FAIRTRADE URBANISM: THE POLITICS OF PLACE BEYOND PLACE IN THE BRISTOL FAIRTRADE CITY CAMPAIGN

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ABSTRACT

Understandings of fairtrade, ethical trading and sustainability often assume a relationship involving disparate placeless consumers being stitched together with place-specific producers in developing world contexts. Using an ethnographic study of the policy-making and political processes of the <u>Bristol Fairtrade City</u> campaign, we suggest ways in which fairtrade consumption can become aligned with place. The campaign was a vehicle for enlisting the ordinary people of Bristol into awareness of and identification with fairtrade issues. Citizens of Bristol were enrolled into a re-imagination of the city involving aspects of what Massey (2007) terms the politics of place beyond place. The campaign also enlisted the jurisdictional governance of the local authority, including the introduction of the fairtrade procurement practices. As a result, employees, residents and visitors became fairtrade consumers, knowingly or unknowingly, when visiting the canteens and restaurants of the local authority and other significant sites and institutions in the city. The Fairtrade City campaign can therefore be seen to have deployed ideas of place, fairness and local-global relations as scale frames of mobility through which to embed ethical consumption in place, and to govern consumption at a distance.

INTRODUCTION: RETHINKING THE SPATIALITIES OF fAIRTRADE

When a group of Oxfam activists in Garstang announced their town to be the first "Fairtrade Town" in Britain in 2000, the Fairtrade Foundation (FTF) seized upon the "Fairtrade Town" as a device which could be formalised into a national campaign. The FTF is an NGO committed to campaigning for, and regulating, fairtrade. Since 2000, more than 100 towns and cities in Britain have been awarded certification as Fairtrade Towns/Cities and more than 200 other places are currently campaigning for Fairtrade status. This paper evaluates the campaign of one city – Bristol - which led to Fairtrade City (FTC) certification in March 2004. As part of a wider study of ethical consumption (1), our research on the Bristol FTC campaign was based around ethnographic work with the FTC campaign steering committee – one of us (Alice Malpass) was a member of the committee and attended meetings over a period of 12 months. This participant observation was supplemented by in-depth interviews (2) with key local actors, including other group members, acting as discussants in a local "Big Conversation" on fairtrade – involving national and local politicians and invited local people – and participation in national FTF events and on-line discussion forums.

The Bristol FTC campaign illustrates more than simply a story of local political mobilisation, interesting and significant though that is. The campaign offers insights into two often neglected aspects of fairtrade activism: the emphasis on collective rather than individual espousal of fairtrade; and the importance of 'placed' rather than seemingly 'placeless' consumption of fairtrade ideas and goods. Too often, studies of fairtrade movements and networks have positioned fairtrade as a simple linear linkage between needy and exploited producer communities (Rice 2001) and individual

consumers who are drawn into the commodification of moral betterment (Goodman, 2004; Gould, 2003). Although fairtrade marketing addresses consumers through political ecology narratives (Bryant and Goodman, 2003) such narratives only conceptualise place in relation to the producer community, which is often represented photographically – typically showing farmers and their families in-place as part of product packaging and advertising. This positioning of fairtrade as reconnecting placeless consumers with in-place producers (see Holloway and Kneafsey, 2000; Hughes, 2001) is not only predicated on assumptions about how 'space hide consequences' and ' difference leads to indifference' (Smith 2000), but also risks losing sight of how caring at a distance can become an instigator for a re-examination of responsibilities closer to home (Barnett et al, 2005). In this way "landscapes of production become ethical places embodying a global sense of place" (Goodman, 2004, 17). We want to argue, however that the idea of ethical places is also relevant to landscapes of consumption. Miller (1992) demonstrated how individuals can be drawn into common understandings, communal bonds and collective identities through place-related communicative action which can be "colonized" by systemic forms of co-ordinated action. Our analyses of the Bristol FTC campaign suggest that fairtrade consumers can also be regarded as in-place, and that therefore landscapes of consumption can, under certain circumstances become "ethical places" with concomitant embodiment of global senses of place, as collective consumption is governed within place jurisdiction.

