

A CASE STUDY OF GENDER,
HEALTH, AND FAIR TRADE
IN NICARAGUA

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ABSTRACT

The impact of global economic policies on health equity and social development has been well-documented and, in the current phase of economic globalization, profound health inequities have been attributed to these policies. In response to these inequitable trade conditions, which are especially pronounced in the trade of boom-and-bust commodities like coffee, alternative trade models such as Fair Trade have proliferated. Although there is great potential for these alternative economic policies to achieve health and gender equity, these considerations have largely been left out of existing analyses, which focus on gender-blind economic, organizational, and environmental indicators.

To address these omissions, this study explores the experiences, perceptions, and aspirations of an organized group of coffee-producing women with regards to Fair Trade. The study was conducted in Northern Nicaragua in 2009 and focuses on the experiences of women supported by a local feminist organization, la Fundación Entre Mujeres, in an embedded, single case study design. It is informed by participant-observation, interviews, and dialogic focus groups. The study situates participants' perceptions and aspirations in a globalization and health framework as well as an empowerment framework. Considered in this light, women's experiences provide valuable insights about the perceived and potential health and gender impacts of alternative models of trade and provide a vision for the future directions of these models.

The women's experiences reveal that although valuable benefits are being experienced as a result of participation in Fair Trade – especially in terms of a higher income and a commitment to organic agriculture – there are lingering doubts as to whether Fair Trade is actually “fair” or simply “better”. The women supported by la Fundación Entre Mujeres aspire to more equitable trade characterized by solidarity, justice, a focus on women's rights, and a fairer valuation and recognition of women's efforts inside and outside of coffee. In order to move towards this “fair” system of trade, the current Fair Trade model must become more oriented towards equitable control for all of its stakeholders and must broaden its definition of empowerment so as to more actively and vocally participate in the broader contexts of international trade that are influencing health and gender equity for women around the world.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
CAFRA	Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action
CINCO	Centro de Investigaciones de la Comunicación
COMTINUE	Cooperativa Multisectorial Tierra Nuestra
COMUTRADI	Cooperativa Multisectorial Mujeres Trabajadoras De Dipilto
COPELUZ	Cooperativa Multisectorial Luz de Mujeres
COPEMUJER	Cooperativa Multisectorial Mujeres del Norte
CSDH	Commission on Social Determinants of Health
FEM	Fundación Entre Mujeres
FLO	Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PRODECOOP	Promotora de Desarrollo Cooperativo de Las Segovias
UCA	Unión de Cooperativas Agropecuarias
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
USD	United States dollars

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The recently published final report of the World Health Organization's Commission on Social Determinants of Health (1) came to the sobering conclusions that "social injustice is killing people on a grand scale" (p. 26) and that a "toxic combination of bad policies, economics, and politics is, in large measure, responsible for the fact that a majority of people in the world do not enjoy the good health that is biologically plausible". (p. 26) This research is based on the view that I share with the Commission on Social Determinants of Health (1) that addressing the egregious health inequities that result from this "toxic combination" is nothing less than an ethical imperative. The question becomes, however: What does action on this toxic combination of policies, economics, and politics look like and how is it experienced on the ground?

My thesis research project begins from the premise that Fair Trade, a movement and market access mechanism broadly defined as a "trading partnership... that seeks greater equity in international trade" (2) represents one such action. Through its standards for both traders and producers, and its commitment to sustainable development and "trade not aid", (3)(p. 1109) Fair Trade appears to represent a concrete action on both the conditions of daily living and the structural drivers that determine these conditions, together referred to as the social determinants of health. (1) I further contend that Fair Trade, based on its objectives, vision, and reach, also represents one of very few potential actions on "the determinant of health determinants", (4) globalization.

Although Fair Trade appears to hold considerable transformative potential, Utting-Chamorro (5) makes the important point that "it is crucial to analyse the experiences and problems of small coffee producers and producer organizations involved in the fair trade market to ensure that the objectives and claims of fair trade are achieved in practice". (p. 584) While a growing number of researchers and organizations have assessed small-scale producers' experiences of Fair Trade, a particularly notable omission, given the limitations that this puts on the equity and empowerment potential of Fair Trade, has been the paucity of work examining women's experiences in Fair Trade. Seeking to address this blindspot, I aim to elucidate and share women's experiences in Fair Trade coffee cooperatives. By focusing on women and framing the issues in broader empowerment and globalization and health frameworks, I hope to

provide a foundation on which Fair Trade certification can incorporate women's voices and aspirations as it attempts to act equitably on the social determinants of health.

The purpose of this study is therefore to describe both the experiences and aspirations of women involved in Fair Trade coffee production. To do this, I employ a multi-method case study design using a Nicaraguan women's organization, la Fundación Entre Mujeres (la FEM), and its four coffee-producing women's cooperatives as my case. Throughout this research, I frame Fair Trade as a potential action on the social determinants of health and, as a result, the study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between health, gender equity, and Fair Trade as experienced and aspired to by women coffee producers.

As I note later, the lens through which one interprets and frames Fair Trade is an important determinant of one's experience of Fair Trade. My own engagement with Fair Trade began as a student and researcher in community health and was therefore informed from the beginning by complementary social determinants of health and feminist perspectives developed in part through my early engagement with different partners in this project, especially la FEM. This is why I have framed Fair Trade as a potential action on the social determinants of health. I will discuss the research partnership as well as the role of reflexivity in this project later, but it is worth noting here that from the outset, I aimed to keep my own perspective on Fair Trade explicit and, cognizant of its impact on my research, sought to solicit, present, and understand various other perspectives throughout the research process.

The result is an inquiry guided by a single broad research question: What are women's perceptions, expectations, and aspirations with regard to Fair Trade? This guiding question is complemented by three more specific research questions that include:

1. Does Fair Trade need to be reconceptualized for women?
2. What are the impacts of la FEM's empowerment and conscientization activities on women's experiences of Fair Trade?
3. What are women's experiences of health in relation to Fair Trade?

CHAPTER 2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1 Action on the Social Determinants of Health

As noted, this study begins from the premise that Fair Trade, which will be defined later, holds significant potential as an action on the social determinants of health. The social determinants of health are both the everyday conditions in which we live, work, grow, and age as well as the structural forces that shape these conditions. (1) Examples of these conditions include early childhood development, physical living conditions, employment, and access to health care whereas the structural drivers include gender equity, “free market” forces, access to resources, and participatory government. (1) Importantly, it is these social determinants, rather than biological processes or behavioral choices, that are primarily responsible for the massive health inequities that have come to characterize our planet. (1) It is also action on these social determinants that offers the greatest hope for reducing health inequities, (1,6) which is why potential actions should be explored. To this end, the explicitly action-oriented (6) Commission on Social Determinants of Health (CSDH) provides valuable insight into what action on the social determinants of health may entail. These insights also illustrate why I believe that Fair Trade, based on its stated goals and principles, holds great potential as an action on both daily living conditions and structural inequities.

Drawing on a social determinants of health framework as well as lessons from the past, Solar and Irwin (7) provide specific directions for successful action on the social determinants of health and health inequities. They note that in order to result in meaningful change, actions must be context-specific, must address both structural and intermediate determinants of health, must be intersectoral, and must work towards empowerment. (7) Together, these principles for action entail an important set of roles for civil society actors, including advocacy, mobilizing communities, capacity building, and giving voice to marginalized groups. (8) This civil society engagement is crucial if actions are to successfully reduce health inequities. (9) In other words, action on the social determinants of health is not only government action, but rather it “must involve the whole of government, civil society and local communities, business, global fora, and international agencies.” (1)(p. 27) As a result, traditional conceptualizations of health and medicine are challenged, as “the main action on social determinants of health must therefore come from outside the health sector.” (1)(p. 35) Historically, large-scale collective actions such

as universal franchise and the emancipation of women, despite not being explicitly concerned with health, “have advanced people’s ability, globally, to lead a flourishing life.” (1)(p. 33) Similar actions that impact the social determinants of health without explicitly being concerned with health can also be seen at local, regional, and national levels and I contend that Fair Trade, based on its objectives, vision, and scope, could represent another such action. This potential, however, has not been explored, including the especially notable blind spot in terms of experiences of empowerment and gender equity in Fair Trade, two key components of successful action on the social determinants of health.

2.2 Fair Trade Coffee

2.2.1 Coffee and the Coffee Crisis

Coffee is a popular global commodity – it is the second most highly traded global commodity after petroleum. (5) It is also unique amongst globally traded commodities as nearly three quarters of the world’s coffee is produced by small-scale producers.¹ (5,10) This uniquely close link between small-scale producers and the global market creates a risky situation for coffee producers, as unlike some other major commodities, when global coffee prices fall, it is small family farms, not plantations or corporations, that bear the brunt of the impact.

This was the reality of the two prolonged coffee price crises that occurred in the past twenty years. These two crises illustrate the need for action on both individual and structural contexts in the coffee sector and demonstrate the influence of upstream variables like corporate consolidation and supranational institutions on health. The first modern coffee price crisis began in 1989 and lasted until 1994. The second price crisis, from which most producers are still trying to recover, was at its worst from 1999-2004. The lowest point of these crises was a low price of 41 cents per pound of coffee² in December of 2001. (11) Taking inflation into account, this was the lowest price that producers had received for their coffee in over a century. (12) Jaffee (11) shares a story of a farmer who received “a couple of modest plastic shopping bags of vegetables, meat, and cooking oil” (p. 38-39) in exchange for 66 pounds of coffee. In another case, intermediaries (*coyotes*) were paying approximately 25 cents per pound for coffee in an area where the “break-even point” is estimated to be 70 cents per pound. (11)

¹ Throughout this paper, I define small-scale producers as those agricultural producers who are not structurally dependent on waged labour and who rely predominantly on family labour. This definition is common in both the Fairtrade Labelling Organizations (FLO) standards as well as the research literature.

² Unless otherwise noted, all dollar figures in this paper are in United States dollars (USD) as that is the de facto currency of the coffee industry.

Although it is beyond the scope of this project to fully describe the various factors that converged to cause the coffee crises, it is worth providing a brief overview as it does provide some important insight into the determinants of small-scale producers' experiences, the historical context for Fair Trade's emergence, and the current situation facing producers. In 1989, the International Coffee Agreement, which regulated production through a quota system, disintegrated. (10,11) The collapse of this institution set off a chain reaction as coffee markets liberalized, coffee production increased, and the market became incredibly over-supplied, largely through increased outputs in Brazil and the emergence of Vietnam as a massive coffee producer. (10,12) At the same time, coffee-purchasing corporations began consolidating and increasing their power. In 1998, the five largest coffee companies controlled over two thirds of the roasted and instant coffee markets, (10) giving them the power to dictate prices and influence policy. This consolidation of power into the hands of Northern companies also translates to a higher portion of the retail price staying in the Global North. Before the collapse of the International Coffee Agreement, producers received approximately 20% of the retail price of coffee and coffee-producing nations kept approximately 55% of the retail price. These figures are now at 13% and 22%, respectively. (10)

2.2.2 Fair Trade

This is the situation – one of vulnerability, uncertainty, and struggle for most small-scale coffee producers – that Fair Trade is attempting to change. Fair Trade³ is alternately framed as a market access mechanism for small-scale producers, a social movement driven by relationships between producers and consumers, a corrective mechanism for market failures, and an alternative market that challenges the very foundations of capitalism.⁴ (11,13-15) The most widely used definition of Fair Trade is that of F.I.N.E., a consortium of four Fair Trade organizations, which states that

Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency, and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to

³ As I discuss later, Fair Trade is characterized by tensions between a standards-based approach and a movement-based approach to alternative trade. Throughout this paper, I will use capital letters (Fair Trade) to refer to the former – essentially the FLO system – and lower case (fair trade) to refer more generally to the ideas of alternative trade relationships and alternative models of economic trade. It is worth noting that where I use Fair Trade, some authors and organizations use “Fairtrade”.

