



## 5th Fair Trade International Symposium

***Critically Developing the Fair Trade Movement: Trade justice in food, fashion and craft***  
**29-31 May 2015- Politecnico di Milano, Italy**

Following the development of a vibrant international community of researchers and practitioners around the series of **Fair Trade International Symposiums** (FTIS – first held in Montreal 2002 and 2006, then Montpellier 2008, and Liverpool 2012), the International Steering Committee are delighted to announce a 5th event to be held in Milan, May 2015. Building on the express efforts made in Liverpool to facilitate a close working relationship between researchers, policy makers and practitioners, the 5th Fair Trade International Symposium will be held in conjunction with the next World Fair Trade Organisation's Biennial Conference and also with the 2015 Fair Trade Week 2015 and in parallel to Expo, Milano 2015, Feeding the Planet: Energy for Life.

The 5th Fair Trade International Symposium 2015, '***Critically Developing the Fair Trade Movement: Trade justice in food, fashion and craft***', will develop critical analysis of the international Fair Trade movement in a number of key contexts. The reason for this theme is to connect with the immediate work of the Milan Expo and also the prominent yet largely under researched themes in the wider Fair Trade movement.

### **Call for papers**

The ethos of the FTIS series aims to push organizational practices beyond those of conventional academic conference events. With a growing focus on knowledge exchange between researchers, policy makers and practitioners, for the first time in its history the FTIS has sought input from various stakeholders in the identification of its intellectual agenda. For FTIS 2015, the International Steering Committee has requested input from Fairness UK and Fairness Fr (two networks that represent both academics and practitioners from across Europe and increasingly further afield), the European Fair Trade Advocacy Office and the Italian Fair Trade platform AGICES. The symposium will be hosted by Milano Politecnico bringing a new appropriate technology focus to the call.

Below are the broad themes that FTIS 2015 will take as a framework for discussion, as well as some indicative questions within. Having said this, potential contributors should not feel restricted to specific questions, and only be guided by the overall framework set out in this call. Clearly, there is much overlap between different themes and contributors only need select that theme most suitable when submitting proposals.

#### **1. Critical Perspectives on Fair Trade Governance and Certification Approaches.**

One of the most significant practices within the Fair Trade movement has been the development of specific approaches to governance for Fair Trade practices. Many of these are either third-party certification systems or first-party internal operating frameworks. However, with an increasing number of approaches self-identifying with

the Fair Trade concept, academics, now more than ever, can be valuable in providing independent critique. Key questions of this track include the following:

- What are empirical developments within Fair Trade practices (development of Small Producers Symbol, separation of Fair Trade USA, creation of the Fairtrade Sourcing Programme, emergence of IMO Fair for Life and emergence of WFTO's Guarantee System)?
- How can these be normatively appraised and what conclusions can be drawn? Should the Fair Trade movement do more to define standards and procedures for legitimate operation or does a 'big tent' approach add more value than maintaining narrow approaches?
- What of the dynamic between Fair Trade and other sustainability approaches and governance arrangements designed to render international trade more socially beneficial?
- What are the synergies and the tensions between Fair Trade and local food systems like Farmers Markets or Community Supported Agriculture that are sometimes labelled 'local fair trade'?
- Going beyond the private sector and civil society, what has been the role of state institutions and governments in governance associated with the discourse and practice of Fair Trade?
- Are there best practices that can be drawn from legal frameworks and government enabling public policy environments for Fair Trade?
- How to ensure keeping definition of Fair Trade in the hands of the Fair Trade movement and avoiding watering-down the Fair Trade principles that regulatory harmonisation could mean?

## **2. What Changes Do Fair Trade Practices Bring About in Production and Trade?**

At the basic level, Fair Trade practices are designed to promote 'fairness' in the processes and outcomes of the international trade system. However, the specific aims of the Fair Trade operation are contested. Here particular attention is devoted to the following themes:

- What intended and unintended changes have really been promoted by different Fair Trade approaches, and what are the legitimate areas and boundaries of expected impact? Can claims about the adverse impact of Fair Trade governance be empirically supported?
- What is the relationship between Fair Trade and the very poorest producers in the developing world and how can this be altered? Is there a role for Fair Trade in post-war and conflict situations?
- Is it possible to identify variables which shape outcomes for stakeholders (individuals, companies, organizations) both within and outside Fair Trade networks, and how might an understanding of these inform the development of Fair Trade operations?
- What is the relationship between Fair Trade and the environment, especially given the wider concerns over the stresses exerted by the wider food system?

