Juteworks. From July 2010 to June 2011, the total export of the FTO worth USD$ 808,569 with 47 buyers coming from 17 countries. Recently it

worked with 168 co-operative groups consisted of 4,200 artisans distributed in 19 districts of Bangladesh, which were organized under fully autonomous status. The number of artisans in each group ranged from 20 to 100 members, but the standard was 20 to 30 members. CORR Juteworks staff would make regular visits to ensure the groups were following the organizational objectives and ethical guidelines. In order to achieve CORR Juteworks' core objective of "holistic development", the groups organized different activities including:

1. Socio-economic services: group development fund, small credit fund and provident fund for the artisans;

2. Capacity building: production and quality training, leadership training, awareness on gender & social rights such as trafficking and good governance;

3. Health and nutrition facilities: emergency medical assistances and health care programs such as eye camps, health camps;

4. Environment and climate program: such as tree planting in indigenous area and in Terracotta group;

5. Services to the community: gender equity, corporate social responsibility, external relations and network building.

On his namecard, Milton was titled as the Project and Development Manager, rather than the Marketing and Sales Manager of CORR Juteworks, although he was handling all the deals with importers from Hong Kong like Fair Circle. The title seems to once again revealed the secrets of the management style of the organization. Milton, as an ex-journalist and social activist, who was even sent to the jail in his early years, was still highly outspoken and critical of the political situations of Bangladesh. He talked a lot on the current affairs and the civil society in general, including the recent government persecution of Mohammad Yunus the founder of Grameen Bank and winner of Nobel Peace Prize, rather than the business operations of CORR Juteworks in specific. He

also talked a lot on their advocacy work like the dowry system and domestic violence problems. He thought that only fundamental institutional changes could ultimately liberate women from their chains of Hindi or Muslim gender discrimination practices. After all, CORR Juteworks was not only working on economic empowerment, but also on cultural, legal and policy aspects that hinder the improvements of gender and wider social equality.

On the final day of our visit, Milton once again brought us to see the "not the usual" case of fair trade production site - a refugee camp in Maipur, Dhaka. Political and institutional rather than economic discrimination was the main theme. Although Bangladesh is a homogenous country in terms of ethnicity, different minority groups could be found on the accounts of the historical and political causes. After the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971, some Pakistanis could not return to their country and were left behind as refugees. Without any citizen status, it was difficult for them to find jobs in the city. However, the government seldom cared about the refugees and their welfare. The refugee camps were built in poor sanitary and safety standards. It was not until 2008, the Bangladesh government granted citizenship to the refugees. But most of the refugees still found it difficult to relocate outside the refugee camps as they could not afford the expensive living costs. They still relied on craftsmanship and causal jobs to earn a minimal living. With the support of the BRAC and Red Cross, some schools were set up and small amount of micro-credits was offered. There was also a handicraft group supported by CORR Juteworks inside the refugee camp, one of the six such kind of groups in that area. There were 20 members in this group, who mainly produces jute shoes and jute houseware.

The basic orientations towards "holistic development", however, did not simply imply CORR Juteworks was opting for rapid and fundamental social changes, fighting for justice in a radical and straight forward manner, and being less sensitive of the religious and cultural barriers towards fairer trade. Just the opposite and certainly also quite out of our expectations, at the community and practical level CORR Juteworks adopted a much more conservative approach. While the Hong Kong group was arranged a visit to a women

handicraft co-operative near Basaril in South Bangladesh, we were surprised to find that the members consisted of two very different batches of producers. The first consisted of 60 women producers working on reed products seemed to be closely bonded with each other as a cohesive collective. Although they still maintained their production individually at home as a means of balance for domestic duties, as Catholics they still managed to meet at the production centre and pray together every Thursday. Judging from the some 20 producers who met with us, they were highly cheerful and laughing and joking with each other all the time, even with strangers like us around them. Apparently they have developed strong mutual support and community identities among themselves.

The second batch, consisted of only 4 producers working on bamboo products living some 60 km away, however, did not often join the group activities. When visiting these bamboo artisans we were all surprised to found that, it was actually all the men in the village involved in speaking, and all women sat behind quietly or just busying elaswhere preparing coconut milk or fruit or snacks for the guests. One woman even used a bamboo made fan and began to fan cool air for me under the summer heat! Although, not surprisingly, during bamboo processing demonstration sessions, we finally found that it was really the women who were responsible for all the manual procedures. Men were still sitting next to them taking up all the tasks of verbal explanations. When asked why bamboo production seemed more like family business than the co-operative model, the CORR Juteworks official accompanying us said that this was a special model of "family co-operative"!

The group mates, with all the puzzles unresolved, returned to Dhaka and asked Milton for better explanations. Milton, being working with CORR Juteworks for more than ten years, seemed to be totally familiar with all the model answers and our groupmates called just him the "diplomat". He was totally not surprised by our findings and comfortably responded to our queries, that the latter village we visited was from the lower caste of a minority Hindi tribe, who still preserved a highly traditional culture which carried heavy elements of gender discrimination. The purpose of working with them was to

build up a relationship by the guaranteed employment opportunities and helped the group to export their products. CORR Juteworks would further facilitate the Hindi community to voice their concerns in the society. The partnership could only start with relatively simple tasks of economic empowerment, rather than address the deep-rooted social and cultural injustices directly. "Though the change in the community is subtle, at least some women are empowered. Men are no longer the sole representatives to express the community concerns. Traditionally, women were seldom allowed to meet strangers and their activities were restricted to private spectrum. However, their social status has been promoted a lot since they join the co-operative," said Milton. The gender issues could only be gradually raised after the general material conditions have been improved. Any brutal interventions by external parties would not only doom to fail, but created troubles to the communities and the women themselves.

Prokritee

After travelling a few days with CORR Juteworks, we moved on to visit Prokritee's project sites. The first stop was its headquarter on Mirpur Road in Central Dhaka. Obviously the first sight which attracted our attention was its huge outlet store, the SOURCE (an abbreviation of Self-help Organization for Underdeveloped Rural Community Economies), nicely decorated with a wide range of charming, fashionable handicrafts, occupied the whole ground floor and virtually looked like a mini-museum of Bangladesh folk art! The more popular items included various kinds of handmade papers made of (waste) jute, silk, (waste) cotton, pineapple leaf, etc. Also popular for customers were our natural soaps, jute bags and home decor. It served as a wholesale centre catering both local retailers and international buyers. Prokritee maintained strong marketing and sales, product development and design units on the second floor of the headquarter, which were responsible for connecting the local and international buyers, delivering project designs and layouts to other units, and making sure that the product styles and qualities can meet the requirements of the international market.

The ambitions of Prokritee to preserve its status as a traditional FTO as well as developing into a more competitive business was clearly stated on its leaflets: "Prokritee is committed to moral and social values and strictly follows ethical practices in business and the ideals of FTO. It deals in handicrafts and bulk of its business is done with its Fair Trade partners. Prokritee at the same time plans to come also to the mainstream of the global handicraft business with renewed organizational strength and capacity building. It has done a structural reorganization and review and revision of its service rules and procedures and practices as compiled in the existing manuals." Following its mission and operational principles, the enterprises employ local women in poverty, who have little to no income or land and who acted as heads of their households (such as widows, separated, and divorced women). Prokritee was some of the earliest among WFTO members to acquire the WTFO-GS status successfully. In parallel, it also applied for the IMO certification and worked with international brands like Body Shop, and has been increasingly exploring the potentials in the mainstream export market especially in Europe.

All products were sourced from the 9 enterprises and 15 producer groups all over Bangladesh, altogether working with 1,500 women producers. All units are individually supervised by a unit manager with the help of a producer management committee, with its 7-8 members elected by the producers. The members often meet once a month and discuss some complicated issues, such as order target, recruitment, salary setting, new product development, raw material, skill development, capacity building and health care etc. Ever since the years of Mennonite Central Committee, job creation and income generation for rural women have been the major objectives of Prokritee. Economic empowerment is unmistakably the prime mission of the organization. The average wage that producers earn was 3,000 taka per month. In addition to it, the producers receive two holiday bonuses, a dividend based on the sales of the enterprises, and 100 taka per month for medical assistance. The enterprises also set aside some money for community development funds and skill development funds. Producers are encouraged to save money but most of them only save the minimum amount that the enterprises asked them to save, 25 to 100 taka per month.

One of the enterprises we visited was named Hajiganj Handicraft located in Saidpur, a city at the northern tip of Bangladesh. It produced crochet and basket products exclusively for export to USA, Canada, Japan, Australia and Italy. Producers could work on the home-based or centre-based basis. Centre-based workers have to work 6 days and from 8:00am to 5:00pm and could earn more than the home based workers. By then Hajiganj employed 35 permanent workers, women all from refugee background, were all centre-based workers. They were allow to bring children under 2 years old to work. They could earn even up to 5,000 to 7,500 taka per month and contribute 40% to 45% of their family income. There were also seasonal workers which mainly worked at home.

Ahmed, the general manager, brought us around the production centre. The venue was small and nicely situated in a rural setting. Within minutes we have be able to greet all the producers scattered around, and the interpersonal relationship among them seemed to be very close. Communication and coordination between the management and the producers could easily be enhanced. Centre-based production was so much different from home based ones, we thought. It conveyed a very different image of fair trade and relations of production, since it worked out more like a factory of mini-size and producers perform the roles of wage labour, just that the factory was located near their homes within walking distances, with a relative pleasant working environment and would be much less stressful than the mainstream factories. Obviously, the women producers were able to free themselves, at least partially, from the burdens of domestic duties. On the other hand, such arrangement also facilitated their skill development and contributed to their high productivity and high income level. From the perspective of Prokritee, the higher quality of products could also readily be guaranteed.

In the next day, we visited the Eastern Screen Print Enterprise as well as the Mymenshing paper and soap project in Saidpur region. The settings of production centre and the styles of management were highly similar to Hajiganj. Collectively, the enterprises of Prokritee demonstrated a specific model of fair

trade production, which could be so different from that of CORR Jute Works, that we could have seldom imagined. The elephant's ear vs. the trunk, maybe.CORR Jute Works as a traditional FTO was mainly working with women co-operatives counting on home based production. Prokritee, on the other hand, was operating mainly through a federation of 9 enterprises which resembled social enterprises in Hong Kong. It will be the managers, rather than the co-operative members themselves, who bore the major responsibilities of business management, although producers were still represented by the producer management committees. The enterprises could be considered as a compromize between alternative and mainstream practices, attempting to strive a balance between fairness and efficiency. Although job creation and economic empowerment was highlighted, for sure its potentials of social and cultural transformation could not be underestimated. These were simply part of the branding strategy which delivered a less "politicized" image which might better suited its wider audiences, we speculated. But it did not imply Prokritee was not out-spoken, especially in the incidents like Rana Plaza collapse.

3. "Unfair trade": from Zhili Factory fire to Rana Plaza collapse

A groundbreaking moment for consumption activism

As already mentioned in Chapter III, Oxfam International launched the "Make Trade Fair Campaign" in 2001, as Mainland China was also admitted membership to WTO in the same year. The "Coffee Wedge", a mini-campaign focusing on the world coffee market, was also launched in 2002. These were, however, by far the terminal of a long stream of campaign stories. Various "wedges" and series of advocacies have been promoted all the way until recent years. Although, to a large extent resulted from the rapidly changing external environment, WTO has gradually fading as the target of campaigning, transnational brands continued to be the focuses especially after Nestle was discovered to be a fragile opponent which opened up much spaces for manoeuvre. Consumer activism and threats of boycott - strategies for long be

adopted by other campaign-oriented NGOs like Greenpeace, was "discovered" to be equally effective for Oxfam. A number of giant brands coming from different sectors, being condemned for various offences, have successively been targeted since 2002.

In retrospect, the "brief stop" of Fair Coffee in Hong Kong and the cease of the "Coffee Wedge" to become a campaign priority was, at least in the case of OHK, due to the pressing schedule of the coming "Labour Wedge" - the next mini-campaign focus to be ridden on. The summer Olympics took place at Sidney in 2004 was perceived as a golden opportunity for the anti-sweatshop movement worldwide, with "traditional" targets of Nike, Adidas, Puma and so on to be pinpointed. However, the issue has been becoming extremely tricky not only since most if not all of the suppliers for sports brands, by then, were located in Mainland China (actually Southern China right next to Hong Kong), but also for the simple fact that Beijing was just granted the right to host the nest Olympics in 2008 ! OHK has, instead of creeping away quietly from the main stage and attempted to maintain a lower profile, decisively made the strategic choice of committing to the campaign proactively. The major reason behind was, without any doubt, to preempt other Oxfams for the temptations to adopt more radical means - at least being perceived by the Mainland officials, and trigger revengous actions that might induce potentially disastrous effects on OHK. The steering role of OHK in the "Labour Wedge", in return, demanded an equal weight of prioritized commitment and resource devotion. Fair Coffee, by then, seemed to be something of least urgency which caught minimal attentions from the OHK management.

Even from the perspective of local social movement, the OHK "Labour Wedge" being launched in 2004 was fully "revolutionary" in nature. Huge size posters of "Let's Turn the Garment Industry Inside Out" were exhibited in all the major metro stations, heavily bargained by the fundraising arm for applying concession rates of advertising. Street events were organized including at Mongkok's pedestrian area, right next to the street famous for selling sports shoes. Research data of sportswear factories were even collected through OHK's partner NGOs working in the Guangdong export industrial zones.

Infographics in the form of animation was produced to summarize how unjust global supply chains were. A resource kit on CSR was published and sent out to companies, business associations and government bodies. Garment traders which have for long served as the middlemen between Mainland suppliers and overseas brands were also named and shamed. All these could be conceived as highly risky steps that may anger the ordinary donors who merely understood OHK as a traditional charity organization. It could be obviously considered as a show case for large scale campaigns, and seemed to be something hardly achievable any more from the standards of today. What another historical moment for social movements, just how lucky I felt I could be.

Large size posters of OHK "Labour Wedge" in metro stations in 2004.

Zhili Factory fire: anti-sweatshop movement on the "world factory"

Many labour NGOs and anti-sweatshop activists based in Hong Kong associated their historical origins to the specific incident of Zhili Factory fire - a fire that took place at a Hong Kong invested toy factory killing 83 young women workers in Shenzhen in late 1993. All the causalities was found to be locked on the shop floor in the fire, during the peak season of production for the delivery of Christmas orders. One of the survivors, Xiao Ying, lost two arms and one leg during the fire when she was 18 years old. It took more than five years for her to struggle with the fatal injuries before achieving a complete recovery. She emerged to become one of the most out-spoken victims, participating in many

actions fighting for compensations, visiting families of the deceased and starting a role of activist herself in the labour movement. Under the strong support of OHK, she later even established her own labour NGO in the home town Chongqing and served workers sharing similar misfortunes. Professor Pun Ngai, among others, also worked with her quite closely. Xiao Ying was generally considered as a historic icon representing the ill fates of the first generation migrant workers in the emerging "world factory" of Mainland China.

It was equally in early 1990s, that the anti-sweatshop movement gained its momentum in Northern countries.The movement was characterized by its strategy of disclosing sweatshops linked with the transnational brands, urging them to take CSR seriously and respect workers' rights along their global supply chains. High-profile brand names and retailers such as Nike, Disney and Wal-Mart became the primary targets. The campaigns were normally organized by a diverse cluster of human rights, religious, student and consumer NGOs as well as the Northern trade unions. Distinct from the traditional labour movement, these campaigns shares many similarities of new social movements and has become an icon of the global justice movement (Yu, 2006). One of the most extensive and long-lasting campaigns was the Nike Campaign, which has managed to induce long term and far-reaching impacts. Infamous for its frequent labor abuses and poor working conditions of workers among the supplier chain, the Nike Company started to became the focus of media attention in 1990s. These ultimately led to the emergence of various CSR or ethical trade programmes and the formulation of private labour and environmental standards. Regulation systems based on corporate codes of conduct and contracting of third party auditors for verification gradually became the norms of the export industries in developing countries (Klein, 2000).

NGOs and activists in Hong Kong, on the contrary, started to recognized their potentially unique positions in this global movement. Hong Kong, as one of the newly industrialized "Asian Tigers", has for long been the garment manufacturing centre of the world. Since the early 1980s, factories started to migrate and mushroom all over Southern China, with Hong Kong remained as the centre of producer services. The model of "shop at the front, workshop at

the back" continued to proliferate throughout the decades. The Zhili Fire not only reminded people of the dangers faced by millions of migrant workers, but also demonstrated how the predicament of workers is closely related to Hong Kong capital. In following years after the fire, activists turned to investigate the general conditions of Hong Kong invested toy factories and highlighted "occupational safety" as the most serious problem among others. According to Xu (2012:79), the toy campaigners attempted to achieve their goals through three kinds of approaches: research, campaign and lobbying. From 1996 to 2002, NGOs conducted a number of studies and published more than five reports on labor rights, occupational safety and health conditions of toy factories in Southern China, concerning products all being labelled with Disney, McDonald's or Mattel. Since Hong Kong invested factories were the biggest producers for these brands, the Hong Kong Toys Council and the International Toys and Game Fair in Hong Kong also became the main targets of protests. Later the Toy Campaign was taken over by Students and Scholars Against Corporate Misbehavior (SACOM) of Hong Kong , which furthered a specific focus on the workers of Disney's suppliers.

The "Labour Wedge" of OHK emerged from such a local background. One of the core component of the campaign in 2004 was the publication of the *Oxfam Report: Turning Garment Industry Inside Out.* At that time, I was assigned the role of editor for its Chinese translation, and the report was published in form of a book in Hong Kong, renamed as *Who betrayed the Labour Rights? Workers lives under Global Supply Chains.* From then on, it was widely cited by movement organizations especially for those specialized in anti-sweatshop campaigns. One of the main message in it was: purchasing practices along the supply chain did matter. The brands should be held responsible. Various stakeholders bearing huge business interests could make a change in it. "The mobility of capital towards low-cost and labour-intensive locations cause intense competition among producers worldwide and even a 'race to the bottom' in workers' wages and working conditions. Such power asymmetry between multinational buyers and their suppliers means that big buyers have the upper hand: these buyers have more bargaining power with suppliers in deciding the price, quality, delivery time, and other aspects of production...hence decide

workers' wages, working hours and other working conditions in the supplier factories." (Oxfam Hong Kong, 2004)

"Turning Garment Industry Inside Out"

Oxfam Hong Kong
April, 2004

Li & Fung Limited is an example of a worldwide trading company that manages a global logistics chain for its retailer clients and partners. It is a full-package provider that brokers high-volume garments and fashion accessories.The firm is headquartered in Hong Kong, China, and is listed on its stock market. It has an annual turnover of about US$4.2 billion, employing about 5,000 people worldwide. In 2001, 72% of the turnover was in the garments segment; regionally, orders came mainly from North America (75%) and Europe (21 %).

The firm's specialty is supply-chain management within its global supply network. It does not own any production facilities, but manages the "full package": product development, product sourcing and product delivery, including quality control and on-time delivery."
Li & Fung presides over a large network of contract suppliers in China and other Asian developing countries, notably Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, as well as in Egypt, Madagascar, Morocco and South Africa. The firm

---

> *generally takes between 30 to 70 % of a factory's output - less would not give it the clout to secure orders or reserve production capacity for incoming orders, and more would make it over-dependent on the supplier. In sum, the company's transnationalization process is based not on the possession of domestic assets that can be exploited abroad (as was the case for many conventional transnational corporations), but on linkages, tapping into the resources of partners and sharing the risk with them."*

In parallel to the "Labour Wedge", the China Programme Unit of OHK also made grants to a number of grassroot NGOs working on labour issues both in Hong Kong and Mainland China, implementing a series community level projects under the name of "poverty alleviation", ranging from worker support, community economy, legal advices to culture, education and leisure activities. Under the tight control of labour policy and restricted unionization in Mainland, obviously such "on-site" projects were highly sensitive from the onset. In general, these projects tended to adopt much lower profiles, distanced from politically sensitive issues and figures, as well as concentrated their efforts in direct services rather than advocacy. Many NGOs even tried to develop collaborative relationships with provincial and township official bodies, in order to gain patronages and protections, and systematically avoid political risks for their fragile existences. Although carried out in a highly cautious manner, such labour projects could still managed to perform very special roles, namely to provide "first-hand" information within the very core the "world factory", for which the anti-sweatshop movement was by far lacking and deadly expecting.

Although the "on-site" labour projects continued to operate smoothly for some further years, OHK's engagement in the "Labour Wedge" terminated soon when the international Oxfam family started to reorient its campaign focuses, once again, in 2006. Manufacturing workers were no longer the key concern, food and agriculture returned to become the main focus. This seemed to be peculiar to outsiders but could be highly justified to the Oxfams in particular due to the fact that, over the years, climate change has emerged as a global hotspot of prime importance, and billions of peasants and farmers have increasingly been suffering under extreme climate situations. The volatility of global food prices

further induced tremendous sufferings for poor populations in the non-producing regions. The intensity of land grab by agribusiness in less developed regions like the Amazon, Sub-Sahara Africa and Middle Asia also caught rising international attentions. It took not long for the Oxfam family to initiate a brand new "GROW Campaign" during 2008, at the moment I was leaving OHK and started to work for Hong Kong Polytechnic University, which was in fact tailored perfectly for the global food crisis later in the decade.

The entanglement of fair trade and ethical trade

The segregation and compartmentalization of the campaign topics, however, did not totally fit into the complexities and subtleties of real world situations. Some of the most marginalized farmers in the world were, in fact, landless plantation workers rather than smallholders. As have been briefly touched upon in Chapter IV, their poor working and living conditions were largely resulted from the irresponsible purchasing practices of transnational corporations and giant brands. The power inbalances along the food supply chains were by no means different from that found in the garment or toy supply chains. The fair or unfair trade practices, whether implemented in coffee plantations or garment factories, casted equally positive or negative consequences on the labourers. It was however, totally logical for OHK to preserve their labour projects at the community level for the long run, at the same time dropping all the "labour" elements in its massive campaigns, especially before and after the sensitive periods of the Beijing Olympics. By then, the fair trade projects of OHK started from 2002 was also combined into the GROW Campaign, but with its major operations shifted to the newly established FTHK (Chapter III). Equally, OHK also systematically avoided all talks about land grab in the local version of the GROW Campaign. Obviously, "property hegemony" has emerged as one of the most politically sensitive topic in Hong Kong, and OHK simply did not want to get its hands dirty on it.

Which brands do the big food and beverage companies own? (Joki Gauthier for Oxfam 2012 cited in Oxfam International, 2013)

One of the major targets of the GROW Campaign was the purchasing practices and codes of conduct of the transnational brands. The *Oxfam Report: Behind the Brands, Food Justice and the "Big 10" Food and Beverage Companies*, published in 2013, featuring the instrument called "Behind the Brands Scorecard", which systematically examined the "Big 10" company policies in seven critical yet neglected areas for sustainable agricultural production: women, small-scale farmers, farm workers, water, land, climate change and transparency. Important foundings included companies were overly secretive about their agricultural supply chains, making claims of 'sustainability' and 'social responsibility' difficult to verify. None of the "Big 10" have adequate policies to protect local communities from land and water grabs along their supply chains. Most companies did not provide small-scale farmers with equal access to their supply chains and no company has made a commitment to ensure that small-scale producers are paid a fair price. Minimal efforts have been paid to address the exploitation of women small-scale farmers and workers in their supply chains. In particular, the report called to "establish supply chain standards and policies which ensure that agricultural supply chains meet

international labour standards established under International Labour Organization Conventions. This includes freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively, fair working conditions that protect workers' health and safety, an anonymous grievance process to register and address labor violations, and public recognition that all agricultural workers should earn enough to meet the basic needs of their families - a 'living wage'." (Oxfam International, 2013:36)

Table 1: Behind the Brands: food companies scorecard

Legend: 8 – 10 Good · 6 – 7 Fair · 4 – 5 Some progress · 2 – 3 Poor · 0 – 1 Very poor

Rank	Company	Score	Land	Women	Farmers	Workers	Climate	Transparency	Water	Total
1	Nestlé	54%	3	4	5	6	6	7	7	38/70
2	Unilever	49%	3	2	7	6	5	5	6	34/70
3	Coca-Cola	41%	1	5	3	6	5	5	4	29/70
4	PEPSICO	31%	2	2	3	3	3	4	5	22/70
5	MARS	30%	1	1	5	4	3	5	2	21/70
=6	Danone	29%	1	1	1	3	3	6	5	20/70
=6	Mondelez International	29%	1	2	4	4	3	4	2	20/70
=8	General Mills	23%	1	2	1	3	2	2	5	16/70
=8	Kellogg's	23%	1	2	1	2	2	4	4	16/70
10	Associated British Foods plc	19%	1	1	2	3	1	3	2	13/70

This scorecard was made on 26 February 2013. The latest version is available at http://oxfam.org/behindthebrands

Behind the brands: food companies scorecard. (Oxfam International, 2013)

As being observed by Hughes, Wrigley and Buttle (2008:356-7), the anti-sweatshop movements in the UK and US differ in key ways, demonstrating the huge contrasts pf socio-political contexts under which their ethical trade programmes have emerged. There has been a striking difference in terms of the sectors targeted by the consumer movements and media exposures of the corporate supply chains. While both food and clothing retailers in the UK have been campaigned against and forced to engage in ethical trading programmes, it was mainly the clothing retailers and brand manufacturers in the USA who have received the most attention. US food retailers have not been subject to the

campaigns that have equally targeted UK food retailers and US apparel retailers. While the UK's Ethical Trade Initiative (ETI), started under such background, encompassed most leading retailers from both food and clothing, US multi-stakeholder initiatives focused almost exclusively on the clothing sector.

Smith and Barrientos (2005:194) further adds, "In response to civil society pressures, many UK supermarkets include minimum labour standards as one of the criteria producers have to meet. Ethical trade has been established amongst UK supermarkets since the foundation of the ETI in 1998, of which all but one of the major supermarkets are members. Suppliers are typically monitored for compliance with a code of labour practice in a manner characteristic of industrial coordination in buyer driven, modular chains."

Smith and Barrientos (2005) move on to argue, the different logics of supply chain relationship could be found in fair trade and ethical trade, which have for long been adopting unique trajectories of development and targeting specific audiences, their distinctions were however blur under the trend of Fairtrade certification and mainstreaming. In particular, the sales of Fairtrade products in supermarkets have greatly boosted their market growth. In order to meet the rapidly rising consumer demand, fruit, tea, flowers and wine were increaingly sourced from plantations (Chapter III). Purchasing practices and codes of conduct under ethical trade, on the contrary, were always complained to be poorly managed and abused, leading to sub-optimal labour conditions, with brands and supermarkets further exposed to continual movement pressures, like the Oxfam Report just mentioned. "As a result of issues such as these, some have argued that ethical trade needs to move beyond simple code compliance to a more developmental and holistic approach. This includes addressing value chain relations between buyers and suppliers and facilitating change through more stable and sustainable sourcing. This would involve a move in the direction of at least some of the principles of fair trade. While products may not necessarily be labelled fair trade, it implies a greater relational commitment between the different actors along the value chain." (ibid:194-5)

Raynolds (2014), through her trace of the history of Fairtrade certified flowers, accounts for Fairtrade certification's extension to tea and banana plantations since 1994. Fairtrade standards have increasingly facilitated the incorporation of new products and large-scale enterprises, based on the argument that if the goal was to benefit "disadvantaged producers" then landless labourers should be included (EFTA, 1998). For instance, Fairtrade flower standards were developed in 2001 in response to requests from a major Swiss supermarket. "FLO documents often refer to disadvantaged 'producers' in a vague way to include workers as well as farmers, even though the term 'producer' normally refers to a firm or farmer. While plantations and workers are at times explicitly referenced, they tend to disappear in the core small farmer narrative. Large enterprises and workers have a similarly unclear place in Fairtrade certification institutions and governance." (Raynolds, 2014:503). In response to critiques that certifications have not gone far enough in bolstering labor standards or labor rights, FLO (2012) announced a ''New Workers Rights Strategy for Fairtrade'' with the following objective, "We want to move beyond the traditional CSR paradigm of social compliance based on standard-setting and auditing. While audits are a tool, Fairtrade's focus should be to help build the conditions whereby workers have the tools and ability to negotiate their own wages and terms of work." This new strategy pursued a ''beyond auditing'' approach, and called for reinforcing Fairtrade's transformative power to ensure that workers can ''negotiate their own'' conditions.