⁴ Although few Fair Trade organizations explicitly acknowledge his influence, the ideas and framings of Fair Trade echo the insights made by Karl Polanyi in his seminal work, *The Great Transformation*. (16) Polanyi's historical analysis of economic systems and his ideas of re-embedding the economy into social relations are explored there. (16) For a discussion of the use of Polanyi's ideas in Fair Trade, see Jaffee (11) and Bacon. (17)

sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers – especially in the South. Fair Trade Organizations (backed by consumers) are actively engaged in supporting producers, in awareness raising and in campaigning for changes in the rules and practices of conventional international trade. (2)

For the vast majority of fairly traded coffee and other food commodities like tea, bananas, and cocoa, this “trading partnership” and offer of “better trading conditions” involves a certification process organized by the Fairtrade Labelling Organizations (FLO) International.⁵ This codified approach to fairly trading products, an approach that has been criticized as being too prescriptive and standards-based and embedded in neoliberal logic, (18) is well-summarized by Parrish, who notes that FLO’s strategy is

to build consumer demand for Fairtrade based on values of high quality and improved benefits to farmers. The mechanism for providing these benefits is to alter the relationship among farmers (via cooperatives), and between farmers and others in the commodity chain. To accomplish this, FLO establishes trade standards, maintains the integrity of those standards and promotes a symbol of those standards – the Fairtrade mark. (19)(p. 180)

In order to become certified as Fair Trade, small-scale coffee producers and traders have to meet several standards set out by the FLO. These include generic standards for all small producers’ organizations (20) as well as product-specific standards. (21) These are:

- Producers must be organized into democratic and transparent cooperatives or associations. Each member should have delegated or direct voting rights. (20)
- Fair Trade should result in “demonstrable empowerment and environmentally-sustainable social and economic development of the producer organization and its members...” (20)(p. 6)
- Organizations may not restrict their membership on the basis of race, sex, religion, or political opinion and should actively promote the position of disadvantaged and minority groups in their organization. “Special attention should be given to the participation of female members” (20)(p. 10) in the organization.
- The organization must be transparent in its use of the Fair Trade premium. (20)

⁵ Some importers, including one company that la FEM works with, are engaged in fair trade practices but do not participate in certification initiatives. For more information, including a discussion of some of the reasons behind this decision, see Chapter 7 in Jaffee. (11)

- “The organization should take gradual steps to assume more control over the entire trading process.” (20)(p. 11)
- Producers should have access to administrative, technical, and logistical assistance in order to successfully and reliably produce a quality product. (20)
- Organizations must assess producers’ environmental impacts and, where possible, take steps to mitigate those impacts. Specific environmental criteria include, amongst others: Minimization of agrochemical inputs, reduction of waste, conservation of water. (20)
- International Labour Organization standards must be respected for laborers. (20)

There are also several standards that traders must fulfill in order to be eligible to receive the Fair Trade label on their products. These standards include:

- A guaranteed minimum price must be paid to producers. For washed arabica coffee like that produced by the women in this study, this minimum price is \$1.25 per pound. Organic coffee receives an additional premium of \$0.20 per pound. (22) When the market “C” price of coffee is higher than the minimum price, then the market price must be paid (plus the premiums).⁶
- A Fair Trade premium (hereafter referred to as the social premium) must be paid in addition to the base price.⁷ For coffee, this premium is \$0.10 per pound. (22)
- Advance credit (pre-financing) of up to 60% of the total contract must be made available to producers. (21)
- Long-term, stable contracts must be signed with producers. (23)

For all of these Fair Trade standards, there are minimum requirements as well as progress requirements. When all of the minimum standards have been met, and as long as the progress requirements are met to the satisfaction of the FLO auditor, then the official Fair Trade label can be placed on the product to let consumers know that the product has met these social, environmental, and economic standards. What is unclear according to several authors is how

⁶ At the time of writing, the New York “C” price of coffee was \$1.32 per pound. (98)

⁷ The social premium is intended to be used by the cooperative for democratically-determined social development projects such as scholarships, the construction of schools, the provision of health services, and other cooperative or community initiatives. (17) Because the use of the social premium is meant to be decided by the cooperative, in some cases, the cooperative members choose to spend the premium as a second payment made directly to the members themselves. Ronchi (26) describes a cooperative that invests 30% of the premium for cooperative activities and returns 70% of the premium to producers via a Producers’ Fund. In the case of la FEM, the social premium, which is relatively small given the small amount of coffee sold by la FEM, goes directly to the cooperative and has typically been invested into the development and strengthening of the cooperative itself.

these standards have materialized and have been experienced on the ground, especially the issue of gender equity implied by the third standard for producers listed above. (24-26)

2.2.3 History of Fair Trade

In the mid-1950s, (15,27) the fair trade movement began as “goodwill selling”, (28)(p. 167) with groups, often faith-based, in the Global North selling handicrafts or products from producers in the Global South with whom they had built direct relationships. This approach was inherently limited in its capacity, was highly localized, and ultimately evolved into solidarity trade. Within solidarity trade, the creation of a small market for products directly from the Global South was coupled with a political agenda for change. (14) Currently, this approach to fair trade is developing into one of mutually beneficial trade and partnership, (28) as Fair Trade products become more widely accessible and the certification schemes become more established.

The first international certification and monitoring body for Fair Trade was the Max Havelaar system in the Netherlands that was developed in 1988. (10,15) This differed, and continues to differ, from most other certifications by dealing with the terms of trade, not just the terms of production. Recognizing the importance of a standardized certification, FLO International was created in 1997 to set and monitor Fair Trade standards, promote Fair Trade products, and coordinate certification. (10,29) While existing Fair Trade products now include cocoa, tea, fruits, wine, sugar, honey, rice, crafts, and textiles, coffee has been, and continues to be, the highest selling Fair Trade product by a significant margin and forms the backbone of the Fair Trade system. (10)

The market for Fair Trade coffee is growing rapidly, especially in North America, (3) as consumers in the Global North look to infuse their consumption with social values. Despite this growth, however, Fair Trade represents only 1% to 2% of the global coffee trade (10) and the supply of Fair Trade coffee far outweighs the demand. (5,30,31) This has implications for producers and for the future of Fair Trade that will be discussed later.

At the end of 2008, Fair Trade certified producer organizations were found in 59 countries, including most Latin American countries, and Fair Trade products were sold in 60 countries. (32) Globally, there are 746 certified Fair Trade producer organizations that together represent over 1 million small-scale producers and workers. (33) The total retail value of all Fair Trade products, including cotton products, tea, coffee, bananas, and more, was over \$4 billion, up 22% from 2007. (32) In Canada, the retail value of Fair Trade products was \$180 million, up

67% from the previous year. (32) Coffee leads the way in sales of Fair Trade products, with slightly over 5 million kilograms of Fair Trade coffee sold in Canada in 2008, a 30% increase from 2007. (34) This is ahead of the global growth rate, as global sales of Fair Trade coffee continued to grow, rising 14% to 65,808 metric tonnes. (32)

2.2.4 Fair Trade vs. Alternative Trade

Authors have argued that Fair Trade, as a system of standards and codes, is deviating from the original mission of alternative trade systems and solidarity trade which sought to provide a genuine alternative to free market capitalism and rectify the historical power imbalances in global trade systems. (14) The debate over the definition and future direction of fair trade has three main orientations, which Jaffee (11) describes as “market-access”, “market-breaking”, and “market-reform” stances. (p. 29) These positions provide a valuable framing for the way in which the women in the study perceive and experience Fair Trade as well as how they hope to see fair trade initiatives evolve. It is important to note that the differences described below are not merely philosophical and academic, but that they entail a “disagreement over basic goals and practices” (11)(p. 28) for fair trade.

The proponents of the position that fair trade is predominantly a tool for market access, or “a neoliberal solution to trade problems” (35)(p. 45), sometimes describe it as a transitional mechanism that helps producers get the skills necessary to succeed in the traditional market (18) or as a market niche within the traditional market. (18) These market access proponents would applaud the commitments of large transnational companies like Starbucks, Chiquita, Cadbury, and Nestlé to sell a portion of their products as Fair Trade certified whereas the “market-breaking” and, to some extent, the “market-reform” positions argue that this amounts to washing the corporate image (11,14) and misrepresenting corporate practices.

Proponents of the “market-breaking” orientation towards fair trade, or an “alternative market”, such as Vanderhoff Boersma, (18) describe it as needing to be a “truly fair market” (p. 55) and “an alliance among producers and consumers who come to an agreement on the rules that should govern the market in such a way that both the producer and the responsible consumer reap greater benefits that go beyond monetary or pecuniary concerns.” (p. 55) Vanderhoff Boersma (18) considers the codified system of Fair Trade (the “market access” conceptualization) to be primarily concerned with reducing poverty, which is a symptom, rather than the problem, which he notes is “an unjust and irrational system of trade. To focus on the

effects of the system (i.e., poverty), and not on the means for changing it, is not a viable long-term strategy.” (p. 58) Fair Trade, then, is seen as a Band-Aid solution. This “market-breaking” orientation is explicitly linked to broader social movements and followers of this position believe that equity and justice are impossible within a neoliberal free-market economy. (11)

Arguably the most common view of fair trade resides between the two extremes and acknowledges that the market “is broken and needs fixing”. (11)(p. 27) Actors within this orientation frequently describe Fair Trade as operating “in, as well as against, the market”. (36)(p.419) Within this more moderate position, Fair Trade is considered to be a means to “[incorporate] ethics into trade” (28)(p. 167) and proponents of the moderate view deny Fair Trade’s ability and potential to single-handedly address the challenges and inequities associated with neo-liberal globalization. (27) Supporters of this middle ground struggle with the dilemma posed by Renard (14) who notes that while complete systemic reform may be the “purist” (p. 92) vision of fair trade based on its original mission, the dilemma faced by fair trade stakeholders is one of ““continuing to be pure (and marginal) or aligning with large distribution (and losing their soul)”” (Regnier in Renard (14)(p. 92)). Within the moderate position, the most important features of Fair Trade are considered to be the creation of long-term relationships between buyers and producers as well as the reduction of intermediaries in the value chain. (11) Nicholls and Opal, (13) who situate Fair Trade in a relatively moderate position within the “market reform” orientation, argue that the principles and concepts of free market economics are sound, but note that certain market failures, like disproportionate access to information, weak legal systems of property rights, and unfair access to credit, limit the free market’s ability to operate as it should. By ensuring that small-scale producers have access to credit and information, Fair Trade therefore becomes a tool to correct market failures, (13) which allows the free market to work as it should (which, the argument goes, is by nature beneficial to all).

As is evident, “the boundaries between these positions are blurry, and they suggest a continuum rather than distinct ideological camps.” (11)(p. 28) Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge and understand these framings of fair trade because they influence different stakeholders’ perceptions and experiences. As Le Mare (37) notes, “how one defines ‘Fair Trade’ is contested, with benefits and limitations assessed through personal and institutional lenses” (p. 1923) and this may result in “differences in priorities depending on one’s experience

of Fair Trade.” (p. 1924) La FEM, the women and women’s cooperatives described in my study, and I as a researcher and student are no exception to this.

