



GLOBAL JOURNAL OF HUMAN-SOCIAL SCIENCE: H  
INTERDISCIPLINARY  
Volume 14 Issue 6 Version 1.0 Year 2014  
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal  
Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)  
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

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*GJHSS-H Classification: FOR Code: 180120*



EXAMININGGAPSINJUSTICEANDWELLBEINGFORFAIRTRADEWOMENACROSSINDUSTRIES

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RESEARCH | DIVERSITY | ETHICS

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# Examining Gaps in Justice and Well Being for Fair Trade Women across Industries

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## I. INTRO - SUMMARY

Fair Trade brings economic justice to disadvantaged producers by incorporating higher wages, environmental protection and education into the cost of production. The Fair Trade industry is valued at \$6.8 billion with 10% annual growth (WFTO, 2012). It impacts millions of people, 30% of whom are women (WFTO, 2013). Fair Trade guidelines, developed by European and US institutions, are applied to all production with the expectation that capabilities and opportunities are equally enhanced. Yet they are not. This paper examines through comparative study how undifferentiated Fair Trade standards and gender-based limitations on engagement negatively impact how justice is realized by producers. The author suggests that by democratizing Fair Trade through regular public reasoning sessions targeting both genders, greater collaboration and reciprocity can be realized resulting in expanded capabilities and opportunities, economic resilience and an improved quality of life. Looking at this as a case study of development policy in general, an argument can be made that by building gender specific public reasoning into early and ongoing project design and development, a more just and sustainable outcome can be achieved.

## II. BACKGROUND/PROBLEMS

Thousands of Fair Trade women producers are the least studied and known of Fair Trade. Not always visible from their place within the family home and often not present in leadership roles, women are easily overlooked. Though Fair Trade guidelines include an

equal opportunity clause for both men and women, women do not experience this equally. Fair Trade acts as a catalyst in exposing gender inequality. In addition the Fair Trade experience changes for women in different industries for example, handicrafts and agriculture. Two studies conducted by the author in Bolivia, in 2010 and 2012, capture this difference.

The primary focus of Fair Trade institutions is to improve the lives of the most disadvantaged people in developing countries through market access (Nicholls & Opal, 2006). Fair Trade studies largely find that Fair Trade increases income and economic stability for producers, creates access to credit, organic certification and export markets and brings benefits from diversification, structural improvements and market control (Nelson & Pound, 2009). Lives are improved through economic growth. However, economic growth is just one aspect of one's well-being. An individual's advantage, or happiness is also important. Economic gains do not necessarily create happiness. Amartya Sen writes that an individual's advantage is judged by the person's, "capability to do things he or she has reason to value" (2009, p. 231). Happiness is understood as a feeling of self-satisfaction both personally and within one's community, which include one's ability to achieve different combinations of functionings that can be compared and judged against each other in terms of what one had "reason to value" (Sen, 2009). In order for Fair Trade institutions to improve lives, participants' functionings as well as their economic advantage need to be considered. Bolivian women participating in Fair Trade identified six functions that are important to them and affect their well-being. These are: Education, family/management, social, self/gender economic, fair trade, and health/environment (Stenn, 2010, 2012).

The Bolivian women studied are of Aymara and Quechua descent and self-identify as being "original people" the term Bolivians use to indicate a weak or lack of European bloodlines within the family. Calling oneself an original person means that the individual feels connected to Incas and other people originally living in the region prior to the Spanish conquest. The women's reference to their cultural identity as being *originales* (originals) is an important distinction because it creates a unique experience and world view which is different from that found in popular feminist theory. For example

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from the *originales* perspective, gender role differentiation, rather than equality, is seen as necessary in creating a balanced whole. Women are seen as more nurturing and naturally fit for home and childcare work, while men are seen as being strong, less tied to the home and better suited for outside labor and travel (Huanacuni, 2013). However a narrow adherence to original beliefs can create obstacles for women in today's changing times (Copa & Petermann, 2013; Lilja, 2000).

The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) measures the extent to which women and men actively participate in economic and political life and take part in decision-making. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) found that countries with a higher GEM also had a higher Human Development Index (HDI). This suggests that gender empowerment is linked to greater achievements in human development. Bolivia had a 2010 GEM of .50 placing it in the bottom quartile of world rankings (UNDP, 2011). This study examines the dynamic of original culture norms and women's empowerment as specified in Fair Trade guidelines.