Davenport and Low (2012), following the same line of argument, criticize FLO's adoption of the term "producer" conflated a number of categories of actors, not all of who benefit equally from Fairtrade practices. In particular, the authors point out that the noble peasant farmer and the skilled artisan were traditionally singled out and highlighted as the ideal typical "producer", while waged labour was obscured in fair trade. They further suggest that the development project underpinning Fairtrade must re-engage with the project of empowering the most vulnerable - whether they are landless farm labourers or casual workers in craft enterprises. They suggest, from the narratives and visual depictions on FLO affiliates' websites, that there should be a third emerging fair trade archetype which encompassed the plantation worker: the "empowered decision maker".

This archetype should contrast markedly with the narratives of traditional plantations where workers are typically downtrodden, if not physically or verbally abused. Riisgaard (2015) goes on to claim that, Fairtrade's focus on stabilizing the contractual relations between buyer and producer, such that importers must adhere to generic trade standards focusing on contract security, was unique among sustainability standards. This could help addressing the key precondition for a stabilization of coventional labour management systems as the stability of demand made it not just feasible but also desirable to stabilize output and enhance effectivity.

Rana Plaza collapse: fair traders campaign against "unfair trade"

In newly industrialized countries like Bangladesh, millions of migrant workers, especially females, just similar to those working in the co-operatives or production centres of CORR Jute Works or Prokritee, still managed to left the fields and families and moved into the export industrial zones, in hoping to earn better livings outside farming or other primary production functions, as well as more independent lives outside the patriarchal Muslim families. In Savar, an administrative district of Dhaka some 24 km Northwest of the capital city, Rana Plaza was originally built as an eight-storey commercial centre, but all the upper floors were converted into garment factories with just a few retail shops left on the lower floors. Cracks on the walls were already found on 23 April 2013 but the owner ignored the warnings, and workers were still forced to return to work in the following day. When it collapsed during the rush hours in the early morning, more than 3,000 workers were squeezing into the limited spaces of the building. Besides the 1,133 casualties, some further 2,500 were injured, with many losing their limbs permanently. Benetton, Mango, Primark and Walmart were among the dozen of brand names found to be sourcing from Rana Plaza.

Although serious industrial accidents were commonly found in South and South East Asia, and have already killed hundreds of workers during the past decade, they were hardly comparable with the scale of the Rana Plaza collapse. Such huge disaster decisively shocked the world and aroused new concerns about the sweatshop situations in the new export industrial zones. Similar to Zhili Fire

that took place in Shenzhen exactly 20 years ago, Rana Plaza collapse also stirred up new waves of anti-sweatshop movement in the Northern countries.The effectiveness of established CSR programmes and ethical codes of fashion brands were seriously questioned, new initiatives were demanded to improved occupational safety, among other welfare protections, for the garment workers. Consequently, "Fashion Revolution" was launched a global flagship campaign asking the brands to improve transparency and accountability of their supply chains. 24 April every year was designated as "Fashion Revolution Day" and hundreds of events were held during the Rana Plaza collapse anniversaries.

Furthermore, a new Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh was signed soon after the disaster. Under huge public pressure, over 150 companies signed a legally-binding agreement to make sure their supplier factories should be safe. Such could be considered as a key step moving beyond the corporate-controlled private codes and ritual audits that have so clearly failed to deliver real changes in the last two decades. Yet some companies have failed to join the new project, and were instead trying to undermine it by promoting their own new plan. For instance, Gap and Asda's parent company Walmart were identified as the foremost companies to devise a rival to the Accord. In addition, according to the London based NGO War on Want, while major brands was forced to face up to factory safety in Bangladesh, wages across the fashion industry remain appallingly low. "Despite recent increases in the minimum wage, garment workers in Bangladesh are still paid as little as £42 a month, Sri Lankan workers just £53 a month and Cambodian workers £60 a month.These wages fall well below a living wage that would allow these workers to live a life of basic dignity, with an income that covers basic essentials like housing, food, education, healthcare and savings. Such low wages also result in workers being forced into hazardous work. Earning poverty pay, they can't afford to risk the loss of income from refusing unsafe work or not obeying their managers' demands to work in dangerous conditions." (War on Want, 2015)

Among many fair traders and WFTO members which were active in anti-

sweatshop movements, People Tree, as the world's leading fair trade and sustainable fashion company, was particularly devoted and outspoken. Its Britain-borned founder Safia Minney started the business in Toyko in 1991, which was later expanded to UK in 2001. Artists and celebrities were frequently invited as ambassadors of People Tree to promote the campaign messages, rather than the products themselves. Among them was Emma Watson who joined Safia on a field trip to Bangladesh in 2011, visiting some of the most disadvantaged groups living in Dhaka. After the Rana Plaza collapse, People Tree soon launched the Rag Rage Campaign, not only demanding fashion brands to be held responsible for compensations, but also asking its own customers to make donations for the victims and their families. It worked with trade unions in Bangladesh to help the surviving workers, as well as fighting for higher national labour standards. New jobs were also offered for the survivors in fair trade workshops of handmade garments, just like the kind of production centres of Prokritee in Saidpur (Chapter I). Last but not the least, the campaign further called for less purchases of "fast fashion" before substantial improvements were made along the supply chains.

Safia also join the WFTO Biennial Conference in Milan 2015 in person, introducing People Tree's experiences with the new WFTO-GS (Chapter IV). Just like what was contained in her book: *Naked Fashion: The New Sustainable Fashion Revolution* (2011), her presentation was full of the names of people, and passions. She called the people involving in fair trade fashion, including herself, "agents for change", as if fair trade fashion was a genuine revolution, a really serious campaign that attempted to uproot the garment industry as a whole. She provided all the minute details of the supply chain in an expert style, and pinpointed to every single contrast between "fast fashion" and fair trade fashion. Her analysis of "unfair trade" was equally, if not more impressive than that of fair trade she involved in. Her condemn on "fast fashion" was equally, if not more fuelled with power than her praise for fair trade fashion. A solid show case for "thick commitment" and "deep penetration" of fair trade (see Chapter III). That was probably the key to her success, I personally guessed.
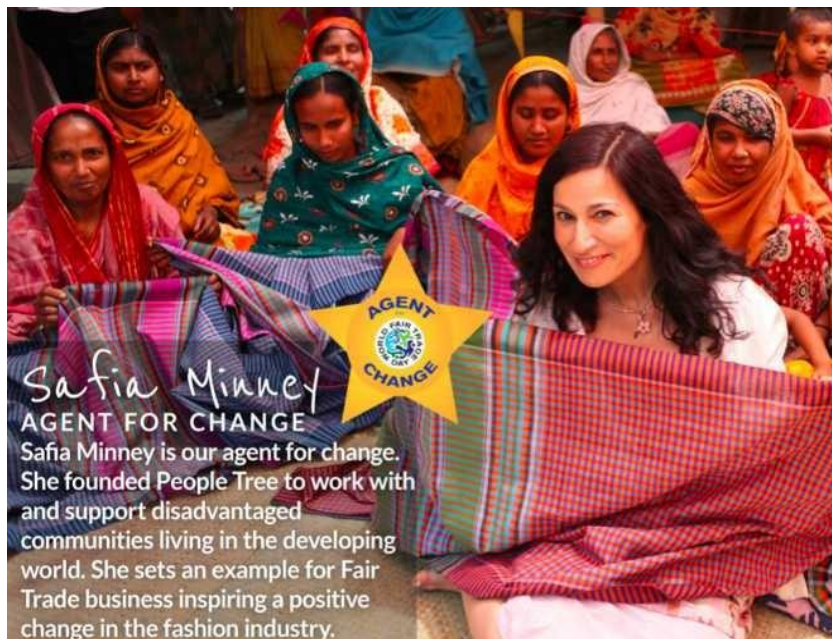
Presentation materials of People Tree. (Minney, 2015)

Marketing FTOs like People Tree in the Global North, as far as resource situations allowed, occupied favourable positions in campaigning against "unfair trade". Their supporters were highly knowledgeable ethical consumers, more readily be alerted when compared to the normal people. Their close connections through membership and volunteer systems could also facilitate the mobilization processes. Their network with not only producer FTOs, but also local unions and NGOs in developing countries, provided first-hand information and authoritative viewpoints on the mainstream supply chains. Their business

models fully demonstrated the potential solutions, rather than challenging conventional purchasing practices through lip services. Their income mainly generated from sales implied that they could be even more outspoken than NGOs that may rely on donations from the corporate sector. After all, the somehow "militant images" of campaigning, the counter-cultural elements of "culture jams", when adopted properly, become the competitive edge that can be so unique to FTOs. Challenging "unfair trade" hand in hand with promoting fair trade provides sharp branding images for them. Advocating for justices and marketing for alternatives can be so harmoniously and reciprocally accommodated.

Naked Fashion: The New Sustainable Fashion Revolution

Safia Minney
2011
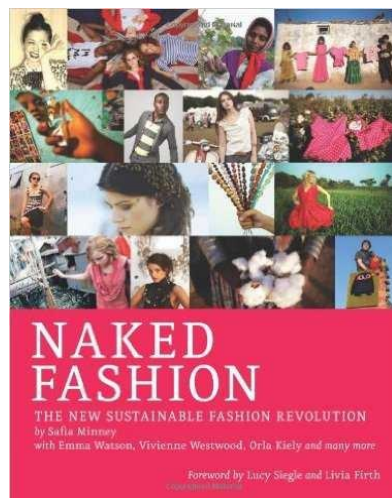
Creativity, compassion and consumption have to learn to go hand in hand. At 18 years old I worked in the advertising industry. I'd see talented creatives at the top of their class scoop up creative awards in the finest London hotels and at Cannes. Bathed in golden light, champagne flowing, surrounded by beautiful people - but then we'd be out at lunch and they'd confide about how uncomfortable it was to create advertising for products that nobody needed, that polluted the planet. They'd say, what about spending our energy-raising awareness and finding solutions to the real issues of human rights, poverty

---

and environmental destruction? What about promoting social inclusion, more responsible consumption and more sustainable lifestyles? What if design, creativity and media could be used to change the world?

For many people at that rat race / "what's the point of it all?" moment in their career, travel or time alone in nature has triggered a crucial switch away from our habitually amused-to- death lives. Get some fresh air. See parts of the world that function very well without our level of consumerism. See how conventional economics and consumerism are stripping land and natural resources away from farmers and fisherfolk and concentrating it all into the hands of a few business owners, investors and their army - the advertisers, creatives and marketeers who make consumption so seductive, even at the cost of our planet and our sanity.

Exactly what happened in the 1950s in the west is happening in India today, as women in the villages are seduced by fashion and beauty billboards to buy one-rupee sachets of shampoo.

This book looks at how fashion, an industry and a tool for popular culture, is changing. From rural villages in Bangladesh to "upcycling" ateliers in London and Melbourne and boutiques in New York, Tokyo and Paris, sustainable fashion pioneers, creatives and consumers are demanding a fashion industry free of worker exploitation. They are talking about a new industry that sustains this planet, that looks at real role-models and does not exploit our insecurities through 'body fascism'.

The world is seduced by the imagery of the global fashion brands. We hope Naked Fashion will inspire you to be part of the change we need to be.

Condemning the unfair while upholding the fair

After all, Raynolds (2012:281) summaries the relationship between campaigning and marketing as follows, "Fair trade advocacy networks are entwined with FTOs and labeling initiatives in seeking to prove the market

viability of fairer trade relations, provide an avenue for mainstream businesses to enter certified markets, and offer public opportunities for demonstrating support through consumer purchases. FTOs and, to a lesser extent, labeling initiatives in turn bolster advocacy networks through their political activities. FTOs have an activist agenda and participate in advocacy campaigns both individually and collectively." While some FTOs are activist groups which run Fair Trade shops; others are merchants first and activists second. Such analysis suggests that fair trade's normative power derives from its ability to move from critique to a positive vision which merges popular social/ecological and personal/global values, rights, and responsibilities, while its institutional power derives from its ability to harness transnational advocacy networks and embed its vision in socialized market arrangements.

At the same time, Raynolds also observes a basic contrast between fair trade movements in US and UK. The first ever fair trade brand company, Equal Exchange, was founded in US in 1986. It worked with other FTOs and movement organzations on global justice and ethical consumption. Equal Exchange helped to launch FTUSA in 1998. Before long student groups led successful campaigns demanding Fairtrade coffee to be served on university campuses. "While US fair trade organizations and advocacy groups have fueled a countermovement of decommodification and corporate accountability, FTUSA has pursued a market-based strategy of recommodification, promoting certified sales to bolster corporate profitability. FTUSA has distanced itself from the collective citizen actions of movement groups, supporting instead the individualized consumer choice model enshrined in its logo 'every purchase matters'." (ibid:281-2) On the contrary, fair trade movement in UK maintained a more coherent countermovement thrust due to closer ties between advocacy groups, FTOs and the national certifier. "Fair trade's development has occurred in waves which have largely incorporated, rather than alienated, prior advocates. The solidarity groups that started fair trade handicraft retailers also founded the UK's first Fair Trade brand company, Cafedirect, in 1991. These and related civil society groups went on to launch the FLO national affiliate, the Fairtrade Foundation, in 1992. Unlike its business oriented US counterpart, Fairtrade Foundation maintains strong movement ties, with 15 solidarity and

faith-based shareholders and a Board comprised largely of social movement representatives." (Raynolds, 2012:282)

Such trends resembled closely with the emergent trend being qualified as "political consumerism" in the past decade (Micheletti, 2003; Micheletti and Stolle, 2006; Stolle and Micheletti, 2013), which can be considered as a natural extension and escalation of the practices of ethical consumerism. Consumers equip with knowledge, attitudes and form a collective force in purchasing fairly or ethically traded products, thus known as "buycott", may equally be sensitive to and detered from buying unfairly or unethically traded products, thus known as "boycott". "Buycott"and "boycott" seem to be logically enmeshed as two sides of the same coin, which jointly induce positive and negative incentives on corporate purchasing practices and ethical compliances. Traditionally individualized consumption behaviours thus are transformed as collective means of political participation, addressing wider institutional and policy issues, and bisecting the conventional boundaries of politics and economics. As it will further be discussed in Chapter VI, however, that the more specific conceptualization of "citizen consumers", grounded in more concrete locations and places, as well as embedded in local and communal networks, could provide more meaningful discussions on how "political consumerism" are actually worked out.

Echoing with the "Fashion Revolution Day", Fair Circle organized a seminar jointly with SACOM in Hong Kong on 24 April 2014. Representatives from Prokritee and another producer FTO Keya Palm Handicrafts were invited as guests, who happened to travel to Hong Kong for joining the Fair Trade Fortnight to be commenced in early May. "It is impossible to fully understand disasters like the Rana Plaza collapse without also understanding the lives of garment workers. In such cases there was little attempt to collectively refuse unsafe work or to demand explanations, as worker organization and representation are frequently repressed in an industry where workers' rights to organize and collectively bargain are routinely ignored," said Stanley Rodrigues of Prikritee. SACOM also compared their experiences of anti-sweatshop in

Mainland China. Besides the updated briefings about worker situations of fair trade and "unfair trade" in Bangladesh, audiences were also invited to join a simple ceremony of knitting a small handicraft, in memorizing the casualties of the tragedy. In the following year, Fair Circle hosted the film show of *True Cost*, a documentary circulated world wide during the second anniversary of Rana Plaza collapse.

4. The places of fair trade campaigns and advocacy

SACOM: localizing the anti-sweatshop movement

If the activism after Zhili fire and the "Labour Wedge" of OHK marked the early history of anti-sweatshop movement in Hong Kong, the establishment of SACOM in 2005 and the subsequent development of trans-border campaigns symbolized its evolvement into more advanced stages. While in the earlier stage, campaigns within the region could be still considered as the passive followers and supplementary components of a global movement; during the later stage, they were more consciously and autonomously constituted by efforts of localization and renovations of context specific strategies. Originally, SACOM stemmed from a student action group devoted to improving the working conditions of outsourced cleaning workers and security guards, but later formalize as an organization equipped with full-time activists, committed to monitor wider corporate mistreatment of labour and to promote workers' rights in Mainland China. To put pressure especially on transnational corporations, SACOM exposes various sweatshop practices through their contacts in Mainland and spreads the information to domestic and international society.

According to the detailed analysis of Xu (2011), SACOM grew out of three aspects of activism. First, It was specialized in anti-sweatshop campaigning, and adopted a proactive approach in systematically researching and exposing labour abuses, rather than passively responding to serious industrial accidents or events involving deaths or injuries of workers. Second, it aimed at

compensating the limitations of Mainland labour NGOs and attempted to supplement their work with additional advocacy capacities. Finally, it recognized codes of conduct, one of the achievements of the movement, were failing to prevent continuous labor abuses. It was especially after 2008, through a series of campaigns targeting Coca-cola, Disney and most decisively, Foxconn-Apple, that the anti-sweatshop model was gradually introduced and adapted in the Mainland by domestic student groups, and more local resources were mobilized to support campaigns. Under the efforts of SACOM, a domestic-Hong Kong-global network of trans-border activism was built, and domestic groups have built closer connections with workers in supporting their own struggles.

Campaign targeting Foxconn-Apple. (SACOM, n.d.)

With such an innovative approach, the typical "boomerang model" of anti-sweatshop movement as proposed by Keck and Sikkink (1998) was effectively modified. Through the analysis of six cases handled by SACOM, Xu (2011:172) concluded, "In Keck and Sikkink's model, the boomerang effect occurs when claimants come up against blockages in redressing grievances within a domestic context, and then seek help from a foreign organizations or 'external elites' in different national settings. Such a transnational network then applies pressure on relevant transnational targets or to a transnational governance entity, which can be helpful in solving the original problems...The most significant modification is bidirectionality between claimants and external supporters. In contrast with the one-way help-seeking approach from domestic claimants to external elites, the six cases demonstrate a more complex and multilateral correlation among actors. Hong Kong activists are not pure external elites waiting to collect domestic information, but have transferred their agency from the outside to help the original claimants. Moreover, workers and other domestic activists are not purely claimants only seeking support from the outside. They also played a very positive role in their positions."

What Xu (2011) terms as trans-border activism can equally be qualified as "trans-local activism", in the sense that domestic campaigns has dramatically enriched the transformative imagery of a global movement. "'Local' here refers

to Mainland places, especially the sites of production and the major cities of contentious activities. Local mobilization of actors involves multiple groups: workers, students and scholars, media, consumers and the public. As a 'new social movement', anti-sweatshop activism involves as many supportive actors as possible, rather than merely focusing on mobilizing workers. Different actors have specific agencies and can plan different roles during a campaign...In different campaigns, activists have their own strategies of prioritized local actors to mobilize. Such strategies depend on different contexts and opportunities." (ibid: 170-1) Such innovations have substantially modified the basic character of the global anti-sweatshop movement , which used to heavily rely on "foreign organizations or external elites". The efforts of SACOM has actually transformed the originally placeless and timeless campaign activities, into a matrix of locally entangled and context specific strategies and actions.

The above observations, however, might equally address the question why Rana Plaza collapse, even as a disaster of exceptional scale, was unable to arouse wider movement responses, at least from the local perspective of Hong Kong. When compared with Zhili or Foxxcon factories in Shenzhen, Rana Plaza in Savor seemed to be "too remote". Without the extensive networks connecting to local trade unions and labour NGOs (at least as People Tree did have), it seemed to be extremely difficult even for activists of SACOM to effectively engage in the related campaigns. Its specific role of intermediary in trans-border

activism was highly limited to the locality of Hong Kong situated next to Mainland's traditional export industrial zone, but would become increasingly handicap in the wider regional contexts, even though Hong Kong capital could by far be a minor player inside the concerning garment supply chains. Geographical distances, ironically, equally created barriers to "foreign organizations" from Hong Kong, just as what Chen, one of the founder of SACOM, told Xu (2011:89), "The western anti-sweatshop organizations are too far from producing countries, they cannot follow up cases of labour abuses, and they are not able to fully respond to workers' demands."

The "locality" of global standards

The concept of "politics of production" in Burawoy (1985) was critical for bringing back the political and ideological effects of production regimes, in which the role of the state played a central part in shaping the nature of production and labour politics. Obviously, such political and ideological elements are also crucial for a more place-specific understanding of the dynamics of campaign activities. The innovations of SACOM and trans-border activism can be considered as a typical example of reembedding the anti-sweatshop movement into the local socio-political contexts. In particular, Xu (2011:160) highlights how movement causes were domestically reframed in China's political context. Anti-sweatshops groups primarily framed their struggle in the language of "legal pursuit" according to the "Chinese labour laws" rather than "basic human rights", and the violation of the laws could be framed as "sweatshops" or using "sweated labour". Such adaptation was highly specific to the political and legal context of Mainland China, in which legislation was relatively mature and comprehensive when compared with other developing countries, though the enforcement was far lagging behind, mainly due to the discretions and corruptions of local government and officials. "Upholding the rule of law" actually provided a political justification and legitimacy, which was so crucial for the rooting the movement and spreading the risks under the authoritarian state of Mainland China. Similar tactics were also employed by OHK and other NGOs which wanted to build their local foundations there.

Such fine tuning in strategic orientations under trans-border activism and place-specific campaigning actually addresses some of the major pitfalls of CSR programmes and ethical codes, which are in general highly depoliticized and technocratic in nature, dominated by a new class of international professionals principally detach from the local context and work at the expenses of workers participation and domestic stakeholder engagement. Such programmes could doom to be disentangled or disconnected from the local socio-political contexts, and were unable to address the fundamental contradictions embedded in various locations of the global supply chains. On the other side of the same token, anti-sweatshop movement targeting such programmes might also tend to be dominated by "foreign organizations or external elites", loss sight to the real world diversities and complexities of capital-labour struggles in the localities. Both the movement and the CSR programmes it pinpointed, simultaneously, might bear the tendencies of overwhelmingly global and abstract, and much devoid of specific characteristics of place or time. Even for political consumerism thus resulted, it might also enter into the potential risks of depoliticized and de-ideological nature.

As already witnessed above, in the cases of food and agricultural supply chains, there are much witnessed overlapping and convergence between fair trade and ethical trade systems. As we also can find in Chapter III, these are particularly true for the Fairtrade labeling and certification which tends to adopt a "thin commitment" with board base approach through corporatization and mainstreaming. The creation of Fairtrade label could be considered as a component of a series of international standardization initiatives and private regulation systems based on certification, predominantly being established to address the "ethical" issues (Low and Davenport, 2006: 320). As further illustrated with an example in Chapter IV, the fatal attempt of Ruediger Meyer, the CEO of FLO-CERT, to reconcile formal procedures with informal "common sense", symbolized how labeling systems may potentially be handicap for handling real world subtleties and diversities. To use the words of Bush and Oosterveer (2007), Fairtrade labeling systems in specific and private regulation systems in general tend to work within the "space of flows". While movement responses might potentially embody innovations as crucial efforts to reassert

"space of places" into the movement. All in all, international standards and governance arrangements thus represented efforts of global entanglement for the market economy which however suffered potential local disentanglement, while locationally embedded initiatives and strategies might potentially offer a remedy to achieve its re-entanglement.

Traidcraft: locating its campaigns at Europe

In September 2014, Traidcraft started a new flagship campaign - Justice Campaign. At the same day when it was launched, an opinion poll was also released claiming that 78% of the public wanted British companies held to account in the UK for harm caused in developing countries, amid growing concern over human rights abuses, including loss of livelihoods, injuries and even deaths. Seven in ten Members of Parliament shared similar views with little variance across political parties. Such result revealed a sharp contrast with the dominant neoliberal belief that "there is no alternative", in the sense that under the running away globalization, governments have little power over the conducts of transnational corporations, even they are registered or listed the home countries. The researchers maintained that the results reflected attitude changes after the Rana Plaza disaster took place in the year before, in which many of victims were found to be producing clothes for British stores. In the *Traidcraft Report: Justice: We Mean Business*, it was also highlighted that during the disaster, many low-paid young women claimed that they were forced to work on, despite concerns about cracks in the building. Masuma, a Rana Plaza survivor, said: "There was so much debris, you could barely see. I closed my eyes and started to crawl my way towards the window." (Traidcraft, 2014a)

As mentioned in Chapter IV, Traidcraft was well-known for its re-innovation among pioneer FTOs. Rather unlike the business as usual practices of anti-sweatshop movement, the Justice Campaign did not place its target on the garment brands. If the case of SACOM represented located mobilization efforts mainly within the export industrial zones, Traidcraft might demonstrate the possibilities of locating advocacy in the importing and consuming Global North. The Traidcraft Report claimed that people could still appeal directly to the

corporations. But there was a fundamental problem with expecting a victim of abuse to seek justice from the perpetrator. "In theory, victims should seek justice in the country where the harm took place. However they may face weak judicial systems under pressure from powerful global companies. National governments are eager for trade and investment and reluctant to criticize foreign companies. To stop UK companies operating with impunity around the world, there must be an option to hold them to account and pursue justice in the UK...Civil justice can win much needed financial compensation for victims. But it has limited effect on changing the future actions and decisions of companies. Ultimately, for global trade to be truly just, companies or their directors should be prosecuted under criminal law when they are responsible for or complicit in acts such as unlawful killing, even if these acts are committed elsewhere in the world." (Traidcraft, 2014a)

The major targets of Justice Campaign were actually the politicians heading for the General Election in mid 2015. Traidcraft called on the political parties and the next UK government to take this issues further through: 1. Make it possible to bring criminal prosecutions in the UK against British companies that abuse human rights in other countries; 2. Remove the barriers which stop people from poor communities bringing civil cases in the UK courts; 3. Ensure that companies can also be held to account effectively outside the court system. In another *Traidcraft Report: Justice: Time to call in the Law*, it was stated that as a fair trade company based in UK, Traidcraft did understand the realities of doing business around the world, but continue "to see some other companies acting in developing countries in ways which would simply not be acceptable here...Many companies already undertake due diligence to assess the risks to their business. New legislation would clarify the risks of operating and doing business in developing countries, something that many businesses would welcome. The time has come for action. The new British government needs to use the law to stop irresponsible companies causing serious harm in developing countries." (Traidcraft, 2014b)

Traidcraft chief executive Paul Chandler was also frequent and popular figure in WFTO Biennial Conferences. In the 2015 Milan occasion, he introduced how

Traidcraft conducted successful campaigns. Paul said that fair trade sales was a big achievement for fair trade movement in the UK, then worthed over £1 billion per year, but the story did not just end there. What Traidcraft ultimately wanted to change was the way that trade being run. When Traidcraft talked about campaigning, they meant to speak out and tackle the root causes of global poverty. "Some people might be put off by the term 'campaigning', but if they were serious about using trade to fight poverty, then campaign was the only direction to go, and supporter bases was the means for it. When decision makers receive thousands of messages from Traidcraft supporters expressing their concern about an issue, they are compelled to respond. They are also more likely to listen to Traidcraft staff when we lobby for policies to be changed and present evidence from our work with producers around the world...Campaigning with Traidcraft is easy and really works. Simple actions like signing a postcard can help to change unfair trade systems!"

Presentation materials of Traidcraft (Chandler, 2015).