2.2.5 Impact Studies

Empirical research in Fair Trade has predominantly consisted of impact studies that evaluate the effects of Fair Trade in agricultural communities, predominantly coffee-growing communities, in the Global South. Although this body of research is still in its infancy, it has provided some support for the economic, social, and environmental development benefits claimed by Fair Trade, though these are often tempered by discussions of the challenges and limits of Fair Trade. I will introduce this literature below, organized according FLO’s common principles of economic development, social development, and environmental development. (38)

Assessing the impacts of Fair Trade can be a difficult task, especially in terms of causality and attribution, because very few producers involved with Fair Trade cooperatives acknowledge, or are aware of, their involvement in Fair Trade. (11,26,27,30,31) The activities associated with Fair Trade, according to many producers, operate predominantly at the cooperative level which leads to very low self-identification as a “Fair Trade producer”. (11,26,27) Although this was not the case in the small women’s cooperatives where I worked, this does create a difficult analytical position for many authors as the benefits of participating in Fair Trade (i.e., the evidence that Fair Trade “works”), are virtually inseparable from the benefits of participating in a cooperative.

Economic development: impact of minimum price, access to credit, and costs of Fair Trade

The most well-known characteristic of Fair Trade coffee and arguably its most frequently examined variable is the payment of a minimum price and social premium to cooperatives. Most consumers equate this “fair price” with a higher income for small-scale producers, but research has not been unanimous in corroborating this perception. While several case studies (10,18,25,26,31,39,40) have reported substantial relative improvements in producer income as a result of Fair Trade, others have found no improvement despite the higher Fair Trade price. (11,41-43) This uncertainty and disagreement surrounding the impact of Fair Trade on producers’ income relates to the important point made by several authors that the impacts of Fair Trade are context-dependent. (37,39,42,44)

Several factors may limit producers’ actual income, including the higher input costs of Fair Trade, (11,42) the stagnancy of the Fair Trade minimum price (which has not kept pace with

inflation), (17) as well as the fact that the supply and production of Fair Trade coffee far exceeds the demand for it. (5,30,31,40) As a result of this final challenge, in many communities not all of the coffee that a Fair Trade cooperative produces is sold to the Fair Trade market and the surplus coffee, which required equivalent monetary and labor inputs, is sold on the conventional market, ultimately diluting the higher Fair Trade price and lowering the total price paid to producers. (11,24,30) In addition, there are expenditures for the cooperative, such as administrative fees, debt repayment, infrastructure investment, credit provision, and development projects (5,10,25) that, although creating additional benefits, lessen the actual “farm-gate” income of the Fair Trade producer, which Utting-Chamorro (5) estimates at between \$0.40 and \$0.85 per pound and Bacon (17) estimates at \$0.70 per pound, which is very close to, if not below, the cost of production. Another consideration is raised by Le Mare (37) who, in her extensive review of Fair Trade impact studies, notes that while some studies have found that Fair Trade producers are receiving extra income, there is disagreement on whether this actually represents a living wage or whether this is sufficient to meet producers’ basic needs. Taylor, (30) too, questions the impact of any higher income, writing that though experiencing higher standards of living, Fair Trade coffee producers are still living in “persistent poverty, but not extreme misery”. (p. 20)

Despite the uncertain picture painted by an examination of producer income, there are several different, well-documented economic benefits that result from Fair Trade certification. In particular, the guaranteed stability of the Fair Trade price, the negotiation of long-term, stable trading relationships, and the availability of credit all reduce the vulnerability of coffee producers (5,24,28,30,40,42) and allow families to live more comfortably, (11,30,37) diversify their economic activities, (18,37) and carry out some limited planning for the future. (25,39) Le Mare (37) notes that these additional economic benefits are particularly important because, even considering uncertain findings in terms of income, these economic benefits have the potential to contribute to producers’ economic development. This may explain why, despite the disagreement regarding Fair Trade’s impact on their net incomes, Fair Trade coffee producers are more satisfied with their income than non-Fair Trade certified producers. (41)

Several authors, however, including those who reported the findings outlined above, temper the enthusiasm of these positive impacts with a discussion of the limits of these benefits. The most commonly cited limitation is that the economic benefits of Fair Trade remain at the level of the cooperative without being experienced by the producers themselves. (19,42,43)

Furthermore, Raynolds and Ngcwangu (43) challenge the assumed link between a modest increase in producers' standard of living and the broader goals of empowerment espoused by Fair Trade. Dolan (45) effectively summarizes this critique, noting

notwithstanding the tangible and valued benefits producers and workers gleaned through the social premium, the processes through which these projects 'arrived' bore little resemblance to the championing of producer participation and local knowledges that dominates development parlance. (p. 41)

Social development: impact of cooperative organization, capacity-building, and non-discrimination

Several authors have found that the most lasting and substantial impact of Fair Trade for small-scale coffee producers are related to social development – cooperative organization and strengthening, capacity development, and access to markets and information, for example. (19,26,37,40) Fair Trade requires that producers be organized into cooperatives and these organizations are key in providing social services, (37,40,42) sharing information with producers, (19,39) and providing training opportunities. (39,40) As a result of this access to training, producers involved in Fair Trade show pronounced improvement in skills development and capacity building, (25-27,30) higher self-esteem, (18,25,30,37) and higher levels of confidence. (18,26)

Fair Trade is reported to be a direct cause of the benefits associated with cooperative capacity, transparency, access to information, and connectedness to markets. (19,42) By strengthening cooperatives in this way, Fair Trade not only boosts their business and marketing potential, (39,43) but also helps cooperatives to develop the necessary skills and capacities to engage with government and other organizations, including non-Fair Trade buyers. (37,40) Pirotte (39) found that because of their organization, strength, and capacity (all of which were developed with the support of the Fair Trade market) Fair Trade cooperatives attract attention and investment from NGOs looking to establish projects in the community. As a result, the cooperative members and the community gain access to services and infrastructure that they may not otherwise be able to. By providing these benefits in addition to the modest economic benefits described earlier, Fair Trade has stemmed the flow of migration in some communities (11) and, perhaps as a result, has led to a revival of some traditional cultural practices. (25,27)

In terms of health, although these elements all implicitly address social determinants of health, very few studies have explored the connection between Fair Trade and producer health. One study in particular did focus on health, measuring health in terms of days lost to illness, and found that affiliation to a certified cooperative is linked to better health status, even when controlled for income, age, education, and diet. (46)

In the realm of social development, however, Fair Trade also encounters challenges and limitations to its potential impacts. Several authors note that although producer cooperatives are becoming more powerful entities in their communities, decision-making power and control in the Fair Trade system remains largely in the hands of Northern stakeholders. (18,45) Additionally, capacity-building impacts face challenges similar to those confronting economic development impacts as challenges have been reported in the dissemination of market information and skills development from the level of the cooperative and its administrators down to producers. (19,39) Pirotte (39) writes that this is especially a concern in countries like Nicaragua where the extensive, formalized networks of cooperatives add extra layers where information dissemination and sharing can stall.

Social development: gender equity in Fair Trade

The impact of Fair Trade on gender equity and the empowerment of women, which is of central concern to this study and to action on the social determinants of health more generally, is unclear or, at worst, negative. Todd (47) concludes that Fair Trade in Latin America “has clearly failed to address the gender question” (p. 51) and several authors note that the research literature in this area is scant. (37,40,47) There are a few studies (35,40,44,45,47) that focus on gender in Fair Trade and others that include the nominal mention of gender as one variable amongst several, (26,30,48) but by and large the Fair Trade research literature has overlooked gender, often referring to it only as a consideration for future research. (24-27) Unfortunately, this mirrors the broader tendency towards gender-blind research in trade and globalization, as the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA) (49) notes that “very, very little has been researched, written or debated regarding the gender dynamics of trade.” To the credit of FLO, they have recognized this problem and, in addition to recently adding an explicit reference to equal participation of female cooperative members in their new standards, (20) recently completed an environmental scan to assess the status of gender equity and women’s

participation in Fair Trade cooperatives in Nicaragua. (50) They are planning a similar exercise in Africa in the near future. (32)

When gender is included as a variable in Fair Trade impact studies, the most frequent finding that is reported refers to women's participation in the cooperative. In many cooperatives, women are vastly outnumbered, (40) some as much as 26-to-1. (5) Lyon (40) writes that in the cooperatives where she worked, "the ongoing lack of female participation in the group indicates that female members and the wives of male cooperative remain largely an afterthought, second to the business at hand, coffee commercialization." (p. 263) Even in areas where women's participation was found to be increasing, however, their access to positions of authority and power remains limited, (30,37,44) with Lyon, Bezaury, and Mutersbaugh (44) describing those positions as "overwhelmingly male". (p. 99)

While Utting-Chamorro (5) found that "the position of women is changing and women producers are experiencing a certain degree of empowerment" (p. 595) in Fair Trade cooperatives, one fundamental question that remains unclear is whether women's increased participation in Fair Trade, itself a far-from-universal finding, actually represents empowerment (37,44) or whether it is "simply another face of the feminization of agriculture in which women are left on the farm to engage in undercapitalized activities while men undertake better paying off-farm labor or migrate..." (44)(p. 97) Their finding that women's participation in Fair Trade is increasing in areas of high male out-migration supports the latter proposition. (44)

What is becoming clearer is that Fair Trade is a gendered concept that interacts with gendered contexts and affects men and women differently. Because of this, it is important to explore women's experiences of Fair Trade beyond simply participation and interrogate Fair Trade's impact, if any, on deeply rooted structures and contexts that impact gender roles. (51) Rice, (35) for example, notes that cooperative activities, though they may generate income for women, also increase the burden of work for women because they largely ignore (or tacitly accept) inequities in women's household labor. Similarly, from a power and equity perspective, although Vanderhoff (18) writes about the benefits of women's groups that are supported by Fair Trade funds (a relatively common initiative), others are quick to note that these activities are outside of the realm of export agriculture and fail to address inequities by maintaining women in traditional handicraft or weaving type activities. (40) Unfortunately, the extent and expansion of

these income-generating opportunities are inherently limited because FLO is not able to certify handicrafts, which reduces the number of retailers interested in selling the product. (35)

Rice (35) traces Fair Trade's limited impact on contexts and structures impacting gender back to Fair Trade's tendency towards reinforcing trade liberalization, noting that "Because fair trade reinforces rather than challenges trade liberalization, fair trade does little to address the structural processes that perpetuate gender inequality." (p. 46) Fridell (52) takes a slightly less harsh view, noting that cooperatives are beginning to address structural issues of patriarchal relations and gender discrimination but that these changes take time. He does go on to note, however, that immediate, rapid changes to gender equity are both feasible and necessary "to promote a democratic environment" (52)(p. 209) in the cooperative.

Perhaps demonstrative of an existing tacit acceptance of structural inequities, Lyon, Bezaury, and Mutersbaugh (44) note that several skills and requirements for participation in Fair Trade, including basic literacy and education, language requirements, and time commitments, exclude many women in coffee-growing communities a priori or limit their ability to participate in higher levels of cooperative organization. Utting-Chamorro (5) writes about the structural issues that Fair Trade is up against in Nicaragua, noting

Nevertheless, *machismo* still prevails in many communities, restricting the participation of women in fair trade. Interview data emphasized the dominance of men in household decisions, women's lack of access to and control over key productive and financial resources, and the traditional role of women in the community. Other factors included limited technical support and training, the submissiveness of rural women, and the community's Catholic background. (p. 595-596)

Taken together with the wording of FLO's non-discrimination progress standards and Utting-Chamorro's (5) earlier claim that women were "content with their involvement in fair trade activities," (p. 595) the implication is that Fair Trade turns a blind eye to these contexts and frames women's participation as an isolated phenomenon.