### III. METHOD OF STUDY

Ethnographic study which focuses on the meanings and concerns of people in their everyday lives including people's social and interactional processes and activities captured the authentic experience of women Fair Trade producers. This type of study is performed over time and is supplemented with additional resources collected in the field such as literature, government reports, data, and artifacts. An ethnographic approach captures the original experience in the context of its own reality and reduces researcher bias. Ethnographic research methods used in the 2010 and 2012 studies cited here included the talking stick, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), thick description, language studies, and observation (First Peoples, 2011; Chambers, 1997; Emerson et al, 1995).

Language is important in ethnographic study. I knew and worked with many of Bolivia's original people first meeting them as a Peace Corps volunteer in 1996. The women studied spoke Quechua and Aymara as first languages, and Spanish as a second language. There is complexity in Quechua and Aymara such as two forms of the pronoun, "we." There is a "we" (*kanchis*) that includes everyone and a "we" (*kayku*) that includes everyone except the person being addressed. Women Fair Trade coffee producers spoke of their exclusion, *kayku*, from Fair Trade meetings while knitters spoke of the inclusiveness, *kanchis*, of their meetings (Stenn 2010, 2012). These are important distinctions which will be explored later in this paper.

My study of *tejedoras* (women knitters) took place in 2010 during women's mandatory weekly Fair Trade knitting meetings with home visits and home stays

in the many neighborhoods of El Alto, La Paz and Arani, Cochabamba. Sixty-six women from eight different Fair Trade knitting groups participated. In addition, knitting group leaders gave in in-depth personal interviews and spoke of their organizations' histories.

My study of *cafeteleras* (women coffee farmers) took place in 2012 at educational workshops and organizational meetings. Three of the 30 member groups of FECAFEB were included in this study along with Cafe Pachamama, a direct trade women's coffee project organized through Spanish NGO Caritas and follows Fair Trade guidelines but is not yet certified. In all 33 producers participated in this study with 79 percent being women. The men in the study either worked with the women or were representing a woman who could not attend the meeting. Women agreed to let the men participate but it was made clear that the focus of the meeting was on the women's experience. Additional information was provided from the 2010 Fifth Annual Meeting of Women Coffee Farmers in Caranavi where 90 participants including FECAFEB members, associations, cooperatives, and affiliates contributed to two days of events, discussions, presentations, information, diagnosis, questions and comments revolving around women and Fair Trade coffee.

### IV. FINDINGS

The two different groups of Bolivian Fair Trade producers studied were from the same socio-economic, cultural background (Andean highlands) but working in different industries; handicrafts and agriculture. Fair Trade handicrafts are part of an older, slow-growing sector which make up just 10 percent of the almost \$6 billion global Fair Trade market (Eversole, 2006). Coffee is a much larger, newer market experiencing 20 percent annual growth for several years (Arnould & Platstina, 2011). Research showed that Fair Trade coffee farming improved the quality of life for families providing children with better access to education and healthcare, communities with better infrastructure through improved roads and bridges, and farmers with technical training and support (Arnould & Platstina, 2011). However no gender distinctions had been made in prior studies and most subjects studied were men. The following is information on each sector, handicrafts and agriculture, with an emphasis on the effect that Fair Trade is having on women. Later in this paper, study results are compared to Fair Trade guidelines to determine how undifferentiated Fair Trade standards and gender-based limitations on engagement negatively impacted how justice was realized by producers.

## V. HANDICRAFTS - KNITTING

In the 1990s micro-enterprise development projects enabled new economies to be realized in the countryside while preserving rural culture, language and traditions (Eversole, 2006). Some evolved to become Fair Trade organizations. Similar to the Mothers' Clubs model used by the International Federation of Red Cross and Crescent Societies (IFRC) and other development and aid organizations, Fair Trade handicraft production was regionally focused, provided peer support, took place in community groups of 20-30 people, and relied on voluntary participation solicited by word of mouth (IFRC, 2012). Women participated in Fair Trade handicrafts such as knitting by invitation from a friend, neighbor or family member. There is no fee to become affiliated with a Fair Trade knitting organization, there is just a commitment to learn, work together, and produce high quality goods. By the 2010 study, rural knitters had moved to El Alto, a large urban sector of La Paz city, returning to their rural communities just a few times a year for festivals, planting and harvesting (Stenn). Though they preferred to live in the countryside, the need for wages and services such as schools and health centers brought the knitters to the cities (Lazar, 2008).