All in all, the campaign approach being adopted by Traidcraft could be clearly summarized by the general organization statement released in 2014, "Our policy and campaigns work is all about creating far-reaching change by influencing the right people - those with the power to either protect or endanger the poor. This can mean MPs, MEPs (Members of the European Parliament), governments, and large companies that do business in the developing world. Our work comprises both research and campaigning. First we use our connections and expertise to get to grips with current issues. We look into what needs to change to better support the poor at a policy level - we find out the facts and try to get a balanced viewpoint. Then we go into campaign mode, calling on our fantastic supporter network to take action by post, email, social media and attending events." By the year 2013, Traidcraft nurtured a network of 6,145 Fairtraders (see Chapter IV), 19,939 donors and 19,651 campaigners - only slight overlapping could be found across the three categories. "In order to deliver our key strategic goals, Traidcraft needs to mobilize support among the UK public: our active supporters, customers, donors and campaigners, without whose engagement we could achieve little. We also believe that as we engage with the general public in these ways we can promote their flourishing, as well

as that of poor producers - by helping people understand and feel connected with the things they buy and consume, and feel that they are living in ways that are socially and environmentally responsible. " (Traidcraft, 2013)

In a detailed case study of earlier campaigns by Barnett, Cloke, Clarke and Malpass (2011:166-7), the authors summarized Traidcraft's approach as "contact" and "collective" activism (adopted from Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley, 2003), which was closely related to the work of its Policy Unit established in 1998. "This formalization of Traidcraft's advocacy and lobbying activities followed in part from the development of the organization's internal financial resources. It also reflected a response to the new opportunities for access to government following the election of a Labour government in 1997; for example, Traidcraft quickly became part of the Department of Trade and Industry's Trade Policy Consultative Forum. But the policy and advocacy activities of Traidcraft are also indicative of a long-standing acknowledgement that 'one relatively small trading organization cannot solve the problems of the world on its own'. In both the UK and at the EU level, Traidcraft has succeeded in gaining 'standing' as one representative organization with a voice on trade issues." The authors also found that via its web site and regular mailings, Traidcraft achieved huge success in encouraging people to express support through formatted emails, postcards and letters. Furthermore, the "Traidcraft Speaker Scheme provided volunteers with the opportunity to present at school assemblies or in the classroom, to give sermons in churches, or to appear on local radio or news. And it provides a number of pedagogic resources to assist these volunteers, including interactive games, videos and DVDs, maps, information sheets, and even prayers and sermon outlines." (Barnett et al, 2011:166)

Of particular interest for the authors was the GeoActivist Personality Test, an example of Internet communication being used as more than a source of information, but as a campaigning device (Kleine 2005). It targeted to enroll healthy lifestyle advocates, walkers, runners, cyclists, world explorers, and fair trade activists as fundraisers, through organized sponsored walks, rides and runs, thereby connecting existing leisure and lifestyle commitments to concerns with trade justice and global poverty. It is an example of Traidcraft's sensitivity

as an organization to the differentiated practices, resources, commitments and concerns that lead people to support the principles of fair trade. It also reflects an explicit concern to widen its support base by hooking into existing networks.

As Brain Conder, Traidcraft's Key Account Manager, told the authors, "We have the GeoActivists, which is quite new and is used for raising our profile at various sporting events such as the Great North Run, the Great South Run, etc. So that is one way of doing it. But also, just when we target churches we will specifically target the material so that it will not necessarily lean away from the older person, but the graphics that we show on there might be showing younger people at work or working with children at the church to help promote the product. We are getting very involved in school groups now with our Young Co-operative scheme, which is aimed at middle schools and upwards. Ministers of religion are one of our targets over the next few years to increase the number of Fairtraders from church-based backgrounds. So we will target ministers, who again we will explain to them what we are about and they will hopefully explain to their congregation what we are about. It is not specifically aimed at the younger people but a lot of the materials that we produce will actually give that impression if you like." (ibid.)

5. Concluding remarks

Rewinding back in 2012, the field work for the current research brought me to Bangladesh. CORR Jute Works and Prokritee were the two producer FTOs being visited, exhibiting the contrasts of different fair trade models even under the common WFTO framework. But what was out of my expectation was, the visit also came cross mainstream garment factories in Dhaka, as well as "semi-fair trade" found of Aarong and BRAC. What was even more unexpected was, nevertheless, the collapse of Rana Plaza in the suburb of Dhaka, just 10 months after our visit, killing 1,133 persons and predominantly garment workers, became one of the worst industrial disasters in the world history.

The above experiences fully reveal how fair trade movement has been continually entangled with "unfair trade" in the mainstream market. While producer and marketing FTOs might demonstrate alternative paths for the sweatshops, Northern NGOs like Oxfam took a more proactive roles in the anti-sweatshop movements. The history of campaigning efforts could be traced back to early 1990s, especially when Mainland China emerged to become the world factory and Zhili fire in 1993 became a landmark incident for activists especially located in Hong Kong. During the later stage of the Make Trade fair campaign, "Labour Wedge" and GROW campaign of OHK targeted garment and argibusiness respectively, while SACOM also started a new stage of "localizing" the anti-sweatshop movement.

The fair trade movement itself, however, was never detached from this bigger picture. Both the Fairtrade labels and the so-called CSR or ethical trade projects could be considered as part of international standardization initiatives and private regulation systems started to proliferate in the 1990s, which have also went through a trend of convergence more recently. Furthermore, it must equally be added, that marketing FTOs also played a crucial part in fighting against "unfair trade" hand in hand with promoting fair trade. As the cases of People Tree and Traidcraft forcefully demonstrated, especially following the Rana Plaza disaster, that advocating for justice and marketing for alternatives can be so harmoniously and reciprocally accommodated under the specific socio-political contexts. After all, efforts of global entanglement might suffer local disentanglement, while locationally embedded initiatives and strategies might offer potential re-entanglement.

The adoption of collective mobilization and campaign strategies, both inside and outside the fair trade movement, casts a significantly different perspective on Wright (2010)'s version of ruptural strategy. In his original framework, Wright is working with a diachronic rather synchronic approach towards the different trajectories. What is still by and large missing, however, will be how the three types of transformation strategies - ruptural, interstitial and symbiotic - **coexist, interact and co-evolve simultaneously**. This is precisely handled by the more substantive account of Brunori (1999) on how aesthetic, social and

environmental values are progressively incorporated into the market, the process of disentanglement and re-entanglement, or "framing" and "overflowing" as Callon proposes, involving continual negotiation and conflict between mainstream and social movement actors.

All in all, as Wilkinson (2006:113) draws from the insights of Brunori, "In practical terms, this would mean campaigning for higher standards once the original standards have been transformed into conventional criteria, establishing new connections, integrating an increasing number of alternative characteristics or developing new distribution channels...It is unlikely, however, that a politicization of the social movement will lead to the alternating cycles of consumer and political mobilization identified by Hirschman (1970) for an earlier period. In the context of globalization and trans-nationalization it is more likely that the three facets of social movement activity - **mainstreaming, alternative circuits and political campaigning - continue to develop synchronically**."

VI Grounding trajectories: the emerging fair trade town movement

1. Kumamoto: experiencing the aesthetics of cherry blossom
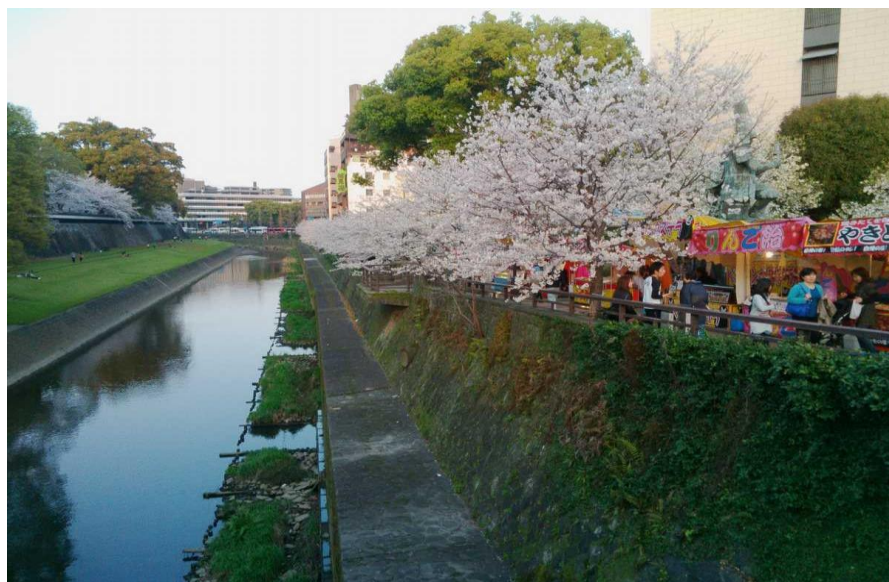
Cherry blossom along Tsuiboi River, with city hall the venue of Conference on the right, and the Kumamoto Castle on the left.

The fieldwork journey finally returned from the Global South to the Global North. I arrived at Kumamoto, the small city in Western Kyushu,[53] which was recognized as a fair trade city in 2011, not only the one and only one to be found throughout Asia, but also became the hosting city of the Eighth International Fair Trade Towns Conference on 29th and 30th March, 2014. In the eight consecutive year after this conference has been organized annually, it took place out of Europe for the first time. I felt so lucky, once again, how events happened more or less according to not only my research agenda, but also my research schedule.

Late March, needless to explain in further detail, is a busy season of Japan. It is the time for public and private organizations to round up their annual plans and

---

53 Kumamoto was hard hitted by an earthquake of magnitude 7.0 in April, 2016. It is unclear how this may affect the future development of the city as well as the role of fair trade in it.

budgets. It is also the high season, especially for the counties in the south, for celebrating the cherry blossom. I have witness the enigma of cherry flowers before, but only of species with pink colour. The majority of cherries in Kumamoto are plainly white. They deliver the illusion as if snow is covering the whole trees, and snow flicks fall when a gentle breeze of wind embraces them. If it was not because of the fieldwork, I would never ever be free for a trip in March, which is also the high season of the university curriculum.

Just ten months ago, I have been to the Rio WFTO Biennial Conference (Chapter IV). The contrast could never ever be greater. If both Rio and Dhaka represented the kind of diversity and anarchy to be found in the Global South, then Kumamoto must be representing the kind of neat and tidiness only to be found in the Global North, which appeared in a even strengthened version under Japanese culture. Specifically, the harmony and unity of such global "mega-puzzle" was characterized by an unusual huge number of local volunteers, all managed to speak fluent English and all dressed in uniform T-shirts, happened to be also white in colour. It seems as if the number of volunteers was even larger than the number of conference participants. Every single details of events and activities were handled in great care and high discipline, exhibiting the unique hospitality of traditional Japanese culture. Once again, it delivered an equally strong sense of locality and ethnicity for the conference.

Although most volunteers looked like local university students, it was by far unclear, whether these volunteers were mainly coming from civic, private or public sector. Just as it would be highly difficult to say, whether the fair trade town movement itself should be understood as civic, private or public in nature. But what seemed to apparent would be, the Kumamoto Municipal Government was highly supportive to the conference, just exactly as what could found in the case of Rio. If there was a single most important "volunteer" for the Kumamoto Conference, then it must be the Major Seishi Kohyama. He brought with a more than a dozen of municipal officials in the welcome dinner, together with actors dressed in ancient samurais. A highly entertaining comic show, together with an abundant supply of sake, brought the dinner into an exceptional great

atmosphere. As a small city in Western Kyushu, Kumamoto managed to emerge to be a highly internationalized one, and its status as the only fair trade city in Asia has added further to its uniqueness.

The most crucial figure in the conference, however, would certainly be Shoko Akashi, the Chairlady of Kumamoto Fair Trade City Steering Committee. It seemed as without her, Kumamoto would not quite possibly become a fair trade city, or might not be even popular with the fair trade movement. It seemed as if with effort all on her own, that fair trade was incorporated into and finally planted its roots in this remote city. Surprisingly though, Miss Akashi did not speak any English at all, and always needed translation in the international events. During the two days conference, she was always wearing pretty traditional kimonos, in parallel with the charming cherries, making herself a major target of joint photos, or selfies as they have been called.

The story began in more than two decades ago, when Miss Akashi set up a small shop called Love Land, which gradually developed into a fair trade speciality shop. Starting from 2003, when she first learnt about the fair trade town movement, she started to launch a series of campaign, including more than 50 events annually in promoting Kumamoto a fair trade city. These events included lectures, school visits, internship programmes, meetings with multiple stakeholders, fair trade fashion shows, temporary fair trade shops in various events, receiving fair trade tour groups in and out of Kumamoto and last but not the least, planning and developing collaborations between fair trade products with local products. In 2009, Bruce Crowther, the founder of the first fair trade town Garstang, in the county of Lancashire, UK and subsequently the worldwide movement, visited Kumamoto and held a symposium on the topic. In the following year, 8 members of the municipal council submitted a resolution in supporting fair trade, which was approved unanimously by the council. And finally in 2011, 10,000 signatures were collected among the citizens for supporting the campaign, and Kumamoto was certified as a fair trade city.

The story of Miss Akashi reminded me another story that I told in my recent book, *David Harvey's Geographical Critique of Capitalism* (2015). It was the

famous story of Jane Jacobs, by then who was a housewife with three young kids living in downtown Manhattan, campaigned against the urban redevelopment plans proposed by Robert Moses, the town planning head of New York City at the time, predominantly through her individual efforts, finally defeating the plans and rescuing the whole district known as SOHO, later becoming a tourist hotspot of Manhattan. Her experiences were then recorded in her masterpiece *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1960). "It is totally unimaginable, that without Jane Jacobs, what would New York City look like after these 60 years." I wrote, echoing with the writings of Harvey on the dialectics of "agency and structure".

Without any doubt, the above sentence can equally applied to Shoko Akashi and Kumamoto, as well as Bruce Crowther and the whole fair trade town movement. It reminds me, once again, about the metaphor of elephant. Rather than the elephant shakes its tail, It seems as if the tail of the elephant can, under specific circumstances, sooner or later manage to shake its whole body! In early May, 2016, as I was rounding up the thesis for final submission, Leicester City won the Premier League of England at a 5000:1 odds. This once again forcefully demonstrated that "the elephant's tail shakes its body" is not a rare case, just that the dynamics and dialectics contributing to it is far from discovered.

2. Fair trade town: the "big tent" approach of united front

"The sixth goal"

In the last decade, the fair trade town movement, seemed to be coming from nowhere, suddenly exploded to become by far the most energetic and promising arm of the fair trade movement. Since Garstang was formally recognized by the UK Fairtrade Foundation as the first fair trade town in the world, up to the year 2014, the number of fair trade towns have already risen up to beyond 1,480 distributed in 24 countries. The list includes large capital cities

of Landon, Paris and Rome rather than merely small towns. As Crowther countlessly repeated his joke virtually in all his speeches, during the 1990s the movement only consisted of 3 persons: he, his wife and the babysitter! Initially the movement failed to involved the whole community before some representatives from the town council, together with local business, schools and churches, were invited to a meal including Fairtrade ingredients and local produces, and later requested to signed a pledge agreeing to sell or use Fairtrade products in their premises, that it started to take roots, sustain and spread to other towns and cities. The declaration by Garstang greatly inspired fair trade promoting groups in other regions which have similar difficulties and frustrations, resulted in the birth of many fair trade towns in UK. The movement eventually spread to other European countries, US, Oceania and Japan, as well as taking hold in developing countries such as Brazil and Ghana.

The fair trade town movement, in short, is a campaign for which a whole town entity supports and promotes fair trade. As Crowther said, "In general, society consists of three sectors: government, business and citizens' groups. In order to make a whole town support and promote the movement, it is necessary that these three sectors, namely government (administrative and legislative bodies), business (wholesale, retail, support services and production) and citizens' groups (NGO and NPO) as well as local residents, agree to the concept of of fair trade and take action." Although it remains known as fair trade town movement, the accreditation is also available to villages, cities, islands, boroughs and counties, as well as zones for all other geographical locations not fitting into one of the above categories. To become a fair trade town or the like, all the following international accepted 5 goals must be met:

1. The local council passes a resolution supporting fair trade and agrees to serve fair trade products (for example, in meetings, offices and canteens).

2. The area's retailers (shops, supermarkets, news agents and petrol stations) and catering outlets (cafes, restaurants, pubs) make a range of fair trade products readily available.

3. Local workplaces and community organizations (places of worship, schools, universities, colleges and other community organizations) support fair trade and use fair trade products whenever possible.

4. Media coverage and events raise awareness and understanding of fair trade across the community.

5. A local fair trade steering group is convened to ensure the fair trade town campaign continues to develop and gain new support.

In addition to fair trade places defined by the geographical boundaries of state administration, the UK Fairtrade Foundation also attempted to promote other place-based accreditations. For example, universities and colleges could apply for fair trade status since 2003, and the scheme was further extended to schools since 2007. The Foundation also offers fair trade status to places of worship. All these schemes have been based in similar requirements to those of fair trade Towns. As we will see further on, the status of fair trade nations was also being granted to Wales and Scotland more recently.

The theme of the Kumamoto Conference was "Building Fair and Local Socio-Economies in the South and the North". As it was described in the brochure of the conference, "With the increasing inclusion of many participants, the movement is diversifying. In its inception, the spread of Fairtrade labelled products handled by companies was the focus, but this focus shifted when American international cooperation NGOs or fair trade groups started to promote their long-committed joint fair trade. The goals of a fair trade town have also evolved as the movement spreads. The original 5 goals established in UK are universal, however time has seen an increasing number of countries adding a sixth goal. As a sixth goal, many countries have added the contribution to regional developments through local production and local consumption or to inspire moral sense towards consumption. Japan is one of these countries. This trend has led to a rising consumer consciousness aimed at creating a fair and sustainable society in developing and developed countries alike. In this way the fair trade town movement is not just spreading globally, but the targets have

been widened and the objects are also evolving. However the fact that the movement is citizen oriented is still invariable and that is the indispensable requirement."

The sixth goal for Kumamoto, for instance, aimed at local revitalization. It required the coordination of community activities to promote local production and consumption, city development, environmental awareness and support for the disabled. It attempted to boost the local economy and social vitality through the revitalization of local producers, shops and industries as well as strengthening the bonds of the people. As it was further told in the brochure,"The advance of profit oriented neoliberalism that distresses producers in the developing countries is also a major culprit in weakening local agriculture, forestry and fishery and undermining the dynamism of cities in the developed countries. There is no difference between the South and the North when it comes to the necessity or a fair and sustainable society and economy. Through fair trade movement, our aim is to achieve a fair and sustainable society with stability in our region as well as to support producers in developing countries." All in all, rather than focusing on a narrow definition of fair trade, the framework tended to embrace a wider conception of "socio-economies", or what would be more commonly known as social and solidarity economy (SSE).

The Garstang Story

Joe Human and Bruce Crowther
2011

The spectacles through which trade justice campaigners look at the world are not the same as most people's, and Garstang's campaigners had very little success initially in reaching out into the community. Their letters to the local press on issues of international development could not complete with local concerns. And their pleas to town council to use Fairtrade tea and coffee at their meetings were rebuffed with the illogical response that the councillors did not drink enough to make it worthwhile! It was even a struggle with faith

> *groups. When six local churches were given catering packs of Fairtrade Cafedirect coffee in an attempt to get them to switch permanently to Fairtrade products, only half of them obliged. This was almost, but not quite, the final blow. If churches wouldn't change, who would?*
>
> *...So what was the breakthrough? And this is the wonderful part of the story: the group would not give up. In Fairtrade Fortnight 2000 they invited representatives of different sections of the community to a meal of Fairtrade and local produce. Local produce was used alongside Fairtrade because for campaigners in rural Garstang it was vital to show empathy with local farmers who also struggle to get a fair price for their produce. Guests were not asked to pay for the meal, or even to make a donation. Instead they were asked to sign a form pledging to sell Fairtrade products, or when this was not possible, to use them on their premises.*

The three-dimensional or cubic expansion

Such more inclusive and flexible strategy, normally termed as the "big tent" approach of the fair trade town movement, was first described by the US National Steering Committee. Soon it has been adopted, on top of the USA and Japan, in Australia, New Zealand, Spain, France, Czech Republic, Poland and Switzerland. As Tatsuya Watanabe, Board Chairman of Fair Trade Town Japan and Professor of Economics at Tokyo University, said in his opening speech of the Kumamoto Conference, "Up until then, the model focused exclusively on promoting Fairtrade, that is FLO-certified labelled products. The US campaign, however, expanded the perimeter by including products handled by the members of FTUSA that subscribe to WFTO principles. The movement in Japan took another step forward by including other 'genuine' fair trade products that are not subject to independent monitoring, yet committed to the WFTO principles. While some misgivings have been expressed by campaigners who prefer to maintain exclusive focus on the FLO label, wider acceptance of the 'big tent' concept has led the International Steering Committee to endorse it in the new guidelines that the committee is developing."

"The original UK model has seen yet another diversification when follower countries added a sixth or even seventh goal or criterion to the original five. For example, the Belgian initiative added 'local consumption and production of sustainable food' while the Canadian campaign inserted 'ethical and sustainable consumption', and the Dutch included 'encouragement of CSR within the local companies'. This version of diversification may be viewed as enlarging the tent to another direction. All in all, the fair trade towns movement has undergone diversification in three different ways: **1. from the North to the East and the South; 2. from the Fairtrade [certification] focus approach to a more inclusive approach; and 3. from focusing exclusively on fair trade to broadening the movement's scope to address wider sustainability issues**. One may view this three-dimensional or cubic expansion of the movement is something inevitable - a Darwinian evolution of the movement, so to speak. The others may regard it as a 'mission drift' or 'dilution' of the original goals, which must be avoided," remarked Professor Watanabe.

Blossoming and flourishing of the fair trade town movement

Chow Sung Ming and Anthony Chiu
Published on the blog of Fair Circle, 1.4.2014

Except the 5 basic goals for all fair trade towns, various towns also supplement "the sixth goal" according to the local and special needs. In the case of Kumamoto, for instance, "contribution to revitalization of local community" is added. A worldwide blossoming and flourishing of the fair trade town movement is thus witnessed.

In fact, such an open approach to cover wider sectors and industries, not only extends the scope and audience of fair trade, but also makes the movement more localized and adaptive to the socio-political contexts. It is named the "big tent" approach, which first emerged in the US fair trade town movement. According to its national coordinator, William Goldsmith, it originated in 2006 when the movement first landed in US, some groups of local artists were

> *engaged at the onset, and remained as hard core supporters throughout the years. Although these groups were traditionally not part of or affiliated with fair trade, their network has become so crucial for the further spreading of the movement. They were also able to make the movement more inclusive and diversified.*
>
> *To employ William as an example, he himself is still an employee of FTUSA until then. But he insists, not without external pressure, on promoting products beyond those certified by FTUSA. Under the capacity of fair trade town movement, he tries to incorporate other certified or non-certified products, especially those coming from the small local producers.*
>
> *Without any doubt, from Garstang to Kumamoto, fair trade town has continued to be a bottom up movement, deeply embedded in the grassroot level. Its nature can actually be fully reflected by the dressing code of Bruce Crowther, who was wearing the same kind of rotten T-shirts and blue jeans everyday. The dramatic rise of the movement from the bottom up, it can be fully anticipated, requires much more time before the dominant organizations could adapt to and accept it. On the contrary, as demonstrated by the case of Kumamoto, strong government involvement is also a key to its success. It also requires visionary, innovative and forward looking municipal officials. Hong Kong, as it was claimed to be the "Asia's World City", much would remain to learn from the Kumamoto experience.*
>
> *(Translated from the original Chinese article)*

"Balkanization" of fair trade definition?

The "big tent" approach became the major focus of the Kumamoto Conference. For the first time it was upheld as an ideal to be promoted worldwide. However, such decision was far from a consensus without disputes. For some might think that it could potentially confuse and trivialize the definition of fair trade, and endanger the established systems of certification and labeling. Worser still, due to the distributed and decentralized nature of the movement, the concept "fair

trade" might be exploited potentially for self-interested and unethical purposes. As it was being claimed by Molly Harris Olson, the former board chairlady of FLO who also presented in Kumamoto, it was FLO which was actually practicing the "big tent" approach, for its attempt to attract the corporate sector in promoting and selling Fairtrade products, in a formalized, standardized and consistent manner. Rudi Dalvai, the President of WFTO who was also in the same occasion, nevertheless strongly disagreed with Molly's views. He pointed out that certification and labeling has be manipulated by big players and transnational corporations uncommitted to the movement, Fairtrade labelled products only constituted an extremely minor portion of their sales, and was fatally utilized as an instrument of "fairwashing". Being committed to small producers rather than working for big players, the consistency and integrity of the fair trade town movement could thus be maintained. "For fair trade towns, there are many guys in the big tent; but for FLO, it is the big guys that occupy the tents!" Rudi remarked with his stylish English.

It was extremely easy to understand, that the "big tent" approach would inevitably arouse debates and controversies concerning its "mission drift", "dilution", "confusion" or "trivialization". If the declining creditability of FLO and the emergence of new or peripheral systems, like IMO or ECOCERT, could be considered as the "balkanization of Fairtrade certification", then the "big tent" approach might potentially promote a further trend of "balkanization of fair trade definition". Especially under the bottom up configuration of the fair trade town movement, there would likely be a proliferation of localized and place-specific fair trade practices. This would exactly echo what Brunori (1999:4) terms the "local turn" in his discussion of alternative food networks, "Whereas globalization threatens the control of place through exogenous mechanisms, an increased **control of place** can reduce domination from external forces. In the meanwhile, powerless actors can reduce their dependence from external forces setting up alliances at a distance. Alternative agrifood networks provide powerless actors with resources to better control their environment."

Crowther, as a mastermind of the brand new global movement, further added, "Groups in the UK have often made the connection to the plight of local farmers

also suffering from not obtaining a fair price for their produce and the sixth goal developed in Belgium ten years ago aims 'to support a local initiative to help local farmers in sustainable agriculture'. But in Japan the sixth goal has gone further not only serving to support local farmers, but also community development, environmental actions and welfare of the handicapped and other disadvantaged persons, with a view to revitalizing local production, local economy, local society and strengthening the social bond within the community. Some would say this only serves to dilute the fair trade message and some even suggest that the fair trade Towns movement is **'out of control'**. As a grassroots movement, however, fair trade towns must continue to be led by the people rather than weaken the message. These moves in Japan to broaden the movement serve to unite even more people who are fighting towards a better world for all. In my view this can only strengthen the movement as we look to learn from Kumamoto and Japan."

When Harriet Lamb (2008), who was the Executive Director of the UK Fairtrade Foundation (and later became the CEO of FLO), memorizes in her book on banana wars, that when Garstang informed her office "they has in fact declared themselves a Fairtrade town, some eyebrows were raised pretty high. The Foundation was nurturing a certification mark, battling to establish its credibility as a stamp of approval for companies' products which meant they had met a rigorous set of standards...And now here were a bunch of campaigners saying a whole town had become Fairtrade and starting to use the mark as a campaign tool – on town signs, flower beds grown in the shape of the mark, chocolate art, wool badges...It was a brand-controllers' nightmare. And a campaigners dream come true." Smith (2015:204) further remarks, "This is because the practices of different fair trade places show a range of willingness to remain within this initial discursive and governance framing. Although some places have met the expectations of status award and little more, others have found their understanding requires the specific championing of dedicated FTOs and wider awareness raising."

As Smith (2015:200) further notes, even taking into account the diversity of fair trade places, the International Steering Committee explicitly recognizes not only

the FINE definition of fair trade, but also the Charter of Fair Trade Principles agreed between the WFTO and FLO (2009). "This is important as among other things, the Charter outlines the validity of both the product certification and the integrated supply chain approach to fair trade practice. This underpinning leads the committee to suggest that while it might be advantageous for new fair trade towns schemes to follow the five goals model, 'Any national campaign should include a whole range of fair trade products in particular both Fairtrade certified (and other fair trade certifiers) products if present and also independently recognized fair trade products (for example, from WFTO certified members) when these are present in the national context.'" A priority and respect is still given to the Fairtrade label, although it is not longer considered as the one and only one choice, but just the first among equals.

The much inclusive and flexible "sixth goal", as it was exemplified in the case of Kumamoto, in parallel with the 5 original goals, nevertheless managed to maintain a cautious balance between dispersion and concentration, decentralization and centralization within the fair trade town movement. Ultimately, "the sixth goal" was designed not as a substitute but supplement to the 5 original goals. It provided an effective instrument of making more friends, rather than creating more enemies for the fair trade network. It attempted to enrich rather than replace the definition(s) of fair trade. The "frame(s)" of fair trade, as envisioned by Callon (1998), were significantly enlarged rather than overwritten by new "frame(s)". For sure, fair trade could still likely be comprehended as an elephant, rather than the thousands of skies as perceived by frogs under their own wells. As Crowther summarized in the Kumamoto Conference, "Involving the whole community has always been central to a fair trade town campaign and increasing civic pride, social capital and community networking are benefits recognized from the start, including the words of the former UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown when he said 'fair trade in the UK demonstrates the power of communities at its best.'" After all, Molly was invited as the keynote speaker of the conference, and was allowed to cast severe criticism on the "big tent" approach. This was probably the best example for how "inclusive" the fair trade town movement could be!

Five goals and stakeholder engagement, in the *Fair Trade Town Action Guide*.
(Fairtrade Foundation, n.d.)