What is clear is that Fair Trade's impact on social development and gender equity, much like its impact on economic development, is mediated by contexts, pre-existing endowments, and specific local circumstances. (36,44,45) This is especially the case for women's experiences of Fair Trade, with Lyon, Bezaury, and Mutersbaugh (44) noting that "...women may be benefited or excluded depending on how fairtrade-organic practices interact with pre-existing cultural practices and structural trends, such as high rates of male migration" (p.94) and that any benefit

or impact of Fair Trade “encounters an existing, gendered portfolio of rights and responsibilities”. (p. 102) What is troubling is that Fair Trade appears to be operating uncritically within these pre-existing practices, structures, and portfolios related to gender. Dolan (45) argues that it is the mainstreaming tendencies of Fair Trade that have caused it to turn a blind eye to these contexts, noting that “fairtrade mirrors the wider neoliberal project in which economic processes are abstracted and unmoored from social and political contexts.” (p. 34)

Finally, research has also revealed the need to question where the gender equity activities are originating. Another problematic finding in terms of gender in Fair Trade is that for some cooperatives, activities relating to gender equity are only initiated because of Fair Trade requirements and audits rather than because of any intrinsic valuation. (26,30,44) A discussion of the nascent partnership in which my study took place, however, found that this may be an oversimplification of the issue of gender equity and that to assume that Southern coffee cooperatives are unconcerned with gender equity is a unfair generalization. (53) Here, the role of women-only cooperatives, which have become more common, (40) cannot be understated. (47,51) Few studies have explored women’s cooperatives, but Pollack (51) notes that participation in a women’s only group leads to higher participation and access to decision-making roles in mixed cooperatives while Bacon (personal communication) finds that women-only cooperatives register very high improvements in development outcomes compared to mixed cooperatives. Lyon (40) identifies a number of women-only cooperatives and asks whether this is simply a new market niche that has been identified or whether this represents a broader failure of traditional cooperatives to serve women’s interests. My project adds additional voices to this discussion.

Environmental development: impact of environmental sustainability standards

Because the vast majority of Fair Trade coffee is also certified organic – most authors do not separate the two – the environmental benefits of Fair Trade are mostly those of organic production methods. Few authors explore specific environmental practices, but there is general agreement that Fair Trade coffee growers do show a tendency towards more sustainable environmental practices. (11,24,25,30) Becchetti and Costantino, (41) for example, noted significant improvements in crop diversification for certified producers. Vanderhoff Boersma (18) adds to this finding and notes that this diversification improves producers’ economic situation by developing new markets such as eco-tourism as well as the production and sale of vegetables and flowers in local markets.

These positive environmental impacts have implications for producer's health and well-being. In their quantitative assessment of the impact of Fair Trade, Becchetti and Costantino (41) found positive results related to Fair Trade certification in terms of producers' food security and nutrition. Jaffee (11) also noted significant differences in food security for Fair Trade certified coffee producers as compared to non-certified producers.

Impact summary

Based on the growing literature examining the impacts of Fair Trade, it is clear that Fair Trade does make a difference in producers' lives through stable and long-term market relations, a stable pricing structure, access to credit, strengthening of cooperatives, access to market information, development of infrastructure, environmentally sustainable production practices, and more. What is not clear, however, is the depth of any of these changes and impacts, the link between these positive impacts and empowerment, and whether Fair Trade is truly an action on the upstream determinants of health like globalization and international trade. Importantly, the economic, social, and environmental impacts of Fair Trade, especially in areas such as gender equity, are mediated by individual, community-level, national, and international contexts, conditions, and pre-existing endowments. (36,44,45)

It is perhaps Jaffee (11) who best sums up the current impact of Fair Trade on producers when he concludes that although "fair trade clearly makes a tangible difference in producer livelihoods", (p. 198) in its current form, Fair Trade does not "constitute a solution to rural poverty, economic crisis, or ecological degradation". (p. 198) Several authors echo this sentiment and I believe that this serves as an impetus to explore producers' perceptions and experiences of Fair Trade beyond simply its impact and into issues of perceived equity, fairness, and empowerment which do hold promise to "solve" those issues.

2.3 Study Context

Given the importance of context to the experience of Fair Trade and to the success of action on the social determinants of health, it is important to introduce some contexts in which my study took place. I begin with a brief description of the national-level contexts that exist with regards to coffee, women, and cooperatives in Nicaragua, and will then move to a description of the organizational contexts at la FEM.

2.3.1 Coffee in Nicaragua

There is no doubt that the production and export of coffee is vital to the Nicaraguan economy and to livelihoods across the country. Bacon writes that in Nicaragua, “coffee dollars build houses, send children to school, and provide hope for the future” (10)(p. 504). Late in the 1990s, before the coffee crisis, coffee exports were injecting nearly \$140 million into Nicaragua’s economy each year, providing permanent employment for over 280,000 people, (10) approximately one third of the country’s agricultural workforce. (54) More recently, Pirotte (39) estimates that 13% of the total employment in Nicaragua is related to the production of coffee. In the 2008/2009 coffee cycle, Nicaragua exported 1,367,000 quintals (100 pound bags) of green coffee, valued at \$182 million. (55) This amounted to approximately 25% of all income from agricultural exports (55) and approximately 17% of all export income. (56) Other estimates from previous years have estimated coffee’s contribution to total national export income at anywhere between 15% to 30%. (11,39,42,57,58) Nicaragua is the fifth most reliant country in the world on coffee exports. (11)

Regionally, in the municipios where la FEM supports coffee producers: Pueblo Nuevo, Condega, and Dipilto, coffee producers represent 81%, 70%, and 97% of all agricultural producers with at least one perennial crop respectively. (59) In terms of land usage, of the arable land that has one or more perennial crops (as opposed to pasture land, annual crops, subsistence farming, forested land, etc.), in Pueblo Nuevo, Condega, and Dipilto, 96%, 80%, and 98% of that land is devoted to coffee production respectively. (59)

Because of this dependence on coffee, the impact of the most recent coffee crisis in Nicaragua was particularly harsh. Wilson (42) describes the results as “economic violence” (p. 85) perpetrated against small-scale producers, and it is easy to see why: an estimated 300,000 people lost work due to the crisis, (57) between 500 and 3,000 farms were foreclosed, (42) three banks declared bankruptcy, (10) and lending to producers was cut by 80%. (42) Describing the devastation of the coffee crisis in statistics, however, does not do justice to the full extent of the situation. The “coping strategies” that were used during the coffee crises in Nicaragua and elsewhere included removing children from school, migration, borrowing monies from anyone willing to lend, and substituting crops. (10) In other regions of Central America where the growing conditions may be appropriate, another “coping mechanism” involved the substitution

of coffee crops for more lucrative crops without historic booms and busts, namely illicit crops like coca (the basis of cocaine). (15)

As for Fair Trade in Nicaragua, the country has historical linkages to Fair Trade, as it was one of the main countries involved in the solidarity trade that predated and in many ways led up to Fair Trade certification initiatives as consumers expressed their support for the Sandinista movement and their displeasure with the international response to it. (60) Currently, FLO certifies 20 Nicaraguan organizations representing coffee producers, most of which are unions of cooperatives. (50) Nicaragua's geography and landscape is particularly well suited for high quality, specialty coffee like that required by Fair Trade and organic markets and Bacon (10) estimates that up to 80% of the coffee produced in Nicaragua could potentially be marketed as specialty coffee. Like the broader Fair Trade market, however, supply of specialty coffee greatly surpasses demand and Fair Trade and organic cooperatives in Nicaragua are selling up to 60% of their coffee through the conventional market. (61) Globally, Fair Trade producer capacity has been estimated to be seven times higher than the current imported volume of Fair Trade. (44)

Coffee remains by-and-large a commodity produced by small-scale producers and Nicaragua is no exception, as 89% of coffee producers are small-scale farmers. (58) Just like in other countries, this has created a gross imbalance in power and control in the coffee industry. In 2002 in Nicaragua, 5.4% of coffee farms produced 75% of the coffee and controlled 42% of the land. (61) Regional statistics mirror these national trends, as in the *departamento* of Estelí, 8% of coffee producers control 47% of the land and in Nueva Segovia, 14% of producers control 56% of the land. At the other end of the spectrum, in Estelí, 28% of coffee producers work less than 0.5 manzanas and collectively control only 4% of the land devoted to coffee production in the region and in Nueva Segovia, 19% of coffee producers work less than 0.5 manzanas and control only 2% of the land there. (59)

2.3.2 Cooperatives in Nicaragua

In addition to the importance of coffee in Nicaragua, the country also has a strong and proud history of cooperative organization. (5) As a result of Sandinista era policies that have withstood recent changes, "Nicaragua is still a country where co-operative movements flourish, particularly in the coffee industry." (57)(p. 243) Notably, the regions where la FEM works are Sandinista strongholds and in several electoral districts of Estelí, the Sandinista party has never lost a municipal or national election. (62)

The structure and function of cooperatives in Nicaragua is quite tightly regulated, (39) with most coffee producers represented at three tiers: the local level by cooperatives (such as COMUTRADI in Dipilto), at a higher level by a union of cooperatives (like the UCA Mirafior or PRODECOOP), and at the highest level by a central marketing cooperative (like CAFENICA), which brings together both unions of cooperatives and, in some cases, local cooperatives.⁸ Interestingly, la FEM is only affiliated with the UCA Mirafior in order to receive the FLO Fair Trade certification and contracts processing services from PRODECOOP. Other than those two involvements, la FEM and the women's cooperatives operate largely outside of these groups. In fact, the cooperatives supported by la FEM are currently assessing the feasibility of forming their own union of cooperatives.

Many cooperatives in Nicaragua are struggling with crippling debts and increasingly lower producer incomes. (42) This has proven to be a significant barrier to growth and development, “particularly in Nicaragua where state assistance to the coffee sector is largely absent”. (42)(p. 85) The absence of the state has been attributed to the influence of global economic institutions on policies, programs, and ideology in Nicaragua, (39,57) as the government has moved away from alternative models of development and interventionism and towards neo-liberal economic policies. (39,58) It is unclear, though, what the impact of the return of the Sandinista government in 2007 has meant and will mean for co-operatives and alternative development. Utting-Chamorro (5) notes that in combination with volatile coffee prices, the lack of government support and the high levels of cooperative debt in Nicaragua have limited Fair Trade's potential impacts.