The average Fair Trade knitting group is 15 to 20 years old, has 50 to 250 members 99 percent of whom are women, and is headed by a single woman leader who is democratically re-elected to her post annually. Most knitting group leaders are in their 50s and know each other through the Bartolina Sisa National Confederation of Bolivian Rural Women (FNMCB-BS) leadership development workshops they attended in the 1980s. Group leaders are highly competitive and rarely work together. However, they maintain loose contacts with each other through a vast professional network of development agents and supporters. Leaders share common life themes of living non-traditional lives by choosing to be single or divorced in order to pursue more independent work and leadership roles; identifying as original, speaking native languages, and coming from humble beginnings; and acting as bridges by communicating with foreign customers via cell phones and the internet and organizing work within local, indigenous communities (Stenn, 2010). "With my husband, I could not work," explained Marina Claros, leader of the Alma de los Andes knitting group. "I could not study, I could not leave the house. I waited until my children were older, and then filed for a divorce and left the house" (Stenn, 2010).

A Fair Trade knitter is taught export quality knitting skills, given yarn, and an order. It is expected she participate in two-hour long weekly meetings and complete work properly and on time. In exchange, she is paid a per piece amount that is often higher than

minimum wage, invited to a snack of tea and bread, permitted to bring her children to weekly meetings, and taught about women's rights, health, empowerment, child development, time management, and other topics by voluntary visiting nurses, lawyers, doctors, administrators, social workers and foreign visitors (Stenn, 2010). Since earnings are based on production, the faster one knits and more time they have for knitting, the more they earn. Skilled knitters with enough time can earn up to \$100 a week, completing an adult sweater every three to four days. Most though, earn about \$40 to \$60 a week knitting a bit more slowly and having less time for knitting (Stenn, 2010). Minimum wage jobs are difficult to find in Bolivia since only legally registered businesses are required to follow wage laws and most Bolivian businesses are not legally registered, forming a large informal economy. Fair Trade businesses however are registered. Bolivian minimum wage in 2010 was \$97 a month reflecting a 35 hour work week for women. This represents an hourly wage of \$0.69. The average woman knitter earned about \$1.14 per hour. Today the knitters earn about the same but the Bolivian minimum wage has more than doubled to \$1.54 an hour so it seems the price of knitting a Fair Trade Bolivian sweater is slated to raise too. Though fair Trade guidelines are the same worldwide, individual country dynamics over time impact the way they are realized.

Knitting is not steady work. Orders are sporadic and there is much competition between Bolivia's handful of export quality knitting groups. Most knitting takes place in the winter months, May through August, when the harvest is complete and spring planting has not yet begun. This also corresponded to seasonal production demands from European and US customers who place orders in April and May for their fall, winter and holiday knitwear sales with August and September ship dates.

Though this is not formally tracked by any of the knitting groups and there is much variance. Knitters in general agree that average annual earnings per knitter can range from \$300 - \$500 per year. The average annual (non knitting) earnings of a knitting family varies greatly but in general is about \$1,800 a year, similar to that of the Fair Trade coffee farmers (Stenn, 2010). Fair Trade knitting income makes up about 22% of the total family earnings. Income is supplemented by additional work in the informal sector in the form of washing clothes, gardening, cleaning, cooking, child care and through the production of the family's own food on their rural highland farms.

When not knitting, artisans farm their family land, visiting on weekends and during school holidays. They consume most of what they grow and sell surplus production in local markets. Being urban based, they now supplement their knitting income by providing services in the cities such as washing clothes,

housecleaning or gardening for wealthier Bolivians, or preparing and selling food as informal street vendors (Stenn, 2010). As with all Fair Trade, organizations are required to provide equal opportunity for all genders. Men do sometimes join a handicraft group but usually work in a different area such as inventory control, administration or weaving. The organizations are largely women-run and women-centric (Stenn, 2010).

## VI. COFFEE

In contrast to Fair Trade handicraft's simple beginnings, longevity and small scale operations, coffee is a new area of development with millions of dollars of investment, infrastructure and world market support. Many impoverished farmers from the high, cold altiplano regions moved down to the warm, rich, fertile lands of the Bolivian Yungas hours away in search of a better way of life (Kay & Urgiose, 2007). The roots of Bolivia's Fair Trade coffee lie in the \$4 billion drug eradication Plan Colombia from 2000-2006 (Jackson, Bathrick, Martin & Rodriguez-Schneider, 2003). Plan Colombia included a social development program to expand markets for crops such as coffee as an incentive for farmers to reduce or end their (illegal) coca production. A \$291 million five-year agreement was signed between the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Bolivian government to support the Integrated Alternative Development (IAD) program in the Yungas and Chapare regions through a Market Access and Poverty Alleviation (MAPA) program to improve conditions through alternative crop development, starting with coffee (Calvo, 2005). The MAPA team trained (male) farmers to better care for and manage their coffee and marketed the Bolivian coffee to outside buyers, introducing farmers to Fair Trade and helping to form the 8,491 member Federation of Cafetaleros of Bolivia (FECAFEBEB), the country's large \$16 billion-a-year Fair Trade coffee cooperative (Choquehuanca, 2012).