Returning from "broadly thin" to "broadly thick"

As having been discussed so far, FLO/certification (Chapter III) and
WFTO/membership (Chapter IV) represent the two major and contrasting
models in the worldwide movement of fair trade in the past two decades. The
dramatic rise and rocketing growth of fair trade town movement, even not being
fully aware of by myself before starting my PhD research, seems to be
emerging to be the third force, powerfully reshaping the movement from a duo
into a trio landscape. While FLO's certification system is highly centralized,
WFTO's membership system is relatively loosely organized, as least before the
WFTO-GS was fully incorporated (Chapter IV). The fair trade town movement,
on the contrary, is much more decentralized and diversified. The "big tent"
approach, furthermore, not only significantly enlarges the scope and audience
of fair trade, but also provides it with a foundation of local re-entanglement. It
can be easily anticipated that a natural affinity and mutual accommodation
could be found between WFTO and the fair trade town movement, both
preserving a strong alternative character. While in effect, the tendency of
mainstreaming and corporatization being promoted by FLO has been virtually
isolated.

In the 2013 Rio Biennial Conference, WFTO has even passed a motion that encouraged its members to participate in fair trade places and established support for WFTO representation within the International Steering Committee (WFTO 2013). In the new Strategic Plan or 2014-2017, a goal was included to build strategic relationships and cooperate more closely with the solidarity economy and "domestic fair trade" (see below). In February 2014, the WFTO Board established the WFTO Social and Solidarity Economy Working Group (SSE-WG), aiming at a global research about existing national and international networks of SSE and "domestic fair trade" movements. In 2015, a closed workshop was organized during the Milan biennial Conference and a new resolution was approved requesting the WFTO Board to work on the concept of the "domestic fair trade" and to explore possibilities, opportunities and implications of including a South-South and North-North approaches into the traditional approach of North-South fair trade. Finally in late 2015, a new working group was established, headed by Rudi Dalvai, to propose ways to increase the representation and visibility of WFTO in relevant international SSE events (WFTO, 2015). Personally I also applied to be a member of the working group, but so far no reply was received from WFTO.

Thanks for Smith (2015:194) for reminding us, it is important to recognize that Garstang as the first town emerged not from the UK Fairtrade Foundation, but from a local group at the grassroot level. Right from the beginning, the patterns and processes of fair trade town movement was carefully designed in order to encompass wide range of participation by actors coming from key consumption sectors. The participatory approach was already built into the core of the movement, and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds were able to find their own roles and identities within the very same movement. "Importantly, the involvement of government actors has also lent an element of state legitimacy to the recognition of fair trade towns, as has formal signifiers usually associated with state authority, such as road signs that identify the boundaries of, and formally welcome visitors to, officially demarcated fair trade towns."

Another crucial element of the Garstang experience was the negotiated and

compromized order of what practices should constitute a sense of fair trade town. "While the emphasis was largely on Fairtrade certified goods, the Garstang group worked explicitly with mission-driven FTOs, for example in 1995 through participation in the Cafedirect Challenge. Also, in addition to drawing on international connections, the fair trade group highlighted relationships with the places of UK agriculture. For this reason, when campaigners held a promotional meal to encourage greater buy-in from local stakeholders, food consisted of both Fairtrade goods and those sourced from local producers. This had the direct effect of establishing a connection between local and international social justice and demonstrated the lack of conflict between them." (ibid.) Actually, until lately, Garstang was still naming itself a "Fairtrade town" rather than as a "fair trade town", along with many other towns that subsequently follow this tradition. However, as it is fully revealed above, the movement has already gone a long way beyond limiting itself to certified and labelled products.

As shown in the *Fair Trade Town Action Guide*, working directly with local and overseas producers are equally treasured by the movement. "Community links or partnerships can be very rewarding when based on mutual learning and respect and on understanding and exploring issues like trade justice together. The Fairtrade Foundation does not arrange community linking with Fairtrade producer organizations but there are organizations that can help you link with communities in developing countries." At the same time it has also been added that, "Fairtrade isn't in competition with UK farmers. Most Fairtrade products such as coffee, rice, bananas, tea and cocoa can't be grown in the temperate British climate. Many Fairtrade Town groups have made a link between Fairtrade and a fair deal for local farmers by taking Fairtrade to farmers' markets and promoting local produce in directories. It is up to your group to decide its own policy, balancing concern for both local and global farmers." "Domestic fair trade", as it has been named, started to become another new front of the global fair trade movement.

In a comparative study of 3 fair trade towns in UK, US and Sweden by Wheeler (2012:82), it is found that there are significant varieties across different countries. While in Sweden the municipalities tend to take the lead, in order to

promote the local identity as a responsible town, in UK and US grassroot supporters play more important roles at least in the initial stage. Although there are significant variations across US, "there does appear to be strong support for fair trade among local business, reflecting the historical development of fair trade within US." In general, however, strong support from religious and environmental groups is commonly found in all the countries, and regardless of where the campaign starts, networks will ultimately encompass businesses, community and municipal sectors as the campaign proceeds. "Of course, the ability of fair trade town organizers to reach out to other sectors of the community is influenced by their level of social capital, as well as their influence with local decision makers."

After all, fair trade is designated as a tool of decommodification and reestablishing the direct linkages between producers and consumers. Under the trend of mainstreaming and corporatization, however, the "black box" effect of certification and labeling is much easily manipulated and dominated by mainstream business, and the generic **"high symbolic density"** of fair trade is essentially diluted. To a greater or lesser extent, the participatory approach and stakeholder engagement of the fair trade town movement, refreshingly, provides a dynamic and emergent platform of highly indeterministic nature, opening up all kinds of possibilities of reconnection, both locally or translocally, "challenging the dominance of abstract economic principles and moving to re-embed economic markets within social relationships" (Raynolds and Greenfield, 2015:24) The enclosure of the "black box" virtually stirs and "opens up" another round of movement dynamics, and mobilizes new efforts to reintegrate social and symbolic values which has been systematically ignored and excluded, to employ the insights of Brunori (1999) once again. The advantages of board base and wide audience as promoted by symbiotic strategy, can thus be further consolidated and deepened through such hybrid model of localized network, so that the "thin" commitment to fair trade potentially be once again "re-thickened".

3. Social economy, social enterprises and ethical consumption

The loose cluster of community economy projects

Rather different from many international agencies, OHK also works on local community projects in Hong Kong. Poverty and development problems, being encountered by people in developing countries, can equally and commonly be witnessed in the so-called "Asia's World City", with the rich-poor gap ever widening under the impact of neoliberal globalization and poor policy responses. Specifically, the local economy suffered from deindustrialization and "hollowing out" when manufacturing industries began to emigrate to the north, as Mainland China emerged as the "world factory" in late 1980s and early 1990s. Marginalized workers, already in their middle ages, were further hard hit by the Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s, collectively experiencing downward mobility resulted from causalization and under-employment. During that period, famous scholars including Hui Po Keung of Lingnan University and Wong Hung of Chinese University of Hong Kong were invited as advisors by OHK to generate new ideas to tackle these problems. Though resulted from diverse historical backgrounds and handled by different divisions and personnel, OHK launched the local community economy projects more less in parallel with the "Make Trade Fair Campaign" in early 2000's.

With its unique "rights-based approach" and the principle of "helping people to help themselves", OHK attempted to revitalize communities, generate new income sources, improve the livelihood and restore the dignity of work. Through the partnership with trade unions, community organizations and citizens groups, OHK started to experiment a number of projects in traditional urban neighbourhoods to tap the social capital and community resources, with their values no longer recognized by the mainstream market, to generate various models of alternative economic practices among the marginalized workers and grassroot citizens, and to reembed economic relationships into the community contexts. In retrospect, such approach was highly linked to the Third Way advocated by New Labour in UK after 1997, which emphasized on community self-help rather than replying on the welfare state anymore. At that time,

although I was mainly working on research and campaigns, I could still manage to spare some office hours to visit these projects frequently and made a lot of friends within that circle. Later in 2003, a book called *It is not a Utopia: Community Economics Theories and Practices* was published to record the experiences of the community economy projects. As usual, I took up the role of editor.

Among others, Saint James Settlement, Women Workers Association and Industrial Relations Institute were the most active organizations in the field. The first one was a traditional NGO located in Wan Chai district, which was however highly open to new ideas and could be considered as a pioneer of social innovation in Hong Kong. The flagship programme of time coupon / community currency, formally known as the Community Oriented Mutual Economy, or COME project, has operated over 15 years since 2000. The next one was a trade union handling labour issues based in Kwun Tong, and was particularly keen in promoting the co-operative movement. The women coops it initiated manage snack shops in the campuses of a few universities. The last one was a labour organization located in Shum Shui Po. The variety of projects ranged from women coop, second hand shop, mini-market promoting collective purchasing and also a community currency programme. With such a simple summary, it could be easily understood that community economy projects were highly diversified with their directions highly dependent on the local situations. It was nearly impossible to draw a concrete definition on it, or to suggest clear criteria for what should or should not be included.

Such loose cluster of projects and activities, to be visualized as small pieces joining up into a puzzle, accidentally, was put on the book cover of *It is not a Utopia* (for which I was also the designer). To reflect on it after these many years, the complexity and diversity of community economic practices echoed miraculously with the "anti-essentialist" and "postmodernist" propositions of Gibson-Graham (1996, 2006, see Chapter II), which were considered as the major theoretical resources the movement heavily counted on, not only locally but in the worldwide arena. Unlike "fair trade" which is also ill-defined, still manages to come up with commonly agreed principles, "community economy" can virtually imply anything outside the mainstream market. It is much easier to identify what is not community economy rather than pinpointing to what is community economy. If we are not too sure whether "the elephant of fair trade" really exist, then such skepticism must be even serious for "the elephant of community economy". Anyway, such a "big big tent" approach seemed to work very well and the sector grew stronger and stronger, with its influences going well beyond the original OHK circle, provided that the Hong Kong economy was performing worse and worse over the years.

COME

In 2014, Saint James Settlement invited the Third Sector Research Centre in our department in Hong Kong Polytechnic University headed by Professor K.T.Chan to conduct an indepth evaluation research for the time COME project. This was the first of this kind to be found in Hong Kong. According to the research, significant achievements have been recorded in economic, social and cultural aspects. Non-material outcomes, in particular, were equally if not treasured more by the members when compared to material outcomes. Sense of community belonging, social inclusion, dignity of work and the satisfaction of democratic participation were among the important values commonly identified. According to one of the respondents, "Compare with the mainstream market, community currency is an open system, allowing the disadvantaged groups to participate. It is a more 'humanized' form of economic activity, mutual help and respect are promoted through 'solidarity'." (Third Sector Research Centre, 2015)

One could equally discover, although time coupon/community currency was a project of completely different nature, the above descriptions might still by and large be applicable to fair trade.

From community economy to social economy

Much later on, as already being introduced in Chapter I, a research network on Pearl River Delta Social Economy was formed in our department in Hong Kong Polytechnic University, headed by Professor Pun Ngai. While OHK no longer supported this kind of projects any more, the original partners managed to continue community economy initiatives on their own, and most of them turned out to become members of the network. One must say, that the principles and practices of the projects were absolutely identical, but they now came under the brand new "big big big tent" of "social economy", which covered even wider number of organizations, including FTOs and social enterprises as later comers to the scene, and could be considered as a step forward of "scaling up" the movement. Later the network was modified into a more structured group called Hong Kong Social Economy Alliance, with another colleague from Polytechnic University, Pauline Chan, became part of it. Education activities were organized to promote the concept of social economy. Dialogues and exchanges were conducted with Mainland as well as overseas parties. Research and advocacy was done on government policies that might facilitate the development of social economy in Hong Kong (Pun, Chan, Koo and Lo, 2013).

Fair Circle, although not originated from the community economy circle, has also actively engaged in the alliance. For sure, Anthony, even before the founding of Fair Circle, has been highly active among the local social movement and grassroot organizations circles. By then they just discovered a new common platform under the umbrella of social economy. When the alliance formally established in 2012, however, Fair Circle has already developed into a FTO with huge market success. While at the same time, the community economy projects might be still struggling for survival over the years, the business situations were not in very good conditions. Many of them were still subsidized by NGOs rather than financially self-sustained. In general, they were

encompassing wider social economic goals, and maintained strong characters of NGOs. On the contrary, for FTOs like Fair Circle, especially operating under different models of social enterprise, they seemed to be able to achieve much better at least in terms of economic returns. After all, the social economy projects were mainly working with the marginalized groups, while modest FTOs even like Fair Circle, the customers were predominantly coming from middle class background (Yuen, 2011; Yuen and Chan, 2011).

WECONS

The even looser cluster of organizations finally came into a decision of jointly operating a shop, called WECONS, a retail platform as a joint venture among 8 organizations including Fair Circle, as a flagship project of the alliance in late 2014. It was located in a heritage building in the Flower Market area of Mongkok. The Urban Renewal Council offered a slightly discounted rent to NGOs, and organizations of the alliance, joined by the Zen in Five Seasons, a non-profit arm of a private food company, to form a retail complex selling products collectively sourced from all the members. Originally, it was planned to be an education hub, organizing all types of courses and activities to connect not only with the customers, but also the wider neighbourhood to promote healthy lifestyle and ethical consumption. The implementation of the rather large scale project was, nevertheless, resulted with outcomes less than satisfactory. The diverse sizes and maturity of the member organizations made their interests difficult to be mutually accommodated. Their joint responsibilities to run the shops also arouse much unnecessary disputes among themselves. The product and activity ranges were far from adequate to attract a critical mass of supporters. The sales performances turned out to be lag behind the target and the organizations have to bear heavy operational deficits collectively.

Social enterprises from other domains

Organizations working on community economy or social economy projects, while still preserving significant NGO birthmarks, also shared much characteristics of alternative trade. WECONS reminded me of the world shops

that have proliferated in Europe and North America, which also recorded poor economic performances especially in the 1980s, and could be considered as an indirect reason why alternative trade has been evolved into fair trade, and finally dominated by the certification and labeling systems in the 1990s. The "market competition" among different operational models and management styles could equally be expected among organizations both inside and outside the field of social economy. In mid 2000s, a new species of organizations, commonly known as social enterprises, started to become a new trend significantly contrasting to the traditional social economy counterparts. In general, they adopted new models of social enterprises and entrepreneurship (SEE) and the emphasis was by then put onto "entrepreneurship", which loosely implied a kind of innovative and venturous mentality normally found in the personalities of the entrepreneurs. More specifically, a group of commercial elites started to shift their career paths and began to respond to the call of social missions. Such ideas were further popularized when Mohammad Yunus was rewarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006, and Ashoka Foundation, the most well-known pioneer of social entrepreneurship from US, started to become active in the Greater China region.

The explosive growth of social enterprises and entrepreneurial activities in Hong Kong, however, was by far not apparent before 2006, when Hong Kong Government has not yet started to identify it as a major instrument of poverty alleviation. In particular, the Enhancing Self-Reliance Programme was launched under the Home Affairs Bureau aiming at nurturing social enterprise new start ups during that year. The overwhelming objectives of this and other official schemes, were narrowly focused on job creation or what was more commonly known as "work integration" in Europe. Funding resources were mainly devoted to the provision of trainings and employment opportunities for the disadvantaged groups. Under the peculiar situation in Hong Kong, for traditional welfare organizations that have suffered from budget cuts after the Asian financial crisis and under the lump-sum grant policy, the new scheme(s) were perceived as new source(s) of soliciting organizational fundings. Social enterprises were commonly seen as the income generating arms of the established non-profits (Ho and Chan, 2010). It was not until 2012, when a New

Poverty Commission was set up, that the official funding policy started to shift its focuses. A new Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund was formally launched in 2014, with the terms "innovation" and "entrepreneurship" first recognized officially in policy objectives, and funding opportunities were opened up to sectors beyond the welfare organizations.

The Alternative Human Resources Market

In 2014, the Center for Entrepreneurship of Chinese University of Hong Kong released a report capturing the landscape of social enterprises in Hong Kong. A total of 174 social enterprises were interviewed, with 10 of them further selected as exemplary cases covered by comparative analysis. While the majority of cases still fell within "work integration social enterprises" (or WISE in its short form), other categories were identified as "market creation", "creating social values in multiple domains" as well as "engaging in community economic development". The last category, obviously, referred to cases that were highly overlapped with organizations of community economy or social economy. Saint James Settlement's Ground Works and Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council's Alternative Human Resources Market were selected as exemplary cases. For the latter, also a core member of Social Economy Alliance, it was considered as unique for its approach to assist the economically deprived (namely single-parent families) to reconnect to the labor market. It "aspires to create family-friendly work opportunities with flexible working hours that could better accommodate the situations of single parents who need to take care of their families and cannot take up the long-shift jobs that are more abundant in the labor market. In collaboration with some 50 partner organizations, the social enterprise platform offers 20 kinds of services including patient escort service, house cleaning service, haircut service at elderly homes, etc." (Center for Entrepreneurship, 2014:14)

What was unique in the case of the Alternative Human Resources Market was it did not only cater the needs of both the service users and the part-time workers, but also invented a a job order management system to facilitate the matching of both the service provider and customer sides. Furthermore, part-time workers

were encouraged to self-organize among themselves, It "realized assisting their members to form small units of self-organized 'cooperatives' is the best way to help unleash the 'labour potential' of the single parents. Having gained successful experience in helping the single parents to form the quasi-cooperatives, the social enterprise now has the ambitious plan to support the establishment of dozens of similar "quasi-coops"so as to help unleash the hidden human resources for participating in value-creating productive activities. The case of Alternative Human Resources Market again demonstrates that achieving value creation through community economic development has to overcome various coordination and incentive problems, micro 'market failure' if you may, at the grassroots level. The numerous social innovations and alternative economic practices brought in by these social enterprises transcend the four activity domains and help change the incentives of market participation and in the process engage new stakeholder groups and build community relationships and networks." (ibid.)

Convergence of the ethical consumption month

After all, the majority of social enterprises in Hong Kong, including WISEs in general, were not community based organizations as Ground Works and Alternative Human Resources Market have been. The loose clusters of SSE and SEE, throughout the years, operated as rather separated domains with little crossovers. Even for large NGOs like Saint James Settlement, which involved in both social economy and social enterprise projects, the two arms were highly separated from, and seldom have any collaborations with each other. As mentioned in Chapter III, however, besides the Fair Trade Fortnight as the flagship programme of FTHK, another major event, the Ethical Consumption Month, was further introduced in November 2012, through the engagement with the wider local network of SSE and SEE. The idea was initially promoted by Kee, a broad member of FTHK from commercial background who, after early retirement in his early fifties, started to become a keen promotor of social entrepreneurship in Hong Kong. He was the head of Fullness Social Enterprise Society, and affiliate of the Fullness Salon which worked as a WISE for juvenile ex-offenders, both coming from Christian faith background. The slogan of

Ethical Consumption Month was thus assigned as "tithe ethical consumption", echoing with the call for titling by the Bible. During that month, consumers were requested to swap one-tenth of their spendings to ethical consumption, which was then defined as buyings through FTOs, social enterprises and social economy organizations among others. In principle, all the parties were considered as supporters of "upholding fairness, caring the disadvantaged, concerning the environment, and embracing cultural diversity and community development" - a further "big big big big tent".

Due to the connection between Kee and FTHK, the latter was negotiated to become the secretariat of the event. It was hoped that the peak season of Christmas could also be tapped (especially when compared with the Fortnight happened to take place in May), and Fairtrade or fair trade products, alongside with other types of ethical consumption, could be offered in a bundle. In the shopping guide published for the event, they were further divided under categories of eating, buying, entertaining and personal services, targeting the diverse consumption needs of different strata of consumers. In addition, recipes were designed for "ethical meals", tours were arranged for "ethical trails", exhibits were shown in "ethical bazaars" and consumers were mobilized to collect stamps which could be exchanged for souvenirs. The coverage and variety of events and functions was far beyond the Fortnight. The reception to it, however, was far lag behind expectations. Little impact seemed to have been generated, as least from the perceptions of the organizers. The range of products was too wide, the background of stakeholders too diverse, and the structure of activities too scattered. That was the rough impression obtained in general. However, as the Ethical Consumption Month ceased to exist after 2014, follow up investigation on it became impossible.

Wheeler (2012), in her case study of fair trade town, equally emphasizes on the crucial roles of events. The movement typically relies on the commitment of a network of "self-selected" supporters. But for those who are not directly engaged actually know little about it. The annual events like Fair Trade Fortnight actually provide a concentrated episode of exposure, which specifically aims at raising awareness and sales among the general population, as well as

generating media exposure and business/organizational supports. "For fair trade towns, who need to generate media coverage and run events as a condition of their status, the fair trade promotional period offers the perfect moment for them to concentrate their activities. Indeed, the guides that FTOs provide supporters with to help them to plan and organize events often assume that supporters are already organzied in their communities. The fair trade promotional period offers fair trade supporters the chance to extend and deepen their engagement with fair trade..Although the fair trade promotional period is really for existing supporters, through their work with corporations, and by having a period of 'exposure in which to measure change, it makes it seem as if it 'works' on the general public." (ibid:75, 80)

Leondias Fresh Begian Chocolate

A brand called Leondias Fresh Begian Chocolate came to be known in the field, and was heavily publicized during the Ethical Consumption Month events. According to the reports, it was affiliated to an NGO founded by a couple working for disable children from low income family. It was called Benji's Center named after their ceased son who suffered Down syndrome. The story was told that all the surpluses coming from the chocolate sales were transferred to support the NGO, and Leondias was thus considered as a successful model of social enterprise. It raised the query for, although the income of chocolate business was totally reinvested into the NGO, the nature of the chocolate business itself, however, has been concentrated on the economic returns and has nothing to do with the generation of social values. Not to mention, that Leondias was not doing fair trade chocolate at all! It seemed as if it was just another case of Bill Gates, who virtually donated as the assets from Microsoft to his charity foundation. But would anyone ever think of Microsoft in terms of a social enterprise?

As has been noted in Chapter V, there was an emergent trend for CSR or ethical trade programmes to converge with fair trade programmes, especially for those focusing on certification and labeling and working with mainstream corporations. It was sometimes difficult even for insiders to differentiate the

essences of various programmmes, not to mention the ordinary consumers who possessed much less knowledge about them. This seemed to be exactly the case of the "big big big big tent" of the Ethical Consumption Month, in which a substantial risk may be encountered on the potential "dilution", "confusion" or "trivialization". If it had managed to continued and expanded, judging from the cases of ethical trade vs. fair trade, it might well be likely for CSR or charity donation programmes to converge with ethical consumption. Though there was by far inadequate evidences to fully reveal the issues at hand, what seemed certain was the boundaries between the originally well-defined domains would inevitably be blurred.

4. Organic farms and banquets in Choi Yuen Village

From rupture to interstices

During the year 2010, when I was starting my PhD study, a massive protest broke out and occupied the pubic attention for over a year. It could be considered as the most controversial event since Hong Kong's sovereignty return in 1997. It was the incident resulted from Hong Kong Government's decision to construct a high speed railway, connecting Hong Kong to Guangzhou and all the way to Beijing. Much public attention was spotlighted onto Choi Yuen Village, a small rural village located in Shek Kong area. Under the government proposal it was designated to be the location of the future railway depot, thus the whole village has to be demolished. Although the village was inhibited with slightly more than 100 households, it turned out to arouse the territorial wide empathy, and generated waves of protest and movement, especially popular among the youth then commonly referred as the "post-eigthies" generation, to campaign against the government's decision.[54] The movement, it was widely recognized, not only reflected the emerging post-material mentality of the young people, but also carried a strong sense of "local culture", for which Choi Yuen Village was incidentally identified as a typical

---

54 Oxfam Hong Kong Programme

case, where traditional lifestyles and community bondings were well preserved. The conflicts between demands for development vs. conservation have been intensified to its peak during the year.

As already briefly accounted for in Chapter I, in the spring of 2011, I happened to move with my family to the area where the New Choi Yuen Village, after abolished by the construction of the high speed railway, was relocated. I even attempted to become a helper in the fields and experienced the lives of farmers. Although my decision of moving home has nothing to do either with my research or the protest, it turned out, totally beyond my expectation, that I was later heavily involved in the follow up movement, and worked closely with the "post-eigthies" in the next few years. I first became a campaigner for Choi Yuen Village candidate for the 2011 district council election, later joined an affiliated network called Local Research Community, and ultimately, be elected as an exco member of Land Justice League, the flagship organization active in the campaigning field. Besides the books jointly published with Fair Circle, I also completed other books related to the movement, including books related to the land and housing policies, as well as titles recording another major incident of land grab in Northeast New Territories in 2014. Last but not the least, two books related to food and agriculture were published in 2015: *A Reader on Local Agriculture* (co-authored with Professor Edward Yiu of Urban Studies Programme in the Chinese University of Hong Kong) and *Rice from Fields* (co-authored with Ranae So).

To go back a little bit in history, agricultural production has been in decline since the early 1980s, when Hong Kong was undergoing rapid urbanization, and local fresh produce has been out-completed by dirt cheap Mainland imports. Further within the same period, international agricultural trade was gradually liberalized and even for the China farmers, they were also hard-hit by the agribusiness imports heavily subsidized by the Northern countries. Ironically, the green movement started to take root and Produce Green Foundation, the first organic farm in Hong Kong, was established in 1989 (Chow and Yiu, 2015). The movement turned out to be extremely tiny in scale and was only popular among small circles of activists and intellectuals. The popular concerns on and

demands for local produce did not really exist before 2003, when the SARS outbreak ruined the city and resulted with 300 casualties. People started to pay more attention, as well as paying more money to explore healthy food and healthy lifestyle. But it was not until 2010 and after the Choi Yuen Village incident, that people really opened up their eyes to look beyond healthy food, and begin to consider issues of agriculture, rural conservation and ecology as a whole. *A Reader on Local Agriculture*, unsurprisingly, became the first book related to agricultural policy in Hong Kong over 40 years. It was published in early 2015 as a response to the newly released official agricultural policy for the first time in the history of Hong Kong.

As an after thought, the Choi Yuen Village incident unmistakably marked the watershed of local agricultural development. Before 2010, it was general believed that "local agriculture is dead" in metropolitan Hong Kong, especially under the dominant official discourses. Statutory agricultural land have in fact accumulated by the giant developers like Li Ka Shing and became reserves for future housing projects. "The logic of urban development" as well as the need to maintain "the city's competitiveness" (thus the high speed railway was a must), has justified the legitimacy of land grab and sacrifices of the disadvantaged groups. The notion of "property hegemony" amazingly captured the spirit of interest conglomerate among the majority of Hong Kong people (Poon, 2005). However, with the rise of the younger generation and the common experiences of the anti-high speed railway campaign, local agriculture suddenly became a new battlefield of the civil society and mass mobilizations. The "conservation discourse", though by far unable to overwhelm the "development discourse", started to take roots not only among the youth but within middle class more broadly, and occasionally spread to other social strata in the city.[55]

Vince Cheung was one of the groupmates who travelled to Sri Lanka with Fair Circle in 2011. She was by far the youngest member of the group, when entering the last night of the trip, just celebrating her 23th birthday. I can never forget that by then we were visiting a vanilla farm in the Kandy region. Due to

---

55 Some NGOs being supported by OHK's Hong Kong Programme transferred some fundings to support the anti-high speed railway campaign. After the incident was exposed by mass media, it became highly politicized and utimately, two top managers of OHK were forced to resigned.

the extremely poor road conditions, we have been far lag behind the schedule. When we arrived at the farm located in a jungle, it was already totally dark and the whole place was surrounded by the symphony of insects. Suddenly the electricity ran out and all of us were caught in total darkness. Then we started to discover hundreds of fireflies slowly wandering around the vicinity. Later Vince became a very close friend of mine. She was not only the co-editor of many of my books, but also an expert of agriculture and ecology, that virtually all my knowledge in this field came from her. She studied Environmental Sciences in the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and devoted herself to work on local agriculture (though not as a farmer). She later also joined Land Justice League and was frequent in many of the campaigns and protests. The main difference between her and many other "post-eigthies" was, she read an amazingly large number of books in addition to the Facebook.

Chu Hoi Dick, Dick as commonly called, was born in 1977, who could not be considered as the "post-eigthies" and was the oldest among the activists. He however became the figure head of the movement and Land Justice League. Although he was not an inhabitant of Choi Yuen Village, he has moved in since 2011 and assisted the relocation project throughout the years. I started to work quite closely with him and occasionally, we also work together in clearing the reeds in the fields. Although he has gone into serious conflicts with the police and was arrested for countless occasions, he was actually a very mild and calm person who never went into extreme emotions. Under his charismatic leadership, among other factors, many young people started to move to villages, became full time or part time farmers, and engaged in various kinds of related activities including farmer markets, collective purchases as well as other education and advocacy initiatives. While for myself, I also gradually became a core (and senior) member of the team, but my role was limited to research and publications, and did not really enter into the direct actions and confrontations. Such a new role in local movement, totally unrelated to my engagements in fair trade at the onset, after all these years, turned out to be highly integrated and no longer being able to be distinguished from each other.