In this paper then, we recognise fairtrade campaigning as a mechanism through which place can become a mobilising device for collective action (see also Escobar, 2001; Miller, 1994; 2000; 2004) through the specific intermediary action of local authorities and other actors implicated in governing systems of provisioning,

consumption practices, and trading networks (Friedberg, 2003; Hughes, 2001; Marsden, 2000). In this context we draw significantly on Massey's (2007) account of the political challenges of 'place beyond place'. These challenges involve not only acceptance of the openness and relational construction of place so as to develop external relations of identity characterised by an overcoming of self-interest and an acceptance of responsibility, but also the internal political construction of the identity of place so as to bring about a re-imagination of place from the perspective of looking from the inside out. Massey recognises that not only can the 'outside' of a place be found within, but also that part of the 'inside' of a place lies beyond, such that other places are in some senses part of our place, and vice versa. This formulation of place beyond place offers potential for a new form of politics of solidarity between places that stands as a challenge to conventional neoliberal accounts of inter-place relations (see, for example, Peck and Tickell, 2002). The idea of place beyond place illuminates a range of issues. For example, accounts of transnational activism (see della Porta and Tarrow, 2004) can trace local networks (such as those in Bristol and Glasgow) that serve to translate global justice (such as that relating to the Zapatistas) into grass roots action, and vice versa. Equally, accounts of globalization of agricultural and food systems (see, for example, Imbruce, 2004) demonstrate how individualised actors take advantage of local contexts as well as global changes to develop new livelihood strategies, and that places and people are not only shaped by global processes, but also shape these processes. We are interested in how a politics of solidarity might turn what is previously constituted as 'aid' or 'charity' into political acts of obligation. Our case study stands as an example of how fairtrade campaigning can act as vehicle for challenging, and even changing, both the external and internal relations which construct the identity of a place such as Bristol. By

bringing fairtrade into the formal identity of the city, part of the 'outside' is brought within, in the hope that part of the 'inside' will come to dwell beyond the city.

Such a re-imagination of Bristol's place beyond place is made especially significant given common public awareness of the implication of the city in the relations and practices of 19th Century slave-trading. Re-imagining Bristol in this way, and securing tentative steps towards turning localism inside out through fairtrade involves negotiation between different interests, imperatives and imaginaries. In Bristol, a particular alignment of actors and interests led to a group in Bristol deciding to mobilise around the FTC device, with the result that citizens and residents of the city not only engaged publicly with the ethics and politics of the fairtrade movement, but also led to significant changes to public procurement practices bringing about new models of collective provisioning. These processes illustrate the potential of the politics of consumption to extend beyond individualism into modes of collective politics, and of the jurisdictional enforcement of fairtrade provisions with or without the formal consent of individuals embedded in consumption practices. In this way, then, the FTC story illustrates how place can become a territory for a kind of configurational politics in which individuals are joined into wider communities of action.

RE-IMAGINING BRISTOL AS A FAIR TRADE CITY

THE FTF's desire to re-articulate the local Garstang campaign into a nationwide programme was given warm central government approval, with specific endorsement from the Department of International Development and its then Under Secretary,

George Foulkes MP, who (in a press release) told the FTF to "ensure that the initiative is followed in many other towns and cities throughout the United Kingdom and beyond" (Fairtrade Towns: Goals and Action Guide). Accordingly, the FTC campaign was packaged so as both to ignite the collective imagination of place and community in particular towns and cities, and to fuel rivalries between places which could be exploited to ensure participation in the programme. The aim of the campaign highlighted the need to "tackle poverty by enabling disadvantaged producers from poor countries to receive a better deal, through encouraging support for the fairtrade mark"(ibid). The specific objectives were to develop national and regional support for the fairtrade mark, to increase levels of awareness and understanding of the fairtrade concept, to increase the availability of fairtrade products, and to increase sales of fairtrade products. These broad aims and objectives translate into five specific goals for candidate cities and towns:

1. the local authority must pass a resolution supporting fairtrade and agree to serve fairtrade tea and coffee at its meetings, offices and canteens.
2. a range of fairtrade products must be made available in a specified number of local shops and cafes, so that it should be easy for local people to include fairtrade products in their everyday shopping.
3. fairtrade products must be used in a specified number of local workplaces and community organisations.
4. significant media coverage and popular support must be attracted for the campaign, and a strategy must be developed to keep the campaign in the news.
5. a local fairtrade steering group must be established to ensure continued commitment to the fairtrade city status.

To these mandatory elements, the FTF offer additional options, including: regular local authority promotion of fairtrade awareness, local authority allocation of FTC responsibilities to a particular staff member (often Environmental or Agenda 21 Officers); erection of street signs declaring the place as a Fairtrade Town / City; production of a local Fairtrade Directory; inclusion of a flagship employer in the matrix of support; and organisation of workplace educational campaigns and

educational awareness events or competitions.