Through improved farming methods, farm families who once were paid just \$.10 a pound for their raw coffee beans now earned \$.39 a pound in the common market and \$1.10 a pound in the export markets with Fair Trade and organic certifications (Stenn, 2012). The average farm family had a husband, wife and five children. Families joined a Fair Trade coffee organization by cultivating at least one hectare of coffee (2.47 acres). Most Yungas farmers already owned 10 to 15 hectares of land which they received from the government's 1970 and 1990 land reforms. For those who did not own land yet, a hectare of land with road access could be purchased for \$1,000. This was more than what a family earned in six months however financing, guaranteed by coffee production and cooperative membership, could be found via credit cooperatives and lending programs which offered a 15

percent annual interest rate (Stenn, 2012). The average Fair Trade coffee producer grew 10 acres of coffee, harvesting 154 pounds of dried, green beans per acre valued wholesale at \$1,700 (Stenn, 2012). Average per-farm family costs associated with the harvest included \$243 for additional labor, \$350 for Fair Trade commissions and membership fees (up to 25 percent of the total harvest), and \$30 for transportation (Fig. 1). This left the farm family with \$1,077 earned over a three-month period of time representing 56 percent of their average annual income of \$1,919 (Stenn, 2012, FECAFEB, 2011). In Caranavi, the coffee capitol of the Yungas, women and men over the age of 50 rarely participated in Fair Trade, preferring to rely on familiar farming methods of the past. However, the people of Caranavi were young. Eighty-three percent of its population was under the age of 60 with almost 40 percent of its population under the age of 19 (FECAFEB, 2011).

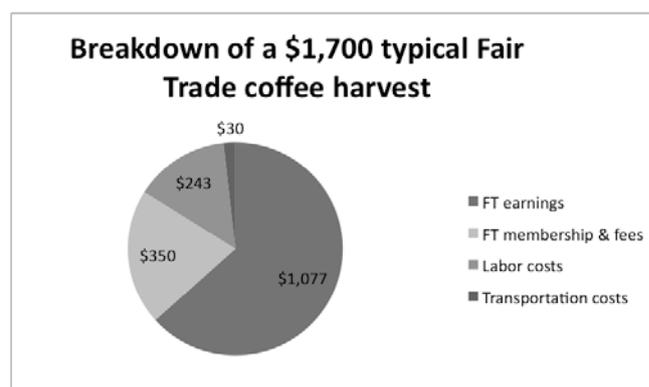


Figure 1: (Stenn, 2012)

## VII. FAIR TRADE EXPERIENCES

Both male and female Fair Trade coffee farmers took pride in how they worked alongside each other, the men being the organizers and the women the homemakers, together in the original tradition, making a complete unit. Traditionally decisions were made jointly by the man and woman in the home and communicated to the community via the male. However women Fair Trade coffee growers reported not knowing enough about things to be able to make decisions since they were unable to attend educational workshops and presentations due to their home duties. Because of this, they were not given the opportunity to engage in decision making about coffee production in the home. Women Fair Trade coffee growers reported feeling inferior and left out (Stenn, 2012). In contrast the female Fair Trade knitters did not work with males at all and were in full control of decision making surrounding their production - deciding themselves when, how and what to produce. Many were from non-traditional households with an absent spouse who traveled for months as a migrant worker leaving them home alone. Others were

widows. These women struggled with their difficult role of being “mother-father” to their children and community (Stenn, 2010). Their knitting work was seen as a respite from this and as a way to earn money and skills to help them in their new roles. Their Fair Trade connection empowered and supported them in these new roles. However, while Fair Trade guidelines valuing women’s independence and their pursuit of opportunity helped many knitters, it created strife for the women coffee farmers who functioned in conservative households were isolated from the education and empowerment Fair Trade brought producers (Stenn, 2012).

