BEYOND THE MOVEMENT:
An Institutional Ethnographic Study of Fair Trade Participation in Sacramento

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A Thesis

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Department of Sociology
Abstract

of

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This study examines the daily practice of fair trade. More specifically, I investigate the text-based and discursive forms of ruling that guide some fair trade behavior. Open-ended in-depth interviews were conducted with fair trade business owners and customers in an effort to better understand fair trade participation from an insider's perspective. Institutional ethnography is the theoretical and methodological framework used throughout this investigation. Analysis reveals how “free-trade” concepts such as national identity, paternalism and the construction of the Other based on global difference are embedded in some informants’ moral economy perceptions and discussions of fair trade. Through textual and discursive relations with fair trade literature and other participants, informants discuss the ways in which they appropriate “free-trade” concepts and reproduce them within fair trade discourses. A discussion of why these findings are problematic for fair trade business owners, consumers and activists alike is addressed in this study.

Committee Chair

Mridula Udayagiri

12/04/08

Date
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

“Consumers now commonly engage in a cultural audit of providers. People want to know your values and ethics demonstrated by how you treat employees, the community in which you operate, and many other things that are important to them. This is not a trend, but a new way of doing business by and with consumers... They want products or services that create a powerful and enduring emotional connection.”

Earlier this year, Starbucks Chairman and Chief Global Strategist Howard Schultz spoke to students at Notre Dame about the importance of preserving ethics in business. His talk entitled “Entrepreneurship and Ethics” began with a call for balance between profitability and social consciousness. Schultz went on to speak about the importance of going beyond the corporate “gimmick” of social responsibility in order to meet the real needs of workers. The coffee giant ended his speech by proudly announcing that Starbucks is doing its part by purchasing more fairly trade coffee than any other company in the world (McClelland 2007). Although Schultz received a standing ovation for his moral approach to market practice, not every consumer is buying it. My inquiry into the daily practice of fair trade seeks to gain a better understanding of how fair trade is conceived, practiced and discussed on the ground level by the everyday consumer. Through the process of speaking directly with informants about their fair trade participation, I uncover the ways in which some “free-trade” discourses such as national identity, paternalism and Othering based on global difference are embedded within the

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broader discourse of fair trade and moral economy concerns. My intention behind exposing why these embedded discourses are problematic is not meant to discourage or demean fair trade participation. Rather, it is my hope that having a better understanding of how these "free-trade" concepts become appropriated and reproduced within fair trade discourses will provide consumers, business owners and activists alike a forum for further discussion, debate and transformation of fair trade practices.

According to fair trade activists, Starbucks preemptively cashed in on the "socially responsible" label without producing much change in their daily business practices. Starbucks' 2006 annual corporate social responsibility report states that only six percent of Starbucks' total green (pre-roasted) coffee is purchased under fair trade standards (Starbucks 2006). Concerned activists feel Starbucks' commitment to fair trade has been minimal at best (Jaffee 2007). For the most part, the actions and motivations of large corporations are at odds with the fair trade philosophy for social justice. This contradiction creates tensions within the fair trade movement while facilitating possible opportunities for growth. Corporations like Starbucks are co-opting fair trade oppositional politics, which is problematic for activist and conscious consumers alike. However, corporate involvement in fair trade provides opportunities for ethical choices in people's everyday consumption patterns by providing broader access to and information about fair trade.

Accounts from international news sources such as the Financial Times in London (Beattie 2006) suggest a clear rise in mainstream popularity for fair trade products. The increasing demand for fair trade is reported to be largely attributed to increased corporate
retailer involvement. Large corporate promotion and involvement with fair trade is shifting the territory of contestation in the global economy. The shift has been articulated in part by what sociologist Peter Evans (2000) argues are "counter-hegemonic movements" to changes in everyday mass consumption practices. Consequently, as everyday participation in fair trade markets rise, we can no longer conceive of fair trade solely as a social movement issue.

Therefore, for the purposes of this study, I am interested in examining the everyday practice of fair trade. More specifically, I want to study how this practice of fair trade is perceived and experienced at the micro-level by everyday fair trade business owners and consumers. Institutional ethnography is both the theoretical and methodological framework I employ in this study to tease out how concepts of national identity, paternalism and the global Other are invoked by informants when making sense of their participation in fair trade markets. I show how these "free-trade" discourses function as the relations of ruling that organize and coordinate behavior across a variety of fair trade settings.

*Defining Fair Trade: A Brief History*

Fair trade principles typically include stable fair prices, safe and fair labor conditions, direct trade with producers, democratic and transparent organizations, community development and environmental sustainability (Simpson and Rapone 2000). The origins of fair trade can be traced back to the early 1940's when North American and European organizations provided economic relief to poverty stricken communities and refugees throughout Europe. These fair trade markets manifested from a sense of justice
and began to sell producer handicrafts to North American markets outside of the conventional trading structures. In establishing fair and direct trade, these Alternative Trade Organizations (ATOs) gave higher returns to producers throughout various parts of the world. In the United States ATOs such as Sales Exchange for Refugee Rehabilitation Vocation (SERRV) and Ten Thousand Villages continued to abide by this model of fair trade, and in 1988, after world coffee prices hit an all-time low, Equal Exchange was founded in order to import fair trade coffee to the U.S. markets (Simpson and Rapone 2000).

During the same year, the first fair trade certification initiative was born. It was called the “Max Havelaar initiative,” named after a fictional Dutch character that fought against the exploitation of coffee pickers in Dutch colonies (Levi and Linton 2003). In 1997, the Max Havelaar label expanded its certifying process under the Fair Trade Labeling Organization (FLO) in order to reach farmers and roasters around the globe. Today TransFair USA is a certified member of FLO and is currently represented in over 19 countries across Europe, North America, and Japan. Building on the success of Max Havelaar and the ATOs, TransFair USA began certifying fair trade coffee in 1999. Since then, TransFair USA has also made fair trade tea and cocoa available to U.S. markets (Jaffee 2007).

The Growing Significance of Fair Trade

Widespread adoption of fair trade practices shows the growing significance of this social phenomenon. Dr. Kevin Hawkins, a key figure of the British food industry, predicts that fair trade produce will see an upsurge of 105 percent over the next five years
(Buglass 2007). According to the *Financial Times*, global sales of fair trade goods have risen between 40 to 60 percent in the past three years alone (Beattie 2006). Even former English Prime Minister Tony Blair made sure to offer fair trade tea and coffee at the 2005 G8 summit in Gleneagles. But perhaps even more compelling is Oxfam’s “Make Trade Fair” campaign which has successfully lobbied the World Trade Organization (WTO) to end export subsidies by 2013. Oxfam’s campaign to redefine international trade practices based on moral and ethical initiatives was made possible by the support of over 20 million people worldwide (Black 2007). Backed by consumer support, activist organizations like Oxfam have been at the forefront of transforming fair trade from marginal to mainstream markets. If Oxfam and Tony Blair’s participation in fair trade suggests anything, it is that fair trade has moved beyond the realm of a social movement issue to incorporate everyday consumption patterns.

*Beyond the Movement: The Daily Practice of Fair Trade*

Social justice organizations such as Global Exchange and Oxfam International have been effective in pressuring corporations to adopt fair trade practices. As the discussion clearly shows, fair trade cannot be conceptualized as just a social movement because it neglects the occurrence of everyday fair trade practice. For instance, a recent study conducted by Monica Prasad (2004) investigated the degree in which everyday “conscientious consumers” acted as agents for reshaping market outcomes. The experiment presented consumers with the choice of buying conventionally made apparel or apparel that was indicated to have been made under “good working conditions.” After a few months and a series of price increments, the researchers concluded that almost one
in four consumers were willing to pay up to 40 percent more for the sweatshop-free apparel (Prasad, Kimeldorf, Meyer, et al 2004). This study is indicative of how the practice of fair trade has gone beyond social movement participation to include everyday market behavior.

Additional examples of fair trade as an everyday practice are frequently found in coffee shops where fairly trade coffee and tea are offered. Similar to Prasad’s experiment, consumers are faced with a choice to purchase conventionally traded coffee or fairly traded coffee. With participation on the rise, choosing fair trade as an everyday practice begins to have significant meaning. So what informs people’s consumption choices? Clearly it is more than just market value. People are informed by a set of normative evaluations of economic practices. These evaluations go beyond the belief in market fundamentalism, a term sociologist Fred Block (2006) describes as the dogmatic belief in the power of Adam Smith’s ‘invisible hand’ to create and maintain prosperity. Market fundamentalism rests on the notion that markets are “natural,” impervious to human activity. However, the establishment and growing impact of fair trade are morally based market economies- a market phenomenon not represented in market fundamentalist ideology. Moral economy concerns originate from a shared understanding of traditional rights and customs inherent to ensuring fair and just market practices. It is these standards of justice supported by the wider social community that create legitimizing notions for protest and resistance (Walton and Seddon 1994).
Fair Trade and Social Justice

As discussed thus far, the construction of the fair trade movement arose out of a sense of injustice toward the self-regulating “free-trade” market. Examining fair trade participation as a form of moral economy challenges the ideology behind market fundamentalism and redefines market outcomes according to economic, social, and cultural practices. Because fair trade is considered to be an ethical form of trade, supported and maintained by conscientious consumer behavior, a more complete examination into moral economy arguments by E.P. Thompson (1971) will be covered in this study.

As opposed to the calculated and deliberate construction of conventional market structures, the fair trade movement acts as a spontaneous counter-movement against the hegemonic “free-trade” model. International rules of trade are currently being constructed around the interests of transnational corporations (Hartwick and Peet 2003), resulting in their ideological and material dominance in “free-trade” markets. Because fair trade operates in response to the injustices created in the global market system it can also be considered a form of counter-hegemonic globalization. Examining Peter Evan’s (2000) work on transnational advocacy networks will provide further insight into how fair trade resists dominant market ideology and practice.

Methodology

This investigation requires identifying the actual experiences, thoughts and feelings of those who choose to participate in the fair trade market. I am interested in understanding how everyday fair trade business owners and consumers create meaning
around their participation and how they make sense of their choices to participate.

Institutional ethnography is the most appropriate method for embarking on such an investigation as it aims to uncover how social relations and activities are coordinated in and across local settings. Through the institutional ethnographic process we learn how textual and discursive interactions guide or rule fair trade participation and the perception there of. The theories presented throughout the literature, most notably Thompson's (1971) theory of moral economy and Evans's (2000) theory of counter-hegemonic globalization, provide us with insight into fair trade discourse. However, relying solely on these frameworks to explain the daily practice of fair trade is misleading. Institutional ethnography reveals that there are disjunctures within these frameworks, such as when informants invoke concepts of nation identity and paternalism or when they construct the notion of a global Other based on difference. These three concepts: national identity, paternalism and Othering based on global difference are terms used throughout this study and are therefore important to define.

Because the term “nationalism” has a variety of meanings, the concept of a national identity is not always clear and is therefore, commonly debated by scholars (Billiet, Maddens and Beerten 2003). For the purposes of this study, however, national identity will refer to the attitudes that informants express in terms of a common origin, ethnicity, or cultural ties when discussing their identity or role as an American or U.S. citizen (Smith, 1991). This classical, but typical view of national identity has been described by some sociologists as an ethno-national perspective for its involuntary association with a community of origin and culture, including a prominent language and
customs (McKim and McMahan, 1997). Although this notion of “a people” based on the
notion of a culturally homogenous population continues to be a site of contention and
debate between scholars, it remains prevalent in its conception and use by fair trade
participants.

The term paternalism is used to refer to an attitude or ideology expressed by
informants when discussing fair trade producer-consumer relationships. In such
situations, consumer desires to help, advise and protect producers are advanced in order
to maintain ideological and material positions of power and authority. An analogy to
which the concept of paternalism is commonly referred is the relationship between a
father and his child (Fotion 1979). Within the context of fair trade participation,
informants who invoke their American national identity assume the role of the benevolent
and dominant father figure who is only trying to aid or help his maturing global
counterpart (Klein 203).

Finally, informant discourses that invoke a singular or homogenous representation
of a people based on notions of global difference is referred to throughout this study as
Othering. The social construction of the Other by fair trade participants relates to notions
of ethnic and cultural difference wherein producers are assumed to be an abstraction of
the third world; romanticized and reproduced within “Western” discourses as being
perpetually poor, less modern and victimized (Said 1979). As illustrated in the analysis
chapter, institutional ethnography was paramount in revealing how these disjunctures
within the daily practice of fair trade deviated from the moral economy and counter-
hegemonic globalization frameworks. Applying institutional ethnography as a tool for
investigation allowed for the inconsistencies between previous fair trade frameworks and the lived realities of fair trade participants to be revealed. Lastly, institutional ethnography provides the opportunity for my own experience in fair trade markets to be acknowledged and accounted for. Having spent time as both a fair trade activist and consumer provides another layer of useful disjuncture when examining fair trade participation.