The FTC concept is envisaged as a way of focusing and widening existing fairtrade activity. The FTF recommends that local FTC steering groups should include local authority representatives alongside campaigners from businesses, churches and schools. This incorporation of the local authority as integral to the campaign strategy means that the formal authority of political jurisdiction is combined with the voluntary engagements of companies, social networks and individuals. Successful collaboration can be stillborn if there is no initial impetus from the local authority, but in the Bristol case a Fairtrade steering group was quickly established in 2003, energised by an ex-employee of the FTF who was then working for the local authority's sustainability department. This individual was a key actor in the campaign, but the significance of her role was magnified by the coincidental appointment of two other key local authority officers at the same time – a new manager of the Corporate Procurement Unit who was also appointed as fairtrade officer for the council (a job specification created for the first time in the history of the local authority) and a sustainability officer working both on food policy and procurement, who was a long term personal supporter of fairtrade. These serendipitous appointments can be seen in terms of temporally resonating 'political opportunity structures' noted by Miller (1994) and Tarrow (1998), in which different scales of opportunity are open at different times. For Tarrow, contentious collective action is often triggered not so much by the depth or extent of grievance, but by the political opportunities that create incentives and pathways for action. In the case of Bristol, the appointment of these key actors was a key situational factor behind the development of the FTC.

Beginning with the three local authority actors, the steering group quickly brought together a range of other activists and interests from around the city, including: faith-based activists from Christian Aid, Traidcraft and Oxfam; ethical business interests representing local firms such as Café Unlimited (a fairtrade café) and Equop (an organic fairtrade clothing company), and locally-based national interests such as the Tridos Bank and the Co-operative; and representatives from school and university groups. Interestingly trade union representation was not part of this configuration of interest, an absence which has been common in FTC campaigns across the country. However even within the existing coalitions of interest representing sustainability, faith, social solidarity and poverty reduction, there are significant differences in terms of how widely or narrowly 'fairtrade' is defined. We argue that the specificities of how the FTC campaign 'gets into place' enable particular balances of interest between maximising activism and minimising potentially damaging divisions of interest. In particular that the re-imagination of that particular place is crucial to the formation and sustainability for the coalition of interests. In the Bristol example, the emphasis in kickstarting the FTC campaign was on a strict timeline within which to achieve FTC status. Accordingly, the objective became to keep the campaign simple in order to rise above potentially conflictual local interest and to present a "win-win" political manoeuvre to all concerned. For that reason the fairtrade campaign was not initially aligned with green interests, and when potential conflict arose between fairtrade and issues of fairness to local producers, these local fairtrade objectives were seamlessly fugued into the overall campaign. Only more recently has FTC status been linked with wider political concerns, such as Bristol's position as a flagship city for celebrations of the Bicentenary of the abolition of slavery.

Following Cox (1998) we understand the production of a locality or place to be connected to the production of scale. In the case of Bristol, the ways in which key actors were embedded in particular scalar structures provides crucial contextualisation for their involvement in the FTC campaign. In particular, two central government edicts have helped shape the role played by local authority officers in the Bristol FTC coalition. Firstly, the interdepartmental Sustainable Procurement Group recommended in 2003 that "value for money is not an end in itself. Government buys in order to achieve those things which it has set out to do. If Government has resolved to conduct its business in a sustainable manner then there can be no choice other than to conduct its procurement in a sustainable manner" (Chapter 4.4, 2003). Secondly, in 2004, the Office of Government Commerce issued policy guidance to all Whitehall departments to coincide with the start of Fairtrade Fortnight – the FTF's annual campaign to maximise and co-ordinate all of its regional activities relating to fairtrade. These guidelines clarified that 'best value' conventions for the public procurement of goods, works and services need not be seen as counter to fairtrade connections of a 'fair price':

> "Value is not just about price. It is defined as the optimum combination of whole-life cost and quality to meet the user's requirement" (OGC Guidelines 2004, p.1).

These cues were rapidly acted on within Bristol City Council. A new sustainable code of practice was established which sought both to establish forms of local governance with which to dislodge existing conventions of 'best value', and to remove any hurdles from EU directives which might otherwise prevent the introduction of fairtrade issues into broader sustainable procurement practices. The Council's Procurement Code of Practice concludes that they should attempt to govern

production conditions elsewhere by including their fairtrade / sustainability requirements at the point of specification and tendering. In this way fairtrade specifications became enfolded into the everyday procurement practices of the council.