Fair trade, fresh from the fields

In the year 2013, the second year after I moved to the New Choi Yuen Village area, the villagers have already settled in the temporary houses, and started the reconstruction work of the new village collectively. I became a close friend of Fung Yue Chuk, Chuk as commonly called, who was born in the old village, moved out after marriage and became one of the most high profile figures during the 2010 protest. Afterwards, she decided to quit her outside job and totally devote to the reconstruction project. She started a new farm next to the new village through partnerships with 10 villagers and activists, and attempted to demonstrate to the general public an ideal image of traditional rural lifestyles. She worked with the partners, as well as a lot of empathic supporters, to practice community support agriculture (normally called CSA in short). Fresh vegetables were delivered directly along the metro stations at fixed schedules. The supporters, on the contrary, went to the farm for volunteering, just like what Dick and me also did. Furthermore, university or high school teachers and students also visited the farm frequently to learn more about local agriculture. Tour fees were collected for the villagers who offered the guided tours. All the income collected, with the necessary costs deducted, was pooled together for supporting the reconstruction work. Although the sum was minimal when compared with their heavy financial burdens, the feeling of teamwork and interpersonal bondings were really crucial for a community encountering such a big crisis.

For some of the guided tours, a dinner would further be served in the open space next to the farm and the temporary houses. Traditional Hakka cuisine popular in rural Hong Kong was assigned to be the main menu - business as usual. It was normally dominated by overcooked meat and did not fully exploit the strength of fresh produce. Thus one day I suggested to Chuk, in a rather causal manner, that actually we could make appetizers, salads, desserts and a wider variety of dishes on top of the original menu. More importantly, a much higher price would be charged to generate additional income. Chuk's response was highly positive and we started to experiment new menus featuring Italian cuisine (which I learnt during much earlier travels to Italy). The main ideas were, there has already been a full range of fair trade items readily supplied by Fair

Circle, what I really needed to do was to survey the seasonal green recently available, mixing and matching them with the suitable imported items. If there were not enough output from the farm, more supply would also be sourced from the nearby organic farms. In general, these could have already constituted to 80-90% of the necessary ingredients, not much is needed to be bought from the mainstream market. And even if extra purchases have to been done, they would certainly be made in the food markets instead of supermarkets. The result was a fair trade banquet crossover with local fresh produce.

Chuk teamed up with me to become the master chefs. Other women villagers also helped a hand for washing and cutting the materials. The cooking was usually done in the kitchen of one of their temporary houses. In addition, the friends of Fair Circle who travelled to Sri Lanka and Bangladesh together were also invited as the assistants. Vince, Chi, Kitty and Ranae were the most helpful ones, with Ranae further gave a hand, through her network in the fair trade circle, to promote the event and recruit participants. The price per person, including a two-hour guided tour and a dinner, was listed as HKD$200 at the beginning, and later raised to HKD$250. All the net income was pooled into the account of the village. Normally up to 15-20 different dishes, predominantly vegetarian, could be served in the form of banquet and the maximum number of guests could go up to 50-60. It took 4-5 of us an extremely busy afternoon, starting first at farm to gather all the necessary vegetables, dividing among ourselves for various kind of dishes, and completing all the processing and cooking before 6:00pm. Sri Lankan spices were extensively utilized to provide a rich favour. Fair trade juice and red wine was also included in the menu. Quinoa, one of the most prestige product of Fair Circle, usually served as salad together with vegetables, was converted to become a dessert and a highlight by the end the event.

During the years of 2013-2014, more than ten such banquets have been organized. Most of them took place in New Choi Yuen Village. Occasionally they might also be relocated to the urban venues upon requests. In one occasion, my friend of television actress also became the co-host and attracted a huge crowd. Alot of photos, especially closing up onto the final products, were taken

and piled up in my computer hard disc. By then Ranae just completed her employment contract and got some free time at the moment. I thus suggested a joint writing project, for while she would try to interview different organic farms in Hong Kong, I would try to write down the recipes and supplement with the colourful pictures. As a result, in late 2014, a total of 12 organic farm interviews, including the one in New Choi Yuen Village, were completed. They were compiled together with the recipes to became a co-authored book called *Rice from Fields: Sustainable foodways in Hong Kong.* As it was published in 2015, happened to be the UN International year of Soils, a prolonged introduction was further written to introduce the concept of agroecology - the knowledge and wisdom about how food, agriculture, people and the whole nature could mutually adapt and sustainably co-exist on the limited spaces of earth.
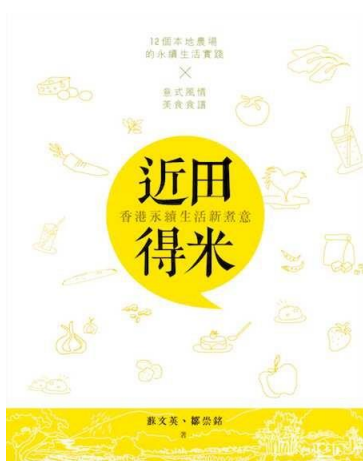
In van Wijk (2013:134)'s earlier research on the fair trade and CSA movement in Hong Kong, partial convergence between the fair trade and organic food was observed. "Some fair traders believed that the movement needed to take a more holistic approach to the environment and in response to this, had developed their own brands of organic fair trade food products. These fair traders had taken a step to advance the movement in this direction, recognizing that within the context of Hong Kong, there was a growing niche market for organic fair trade products. This union and cross fertilization of ideas between organic and fair trade was possible because the food networks of fair trade and CSA are very small in Hong Kong. Through social networking, many of the participants got to know each other on the basis of shared interests and this was pointed out to me by several fair traders and CSA members." Equally

speaking, fair trade products coming from the Global South were also increasingly organic certified, as shown in the cases of Yisheng Organic (Chapter III), IMO and ECOCERT (Chapter IV).

Ground Works

As mentioned earlier, Ground Works of Saint James Settlement was also widely known as a social enterprise "engaging in community economic development". It was established in 2008 under the funding support of the official Enhancing Self-Reliance Programme, but later became organizationally and financially independent. By running a licensed food processing unit, it linked up with local organic farms in Hong Kong that supplied fresh produce to make healthy and good quality food, with the finished food products sold in various outlets, including WECONS, using the Ground Works label or through other commercial labels. With the time coupon / community currency system of Saint James Settlement already at hand, marginalized workers in Wanchai district were employed and could "earned in exchange for their labour hours, the poor families could also consume a variety of healthy food products (e.g. organic vegetables) that otherwise would be way too expensive for them. In all, through the networking and partnership arrangements, different community segments including both the rich and the poor are all getting involved in the alternative economic system crafted by Ground Works. Social capital has been nurtured in the process and social benefits diffused across the entire community of actors." (Center for Entrepreneurship, 2014:13-14)

Ground Works was considered as one of the more successful CSA projects, among others, that started to proliferate in the city in recent years. They were also extensions of the community economy projects originated from urban neighbourhoods, later attempted to link up rural and urban communities, and incorporated values and practices similar to fair trade. Whether it was termed as CSA, "domestic fair trade", community economy or a component of the SSE sector as a whole, community foundations and bondings were unmistakably the integral elements to be found. These marked sharp contrasts with the social

enterprises in specific and the SEE domain in general, especially for those initiated under government sponsorship, which worked on various principles and objectives but nothing related to community engagement. The Ethical Consumption Month, as directly resulted from such SEE tradition, also heritaged all the shortcomings of being detached from community settings, even through "community development" was laid down as a major principle. Nor did Kee and FTHK, as the major organizers of the event, attempted to connect it with local producers in general, and organic farmers in specific. The advantages of and opportunities with localized network to "re-thicken" the commitment to ethical consumption and fair trade were thus missed.

Buying local, buying fair?

In the majority of existing literature, both fair trade and local food can be considered as part of the wider movement of alternative food networks (Chapter II). Although domestic fair trade was formally recognized by WFTO not until recently, it has caught attentions of scholars from North America since early. Jaffee and his colleagues, for instance, called for "bringing the moral charge home" as early as in 2004, arguing that "fair trade, is not necessarily *far* trade...We share Raynolds' belief that fair trade, wherever one finds it, may indeed mount a fundamental challenge to the domination of the agrofood system by powerful corporations and the straitened ethics of the neoliberal market." (Jaffee, Kloppenburg and Monney, 2004:171) They employed 5 cases in US and 2 cases in Mexico to demonstrate, that these cases not only shared many of the principles and practices of international fair trade, some of them also explicitly adopted the terminology of "fair trade" to describe the local projects. "The US initiatives, to greater and lesser degree, may best be understood as "proto-" fair trade projects in which elements of the fair trade model appear in promising ways, but are neither fully developed nor systematized." (ibid.:188)

Brown and Getz (2008, 2015), nevertheless, attempted to deliver a more indepth picture of the complicated internal dynamics of domestic fair trade in US. The Domestic Fair Trade Association (DFTA in short) was established in

2005 with the explicit goal of addressing "the converging interests of family farmers, farm workers, organic advocates and FTOs in domestic agriculture". It served as an umbrella for a wide variety of non-profit and market-based entities interested in moving beyond the narrow confines of organic certification, and addressed "broader environmental and social relations of agricultural production and trade. From the outset, leaders explicitly rejected becoming an accreditation or certification body and instead envisioned the organization as a networking, marketing and gatekeeping resource. One of the DFTA's first moves was to develop a 12-point set of foundational criteria addressing a range of issues, including family-scale farming, democratic and participatory control, rights of labor, direct trade, fair and stable pricing, credit access, transparency and accountability and sustainable agriculture." (Brown and Getz, 2015:181) All of its members came from the following stakeholder groups, including: family farmers and farmer cooperatives; farmworker organizations; processors, marketers and intermediary trading organizations; retailers, food cooperatives and farmers' markets; and NGOs and civil society.

As Brown and Getz go on to argue, the NGO and market actors involved in these efforts have had to confront many of the same tensions and challenges facing the international fair trade network, and "nowhere have the tensions of merging the varied visions of international fair trade, sustainable agriculture, farmworker justice and small-scale farming in the United States been more apparent than within the DFTA. Notable examples include debates over definitions of family-scale farming, whether or not to require organic certification, how to determine fair prices and living wages, and over fair labor practices. We suggest that attempts to simultaneously address farmer and farmworker interests have made it difficult for the DFTA to reach consensus on a variety of issues. DFTA members' strong focus on family-scale farming implicitly accepts the family farm/industrial agriculture binary that frames labor exploitation as a problem in large-scale farming and small farms as inherently more virtuous. This focus has obscured the role of immigrant farmworkers at virtually all scales of US agricultural production, at times placing farmers and their representatives at odds with farmworker members." (ibid.:180, 182)

Such examples reveal that domestic fair trade, very similar to the cases of international fair trade, was consisted of a loose cluster of people and organizations sharing greater or lesser values and believes in common, and encompassed a wide range of stakeholders from heterogenous backgrounds. The ideals of fair trade, organic or local food do not necessarily fit with each other and automatically translate themselves into an integrated movement. Worser still, besides the internal cleavages of domestic fair trade, or various South-South and North-North initiatives, the tensions and conflicts with traditional North-South fair trade should not be overlooked. As Hinrichs has warned as early as in 2003 in her study of local food, "Localization has become a catchword, often invoked as a counterpoint to globalization While academics see the agency in local places and resulting contingencies of change as unsettling the seeming structural predictability of globalization, activists trumpet localization as 'something done by people, not something done to them'...Atomized market relations are seen as a defining, but negative feature of 'global', while the 'local' will manifest high levels of social capital and relations of care - in short, a more moral or associative economy." (Hinrichs, 2003:34, 36)

Hinrichs thus argues, while these positive aspects of social embeddedness can and do flow from local contexts, "local social interactions are not absent of intolerance and unequal power relations. Local communities and organizations may have checkered histories, replete with provincial bias and social exclusion, evidence of the "dark side of social capital" (ibid.). Thus, while affect, trust and regard can flourish under conditions of spatial proximity, this is not automatically or necessarily the case. Hinrichs further differentiates the two broad tendencies of defensive localization and more diversity-receptive localization. A politics of defensive localization emphasizes the construction, relational positioning and protection of "local". "In the food systems arena, defensive localization imposes rigid boundaries around the spatial 'local' and minimizes internal difference in the name of some 'local good'. In a more reactionary vein, defensive localization even suggests a separatist politics, where the challenges of local sustainability in a globalizing context can only be addressed by secession...In this sense, defensive food system localization tends to stress the homogeneity and coherence of 'local', in patriotic opposition to heterogenous and

destabilizing outside forces, perhaps a global 'other'. Predicated on such pat assumptions about the community or the heritage being preserved and promoted, localization becomes elitist and reactionary, appealing to narrow nativist sentiments." (ibid.:37) Such comments could equally be applied to some localist sentiments commonly found in Hong Kong nowadays.

Cucco and Fonte (2015:27), more recently, attempt to distinguish the different, but interconnected meanings - the geographical and social aspects of local food. "In its geographical meaning, local food means a critique of the long physical distance food travels 'from farm to fork' in industrialized, consolidated global value chains. Attentions to food miles links concerns over food to environmental preoccupations with climate change and emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from transport. From a social perspective, production processes in the agro-industrial food complex are deterritorialized, placeless and centred around the commodification of food (food from nowhere)...This concept of embeddedness imparts social meaning to notions of place, social meaning to be elaborated by the rural communities inhabiting the 'places' in question. The shortness of local food chains makes it possible to trace the food almost personally to the individual farmer who produced it, enabling relations of trust to be established in the local society. Food production is re-contextualized within the formal and informal social relationships that constitute the basis for community life. Geographical proximity is, then, important because it implies or favours social proximity, i.e. face-to-face interactions between producers and consumers."

However, as we will see further on, place-embeddedness is not strictly identical with "localness". A much more careful interrogation and subtle differentiation is needed. Neither does the concept of "localness" automatically imply "sustainability", both in theoretical and practical sense, nor does "from farm to fork" imply the minimization of environmental impact. "To use the words of DeLind (2011), we must ask ourselves: 'is local food taking us where we want to go?' Hinrichs (2015) invites us to look at how the distribution of interests and power across different groups of farmers and consumers, as well as across varied organizations and institutions, serves to concentrate or spread the

benefits and risks when fastening food to a locality." (Cucco and Fonte, 2015:29) Interestingly, The authors also adopt Wright (2006, 2010)'s framework of "real utopias", and highlight alternative food networks as interstitial strategy fostering new forms of social and economic relations through direct linkages. "The contribution of 'civic food networks' has been particularly relevant in this regard, since they have stressed the transformative potential of the 'consumer' intended not as the neoliberal agent operating to make markets work better, but as the 'ecological citizen' ready to assume responsibility for local and global problems and to organize collective democratic action in order to advance toward a solution." (ibid.:31) No further explanations concerning interstitial strategy, however, have been elaborated within the short piece.

Glocal care

When compared with the organizations and projects already being introduced above, Glocal Care is much smaller in scale. Frankly speaking, it is merely an experimental set up involving only Ranae and myself. During the running of the fair trade banquets and the writing of *Rice from Fields*, we both shared a strong feeling that, in order to further the fair trade movement and make it take root in Hong Kong, we could not solely focus on the unfair trade practices at the global level, and rely on imported fair trade products as an alternative. We have to equally address the issues of property hegemony, and the sufferings of local farmers in Hong Kong. The name of Glocal Care chosen by Ranae, however, precisely revealed our attentions both placed on global and domestic fair trade, our concerns were equally invested onto international and local poverty and development issues. Due to the lack of resources, this tiny organization neither functions constantly nor carries on long term projects. It could only manage to involve in occasional events and activities, mainly educational in nature. However, it could still be rather safe to say, that similar set ups on fair trade and ethical consumption could still not found in Hong Kong.

5. Re-entanglement with the soil

Re-politicization on citizen-consumers

Obviously, compared with the kind of defensive localization, the fair trade town movement represents a much more diversity-receptive kind of localization (Hinrichs, 2000, 2003), or "reflexive localism" reconciling with "a sense of planet" or "a global sense of place" (Fonte, 2013; Cucco and Fonte, 2015). After all, it aimed at re-orienting a global movement towards reembeded locally, and developing translocal entanglements among rural and urban communities both at national and international level, rather than detached itself as autonomous sites, isolated from the global connections. But besides the extension of fair trade network and the promotion of fair trade (while not dismissing social economy, ethical consumption, etc.) products, there were still much undervalued potentials within the fair trade town movement which worths further explorations. As Wheeler (2012) argues, rather than viewing consumers as autonomous and individualistic choosers, fair trade towns expose the collective and complex process of how consumption is conditioned by situational and institutional forms of collective constraints. Consumption of fair trade products is thus neither the only, nor main means of supporting fair trade. The supporters often work to encourage others to use and learn about fair trade, extend the scope of community support and develop a collective practice of which fair trade consumption is only part of it.

Wheeler (2012:108-9), through her study of "citizen-consumers", challenges the traditional undifferentiated image of fair trade consumers and supporters, "Indeed, we are forced to question the importance of consuming fair trade products for being a fair trade supporter. As individual can consume fair trade without being a fair trade supporter, for example, when fair trade becomes the standard option in particular places and retail outlets, and an individual can count himself or herself as a fair trade supporter without always consuming fair trade...It might therefore be better to focus upon the everyday social flow and 'do-ability' of fair trade consumer practices and performances and consider the conditions under which these performances are made possible (Halkier, 2010). It follows that strategies for changing patterns of consumption must act on the collective level and seek to transform social practices rather than focusing on

the individual level of consumer choice." As we can see further on, the emphasis placed on public procurement policies and the collective provisioning of fair trade products in retail outlets and public spaces can be seen as a crucial strategic shift towards this objective.

In a rather similar manner, Lekakis (2013:8) attempts to contrast what he terms radical or political consumerism with the more commonly known as ethical or socially conscious consumption. While ethical consumption focuses on individual consumption behaviour in the marketplace, political consumerism perserves the coordinated actions of citizens as a collective. While the former may entail the potential risk of "marketopoly" - the reign of market over politics through a dominant discourse of consumption that pervades and overwhelms political contexts, "the appeal of political consumerism can be democratically productive in so far as it revitalizes the political imaginary, and provokes more global or national questions, but not in so far as it is shaped, shifted, packaged and distributed explicitly by the tools of the markets, such as brands and their resourceful co-optation practices." All in all, political consumerism does not refute ethical consumption but further upgrade it. The mainstreaming of fair trade might dilute and trivialize its previously more politically vocal nature, but it also expand the constituencies of followers in both campaigning and consuming. "The consumer narrative behind the cause might be reduced to acts of participation in the marketplace, but it might also make it accessible to more people. Fair trade remains a type of activism where we are addressed as 'cool citizens' (Scammell, 2000), but we must also act as 'critical citizens' (Norris, 1999)." (ibid.:155-6)

Lekakis equally pinpoints to the prime importance of what he terms as "the politics of spaces", referring to the communal networks and public spaces which carry high potentials of connecting and mobilizing citizens in the cause. Specifically, when contrasting to proliferation of digital media in the last decade, which has become an integral component of global justice movement and worldwide mass mobilizations, offline associations are still playing critical roles in it. "Social spaces, spaces of worship and spaces of education are more likely to provide entry points of civic engagements in causes such as coffee activism."

(ibid.:117-8) Lekakis' words echo with Low and Davenport (2007:337)''s earlier formulation of "ethical spaces of consumption", aiming at the re-politicization of fair trade practices through "political and geographical lenses", and refueling the "political ecological imaginary" into what has become an increasingly de-politicized ethical consumption environment. "These 'real' and virtual spaces can be established through legislative mandate or voluntarily (through citizen-led activism); examples include institutionalized ethical purchasing policies, fair trade/world shops and fair trade towns and campuses. We argue that the (re-)creation of ethical spaces of consumption can be a way of expanding sales, shortening the distance between producer and consumer and reinvigorating the message of reforming and transforming market relationships."

Barnett et al. (2011:189), in addition, through their indepth analysis of Bristol as a fair trade City, describes how it adopts an approach under which fair trade products were not promoted just a means of "voting with your wallet". Instead it conveys a "political ecological imaginary" for the citizens to view it as a battle to eradicate poverty through trade reforms. "Thus one of the storylines in the campaign emphasized that consuming fair trade products through the fair trade city device was an integral part of wider practices of good local citizenship and place-belonging, of becoming what Escobar (2001) calls a 'placeling'. Fair trade city campaign literature frames involvement around place specificity." The propaganda that frames Bristol as a place inheriting distinctive qualities are key to fair trade City campaigning, which has successfully drawn a linkage between "the conspicuous consumption of fairness with the endowment of the city with meaningfulness and civic pride. Thus a Fairtrade City becomes not only a place that is known to promote fair trade but also a place characterized by fairness. As a member of the Bristol fair trade City steering group describes, people think 'oh the council is not exploiting people outside the city' so perhaps people might also extrapolate that the council is not trying to exploit people in the city." (Barnett et al., 2011:190)

Among other examples, Low and Davenport (2007:345) refer to Oxfam Great Britain's re-entrance in the fair trade market through reinvigoration of a new

voluntary ethical space that is an explicit alternative to both the purely commercial market and mainstream fair trade. After the termination of direct imports in early 2000s (Chapter III), Oxfam re-formulated its strategy and established a joint venture - Progreso coffee bars - in London in 2005, partnering with three coffee co-operatives in Honduras, Ethiopia and Indonesia. The business model was borrowed from Day Chocolate, in which the Southern partners held 25% of shares, a community trust in the growers' communities obtained another 25% and Oxfam retained the remaining 50%. "When you enter a Progreso coffee bar the fair trade message is central and explicit, and you know all the coffee is Fairtrade certified. In comparison, Starbucks has been heavily criticized for offering only one line of fair trade coffee (possibly as little as 1% of its sales) and promoting this coffee only once a month as 'coffee of the day' (and only in its USA stores). Fair-trade coffee is therefore just one of the 'quality' choices a consumer can make having entered Starbucks."

Low and Davenport (2007:346) thus argue that ethical spaces like Progreso achieves market reconnections and reembeddedness "more likely than do mainstream channels such as Starbucks where leaflets on fair trade may be available if one looks for them, or a supermarket where a consumer may spend only 4 seconds making a purchase decision (Crispell and Brandenburg, 1993). Instead, the emergent forms of ethical spaces make the politics of consumption explicit rather than subordinate to the everyday business of consumption by, for example, lifting the veil of consumption and shortening the distance between producer and consumer."

Fair trade nation: new frontiers of ethical procurement

Another example of ethical space and political consumerism briefly mentioned by Low and Davenport (2005:506) is the adoption of ethical purchasing policies within the public sector, which can provide a very powerful boost to fair and ethical trade goods. Instead of relying on public education and conscious raising of the ordinary consumers, private and public institutions, organizations and associations including the British Houses of Parliament, the EU Parliament, the

UK Salvation Army and the Youth Hostel Association, "now serve only fair trade tea, coffee and other foods as a matter of principle. The development of fair trade university campuses in the UK and the USA has also been a popular initiative. We term this 'political consumerism' in contrast to individually based ethical consumerism. Whether or not the individual chooses to buy fair trade products at other times, while they occupy the time and space boundaries of these institutions, a collective decision for positive social action overrides their individual preferences."

Malpass, Cloke, Barnett, and Clarke (2007) provide an indepth account, once again, on Bristol's experience of a fair trade city campaign, suggesting the ways in which fair trade consumption is aligned with the place, involving in "a politics of place beyond place". One highlight of the campaign is the introduction of fair trade procurement practices into the public and private sectors. "As a result, employees, residents and visitors became fair trade consumers, knowingly or unknowingly, when visiting the canteens and restaurants of the local authority and other significant sites and institutions in the city. The fair trade city campaign can therefore be seen to have deployed ideas of place, fairness and local-global relations as scale frames of mobility though which to embed ethical consumption in place, and to govern consumption at a distance."

Smith (2010, 2015), on the contrary, touches upon the even rarer notion of fair trade nation, and examines how principles of sustainable development and fair trade governance are negotiated and operationalized into the policies of public procurement in the cases of Scotland and Wales. Practices particularly with regard to state procurement, indeed mostly focus on Fairtrade certified goods, thus reinforcing the concerns that campaign appeals are constructing a monopoly market for commodities bearing the Fairtrade Mark. "While local government involvement in fair trade towns has arguably begun the process of re-introducing the state following its wider exit under neoliberalizing forces, the emergence of fair trade nations demands attention as a potential further development." Following on from gaining recognition for Cardiff as the world's first fair trade capital city in 2004, the Wales Fair Trade Forum (WFTF) identified the possibility to work towards similar recognition for the country of Wales as a

whole and approached UK Fairtrade Foundation to help develop a form of national-level recognition. "During initial conversations in Wales it was felt that a fair trade place at the national scale should focus on a threefold agenda of international trade justice, promoting fair trade goods and also supporting the consumption of 'locally' and nationally produced food. This again offered the opportunity to use the framing of place to gather a range of interests and highlight connections between them...Following this procedure the first stage criteria were met first by Wales in 2008 and then Scotland in early 2013." (Smith, 2015:200)

As said by UK Fairtrade Foundation, sustainable procurement has grown in significance over the past decade and some public bodies have started to develop good practice in fair trade procurement. Fair trade towns have been at the forefront of this development, with over 500 local authorities in the UK passing resolutions and policies to support fair trade. According to its *Guide of Public Procurement for Fair Trade Towns*, all public bodies in the EU are bound by procurement principles articulated in EU Procurement Directives. These are intended to ensure procurement is done fairly and achieves value for money - in other words they refer to how you buy rather than what you buy. This prevents public bodies from specifically requesting products that carry the Fairtrade Mark, which is a trademark and can therefore be seen to be excluding some suppliers from applying for a tender. "Instead, when tendering for fair trade products purchasers need to take care to make clear that all fair trade options are welcomed. While 'the Fairtrade Mark or equivalent' can be accepted as proof of meeting these criteria (in award criteria or at the contract performance stages), suppliers must be able to show they can verify the products in another way."