Fair Trade guidelines require that there be no gender bias. Never-the-less gender bias existed as one moved around different Fair Trade industries. Bolivia’s Fair Trade coffee training workshops are co-ed with women as equally welcome to participate as men, however workshops are dominated by men who have time to leave their farms for meetings hours away, while women stay home and care for the children. The few women who were at the workshops were reluctant to speak describing themselves as “timid” and preferring to give space for the men to speak. They felt men were more organized and could talk about the topic better (Stenn, 2012). These women were young, single, teens, daughters of coffee growers, and reflecting the median age of the local population, 15 to 19 (Velasquez, Vargas, Terrazas, 2011). In contrast, knitting meetings were set up to accommodate women. They were held near-by at a convenient time when older children were home from school and could watch the younger children and dinner did not need to be prepared yet. The knitting meeting had very few male participants not just because of its timing, during the workday when many men were out at jobs, but because it did not involve a skill many men had or were interested in learning. However, this lack of inclusion of men in knitting, created feelings of mistrust and jealousy amongst conservative communities leaving women challenged and criticized for working on their own outside the home.

Women coffee growers called *cafeteleras* were secondary beneficiaries and participants in coffee development, gaining greater household earnings through coffee sales but rarely realizing these sales themselves. Women participated in agricultural labor and received some training on coffee care, harvest and processing, but were not recognized in any part of the MAPA project nor given memberships to Fair Trade coffee associations. Because of this, women were not used to nor expected to be organizing, assuming leadership roles or developing and speaking their own opinions. Membership was assumed through husbands, who were required to attend regular meetings and play active roles in decision-making, production and organizational development.

Despite valuing their work alongside the men, some *cafeteleras* wanted to have a direct say in decisions as well. They felt this would provide balance and add to the strength of the organization. In 2006, a Women’s Committee was formed by the wives and daughters of the Federation of Bolivian Coffee Exporters (FECAFEB) to strengthen women’s participation in coffee production. FECAFEB is Bolivia’s principle Fair Trade coffee exporter. The women’s committee held elections, annual regional meetings and built a network of 36 local women’s organizations though with scant results (FECAFEB, 2011). They did not have funding or male support for their efforts. Meetings continued to be held at inaccessible times and places and decisions made without women’s direct input. In 2010 FECAFEB’s Women’s Committee drew up a resolution that demanded women’s full participation in all parts of FECAFEB, including individual memberships, equal representation on the board, participation in the general assembly, transparency, access to financial data and the commitment of the new FECAFEB directorate to support the Women’s Committee (Copa & Petermann, 2010). This was adopted by the FECAFEB directors. However, when I arrived at the FECAFEB offices in 2012 with a scheduled appointment to talk specifically about women and coffee, I was greeted by five male directors who assured me that women and men worked together in coffee production and benefitted equally from the activity though they failed to include the Women’s Committee located across the hall, in our meeting. When I later spoke with the Women’s Committee, they did not agree with the male directors’ claims of equal benefits (Stenn, 2012).

## VIII. FAIR TRADE AS JUSTICE

As strife and contradiction arise from Fair Trade gender challenges, taking a larger view of Fair Trade as justice becomes important. Since happiness, according to Sen, is realized by one being able to engage in the things they value, their advantage, and Bolivian women from two different Fair Trade industries identified the following functions as forming their advantage: education, family/management, social, self/gender economic, fair trade, and health/environment, one must look closely how they are realized in Fair Trade (2009). All Fair Trade institutions such as the Fair Trade Federation, World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) and Fair Trade USA provide similar guidelines to grow economic and social justice amongst the world’s most impoverished. Fair Trade guidelines ensure that producers receive fair and timely payment for their products; goods are produced in an environmentally safe and culturally appropriate way; producers are given the skills and opportunity to direct their own development; and proper labor practices are followed including non discrimination, gender equality and the

prohibition of child or slave labor (WFTO, 2014, FTF 2014, FTUSA 2014). Handicraft producers with more varied production methods pledge to adhere to these guidelines while coffee producers who have more systemized production apply for a certification and pay for the ongoing monitoring of their compliance with these same guidelines. The challenge is that though Fair Trade guidelines were created with the intention of growing justice, they were developed without the consent and input from the very people they were supposed to be benefitting and lacked a feedback mechanism. So while universal Fair Trade guidelines were helpful in many ways, they were not achieving all they had set out to do.