These changes were facilitated by the formation of a new Corporate Procurement Unit responsible both for streamlining procurement practice and introducing fairtrade and other ethical specifications. These potentially strange bedfellows of policy change are no coincidence, as the local authority officer charged with overseeing the rationalisation of procurement is also the Council's sole appointed fairtrade officer. In combination, these roles present the most effective channel for rebuffing potential financial and legal challenges to fairtrade as a significant new purchasing convention. The Corporate Procurement Unit's challenge was to reduce and rationalise the existing number of suppliers; at the time Bristol City Council had 19,374 different suppliers of contracts. Fairtrade has thus become aligned with a "move from existing arrangements into a more corporate perspective" (CPU Manager, Bristol CC, Interview, 2004). Just as in wider FTF campaigns, the Bristol local authority initiative was seeking to shorten the producer-consumer link, and so the aggregation of contract suppliers was seen to fit a move towards fairtrade, not least because both streamlining suppliers and introducing fairtrade was about managing business relationships differently, "to make sure you keep a good business relationship with a reduced number of suppliers"(ibid). It was about making the supplier 'known', building the business relationship, restoring to view a previously hidden set of complex relationships.

These procedural changes beg the question of what exactly does the FTC campaign achieve for the local authority. Why should a city such as Bristol work so hard simply to get a badge from an NGO? In this case, the FTC idea was an ideal vehicle for bringing together different responsibilities, not least centrally-directed requirements for 'sustainable' and aggregated procurement, and local sustainability initiatives such as the Bristol Community Strategy launched in 2001. The place jurisdiction of the local authority permits amplification and extension of the framing of different, though not necessarily conflicting, interests (Snow and Benford, 992; Tarrow, 1998). The FTC idea represents a politically neutral way to support a campaign aiming to reduce distant poverty whilst keeping to a repertoire of local jurisdiction. In this way the FTC provides a repertoire of political agreement, and aids the building of support within and between communities and across different political interests. The FTC campaign therefore relies on particular devices and discursive strategies through which actors can 'speak for the city', thereby negotiating the potentially competing interests which have been mobilised under the FTC banner. Kurtz (2003) conceptualises "scale frames" as the discursive practices that construct meaningful linkages between scale at which the social problem is experienced and the scales at which it could be politically addressed" (p. 894). These scale frames are helpful tools in making sense of the way in which campaigners and campaigns are able to align different interests. Scale-specific storylines can be generated which gather together interests in order to frame the shared contention of trade injustice. In the case of the Bristol FTC campaign, then, we suggest that scale frames and associated storylines have operationalised a particular repertoire of agreement which helps to re-imagine 'place beyond place'.

PLACING FAIRTRADE

Bristol's FTC Steering Committee quickly realised that the consumption of fairtrade products should not be just a way of 'voting with your wallet', but rather constitutes enrolment in the fight to eradicate poverty through better trade terms. Thus one of the storylines in the campaign emphasised that consuming fairtrade products through the FTC device was an integral part of wider practices of good local citizenship and place-belonging - what Escobar (2001) terms becoming a "placeling". FTC campaign literature frames involvement around place specificity.

> "Bristol is a great place to live, where we pride ourselves on our maritime history and our position as an economic and cultural centre for the south west….despite Bristol's trading past, its future is that of an internationalist fair-trading city" (Bristol Fairtrade City Challenge Leaflet, 2004).

Such displays of Veblenisque distinction (Veblen, 2003) at the level of place-identity rather than individual identity are key to FTC campaigning which interconnects the conspicuous consumption of fairness with the endowment of the city with meaningfulness and civic pride. Thus a FTC becomes not only a place that is known to promote fairtrade but also a place characterised by fairness. As a member of the Bristol FTC 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" (LA officer, Bristol FTC, Interview 2004).

In other words, in some ways the FTC badge becomes thought of by local authority officers as a way to promote the *local* reputation of the authority and the way it acts within its own jurisdiction. The Bristol City Council's Code of Practice suggests that the risks of non-compliance (with sustainable and fair trade specifications) will bring damage to the Council's *reputation*, scaling up the Veblenisque ideas of distinction

through conspicuous consumption to the level of local authority jurisdiction.

Temporal aspects of these constructions are integral to the evocation of a sense of

fairtrade which becomes not only a distinguishing mark of the newly created fairtrade

'zones' but also a temporally resonating marker that builds upon existing iconic

images of the city and its people. Here, the local celebrity Sherrie Eugene, of ITV

West, is quoted in publicity for the FTC campaign, talking about iconic image of the

city:

> "Fairtrade is about recognising that everyone has worth. It's about being balanced, conscious and fair. *Let's make Bristol known* not just for the Suspension Bridge or the Slave Trade but also for Fair Trade" (Sherrie Eugene, cited in Bristol Fairtrade Challenge Leaflet).