In the year 2004, the Fair Trade Advocacy Office (FTAO) as a joint initiative of FLO, WFTO and the WFTO - Europe was set up to become the advocacy cooperation mechanism, with the mandate to advocate for EU policies in support of fair trade and trade justice and to strengthen the fair trade networks and members' capacities to interact and engage in on-going dialogue with the EU Institutions. The FTAO Secretariat was based in Brussels and is headed by

director Sergi Corbalan, who was a frequent participant in the aforementioned WFTO biennial conferences. According to Sergi, one of the major advocacy campaigns was called Vote4FT, which mainly targeted the European Parliament elections in 2014. It provided a good opportunity for the fair trade movement to approach the candidates, addressing the importance of EU policies for the livelihoods of marginalized producers and workers in the Global South. As once written by Sergi and his colleague, "Despite increased demand for fair trade as part of international, regional or national government-backed sustainability agendas, purchasing fair trade products presents difficulties for European public authorities. In part this is because a profound shift in thinking is required to encompass approaches to sustainable procurement and to address *inter alia* fair trade, thus challenging practices that associate public procurement with the award of public contracts to tenders offering the lowest cost. This is all the more difficult in times of public austerity and budget cuts that reinforce a well-established tension between sustainable procurement and pressure to equate value for money with efficiency savings." (Fisher and Corbalan, 2010)

Locationally embedded and place-specific fair trade

So far we have come across various geographical accounts of ethical spaces, fair trade places, "a politics of place beyond place" and the like, the conceptual schemes are loosely assembled and far from vigorously formulated. This exactly echoes with what Bowen and Mutersbaugh (2013) observe, that under the Anglo-Saxon tradition of alternative food networks study, specific spatial settings and unique locational contexts have been by and large neglected. This is particularly true when compared with the Mediterranean Europe tradition, in which the prime importance of locality is highlighted (Chapter II). In particular, locally distinctive historical, ecological, cultural and symbolic factors, as specifically defined by their localities, are being prioritized (rather than singled out) as the locus and focus of analysis. The dialectics and dynamic interactions of the local and the global forces of fair trade movements are being treated in a rather complex and emergent manner. "The diverse actors that constitute particular territories are linked by shared identifications; as such, territoriality and belonging can thus be considered both a value and a socio-spatial relation

(Muchnik et al. 2008). Local Agrifood Systems scholars understand territory, which is strongly linked to *terroir*, not just in terms of the biophysical resources (e.g., soils, microclimates, landscapes) that structure economic activity, but also particular ecologies and historical contexts and linked to specific practices and cultural and social resources (e.g., institutions, organizations, knowledge, traditional practices). " (Bowen and Mutersbaugh, 2013)

The following three case studies can highlight the core issues at hand. In an earlier study, Getz and Shreck (2006:492) demonstrate through small farmers growing Fairtrade bananas in the Dominican Republic and organic tomatoes in Mexico, the disconnection between the promises of Fairtrade and organic labels and the "lived experiences" of small farmers. "Both cases illustrate some of the hidden costs and more ambiguous implications of certification and labeling that are illuminated only when one focuses attention on what happens locally, behind the scenes or before the labelled product makes its appearance to consumers. Our findings suggest that some of the promise embodied by eco- and social-certification regimes is of yet still unfulfilled." The authors thus call for "a place-based understanding of certification". "A more nuanced and robust incorporation of 'place' (at the point of production) into international certified commodity systems would go a long way towards reflecting on these questions and holding such consumers and certification groups accountable to the small farming communities who stand to benefit, and also to lose, the most from certification's success or failure." (ibid.:500)

Another case study comes from Herman (2010)'s analysis of Fairtrade wine in South Africa, which draws our attention to the specific local political context that despite post-apartheid legislative, social, technological and market changes, farmworkers continue to be one of the most socially excluded groups in the country. "Fairtrade's engagement in South Africa is unique. Given the continuing domination of agriculture by white owner-farmers and plantation-style farms, Fairtrade was, via certification, in danger of 'legitimizing the racial and material legacy of slavery, colonialism and apartheid' (Kruger and du Toit 2006). Fairtrade has therefore adapted to South African specificities through an unprecedented national-level discussion as to what 'fairness' means within this

space. B-BBEE is the current national strategy deployed to address South Africa's continuing, racially grounded socio-economic marginalization...incorporated into Fairtrade, making Fairtrade more 'knowable' to local producers by enhancing its relevance and sensitivity and B-BBEE more accountable by tying it into internationally recognized auditing systems." (Goodman and Herman, 2015:148) The authors thus attempt to highlight the "spatial dimensions of fair trade practices, shifting to a more producer-oriented focus, and explore the 'complex lived worlds' (Herman 2010) of fair trade in the ways that Fairtrade regulations have been tactically adopted and adapted on the ground." (ibid.:140)

A more recent South African case is the study of an agricultural cooperative supplying raisins to Traidcraft plc (Chapter IV). Through the efforts of McEwan, Hughes, Bek and Rosenberg (2014), it is revealed how "the specificities of place" keep on challenging the meanings and methods of practicing fair trade. The social political context of South Africa is highlighted "owing to the ways in which national and local policies of empowerment inform and affect the workings of Fairtrade codes and standards. However, rather than allude to 'South African exceptionalism', we use this case to illustrate that all places have histories and geographies that need to be properly understood for Fairtrade to work effectively." The authors thus challenges the "one size fits all" discourse, "which until recently has dominated Fairtrade, and advances arguments for sensitizing Fairtrade to the specificities of particular places. This approach focuses on historical legacies, political and cultural identities, the significance of geography, and environmental risk, which combine to drive the dynamics of producer groups and cooperatives as they cope with specific, local challenges." (ibid.)

The three accounts force me to recall my journeys to Sri Lanka in 2011 and Bangladesh in 2012 (Chapter I and V), in which the "lived experiences" or "complex lived worlds" of producers also seemed to be so remote to the "textbook definitions" of fair trade. What is however more revealing would be, the **locationality and contextuality** of fair trade network in diverse locations scattered around the world, rather than creating unresolvable deadlocks for the

movement as a whole, are actually opening up wide possibilities of localized adoptions and place-based adaptations of fair trade operations. These closely resemble "the sixth goal" approach of fair trade town movement, which by then still concentrates in the Global North, may equally and potentially be popularized in the producer countries of the Global South. Undoubtedly, this will also raise the queries of "dilution" or "trivialization", and promoting a further trend of "balkanization of fair trade definition". There would likely be a proliferation of **localized and place-specific** fair trade practices. However, just like the much inclusive and flexible "sixth goal" of Kumamoto, it nevertheless managed to maintain a cautious balance between dispersion and concentration, decentralization and centralization. The experiences of the fair trade town movement may well be incorporated into the wider practices of the larger number of "fair trade places".

According to Muchnik (2009:7), "In France, when the scientific interest group of Local Agrifood Systems was created, a discussion about the choice of **'local'** or **'localized'** terms emerged. With hindsight, this apparently banal discussion was nothing of the sort. The term 'local' refers to an inherent quality at any given moment, the term 'localized' relates to a process, a system that has been localized, which was not always in that place and with no guarantee that it will remain there forever...At a given time, human beings adapted and created the skills and technology to anchor products like this locally. It has been historically documented that the opposite process is also possible: apparently deeply-rooted local products can disappear. For this reason we prefer the metaphor 'territorial anchorage' to describe the incessant journey of humans, products and skills." To employ the words of Oosterveer (2007:47), once again, "The contrasting logic between timelessness, structured by 'space of flows', and multiple, subordinated temporalities, associated with the 'space of places' creates a tension in contemporary society between the global and the local levels." Attempts to organize governance of food in the "space of flows" requires governance arrangements to be global and abstract, and as much as possible devoid of specific characteristics of place or time - placeless and timeless. On the one hand, the "missing link" between the local producers and the global networks thus constitutes a "black box" that obscures our understanding of the

system. On the other hand, alternative food networks and new governance initiatives emerge as crucial efforts to reassert "space of places" into the system (Bush and Oosterveer, 2007).

These formulations further remind me for Brunori (1999), the enclosure of the "black box" virtually stirs and "opens up" another round of movement dynamics, and mobilizes new efforts to reintegrate social and symbolic values which has been systematically ignored and excluded. In the words of Long (2001:107), it is a "contest of values" in which competing values are continuously generated and challenged. Or according to Feagan (2007:37), "Acting in opposition to the 'thinning-out' of the place-world involves, it is argued by Local Agrifood Systems proponents, in shifting food choices such that they result in re-engagement with people through relations of regard, with local places and environments, and with knowledge of place-histories and cultural customs - hence 'thickening' place through agency choice. As our identities are seemingly threatened by physically lengthening food chains and the place-disruption that ensues with modern agricultural systems, the Local Agrifood Systems movements portend or offer some psychological solutions or antidotes to this 'thinning' - the reconstitution of homo-geographicus. This figure might be described as the outcome of a conscious reattachment to place: as 'places come to be embedded in us, they become part of our very self, our enduring character' (Casey, 2001), ideally committing ourselves, economically and politically, to those places." All in all, if Fair Circle has actively attempted to "return the faces" to the producers "being disappeared" in mainstream fair trade, in order to fill the "missing link" and "black box", a further call for "territorial anchorage" and "return the places" to the producers and consumers may equally not be overlooked.

In addition, these formulations remind me about the contribution of Brunori (1999, 2007), once again, focusing on the efforts to reintegrate social and symbolic values which have been systematically ignored and excluded. Moreover, according to Brunori, locationally distinctive products which are representative of the local communities and capable of strengthening the identity of territory form another important source of social power. The effects of "relocalization", as revealed from both the fair trade town movement and the

above cases, nevertheless, are neither referring to **physical relocalization** (encouraging producers to reorganize the production processes within delimited production areas) nor **symbolic relocalization** (mobilizing the claim to the cultural traditions and natural characteristics of the place of origin), but rather a kind of **relational relocalization**, which implies a reconfiguring of the membership of the processes of qualification. Similarly, except the case of domestic fair trade, the discussion in this chapter so far are neither centering on what Brunori identifies as **local food** (with consumers and producers directly or indirectly acquainted to each other within a limited geographical span nor **locality food** (products coming from a certain place and possessing well defined and differentiated characteristics). But rather, various fair trade initiatives are practicing **localist food** strategy. "The difference between local and localist food is related to the reflexivity of consumption - which is low in the former case and much higher in the latter - and to the geographical context of consumption."

Kardoorie Farm and Green Hub

In late 2014, when the urban areas of Hong Kong was overwhelmed by the Occupy Central Movement, I was invited as a guest speaker in a five-day workshop by the Kardoorie Farm and Botanic Garden. It was originally intended as an event celebrating the opening of Green Hub, and education complex promoting green and sustainable lifestyle. Due to the delay in renovation work of the Old Tai Po Police Station - the preserved heritage where green Hub would be located, the workshop was relocated back to Kardoorie Farm a dozen of miles away at the foot of Tai Mo Mountain - a farm closely connected to the government and sponsored by the Kardoorie family fundings, witnessed the rise and decline of agricultural development in Hong Kong. The workshop was by far the most prestigious one I have even attended, since Satish Kumar, a world famous philosopher, social activist, and founder of Schumacher College (named after the prophet economist E.F. Schumacher), was invited to be the modulator. The title of the workshop, rather unexpectedly, was titled as "small is beautiful" (name of Schumacher's *magmum opus*) instead of "Soil, Soul, Society" (name of Satish's newly published book).

Actually I was astonished when I received such an invitation from someone unknown to me before. Agriculture in Hong Kong, probably, was something so rarely talked about in the city, and speakers have so hard to identify. I was assigned the role of not only delivering a talk, but also having a dialogue session with Satish to be later put on a television show. In another session, we were sent to the field and did some planting together with other attendants, and everybody were provided with an opportunity of not only touching the soil, but collect food for preparing a dinner together later that evening. The somehow above twenty attendants of the workshop, however, were faces highly familiar to me. They included ex-colleagues of Oxfam Hong Kong, members of Social Economy Alliance, as well as other friends who worked on organic farming, fair trade, ethical consumption and green lifestyle in Hong Kong, or virtually working on all of the above simultaneously. What a small circle! I whispered. But that is how things start to work out. A network of activists, connected to a wider network in various fields, further connected to diverse domains and arenas, linking up with a much larger crowd, resources and practices encompassing a much wider geographical span. Everything may find their threads connecting to this small group, situated far away from the busy city at the small hill station.

6. Concluding remarks

My last stop of fieldwork brought me back to East Asia, the city of Kumamoto in Kyushu, Japan, somewhat geographically and culturally much less distant for me. As the one and only one fair trade city located in Asia, Kumamoto hosted the Eighth International Fair Trade Towns Conference in March, 2014, also for the first time it moved outside the North Atlantic. The concerning discussions and debates fully demonstrated the secrets of success of the dramatically rising fair trade town movement, started with Garstang, UK in 2000, the number has already risen to 1,480 distributed in 24 countries in 2014. Originally, it only promoted Fairtrade labelled products, but its success was thought to be highly associated with "the sixth goal", on top of the movement's 5 basic goals, which

could address locally specific issues. Another important advancement was the "big tent approach", which allowed a wider range of labelled and non-labelled products, resulted from local and global sources, to be included. These steps forward were thus resulted with a more inclusive and diversified movement.

Such flexible and adaptive approach became the major focus of the Kumamoto Conference, but it was far from a consensus without disputes. For some might think that it could potentially confuse and trivialize fair trade, endanger the established systems of certification and labeling, and lead to a "balkanization of fair trade definition". Evidences revealed so far nevertheless demonstrated that the fair trade town movement has maintained a cautious balance between dispersion and concentration, decentralization and centralization, and was able to preserve itself as an integrated whole with a strong sense of collective identity. The "frame(s)" of fair trade, as envisioned by Callon (1998), were significantly enlarged rather than overwritten by new "frame(s)". Instead of confronting with and jeopardizing the foundations of symbiotic strategy, the movement managed to built on the advantages of board base and wide audience, further consolidated and deepened it through the hybrid model of localized network, so that the "thin" commitment to fair trade potentially be once again "re-thickened".

Although Hong Kong has yet to kick off its campaign to be a fair trade city, a "big big tent" of community economy and SSE has been matured throughout the years. Networks and alliances have been developed and a number of experimental projects have been initiated. Under the government sponsorship, a new arena of SEE later also emerged, although most of the start ups have been narrowly focused on work-integration. After all, the emergent trends and initiatives ultimate converged into the Ethical Consumption Month in 2013, far from being considered successful as a focal event, nevertheless shared a lot of similarities with those found in the fair trade town movement. Furthermore, with the intensified conflicts on land grab and debates related to "development vs. conservation", local agriculture has also arouse increasing attention especially among the younger generation. The demolishment of Choi Yuen Village happened to be the historical incident, which has also drawn much of my

attention and engagement in recent years, and a fair trade banquet crossing over with local organic produce was resulted. These trials also closely resembled with the new developments of domestic fair trade in the Global North.

As an unexpected but critical case being "extended" from the current research, it is ultimately the encounter with Choi Yuen Village that has fully revealed, while disruptive mass mobilizations might not be able to bring social transformation immediately, it nevertheless nurtures seeds of change in a more subtle manner. The emergence of "ethical spaces' or "fair trade places" provide the perfect grounds for these seeds to take roots and perpetuate. Similar to the cases of People Tree and Traidcraft in Chapter V, under the locally specific socio-political contexts, campaigning against injustice and searching for solutions could be so ideally supplementary to rather than defeating each other. It is within the **locationality and contextuality** of fair trade network in diverse locations that the collective identity of "citizen-consumers" starts to configure, and the entanglement of transformative trajectories start to consolidate. It is the **localized and place-specific** fair trade practices that realize **"deep penetration" and "thick commitment"**, injecting new energies into the global movement. All in all, it is the "territorial anchorage" and "return to places" that anchors the promises of **reconnection, reembeddedness or re-entanglement.**

VII Conclusion: fair trade as co-production of counter-hegemony

1. iCOOP Hong Kong: the end is a new beginning

The Link

Anthony also joined the Kumamoto conference with me in 2014. During the breaks, he has talked to Bruce Crowther for a long time and in great details. Later he was officially appointed as the local coordinator of fair trade town movement in Hong Kong. Although not much progresses have been witnessed at the moment when this research is going to be completed, what seems to be certain is it will be the direction for fair trade to proceed in the future. It will, especially through "the sixth goal" and "the big tent" approach, that make fair trade become more flexible and inclusive according to the local situations. It will be a movement integrating both international and domestic fair trade, reconnecting consumers to both local and overseas producers. For sure, networks and alliances will further be extended towards wider domains and arenas. Social economy, ethical consumption and other social movements devoted to tackle economic injustice under the locationally specific socio-political context will certainly be among them.

When I was just writing down the above paragraphs, I received a email from Anthony, reminding me of my interview by Radio Television Hong Kong the week before. It was a investigative report about the hegemony of The Link, which was resulted from the privatization of retail facilities in public housing estates, and has dominated the shopping opportunities particularly in new towns and low income districts. The report attempted to explore how the livelihood of the poor people was severely affected, and how the problem may potentially be tackled. Anthony told me that he wanted to share the link of the TV programme on the Facebook page of Fair Circle. Oh my goodness! He is

doing what I am just trying to capture in this thesis! Economic injustice can be found in anywhere at any moment and in any form, but there are certainly some being strongly felt under specific spatial-temporal configuration. This is what all about fair trade vs. unfair trade! You cannot just single out farmers in distant developing countries without understanding the local economic injustice. You cannot just sell labelled Fairtrade products from remote areas without seeing the need for progressive reform just next to your door!

The post on Fair Circle's page obtained more than 20,000 views within hours.

Anthony's email further reminded me, that Dick of Land Justice League, who is going to run the Legislative Council election later this year, has recently also focused on The Link as his campaign target. Rather different from the dominant discourse in the mass media, which asked the government to re-purchase or nationalize The Link again, Dick called for the communities to self-help themselves. He released a guideline on how ordinary citizens could play a part in fighting against The Link, then started his roadshow to demonstrate how this could be practiced in different districts. He called for the local residents to join hands and set up a temporary bazaar, first working through bartering rather

than making transactions with cash, so as to exploit the grey areas of the legal provision. Although, as it has been fully anticipated, that the frontline officials would enter and attempt to remove the bazaar, claiming that this was a violation of certain rules or regulations. But as a result, this was doomed to fail and merely arouse the anger of the residents, for who have been suffering from the monopoly of The Link over a decade. Dick's theory is, as long as there are more and more citizens join the direct actions, and set up bazaars here, there and everywhere, then the hegemony, or government-business interest collusion will automatically dissolve.

Well, Dick openly admitted that his ideas of deliberations and participatory democracy, which has been popularized after Occupy Wall Street movement, and in particular, by David Graeber through his book *The Democracy Project: A History, a Crisis, a Movement* (2013), or could be found from an earlier formulation of *Deep Democracy* that E.O. Wright has involved (Fung and Wright, 2003), happened to be also heritaged from my books *Sharing Cities* and *Sharing Hong Kong,* both being published in early 2014, just before the Occupy Central movement kicked off in Hong Kong.

From social economy to sharing economy

A group photo with the CEO of iCOOP Korea, Mr. Sin Bok-Su, 30th June, 2016.

The story of iCOOP Hong Kong should started with the books *Sharing Cities* and *Sharing Hong Kong.* At the first stance, it was Ada Wong, who has been a key figure in promoting social enterprise in Hong Kong, suggested that Seoul has declared itself as a sharing city in 2013 after the new Mayor Park Won-Soon came to office. I was highly inspired and started my investigations on what sharing economy and sharing cities were all about. In late 2013, just five months after my trip to Rio (Chapter IV), we have a chance of attending the Global Social Economy Forum in Seoul, and a lot of the extremely innovative projects have been directly witnessed. Among them was iCOOP Korea, a federation of consumer and producer cooperatives consisting 200,000 members with just a history of less than twenty years. It was exactly a successful model of domestic fair trade (Chapter VI), we all thought. Later the CEO Mr. Sin Bok-Su visited Hong Kong in return and delivered some talks at the Hong Kong Council of Social Services. All the events and activities were recorded into the two books, co-edited by me and Ada, as well as Terence Yuen, originally the research fellow of the network on Pearl River Delta Social Economy (Chapter I), who was an expert of social enterprise and social economy researches.

Inspired by the ideas of sharing economy, the publication of the books were also funded through the crowdfunding model.

As I wrote, in the introductory chapter of *Sharing Cities*, that the brand new trend of sharing economy, on the one hand, was resulted from the rapid development of Web 2.0 and P2P online platforms, greatly enhanced the direct linkages among individuals. On the other hand, its localized version was in fact a historical continuity of the tradition of SSE and SEE. "If we count *It is not a Utopia* (2003) as the starting point, the community economy and social economy in Hong Kong has already encountered enormous transformation. In the past, community economy was limited in a single district, and contained geographically concentrated alternative economic experiments. The Community Oriented Mutual Economy of Saint James Settlement, women coops of Women Workers Association and the second hand shop of Industrial Relations Institute were the typical examples. But as the macro socio-political environment has fundamentally transformed, and the mainstream market is increasingly failing the expectations of the general public, alternative economic practices have been becoming much more popular. They have already move out of 'communities' and connected to the 'society' at large. The mushrooming of sharing economy activities are, thus just another stage of the same orientation." (Chow, Wong and Yuen, 2014a)

This is, nevertheless, just the beginning of a new waves of development. In June 2016, as I am going to complete the current research, Ada, Terence and Anthony, together with myself, decided to establish iCOOP Hong Kong. Although it will not register as a cooperative due to the complications under the Hong Kong legal framework, it will still carry many of the essences of cooperative movement inherited from iCOOP Korea. As a starting point, 50 companions will be invited and each will be asked to invested HK$10,000 as initial investment for the start up (probably the members of the Board of Examination will also be on the invitation list!). They will formally be named as "commoners" since they will supposedly become the **co-owners** of iCOOP Hong Kong, and stakeholders of "commoning" private corporations, social enterprises and other entities in social economy into common properties.

iCOOP Hong Kong will then **co-create** a number of operations including retail outlets of ethical consumption, food processing workshops of organic food, fair trade cafes, schools of global citizenship, urban farms and the like, connecting and combining the efforts of diverse domains and arenas, addressing the various issues along the supply chains (with food as the natural priority). Actually both iCOOP Korea and Hong Kong can be considered as models of "open cooperativism" or "platform cooerpativism", which aim at "opening up" the traditionally sectoral bounded and membership exclusive traditional cooperatives. After all, these different models of sharing economy are by now considered as building blocks of the mega-trend called "commons transition".[56]

As I have also written, in the last chapter of *Sharing Cities*, that the problem of The Link can potentially be addressed through "community re-purchase", a proposal borrowed from the Localism Act being passed in 2011 in UK, which granting "community rights to bid, to buy and to build", providing a legal framework under which community assets could be acquired, owned, managed and operated by community members through direct democratic means. With iCOOP Hong Kong at hand, a prototype could be **co-produced** with its fundamental policy implications potentially be magnified through further research and advocacy.

Co-ownership, co-creation and co-production of fair trade

The concepts and practices of **co-ownership, co-creation, co-production** and the like are core to the ideas of iCOOP in specific, and sharing economy in general. These terms are used quite freely and interchangeably until then, as they are still taking shape, rapidly evolving and barely captured by devoted observers, not to mention the "academics who think of themselves as political radicals" who are still producing the kind of "fervent position papers", to employ the words of Graeber (2001) once again (see Chapter I). It is only at this latest moment of the current research, that I started to discover these concepts could be highly useful in summarizing my core argument. Certainly there may be a

---

56

risk that such concepts are not yet mature or scholarly not vigorous enough, they nevertheless offer refreshing eyes for reviewing and reflecting on my research that has already continued for six years. This serves as if it is the tail of the elephant, though still a minor part when compares to the body as a whole, may sooner or later manifest itself and may even ultimate shake the entire body. More decisively, this is not an elephant simply exists out there. It must be an elephant jointly nurtured by all its stakeholders. **The fair trade movement, by nature, is itself a result of co-creation, co-production and co-ownership.**

Co-production, for instance, is a term popularized by the renowned UK think tank New Economics Foundation, which originally defines it as "the means by which the clients or beneficiaries of charity, philanthropy services or public services are instrumental in the design, planning and delivery of specific services or broader social outcomes as a way of improving the service or activity and rebuilding the local community" (New Economics Foundation, 2008). Fair trade, after all, is a matter of how to re-establish the **connection, embeddedness or entanglement** between producers and consumers. Thus it will be imperative for the consumers, or clients traditionally being served at the lower end of the supply chains, to take up proactive roles in various positions of consumer activism. It is through dedicated engagements that the solidarity, or **"thick commitment"** among and towards people in different parts of world can be promoted and preserved. As has been witnessed in Chapter IV, that "Companions" and "cell groups" were developed by Fair Circle to spread the messages of fair trade beyond information of the products, so as to enhance their co-ownership of the fair trade movement. Or in the case of Traidcraft, that individual acts of buying are directly connected to wider practices of campaigning. Fairtrader representatives are further recruited to perform the roles of local agents in co-creating fair trade practices. Or as in the case of CTM Altromercado, there is "a general orientation towards the production of intangible social values such as solidarity, consumer sobriety, participation, grass-roots political action, and a special attention to the quality of partnerships between importers, producers and workshops. This last goal is pursued through numerous participation mechanisms." (Costantino and Micotti, 2015)

Alternatively, as the case of People Tree (Chapter V) have showed, that people involving in fair trade fashion are identified as "agents for change". Advocating for justices and marketing for alternatives can be so harmoniously and reciprocally accommodated. Or as in the case of Traidcraft's Justice Campaign, supporters are encouraged to voice out their opinion on trade issues. "Our active supporters, customers, donors and campaigners, without whose engagement we could achieve little. We also believe that as we engage with the general public in these ways we can promote their flourishing, as well as that of poor producers." (Traidcraft, 2013) Finally, as in the case of the fair trade town movement in general, with its innovative "big tent" approach in specific (Chapter VI), that the scope and audience of fair trade was not only significantly enlarged, but a place-based foundation of **local re-entanglement** was also co-produced. The participatory approach and stakeholder engagement, forcefully, provides a dynamic and emergent platform of reconnection, both locally or translocally, "challenging the dominance of abstract economic principles and moving to re-embed economic markets within social relationships" (Raynolds and Greenfield, 2015:24) The advantages of board base and wide audience as promoted by symbiotic strategy, can thus be further consolidated and deepened through such hybrid model of localized network, with the previous **"thin" commitment** to fair trade potentially be once again **"re-thickened"**.

Further on, as I find the concept of co-production seems to highly promising, I begin to "rediscover" it in a wide range of the literature of Local Agrifood Systems. In particular, an article published by Brunori, Rossi and Malandrin in 2010 titled "Co-producing Transition: Innovation Processes in Farms Adhering to Solidarity-based Purchase Groups (GAS) in Tuscany, Italy" suddenly came into my sight! For so many years I have been relying on Brunori as my key theoretical guidance, I have missed such an important article until the very last month of working on my dissertation! For Brunori et al. (2010:31), "The more intense the network interaction in alternative food networks is, the more farmers, consumers, and other actors align their cognitive frames, developing new production paradigms, technical norms, patterns of interaction and routines...The more farmers are connected to other actors, the more learning

becomes **'social learning'**, improved ways of knowing or doing that are common goods within the network. From this point of departure, we have set out a model for understanding innovation as a co-production between all the actors involved in an alternative food network."

As research collaborators of Brunori, Rossi, Dvortsin and Malandrin (2014), through their case study of bread and wheat chain, furthermore, see co-production systems as **learning and innovative networks**, "Many grassroots initiatives, developing out of the conventional system and aimed at creating alternatives to it, are showing the potentials and also the challenges of this complex process of change. Interaction and learning processes developing within hybrid networks, including all the diverse actors engaged in the change, prove to be crucial to this process of innovation. Within these networks actors mobilize their knowledge and create new frames of common understanding. This learning process results in shared knowledge which, translated into new attitudes and practices, allows a coherent re-configuration of all the components of the system, from the level of production to that of consumption." This strongly echoes with Smith's remarks in the Ketso exercise (Chapter IV), which casted a highly unusual perspective on fair trade. Under this perspective, fair trade is no longer viewed as a system or an institution as such, nor should it be understood as a tool of encouraging and empowering. It is virtually a medium or a platform of mutual learning and support, not only for the "capacity building" of the producers, but also for the consumers, intermediaries, and virtually all the stakeholders.

While for Forno, Grasseni, and Signori (2015:68), through their studies of other GAS groups in Lombardy, Italy, the experiences of alternative provisioning have move beyond "individualized political consumerism and brings diverse collectives together...Unlike traditional consumer organizations that seek to protect customers from corporate abuse, GAS groups create a space for **civic learning**, building social capital, and considering opportunities for political mobilization, often counteracting or aiming to substitute inefficient governance in the realms of environmental stewardship and labor protection." Thus the authors call these GAS groups **"citizenship labs"**, namely as spaces of

aggregation and workshops for collective practice on the part of consumers. "People practice hands-on what it means to develop a direct relationship with producers, some proximate and others more distant. It is this practice of collective self-provisioning that develops awareness about the complexity and flaws of the global food system...On the basis of this novel recognition, more responsible lifestyles ensue, and a sense of collective direction about resilience, sufficiency, and sustainability is developed as a group." (ibid.: 84) Comparable efforts of pioneer FTOs, as well as various platforms of consumer engagement, have been also well documented in Chapter V and VI. Similar qualifications of "political consumerism" in general, and "citizen consumers" in specific, can equally and clearly be found in the fair trade movement.

Finally, the preceding researches of Grasseni (2013, 2014), through her insightful analysis of food relocalization discourses and practices as a process of co-production, delineates that "in fact, GAS activists define themselves as co-producers, which is something radically different from 'prosumers'; co-production is an expression coined within circles of provisioning activism. While prosumers are involved in end-user evaluation and design of some products, the co-producer's role is not that of taking an active role in farming. It is one of enabling the role of farming by maintaining one's role as consumers, but empowering oneself as such in a direct collaboration with producers...In the Tomasoni case [a family dairy rescued from bankruptcy by a network of solidarity purchase groups], a grassroots food relocalization strategy not only safeguarded the continuity of the dairy's production, but also 'reembedded its value' in the social network of its consumers. In the case of anti-mafia oranges, GAS consumption included an important element of self-education about a very real issue (i.e. the mafia's stakes in large organized distribution) and initiated alternative partnerships that empowered both consumers and producers...On-site farm visits, demonstrations of traditional skills, linguistic performances engendering trust (notably, the use of dialect), volunteered photographic or historical documentation about the rootedness of the farming or cheese-making practice, are all ostentative (sometimes ostentatious) techniques that have an important impact on the expectations of urban customers. The latter, in fact, expect not only **agronomic competence**, but also a **social performance**."