The influence of the state has been especially missed in the provision of credit to producers. The provision of credit has always been an important part of coffee producers' income, with Wilson arguing that many producers depend on it for survival. (42) While credit used to be offered at favourable terms by the government, (58) after the change in government in 1990 it became increasingly difficult to obtain, with the amount of credit provided to producers reduced by 72%. (58) This was cut a further 80% during the coffee crisis in 2001. (42) Producers are increasingly seeking credit from private lenders, as government support continues to lessen. (42) In response to the decline in government support, in some cases, Nicaraguan “co-operatives

⁸ I have chosen to translate the Spanish acronym UCA directly as “union of cooperatives”. Within a union of cooperatives, members are themselves cooperatives. In Canada, this is more commonly referred to as a cooperative federation or a second tier cooperative.

feel obliged to take the place of the state, which has progressively retreated from its former role in providing credit and training. Some co-operatives have even begun to finance public works themselves”. (39)(p. 445)

2.3.3 Women and Coffee

Lyon (40) writes that in Latin America as a whole, “women constitute the majority of the indigent, poor, unemployed, and illiterate, while occupying the lowest paid and least secure jobs and suffering from higher levels of personal violence and risk than their male counterparts.” (p. 260) In many unfortunate respects, this tendency has been replicated in the coffee sector, with gender inequities in participation, access, and control.

In the recently completed environmental scan of gender equity in FLO-certified coffee organizations in Nicaragua, it was reported that of the 13,628 individual members of FLO-certified organizations, 3,348 (25%) of them are women. (50) This participation, already low, dropped even lower when women’s participation in decision-making positions was examined. (50) The low participation of women in Fair Trade cooperatives in Nicaragua mirrors the 2001 Census of Agriculture data (59) on individual coffee producers where producer is defined as “a civil or juridical person who makes major decisions regarding resource use and exercises management control over the agricultural holding operation”. (63) In all crops, activities, and regions, male producers greatly outnumbered female producers. Of the 1,184 coffee producers in the *departamento* of Estelí, 1,023 (86%) were men and 161 (14%) were women. In Nueva Segovia, 5,081 (85%) of the coffee producers were male while 895 (15%) were female. These figures mirror the gendered distribution of agricultural producers more generally (i.e., in crops outside of coffee) in Nicaragua. (59)

In many cases, this low participation is not the result of a lack of interest amongst women, but rather women do not have the time to undertake additional responsibilities on top of their existing “double burden” of agricultural and household work. (44) More nefarious forces may be at work, though, as Lyon (40) reports that when women want to participate in the cooperative, they do not feel welcome to do so even when they make the time as they perceive the cooperatives to be characterized by both subtle and explicit gender discrimination. Working in this context, la FEM’s efforts in the organization of women into cooperatives and the production of coffee for sale in domestic and international markets, was seen by others as “taboo and absurd”, because of the threat it posed to male control and dominance. (62)(p. 82)

In terms of the division of labour, many communities are experiencing a “feminization of agriculture” (44)(p. 95) that is seeing women assuming more farming tasks as well as more agricultural activities that have historically been associated with men. (44) This is due in part to men migrating and seeking work outside of the agriculture sector (i.e., women’s participation is relative and is largely the result of a decrease in men’s participation). (44) Although the results of this feminization are not “uniformly negative”, (44)(p. 95) it cannot be forgotten that this is occurring in a broader context of agricultural decline as agriculture is increasingly characterized by lower on-farm income, declining commodity prices, and higher input costs. (44) Coffee prices, though highly volatile, are no exception to the long-term decline. (19) This means that women are forced to “self-exploit” (p. 102) in order to secure at least some income from this difficult situation in which they are increasingly being expected to assume more responsibility. (44) Fridell (52) notes that the coffee chain as a whole exploits women workers “who have often made up the bulk of the seasonal coffee-sorting labour force and have worked under deplorable conditions for substantially less wages than their male counterparts.” (p. 125-126)

Besides this unequal division of labour, women coffee producers, including those involved with Fair Trade cooperatives, have been found to face significant inequities and discrimination in the workforce. (44) They continue to receive lower pay as compared to men. (44,52) They are less likely to be involved in permanent, stable employment, being pushed instead towards less secure temporary and seasonal labour. (44,52,64) Women also have less access to property, income, and resources, (40,44) especially those related to cash crops. (35) Land ownership is particularly important for women – which was recognized early on by la FEM – as it lowers vulnerability, provides a safety net, and has also been linked to lower risk of domestic violence. (44) Women also tend to use land differently, opting to orient themselves towards food security as opposed to increasing risk and trying to maximize the harvest. In Latin America, however, shares of land ownership for women are very low, ranging from 11% in Brazil to 27% in Paraguay, (44) and in Nicaragua, women were the primary holders for 18% of agricultural land. (59) This is due to a combination of “male preference in inheritance; male privilege in marriage; male bias in both community and state programs of land distribution; and gender bias in the land market.” (Deere and Leon, in (44))(p.100)

Despite carrying out a disproportionate amount of the work in agriculture and coffee production in addition to maintaining ascribed household responsibilities, women still have little

input into, or control over, agricultural and production decisions. (28,31,40,44,51) This provides further impetus for a more careful exploration of the linkages between participation and empowerment for women. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (65) notes that “the coffee sector, like other agricultural settings, exhibits traditional gender distinctions that can place women at a social and economic disadvantage. In addition to outright gender discrimination observed in plantation settings, there is evidence that the role of women in household decision-making is often disproportionate to the work they devote to actual coffee production.” (p. 7) This may be because women’s agricultural work is typically considered to be secondary to men’s work (as “help”) (44) coupled with the view that women’s income is seen as secondary, or as merely supplementary, to men’s income. (64) In a different manifestation of the latter, because coffee producers are paid based on the total amount of coffee harvested, families often receive a lump sum payment for their coffee that, regardless of relative labor inputs, is often controlled by men. (40) This in essence “means that males are paid for their wives’ work.” (40)(p. 261) In select regions of Central America, another contributing factor to this inequitable gendered distribution of power is the widespread voting system in cooperatives based on one vote per family, which more often than not means that a male member of the family is voting. (52) This is not the case in Nicaragua as cooperative law stipulates that voting is based on one vote per cooperative member, not one vote per family. (66)

The general gendered division of tasks associated with coffee production has a particularly interesting dynamic in Fair Trade and organic cooperatives. For most coffee-producing households, women are primarily involved in quality-control tasks such as picking the cherries, selecting the beans, washing, and more (44)(see also Smith et al (64) for a similar description of the division of labour in Fair Trade horticulture). Ironically, Fair Trade can both increase and decrease this particular component of the coffee production chain. First, because of higher quality requirements, this burden of work may increase as women may have to do multiple passes when picking cherries or spend extra time in the sorting process. (44) However, as noted, Fair Trade can also result in increased access to tools and training that may actually lessen this burden of work. (44) A further consideration in this area relates to power, however, as Lyon, Bezaury, and Mutersbaugh (44) note that although it is largely women who are thought to be responsible for these “quality control” tasks, it is nonetheless men and Fair Trade inspectors from the North who hold the positions of power and act as the ultimate arbiters of what passes

for good quality and what does not. Here again, it is evident that one must question the link between women's participation in the Fair Trade coffee production process and broader goals of equity and empowerment.

2.4 La Fundación Entre Mujeres

2.4.1 Vision and Mission

La Fundación Entre Mujeres (la FEM) is a non-profit organization based in Estelí, Nicaragua, working towards equity, empowerment, and the end of subordination of rural women in Northern Nicaragua. They currently support programs in ten communities in the *departamentos* of Estelí and Nueva Segovia (Figure 2.1) and are estimated to benefit approximately 3,000 women with their programming. (62) La FEM was created to fill a perceived void in the services, programs, and opportunities available to rural women in these regions. Their mission is to “contribute to the economic, ideological, political, organizational, spiritual, and social empowerment of rural women... providing them with the capacity that enables them to improve their quality of life and transform their situation of subordination and structural marginalization.” (62)(p. 48)

This multidimensional view of empowerment is defined by the organization as “the process by which women gain control of the material and symbolic resources that reinforce their protagonism in all spheres.” (62)(p. 71) All of the organization's activities, including the production and marketing of coffee, are organized so as to contribute to this broader goal of empowerment. The idea of supporting rural women as they become protagonists is particularly common at la FEM and, in terms of the coffee value chain, this means facilitating and supporting women's control over the entire process from bean to cup as well as becoming organized so as to overcome what are described as systemic gender and economic barriers that currently exist in the chain.



Figure 2.1 Map of Northern Nicaragua with la FEM communities (from Montenegro, Lira, and Yllescas (62)). Community names are in blue, *municipios* are in black, and *departamentos* are in red all-caps.

La FEM's priorities are achieving the full recognition of women's rights and citizenship, moving towards gender equity and empowerment, realizing both women's basic needs and their strategic interests, situating women as economic and social subjects, and building a rural feminist movement. Women's rights are particularly integral to la FEM's work and the organization espouses the importance of reclaiming women's rights "*en la cama, la casa y la comunidad*" (in the bed, the house, and the community). They acknowledge that the breadth of these priorities requires working on both immediate needs as well as large-scale cultural and structural changes.

2.4.2 Structure and Programs

La FEM works towards these goals through a number of different programs, organized into four complementary areas: production, education, sexual and reproductive health, and anti-violence. The organizational headquarters in Estelí houses a technical team that supports women's efforts in these areas. The technical team of nineteen includes agronomists,

psychologists, lawyers, cooperative specialists, support staff (drivers, administrative assistants, and accountants) and others. The four broad thematic areas each involve several specific programs including: facilitating women's access to land, the organization and provision of credit, support for organic agriculture, the provision of technical support and infrastructure, gynaecologic check-ups, family planning services, sexual and reproductive health education, feminist education, community-based adult and youth education, economic and political literacy, anti-violence support groups, victim and survivor support, and community education. These programs are all infused with a feminist perspective and discussions of rights and are intended to contribute to the organization's overarching commitment to empowerment and equity. La FEM's work in the coffee sector – wherein they support women's cooperatives in four of their communities with free production, trade, and marketing support – is therefore just one specific program in their wide array of projects and programs. I will describe the organization's specific work in the coffee sector later.

An additional component of la FEM's work is dedicated to giving a voice to rural women and helping to organize them into strong, vocal groups. Many events that la FEM attends as part of a larger network of Nicaraguan feminist organizations encourage and support the women to break the silence, to continue the ongoing fight for their rights, and to have their voices heard. Examples of la FEM facilitating the organization of women to fight for their rights include participating in demonstrations denouncing the criminalization of medically necessary abortions, participating in International Women's Day rallies, and denouncing incidents of violence against women in communities.

La FEM sees itself as a resource for women, not as an overarching, interventionist organization. As such, the issue of ownership is very important and comes up often. The technical team at la FEM is quick to give communities ownership of the various la FEM projects, especially in the productive sphere and in the production of coffee. Coffee is referred to by the cooperatives' chosen brand name "Las Diosas", rather than "La FEM" coffee, and it is sold on the local market by that same brand name. One United States-based importer and roaster has also kept the Las Diosas name.

The rural women who were recruited to participate in la FEM initiatives come from 10 communities in Northern Nicaragua located in the *departamentos* of Estelí and Nueva Segovia. Statistically, these rural women were much like their peers in these areas – they were materially

poor, had little access to land, and practiced predominantly subsistence agriculture. Most have large families and are charged with the care of their children.