This excerpt comes from a promotional leaflet that was distributed amongst the

population of Bristol as part of the year long campaign (2004-2005) to achieve

Fairtrade City certification. The mobilising of iconic images draws not only

upon a positive historic past, such as the industrial triumphs of technology signified in

the Clifton Suspension Bridge, and the positive association of fairtrade with

celebrities in the media, but also upon the negative iconography of past trading

relations, the slave trade upon which Bristol's wealth and infrastructure was built.

Re-directing people's attention to their own sense of emplacement as historical,

situated subjects is used as a way to engage people with fairtrade. It promotes an

intersubjective relationality by asking people to look around them, at their buildings,

bridges, celebrities and people and ask, how did this come to be? For those involved

in the FTC campaign, the use of iconic images, eras and people is a campaign device:

> "*putting the focus back on Bristol, people tend to think fairtrade is something that happens elsewhere*...by talking about the slave trade in Bristol, how those historic links have made a difference and how now we can make this (fairtrade) a more positive difference…..I think its really good to hook people

in on something that they *do* know about and perhaps learnt about at school or read in the newspapers" (Local Authority Officer on FT steering committee, Interview 2004).

Accordingly, the campaign seeks to re-imagine and even redeem specific place-histories of Bristol, and more generally to benefit from broader characteristics associated with fair-trade, by displaying levels of worthiness, unity, numbers of supporters, and levels of commitment (cf. Tilly, 2004). Thus fairtrade works for the city as much as the city works for fairtrade. By connecting place-imagination to fairtrade, the local authority gains a sense of <u>worthiness.</u> By bringing together previously disparate sets of interests, the city gains a sense of <u>unity,</u> with people perhaps beginning to realise that they have something in common with the council. By sponsoring a sense of investment in place, the city gains a sense of <u>commitment,</u> which can be reinforced through fairtrade city-signs which present a symbolic re-evaluation of the campaign and its success to residents and visitors. Most obviously, the FTC idea enrols <u>numbers</u> of people in the sense that the entire city can political virtue of fairness to its constituents. As Micheletti (2003) has argued, each selling of virtue serves different political purposes, not only as a mechanism for framing particular messages (in this case fairtrade), but also as a currency for mutual understandings between stakeholders (such as the local authority itself, environmental groups, religious groups and trade justice groups). The framing of place through ideas of fairness in the FTC campaign, therefore, can be seen as a device to achieve 'brokerage' (Micheletti, 2003, 157) across different interest groups in an enterprise which constitutes the political mobilisation of ethicality (Kennedy, 2003). Brokerage is one of the recurrent causal mechanisms which is recognisable in events of potentially or actually contentious politics (McAdam et al, 1996, 2001). In this case,

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it involves the enrolling of various parties into the idea of a unifying "win-win" place-based identity, whilst simultaneously entwining that sense of identity with the process of working up that place as a showcase of moral virtue.

Interestingly, the role of local authorities in this re-imagination of place identity is also significant in the widening of fairtrade constituencies within local social networks. Involvement in fairtrade has often been nurtured amongst social networks revolving around faith communities such as churches (Cloke et al, forthcoming). Whilst it is important to recognise the often pioneering role of fairtrade 'evangelists' within these faith based networks, the association of fairtrade with religion can in some ways be seen as an inhibitor to fairtrade campaigning amongst non-faith based constituencies. The FTC campaign in Bristol embraced faith-based activists, but the key role of the local authority ensured a broad disassociation of fairtrade from any specific religious identity. By mobilising people around place rather than faith, a subtle shift is engineered from a 'calling within' to a 'calling on'. Non-believers can be called on as citizens of place to embrace re-imagined place identity without having to associate themselves with religion, a move which is fundamental to the mainstreaming of fairtrade beyond niche consumption in particular (and often "religious") social networks. Local authority jurisdiction opens up the possibility of converting community-based units – schools, libraries, swimming pools and even in Bristol's case the zoological gardens – as fairtrade zones which 'belong' to the city and its people rather than to particular than to restricted membership (as in churches). Thus the civic re-imagination of place takes root in particular facilities where fairtrade procurement policies will ensure that fairtrade consumption takes place whether or not workers, visitors, or consumers consciously choose to participate, or even realise

whether they are participating, in the fairtrade-ness of the city.

PLACE BEYOND PLACE?