This study uses in depth interviews with fair trade participants- both consumers and small business owners- to examine how everyday fair trade participation is experienced and perceived. Interviews give access to the understanding of others in a way that facilitates coherence, depth and density of the material each respondent provides (Weiss 1994). Although fair trade participation is a growing phenomenon, gaining access to informants proved to be challenging and required extensive rapport building with fair trade business owners. Because knowledge of fair trade locations are conveyed primarily through utilizing grassroots tactics such as word-of-mouth or local advertisement in business windows, gaining access to fair trade participants required a who-knows-who approach. These issues made having a flexible approach to inquiry even more important and reaffirmed my decision to utilize institutional ethnography.

This study will begin with an historical account of fair trade. Chapter one will map the significant developments in fair trade's history and discuss how these developments have impacted consumer and corporate behavior as well as policy directives influenced by fair trade activism. Chapter two will review previous literature concerned with moral economy and connect historical fair trade objectives with efforts to
preserve traditional notions of social obligation. In addition, Peter Evans (2000) milestone article will act as a framework for discussing fair trade as a form of counter-hegemonic globalization. Chapter three introduces institutional ethnography as both a theoretical and methodological approach to inquiry. Included is a discussion of institutional ethnography’s methodological objectives as an investigative approach as well as a description of the five core phases inherent to the investigative process. Chapter four is concerned with detailing the methodology developed in this study. A brief description of landscape where this study was conducted as well as the process I went through in making contact and speaking with informants is included. Chapter five contains the analysis and discussion of the data. A discussion of how concepts such as national identity, paternalism and the Other based on global difference become embedded in informants fair trade discourses is covered. I conclude with a discussion about why it is problematic for fair trade business owners and consumers to appropriate and reproduce these “free-trade” concepts within the wider fair trade discourse.
Chapter 2
BUILDING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

"Rather than insert theoretical connections that have an indeterminate relation to what has been discovered ethnographically, the connections of the locally discoverable with the extended social relations of which they are a part are to be discovered in the articulations of people's everyday activities."²

This chapter examines theoretical and discursive frameworks surrounding fair trade. I begin with the emergence of fair trade practices in the United States and examine significant developments within the movement's history. Included is a discussion about what factors led up to the development of fair trade as an alternative trade organization and what went into branding fair trade as the first ethically distinctive commodities market. I uncover the moral and ethical discourses motivating fair trade's grassroots accomplishments and discuss how those accomplishments have affected consumer and corporate behavior. Next I show how the history of fair trade articulates moral economy concerns and ways in which fair trade actors have participated in forms of counter-hegemonic globalization. Finally, a discussion of why I chose institutional ethnography as both a theoretical and methodological approach to my inquiry into the daily practice of fair trade is included. As the opening quote suggests, the use of institutional ethnography commits us not to pre-existing theoretical explanations, but rather to certain theorized practices of looking at the actualities of everyday life. The final section of this chapter

² Dorothy Smith (2005: 37)
gives an overview of institutional ethnography and why it is the most appropriate approach for this study.

**History of Fair Trade**

Fair trade became prevalent in the U.S. during the 1980s. The emergence of the fair trade movement arose in response to the negative effects conventional globalized capitalism had on much of the world's small scale producers (Jaffee, Kloppenbury and Monroy 2004). Neoliberal economic policies in the form of deregulation created instability for many traders and distributors participating in global markets (Hale 2002). Coffee farmers in particular found themselves vulnerable in these harsh economic conditions, in part due to a lack of self-sufficient coffee unions. Historically, coffee farmers can and do form cooperatives, but a lack of sufficient production facilities and sales experience has lead to their historical insusceptibility to successfully unionize (Levi and Linton 2003). This helps to explain why in 1988 when world coffee prices began a sharp decline, fair trade activists from New England took action and founded Equal Exchange.

Designed to bring fair trade marketing to the U.S., the fair trade roaster/distributor took roots in West Bridgewater, Massachusetts (Simpson and Rapone 2000). Responding to the negative effects of a self-regulated market, Equal Exchange provided a unique charge in momentum for human rights activists in the fair trade movement. As a subsequent result of Equal Exchange's formation, a variety of NGOs, universities, and consumer activist organizations began to unite in an effort to improve small scale and factory producer conditions. These interest conversions brought forth waves of student-
led anti-sweatshop movements (Isaac 2001), international labor unions (Herod 1995), and transnational solidarity networks (Prasad et al. 2004). The formation of the International Federation for Alternative Trade (IFAT) in the Netherlands, the Fair Trade Federation (FTF) in Washington DC, and the Fair-trade Labeling Organization (FLO) International stationed in Germany were all established during the late 1980s and 1990s to secure fair trade as the first "ethically distinctive" commodities market (Connor 2004).

Fair trade coffee was the first commodity to be fairly traded, and it continues to be the largest. This helps to explain why the U.S. arrival of fair trade coffee in the late 1980s became paramount for the alternative trade effort. Coffee drinkers in the United States consume one-fifth of the world's coffee, making it the country's single most valuable food import (Dicum and Luttinger 1999). Recent evidence shows how ethical consumers, those who purchase goods with concern for certain ethical issues (human rights, environmental sustainability, labor conditions, etc), see a direct correlation between their purchasing behavior and the associated ethical concern (Shaw and Newholm 2002; Tallontire et al. 2001). According to market research, the purchase of fairly traded goods demonstrates one of the most typical examples of conscious consumer behavior (Shaw and Shin 2002; Shaw and Newholm 2002).

Fair trade participation has grown and shifted, extending the participating population beyond activists to include everyday consumers (Prasad et al. 2004). Consumers become informed about fair trade primarily through package labels, sales brochures, magazine articles (Simpson and Rapone 2000), farmers markets and community supported agricultural (CSAs) projects (Jaffee 2007), campaigns, protests,
and community organizations (Levi and Linton 2003; Smith 2001), and word-of-mouth sources. As more U.S. consumers become involved, consumer demands for corporate responsibility begin to rise (Carty 2002; Isaac 2001; Nicholls and Opal 2005). For example, all the espresso served at the 5,400 Dunkin’ Donuts stores in the U.S. is fair trade (Downie 2007). The U.S. company 1-800-Flowers now carries fair trade certified flowers (Horovitz 2008). And in 2006, coffee giant Starbucks purchased 12 million pounds of fair-trade-certified coffee, about 10 percent of the world’s total (Black 2007).

**Moral Economy of Fair Trade**

The rise in fair trade awareness and increased participation articulates moral economy concerns (Block 2007; Isaac 2001; Jaffee et al. 2004; Prasad et al. 2004; Sage 1999; Simpson and Rapone 2000; Thompson 1971). Moral economies work to support social values of fairness, democracy, compassion, responsibility and environmental protection (Block 2007). They are not the kind of a social, a historical markets economists talk about in which competition governs all participation and where the intensity of market competition is determined solely by the number of participants (Weber 1958; Arrighi 2004).

The notion of moral economy is nothing new. European social historians who study collective responses to eighteenth century subsistence crises attributed aspects of political rioting to articulate moral economy concerns (Bohstedt 1992; Bouton 1990; Markoff 1997). In his analysis of eighteenth century food riots, Thompson (1971) offers a timeless illustration of the relationship between economist’s notion of market and the sense of injustice present in moral economies. During feudal times, poor villagers who
resisted the increase of bread prices during times of scarcity triggered violent protest and riots. The villagers justified their protest on the basis that it is unnatural “that any man should profit from the necessities of others and [believed] that in time of death, prices of ‘necessities’ should remain at a customary level, even though there might be less all around” (Thompson 1971: 132). Although market logic dictates that the price of something must go up when demand for it goes up, the villagers saw the price increase as imposed or unnatural. Together, the villagers stood against the imposed market conditions, constituting a “moral economy of the poor” (Thompson 1971). This sense of injustice is the legitimizing notion behind such contemporary popular action as the fair trade movement.

Recent institutional changes associated with the global adoption of neoliberal policy have led to a resurgence of moral economy arguments. The expansion of “free” trade markets facilitated through international trade policies like the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) and later the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) work to deregulate market economies (Sklair 1992). In the case of coffee, this deregulation has lead to a loss of social protections for many poor producers in the world. Coffee producers are especially vulnerable due their lack of economic and political leverage to negotiate the value of their coffee beans (Levi and Linton 2003). These circumstances led to the coffee crisis during the 1980s wherein world coffee prices hit an all-time low, negatively impacting many small-scale producers in regions such as southern Mexico, Brazil, Columbia and Vietnam (Ponte 2001). The fair trade organization Equal Exchange was founded in direct response to this kind of inequality
derived from neoliberal globalization.

State and market theorist E.P. Thompson (1971) recognizes moral economy as the "normative base on which new practices are imposed" (Walton and Seddon 1994: 35). For example, Oxfam International's "Make Trade Fair" campaign is a great illustration of how fair trade participants are taking an active role in generating a moral economy through policy initiatives. Beginning in 2005, Oxfam International, a grassroots organization dedicated to ending global poverty (Oxfam 2007), mobilized twenty million people from around the world to participate in the "Make Trade Fair" campaign. The campaign utilized consumer power to lobby the WTO into putting an end to the subsidization and dumping of cheap exports onto developing countries. Backed by millions of conscious consumers, the Make Trade Fair campaign was successful at persuading the WTO to alter its trade policy to reflect the moral concerns of market participants (Black 2007). Certainly, the active construction of moral economy is a defining characteristic of the fair trade movement (Jaffee et al. 2004).

**Fair Trade as a Form of Counter-Hegemonic Globalization**

Scholarly literature indicates that the comprehensive community development inherent in fair trade organizing begins with a counter-hegemonic exercise of consciousness-raising (Hunt 1990; Munck 2004). International rules of trade are currently being constructed around the interests of transnational corporations (Hartwick and Peet 2003). These large corporate entities have become hegemonic in their ability to portray the "free trade" paradigm as serving the interest of all citizens, not just particular interests (Gramsci 1971; Evans 2000). The transnational corporate ideology that governs the free
trade model relies on fundamentalist notions of market. As economic sociologist Fred Block (1990) explains, market fundamentalism rests on the assumption that markets occur “naturally” and outside of human values. Fair trade challenges those assumptions by reframing the global commodities market as being embedded in human moral and ethical action (Polanyi 1957; Granovetter 2004; Zukin and DiMaggio 1990).

As opposed to the careful and deliberate construction of conventional market society, the fair trade movement acts as a spontaneous counter-movement. Fair trade impulsively opposes conventional markets through attempts to reframe the economic structure in support of human rights and environmental sustainability (Brook 1994). Scholars who study transnational resistance movements account for a variety of forms a counter-movement can take including cooperatives, labor unions, and in the case of fair trade, alternative trade organizations (ATOs) (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Historically, these kinds of counter-movements have been movements of self-protection that date as far back as the turn of the nineteenth century (Polanyi 1944). Take for instance the transition from feudalism to capitalism. The change is articulated, among other things, by a shift in production practices. Individuals who once made goods in an effort to remain self-sufficient now produce in order to gain participation in the market. Capitalist control of market practice brought about the elimination of the social contract and obligation toward a safety net. As the market expanded and commodified all it came into contact with, counter-movements emerged parallel to market expansion and resisted the destructive effects of the self-regulating market (Walton and Seddon 1994). Karl Polanyi termed this phenomenon the “double movement,” characterized by the spontaneous
response from all sectors of society against the harmful conditions of an unregulated market system (Polanyi 1957; Munck 2004).

Traditionally, these forms of oppositional reaction to unfair market practices have been constructed and initiated by those negatively affected by deregulated global capitalism (Smith and Wiest 2005). However, in the case of fair trade and other recent counter-hegemonic movements, these have been constructed and initiated by people of varied geopolitical and socioeconomic positions (Auyero and Moran 2007). These folks may not see themselves as the victims of unchecked capitalism, but nevertheless they come together with a common moral charge to resolve the institutional contradictions inherent to globalization (Isaac 2001; Smith 2001). The fair trade movement is characteristic of counter-hegemonic globalization in this way. It attempts to limit the power of transnational corporate elites by advocating for different trade rules and new ideological understandings (Evans 2000). Those who practice counter-hegemonic globalization use global networking opportunities to shift the balance of power to those most marginalized by the neoliberal model. The anti-sweatshop movement is a prime example of this.