In each of the ten communities where la FEM works, there is a local committee that is the entry point for la FEM into the community and is responsible for the local implementation of la FEM's programs. At a higher level, the development committee is the de facto organizational body of la FEM and they decide on programs, organize events, and liaise between the technical team and the communities. The development committee is the main decision-making body in la FEM and consists of representatives of the technical team as well as several rural women that represent all ten communities. The committee began as an emergency group organized to determine the role and actions of la FEM during and after Hurricane Mitch in 1998 but has since evolved into the primary decision-making administrative and governance body within la FEM. Currently, the development committee has the ability "...to dream, to reflect, to discuss, and to make the decisions necessary to make those dreams a reality." (62)(p. 89)

As an organization in and of itself, la FEM and its programs are relatively small, so it aims to incorporate itself into national dialogues and increase its reach by partnering with other groups across Nicaragua, including large partners that they affiliate with through the Women's Movement of Nicaragua and the Network of Women Against Violence as well as smaller partners who assist with the delivery of specific programs, such as the mobile health clinic, the staging of educational theatre productions, and the preparation of coffee. The feminist movement in Nicaragua that la FEM is a part of is a strong and vibrant movement that, despite the continued marginalization of women in the country, has achieved a great deal. The movement is a "historical countercurrent" that brought the ideas of equality and liberty of the Enlightenment to Nicaragua. (62)(p. 77) Although the various organizations that make up the feminist movement in Nicaragua disagree on certain approaches and issues, 2009 marked a seminal year for the movement as all of the major actors involved in the movement united to present, for the first time ever, a joint statement to all Nicaraguan women on March 8th, International Women's Day. This unity reflects CINCO's view that the feminist movement in Nicaragua "is probably the only social movement in the country that clearly and transparently articulates its fight against subordination [and] its demand for equality and liberty..." (62)(p. 77) In general, however, and perhaps in keeping with its feminist definition of empowerment, one

could argue that la FEM's focus is on depth of support and programming as opposed to breadth or reach.

2.4.3 History

La FEM was created in 1995 and was officially recognized as a registered non-profit organization in 1997. The organization initially grew from a fight to give rural women equal access to land and this remains a central component of la FEM's work, both for its economic and symbolic importance for women.

According to a recent report documenting ten years of experience at la FEM, (62) the organization's experience and reach have steadily developed since its inception in 1995. The mobile sexual and reproductive health clinic has been around since the start of the organization as has its gender-centered literacy and education programming. La FEM played an important role in organizing and distributing aid to women in several rural communities following the devastating Hurricane Mitch in 1998. In its efforts to support collective action and equal access to land, la FEM has purchased several farms throughout its history for women's collectives to work. In 2001, la FEM moved beyond involving only collectives and expanded its production programming to also include women with small parcels of land. All of la FEM's programs are currently reliant on foreign funds and they have funding agreements with several European and North American groups, both governmental and non-governmental.

The mobile sexual and reproductive health clinic that has been offered by la FEM (through a partner organization) since its infancy demonstrates both the organization's humble origins as well as its rapid development. Because of a lack of funds, the mobile clinic began with basic gynaecologic tests and check-ups in improvised rooms in porches or under outdoor tents. Power was provided by the clinic's truck's battery. (62)(p. 81) Now, with the support of partner organizations, most communities have a room in their local FEM office that provides the women with privacy and comfort in addition to ensuring that the medical professionals have access to power and any other necessity they may require.

The organization works in the *departamentos* of Estelí and Nueva Segovia in rural regions which are characterized in national data as being highly and severely impoverished. (62) La FEM's work occurs in the context of profound inequities whereby rural women are marginalized and subordinated. The organization sees, and has seen, this unequal treatment of women in several spheres, including unequal access to land and resources, men's dominance in

decision-making, women's scant participation in civic and commercial activities, high rates of illiteracy amongst women, women's assigned role of mother, caregiver, and homemaker (and the subsequent domestic and reproductive workload that involves working 14-18 hours per day), high rates of violence against women, the lack of reproductive rights and control over their own bodies (evidenced by the recent criminalization of medically necessary abortions in Nicaragua), the widespread incidence of rape and sexual assault, and the lack of decision-making power for women. These inequities are considered to be the result of the broader context of patriarchal institutions and ideologies against and within which la FEM operates. These structures are described as a "patriarchal trinity of power" (62)(p. 76) weaved into Nicaraguan political culture that sees women's right attacked by men who dominate in the home, male landowners, and men who control the church. With recent legislation limiting women's rights in Nicaragua, one could easily argue that the government represents a fourth powerful patriarchal entity.

2.4.4 Coffee and la FEM

The production and sale of coffee by the women of la FEM occurs as part of the broader "production" program area. Within the production program, there are several specific projects which occur in different communities depending on the conditions within that community (not all FEM communities are in viable coffee-producing regions, for example). The production program includes specific initiatives relating to access to land, financial credit, a credit package of animals and crops, agronomic support, infrastructure and equipment (including wet mills for coffee production), training and capacity-building, and marketing support. The commercialization component of the production program which includes the production of coffee has always had an eye to alternative markets and production practices such as Fair Trade and organic.

Four of the communities in which la FEM works are in viable coffee-producing areas and, in each of those communities, la FEM has supported the creation of women's cooperatives. All of the coffee marketed by la FEM is currently produced by those four cooperatives: COMTINUE in El Jocote, COPELUZ in Guasuyuca, COMUTRADI in Dipilto, and COPEMUJER in Los Llanos. Together, these four cooperatives form the major part of the Las Diosas group – essentially a brand created by the women for their products. COPEMUJER produces by far the most coffee, having produced approximately 200 quintals of coffee in 2008/2009, compared to approximately 75 quintals in Dipilto and 20 in both El Jocote and

Guasuyuca. Together, the cooperatives and collectives, work 140 certified organic manzanas of coffee land and for the 2008/2009 harvest, 89 women submitted approximately 320 quintals of coffee to be processed by the drying mill. Of this, 50 quintals, all produced by collectives, was sold to Germany and the remainder to the United States. The beans that do not meet the strict quality standards required to be exported are roasted, ground, and sold on the local market by the women themselves. Through negotiations and direct relationships with their buyers, the coffee that is exported to the United States is currently being sold at a price above the Fair Trade minimum price.

The women of the cooperatives (hereafter referred to as “Las Diosas”) look after the coffee and carry out all of the necessary work (cleaning, weeding, picking, sorting, washing, depulping, and some drying) up until the coffee is taken to a large dry mill where the coffee is dried, cleaned, tested, and prepared for export. La FEM negotiates the price of these services which are paid for by the cooperatives. For the 2008/2009 harvest, the cost of this processing and export preparation work was negotiated down to \$16 per quintal of coffee. It is important to note that this amount, along with some other deductions relating to the interest on the pre-harvest credit and the cost of certification is taken off of the agreed-upon price of the coffee.

All of the coffee produced by Las Diosas is certified organic and Fair Trade. The organic certification is obtained by each cooperative, with support provided by la FEM, through BioLatina while the Fair Trade certification is obtained from FLO through a partnership with a local “unión de cooperativas” (a union of cooperatives) called UCA Miraflor. The UCA Miraflor currently represents 15 cooperatives with a total of 417 members. La FEM sought out this partnership for the cooperatives because the cost of obtaining Fair Trade certification as a small group of four cooperatives was prohibitively expensive.

The role of la FEM as an organization in the production of coffee is primarily to act as a complementary resource for the women’s cooperatives and collectives. La FEM supports the women by offering the services of a technical advisor and agronomist, negotiating relationships with buyers, offering capacity-building opportunities, organizing the provision of low-interest credit, building and supplying coffee nurseries, assessing the validity of alternative crops, providing access to equipment such as wet mills, organizing the production of organic fertilizer and supporting the marketing of the coffee. Because of its status as a non-profit organization, la FEM cannot legally administer any funds, loans, or credit related to the production of coffee by

Las Diosas, which is a for-profit venture. What it does do in terms of finances is negotiate prices and find buyers for Las Diosas. La FEM does this both because they have the resources and expertise to do so and because they are able to represent all of the cooperatives and the coffee and in so doing increase their bargaining power. As soon as payments for coffee are received by the organization, however, they are immediately transferred to the cooperatives, who then pay their members and invest in their own initiatives as they see fit. The cooperatives are supported by la FEM with the intention of creating sustainable, self-sufficient groups. This is demonstrated by the fact that the cooperatives currently manage their finances independently, including the administration of the Fair Trade social premium. The cooperatives supported by la FEM believe that they have staying power because they are small and exhibit a high degree of solidarity. One of the key initiatives currently underway within the cooperatives is the production of organic fertilizer for use on the coffee plants. This initiative has been undertaken to increase Las Diosas' coffee yield which, at an average of under five quintals per manzana, was described several times as being very low.

La FEM is also working towards promoting internal and domestic coffee consumption of the "Las Diosas" brand coffee. Las Diosas coffee is roasted by a small group of rural women who have been trained as coffee roasters and is packaged and sold in the local organic market. Additionally, one woman affiliated with la FEM is training as a barista and, though admittedly far off, Las Diosas and la FEM have explored the idea of opening a coffeehouse in Estelí.

2.4.5 Obstacles and Challenges

La FEM is currently undergoing an organizational evaluation that may ultimately result in fundamental changes to its structure and organization. Particularly, discussions are ongoing as to how to reconcile la FEM as a non-governmental organization with la FEM as a social movement. Some actors within the organization, including both technical staff and the women in the cooperatives, see themselves as primarily the former while others situate themselves primarily within the latter. Often times, the same woman may be negotiating different roles in these areas. A member of the COMTINUE cooperative in El Jocote, for example, may be attending a workshop on organic coffee production methods organized by la FEM in the community in the morning and that afternoon, the same woman may be attending a rally relating to women's rights in the city of Estelí. Both instances are facilitated and supported by la FEM,

but in one case, la FEM is positioned primarily as an NGO while in the other, la FEM is primarily a social movement actor.

Currently, la FEM is also dependent on funds from international funding agencies. Their funders, who are different from groups that purchase and import and sell coffee, include groups from Austria, Belgium, Ireland, the Basque region, and others. Although all of the program areas were operational during my experience with la FEM, there have been times in the organization's history when, because of a lack of resources, certain programs had to be put on hiatus.

With regards to coffee production, la FEM has encountered some difficulties, primarily in technical issues. In particular, the women coffee producers do not all have consistent and easy access to mechanical depulpers. This difficulty in accessing the appropriate technology is worrisome for the cooperatives because of the importance for quality of processing the coffee cherries soon after they are harvested. If the cherry is left unprocessed for too long, the quality of the coffee deteriorates – and quality is a key element in the specialty coffee market that includes organic and Fair Trade coffee.

2.5 Globalization

Globalization, a phenomenon that has been occurring for centuries, is defined very basically by Labonte et al (67) as “a constellation of *processes* by which nations, businesses and people are becoming more connected and interdependent across the globe through increased economic integration and communication exchange, cultural diffusion (especially of Western culture) and travel”. (p. 2) The current era of globalization, however, is different from previous versions of globalization as it has become marked by a reliance on neoliberal economic assumptions and policies, unprecedented speed and breadth of global connections, massive transnational corporations, binding international trade rules, and economic, environmental, and health issues that have become “inherently global”. (67)(p. 4) In the countries of the Global South where they have been more or less compulsorily imposed, these new neoliberal economic policies have reduced public investment in and ownership of services, eliminated subsidy programs, and opened countries of the Global South to a flood of subsidized products that undermine their own industries. (1) It is these new features of economic globalization, as opposed to other more benign, less dominant types of globalization, that have had “devastating consequences, especially on rural communities”. (18)(p. 53)

Globalization operates through a number of pathways to impact health and, given the astounding income inequalities brought about by neoliberal policies of globalization, all of which “partly underpin state collapse and regional conflict”, (67)(p. 4) the prospects for improvement based on the status quo are bleak. Zaworsky, in her foreword to *Fatal Indifference*, writes that “the currently dominant vision of how economies and societies should function is not conducive to an early improvement in the dismal health situation of most of the world’s population”. (67)(p. xi) In the agrifood system – which is in many ways the epitome of neoliberal policies and economic globalization – Wilson describes the response of conventional markets to coffee producers’ dire straits as “indifference”, (42)(p. 91), which is a stance that, like Zaworsky, (67) is not hopeful for improvements. Likewise, Vanderhoff Boersma (18) writes that the response of neoliberal globalization to coffee producers’ distress is “leave your fields, your rural homelands, and go to the city; try to incorporate yourself into the industrial production system.” (18)(p.53) If we are to reduce health inequities – an ethical imperative according to the CSDH (1) – there is clearly a need to act on globalization: the “determinant of health determinants” (4) and the “quintessential upstream variable”. (68) Fair Trade may indeed represent a “counter-hegemonic” movement (27)(p. 180) that challenges the status quo of economic globalization.