Massey's search for how the 'outside' of a place can be found within and how the 'inside' of a place can be found somewhere beyond, questions existing forms of politics which privilege the 'inside' of the local of any place and provides a model of politics of solidarity that works through rather than in spite of place-based affiliations. The FTC campaign deploys spatial imaginaries of local and global in distinct ways. Not only is the emphasis on the overriding objective to improve the position of poor and marginalized producers in the developing world (FTC Goals and Action Guide) but there is also a clear intention to reinvisage and if necessary 'support' the local. There is potential for conflict between these two emphases. On the one hand, the local authority's championing of fairtrade procurement has resulted in the promotion and use of fairtrade certified products in local authority canteens and offices, suggesting a preference for global sourcing underpinned by ethical criteria of social justice. On the other hand, there are strong pressures for the local authority to give preference to local suppliers of services and products, suggesting a contraction away from global sourcing. The FTC campaign has negotiated these potential conflicts using a storyline grounded in the idea of the local and global being mutually constitutive. Although the local and the global can sometimes be viewed as alternative and competing scales of analysis, there is increasing recognition that they are constructed in relationship to each other (Crang, 2005). Thus local places are often characterised by past and present interconnections with the wider world, thus necessitating a global sense of the local. At the same time, global networks of trade, travel and communication will have geographies that are routed through and into

particular localities, thus necessitating a local sense of the global. Alongside these

mutually constituted local-global relations, the FTC campaigns have also emphasised

the idea of "making the local link". Local links have taken two forms. First, there has

been a commitment to advertise, promote and procure 'local' produce as part of

espousal of 'fair' trade. Secondly, there have been significant attempts to arrange

exchange visits through which connectivitiy can be achieved between local producers

and consumers and fairtrade producers in the developing world. The original

emphasis of the FTF, on 'far off' producers had to be speedily reviewed in the light of

the experience of the first Fairtrade Town campaign in Garstang; as the co-ordinator

of that campaign, Bruce Crowther suggests:

> "When I saw dairy farmers marching down Garstang High Street carrying a
> banner bearing the words 'we want a fair share of the bottle', I realised that we
> could no longer continue campaigning on fairtrade with developing countries,
> without making the link to local farmers. They also want a fair share for their
> produce" (FTF Goals and Action Guide, p.9).

The Garstang campaign agreed to a political alliance with local dairy farmers, and this

even opened up a much wider critical debate concerning the tension and conflicts of

interest between fairtrade as international trade justice and fairtrade as more generic

fair trade for local producers. Such debates have been extensively reviewed in

literatures relating to the localism of food (see, for example, Hinrichs, 2003; Winter,

2003) in which claims relating to the justice and sustainability of local support for

local farmers have been pitched against counter-claims about defensive localism

which acts to obscure the more significant injustices of international trade. Similar

discussions can be found in the FTC on-line discussion forum where, for example,

Bruce Crowther of the original Garstang campaign admits:

> "We were aware of this conflict from the start which is why we took so long in making the connection. The connection we made, and felt we could not avoid any longer, was a simplistic one, i.e. that farmers in the UK also want, and indeed deserve, a fair price for their produce" (Bruce, co-ordinator for the Fairtrade Town Campaign, Garstang, FairtradeTown e-mail forum, accessed 03/05/2004 http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FairtradeTown/).

Whilst many FTC campaigners believe, "the ethics governing local produce and organic production are true also for fairtrade" (FTC Online Forum), others are more sceptical of confusing similar, but quite different types of ethical trade issues. For example, whilst price control by large corporations and the habitual undercutting of small producers by large farms is seen as a common problem in both the UK and overseas, the wider campaigns from Oxfam and Christian Aid to "Make Trade Fair" by removing protectionist legislation have provoked distinct conflicts of interest between local and global producers. In the event, most FTC campaigners have found it difficult to gain local momentum for their campaign without harnessing the support (and thereby avoiding the opposition) of local agricultural producers. The FTC campaign therefore couples global and local fairtrade, using the scale frame of place to bring diverse interests together.

In Bristol, considerable debate took place over whether alignment between 'local' and 'global' producers was advisable under the banner of fairtrade, as extracts from interviews with two members of the FTC steering group suggest:

> "if you were looking at UK farms, it's a bundle of different issues basically….If you are going to be accountable, you have got to be very clear about what those standards are and very confident that you can monitor those standards, its really important to link the issues but its important not to confuse the fairtrade mark with other things….there's a lot of incomprehension around still about exactly what fairtrade means" (Local Authority Officer, co-ordinator of Bristol Fairtrade Steering Group and ex-employee of the FTF, Interview 2004).