In recent years the anti-sweatshop movement has achieved considerable gains in both the U.S. and overseas (Mandel 2000; Prasad 2004). Pressure from college students, labor rights activists, and other opponents of sweatshops have led transnational corporations such as Nike and the Gap to cut back on child labor, lower the average working day and use less dangerous chemicals during production (Greenhouse 2000). Two moral principles can be identified in the anti-sweatshop movement. The first is the
belief that wholesale commoditization of labor is immoral and should be opposed by all conscious individuals. The second is unity with those who work under sweatshop conditions (Isaac 2001). The movement's moral incentive has been the legitimizing force for multiple successes when dealing with transnational supply chains. For instance, in a recent study of 75 U.S. corporations which included Wal-Mart, Volvo, McDonald’s and JetBlue, many executives stated they felt morally obligated to adopt policies that reflected a level of corporate social responsibility (Iwata 2007).

The act of consumers operating “ethically” in their consumption practices connects counter-movements to the construction of a moral economy. Like the anti-sweatshop movement, forms of counter-hegemonic globalization capture the power of consumer solidarity and the application of social norms and obligations necessary for a successful moral economy (Simpson & Rapone 2007; Thompson 1971). The fair trade movement invokes similar market behavior to that of the anti-sweatshop movement in that consumer and fair trade business owners utilize moral and ethical choices to shape market outcomes.

Thus far, this chapter has reviewed fair trade’s long history of promoting and practicing ethical consumption. This kind of ethical market participation articulates a moral economy and forms of counter-hegemonic globalization. Fair trade activists engage in a moral discourse that motivates and legitimizes their efforts to subvert the “free trade” regime. Alternative Trade Organizations (ATOs) like fair trade were initiated in direct response to the harmful effects of capitalist self-regulating markets. As capitalism expands, state and market changes reflect a neoliberal agenda aimed at
keeping market activity serving the interests of transnational corporations. “Free trade” is a result of the hegemonic neoliberal model and has thus become the dominant economic paradigm. Under free trade’s current reign, institutional arrangements previously honored in the social contract continue to dissolve. In addition, some economic theorists have shown how free-trade discourse in the U.S. has encouraged a sense of national identity and paternalism (Soederberg 2003), as well as “othering” based on global difference (Keyman 1995; Slater 1998). Individuals, activist groups, labor organizations, and other forms of resistance movements have banded together in solidarity to advocate for a “more just” operation of market practice. Historically, this kind of understanding of moral economy leads to counter-movements articulated in initiatives like Oxfam’s “Make Trade Fair” campaign and the anti-sweatshop movement.

Evans (2000) provides a nice theoretical framework for understanding the construction of the fair trade movement as a form of counter-hegemonic globalization. However, Evans does not theorize about if or how the everyday fair trade participant fits into the larger schema of counter-hegemonic globalization. It seems clear that the daily practice of fair trade goes beyond the realm of a transnational advocacy network or social movement issue. My research into the daily practice of fair trade answers questions not addressed by Evans.

This investigation requires identifying the actual experiences, thoughts and feelings of those who choose to participate in the fair trade market. I am interested in understanding how everyday fair trade business owners and consumers create meaning around their participation and how they make sense of their choices to participate.
Institutional ethnography is the most appropriate tool for embarking on such an investigation. The theories presented throughout the literature, most notably Thompson’s (1971) theory of moral economy and Evans’s (2000) theory of counter-hegemonic globalization, provide us with insight into fair trade discourse. However, institutional ethnography does not take discourse for granted; rather it requires an exploration into how ones knowing is organized- by whom and by what (Campbell and Gregor 2004). Institutional ethnographers contend that people and events are actually tied together in ways that make sense of such abstractions as power, knowledge and morality (Smith 2005). Institutional ethnography has the capacity to tease out the meanings inherent in fair trade discourse. In this study for instance, institutional ethnography reveals how the meanings of moral economy get appropriated to articulate national identity and paternalism, as well as Othering based on global difference. The next section will provide an overview of institutional ethnography and explain some of the fundamental principles of its framework in relation to my study.
"Discourse and ideology can be investigated as actual social relations ongoingly organized in and by the activities of actual people."³

Developed by Canadian sociologist Dorothy Smith, institutional ethnography is a "method of inquiry" into the social world that aims to make visible the relations that connect one local site to another (Campbell and Gregor 2004). In practice, institutional ethnographers describe the coordination of activities in a social setting, detail how ideological accounts define those activities in relation to ruling institutional discourses, and examine the broader social relations in which local sites of activity are embedded (Grahame 1998). Institutional ethnography has been used to study a range of topics including mental health care in West Africa (Jakubec 2001), veteran palliative care (Miller 1997), university disability policy (Jung 2000), international development regimes (Goldman 2005), and social movements and political activism (Kinsman 1997). The application of institutional ethnography in this project is used to uncover the ways in which concepts of national identity, paternalism and Othering based on global difference are embedded within the broader discourse of moral economy. Examining the daily practice of fair trade using institutional ethnography reveals the inconsistencies between previous fair trade frameworks and the lived realities of fair trade participants.

³ As cited by Dorothy Smith 2005 on the Maxwell School of Syracuse University website: http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/mddevault/information_about_IE.htm
This chapter provides an overview of institutional ethnography including the language used in its application as well as the theoretical and methodological contributions it makes to my research on the daily practice of fair trade. I begin with a discussion of institutional ethnography’s methodological objectives as an investigative approach to the social world. Next I map out the five core phases of institutional ethnography as articulated by its main theorist, Dorothy Smith, and subsequent scholars who have applied this method to their work. In describing the methodological process, I weave in my own application of institutional ethnography as it pertains to this study. I conclude with a summary of the chapter and briefly describe its application for the following analysis section.

According to Smith (2005), conventional ethnographies and other sociological methods are greatly constrained by pre-existing conceptual frameworks. In contrast, institutional ethnographers obtain knowledge(s) of how the relations of ruling operate from the standpoints of the people participating in them. Proceeding in this way allows the researcher to create a map whereby people can see the workings of institutions and their own locations within them. Language is central to this model. Smith (1999) emphasizes language as the medium in which thoughts and ideas move reciprocally between individual people and the realm of the social. She encourages the point of entry into the social world to begin with the researcher’s interest and attention to a specific matter. Once a researcher has solidified an interest in a social phenomenon, the practice of inquiry can begin.
In this study, my interest in fair trade became solidified when I became formally involved in the fair trade movement in the summer of 2005. It was during that time that I took an internship with the International Solidarity Exchange (ISE), a Chicago based organization dedicated to promoting fair wages, economic sustainability and human rights through fair trade practices. I was employed with ISE as an “alternative economy intern” for a little over a year during which time I worked directly with a women’s cooperative located in Chiapas, Mexico. Every month I would receive a spectrum of hand-loomed bags and bracelets, beaded jewelry, embroidered blouses, blankets, and pillow cases, and other hand-crafted goods. The women’s cooperative established fair and reasonable prices for their goods that ensured their standard of living and ongoing ability to participate in global markets. Although my work involved selling these goods at community events around town, the real objective was engaging people in dialogue about the forms of inequality that stem from neoliberalism and “free-trade” markets. Eventually, my interest in fair trade brought me to Chiapas, Mexico, where I stayed with and learned from the women’s cooperative. When I returned to Sacramento, my interest in fair trade increased and took an academic turn. As I watched more people buying and selling fairly trade goods, I became increasingly interested in studying people’s daily practice of fair trade.

True to my own experience, the investigative process described by institutional ethnographers begins with a researcher’s interest in a specific subject matter and unfolds organically into a more formal research project. Scholars who have employed institutional ethnography have compared the process to holding a ball of string in which a
single thread is found and eventually teased out (DeVault and McCoy 2002). Although no particular sequence of research activities are prescribed, Smith discusses five steps for conducting an investigation using institutional ethnography: identifying the problematic, building a conceptual framework for exploration, writing an account of the methodology, the collection of data, and data analysis (Campbell and Gregor 2004).

**Identifying the Problematic**

In institutional ethnography, the term *problematic* makes reference to certain activities that are based in its theorized orientation to research (Campbell and Gregor 2004). It should be clear that the problematic is not a formal research question, nor is it a problem that can only be understood as an informant might explain it. Instead, the concept of the problematic in institutional ethnography is used “to direct attention to a possible set of questions that may not have been posed or a set of puzzles that do not yet exist in the form of puzzles but are latent in the actualities of the experienced world” (Smith 1987: 91). In this research project, my problematic is focused on how national identity, paternalism and global difference are embedded in the moral economy discourse of fair trade.

The notion of a problematic and the work necessary to discover it aids the researcher in locating a place for inquiry to begin. It also helps to orient the researcher to his or her own relation to the inquiry, as opposed to methodologically removing him/herself from it. The work requires the researcher to become familiar with the “experienced actualities” that Smith talks about. Understanding “experienced actualities” entails allowing respondents to inform the researcher about how their position in
institutions or settings are socially embedded, rather than the researcher making categorical assumptions. For instance, a common technique in sociology is to interview people as representatives of a category of people. A researcher might interview ten fair trade participants in order to say something about the situation of everyday fair trade participants in general. However, Dorothy Smith insists that researchers should interview people as informants. The ideal in institutional ethnography is to view informants as subjects who have knowledge and not as objects about who researchers seek knowledge about. When researchers apply categories such as “social class,” and “racial status,” researchers make assumptions about what experiences those who occupy a certain class or race category might go through in their everyday life. In contrast, an institutional ethnographer would begin in the actualities of the lives of those who are involved to understand what they are experiencing without assuming that class or race matter in a certain way. This process allows the researcher to focus on how those actualities are socially embedded and informs the direction the researcher should take to better understand the problematic (Smith 2005).

For example, in my research I did not make assumptions about what people’s thoughts and experiences in fair trade market were based on pre-existing categories of socio-economic status, race, age, etc. Instead, I began my investigation into the daily practice of fair trade by going to various fair trade establishments and talking with business owners and consumers about their daily lived experiences in fair trade market. It is through this process of familiarizing oneself with people’s lived experiences that a researcher may come to notice something that presents a puzzle for someone, a
problematic. The world is organized as it is for some purpose, and understanding what is happening makes a difference to someone. As respondents talk about their everyday experiences relevant to the situation of interest, the researcher begins to understand for whom the problematic makes a difference and why (Campbell and Gregor 2004). As I found out through my interviews, some participants discussed their everyday participation in fair trade market in ways that articulated a neoliberal, free-trade perspective. Embedded in their discourse of morality were concepts of national identity, paternalism, and Othering based on global difference. Institutional ethnography uncovers these discourses and reveals them to be systems of ruling. The discourses that are purported by informants to be about fair trade are also about national identity, paternalism and Othering based on global difference. Therefore, I find that the fair trade practitioners in my study are unknowingly reproducing these systems of ruling that dominate and subordinate (Smith 2005).

It is an important standard in institutional ethnography that a researcher establishes a close relationship with the situation of study. One way a researcher can gain this needed familiarity is by conducting preliminary interviews and collecting entry level data from those who occupy a particular position in the situation. In addition to having my own experiences to reflect upon, I chose to speak with people who were involved in buying and selling a variety of fairly traded goods; everything from fair trade coffee and teas to shoes, textiles, jewelry and home décor. Through interviewing and cataloging individual narratives, a researcher can begin to uncover how individual activities are coordinated across locations. As is true for my experience as a fair trade activist, if a
researcher has lived or is currently living in the situation him/herself, it is recommended the researcher write an account of his/her own knowledge and experience. This approach provides the researcher with what Smith calls *disjuncture* (Smith 1987; 2005).

Disjuncture is an important concept in institutional ethnography because it deals with different accounts of reality- the reality of knowing something from a *ruling* perspective versus a lived experience. The term *ruling* as it is commonly used in institutional ethnography refers to “the socially-organized exercise of power that shapes people’s actions and their lives” (Campbell and Gregor 2004: 32). For instance, fair trade participation and discourse constitutes the social relations of ruling of the informants I interviewed in this study. Although each respondent seems like a disparate actor, they are all embedded in fair trade market relations that coordinate and organize their behavior.

Texts of all kinds are almost always implicated in ruling. Consider the prevalence of newspapers, magazines, stickers, pamphlets, television, computers and other forms of text based information. In fair trade markets, texts take a variety of forms including everything from posters and stickers to books and internet sites. Texts have a broad influence over many of our day to day thoughts and behavior and are therefore implicated in translocal or extended forms of ruling (Smith 2005). Identifying the problematic directs the researcher’s attention to the social relations coordinating behavior as opposed to individual actions and competence. This is why understanding how to identify the problematic is an important tool a researcher must grasp in the early stages of doing institutional ethnography.
Building a Conceptual Frame

As in most analytic approaches to understanding the social world, reviewing relevant literature about what is already known about a topic of interest is paramount to the process of investigation. Reviewing scholarly literature allows the researcher to reflect on the various kinds of knowing about their topic and how their own research would add to what is already known. However, in institutional ethnography, the process of identifying both what is known and what needs to be discovered about the topic serves two additional functions unique to this method of inquiry.