## **3. What is the Relationship between Consumers and Fair Trade Practices.**

Consumers have a key role in the success of Fair Trade supply chains, even if they do not have an active and direct role in their shaping. We try to enhance the understanding of the following aspects:

- What are the information problems Fair Trade consumers are faced with? What are the best ways to overcome these problems?
- How is Fair Trade associated with or opposed to other sustainable initiatives in the consumers' mind?
- How can we understand the gap between positive attitudes and FT consumption behaviour?
- Also Fair Trade sales are developing in the Global South and therefore how do consumer motivations differ if at all between the North and South?

## **4. Fair Trade Business, Networks, Organisations and Places.**

Another key building block in the Fair Trade movement is the organisations, business's and now places (towns and countries etc), that compose it. Here academics have considerable scope to make transparent the empirical

practices that constitute the daily operations of the Fair Trade movement, and provide critical reflection. Key topics we want address are listed below:

- What influence have Fair Trade practices had on wider business operations and has this promoted greater levels of fairness in the international economy?
- How can the role of intermediary (traders and wholesalers), support (capacity building) and complimentary organisations (Trade Unions for example), both within and outside the Fair Trade movement be evaluated?
- What is the dynamic between Fair Trade practices and other governance arrangements for more sustainable food in both the South and North: are there tensions or synergies?
- Are dedicated Fair Trade organisations really different from commercial operations in terms of practices and outcomes?

### **5. The Role of Appropriate Technology in the Fair Trade Movement and in agriculture innovation with particular focus on climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.**

The 4th FTIS provided an insight into the European Union funded GeoFairTrade project, which aimed to apply a suite of technology to the management and commercialization of Fair Trade goods. We hope to understand the following topics:

- What other technological innovations can enhance Fair Trade activity?
- Technology and agriculture innovation can play an important role in goods production. How can reliable and affordable techniques and technologies contribute to production enhancement, while reducing water and raw material consumptions and green gas emissions? How agriculture might adapt to a rapidly changing climate?

### **6. Cross Cutting Theme: Methodological Innovations and Approaches.**

At previous events, the FTIS has showcased much substantive knowledge on the theme of Fair Trade. At this 5th event, the International Steering Committee would like to explicitly invite papers that focus on issues of theoretical and methodological approaches, as well as innovative research methods. While using substantive material to bring such discussion to life, and make them pertinent for practitioners, will remain important, we hope that a more explicit focus will leverage additional value from academic participation.

#### **Procedure for papers and posters**

Researchers and practitioners who want to present a paper will be requested to submit an extended abstract (5 pages) by **15 January 2015** although the organisers would appreciate earlier submissions. Participants are also given the opportunity to submit a 1 page abstract for poster presentations. All abstracts will be evaluated through a process of double-blind peer review. Notification of acceptance or refusal will be sent within two months, no later than **15 February 2015**. Reviewers may formulate suggestions, or in some cases require specific conditions, which will need to be taken into account for the acceptance of the full paper.

The abstract can be written in Italian, French or in Spanish, but English is encouraged as the main language of the conference and most likely to enable sharing with an international audience. The abstract should include the main theme addressed (1 to 6), the applied theory and methodology, the results obtained and the main bibliography. The abstract should **not contain any reference to the author's name**, either in the text or in the bibliography. The email containing the abstract as an attachment must mention the **main theme addressed in the 'subject line'**. The proposal will not be considered if these two conditions are not respected.

You can submit your paper directly from the websites <https://www.eko.polimi.it/index.php/FTIS2015/FTIS2015/author/submit?requiresAuthor=1>

For any problems or concerns you can write to [martina.dalmolin@polimi.it](mailto:martina.dalmolin@polimi.it)

## **General information**

The 5th Fair Trade International Symposium will be held at Politecnico di Milano, Leonardo Campus (to have more information about Leonardo Campus click here <http://www.polimi.it/en/university/campuses/milano-leonardo/>).

More information about the buildings will be announced.

The symposium will feature plenary sessions, parallel sessions, poster sessions and roundtables with practitioners.

The main language of the symposium will be English, but a small number of workshops may take place in Italian, French or Spanish.

Registration is open on the conference website: <https://www.eko.polimi.it/index.php/FTIS2015>

The cost of attendance at the event will be 300 euros for standard delegates and 200 euros for concessions.

Information about accommodation will be announced on the website.

Selected paper will be considered for publication in specific journal.

## **Steering committee**

Irene Bengo, Politecnico di Milano

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Giorgio Dal Fiume, AGICES and WTO Europe

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## **International scientific committee**

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Anne Tallontire, University of Leeds, UK  
Isabelle Vagneron, CIRAD, France  
John Wilkinson, Universidade Federal Rural di Rio de Janeiro, Brasil  
Matteo Zanchi, Politecnico di Milano, Italy

....And others to be announced....

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