(Grasseni, 2014:59-60) Relocalization strategies of fair trade town movement, as well as of other locationally embedded initiatives (Chapter VI), can thus also be more meaningfully reconceptualized as place-specific efforts of **co-ownership, co-creation, co-production**, which is not just a matter of sub-divisions of a top-down movement being imposed internationally, but keep evolving through dynamic interactions of bottom-up responses. It is a movement co-produced among global and local actors, emergent and contingent to the particular social-political contexts. All in all, to employ the terminology of Oosterveer (2007), once again, it is a continuous process in which the "space of places" being reasserted into the placeless and timeless "spaces of flows".

2. Reflections on theories and practices

Simply bees conditioned by nature?

Fair trade, after all, is a matter of management and governance along the value chain. It is a matter of how the processes of production, circulation, distribution and consumption can properly be organized and procedured, especially under the context of the global economy with vast geographical span. It is all about how to re-establish the **connection, embeddedness or entanglement** between producers and consumers. As being forcefully revealed in the Coffee Report of Oxfam (2002a:22), "Where do all the profits go? Oxfam traced the costs that go into the price of coffee through interviewing people who are part of the value chain in Uganda, showing how value is added to coffee as it moves from the farmer, through the various stages of processing and distribution, until it finally lands up on the supermarket shelf. It reveals how the tiny profit margins in that value chain suddenly widen once the coffee reaches the hands of roasters and retailers." And as Raynolds and Greenfield (2015:24) neatly remark, "By challenging the dominance of abstract economic principles and moving to re-embed economic markets within social relationships (Polanyi, 1944/2001), fair trade can be understood as a movement of social protection to resist the destructive impacts of the unfettered market (Raynolds 2000, Jaffee

2007). Infusing commodities with information regarding the people and places involved in production, fair trade seeks to 'humanize' economic transactions and **'shorten the distance'** between producers and consumers (Raynolds 2002)."

However, Raynolds (2014:503) also notes that "the certification of large scale enterprises raises a series of challenges to Fairtrade's domestic ideals of producer/consumer 'connections' and trade 'partnerships'. The physical characteristics of the certified items produced on a large scale, like fruits and flowers, are generally sold without extensive packaging that can be used to recount a product's origins and foster consumer/producer connections. As products are depersonalized so too are those who produce them. Fairtrade's direct trading relations and producer partnerships are further unraveled by the capital intensive cool chains required to move fresh products around the world rapidly and without spoilage. Many of these tensions are anticipated by Boltanski and Thévenot (2006:309), who argue that bridging domestic and industrial worlds is hindered by the traditionally adversarial relations between industrial subjects (managers vs. workers), organizations (corporations vs. unions), and strategies (corporate control backed by threats of layoffs vs. union power backed by threats of strikes). The oppositional relations embedded in hired labor enterprises make it difficult for Fairtrade to foster personal relations of trust within these organizations or between these industrial entities and consumers."

As Goodman et al. (2012:226-9) further argued, "One of the founding principles of fair trade has been the development and maintenance of more direct trade routes between producers, importers and consumers. The idea was not only to provide a more direct semiotic connection, but also reduce the number of 'middle-men' along the supply chain in order to allow a greater share of value to remain with the farmers and producer communities...Yet for a number of reasons, the requirement, and indeed, ability to have direct trading relations began to slip as the mutual interest of supermarkets, transnational corporations, and FTOs in mainstreaming fair trade products intensified..have opened up markets for some but at the price of **'de-centering'** the historically embedded **directness** that earlier has so distinguish fair trade from conventional trade

relations." To summarize, according to Jaffee (2012:111), "These tensions between what some activists term the 'deep' and 'shallow' approaches to fair trade also illustrate the importance of the nature of the commodity chains that social movements aim to regulate. The trading chains within the fair trade system have shifted since its inception from **shorter, alternative or 'relational' linkages** characterized by smallholder agriculture, long-term commercial relationships, and movement-oriented retailers, toward **longer, conventional, or 'captive' chains** marked by vertically integrated transnational firms, waged labor, and agribusiness plantations."

While the above paragraphs can justifiably and reasonably capture the general trends and debates as elaborated so far in this thesis, the non-linear and non-monistic nature of ongoing events should, once again, not to be overlooked. The kind of dichotomy between "heroes" and "villains" of the fair trade movement should cautiously be read with greater subtlety. Although, as it has been all too obvious that, throughout the last decade, FLO has shouldered all the blames of marketizing, corporatizing, and ultimately recommodifying fair trade which was once designated as a tool of decommodification. OHK, FTHK and the like seemed to follow its steps autonomously and became the conspirers of all the guilts. The capital letter "F" became an insulting curse rather than blessing for the FLO version of Fairtrade. One must however, still try to bear in mind how the key stakeholders, or even the pioneers and market movers of the new rules and regulations, once again, as active agents interpreting and reacting to the controversies and criticisms, possess full range of capacities of making strategic choices and dynamic responses to the environmental challenges. All in all, they are not idiots passively manipulated by the giant brands. To recap, even if they are worst among architects, they are simply not bees unconsciously and unreflexively conditioned by natural instincts.

From narrowly "thick" to boardly "thin" fair trade, what next?

What the researchers may call them the shorter or longer linkages, or some activists may term as "deep" and "shallow" approaches, or I prefer to call the

"thick" and "thin" commitments to fair trade, as fully revealed in the previous chapters, constitute to a continuous movement muddling through all kinds of tensions and contradictions, and demonstrate the strong tendencies of complexity and emergence throughout its history. The advantages of entering into the mainstream, as summarized by Low and Davenport (2006:319) "can be characterized as the potential to greatly increase the volume of Fairtrade products being sold, and thus to benefit a correspondingly larger number of marginalized producers; the potential for the fair trade messages to reach a much wider audience than 'traditional' alternative trade supporters; and most importantly, the potential for Fairtrade practice to influence mainstream retailer/wholesaler sourcing policies and to become a 'model' for all trading relations." The creation of Fairtrade label can be considered as part of a bigger picture, the emergence in the early 1990s of a new private regulatory framework. It can be taken as one of a series of international standardization initiatives based on certification, predominantly being established to address "ethical" issues. "The emergence of private regulation systems, as Bartley (2003:433) notes, can be traced to social movement campaigns targeting companies and a neoliberal, free trade institutional context in which the regulation of industries has moved away from state-led forms of regulation and towards private, non-state actors with, in many cases, state support." (Low and Davenport, 2006: 320)

To locate fair trade movement in general, and Fairtrade labelling certification in specific, into such bigger picture of trading relations, normally dismissed by fair trade researches, casts refreshing perspectives on the rather doom reality. After all, the corporatization and mainstreaming of fair trade should not be singled out as a unique and independent issue on its own. It was synchronically intervened with other trends and movements under the gigantic backdrop of neoliberal globalization. In the past two decades, under the overarching influences of transnational corporations, fair trade as a potential movement to work against the current, has undoubtedly been pacified and de-radicalized under the certification and labeling initiatives. The generic **"high symbolic density"** of alternative trade was essentially **diluted** (Brunori, 1999). But rather equally true would be, it did not silent and demoralize consumer activism as a whole.

"Naming and shaming" tactics was not replaced, but rather put in place simultaneously with the process of mainstreaming. It was exactly because campaigns have time and again successfully targeted Nestle and Starbucks, among others, that the coffee giants actively or passively initiated their regulation systems and engagements with fair trade.

On the negative side, with the additional consumers start to appreciate fair trade products due to its "high quality", its sheer size may have potentially "diluted" the political composition of supporters in general. Chic consumerism replaces consumer activism and becomes the dominant norm of the day. But on the positive side, however, the scope and variety of the fair trade network has greatly been expanded. Even with just a minor portion of the newcomers being reflexive agents, that can potentially be "converted" in future, they may still contribute to future potentials of accepting and spreading the "thicker" layer of campaign message, thus empowering and scaling up the movement again. The additional energy and catalyzed sparks for transformation cannot be underestimated.

One should repeatedly be alerted, as Wright (2010a:324) formulates its framework on the multiple strategies of counter-hegemonic transformation, he has predicted that in the practical world of real capitalist societies, there will always be systematic and institutional limits that define the **"zones of unattainability"**, the trajectory of change through symbiotic strategy will sooner or later **"hit the ceiling"**, and "will be marked by periods in which **"limits of possibility"** are encountered and transformation is severely impeded." Once again, alternative strategies and transformative trajectories have to be derived and new ideas and resources to be injected into the movement. To conclude, again in Wrights own words, "The important idea is that what appear to be 'limits' are simply the effect of the power of specific institutional arrangements, and interstitial strategies have the capacity to create alternative institutions that weaken those limits." (ibid.)

Reflections on theories

As also being fully witnessed in the previous chapters, although the character of fair trade has so far been maintained, as a social movement, its original vision is fading rapidly under the enormous market success. Nonetheless, the future possibilities of fair trade are still wide open, but continually subject to the strategic choices and competing trajectories of its stakeholders. **Ruptural, interstitial and symbiotic strategies**, being identified by Wright as the major trajectories of counter hegemonic transformation, offer a good starting point to capture the essentially contested nature of the movement. The current research further attempts to capture the fluidic and dynamic nature of transformation, muddling through all kinds of tensions and contradictions in non-unilinear and non-monistic manner. Callon's duo concepts of **framing and overflowing**, as well as Brunori's three facets of **mainstreaming, alternative circuits and political campaigning,** are found to be especially useful for capturing the successions and cycles of innovations and the movement dynamics of **disentanglement and re-entanglement.**

Based on such theoretical framework, already solidly laid at the very onset, rich observations and important insights in the ethnographic encounters, especially through my direct engagement and first hand experiences within the fair trade movement can thus be expected. I am equally an active agent interacting with other agents, who may be contributing to or creating hurdles for the movement, or simply doing both at the same time, **co-producing** the movement outcomes all together. The **extended case method** as proposed by Burawoy and the **actor oriented approach** as proposed by Long, which can be loosely be qualified as **"methodological interactionism"**, are thus identified as particularly helpful, guiding me through different levels of dialogues or dialectics, starting from myself, with the local case under study, and other cases directly or indirectly found in Hong Kong and around South and East Asia, as well as those cases in the rest of the world.

The dialogues or dialectics, however, being contingent and emergent throughout the six-year course of the research, further generate important reflections on the theoretical framework. Firstly, in the account of Wright, "The existing constraints can be softened to the point that a more accelerated

process of interstitial transformation can take place until it too encounters new limits. There will thus be a kind of cycle of extensions of social empowerment and stagnation as successive limits are encountered and eroded." (Wright, 2010a: 332-4) What Wright does not further elaborate, but the current research attempts to demonstrate, will be how the interstitial strategy manage to fuel the **"cycle of extensions and stagnation"**, in which **"successive limits are encountered and eroded"** through the dynamic interactions among key stakeholders, as well as the dialectic interplay among contrasting and competing trajectories, in a complex and emergent manner.

Secondly, the fair trade movement itself, however, was never detached from the wider socio-economic contexts. Both the Fairtrade labels and the so-called CSR or ethical trade projects could be both considered as part of international standardization initiatives and private regulation systems started to proliferate in the 1990s, which have also went through a trend of convergence more recently. Furthermore, marketing FTOs also played a crucial part in fighting against "unfair trade" hand in hand with promoting fair trade. The adoption of collective mobilization and campaign strategies, both inside and outside the fair trade movement, casts a significantly different perspective on Wright (2010)'s version of ruptural strategy. In his original framework, Wright is working with a diachronic rather synchronic approach towards the different trajectories. What is still by and large missing, however, will be how the three types of transformation strategies - ruptural, interstitial and symbiotic - **coexist, interact and co-evolve simultaneously**.

Third and finally, as an unexpected but critical case being **"extended"** from the current research, it is ultimately the encounter with Choi Yuen Village that has fully revealed, while disruptive mass mobilizations might not be able to bring social transformation immediately, it nevertheless nurtures seeds of change in a more subtle manner. The emergence of "ethical spaces' or "fair trade places" provide the perfect grounds for these seeds to take roots and perpetuate. Under the locally specific socio-political contexts, campaigning against injustice and searching for solutions could be so ideally supplementary to rather than defeating each other. It is within the **locationality and**

contextuality of fair trade network in diverse locations that the collective identity of "citizen-consumers" starts to configure, and the entanglement of transformative trajectories starts to consolidate. It is the **localized and place-specific** fair trade practices that realize **"short linkage", "deep penetration" and "thick commitment"**, injecting new energies into the global movement. All in all, it is the "territorial anchorage" and "return to places" that anchors the promises of **reconnection, reembeddedness or re-entanglement.**

Reflections on practices

As the basic foundation of the extended case method, Burawoy (1998:14) proposes a methodological duality of two models of sciences – positive and reflexive. "Where positive science proposes to insulate subject from object, reflexive science elevates dialogue as its defining principle and intersubjectivity between participant observer as its premise. It enjoins what positive science separates: participant and observer, knowledge and social situation, situation and its field of location, folk theory and academic theory." The interim destination of extension, on the other hand, will be theory reconstruction. "We begin with our favourite theory but seek not confirmations but refutations that inspire us to deepen that theory. Instead of discovering grounded theory we elaborate existing theory." The reconstructions as such are thus "progressive" in nature as they "should lead to surprising predictions, some of which are corroborated...They then re-enter the wider world of participants, there to be adopted, refuted, and extended in intended and unintended ways, circulating back into science. Science offers no final truth, no certainties, but exists in a state of continual revision." (ibid.:16)

Without doubt, such postulations of Burawoy closely resemble with, throughout the current research, the repeated metaphor of fair trade movement or network as an elephant, being continually groped by the participants and observers as a whole, especially when considering the elephant of fair trade as a rapidly growing and transforming one, with its giant size and undetermined shape varying all the time. To put it in another words, it must be a structure that the architects, probably some of the worst architects who are still in their "the age of

apprenticeship", and are currently "caught at the crossroads", still attempting to erect through their imaginations of all different directions. In order to capture such dynamics and complexities, Burawoy further pinpoints to the effects of power, "The intervening social scientist cannot avoid domination, both dominating and being dominated...As participants in sites invested with hierarchies, competing ideologies, and struggles over resources, we are trapped in networks of power. As observers, no matter how we like to deceive ourselves, we are on 'our own side', always there for ulterior reasons. Our mission may be noble – broadening social movements, promoting social justice, challenging the horizons of everyday life – but there is no escaping the divergence between intellectuals, no mattering how organic, and the interests of declared constituency. " (ibid.:23)

The crux of reflexive science thus rests upon the capacity of self-reflexivity. The interim destination of extension for the current research, however, would be further intervention rather than theory reconstruction, not as expected in Burawoy's original formulation. In this round up for the whole thesis, I does not point towards some definite statements or arguments, but rather unexpectedly, re-direct my attention towards new potentials of participation and engagement. As mentioned above, the "conclusion" of the thesis, as fully revealed in the last session, lies in the re-orientation of focus on real-world practices in a theory informed manner. The re-emphasis of place-specific efforts of **co-ownership, co-creation, co-production**, in fact, opens up wide possibilities of movement trajectories and fair trade practices, rather than "close down" into some solid and concrete end-points. This is my version of self-reflexivity, I speculate. Highly probably.

Instead of addressing the implications of **"re-enter"**, on the contrary, Burawoy (2009:73) in his later work discusses the potentials of **"re-visit"**. For him the two may seem to be highly comparable, for me they represent just another potential methodological duality. The latter virtually implies the ad hoc role of an observer, not to mention a devoted participant, can exist only under particular spatial-temporal configuration. Beyond that the researcher is simply detached from the fields. That is the major reason why "re-visits" become mandatory in

order to make sense of the multiple departures from and entries into the fields. The fragmented and scattered nature of engagement and commitment, is unmistakably "outside-in" and "top-down" imposed, and elitist in nature. It is as if intellectuals are the philosophers of Plato who can manage to escape from their chains and able to witness and relay the "real world".

Such remains of Marxist prophecy and teleological tendencies can unmistakably be identified in his later work, as Burawoy further distinguishes two types of theories - folk and analytical theories. "I assume that folk theory, while it has to contain some truth, a practical truth, is not adequate as the truth of analytical theory, scientific truth. This is an act of faith, perhaps, but also the raison d'être of our scholarly existence. As sociologists, therefore, we may think of ourselves as breaking with or elaborate folk theory, but in either case we are moving from folk theory to analytical theory." (ibid.:270) While Burawoy devotes all his efforts in promoting real world engagements rather than satisfied with idealized worldviews, the pitfall, equally, lines in the ambiguous and even suspicious role of the organic intellectual. Accompanying with a degree of self-deception, pretending as if they are not " our own side", it perfectly fits the image of "academics who think of themselves as political radicals" who are still producing the kind of "fervent position papers".

On the contrary, "re-enter" does not necessarily imply any moment of substantial departure, it merely symbolizes the kicking off of just another round of dialogues or dialectics, in which the participant observant is equipped with a reconstructed theoretical framework, with the essence of its dynamics and interactions with other stakeholders being modified. By no means does it imply either superiority or inferiority of the researcher. **He is just one practitioner among others, equally located somewhere within the field of research, collaborating with some as well as confronting with others.** As I have made it crystal clear in the introduction, I am studying the fair trade movement as well as studying myself being an integral and inseparable component of movement. I am observing the agencies interacting within the fair trade network as well as self-observing my own role as an active agency. I am analyzing others positions as well as self-analyzing my own position within the processes of promoting and

constraining social transformation.

All in all, such conception, once again reminds me Long's notion of social interface. This approach requires focusing on the lifeworlds and interlocking "projects" of actors, and developing theoretically grounded methods that allow for the elucidation of social meanings, purposes and powers. It also resembles what Long and Long (1992) have for long termed as the **"battlefields of knowledge"** that shape the relations between local actors, development practitioners and other interested parties, including the researchers themselves. To summarize, in the words of Long (2001;184), "That knowledge is not simply something that is possessed, accumulated and unproblematically imposed upon others. Nor can it be measured precisely in terms of some notions of quantity or quality. It emerges out of precesses of social interaction and it is essentially a joint product of the encounter and fusion of horizons. It must, therefore, like power, be looked at relationally and not treated as if it could be depleted or used up...Nevertheless both power and knowledge may become rectified in social life; that is, we often think of them as being real material things possessed by actors; and we tend to regard them as unquestioned 'givens'."

Bibliography

Aaronson, S. A. and Zimmerman, J. M. (2006). Fair trade: how Oxfam presented a systemic approach to poverty, development, human rights, and trade. *Human Rights Quarterly, 28(4)*, 998-1030.

Anderson, M. (2015). *A History of Fair Trade in Contemporary Britain: from Civil Society Campaigns to Corporate Compliance.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Appiah, K. A. (2006). The ethics of identity. *Philosophy, 81(317)*, 539-542.

Arrighi, G. (2007). *Adam Smith in Beijing: lineages of the twenty-first century.* London: Verso.

Auroi, C. (2000). Le commerce équitable, un créneau potentiel pour les petits producteurs des pays en voie de développement. *Économies et Société, Série Système agroalimentaires*, no 24, 10-11/2000, 199-211.

Barber, B. (1995). All economies are "embedded": the career of a concept, and beyond. *Social Research*, 62, 387–413.

Barratt-Brown, M. (1990). *Fair Trade: reform and realities in the international trading system.* London and New Jersey, Zed Books.

Barnett, C., Cloke, P., Clarke, N. and Malpass, A. (2005). Consuming ethics: articulating the subjects and spaces of ethical consumption. *Antipode, 37(1)*, 23-45.

Barnett, C., Cloke, P., Clarke, N. and Malpass, A. (2011). *Globalizing Responsibility: the Political Rationalities of Ethical Consumption*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Becchetti, L. and Costantino, M. (2010). Fair trade in Italy: too much 'movement'

in the shop? *Journal of Business Ethics, 92*, 181-203.

Benjamin, W. (2006). *The Writer of Modern Life*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Bernstein, H. and Campling, L. (2006). Commodity studies and commodity fetishism II: 'profits with principles'?. *Journal of Agrarian Change, 6(3)*, 414-447.

Bio Foundation, 2013, *Fair for life: social and fair trade certification programme*. Available from: < http://www.fairforlife.org/pmws/indexDOM.php?client_id=fairforlife&page_id=home>. [20 February, 2015].

Block, F. (1991). Contradictions of self-regulatiing markets. In the Legacy of Karl Polanyi (eds.) M. Mendell and D. Salée. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Block, F. (2003). Karl Polanyi and the writing of T*he Great Transformation. Theory and Society, 32*, 1-32.

Boggs, C. (1984). *The Two Revolutions: Gramsci and the Dilemmas of Western Marxism*. London: South End Press.

Boltanski, L. and Thévenot, L. (2006). *On Justification: Economic Worth*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Eds.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood.

Bourdieu, P. (1998). *Practical Reasons: on the theory of action*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (2000). *Pascalian Meditations*. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press.

Bowen, S. and Mutersbaugh, T. (2014). Local or localized? exploring the

contributions of Franco-Mediterranean agrifood theory to alternative food research. *Agriculture and Human Values, 31(2)*, 202-213.

Brickell, K. and Datta, A. (2011). *Translocal Geographies: Spaces, Places, Connections*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Brown, S. and Getz, c. (2015). Domestic fair trade. In L. Raynolds and N. Greenfield (eds.) *The Handbook of Research on Fair Trade*. UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Brunori, G. (1999). *Alternative Trade or Market Fragmentation? Food Circuits and Social Movements*. Italy: University of Pisa.

Brunori, G. (2007). Local food and alternative food networks: a communication perspective**.** *Anthropology of Food S2 (2007).* Retrieved from: http://aof.revues.org/index430.html

Brunori, G., Rossi and Malandrin (2010). Co-producing Transition: Innovation Processes in Farms Adhering to Solidarity-based Purchase Groups (GAS) in Tuscany, Italy. *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture & Food, 18(1): 28–53.*

Burawoy, M. (1985). *The Politics of Production: Factory Regimes under Capitalism and Socialism*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Burawoy, M. (1991). *Ethnography Unbound: Power and Resistance in the Modern Metropolis*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Burawoy, M. (1998). The Extended Case Method. *Sociological Theory, 16 (1),* 4–33.

Burawoy, M. (2003). For a sociological marxism: the complementary convergence of Antonio Gramsci and Karl Polanyi. *Politics and Society, 31(2),* 193-261.

Burawoy, M. (2009). *The Extended Case Method: Four Countries, Four Decades, Four Great Transformations and One Theoretical Tradition*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Burawoy, M. (2010). From Polanyi to Pollyanna: the false optimism of global labor studies. *Global Labour Journal*, *1(2)*, 301-313.

Burawoy, M., Blum, J.A., George, S., Gille, Z. and Thayer, M. (2000). *Global ethnography: Forces, Connections and Imaginations in a Postmodern World*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Bush, S.R., Oosterveer, P. (2007). The missing link: intersecting governance and trade in the space of place and the space of flows. *Sociologia Ruralis, 47(4)*, 384-399.

Callon, M. (1998). *The Laws of the Markets*. London: Blackwell Publishers.

Casey, E.S. (2001). Between Geography and philosophy: what does it mean to be in the place-world? A*nnals of the Association of American Geographers 91: 683–93.*

Castells, M. (1996). *The Rise of the Network Society: the Information Age, Economy, Society and Culture*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers.

Center for Entrepreneurship (2014). *Research on Social Enterprise Sector in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Chandler, P. (2015). *Best practices in Fair Trade*. Presentation materials at the WFTO Biennial Conference, Milan. Retrieved from: http://wfto.com/2015-wfto-conference-presentations

Choudhury, Abu Fardous Md. Abdullah. (2010). *A study of social compliance policy activity and its impact: Aarong*. Dhaka: BRAC University Institutional Repository. Retrieved from:

http://dspace.bracu.ac.bd:8080/xmlui/handle/10361/803

Chow, S. M. ed. (2014). *It is not a Utopia: Community Economics Theories and Practices.* Hong Kong: Oxfam Hong Kong. (In Chinese《不是烏托邦：社區經濟理論與實踐在香港》)

Chow, S. M. (2015). *David Harvey's Geographical Critique of Capitalism.* Taipei: Homebound. (In Chinese《流動、 掠奪與抗爭：大衛哈維對資本主義的地理批判》)

Chow, S. M. and Chiu S. W. (2013). Blossoming and flourishing of the fair trade town movement. Blog of Fair Circle. (In Chinese「百花齊放的公平貿易城鎮運動」)

Chow, S. M., Hong, K. S., Lam, F. and Lee, J.K. (2011). *Pre and Post Eighties.* Hong Kong: Roundtable. (In Chinese《80 前後：超越社運、論述與世代的想像》)

Chow, S. M., Hong, K. S. and Yeung, S. Y. (2011). *Buying brings changes.* Hong Kong: In Press. (In Chinese《用消費改變世界: 公平貿易@新社會經濟運動》)

Chow, S. M., Wong, W. L. and Chow, K. W. eds. (2012). *The City of Marketplaces: Local Auto-conomy and Ethical Consumption*, Hong Kong: In Press. (In Chinese《墟冚城市：在地自主經濟與良心消費》)

Chow, S. M. and Hong, K. S. (2013). *A Metropolitan of stolen spaces.* Hong Kong: In Press. (In Chinese《僭建都市: 從城鄉規劃到社區更新》)

Chow, S. M., Wong, Y. K. and Yuen, Y. K. eds. (2014a). *Sharing cities: from social enterprises, fair trade, ethical consumption to sharing economy*. Hong Kong: Logo Press. (In Chinese《共享城市: 從社會企業、公平貿易、良心消費到共享經濟》)

Chow, S. M., Wong, Y. K. and Yuen, Y. K. eds. (2014b). *Sharing Hong Kong: from social enterprises, fair trade, ethical consumption to sharing economy*. Hong Kong: In Press. (In Chinese《共享香港: 從社會企業、公平貿易、良心消

費到共享經濟》)

Chow, S. M. and Yiu, C.Y. (2015). *A Reader on Local Agriculture.* Hong Kong: Land Education Foundation.

Chiu S. W.（2007). *Blessed are the poor in spirit.* Hong Kong: Felloeship of Evangelical Students. （In Chinese《富裕的貧窮：這不只是一本旅遊書》）

Chiu S. W.（22-12-2013). The producers "being disappeared". New Holiday, 746. (In Chinese「被『失蹤』的Th產者」)

Cohen J. L. and Arato, A. (1994). *Civil Society and Political Theory.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Crispell, D. and Brandenburg, K. (1993). What's in a brand? *American Demographics, 15(5): 26-32.*

Conroy, M. E. (2001). *Can Advocacy-Led Certification Systems Transform Global Corporate Practices?*. University of Massachusetts, Political Economy Research Institute, Amherst.

Coote, B., (1992). *The Trade Trap: poverty and the global commodity markets*. York, Oxfam Publications.

Cucco, Ivan and Fonte, Maria (2015) Local food and civic food networks as a real utopias project. *SOCIO.HU, 3: 22-36.*

Dale, G. (2010). *Karl Polanyi: The Limits of the Market*. Cambridge: Polity.

Dalvai, R. (2012). *The metamorphosis of fair trade, for a better world*. Retrieved from: http:// fairworldproject.org/voices-of-fair-trade/metamorphosis-of-the-fair-trade-movement/

Davenport, E. and Low, W. (2013). From trust to compliance: accountability in the fair trade movement. *Social Enterprise Journal, 9(1)*, 88–101.

De Certeau, M. (1984). *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Dey, C. (2007). Social accounting at Traidcraft plc: A struggle for the meaning of fair trade. *Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal, 20(3)*, 423 – 445.

Doherty, B. Davis, I. A. and Tranchell, S. (2013). Where now for fair trade?. *Business History, 55(2)*, 161-189.

DuPuis, E. M. and Goodman, D. (2005). Should we go home to eat?: Towards a reflexive
politics of localism. *Journal of Rural Studies 21* (3): 359-371.

Durkheim, E. (1982). *The Rules of Sociological Method*. New York, Londo, Toronto and Sydney: The Free Press.

EFAT (European Fair Trade Association). (2001). *Fair Trade in Europe 2001*. Netherlands: EFTA.