The first deals with helping the researcher locate her position in relation to the problematic. According to Smith (1990a), all research writing situates both the researcher (writer) and the reader. As an institutional ethnographer, one must selfconsciously attend to his/her own research stance so as to not leave behind the problematic of the everyday world. If an institutional ethnographer discovers herself standing with a view of the world that is represented only in pre-existing literature, it is reflective of having lost ones stance in the everyday world (Smith 2002a). The problematic is a puzzle; something unsettling about what a researcher is seeing that has yet to be clarified and named. One must never subordinate the interest to whom the problematic makes a difference to what is written in the literature. Fortunately, my ongoing involvement in the fair trade movement enabled me to keep a firm grasp on my research stance. For to lose sight of remembering your research stance, is to have lost ones position in the everyday world (Smith 1999a).

The second function of reviewing relevant literature in institutional ethnography deals with uncovering what is not known about a topic to explain its social organization.
A conceptual framework helps the researcher focus on those aspects of the puzzle that the inquiry must address. When reflecting on previous literature, an institutional ethnographer should ask oneself how the events taking place are being discussed. More importantly, from what position are they being discussed— from a ruling or experience based perspective? The literature written about moral economy and counter-hegemonic globalization are written from positions of ruling; each makes assumptions that organize the way in which knowing is located and discussed. It is important here to remember that knowing from a position of ruling means relying on existing textual discourse and rejecting experience as an authoritative resource for knowing.

For example, the literature on moral economy uses concepts such as a “wider community consensus” when describing legitimizing notions behind market protests. Adopting this framework assumes there is a kind of monolithic community consensus that determines what justice is and what it is not. In speaking to fair trade participants, I recognized arising contradictions that did not fit this framework. For instance, one of the consumers I interviewed discussed sweatshop labor as being a justified practice when it occurs in areas of the world “like China that have always done it that way,” while another informant stated the benefit of choosing fair trade was the opportunities his practice brought him to interact with “cool and mellow people.” Using the moral economy framework to examine the daily practice of fair trade would not have allowed me to account for such inconsistency in respondent’s experiences.

Similarly, the literature written about counter-hegemonic globalization uses concepts such as “translocal advocacy networks” to describe consumer advocacy
behavior. Again, the language used assumes fair trade market behavior only occurs in unified collective movements. It has become obvious; however, that fair trade participation has moved beyond the social movement framework to include everyday practices. Looking at fair trade participation through the counter-hegemonic globalization lens marginalizes and objectifies the everyday fair trade participant's stance in knowing from the inside. Writing a conceptual framework for this research project has allowed me to delineate my own research stance in contrast to those I've found in the literature. According to institutional ethnographers, this is in itself a theoretically-oriented undertaking that allows me to better understand my own problematic and how I can contribute to fair trade discourse.

Writing an Account of the Methodology

In line with other forms of scholarly research, institutional ethnography calls for a detailed write-up of the study and how it was conducted. However, institutional ethnographers realize that the methods required for a research proposal may look somewhat different than the step-by-step retrospective account of what exactly happened during the study. This variation in write-up can occur, at least for students in part, because of university mandates and procedures (Campbell and Gregor 2004). As a student of sociology at CSUS for instance, I needed the necessary approval from the institutional ethics committee before embarking on the research process. This procedure required me to have a pre-determined plan of what my research would entail. For example, students must provide an interview schedule that lays out what questions will be
asked, which informants will be chosen for interview, and what the process for gaining access to a sample will involve.

Institutional ethnographers conducting research projects in such an institutional setting may have some trouble with this kind of approach. Rather than having a research design and plan be determined at the onset of a study, institutional ethnographers prefer that these activities emerge from the research process. In institutional ethnography, even the choice of informants is determined through the course of the inquiry, rather than by a pre-determined plan (Smith 1999; 2005). Because of the disconnect between academic institutional mandates and institutional ethnography’s approach to research, it may require thesis writing students to go back to the proposal’s account of the methodology and alter it. It is important to recount how data collection and analysis were actually done. As important, the research design and methods of data collection must remain consistent with the statement of research methodology. Keeping methodological procedures consistent with an accepted and sufficiently described theory of knowing produces the kind of scientific validity necessary for a research project (Campbell and Gregor 2004).

Data Collection

There are two levels of data needed for analysis in institutional ethnography. Entry-level data are collected first and serve to understand the everyday world through local settings, individual experiences and interactions. Open-ended interviews are a useful method of collecting entry-level data in institutional ethnography. To learn more about the local setting and the problematic guiding the researcher’s interest, the
researcher might talk to many respondents to see a fuller picture about what is happening there. While it is not assumed that all respondents will share the same experiences, their accounts will all surround a similarly organized phenomenon of interest to the researcher (Campbell and Gregor 2004).

In talking with people about their everyday activities and how they make sense of them, institutional ethnographers can begin to uncover the relations that rule. Embedded in the way everyday people talk about their participation in particular settings is their tacit knowledge of how to do what they do, how they align their behavior with others and how they work with the texts and discourses that coordinate their action. Dorothy Smith (1990b) contends that when anyone speaks in a sensible manner about their lives, they also speak to its social relations. Therefore a researcher must remember that whether conversations occur in a one-on-one or group setting, the purpose of interviews in institutional ethnography is to “investigate widespread and discursive processes” (DeVault and McCoy 2002: 757).

Through the process of conducting interviews and collecting entry-level data, the researcher becomes aware of an emerging problematic. The next step is to go looking for data that will illuminate it. This next step of inquiry comprises “level-two” data. Level-two data address the missing organizational details of how the setting works. A researcher will recognize level-two data when they become useful in explaining respondent’s original stories and concerns. Respondents may mention some aspect of the setting such as documents or other forms of information that help to organize respondent behavior. Researchers need to pay close attention to clues leading to level-two data so
that he/she may begin to understand the systems of ruling that coordinate behavior across local settings (Campbell and Gregor 2004).

The theory upon which institutional ethnography depends informs the researcher that the settings and events that are investigated are organized and ruled in definite ways. It is obvious then that fair trade participants do not fully understand how their behavior is socially organized; therefore, a researcher must undergo some detective work to make this discovery. Level-two data can be discovered by asking such questions as “what are the connections across and beyond the boundaries of this setting and how are they enacted by actual people?” (Campbell and Gregor 2004: 61). Fair trade informants in my study for instance, discussed a variety of texts and discourses that informed their choices to participate. Everything from bookmarks and buttons to pamphlets and face to face dialogues were all sources of information and discourses mentioned by informants. Within these text based and discursive relations were neoliberal concepts of national identity, paternalism and the global Other. Obtaining first hand experiential accounts of fair trade perceptions from informants revealed these neoliberal discourses to be relations of ruling that connected one local site to another.

In addition, the process of analyzing level-two data allowed me to see ways in which my experiences and perspectives of fair trade deviated from that which informants were saying. It became clear that my activist background in fair trade contributed to my having had access to different kinds of texts and discourses about fair trade. My internship with ISE for instance, focused on language as a tool to transform situations of domination and subordination. Therefore, we were encouraged to read texts and engage
in discourse that challenged the power dynamics inherent in homogenizing terms like “third world communities.” Fair trade informants I spoke with were having a different experience in fair trade by accessing different kinds of texts as sources of information than I did and by engaging in discourse that reproduced free-trade concepts. Analyzing level-two data allowed me to understand these types of power dynamics in terms of relations between people and relations that rule. Scholarly research that uncovers the ruling relations behind daily activity then has the potential for being a source for activism and transformation for people’s lives. Understanding the way our daily lives are organized makes it possible for people to challenge the systems of domination and subordination (Smith 2005).

Data Analysis

Once a researcher has collected her data on people’s everyday behavior in a setting, something must be done to make some sense of it. As the researcher begins to understand that the everyday activities people engage in are somehow being coordinated, making connections about how behavior is organized and what the implications are is referred to as data analysis. Because institutional ethnography offers no clearly defined procedure for conducting data analysis, a researcher may find oneself with a large amount of data and no apparent direction. If it is a student writing a thesis, he/she might be tempted to code the data, counting instances of comparable events and themes in an effort to build a case for significance. However, coding and quantifying data distorts the relations at the crux of institutional ethnography and is therefore thought to be counter-productive to the analysis (Smith 2005).
Instead, a researcher using institutional ethnography should hold on to the idea of social relations that is at the center of his/her research interest. In my study for instance, the social relations that coordinate behavior across settings are embedded in fair trade text and discourse. As a researcher, I must keep this focus in the forefront of my analysis. Making this discovery involved me going back to the data and mining it for what it might tell me about how the event(s) happen as they do. Each informant’s story contributes to a researcher’s ability to see a broader picture, but there is more to analysis than producing an accurate account of informant narratives. A successful analysis “supersedes any one account and even supersedes the totality of what informants know and can tell (Campbell and Gregor 2004; 85).

Institutional ethnography’s concern for explication is both materialist and empirical. Speaking in theoretical terms about their analytical work, institutional ethnographers would say that they tease out the ruling relations that coordinate the local experiences of informants. The focus remains on the discovery and display of how ruling relations exist in and across many local settings and how those relations organize the experiences the informants talked about. It is important to note that while the institutional ethnographer is interested in collecting data that demonstrates informants’ knowledge, the ultimate goal of the research is not to produce an account of or from those insiders’ perspectives. Rather, respondents inform the researcher about the kinds of translocal and discursively organized relations that enter informant’s understandings, talk and activities. Embedded in some of my informant’s responses were notions of national identity and paternalism that had been organized through their engagement in fair trade discourse. It is
the job of the institutional ethnographer to research the elements that coordinate and organize respondents’ activities from one local site to others (Campbell and Gregor 2004, Smith 2005).

Because analysis is carried out by tracing the social relations people are drawn into by way of their everyday lives, the process has been compared to map making (Devault 2006). Map making is a useful metaphor for institutional ethnography in that maps do not claim to be read independently of the ground they record. Like a map, institutional ethnography uncovers those aspects of a lived experience that will enable others traveling to find where they are and what direction they are going (Smith 2005). It refers back to, and so in a sense ‘maps’ an actuality that those who are active in it know. Also similar to a map, institutional ethnography is designed to grow with the addition of other accounts of those who are active in a situation and therefore know. A map assembles differently positioned situational knowledge, and should include where relevant, an account of the coordinating processes implicated in the institutional settings (Smith 2005).

In this chapter I have argued why institutional ethnography is the most appropriate theoretical and methodological approach for conducting my inquiry into the everyday practice of fair trade. Institutional ethnography contains within it the ability to make visible how free-trade concepts like national identity, paternalism, and Othering based on global difference become embedded in fair trade practitioners’ everyday talk and experiences. The next chapter will discuss the process I went through to search out
and speak with fair trade business owners and customers about their lived experiences in fair trade markets.
Chapter 4

METHODOLOGY

"Institutional ethnography recognizes the authority of the experience to inform the ethnographer's ignorance"\(^4\)

This chapter details the setting of my investigation into the daily practice of fair trade. It will include a brief description of where fair trade business proliferates in Sacramento as well an overview of the urban landscape and some basic population demographics. Next, I discuss the process I went through in choosing the fair trade establishments I examined for this study. I then account for how I made contact and spoke with informants about their fair trade participation. I make clear the complexities involved in accessing informants and explain my method of selection. Last, I detail the progression of my research in terms of institutional ethnography's five research elements previously outlined in chapter 2.

Setting: Sacramento, California

Anyone traveling through Sacramento's midtown area is bound to notice Tribal Gallery.\(^5\) Centrally located near the city's center, the shop's colorful collections spill out onto the sidewalk drawing the eye of all that pass by. Upon entering the shop, one can find everything from custom made Egyptian jewelry to hand-woven textiles from India,

\(^4\) Dorothy Smith (2005) as cited on the Maxwell School of Syracuse University website: http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/mdevault/Information_about_IE.htm

\(^5\) All people and business names are pseudonyms.
Nepal, Indonesia and more. Cory, the store’s owner, travels an average of 250 days a year hand-picking jewelry and home décor from over 90 countries throughout the world. Almost every item in the store is labeled with information detailing the region it came from, its cultural significance, and why a fair trade partnership with producers in the region is beneficial.

Ten blocks down the grid from Tribal Gallery is Sanctuary Coffee. Composed of finely finished wood and teal colored walls, Jim, the owner of Sanctuary Coffee, has created a uniquely modern yet warm atmosphere for his customers to enjoy. Regular events such as Sacramento’s Concerts in the Park and weekly farmers markets are held in the park across the street from Sanctuary Coffee, drawing in thousands of people a year to the area. Conveniently located in downtown, Sanctuary Coffee is a popular hub for State agency employees during the day, students and community groups at night. With no posters in the windows or fair trade labels on their products, one might not ever guess Sanctuary Coffee to be the fair trade establishment that it is.