## IX. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Taking a comparative approach to better understand the economic gains and valued functions that Fair Trade does and does not help women to achieve enables one to think about justice in new ways. A comparative approach, explains Sen, looks at a variety of methods which shared a common interest in order to see the differences in which people's lives may be influenced by institutions and peoples' own behavior and social interactions (2009). The benefit of a comparative approach is to make comparative judgments about the relative justice or injustice of particular outcomes. However, identifying perfect justice is neither necessary nor sufficient for making comparative judgments about the relative justice or injustice of particular proposals. Women's Fair Trade experiences explored in a comparative manner, exposing the flaws and benefits that Fair Trade brings without proposing or disputing that Fair Trade is perfect justice. Fig. 2 is a comparative analysis of the functions Bolivian women working in Fair Trade identify as being important to them and affecting their well-being. Percentages represent the positive responses in each category by women working either in Fair Trade knitting or coffee production. For example, all women Fair Trade knitters recognize the benefits of Fair Trade's education and training while 68 percent of *cafeteleras* feel Fair Trade provides positive education benefits, though about a third feel Fair trade education has its negative effects too such as uncertainty with the continuation of technical assistance and training.

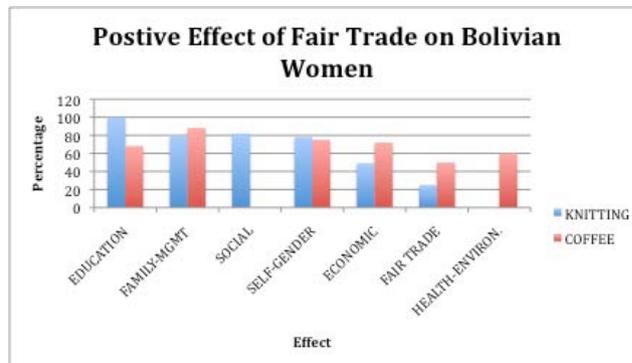


Figure 2 : (Stenn, 2010, Stenn, 2012)

The economic effects of Fair Trade, though the main focus of institutions and most researched in other studies, is not as positively significant as other functions such as education, family/management and social. Almost three-quarters of the women working in coffee, a larger and more established Fair Trade industry than knitting, recognize Fair Trade's positive economic returns though just half of the Fair Trade knitters feel the same. Many of the other functions such as family and self, benefit from the income created through Fair Trade though functions have other meanings for women as well. One of the overarching similarities that women in both knitting and coffee production faced is conflict within their gender roles. At the same time that women's leadership and rights are recognized by both the Bolivian constitution and Fair Trade institutions, women feel restricted in realizing their full Fair Trade participation by home and child care responsibilities. One knitter refers to this as the "double burden" of being a Fair Trade knitter, mother and homemaker (Stenn, 2010).

Sen's work on gender and cooperative conflicts illuminates ways in which Fair Trade influences women's realization of justice and they way in which this is affected not just by institutional guidelines but by the political environment of each country where Fair trade is realized as well. For example, Bolivia has a high level of female deprivation. Maternal mortality in Bolivia is one of the highest in the world with 887 per 100,000 in the rural areas (UNICEF, 2013). Women also suffer from greater mal-nutrition and anemia than men (UNICEF, 2013). In addition women are uneducated and highly discriminated against socially. According to the Human Development Report on Gender, "Bolivia treats men better than women." The report explains, "men receive more and better education than women, receive increased and better health assistance than women, and have the possibility to generate greater income while working less...if we consider that women, as opposed to men, also have...the almost exclusive responsibility for domestic work." (PNUD, 2003). Until recently, women were denied education, being required to stay at home and help with household chores rather

than go to school. "Your husband will read, write, work and care for you. What do you need to know that for?" mothers would tell their daughters (Stenn, 1998). In 2001, illiteracy in rural areas was 38 percent for women while it was just 14 percent for men (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2001). Bolivia's new constitution now requires that girls and boys both go to school and social programs award financial benefits to families whose children have perfect school attendance. Never-the-less, decades of non-education and discrimination resulted in high female deprivation in Bolivia. The lack of education leaves women with a lack of job opportunities as well.

Deprived groups may be habituated to inequality, unaware of possibilities of social change, be hopeless about fulfillment and be resigned to fate (Sen, 1987). Bolivia's women often sighed, threw up their arms, looked skyward and declared that something would happen, "*si Dios quiere*" (if God wants it). I worked with Bolivian women in Fair Trade 13 years before the new constitution was passed granting women legal rights and recognition. Certified Fair Trade's emphasis on gender equity, and non-certified Fair Trade's emphasis on women-run organizations, gained national context in Bolivian as women's leadership, education, health and well-being become important. The women engaged in Fair Trade activities whether knitting or coffee production, are more aligned with Bolivia's new reforms and are better off economically than those not affiliated with Fair trade. The functions the Fair Trade women value; education, management, self and gender, than their counterparts who are affected solely by Bolivia's reforms and do not have the extra support of a Fair Trade institution. The two pillars of government and Fair Trade institutions worked together to support the women producers. Fair Trade does not happen alone, culture and governance have a direct effect in how it is experienced.