2.6 Globalization and Health Framework

Because Fair Trade, in its ideal form, represents an alternative to the current phase of economic globalization and operates at many levels to counter the impacts of neoliberal economic policies of globalization, Labonte and Torgerson’s (69) globalization and health framework can be adapted to guide an inquiry into Fair Trade as a social determinant of health (adapted framework can be seen in Figure 2.2). Though intended to explore the linkages between globalization and health, (69) the pathways in this framework resonate with the empirical research on Fair Trade and with the arguments put forward by the Fair Trade movement. The multi-layered environment in which Fair Trade proposes to operate against the dominant economic model is captured by the framework as it includes space for macroeconomic policies, civil society and community organization, policies and capacities regarding environment, economy, gender, food security, and labor, amongst other factors.

From an analytical perspective, this framework clearly articulates the complexity in which Fair Trade operates and the myriad ways in which it can influence health. The strength of this framework is that it makes these complexities manageable and feasible to explore. (69) The

framework is also useful in guiding the gaze of the research and situating the complex elements of the case and contexts into the wider, more complex whole. Importantly, the framework provides an important starting point to link Fair Trade and health – a link that has been largely absent from the research literature. In using an adapted globalization and health framework, and infusing it with a gendered lens and empowerment focus, the women's experiences in and perceptions of Fair Trade can contribute to larger questions being asked about equitable globalization and the Fair Trade initiative more broadly.

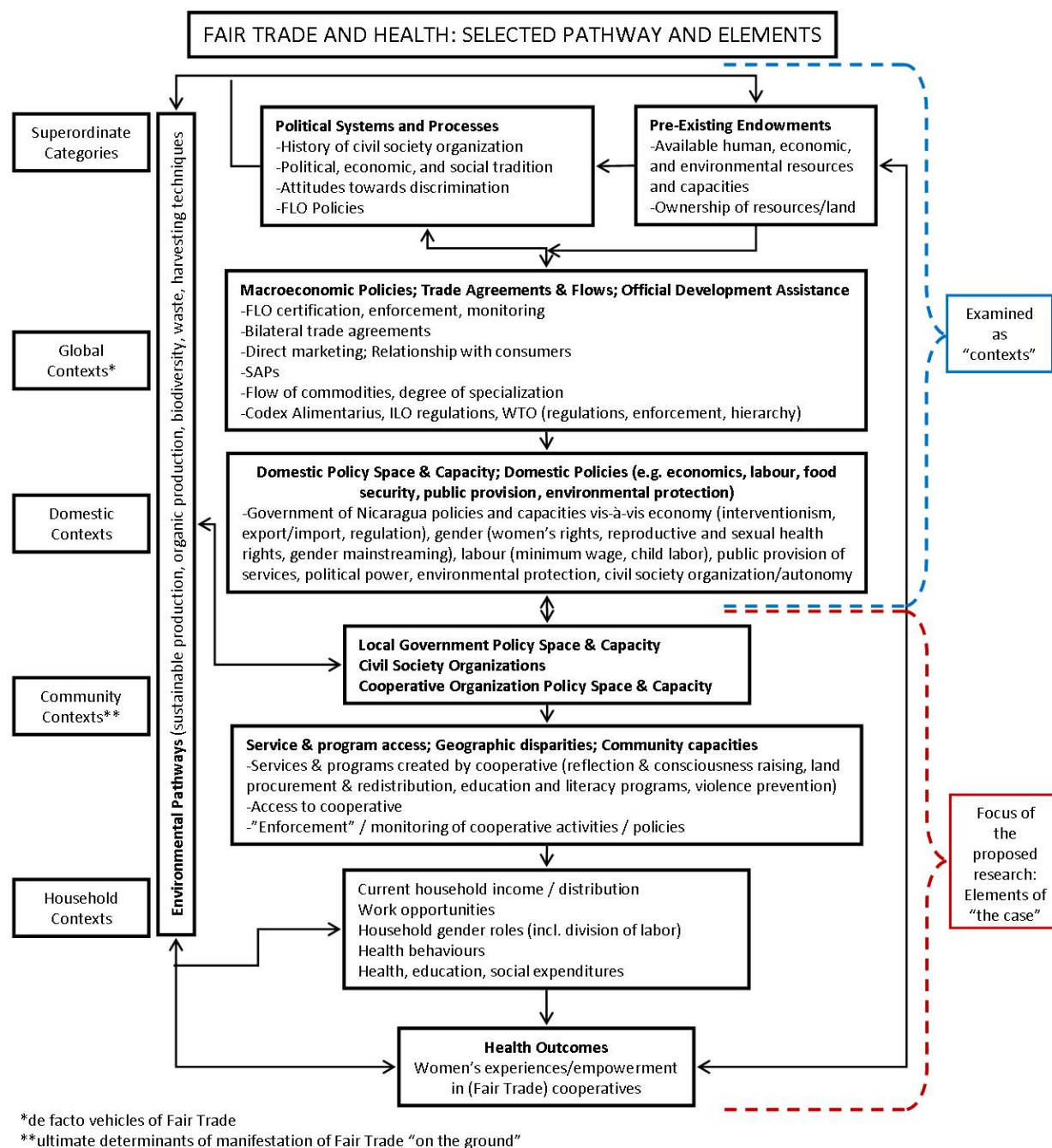


Figure 2.2 Fair Trade and Health framework. Adapted from Labonte and Torgerson. (69)

2.7 Empowerment

One of the key concepts in my analytical framework is empowerment, which has been included as a health outcome. Empowerment, especially women's empowerment, is gaining prominence in health and development research and practice, as is evidenced by the inclusion of women's empowerment as an explicit Millennium Development Goal (Goal #3). (70) Within Fair Trade, producer empowerment and, in some cases, women's empowerment are stated objectives of a number of stakeholders throughout the value chain, including FLO, (32) Transfair (the certifier of Fair Trade in Canada and the United States), (71) and Ten Thousand Villages (a fair trade retail store). (72) The concept also appears in several research studies. (5,18,37,43)

Despite this increasing popularity, empowerment remains a vague term that is rarely defined, which can further confuse the issue. The definition of empowerment that guides my research is that suggested by Wallerstein, (73) who defines empowerment as “a social-action process that promotes participation of people, organizations, and communities towards the goal of increased individual and community control, political efficacy, improved quality of community life, and social justice”. (p. 198) Importantly, then, empowerment is not merely an individual concept, rather, it involves change at community and political levels as well. Empowerment has become depoliticized in recent years, with several development organizations, governments, and authors de-linking individual empowerment from systemic and structural change (73) and even implicitly relying on “empowerment” as an alternative to political change. (7) The CSDH framework, however, like Wallerstein, (73) explicitly politicizes empowerment, and views it as “inseparably linked to marginalized and dominated communities’ gaining effective control over the political and economic processes that affect their wellbeing...” (7)(p. 60) The emphasis for both of these definitions (7,73) is on gaining control, with Solar and Irwin (7) noting that “we value participation but question whether participation alone can be considered genuinely empowering...” (p. 60) The resonance between this concern emanating from the social determinants of health and the criticisms of Fair Trade described earlier are obvious. When evaluating actions on the social determinants of health (like Fair Trade), therefore, the action's “capacity to promote such control should be a significant criterion”. (7)(p. 60)

Another useful framework for this discussion is Longwe's empowerment model. (74) Though meant for development projects, its articulation of empowerment and equality resonate

with both action on the social determinants of health as well as Fair Trade. The model suggests a step-wise process of empowerment and equity that begins with women's welfare and culminates with control, the highest level. (Figure 2.3) The five "levels of equality" (74)(p. 151) are posited to be hierarchically organized, "so that equality of control is more important for women's development than equality of welfare" (74)(p. 151). Additionally, as demonstrated in the figure, in this model, higher levels of equality result in higher levels of empowerment.

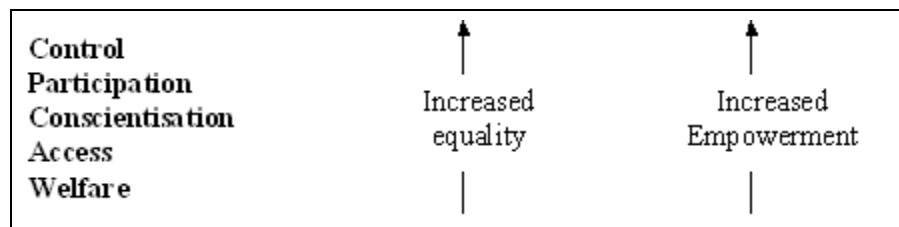


Figure 2.3 Longwe's empowerment framework (74)(p. 151)

This assumption is particular to the model and its levels and should not be assumed to exist in other settings (i.e., equality does not inherently lead to empowerment). (51) Based on her model, Longwe (74) writes that in order for development projects to be successful, they must move beyond welfare and include considerations of equity and of "enabling people to take charge of their own lives..." (74)(p. 149). Like Wallerstein's (73) definition above, Longwe (74) is explicit in noting that this means addressing broader issues of oppression and exploitation rather than maintaining a focus on increasing productivity.

Empowerment is a particularly useful concept to examine in Fair Trade as "empowerment strategies are more likely to be successful if integrated within macro-economic and policy strategies aimed at creating greater equity," (75)(p. 14) a finding echoed by the report of the Women and Gender Equity Knowledge Network of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health, (76) which states that "if interventions [for women's empowerment] are integrated with economic, education, and/or political sectors, they can result in greater psychological empowerment, autonomy and authority and they can substantially affect a range of health outcomes." (76)(p. xi) Using the definitions and frameworks introduced here, I can make the necessary step beyond assessing participation and explore Fair Trade's potential for empowerment based on women's experiences, perceptions, and aspirations.

2.8 Summary

It is important to situate Fair Trade, women's experiences, and la FEM in the variety of contexts in which they exist. In the preceding section, I introduced the growing body of Fair Trade research literature which has documented important benefits linked to participation in the market but has also described several challenges and shortcomings. In particular, although Fair Trade does offer producers a stable income, support for organizations, and less environmental contamination, there are lingering concerns about the depth of Fair Trade's impacts and its transformative potential in matters related to power and equity.