Sacramento’s midtown-downtown area is home to such attractions as California’s State Capitol, California State University, Sacramento, and a myriad of clubs, restaurants, theaters and art galleries. Time magazine calls Sacramento “America’s most integrated city” and for good reason (Stodgill and Bower 2002). Demographic research conducted in 2007 showed Sacramento had a minority population that exceeded the White Non-Hispanic population by over 10 percent (Sacramento County Data 2008). Popular local events such as the downtown weekly Second Saturday Art Walk creates a central meeting ground for all walks of life in the city. In this rapidly growing city wrought with urban
sprawl, downtown Sacramento offers a sanctuary for mom-and-pop business, locally owned theatres and venues, and of course, fair trade stores.

Choosing Fair Trade Establishments to Study

Because coffee is the number one fair trade commodity sold on the market (Dicum and Luttinger 1999), there are a variety of coffee shops in Sacramento that carry some amount of fair trade coffee. Even coffee conglomerate Starbucks carries at least one fair trade blend, although it is not offered regularly. While I could have interviewed one of the more “casual” fair trade entrepreneurs, I focused on talking to business owners who operated solely within the fair trade market. The prerequisite that the business carry 100% fairly traded goods helped to narrow my search considerably. According to Transfair USA, there are five coffee shops in the downtown-midtown Sacramento area that carry all fairly traded coffees and teas and only two fair trade businesses that offer 100% fairly traded clothing, textiles, jewelry, and home décor (TransfairUSA.org 2008). In the end I chose three fair trade businesses in the downtown area that specialized in offering different kinds of commodities: Sanctuary Coffee which offers 100% fairly trade coffees and teas, Inner-City Women specializing in fairly traded textiles, shoes, handbags and jewelry, and Tribal Gallery which offers a wide variety of fairly traded jewelry, home décor and artistic pieces.

Recruiting Informants for Interviews

Identifying participants to interview followed a linear process. My past experience with fair trade activism in the Sacramento area acquainted me with most of the downtown fair trade business owners. After I identified the three businesses I was
interested in investigating, I went into their establishments and spoke with the owners. Because of my activist background, I had a pre-existing rapport with two out of the three business owners; however, I did not know any of them very well. Whenever I spoke with business owners, I made sure to talk about my activist experience buying and selling fairly traded goods and the community organizing I had done to promote consumer participation in fair trade markets. Gaining the trust and cooperation of fair trade business owners was necessary to gaining access to consumers. My goal was to interview all three business owners and two customers from each location. I was fortunate to have four business owners from the three locations agree to interviews.

Choosing a Method: Open-ended In-depth Interviewing

Previous research on fair trade lacked a first-hand dialogue with fair trade business owners and consumers regarding their participation in fair trade markets. None addressed how participants define the fair trade market, where those perceptions come from, or how they make sense of their choice to participate. The kind of rich information that comes from a qualitative analysis is necessary if one hopes to really understand how individuals make sense of their participation in fair trade markets. The literature speculated about possible reasons why people engage themselves in alternative trade markets; however, none offered a detailed, rich description of what people were actually doing and what their participation meant to them. For these reasons, in-depth interviews are a useful tool in gaining the kind of rich, first-hand information needed to better understand the everyday consumer and business owner’s fair trade participation.
Conducting in-depth interviews with fair trade business owners and consumers facilitated the research objectives of this project. In addition to gaining the most detailed accounts a fair trade informant has to offer, qualitative interviews also allow for the integration of multiple perspectives. Open ended interview questions work best due to the variation of observations participants have to contribute. For instance, fair trade business owners occupy a different role in fair trade markets than their customers. Although both groups can be categorized as “fair trade consumers,” each can describe their behavior and role in fair trade markets from varying perspectives. In choosing to conduct open-ended in-depth interviews, a fuller development of information provided by each fair trade participant was gained (Weiss 1994).

All of the interviews conducted were done in person using a face-to-face method. Face-to-face interviews facilitate a natural progression of dialogue that allows for the informant to discuss his/her opinions and experiences with fair trade. During the interviews, respondents are free to express themselves in the same ways in which they normally speak, think, and organize reality. This is particularly important for understanding the everyday process of choosing fair trade and how meaning is created around that active choice. During the interview process the focus remained on the respondent’s narratives and experiences in an effort to gain a greater understanding of how individual experience, events and processes directed their choice to participate in fair trade markets (Neuman 2003). In short, open-ended in-depth interviewing allows the kind of flexibility needed to talk with a variety of participants about their everyday fair
trade experiences and how those experiences are socially organized and coordinated (Smith 1999a; Weiss 1994).

Creating Interview Questions

I began data collection by creating a general set of questions designed to prompt informants about their involvement in fair trade markets. My interview questions were inspired by, but not limited to the information I mined in the literature review. The literature suggests individuals participate in fair trade market for two reasons: to behave in a socially “moral” or “ethical” manner and to counter dominant forms globalization. Therefore, moral economy and counter-hegemonic globalization were both theoretical points of intrigue I aimed to explore in the data.

Interview questions were open-ended and differed slightly depending on the respondent’s position in the market. In general, when speaking to respondents I asked questions in regards to their definition of fair trade and what experiences prompted them to participate in this alternative market. Additional questions regarding barriers to entry, accountability, and cost of goods were asked of business owners to achieve further insight into the unique perspective fair trade business owners occupy. The full list of questions asked to both business owners and consumers can be found in Appendix A.

Collecting Entry-Level Data

Utilizing face-to-face interviews, I began collecting entry level data (Smith 2005) by exploring the experiences of those directly involved in fair trade practice. In the summer of 2005, I spoke with three respondents in downtown Sacramento: Jim, a business owner from Sanctuary Coffee, Dave, a customer from Sanctuary Coffee and
Meadow, a customer from Inner-City Women. Dave, the Sanctuary Coffee customer I interviewed, was someone to whom the business owner introduced me. The owner “vouched” for my presence and openly supported the customer’s choice to talk with me. Subsequently, the interview was comfortable and the customer seemed at ease to discuss his personal experiences and perceptions about fair trade. This experience helped to reaffirm my need to have a flexible method of inquiry. Preliminary data collection allowed me to test out my interview guide and ensure the questions I formulated provided an adequate base for getting the kind of information I was seeking. After conducting these initial interviews I was satisfied with my interview guide and did not change any of my questions.

After I spoke with all of the fair trade business owners, I asked each owner for permission to spend time in their store and invite additional customers to participate. The owners agreed to let me approach their customers for interview but placed some restrictions on my recruitment efforts. For example, one business owner identified which of his customers he did not want disturbed. As he explained to me, “Some of these guys seem temperamental- they just come to relax before going to work so just let them be.” On each subsequent visit to a store, I alerted the business owner to my presence and followed whatever direction they gave me as to who they did not want disturbed for an interview request. In general, I received permission from all the business owners to speak with any consumer after they made their purchase and/or were leaving the establishment.
Building Rapport with Informants

While recruiting participants, customers would often explain to me why they were not qualified to be chosen for an interview. Reasons for self-disqualification included not being an "expert" on fair trade, not being "hard-core" about practicing fair trade and therefore probably not knowing all the "right" answers to my questions. Ironically, having participants try and disqualify themselves for not being "experts" aided my recruitment process. It opened up the doors for me to clarify my research objective and to better understand how the everyday consumer makes sense of their involvement in the fair trade market. After some discussion, participants seemed to be more at ease, perhaps feeling less pressure to be "right" in their responses. Those kinds of clarifying conversations happened often and helped to build the kind of rapport needed to gain the respondent's trust.

The process of building rapport with business owners and consumers was lengthy but essential to achieving interviews. With the aid of the store owner at Sanctuary Coffee, I approached three customers and ended up with two completed interviews. Tribal Gallery was more difficult, probably because I was not able to have the business owner aid me in my efforts. There, I approached nine people. Seven refused and two accepted. My experience at Inner-City Women closely resembled my experience at Sanctuary Coffee in that one of the owners was able to connect me to one of her customers. I approached three additional people and ended up with two completed interviews from there as well. In the end, I approached a total of fifteen consumers to obtain the six who agreed to participate in an interview.
Final Sample for Interview

My final sample consisted of ten interviews with four business owners from three establishments and two customers from each business. All three of the Sanctuary Coffee interviews took place inside the establishment during operating business hours. Inner-City Women is run by a mother-daughter team and as per their request, I interviewed them at their home in Sacramento. In addition, I interviewed both of the Inner-city Women customers separately at local coffee shops near their homes. The Tribal Galley business owner granted me an interview at the store location after business hours. The two Tribal Gallery consumers were interviewed at a local coffee shop across the street from the selected business.

The business owners I interviewed from Tribal Gallery and Sanctuary Coffee are both males, while the two owners of Inner-City Women are female. Of the six customer interviews I conducted, three participants were male and the other three were female. Interviews with participants lasted an average of an hour with the shortest interview being about 30 minutes and the longest lasting almost 3 hours. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Understanding the five phases of institutional ethnography provides a framework in which to understand this investigation of everyday fair trade participation.
Applying Institutional Ethnography to My Study

Locating the problematic

While in the process of conducting preliminary data analysis I noticed that some of the findings corresponded with the existing literature while others did not. Most notably, two discursive themes not addressed in the literature surrounding fair trade were prevalent: national identity/paternalism and Othering based on global difference. These discourses, found traditionally in texts and discussions about “free-trade” markets were being appropriated and reproduced in fair trade discourse. Free-trade discourse in the U.S. includes an historical vision of self-developed national identity and paternalism (Soederberg 2003), as well as Othering based on global difference (Keyman 1995; Slater 1998). Although unintentional, informants referred back to these discourses when discussing their definition of, and experience in fair trade markets. This was puzzling to me in part because my own experience participating in fair trade had exposed me to dangers of reproducing such problematic discourses. Then again, most of my socialization about fair trade came from human rights activist concerned with uncovering and dismantling neoliberal principles of market. Although I would need to explore this problematic further, I could already see an emerging disjuncture between what fair trade participants wanted to achieve through their participation and what was actually happening.
Building a Conceptual Frame

In my quest to build a conceptual framework for understanding the daily practice of fair trade, I underwent an extensive review of scholarly literature about what is already known about fair trade participation. All the literature written about fair trade is centered on the phenomenon as a unified movement, thus not addressing the daily practice of fair trade. The existing research suggests, however, that individuals participate in fair trade for one of two reasons: to behave in a socially moral manner and/or to counter dominant forms of globalization. Although some of the entry-level data I collected corresponded to these pre-existing frameworks, there were other times when informant responses deviated from them. Institutional ethnography provided the most appropriate theoretical and methodological framework for understanding these complex dynamics.

Writing an Account of the Methodology

This study into the daily practice of fair trade began as my proposal for a master's thesis, but even before I started graduate school I had had considerable experience with and investment in fair trade. My ideas about fair trade and my choice of research methods reflect those experiences. Having been an activist in the Sacramento region for years, I felt comfortable with the idea of studying fair trade activity and generally enjoyed talking with people regarding social movement issues and conscious consumerism.

During the onset of this project, the university had specific ethics protocols for students conducting research for a master's thesis. First, I was required to submit a Request for Review to the CSUS Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects. Included in my application was a detailed account of who would be participating in this
research (e.g., how many people, from what source, using what criteria for inclusion or exclusion), how I planned on recruiting their participation (e.g., what inducements, if any, might be offered), how I would ensure the informants’ rights to privacy and safety as well as a summary of my study’s purpose, design and procedures. An interview schedule detailing what questions I would ask both fair trade business owners and consumers was also required before interviews could commence. After receiving Human Subjects Review approval, I began my investigation into the daily practice of fair trade.

While these formal issues of access- permissions, approvals, ethical review, and organizational and individual consents tend to be treated as a part of one’s research methodology, institutional ethnography views them as the relations of research (Smith 2005). For instance, my participation in the application for ethics approval enters me into a relation of ruling in which I am a supplicant. I was required to represent my research plans in a manner that coincided with my university’s requirements, whether or not the criteria fit with institutional ethnography’s methods of discovery (Campbell and Gregor 2004). For these reasons, my application of institutional ethnography has been slightly altered in my approach to inquiry in order to meet university ethics criteria for research done with human subjects.

Data Collection

Embedded in informants’ talk about their daily activities is their tacit knowledge of how to concert their own action with the actions and discourses of others. This is why I chose an open-ended in-depth approach to interviewing respondents. Interviewing in institutional ethnography differs from other styles of interviewing, as the method attempts
to locate the multiple points of text and discourse-mediated coordination of action within and between situations (Smith 2005). When interviews are used in this approach, "they are used not to reveal subjective states, but to locate and trace points of connection among individuals working in different parts of institutional complexes of activity" (Devault and McCoy 2002:753).