Fair Trade brings women new opportunities and ways of approaching work that did not previously exist. Despite radical reforms, redistribution of wealth and growth in democracy, Bolivia is still the poorest country in South America. Sen explains that poverty is the lack of one's capability to function. Reducing poverty is related to positive freedom, which comes from a person's capability to do things they have reason to value. "What's important to people," explained Sen, "is to be able to do and be" (Steele, 2001). Understanding women's deprivation and taking a comparative approach to their Fair Trade experience enables women's needs and freedoms to be more visible. Knitters are more autonomous in their work than coffee farmers. Knitters move freely about their environments, attending weekly meetings with other women, creating their own products and earning their own income directly from the sale of these products. There is a positive correlation between their work and its

immediate benefit. Knitting also brings personal responsibility. The women have to self-direct their own production and find time for it amongst other responsibilities. Unlike coffee farming which is done together, knitting is done alone. Coffee farmers have a stronger, more complex Fair Trade infrastructure with many dependencies. Coffee farming can not be done alone and earnings are shared.

A cooperative conflict, explains Sen, is a type of disagreement that actually helps to move a group along with its task or activities. Bolivia's producers have identities such as being a woman, mother, family member, community citizen and Fair Trade group member. One's individuality co-exists with a variety of such identities and one's understanding of interests, well-being, obligations, objectives, and behavior is affected by the various and sometimes conflicting influences of these diverse identities (Sen, 1987). Some identities exert such a strong influence that it is difficult for one to determine their own individual welfare. For example, Bolivian women are expected to identify strongly with their identity as a mother. Women speak positively of the, "sacrifice of the mother for her children," and see a woman sacrificing herself for the good of her family as "valiant" (Stenn, 2010). Sacrifices are made in terms of health where the most nutritious food is served to the children and husband first, and economically where women worked for the "good of the children" and money earned is first spent on children's needs (Stenn, 2010). Women often speak of their own well-being in relation to that of their children. This causes much of women's own needs to go unmet or become invisible. However multiple identities within an individual exist. Though a woman may traditionally identify strongly with being a mother, her other identities are still there and are not resistant to social development (Sen, 1987). For example, Fair Trade with its specific focus on gender equity speaks to women's gender identity freeing her to focus on that aspect of herself and enabling her to desire to participate more in decision making and leadership.

However there can be conflict with one's different identities as well. The inequality in intra-family divisions where women see themselves as sacrifices, creates deep negative impacts on their well-being and survival. Inequalities are perpetuated by women encouraging their daughters to be humble and self-sacrificing, just as they had been encouraged by their mothers. The well-being of a person can be seen in terms of one's functioning and capabilities. Functionings are what one is able to do and capabilities are what one has the capacity to do, but may not be doing (Sen, 2009). For example realized functionings with an unrealized capability may be to be well-nourished, read, write, communicate and but not be able to take part in community decisions. Though a person may report a

satisfactory level of well-being, it may not actually be present. For example a woman may report being well-nourished, but upon further scrutiny it is found that the family is well nourished but the woman is not. Because she identifies herself through the family, she associates their well being with her own. Although opportunities may arise for one to shift one's identity, one may not choose to do so. An example of this is seen in the *cafetelaras'* resistance to assuming leadership roles, discussed below. The functionings and the capability to function have to be evaluated. "There is a need," explained Sen, "to go beyond the primitive feelings that a person may have on these matters, based perhaps on unquestioning acceptance of certain traditional priorities" (1987, p. 8). While Fair Trade creates new places for women's participation, not everyone finds it easy or desirable to participate. "I don't have time to go to meetings and learn be a representative," said one *cafetelera*. "I'm scared, afraid," stated another, "I am not secure in my words" (Stenn, 2012). Twenty-percent of participants spoke negatively of the pressure they feel to participate more fully in Fair Trade as they experienced resistance from family members and themselves to take on a different identity. However, many other women embrace these new leadership opportunities and reached out to other women to bring them along.