> "It depends how strongly defined fairtrade is I suppose. If its fairtrade as in the fairtrade foundation logo then yes it is just tea and coffee but if you are talking

about *trading more fairly with local people,* then it becomes a far more complicated issue…we mean just ethically trading, *trying to promote the wellbeing of the city* rather than going out to corporate giants all the time in a way…" (Local Authority Officer on the City Sustainability Team and member of the Bristol Fairtrade Steering Group, Interview 2004).

The latter viewpoint, perhaps significantly grounded in the sustainability agendas which, were part of the initial bedrock of the Bristol bid, prevailed in the Bristol case, and 'local' and 'global' understandings of fairtrade were bundled together in the FTC campaign.'Making the local link' has also involved the formation of partnerships between Fairtrade Cities and fairtrade producers in the developing world. For example after Garstang became the first Fairtrade Town, it set up a twinning link with a fairtrade cocoa farming community in New Koforidua, Ghana. The link enables 'community exchanges' between local dairy farmers in Garstang and cocoa farmers in Ghana, with the aim to:

"finally help break down the barrier between local farmers and those in Ghana enabling a closer relationship to develop to the benefit of both communities…." (Bruce Crowther, Garstang FTC).

This repertoire of agreement has used a local - global scale frame to enrol two different interest groups under a common banner, and this form of linkages has permeated into other FTC campaigns, though with different spatial imaginations of the global - local binary underpinning them.

Thus the Oxford FTC campaign describes a visit by a farmer from Ghana to one of their local organic farmers as an occasion when 'local meets global', perhaps suggesting a rather static construction of local and global territorialisation. By contrast the Bristol FTC campaign, with its nascent partnership with fairtrade banana

producers in the Caribbean, tends to frame fairtrade using vocabulary which is both

local and global, suggesting a mutually constitutive process:

> "It is getting across that fairtrade is also local as well as global…in that on the
> one hand its enlightened self interest, its a well known term in these kind of worlds, in
> that what you are doing may not obviously give you a benefit immediately but by
> supporting growers on the other side of the world you are helping them to create more
> sustainable livelihoods as well, which is to the benefit of the planet as a whole, which
> is seeing the local within its global context. What other benefits does it have? Well it
> does also have the feel good, the motivational benefits for people on this side of the
> planet as well, *so that Bristol can be perceived as somewhere where fairtrade is
> important to the people in the City*" (Local Authority Officer and member of FT
> Steering Group, Interview 2004, emphasis added).

Such a framing of fairtrade suggests more than a simple stitching together of UK

consumers and overseas producers (Goodman, 2003). In this case, both consumers

and producers are <u>placed</u>, and while the FTC campaign aims to increase sales and

awareness of goods bearing the Fairtrade mark, this task has inevitably been

entangled with the need to re-think and politicise 'fairness' closer to home. The FTC

campaign has therefore had the effects of raising awareness about fairness in its

broader context.

To some extent, the 'bundling' of intra-local and extra-local versions of 'fair' trade

can be interpreted as a kind of political expediency which is necessary to diffuse the

'over-there-ness' or even religiosity of ethical consumption. However, the

remarkable result of many FTC campaigns has been the raising of the profile of

fairness within the web of relations in which the participating cities are imagined.

The FTC campaign has prised open a more relational construction of place,

developing identity around external relations of responsibility and justice, but it has

also impacted on aspects of the internal political construction of place, raising issues

of fairness which transcend any local-global divide. Thus as Bristol is re-imagined as a Fair Trade City, the outside relations of place are rendered visible in signs and in particular zones of fairtrade activity within the jurisdiction and territory of the city. In a more shadowy and undeveloped way, the development of twinning schemes, and the embracing of concepts of "fairness" have begun to open up new possibilities for recognising part of the identity of the city that lies beyond its place-boundaries. To be a placeling of Bristol is to be inculcated knowingly or not, willingly or not, into the jurisdictional strategy and practices of fairtrade promotion and provision. Participation comes through membership of and identification with the place jurisdiction of the local authority. By recruiting the local authority actors, the fairtrade movement embeds fairtrade into place-identity and placed systems of governance over local provisioning. Simply to live in and identify with such jurisdiction enrols ordinary local people into a process which re-imagines their place both from the inside looking out, and from the outside looking in.