The more data I gathered and examined the more important it seemed to explore the discursive themes that were reappearing throughout participant narratives. When informants discussed their role as an American, it almost always corresponded to a paternalist standpoint regarding market relations. When informants discussed market relations using an *us* and *them* discourse, it became clear that the construction of the Other was based on neoliberal notions of racial and cultural difference. I would need to apply a methodology that would allow me to investigate the problematic and the role power and discourse played in shaping individual experiences in fair trade market. For these reasons, institutional ethnography seemed the most appropriate theoretical and methodological tool for understanding the micro and macro dynamics of fair trade participation.

**Data Analysis and Discussion**

After I collected all my data, I began the process of analysis by revisiting all my transcribed interviews and field notes. While attending to this process, I continually held onto the idea of social relations that are at the center of my research interest. In order to do this, I made a continuous effort to discover the social relations that coordinated behavior across local settings. I allowed the respondents to inform my understanding
about the kinds of translocal and discursively organized relations that enter their understandings, talk and activities. In doing so, I began to notice some of my informant’s experiences and perceptions were embedded in notions of national identity/paternalism and Othering based on global difference. In analyzing the level-two data, I began to understand how some informant’s perceptions of fair trade had been organized through their engagement in fair trade discourse. It then became apparent that some free-trade discourses (e.g., national identity, paternalism, and Othering based on global difference) were embedded in informants talk about moral economy and fair trade participation.

The aim of this chapter was to describe the setting of my investigation into the daily practice of fair trade in Sacramento and the process I underwent in choosing the fair trade establishments I examined for this study. In accounting for how I made contact and spoke with informants about their fair trade participation, I made clear why institutional ethnography is the most appropriate methodology to use for this study. In the next chapter I apply the method of institutional ethnography to analyze the responses of fair trade participants and uncover how informants convey experience and perceptions of fair trade in ways that both correspond to and deviate from moral economy and counter-hegemonic globalization frameworks. Included is a discussion of how some free-trade discourse (e.g. national identity/paternalism and Othering based on global difference) are appropriated and reproduced in fair trade moral economy discourse.
Chapter 5

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE DATA

"The analysis begins in experience and returns to it, having explicated how the experience came to happen as it did" 6

In this chapter, I apply institutional ethnography to my analysis of fair trade participation. I begin with a discussion of how discourses of national identity and paternalism are embedded in some informants' moral economy discourses and perceptions of fair trade. Included is a discussion of how concepts of national identity and paternalism are invoked by informants who see their participation in fair trade as a way to help or aid global producers. Next, I show how not all informants participate in fair trade for ethical reasons pertaining to concepts of justice. Included in this section is an analysis of a fair trade business owner's free-trade motivations for carrying fairly traded goods. Then I uncover how some fair trade participants discuss reasons for participation in fair trade markets that conform to the counter-hegemonic globalization framework. Finally, I closely examine how categories of "us" and the "other" based on an ambiguous sense of global difference are created in a moral economy discourse. I conclude with a short summary of the analysis and discuss the reasons why it is problematic for business owners and consumers to appropriate and reproduce free-trade concepts in their practice of fair trade.

6 Marie Campbell 1998 as cited on the Maxwell School of Syracuse University website: http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/mdevault/Information_about_IE.htm
Supporting Moral Economy, Invoking National Identity and Helping the Global Other

In this section I examine two conversations I had with different fair trade customers regarding their personal history and perceptions about fair trade. Both of these customers articulated moral economy concerns; however, embedded in their discourse about fair trade as an ethical practice are issues relating to national identity, paternalism and Othering based on global difference. The term national identity refers to the attitudes that some informants expressed in terms of a common origin, ethnicity, or cultural ties when discussing their identity or role as an American or U.S. citizen (Smith, 1991). Informants who conceptualize their participation in fair trade markets through a national self-definition perform a kind of cultural work in that they help to legitimize imperial notions of the U.S. in relation to the rest of the world (Klein 2003). Similarly, I use the term paternalism to refer to the power dynamics inherent to producer-consumer relationships in which the desire to help, advise and protect producers are advanced in order to maintain ideological and material positions of power and authority. An analogy to which the concept of paternalism is commonly referred is the relationship a father figure has with his child (Fotion 1979).

Within the context of fair trade, informants who invoke an American concept of national identity assume the role of the benevolent and dominant father to his developing and immature global counterpart (Klein 2003). Because these concepts of national identity and paternalism are embedded in “free-trade” discourse (Soederberg 2003), it is problematic when fair trade participants reproduce them within moral economy
frameworks. Informants do not discuss their varying discourses separately by neatly laying out the ways in which their experiences, thoughts and perceptions fit with or deviate from the existing moral economy framework. Instead, the variety of discourses informants invoke are all embedded and spoken simultaneously throughout our conversations. For this reason, informants’ responses are presented as they happened, in whole sentences and phrases that reflect the embeddedness of these discourses within our discussions about fair trade.

**Pricilla, Tribal Gallery Customer**

I first met Pricilla outside of Tribal Gallery on a warm summer day in midtown Sacramento. She had in her hand a small colorful gift bag covered with a zebra-like striped pattern. I recognized the bag at once and knew she had just made a purchase from the Tribal Gallery fair trade store. After a bit of small talk, I asked Pricilla if she would discuss a little about her personal history and how it shaped her interest in fair trade practices. She responded by telling me:

“Well, fair is good. I think the first time I went in there [Tribal Gallery] someone explained to me what fair trade was, which if I remember correctly, you know, the biggest point they were making was about how much profit the people or artist got. I thought that was really cool. They got a big percentage and by buying stuff there I felt almost like I was helping the people. Kind of, sort of...that’s what I thought. So yeah, it’s just about being a fair and decent human being I guess.”

Pricilla offers an insider’s account into what experiences shaped her interest in fair trade participation. As institutional ethnography reminds us, experience exists in two worlds: one remembered in the body and mind and the other in the actuality of speaking in the company of another. Therefore, according to institutional ethnographic method, we
look beyond the account of what really happened toward the social organization of the informant’s activities and experiences (Smith 2005). In this example, we care not about with whom Pricilla spoke or what percentage of her purchase went back to the producers. Nor are we looking for some pattern or situation that we might find again in other interviews. Instead we learn that Pricilla’s experience engaging in fair trade discourse with the store owner created a new way of understanding her relationship to market, one that draws on notions of morality and fairness. Careful attention to the use of language is important as it is the key to understanding how relations are coordinated. Pricilla sees fair trade as a way to bring a sense of justice and equality to market practices. Pricilla’s use of the words good, fair, and decent when describing her perception of fair trade market practice informs us that her notions of fair trade correspond to pre-existing frameworks on moral economy.

We also learn that Pricilla understands her role as a consumer in relation to those who produce goods in fair trade market as being philanthropic. A major catalyst for Pricilla becoming involved in fair trade occurred when she realized she could help these people by purchasing directly from them. I found Pricilla’s take on fair trade participation as a philanthropic act of giving interesting and worthy of further investigation. Therefore, my next question focused on what she felt the social benefits of choosing fair trade were. Pricilla responded, “I think the artists, the people that do the craft, I think by Americans or people from this country going into those countries and just giving them another opportunity to sell their stuff, make money, and support their families. Yeah, I think that’s the cool part.”
As we continue to take up her account ethnographically, we begin to understand two additional relations of ruling embedded in Pricilla’s fair trade discourse. National identity and Othering based on global difference are two included discourses present in Pricilla’s narrative. Othering based on global difference is an important and reoccurring concept used throughout this analysis to describe the ideological construction of a person or peoples based on a homogeneous notion of “third world difference” (Mohanty 1991: 53). This depiction of a third world Other becomes especially problematic when constituted as a group by means of dependency relationships with people of the “West.”

For example, Pricilla’s concept of national identity constructs a binary discourse between people from this county and them. We get a sense of this when we listen to how Pricilla talks about America in relation to those other countries we go into. The others Pricilla refers to in her discussion of fair trade are reduced to a monolithic and singular them who are constructed as dependent, oppressed and in a sense powerless.

We hear a sense of paternalism in Pricilla’s narrative when she discusses her role as an American with the power to provide other countries with the opportunities and help they need. The power relations inherent in her use of language invoke concepts of the American father figure supporting and aiding his child-like global counter-part. This kind of global imaginary works to reduce the complexity of the world while providing a stable sense of self through notions of national identity (Klein 2003). These insights only become clear when using an approach to inquiry that aims to understand through experienced accounts how relations are organized and for what purpose.
**Fay, Inner-City Women Customer**

Similar to Pricilla, Fay, a customer with Inner-City Women, also engaged in moral economy discourse when discussing why she chooses to participate in fair trade markets.

“To me it [fair trade] means paying a fair wage for a product. Basically, that’s what it is. It’s not pillaging another human being or village to resell something for $10 dollars when you paid a dime for it. It’s just what it is- being fair and decent and making sure other people are reimbursed for their materials and their craft just like they are in the United States.”

Fay understands her relationship to market in moral economy terms such as the importance of *paying a fair price* for goods and *behaving like a decent person* by considering the laborer’s time and cost of materials. The use of her language here clues us in to how Fay’s notions of fair trade conform to the existing moral economy discourse. Fay uses the phrase *pillaging another human being* when describing conventional market practice and uses concepts such as *fair* and *decent* when portraying fair trade market practices.

However, similar to Pricilla’s account, we uncover concepts of national identity and Othering based on global difference that also inform her perspective of fair trade. Here again, it is important to remember how language is key to uncovering these relations of ruling. Fay reproduces monolithic notions of *us* and *them* by assuming that there is this *pillaged villager*, working under exploitative conditions in some part of the world while those of *us* living in the *United States* remain an idealized society that treats its laborers fairly, always reimbursing producers for their time and materials. According
to institutional ethnography, this is what the discursive organization of everyday life looks and feels like (Campbell and Gregor 2004).

Taking up Pricilla and Fay’s responses ethnographically allowed us to see beyond the ways in which Pricilla and Fay’s responses conform to the existing moral economy framework. Embedded in the ways each of them discussed their experience in and perception of fair trade were discourses inherent to free-trade such as national identity and Othering based on global difference. These discourses are being appropriated unintentionally by fair trade participants and thus become embedded and reproduced in fair trade’s moral economy discourse. This is problematic for fair trade consumers who imagine themselves as engaging in a more just market practice, when in reality, embedded in their discussions of fair trade as a form of moral economy are relations of ruling that continue to dominate and subordinate.

In order to better understand the process by which these discourses become embedded in informants’ discussions of fair trade, I asked Pricilla and Fay to discuss what sources of information they encountered that inform their perspectives on fair trade. Pricilla responded by saying,

“The little things that they have, you know, the descriptions of who made the craft. I read, we read it... it’s important to me that I go in there and be able to read you know, hoping that this is all true. You kind of have to trust the people too- trust the owners. So yeah, mostly just the information in the shop itself.”

In hearing Pricilla discuss the importance of trusting the shop owner’s account of fair trade as well as the written material information the shop provides, we learn about the ways in which fair trade discourses are produced and reproduced. Fay describes a similar
experience when describing how she encounters information that informs her perspective on fair trade practices.

"For me it was more of a personal research thing. I started buying art and jewelry from this [fair trade] place in Davis. So, just kind of reading little blurbs once in a while. Maybe I bought little Guatemalan luck dolls or something, and so in there they would have a mini brochure- just a little bit, some wording saying it was fair trade and so on."

Fay informs us that she received information about fair trade through the written descriptions store owners attached to products in their store. Subsequently, I asked Fay to describe what the mini brochures looked like, and if they all the same or did they differ by product. Fay informed me that,

"No, they weren't like a typical brochure, like for a vacation or something. Maybe brochures' not the right word. More like a mini...I donno. Like a little typed-out description of where the money goes and how we’re helping them."

Similar to Pricilla’s account, Fay reminds us how important the notion of trust becomes when attaining information from fair trade stores. Customers like Pricilla and Fay both view fair trade store owners as credible and knowledgable sources of information about the benefits and practices of fair trade. The written accounts describing what fair trade is and whom it benefits provide a material and ideological framework for consumers learning about fair trade. Once while shopping in a fair trade store, I happened to notice some postcards with printed statements that read, “Other cultures are not failed attempts at being you: They are unique manifestations of the human spirit” and “Know how your lettuce and coffee are grow: Wake up and smell the exploitation.”7 When reading such text, I began to ask to whom these statements were written and for what

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7 Phrases printed on postcards made by Syracuse Cultural Workers and taped to fair trade merchandise located in a Global Exchange store.
purpose. Clearly they are written by North Americans for purpose of educating other North Americans about Other cultures and the need for us to end their exploitation. Similarly, when describing the mini brochures she commonly finds in fair trade stores, Fay reiterates her understanding of her fair trade practice as an act of helping them. Listening to fair trade insiders like Pricilla and Fay allow for a better understanding of how free-trade discourses become embedded within the broader fair trade moral economy discourse.