European Parliament (2006). *Report on fair trade and development* (2005/2245(INI)). Retrieved from: http://www.buyfair.org/fileadmin/template/projects/buyfair/files/E_EPResolution_on_Fair_Trade.pdf.pdf

Evans, P. (2000). Fighting marginalization with transnational networks: counter-hegemonic globalization. *Contemporary Sociology, 29,* 230–241.

Fairtrade Foundation (n.d.). *Guide of Public Procurement for Fair Trade Towns*. Retrieved from: https://www.google.com.hk/?gws_rd=ssl#q=Guide+of+Public+Procurement+for+Fair+Trade+Towns.

Fairtrade Foundation (n.d.). *Fair Trade Town Action Guide.*
Retrieved from: https://www.google.com.hk/search?
q=Fair+Trade+Town+Action+Guide.&hl=zh-
TW&source=lnms&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjs-
ruL4eTMAhVLM48KHTjwD0EQ_AUIBigA&biw=1366&bih=707&dpr=1

Fair World Project. (2010). *Comparing approaches and key provisions of FLO
and IMO standards.* Retrieved from:
fairworldproject.org/wp.../Fair_World_Project_Publication.pdf

Feagan, R. (2007). The place of food: mapping out the 'local' in local food
systems. *Progress in Human Geography, 31(1)*, 23-42.

Fisher, E. (2012), The 'fair trade nation': market-oriented development in
devolved European regions. *Human Organization, 71(3): 255-267.*

Fisher, E. and Corbalan, S. (2013). Fair trade and European public
procurement: legal principles and governance dynamics. *Social Enterprise
Journal, 9(1): 11-27.*

Fitzpatrick, K.M. and Willis, D. (2015) *A Place-Based Perspective of Food in
Society.* London: Springer.

FLO (Fairtrade Labeling Organisations International). (2011). Q&A on Fairtrade
International and Fair Trade USA. Retrieved from:
http://www.fairtrade.net/about-fairtrade/fairtrade-in-the-usa/on-flo-and-fair-trade-
usa.html

FLO (Fairtrade Labeling Organisations International) (2014). *Fairtrade standard
for hired labour.* Retrieved from:
http://www.fairtrade.net/fileadmin/user_upload/content/2009/standards/documen
ts/generic-standards/2014-07-16_HL_EN.pdf

Fonte, M. and Papadopoulos, A.G. (2016.) *Naming Food After Places: Food Relocalisation and Knowledge Dynamics in Rural Development.* London: Routledge.

Forno, F., Grasseni, C. and Signori, S. (2015). Italy's Solidarity Purchase Groups as "citizenship labs". In E. H. Kennedy, M. J. Cohen and N. Krogma (eds.) *Putting Sustainability into Practice: Applications and Advances in Research on Sustainable Consumption.* Cheltenham: Edward Edgar.

Fridell, G. (2007). *Fair Trade Coffee: the Prospects and Pitfalls of Market-driven Social Justice.* London: University of Toronto Press.

Fridell, M., Hudson, I. and Hudson, M. (2008). With friends like these: the corporate response to fair trade. *Review of Radical Political Economy, 40(1)*, 8-34.

Friedmann, H. and McNair, A. (2008). Whose rules rule? Contested projects to certify 'local production for distant consumers. *Journal of Agrarian Change, 8(2-3),* 408-434.

FTHK (Fair Trade Hong Kong Foundation) (n.d.). What is Fair Trade?.Retrieved from: http://www.fairtradehk.org/about-fthk/about-fairtrade/

Fung, A. and Wright, E.O. (2003). Deepening Democracy. London: Verso.

Gemici, K. (2008)*. Karl Polanyi and the antinomies of embeddedness. Socio-Economic Review, 6(1)*, 5–33.

Gendron, C., Bisaillon, V. and Ana Isabel Otero Rance. (2009). The institutionalization of fair trade: more than just a degraded form of social action. *Journal of Business Ethics, 86(1)*, 63-79.

Getz, C. and Shreck, A. (2006). What organic and Fair Trade labels do not tell

us: towards a place-based understanding of certification. *International Journal of Consumer Studies, 30 (5): 490–501.*

Gibson-Graham, J. K. (1996). *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It): a Feminist Critique of Political Economy.* Oxford UK and Cambridge USA: Blackwell Publishers.

Gibson-Graham, J.K. (2006). *A Postcapitalist Politics.* Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

Gibson-Graham, J. K., Resnick, S. A. and Wolff, R. D. (2000). *Class and its Others.* Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press.

Gibson-Graham, J.K., S. Resnick and R. Wolff, eds. (2001) *Re/Presenting Class: Essays in Postmodern Marxism.* Durham NC: Duke University Press Books.

Godelier, M. (1981). The Asiatic mode of production. In A. M. Bailey and J. P. Llobera (Eds.), *The Asiatic Mode of Production: Science and Politics.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Goodman, M. (2004). Reading fair trade: political ecological imaginary and the moral economy of fair trade foods. *Political Geography, 23(7),* 891- 915.

Goodman, D., DuPuis, E. M., Goodman, M. (2012). *Alternative Food Networks: Knowledge, Practice and Politics.* Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

Goodman, M. and Herman, A. (2015). Connections in fair trade food networks. In L. Raynolds and E. Bennett (Eds.), *The Handbook of Research on Fair Trade.* UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Graeber, D. (2001). *Toward an anthropological theory of value.* Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Graeber, D. (2013). The Democracy Project: A History, a Crisis, a Movement. London: Allen Lane.

Gramsci, A. (1971). Selections from the Prison Notebooks. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Granovetter, M. (1985). Economic action and social structure: the problem of embeddedness. The American Journal of Sociology, 91(3), 481-510.

Grasseni, C. (2013). *Beyond Alternative Food Networks: Italy's Solidarity Purchase Groups*. London: Bloomsbury.

Grasseni, C. (2014). Family farmers between re-localisation and co-production. *Anthropological Notebooks, 20(3): 49–66.*

Gray, J. (2009). False Dawn: the Delusions of Global Capitalism. London: Granta Books.

Grimes, K. M. (2005). Changing the rules of trade and global partnerships: the fair trade movement. In J. Nash (Eds.), *Social Movements: An Anthropological Reader*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Guthman, J. (2002). Commodified meanings, meaningful commodities: re-thinking production-consumption links through the organic system of provision. *Sociologia Ruralis, 42(4)*, 295-311.

Habermas, J. (2001). *The postnational constellation: political essays.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Halkier, B. (2010). *Consumption Challenged: Food in Medialised Everyday Lives*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Hann, C. (2009). Embedded socialism? : land, labour, and money in eastern Xinjiang. In C. Hann and K. Hart (eds.) *Market and Society: the Great*

Transformation Today. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Harvey, M., Ramlogan, R. and Randles, S. (2007). *Karl Polanyi: New Perspectives on the Place of Economy in Society.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Harvey, D. (1989). *The Condition of Postmodernity.* USA: Blackwell Publishers.

Harvey, D. (2003). *Paris, Capital of Modernity*. New York and London: Routledge.

Harvey, D. (2009). *Cosmopolitanism and the Geographies of Freedom*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Hebinck, P., den Ouden, J. and Verschoor, G. (2001). Past, present and future: Long's actor-oriented approach at the interface. R*esonances and dissonances in development: Actors, networks and cultural repertoires*, 1-16.

Herman, A. (2010). Ethics, Journeys and Wine: Investigating the Discourses of Fairtrade and Black Economic Empowerment through Wine Networks from South Africa to the UK (Doctoral dissertation). University of Exeter.

Hinrichs, C. C. (2000). Embeddedness and local food systems: notes on two types of direct agricultural market. *Journal of Rural Studies, 16(3),* 295-303.

Hinrichs, C. C. (2003). The practice and politics of food system localization. *Journal of Rural Studies, 19: 33–45.*

Hirschman, A. O. (1970). *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Hirschman, A. O. (1982). *Shifting Involvements: Private Interest and Public Action.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Ho P. Y. and Chan, K.T. (2010). The social impact of work-integration social enterprise in Hong Kong. *International Social Work, 53(1), 33-45.*

Hong Kong Fair Trade Power (n.d.). *Site map of Hong Kong Fair Trade Power*. Retrieved from: http://www.hkfairtradepower.com/en-index.html

Hughes, A. (2005). Geographies of exchange and circulation: alternative trading spaces. *Progress in Human Geography*, 29, 496–504.

Hughes, A., Wrigley, N. and Buttle, M. (2008). Global production networks, ethical campaigning, and the embeddedness of responsible governance. *Journal of Economic Geography, 8*, 345–367.

Human, J. and Crowther, B. (2011). The Fairtrade revolution in progress: campaigning for justice. In J. Bowes (Eds.) The fair trade revolution. London: Pluto Press.

Humphrey, L. (2000). Which way to market? exploring opportunities for marginalized producers in developing countries to supply mainstream commercial companies in the UK (*Traidcraft Policy Unit Report Series 1)*. London: Traidcraft Exchange.

Hutchens, A. (2009). *Changing Big Business: the Globalization of the Fair Trade Movement*. UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.

Huybrechts, B. and Jacques, D. (2008). Are fair trade organizations necessarily social enterprises?. *Social Enterprise Journal, 4(3)*, 186-201.

Huybrechts, B. (2010). Fair trade organizations in Belgium: unity in diversity? *Journal of Business Ethics, 92(0)*, 217-240.

IFAT (International Federation for Alternative Trade) (1999). *IFAT Milan conference report*. Bichester, IFAT.

IFAT (International Federation for Alternative Trade) (2004). *Guidelines to registering IFAT member as fair trading organisations*. Retrieved from: http://www.ifat.org

Jacobs, J. (1961/1992).*The Death and Life of Great American Cities.* New York:Vintage.

Jaffee, D. (2007). *Brewing Justice*. USA: University of California Press.

Jaffee, D. (2012). Weak coffee: certification and co-optation in the fair trade movement. *Social Problems, 59(1)*, 94-116.

Jaffee, D. and Howard, P. H. (2010). Corporate cooptation of organic and fair trade standards. *Agriculture and Human Values, 27(4)*, 387-399.

Jaffee, D. and Howard, P. H. (2015). Who's the fairest of them all? The fractured landscape of U.S. fair trade certification. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 1-14.

Jaffee, D., Kloppenburg, J.R. and Monroy, M. (2004). Bringing the "Moral Charge" Home: Fair Trade within the North and within the South. *Rural Sociology, 69(2), 169-196.*

Jessop, B. (2001). The crisis of the national spatiotemporal fix and the ecological dominance of globalizing capitalism. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Studies*, 24, 273-310.

Jessop, B. and Sum, N. L. (2006). *Beyond the Regulation Approach: Putting Capitalist Economics in Their Place*. Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.

Keane, J. (1988). *Civil Society and the State: new European perspectives*. London and New York: Verso.

Keane, J. (2003). *Global Civil Society?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Keck, M. E. and Sikkink, K. (1998). *Activists beyond Borders*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Klein, N. (2000). *No Logo.* London: Flamingo.

Kleine, D. (2005). Fairtrade.com versus Fairtrade.org: how Fairtrade organisations use the Internet. *Interacting with Computers* 17: 57–83.

Kocken, M. (2003). *Fifty years of fair trade: a brief history of the fair trade movement.* Retrieved from:
www.gepa3.de/download/gepa_Fair_Trade_history__en.pdf

Kruger, S. and du Toit, A. (2006). Reconstructing fairness: Fair trade conventions and worker empowerment in South African horticulture. In L. T. Raynolds, D. L. Murray and J. Wilkinson (eds.), *Fair Trade: The Challenges of Transforming Globalization.* London: Routledge.

Lamb, H. (2008). *Fighting the Banana Wars and Other Fairtrade Battles.* London: Random House.

Lapegna, P. (2009). Ethnographers of the world...united? current debates on the ethnographic study of 'globalization'. *Journal of World-Systems Research, 15(1),* 3–24.

Lekakis, E. (2013). *Coffee Activism and the Politics of Fair Trade and Ethical Consumption in the Global North.* UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lewis, D. (1998). Non-governmental organizations, business and the management of ambiguity: case studies of "fair trade" from Nepal and Bangladesh. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 9(2), 135-151.

Lewis, D and Mosse, D. (2006). Encountering order and disjuncture: contemporary anthropological perspectives on the organization of development. *Oxford Development Studies, 34(1),* 1-13.

Lie, J. (1991). Embedding Polanyi's market society. *Sociological Perspectives, 34*, 219–235.

Long, N. (2001). *Development Sociology: Actor Perspectives*. London and New York: Routledge.

Long, N. and Liu, J. (2009). The Centrality of Actors and Interfaces in the Understanding of New Ruralities: A Chinese Case Study. *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs, 38(4)*, 63-84.

Long, N. and Long, A. (1992). *Battlefields of Knowledge: the Interlocking of Theory and Practice in Social Research and Development.* London and New York: Routledge.

Low, W. and Davenport, E. (2005). Postcards from the edge: maintaining the 'alternative' character of fair trade. *Sustainable Development, 13(3),*143-153.

Low, W. and Davenport, E. (2006). Mainstreaming fair trade, adoption, assimilation, appropriation. *Journal of Strategic Marketing, 14(4)*, 315-328.

Low, W. and Davenport, E. (2007). To boldly go...exploring ethical spaces to re-politicise ethical consumption and fair trade. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour, 6 (5),* 336–348.

Luetchford, P. (2006). Brokering fair trade: relations between coffee cooperatives and fair Trade organisations – a view from Costa Rica. In D. Lewis & D. Mosse (Eds.), *Development Brokers and Translators: the ethnography of aid and agencies*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press.

Luetchford, P. (2008). *Fair Trade and a Global Commodity: Coffee in Costa Rica*. London, UK: Pluto Press.

Lyon, S. (2006). Evaluating fair trade consumption: politics, defetishization and producer participation. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 30(5), 452-464.

Lyon, S. and Moberg, M. (2010). *Fair Trade and Social Justice: Global Ethnographies.* New York and London: New York University Press.

MacDonald, K. (2007). Globalising justice within coffee supply chains? fair trade, starbucks and the transformation of supply chain governance. *Third World Quarterly, 28(4)*, 793-812.

Malpass, A., Cloke, P., Barnett, C. and Clarke, N. (2007). Fairtrade urbanism? The politics of place beyond place in the Bristol fairtrade city campaign. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 31(3), 633–645.*

Marcus, G. (1995). Ethnography in/of the world system: the emergence of multi-sited ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 24*, 95-117.

McEwan, C., Hughes, A., Bek, D. and Rosenberg, Z. (2014). Why "place" matters in the development and impacts of Fairtrade production. *Food Chain, 4:78-92.*

Mendoza, R. and J. Bastiaensen (2003). Fair trade and the coffee crisis in the Nicaraguan Segovias. *Small Enterprise Development*, 14(2), 36-46.

Micheletti, M. (2003). *Political Virtue and Shopping: Individuals, Consumerism and Collective Action.* US: Palgrave Macmillan.

Micheletti, M. and Stolle, D. (2006, June). The market as an arena for transnational politics. *Youth Activism.* Retrieved from: http://ya.ssrc.org/transnational/Micheletti_Stolle/

Minney, S. (2012). *Naked Fashion: the New Sustainable Fashion Revolution.* Oxford: New Internationalist.

Muchnik, J. (2009). Localized Agrifood Systems: Concept development and diversity of situations. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society and the Association for the Study of Food and

Society, State College, Pennsylvania, 28–31 May 2009.

Muchnik, J., Can̄ada, J. S. and Salcido, G. T. (2008). Syste`mes Agroalimentaires Localise ́s: E ́tat des recherches et perspectives. *Cahiers Agricultures 17(6), 513–519.*

Munck, R. (2002). *Globalization and Labour: the New 'Great Transformation'.* London: Zed Books.

Munck, R. (2006). Globalization and contestation: a polanyian problematic. *Globalizations, 3(2)*, 175-186.

Munck, R. (2010). Globalization, crisis and social transformation: a view from the south. *Globalizations, 7(1-2)*, 236-246.

Murray, D. L. and Raynolds, L. T. (2000). Alternative trade in bananas: obstacles and opportunities for progressive social change in the global economy. *Agriculture and Human Values, 17(10)*, 65-74.

Murray, D., Raynolds L. T., Taylor P.L. (2003). *One Cup At a Time: Poverty Alleviation and Fair Trade Coffee in Latin America*. Report prepared for The Ford Foundation. Retrieved from http://www.colostate.edu/Depts/Sociology/FairTradeResearchGroup/

Mutersbaugh T. 2002. Ethical trade and certified organic coffee. *Transnational Law and Contemporary Problems*, 12(1), 89–108.

New Economics Foundation (2008). *Co-production: a manifesto for growing the core economy*. London: New Economics Foundation. Retrieved from: http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/entry/co-production

Norris, P. (1999). *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Olivier de Sardan, J. (2005). *Anthropology and Development: Understanding Contemporary Social Change.* London: Zed Books.

Olofsson, G. (1995). Embeddedness and integration: an essay on Karl Polanyi's 'the great transformation. In M. Mortensen (Eds.), Social Integration and Marginalization (pp. 72-113). Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur.

Oosterveer, O. (2007). *Global Governance of Food Production and Consumption: Issues and Challenges.* Cheltenham and Northampton: Edward Elgar.

Oxfam Hong Kong (2004). *Turning the garment industry inside out: purchasing practices and workers' lives.* Hong Kong, Oxfam Hong Kong. Retrieved from: http://www.oxfam.org.hk/content/98/content_3562en.pdf

Oxfam International (2002a). *Mugged: poverty in your coffee cup.* Boston and Washington, DC: Oxfam International.

Oxfam International (2002b). *Rigged Rules and Double Standards: Trade, Globalization and the Fight against Poverty.* DC: Oxfam International.

Oxfam International (2013). *Behind the Brands, Food Justice and the 'Big 10' Food and Beverage Companies. DC:* Oxfam International.

Fonte, M. and Papadopoulos, A.G. (2016.) *Naming Food After Places: Food Relocalisation and Knowledge Dynamics in Rural Development.* London: Routledge.

Pattie, C., Seyd, P., Whiteley, P. (2003). Citizenship and civic engagement: attitudes and behaviour in Britain. *Political Studies, 51(3)*, 443-468.

Pemberton, M. (2011). Playing fair[trade] with Nestlé: the evolution of an unlikely partnership in the conventional coffee market. *Studies in Political Economy, 87*, 65-92.

Petrini, C. (2001). *Slow Food: the Case for Taste*. NewYork: Columbia University Press.

Polanyi, K. (1944/2001). *The Great Transformation*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Poon, A. (2005). Land And The Ruling Class In Hong Kong. Hong Kong: Enrich Professional Publishing.

Portes, A. (2010). *Economic sociology: a systematic inquiry.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Pun, N. (2005). *Made in China: Women Factory Workers in a Global Workplace.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Pun, N., Chan, F. Y., Koo, C.W. and Lo, Y. Y. (2013). Social economy make a difference. Hong Kong: Commerical Press. (In Chinese: 《不一樣的社會經濟》)

Raschke, M. (2010). Fair trade at a crossroads? Position-fixing between niche existence and mass market. *Stimmen der Zeit, 228 (11)*, 743-752.

Raynolds, L. (2000). Re-embedding global agriculture: the international organic and fair trade movements. *Journal of Agriculture and Human Values, 17(3)*, 297-309.

Raynolds, L. (2002). Consumer/producer links in fair trade coffee networks. *Sociologia Ruralis, 42(4)*, 404-424.

Raynolds, L. (2009). Mainstreaming fair trade coffee: from partnership to traceability. *World Development, 37(6)*, 1083-1093.

Raynolds, L. (2012). Fair trade: social regulation in global food markets. *Journal of Rural Studies, 28*, 276-287.

Raynolds, L. (2014). Fairtrade, certification, and labor: global and local tensions in improving conditions for agricultural workers. *Agriculture and Human Values, 31(3)*, 499-511.

Raynolds, L. and Greenfield, N. eds. (2015). *The Handbook of Research on Fair Trade*. UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Reggie, J. G. (1982). International regimes, transactions, and change: embedded liberalism in the postwar economic order. *International Regimes, 36(2)*, 379-415.

Renard, M. C. (1999). The interstices of globalization: the example of fair coffee. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 39(4), 484–500.

Renard, M.C. (2003). Fair Trade: quality, market and conventions. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 19, 87–96.

Riisgaard, L. (2015). Fair trade and worker organizations. In L. Raynolds and E. Bennett (Eds.), *The Handbook of Research on Fair Trade*. UK: Edward Elgar Publising.

Ronchi, Loraine. (2002). The impact of fair trade on producers and their organizations: a case study with Coocafe in Costa Rica (Prus Working Paper). Brighton: University of Sussex. Retrieved from http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/PRU/wps/wp11.pdf

Rossi, A., Dvortsin, L. and Malandrin, V. (2014). The co-production of sustainability by learning networks. The case of reconstruction of knowledge and practices around bread production. Paper presented at the 11th European IFSA Symposium: Farming systems facing global challenges: Capacities and strategies.Berlin, 1-4 April 2014.

Rudi D. (2012). *The metamorphosis of fair trade, for a better world*. Retrieved

from: http:// fairworldproject.org/voices-of-fair-trade/metamorphosis-of-the-fair-trade-movement/

Scammell, M. (2000). The internet and civi engagement: the age of citizen-consumers. *Political Communication, 17(4), 351-5.*

Silver, B. J. (2003). *Forces of Labour: Workers' Movements and Globalization since 1870.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Silver, B. J. and Arrighi, G. (2003). Polanyi's 'double movement': the belle époques of U.S. and British world hegemony compared. *Politics and Society, 31,* 325-355.

Smith, A. (2010). *Fair Trade Governance, Public Procurement and Sustainable Development: A case study of Malawian rice in Scotland* (Doctoral dissertation). Cardiff: Cardiff University.

Smith, A. (2013). What does it mean to do fair trade? ontology, praxis, and the 'fair for life' certification system. *Social Enterprise Journal, 9(1),* 53-72.

Smith, A. (2015). Fair trade places. In L. Raynolds and N. Greenfield (eds.), *The Handbook of Research on Fair Trade.* UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Smith, A. and VanDerHoff Boersma, B. F. (2014). Comercio justo México: potential lessons for fairtrade?. In A. Mukherjee-Reed, D. Reed, P. Utting (Eds.), *Business Regulation and Non-State Actors: Whose Standards? Whose Development?.* London and New York: Routledge.

Smith S. and Barrientos, S. (2005). Fair trade and ethical trade: are there moves towards convergence?. *Sustainable Development, 13(3),* 190-198.

So, M. Y. and Chow, S. M. (2015). *Rice from Fields: Sustainable Foodways in Hong Kong.* Hong Kong: Logo Press. (In Chinese 《近田得米：香港永續Th活新煮意》)

Stolle, D. and Micheletti, M. (2013). *Political Consumerism: Global Responsibility in Action.* Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Starbucks (2008). *Starbucks, TransFair USA and fairtrade labeling organizations international announce groundbreaking initiative to support small-scale coffee farmers*. Retrieved from: https://news.starbucks.com/news/starbucks-transfair-usa-and-fairtrade-labelling-organizations-international

Stiglitz, J. (2006). *Fair Trade for All: How Trade can Promote Development.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Swartz, D. (1997). *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Swedberg, Richard (1997). New economic sociology: what has been accomplished, what is ahead?. *Acta Sociologica*, 40, 161-182.

Tallontire, A. (2000). Partnerships in fair trade: reflections from a case study of Cafedirect. *Development in Practice*, 10(2), 166-77.

Tallontire, A. and Nelson, V. (2013). Fair trade narratives and political dynamics. S*ocial Enterprise Journal, 9(1)*, 28-52.

The University of Hong Kong (n.d.). *M3: Fair Circle as a Case in Promoting Fair Trade.* Retrieved from: http://147.8.204.219/presentation/FairTrade/#screen/c4cf13da-2ce2-4846-80b6-d3d79981dd02/s1

Third Sector Research Centre (2015). *Impact assessment report on the Community Oriented Mutual Economy project of Saint James Settlement.* Hong Kong: Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

Thomson, B. (1999). Lessons for fair trade. *Small Enterprise Development*, 10(4), 56-60.

Traidcraft (2013). *Impact and performance report for Traidcraft 2012-13*. Retrieved from: https://www.ethex.org.uk/medialibrary/2014/02/24/583a86b8/Traidcraft %202013%20Impact%20Report%20and%20PLC%20financial%20statements %20final%2018%20July%202013.pdf

Traidcraft (2014a). *An accident waiting to happen*. Retrieved from: http://www.traidcraft.co.uk/campaign-blog-entry/an-accident-waiting-to-happen

Traidcraft (2014b). *Justice: Time to Call in the Law.* Retrieved from: http://www.traidcraft.co.uk/campaign-blog-entry/ justice-time-to-call-in-the-Law

Tung, K.C. (2010). *The Age of Apprenticeship.* Taipei: Rye Field. (In Chinese 《物種源始、貝貝重Th之學習年代》)

VanderHoff Boersma, F. (2015). Fair Trade and its environment. Presentation materials at the WFTO Biennial Conference, Milan.

War on Wants (2015). *Never Again: Making the Fashion's Factories Safe.* Retrieved from: http://www.waronwant.org/sites/default/files/never%20again %20-%20making%20fashions%20factories%20safe.pdf

Webster, E., Lambert, R. and Bezuidenhout, A. (2008). *Grounding Globalization: Labour in the Age of Insecurity*. Oxford: Blackwell.

WFTO (World Fair Trade Organization) (n.d.). *Website.* Retrieved from: http://wfto.com/

WFTO (World Fair Trade Organization) (2013). *10 Principles of Fair Trade*. Retrieved from: http://www.wfto.com/sites/default/files/10-FAIR-TRADE-PRINCIPLES-2013-(Rio-AGM-and-EGM-2013-approved-modifications).pdf

WFTO (World Fair Trade Organization) (2013). *WFTO resolution on fair trade towns - May 2013.* Retrieved from:
http://www.fairtradetowns.org/resources/reports/wfto-resolution-on-fair-trade-towns-may-
2013/

WFTO (World Fair Trade Organization) (2015). *Terms of Reference for the WFTO Working Group on Links between Fair Trade and Social and Solidarity Economy.*

WFTO (World Fair Trade Organization) and FLO (Fairtrade Labeling Organizations International) (2009). *A Charter of Fair Trade Principles.* Retrieved from: http://www.wfto.com/sites/default/files/Charter-of-Fair-Trade-Principles-Final%20%28EN%29.PDF

Wheeler, K. (2012). *Fair Trade and the Citizen-Consumer: Shopping for Justice.* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wild Oats (2004). *Annual Report 2003: Cultivating Trust, Boulder.* Retrieved from: www.wildoats.com

Winter, M. (2003). Embeddedness, the new food economy and defensive localism. *Journal of Rural Studies, 19:23-32.*

Wilkinson, J. (2006). The mingling of markets, movements and menus: the renegotiation of rural space by NGOs, social movements and traditional actors. *Globalisation: Social and Cultural Dynamics.* Retrieved from:
hwww.idbiolsoningfakspf

Wilson, B. R. (2010). Indebted to fair trade? coffee and crisis in Nicaragua. *Geoforum*, *41(1)*, 84-92.

Wright, E.O. (2006). Compass point: towards a socialist alternative. *New Left Review, 41:* 93-124.

Wright, E.O. (2010a). *Envisioning real utopias.* London and New York: Verso.

Wright, E.O. (2010b). The Social Economy: a niche in capitalism or a pathway beyond?. Paper prepared for the Analytical Marxism Group Conference, Oxford, June 2010.

Xu, Y. (2012). *Activism beyond borders: the study of trans-border anti-sweatshop*s across Hong Kong and Mainland China (Doctoral dissertation). Hong Kong : Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

Yu, X. M. (2006). *Putting corporate codes of conduct regarding labor standards in a global-national-local context. A case study of reebok's athletic footwear supplier factory in china* (Doctoral dissertation). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

Yuen, T. (2011). Unleashing social innovation for social economy: experience of social enterprise development in Hong Kong. China Journal of Social Work, 4(3), 217-233.

Yuen, T. and Chan, P. (2011). Rediscovering social economy in Hong Kong: an urban utopian project. Paper presented at the International Workshop on Urban Utopianism, Hong Kong Baptist University, 12–14 May 2011, Hong Kong.

Zhou Lian (2012). *You can never wake a person who pretends to sleep.* Hong Kong: Enrich Culture. (In Chinese 《你永遠都無法叫醒一個裝睡的人》)