CONCLUSIONS : FAIRTRADE URBANISM

Understandings of fairtrade, ethical trading and environmental sustainability will often portray disparate Western consumers being somehow stitched together with place- specific producers in developing world contexts. These producers will often be personified in packaging and advertising, whereas consumers are faceless and placeless, an amorphous group somehow susceptible to the commodification of moral betterment. This idea of the placeless consumer is in any case grossly over-simplified. Fairtrade consumers will, for example, often belong to particular networks, often associated with particular sites (ranging from churches to Oxfam

shops to school-based events) and they will gravitate to particular "hotspots" of fairtrade activity, such as the 'shabby chic' of the Gloucester Road in North Bristol where there is a cluster of fairtrade cafes, clothes shops and alternative foodshops alongside organic, charity and alternative retailing. Fairtrade consumption, then, has never been placeless, although as sales of 'fairtrade' goods are 'mainstreamed' by inclusion in the sales strategies of major supermarkets, the hotspotting of fairtrade consumption may fade as fairtrade shopping takes a more mainstream presence. Even so, the espousal of fairtrade as a key theme in particular supermarkets (notably the Co-op, but also Waitrose – see Walsh, 2006) will continue to present fairtrade consumers with particularities of consumption space.

In this paper, we have focused on another form of place based consumption of fairtrade. We argue that the FTC campaign in Bristol, and by inference elsewhere, represents a different and significant way of understanding and practising ethical consumption in the city. There are two interlocking aspects of fairtrade urbanism evident in this account. First, the FTC campaign was used by key actors to enlist people in Bristol, to raise awareness about fairtrade issues and support for the city's own bid for certification. This aspect of the campaign depended on the careful calibration of a set of local concerns – for example playing on Bristol's heritage as a trading city – with the more global concerns of the fairtrade movement around global trade and the alleviation of poverty. Arguing that the certification would be 'good for Bristol' was a means by which various different interests – including business, local government departments, local charities, community groups, trade unions, as well as ordinary people – were gathered together into support for a campaign whose primary beneficiaries are, in principle, people living a long way away, in the Caribbean, or in

West Africa, or in Central America.

The FTC campaign thereby enrolled ordinary people into a re-imagination of the city involving aspects of place beyond place. By adopting identity-signifiers associated with fairness and justice, Bristol has begun to be reframed formally in terms of relational connections elsewhere. The ' within' of Bristol is impacted by fairtrade responsibilities with elsewhere, and part of its character lies beyond its jurisdiction. Of course, as Massey (1991) and others have emphasised, cities are marked by the global senses of place of their inhabitants, but here relationship seems to involve external relations of identity which challenge the totalising force of self-interest, and even suggest some sense of responsibility beyond the individual-self and the place-self. Simply by being a 'placeling' of Bristol, people are being drawn, often inadvertently, intosignificant forms of fairtrade urbanism.

Secondly, the FTC campaign was used to enlist the jurisdictional governance of the local authority, not least through the making of procurement practices within the authority consistent with principles of fairtrade and sustainability. Such a move does not address consumers directly, but aims to change the system of collective provisioning of an entire organisation. As one respondent told us, this is a matter of significant culture-change:

> "I think it is more a culture really, *a mind shifting,* to see that it (fairtrade) is important. Obviously once you've written the code of practice you have to make sure it is implemented, that's going to be the difficult thing really....I work on individual contracts that come up for re-negotiation or for re-tender and I work again with corporate procurement on individual tenders to make sure that these (fairtrade) issues are incorporated…..I'm going to give it a while for this to *embed down* and carry on working with the corporate procurement unit and then suggest they make this code of practice a policy…." (Local Authority Officer, FTC Steering Group member).

However, successful changes to procurement policy in the local authority, and in other sympathetic organisations (such as Bristol Zoo and Wessex Water) not only offer symbolic support to fairtrade campaigning, but also ensure that employees, local visitors and tourists from further afield will be consuming fairtrade products, knowingly or unknowingly, when visiting the canteens and restaurants of these organisations. Whereas ethical consumption is usually portrayed in terms of conscious consumer choice, transforming procurement policy will often withdraw choice from the consumer – if you want to purchase a hot drink at Bristol Zoo then it will be fairly traded whether you like it or not. Here, then, we can see a transformation of consumption practices prompted at an institutional level through the regulation of consumption through fixed systems of provisioning. This account of fairtrade urbanism confirms that local authorities can use their jurisdiction over place to begin to engage with the political challenges of the place beyond place. In one sense they are acting to educate, inform and engage residents in their individual responsibilities towards aspects of place beyond the local. In another sense, however, they are using their jurisdictional power to develop patterns of consumption over which local residents have no choice.

NOTES

1. This paper draws on research undertaken as part of an ESRC/AHRC Cultures of Consumption programme grant: "Governing the subjects and spaces of ethical consumption " (RES 143250022).
2. All interviewees were given the option of anonymity, and agreement was obtained to quote interview text identifiable by the interviewee's employment role. Individuals are only named when we quote or cite previously published text.

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