This next section recounts a conversation I had with Nathan, a fair trade customer with Tribal Gallery. In discussing his definition of fair trade, Nathan talked about the important role U.S. fair trade participants have in helping other people in the world victimized by conventional market practices. His account revisits the notions of national identity, paternalism and the Other as global difference as embedded in informant's moral concern for market approaches.

_Nathan, Tribal Gallery Customer_

Nathan, a long time Tribal Gallery customer only agreed to talk to me about his daily experiences in fair trade markets after hearing I was a sociologist. “Oh cool!” He exclaimed, “My ex-girlfriend was one of those!” As soon as we began to talk, I noticed Nathan was defining his role in the fair trade market as a helper for those victimized producers making the goods he was buying. This became apparent during the part of our conversation when Nathan was telling me how he defined fair trade:

“I’ve never been asked to define it before, so I might not be right, but I guess I’d say it’s basically just helping people in other parts of the world get the same kind of pay and equality that we have here. I mean, it’s not child labor and all that stuff. Those people are
just victims of the whole thing, so we should do something, you know? (Pause) I think
too that it's about letting people here get involved in that kind of thing by buying stuff
and that's cool! It's too hard sometimes to go to these remote places to do something, so
it's easier to just write a check or come here and buy something.”

Nathan’s concept of helping people in other parts of the world reproduces an imperialist
discourse of paternalism and Othering based on global difference. Nathan conceptualizes
his participation in fair trade markets through a national self-definition, thus legitimizing
imperial notions of the U.S. in relation to the rest of the world (Klein 2003). Furthermore,
he understands the fair trade market and his participation in it as a way for himself as an
American here to help protect against atrocities such as child labor which occurs in some
remote place in the world. Nathan’s concept of fair trade producer-consumer
relationships is one in which he feels obligated to help and protect producers. His
paternalistic stance works to maintain his ideological and material positions of power and
authority as an American. National identity and paternalism are discourses appropriated
from the free-trade model and incorporated in his discussion of fair trade. Although
Nathan is trying to help others establish the same kind of pay and equality that we have
here, he ignores the idea that unfair pay practices also exist in the United States.

Later in our conversation I asked Nathan what he thought the social benefits of
choosing fair trade are to which he responded:

“Well, the people making the stuff are benefiting! They are getting pennies for what they
do and that’s just not right. If my job paid me that little, I don’t know how I’d make it,
you know? I mean, we have so much...it’s the least we can do. We need to give other
people the opportunities we have- that’s just basic to me.”

Again, we see these same appropriated discourses in play. Nathan invokes a romanticized
notion of the poor victimized Other, in need from the ever-resourceful American parent.
As he invokes an American concept of national identity, he assumes the role of the benevolent and dominant father to his developing and immature global counter-part (Klein 2003). Nathan’s choice to participate in fair trade markets is ruled by his obligatory notions as an American to help the global other.

Next, I asked Nathan what forms of information he relied on to inform his perspective on fair trade.

“I have friends that do this kinda stuff, you know, give back to charities and stuff. Mostly though I just go to like- I go to the Bay Area a lot and it’s [fair trade] pretty big there. Also, I look up fair trade stuff on line and have ordered some cool stuff for Christmas presents and stuff. Mostly like bumper stickers and buttons and some little book-type things, oh and this cool calendar. Just stuff that has some info in them. I donno...I guess I just see stuff around.”

By listening to Nathan talk about how his perceptions of fair trade markets are formed, we learn about the various forms of text-based ruling that guide his choice to participate in fair trade markets. Everything from online literature, bumper stickers, buttons, calendars and pamphlets about fair trade are important sources of information Nathan discusses. In addition, Nathan reiterates his concept of fair trade as a form of charity and links the sources of texts he mentions to support his charitable notion.

Thus far, I have shown how free-trade discourses such as national identity and notions of paternalism as well as Othering based on global difference become embedded in informants’ fair trade moral economy discourse. However, not all fair trade participants do so out of a sense for justice. In examining a conversation I had with Jim, the owner of Sanctuary Coffee, I uncovered an interesting disjuncture from the moral economy discourse.
Business as Usual: A Moral Economy Departure

Fair trade participation as a form of moral economy usually begins when people gain an understanding about the negative effects conventional “free-trade” markets have on the daily lives of people. This sense of justice or injustice acts as a catalyst for people to alter their market behavior and choose to participate in an alternative, fair trade market. However, to assume that someone will participate in fair trade for moral economy reasons even after being made aware of such inequalities would be a mistake. Jim, the business owner of Sanctuary Coffee, provides us with some insight into how an awareness of moral economy issues does not always manifest as an act for justice.

Jim, Sanctuary Coffee Business Owner

During our discussion of his fair trade participation, Jim clued me in to his motivations for carrying fair trade as having nothing to do with fairness, justice or the need to uphold a social contract. As he informed me on one cool morning outside of his establishment, “I’m a businessman first and a Good Samaritan second.” Jim carries fair trade for the same reason big chain grocery stores carry organic produce- it sells. Jim recognizes that he is participating in a capitalist market, one built on the idea of competition. He fears that some people would not patronize Sanctuary Coffee if he did not serve fair trade, so he carries it in an effort to draw a wider population of consumers. As Jim put it,

“I’m not like hardcore Fair Trade. I don’t do research or whatnot. Some people are into it, and that’s why we have it... for us to sell a product rather than us have some people not come here, I’d rather that the ones that care are happy and the ones who don’t care are happy.”
Jim does not carry fair trade because he thinks it is the “right” thing to do. He does not subscribe to fair trade’s moral economy discourses as a motivating source for carrying fairly traded coffee. Instead, Jim openly reproduces free-trade discourses when discussing his choice to participate in fair trade markets. Essentially, his choice to participate in fair trade is nothing more than a marketing strategy. He wants to ensure his business is competitive, and he recognizes the growing potential of fair trade markets to be profitable.

In an attempt to understand how he became informed about fair trade, I asked Jim to describe what information or experiences inform his perspective about fair trade.

“A roaster I knew told me about it...For him, he’s very into fair trade, sustainability, and organic and that’s who I go through. I met him through the coffee industry and he’s like one of the top four roasters in the country. He’s just big into that so I ended up going in that direction too...He sends us fair trade and organic labels and that kind of stuff that you tend to see. Most of that stuff I just throw away ‘cause I’m not big on sticking stuff all over the windows...He gives me pamphlets and whatnot about sustainability with fair trade information. They have a lot of posters and such but the posters are very much like advertising in that they say very simply ‘Sustainability for other cultures, bla, bla, bla.’”

Although Jim is aware of social justice reasons for selling fairly traded goods, he does not embrace fair trade for those reasons. Instead, “free-trade” concerns dominate his business practices. Jim’s main source for fair trade information comes from his business partner- a coffee roaster who happens to purchase fairly traded coffee beans. Jim offers an important disjuncture from what is written in the pre-existing literature on fair trade. Jim does not participate in fair trade because he is resisting the dominant free-trade market or because he is compelled to participate out of a sense of justice. Jim buys and sells fair trade as a marketing strategy aimed at facilitating a competitive edge in the
coffee market. Just as we learned how Jim’s relationship to the fair trade market is
predicated on free-trade notions that deviate from the moral economy framework, the
following section provides a slight analytical turn by showing how market practices
adhere to counter hegemonic globalization.

Supporting Counter-hegemonic Globalization

The previous section focused on how one informant’s motivation and meaning
behind his fair trade practice deviated from the moral economy framework. This section
uncovers the ways in which two fair trade business owners, Cory from Tribal Gallery and
Tatiana from Inner-City Women, discuss their fair trade experiences and perspectives in a
way that aligns with pre-existing counter-hegemonic globalization discourses.

Cory, Tribal Gallery Business Owner

When I interviewed Cory, the business owner of Tribal Gallery, he described
some of his personal experience in relation to his belief in the fair trade concept. Cory’s
perspective on fair trade is derived from his direct experiences traveling to various places
in the world and establishing relationships with producers. In doing so, Cory expressed
how the corporately dominated free-trade market is problematic. He juxtaposes the free-
trade model with his fair trade practice when he said:

“Our philosophy [at Tribal Gallery] has always been ‘Do it better, not cheaper.’ So I
always said take more time and use better materials and I’ll pay you double or triple for
your products. It’s still a very difficult lesson for most of the people. Not because they
inherently they want to do a poor job, but because they have been trained by corporate
culture to do it that way. See? Because every other person comes to like Marshall’s and
Ross, which now go to Africa and Bali and Indonesia, and when they go to these places
their philosophy is ‘Okay- If these cost $3 dollars then I want them for $1 and I want
them to look the same. Make it happen.’ But these small companies are under pressure
which I call the ‘Wal-Mart theory’ (laughs) which I’ve seen many small businesses and international business go bankrupt because of.”

Cory’s Wal-Mart theory illustrates his oppositional stance toward the hegemonic corporations that dominate current forms of globalized free-trade. In hearing Cory talk about why it is problematic for fair trade producers who are trained by the corporate culture to produce low quality goods for a low wage, Cory engages in a discourse of counter-hegemonic globalization. He juxtaposes his notion of an exploitative free-trade model with his participation in what he sees as an improved, fair trade practice of paying double or triple for a better product. Cory’s Wal-Mart theory represents an anti-corporation discourse, now taken for granted in a world dominated by corporate interests. Cory’s language directs our understanding to how he views free-trade market relations as problematic and how his choice to participate in fair trade can be understood as an active form of counter-hegemonic globalization.

**Tatiana, Inner-City Women Business Owner**

Similar to Cory in her attempt to resist and overthrow hegemonic forms of globalized market practice through fair trade, Tatiana, Inner-City Women’s business owner, sees herself as a catalyst for changing the dominant free-trade market structure and why it’s important. While discussing the meaning behind her fair trade participation, Tatiana says

“Representing people who like fair trade and barter, I’ve concluded that there is still so much hope in the desire of people, which is stronger than government, stronger than corporations and stronger than the world powers that be. They can manifest their statement in everything from hand-woven bags to the alpaca sweater. These art forms carry on so many important cultural aspects.”
Paying close attention to Tatiana’s use of language allows us to uncover important clues that make visible the relations of ruling Tatiana feels dominate traditional global markets. *Government, corporations* and the world’s *powers that be* are concepts she uses to explain the scale of power she feels she’s up against when practicing fair trade. Through listening to her language and meaning, we can understand her participation in fair trade market as a form of counter-hegemonic globalization.

When Tatiana talks about *representing* those who resist free-trade market practices and ideology, we learn another way in which Tatiana relates to market. She sees herself as someone who symbolizes and stands for the preservation and incorporation of cultural tradition in market practice. As a young girl who immigrated to the United States from Peru, her understanding of fair trade as a way of preserving and maintaining cultural traditions is directly related to her experience growing up as a Peruvian immigrant. As Tatiana discussed later in our conversation:

“I came from a labor working family that used their hands, and grew up with elders and grandparents that understood the ways of the earth and contributed to that by using their skill-set which had been passed down for generations.”

Tatiana invokes a discourse about cultural preservation in informing me about her choice to participate in fair trade. In describing her practice of resisting globalized market practice, Tatiana’s recounts her personal experience as a Peruvian immigrant as a motivational experience for resisting corporately dominated free-trade markets. Through taking her account up ethnographically, we discover a cultural discourse guiding Tatiana’s choice to participate in fair trade.
While looking over my transcribed interviews with business owners, something of interest caught my attention. Both Cory and Tatiana shared first-hand experiences working with producers in fair trade markets. Both travel numerous days out of the year in order to build rapport and establish direct connections with people in varied parts of the world. Interestingly, these two informants did not reproduce notions of an Other based on global difference, nor were they motivated to participate in fair trade because they felt obligated as patriarchal Americans. This was different from what most other informants were telling me including Jim, the other fair trade business owner.

In trying to understand this disjuncture better, I asked Cory and Tatiana about how they became informed about fair trade. Cory told me,

"The first time I actually hear about Fair Trade was actually through the World Fair Trade Organization which was in 1996, and shortly thereafter they became the Fair Trade Federation- which we were one of the founding members of along with half a dozen other good, close friends. We were the first members paying dues and coming up with the ideals of fair trade and what it meant...but also from a very early age I traveled extensively with my family and father for different reasons than fair trade; he was a big-game hunter so I kind of became the antithesis of that (laughs), but I saw the plight of people living very indigenous lifestyles from a very early age on...And yet, producers were always 'unknown artists.' I could go into a place and figure out that yeah, the person who made this basket is this person. This is talent! Why don't they put her name on it and give her credit? It just seemed so logical to me and yet it wasn't being done, so we started working directly with them to do that."