It is possible to distinguish between a person's well-being and agency, argued Sen. A person might have various goals and objectives other than the pursuit of their own well-being. For example, one's agency may be to create greater opportunities for one's children. The agency aspect is influenced by a person's, "sense of obligation and perception of legitimate behavior" (Sen, 1987, p. 9). Politics and education can influence a person's agency aspect but it can also have a strong social-cultural relevance of its own. One's agency aspect should not be confused with one's well being or be seen as evidence that a person is incapable of determining their own well-being. The coffee growers who felt more conflict in their gender identity and tension between being a mother and being an active community member, found their well-being compromised. However, they easily embraced the agency aspect of Fair Trade with 70 percent of the positive education comments referencing Fair Trade's educational opportunities.

## X. SOLUTION

Fair Trade institutions set the standards and image of Fair Trade. They provide their seals of approval educating both producers and consumers about what Fair Trade is and means. They provide the oversight, accountability and different ways in which to meet the demands and needs of an ever changing world and a growing consumer market. The Fair Trade

industry holds the premise that producer capabilities and opportunities are enhanced through Fair Trade participation, leading to greater socio-economic justice for producers. This message is conveyed to consumers equally across diverse industries and producer countries. However, as seen in the Bolivia case study, undifferentiated Fair Trade standards and gender-based limitations on engagement impact how much justice is realized by producers. The political economy of a country also impacts the degree of justice a producer can realize. Fair Trade guidelines' incongruences at first may appear conflictive, confusing or inadequate. Upon further scrutiny they are building greater justice than neoliberal alternatives which offer minimum producer and environmental protections, though Fair Trade's justice can be further enhanced. Undifferentiated Fair Trade standards and gender-based limitations on engagement negatively impact how justice is realized by producers. As stated earlier, Fair Trade guidelines were set up by institutions with limited or no producer input and no system of checks and balances.

Producers from all Fair Trade industries expressed the desire to have more accountability from Fair Trade retailers that Fair Trade standards are being followed throughout the entire supply chain, especially at the retail level, and that there is more transparency in the distribution process of Fair Trade goods including pricing at all distribution points right to the consumer (FECAFEB, 2011, Stenn, 2010). Handicraft producers would also like to have more interaction with consumers, knowing who purchased the product they spent so many hours creating (Stenn, 2012). Consumers too have expressed interest in having a more direct relationship with producers (Stenn, 2012).

Fair Trade can be democratized for greater social-economic justice and sustainability by using public reasoning to grow collaboration and transparency between Fair Trade consumers, institutions, producers and government. Public reasoning is an open discussion that all participate in. It brings about greater justice by enabling inequalities to be known and discussed resulting in shared solutions and greater understanding, or continued debate. Public reasoning gives voices to those who are not commonly heard and creates a sphere of equality where ideas freely flow (Sen, 2009). The ability of issues of contention to be discussed in an open arena enables ideas to be shared, different views and sides to be seen, new perspectives to be heard, and creates a place for discussion, debate, and, in time, understanding (Sen, 2009).

An open discussion that all participate in brings about greater justice by enabling inequalities to be known and discussed resulting in shared solutions and greater understanding, or continued debate. Open democratic discussion gives voices to those who are not commonly heard and creates a sphere of equality

where ideas can freely flow and grows democracy (Sen, 2009). Democracy, suggests Sen, can be best understood as “government by discussion” (2009, p. 324). There is disagreement in Fair Trade over women’s roles, leadership, opportunity, market access, and self determination. A functioning democracy ensures all citizen voices can be heard with respect at all levels, especially up to the top level, and one in which tolerance and public reasoning takes place (Sen, 2009).

Public reasoning is the ability of issues of contention to be discussed in an open arena. It enables ideas to be shared, different views and sides to be seen, new perspectives to be heard, and creates a place for discussion, debate and, in time, understanding. Participatory governments, such as democracy, are rooted in public reasoning. Fair Trade institutions can benefit by engaging in public reasoning to form stronger relationships with producer groups and together plan the steps needed to help to grow capabilities and opportunities across industries and governments to grow and strengthen justice.

Engaging in plural grounding allows a tolerance of contradictions to take place, a diversity of approaches to be realized and the movement towards greater justice to emerge. As large steps are taken, for example, by including coffee estates in Fair Trade certification, new spaces are opened for further expansion as well, as in the emergence of the Small Farmers Symbol (SPP). This enables Fair Trade to move forward down many different paths driven by a diverse array of missions geared towards achieving greater sustainability and justice, with each arriving in its own time and way.

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