Cory's introduction into fair trade practices came about through information he gained through the Fair Trade Federation. He describes himself as one of the founding members of this organization, charged with the responsibility of establishing the ideals of fair trade. It is possible that his involvement in such an activist-oriented organization created a climate of awareness with regard to issues of Othering based on national or global
difference. Cory's experience traveling with his father as a boy and later on his own as an adult are additional source of information he draws on when discussing how his knowledge of fair trade was informed. Through his travels, Cory gained an appreciation of the art and commodities that were being made by indigenous cultures and he views his fair trade relations with producers in a way that supports moral economy concerns for justice. Consequently, he began working to name and give credit to various artists for their talent and labor. Cory's first-hand engagement with fair trade activists and global producers echoes some of my own experiences in fair trade markets. In my experience working with fair trade activists, I was with provided texts and experience-based knowledge that informed my perspective on fair trade as a social justice issue. While working with activists, my direct experience with fair trade producers is what drew my attention to the role language and discourse plays in defining and redefining power relationships. It seems like Cory's first-hand relationships with fair trade activists and producers have also contributed to his complex understanding of power, Othering and discourse.

Tatiana expressed another perspective, similar to Cory's when she discussed her choice to sell fairly traded goods as a way of preserving and showcasing indigenous art forms.

"It's [fair trade practice] about reaching out and telling a story. Understanding and learning... That is why it is good to showcase the richness of various cultures and what is beautiful about it. We humans are not just one culture, we're many."

Tatiana understands her relation to market as a way to reach out and tell a story about the importance and richness of culture. Tatiana discusses fair trade practice as a mechanism
for understanding and appreciating cultural difference. Notice her concept of we as representing we as humans. Her discussion of cultural preservation celebrates unity and harmony rather than separation and distance. Tatiana resists using language that reproduces homogenous versions of us and them. Through her experience as a Peruvian immigrant living in the United States, Tatiana exposes the contradictions inherent to national identity discourse. Although she is an American citizen, Tatiana does not discuss her standpoint in terms of a shared common origin or ethnicity with other Americans. Cory and Tatiana provide this analysis with examples of disjuncture when considering how first-hand relationships with fair trade producers may inform perceptions of fair trade participation. Describing this kind of experienced-based ruling as opposed to text-based ruling is an important contribution made possible by using institutional ethnography. In the next section we turn to look at how national identity discourses and notions of paternalism are brought into discussions of fair trade by some fair trade informants.

Othering Based on Global Difference

Continuing with our discovery into how Othering based on global difference is discussed as a relation of ruling that guides some fair trade participation and perception, this section examines this discourse more extensively. I examine two informants’ accounts of fair trade participation here. The first is Fay, a fair trade customer with Tribal Gallery. The second is Dave, a fair trade customer of Sanctuary Coffee. Both appropriate the concept of the global Other when discussing their notions of fair trade.
Fay, Tribal Gallery Customer

In speaking with Fay about her daily practice in fair trade markets, I ask her if her choice to shop with Tribal Gallery depends on her awareness of fair trade. She responds by informing me that yes, she relies on fairly traded goods to be authentic and that is something she likes.

“I went down to this other little shop on J Street- I wouldn’t even compare it to this [Tribal Gallery’s] shop. You know, it’s funny because I had a friend from out of town with me and she really likes things authentic- I mean, I don’t know what she thinks about fair trade, but she likes the authentic art and pieces. Anyway, we went into that other shop- it was on Second Saturday, and the first thing we said was that the stuff looked like it was fresh off the boat! It was all in plastic and she was like, ‘No, no, no.’ So, we left there and I think we came here [Tribal Gallery] (laughs). I did have an opinion about who those people were, and it felt like they were in for the bucks.”

Fay’s use of the term those people in this passage refers to the business owners at the free-trade or conventional store. I found her judgment of them as being in it for the bucks particularly interesting as it said something about her assumptions about fair trade vs. free-trade practices. Fay views the store owners as capitalists who do not share her moral economy concerns. She comes to this conclusion based on all the goods she sees that are wrapped in plastic throughout the store. Her concept of the goods as being fresh off the boat is connected to her assumptions that free-trade market practice produces goods in mass and, as she elaborates later, is made under exploitative working conditions.

Fay’s concept of authenticity, which is related to fair trade practices, comes under the assumption that fair trade goods are produced by only a few people that work to make only a few items at a time. This romanticized notion of the Other reproduces images of the fair trade producers as lacking the conceptual and material tools associated with
modernity. Fay makes clear her association of fair trade with a concept of cultural authenticity. She had mentioned her friend as someone who values authentic art, so I asked if her friend was an art dealer or in the art business. Fay said,

“No, but we knows crap when we see it (laughs)! I guess...well, it all just looked like it was made in China or something, you know? She's really got an eye for that stuff. Like, does it look like something you can buy at Target? Then, it's probably a fake. She just...likes real culture, that's all.”

I found Fay's choice to participate in fair trade because she values buying real and authentic cultural commodities to be an interesting discovery. Although I tried to probe her further as to what the pieces were and why they didn't seem authentic, Fay remained vague about her perceptions. At one point she told me, “It’s just a feeling I guess. You know, like this stuff wasn’t made by the villagers. It was probably all made by kids in China or something and I don’t want to support that.” Listening to her talk, I felt confused about who and what she was referring to when she used terms like the fresh off the boat, the villagers and cultural authenticity. These were vague, monolithic concepts Fay used to describe her understanding of free-trade and fair trade markets. Free-trade was associated with cheap crap, less authentic goods produced by Chinese workers in sweatshop conditions. Therefore, according to Fay those goods had no real cultural value. She views fairly traded goods, on the other hand, as culturally significant, sourced by real villagers some place in the world (though not China, apparently), rendering them more authentic.
Dave, Sanctuary Coffee Customer

The construction of the Other based on global difference continues to be a recurring discourse appropriated by fair trade participants. In a conversation I had with Dave, a fair trade customer with Sanctuary Coffee, we become informed about his take on the benefits of fair trade as something that occurs only outside of the United States. He said, “I would presume that its real benefit is just...well, obviously it has some benefit for them somewhere, whether it be in Ecuador or someplace else in the world.” Paying close attention to Dave’s understanding of fair trade as a social benefit for a generalized them, somewhere else in the world, clues us in to how Dave appropriates a national identity discourse that creates a binary understanding of us and them. Dave’s relation to fair trade markets, therefore, puts him in a father-like position to aid people he views as being outside of the protections granted to U.S. citizens by conventional free-trade markets. Here again, we uncover how paternalist notions of helping correspond to a national identity discourse appropriated by fair trade informants.

Discussion

Because uncovering the ways in which free-trade discourses are being appropriated and reproduced in fair trade discourse is my primary contribution to this research, my analysis showed that embedded in free-trade discourses are notions of national identity and paternalism (Soederberg 2003), as well as Othering based on global difference (Keyman 1995; Slater 1998). These issues not addressed by the existing literature on moral economy or counter-hegemonic globalization have become part of informants’ talk about fair trade. How informants talk about these issues is important to
understanding the ways in which free-trade discourse is being appropriated and reproduced within fair trade discourses. This chapter analyzed fair trade informants’ experiences, thoughts and feelings in an effort to uncover the ways in which these free-trade discourses are used by some fair trade participants. Through the process of examining what sources of information fair trade participants encounter and by listening to them explain how that information affects their perceptions of fair trade, we have become better informed about the ways in which these discourses and texts act as relations of ruling guiding and shaping fair trade participation.

As a prior fair trade activist and current fair trade consumer, I believe that most if not all of the fair trade informants I spoke with have good intentions when participating in fair trade markets. Almost everyone I spoke with described their motivations for participation in a way that facilitated a sense of justice, equality and aid for producers who are victims of the self-regulated free-trade market. However, in taking up their accounts ethnographically, I have uncovered how free-trade discourses are appropriated and reproduced within fair trade discourses. This is problematic for business owners and consumers who may not realize the implications for such reproduction. Clearly, fair trade producers are neither singular nor homogeneous in their culture practices, interests, or analysis. Therefore, the construction of a “third world Other” by consumers in the United States not only distorts but also objectifies the relationships between producers and consumers. As previous scholars have noted, this “Western” discourse pertaining to a third world Other invariably implies a relation of structural domination and subjugation of the people in question (Mohanty 1991).
Also related is the problem with how this idea of a third world Other is seen and reproduced within fair trade discourse. Throughout this investigation I found business owners and consumers depicting fair trade producers in romanticized ways; seemingly fixed in feudal times and consequently preserved as some classic abstraction (Said 1979). The Other in this context remains a perpetual victim, poor, backwards, living simply in a rural village, untouched by modernity, unaware and incapable without the help and guidance of its Western parent (Klein 2003). Theorist Edward Said (1979) argued that these socially constructed notions are not so much a misrepresentation of a perceived essence, but rather they operate for a purpose, and that purpose is what should be taken up critically. In this investigation for instance, some fair trade participants invoke concepts of national identity and paternalism as a way of defending the ideals of the U.S. as being socially and economically stable, independent, and consequently without need for domestic fair trade initiatives.

In fact, for many people in the U.S., the term “fair trade” conjures up images of far-off lands most likely thought to be dispossessed and associated with the geopolitical “South” (Sklair 2002). This is not surprising given the amount of fair trade activism associated with Europe and the United States helping growers and producers in regions such as Guatemala, Colombia, and Mexico. Despite the stigma, the notion of fair trade as being “far trade” is currently being challenged and expanded to include domestic practice within the geopolitical “North” and “South” (Jaffee 2004 et al; 2007). Nevertheless, one involved in fair trade markets should consider the ideological and material implications of appropriating such free-trade discourses within fair trade market practices.
Practitioners are not challenging these systems of ruling but rather reproducing conditions of domination and subordination under the premise of having moral economy concerns.

My investigation into the daily practice of fair trade began as a puzzle by which some of the pieces were put together by the pre-existing frameworks on moral economy and counter-hegemonic globalization. However, applying institutional ethnography to my inquiry revealed contradictions inherent to the moral economy framework. In talking directly with fair trade participants, I became informed about the ways in which concepts of national identity, paternalism and Othering based on global difference are embedded within the broader discourse of moral economy. Through textual and discursive relations with fair trade literature and other participants, informants appropriate these “free-trade” discourses which then act as the relations of ruling that coordinate their behavior across multiple local settings. My theoretical contribution involves teasing out the ruling relations that coordinate the local experiences of fair trade participants.

In conclusion, this project is not meant to be representative of a category of people called “fair trade participants.” The explanations I derived from my analysis of informant narratives are not meant to say something about the situation of everyday fair trade participants in general. Instead, like a map, my findings uncover those aspects of lived experiences that will enable others participating in fair trade to find where they are and what direction they might be going. It refers back to, and so in a sense ‘maps’ an actuality that those who are active in it know. As Dorothy Smith (2005) so eloquently explains, it is only when we understand the ways our daily lives are organized that it
become possible to challenge the systems of domination and subordination we see as problematic.
APPENDIX A

Customer Interview Schedule

How long have you been shopping at (business name here)?

Can you discuss your personal history and how it shaped your interest in fair trade practices?

Does your choice to shop here depend on your awareness of Fair Trade?

How do you define fair trade?

What sources of information have you encountered that influence your perspective on fair trade vs. non-fair trade goods?

In your consumption practices, how often do you search out fair trade options first?

How accessible to you feel finding fair trade products to be in Sacramento?

What do you feel are the social benefits of choosing fair trade?

What do you feel is the future of fair trade?

Do you feel your personal preferences for fair trade will have a greater impact in the future?

In your opinion what items are best suited for fair trade practices?
APPENDIX B

Business Owner Interview Schedule

How long have you owned (local business name here)?

Could you share some of your personal history and why you believe in the fair trade concept?

What experience(s) or information prompted you to carry fair trade goods?

Please define what you consider to be fair trade.

In what ways do you feel carrying fair trade impacts your local community?

Where and how do you receive the fair trade product(s) you sell?

Are some or all of your items fair trade?

Do you feel your prices are comparable compared to similar businesses that do not offer fair trade?

Do you feel there are barriers to entry for fair trade businesses?

Can you tell us as to what could improve the accountability for fair trade businesses?

How can we shape consumer awareness for fair trade products?

What kinds of commodities do you feel are best suited for a fair trade practice?
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