I also introduced la FEM, a feminist organization that, in the realm of coffee production, supports four cooperatives in the production and marketing of coffee. This production support is provided in addition to work done in a variety of other spheres including feminist education, sexual and reproductive health, and anti-violence initiatives. La FEM works towards women's empowerments in all spheres, from the household to the community and beyond, and works to make women protagonists in these areas. This organizational orientation is well-aligned with both the globalization and health as well as empowerment frameworks that I introduced to end the chapter. Taken together, these various contexts and concepts provide a valuable framing for women's perceptions, experiences, and aspirations with regards to Fair Trade. After introducing my research methods in the following chapter, I will share these diverse perspectives.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative case study design informed by multiple complementary research methods including dialogic focus groups, in-depth interviews, and participant-observation. In this section, I describe my methodological choices, beginning with two broad methodological considerations, following with specifications on the design, a description of my methods of data collection and thematic analysis, and ending with a discussion of the theoretical underpinnings of my methodological choices.

3.1 Social Determinants of Health: Influence on Methodology

As noted, the impetus for this study is the call emanating from the CSDH to assess and discuss actions on the social determinants of health. In order to add to this growing body of research in a useful and effective manner, it is important to consider the broad methodological guidelines of a social determinants of health approach in the design, conduct, interpretation, and writing of the project. More research is needed on understanding what works in terms of actions on the social determinants of health, though “generating evidence on what works to reduce health inequities is a complex process” (1)(p. 179). To ensure that research endeavours do not get lost in this complexity, the CSDH provides some broad guidelines to direct research methods.

The CSDH calls for the creation of “a rich and diverse evidence base” (1)(p. 186) and argues for a rethinking of “strict traditional hierarchies of evidence” (1)(p. 179) that put quantitative research, specifically randomized control trials and laboratory research, above all other knowledge and evidence. Instead, research methods and the knowledge generated from them should be assessed based on their appropriateness to the research questions being asked. Understanding the experiences of those on-the-ground, especially those voices that have been largely excluded to date, is a particularly valuable and much-needed contribution to this evidence base (1,77) and qualitative inquiry is the most appropriate method for this area. The Commission writes that experience from those directly impacted by interventions

is particularly important as evidence on the social determinants of health is often context dependent. Evaluations of social determinants of health interventions require rich qualitative data in order to understand the ways in which context affects the intervention and the reasons for its success or failure. (1)(p. 186)

The issue of understanding, accepting, and reporting on complexity and contexts is central to the CSDH's methodology, and the report urges methods to take into account the wide range of factors and contexts that affect health inequities and actions on social determinants. Social determinants of health and the actions that hold the potential to alter these determinants are inherently complex and to represent it otherwise would be misleading.

In order for the information and experiences that I collected and share herein to be relevant to the broader dialogue on social determinants of health, the CSDH put forth recommendations to guide the collection of data. First, they note that research questions and the research process should be made explicit, as should all of the biases of the methodologies and of the researcher. (77) This links well to the reflexivity called for in the feminist approach to research described later and was a central feature of my research design. Second, individual studies should be methodologically consistent and be well-contextualized. (77) This is particularly pertinent given the complex, multidisciplinary nature of action on the social determinants of health. It is worth quoting the Measurement and Evidence Knowledge Network of the CSDH at length here, as they write,

given the complex nature of interventions required to address the social determinants of health, it is not possible for any one research study to answer all the questions relevant to this endeavour – it is therefore important for studies to contextualize their research in a broader theoretical framework (causes, determinants and outcomes). This allows the reader to understand which aspects of the social determinants agenda are being investigated and what aspects of the 'jigsaw' the research hopes to complete. (77)(p. 105).

Finally, studies should discuss the implications and applicability of the research for other contexts and other communities. (77)

3.2 Feminist Approach to Research

From its inception, this study was guided by a feminist approach to research. As several authors have noted, this does not imply the use of a particular set of methods or epistemological approach (78-81) – as even the historical link between qualitative research and feminism has been challenged (78,81) – but rather sets out broad parameters that influence the entire research process, from design through to analysis and dissemination. The debate on what exactly constitutes “feminist research” continues, but there are nonetheless a number of commonalities that bridge these debates. These commonalities inform this study and are introduced below.

Feminist research is characterized by a central focus on women's experiences. (79,80,82) Maynard and Purvis (80) write that "it has generally been regarded as an axiomatic feature of feminist social research that it is grounded in women's experiences." (p. 6) This implies working with women to create and privilege knowledge that has often remained hidden in academic research and from mainstream society. (81) It also involves problematizing existing structures, situations, and institutions (83,84) that have been constructed using gender-blind or androcentric knowledge, like Fair Trade and the coffee market, both of which suffer, as noted, from a lack of insight into women's experiences.

The call to focus on women's experiences and the subsequent challenging of androcentric biases has not remained exclusively in the domain of feminism. In fact, the need to challenge the androcentric bias in research was noted as a key action by the Commission on Social Determinants of Health as well. (1) In the realm of Fair Trade, there have been several calls for research into gender equity and women's experiences (for reasons related both to equity and to the fact that gender equity is a FLO Fair Trade standard), but few have heeded this call.

Another common feature of feminist research is the devotion to seeking change through the research project. (78,82,83,85) Kelly et al. (85) acknowledge that while women's experiences are a starting point, the research must not end there. Rather, it must understand "what is happening in women's lives, *and* how we might change it." (85)(p. 32, emphasis added). This changes the position of the researcher from one centrally concerned with understanding and discovery to one that acknowledges a responsibility for change. (83,85) This process of change can occur both through the results of the research as well as the research process itself, which must be committed to empowerment and critical of existing androcentric biases in research. I was particularly cognizant of this potential for change in the research process and, as a result, worked with la FEM to develop participatory dialogic focus groups which served both as my primary method of data collection and as a potential process of change. I strove to maximize collaboration in the research process and specific research methods "...so that growth and learning can be mutually beneficial, interactive, and cooperative." (78)(p. 4).

Finally, the feminist approach to research calls for the researcher to be aware, explicit, and reflexive of their position in the research process. (82,86) This involves eschewing the notion of a disconnected, neutral researcher and humanizes the research process. Maynard (79) discusses the reasons and outcome of this approach, writing

[feminists] have argued for the significance of a genuine, rather than an instrumental rapport between [the researcher and the researched]. This, it has been claimed, encourages a non-exploitative relationship, where the person being studied is not treated simply as a source of data. Research becomes a means of sharing information and, rather than being seen as a source of bias, the personal involvement of the interviewer is an important element in establishing trust and thus obtaining good quality information. (p. 15-16)

I used these three broad, guiding principles: focus on women's experiences, commitment to social change, and reflexivity throughout the research process. In so doing, I follow Nagy Hesse-Biber's (86) approach to feminism in research, as she notes that feminism engages with the entire research endeavour

starting with the research questions [feminists] devise, how research methods are practiced, and the special attention given to issues of power, authority, reflexivity, ethics, and difference in the practice, writing, and reading of feminist research. (p. 15)

The influence of this feminist approach on individual methods is discussed later.

3.3 Case Study Design

Influenced by these principles, this study uses a case study design in order to understand women's perceptions, aspirations, and experiences of Fair Trade. The case study design is "a choice of what is to be studied" (87)(p. 443), rather than a specific research methodology and focuses one's attention on a "specific, unique, bounded system" (87)(p. 445). In so doing, case studies offer the opportunity to learn and understand the particularities of a specific case. A single case study design also directs one's gaze to contexts, as the case is understood to exist as embedded and interacting with various contexts. (88) Although the focus of the case study is on understanding the case, qualitative case studies explore "real cases operating in real situations" (89)(p. 3) and the case is acknowledged as being inextricable from its contexts. According to Stake, (88) the single case study can be informed by a number of methods, though narratives and thick description are crucial in order "to optimize the opportunity of the reader to gain an experiential understanding of the case." (p. 40)

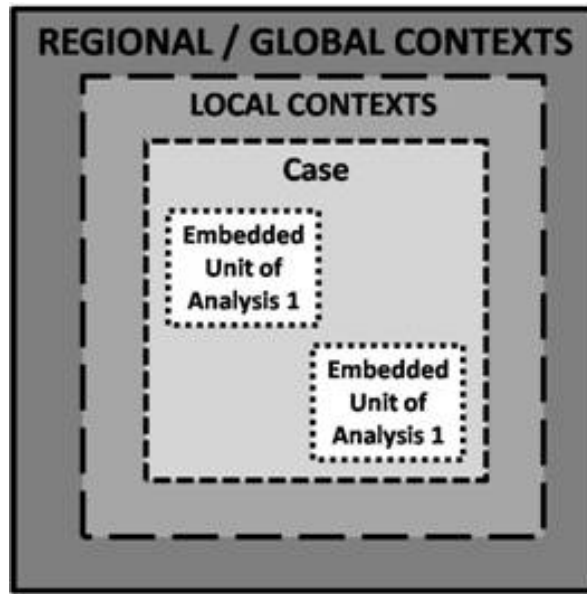


Figure 3.1 Embedded case study design (adapted from Yin (90))

Within the broad case study design, my study is an embedded, single case design. As demonstrated in the figure (Figure 3.1) adapted from Yin, (90) this places the cooperatives as embedded units of analysis within the broader case – la FEM – which is itself firmly embedded in local, regional, and global contexts. This study design allows me to focus on specific women’s experiences and stories while simultaneously situating those in the broader contexts of Nicaragua, Fair Trade, neoliberalism, health, and gender equity described earlier. Additionally, I consider la FEM to be both an intrinsic and an instrumental case. It is intrinsic in that I am exploring la FEM as an entity of interest in and of itself (87,88) but it is also an instrumental case in so much as I am using la FEM as a lens into women’s experiences of Fair Trade.

La FEM is well-suited as a case because of its uniqueness and its revelatory nature, both of which are important characteristics in a single-case design, (90) where the purpose is not necessarily generalization, but rather to understand “the particularity and complexity of a single case” (88)(p. xi). Several authors note the value of focusing on “highly atypical cases” (89)(p. vii) as a means of gaining insight into a particular issue. Stake (87) notes that “potential for learning is a different and sometimes superior criterion [for selecting cases] to representativeness. Sometimes it is better to learn a lot from an atypical case than a little from a seemingly typical case”. (p. 451) As a feminist organization working with small cooperatives of rural women in Northern Nicaragua, la FEM is certainly atypical in the realm of the international

coffee trade and, as such, holds great potential for learning about Fair Trade and the social determinants of health.

In existing research in both gender equity and Fair Trade, the importance of describing and understanding innovative and atypical cases has been identified as vital for learning and progress. Raynolds and Ngcwangu (43)(p. 82) discuss the importance of “radical initiatives” (p. 82) in order for the fair and alternative trade system “to maintain its transformative potential” (p. 82). These radical initiatives, such as la FEM, are often overlooked in Fair Trade research which, as noted, still predominantly consists of general impact studies and work done with large cooperatives. In the final report of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health’s Women and Gender Equity Knowledge Network, (76) the authors note the importance of women’s organizations “that are often at the forefront of identifying problems and experimenting with innovative solutions”. (p. xviii) Understanding these innovative solutions and learning from these cases is crucial to developing the evidence base to inform action on health inequities. (1)(p. 196)

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Although designed as a case study and guided by the feminist and social determinants of health approaches to research, there is no particular method or methods entailed by this configuration. Rather, there is general agreement amongst these approaches that the most important consideration in selecting research methods is that the method or methods be appropriate for the study and the research questions. To this end, this study is informed by three complementary methods of data collection: focus groups, interviews, and participant-observation.

3.4.1 Site and Dates of Research

These methods all took place during a 20-week research experience in Northern Nicaragua in 2009. I lived and spent most of my time in Estelí, where la FEM’s headquarters are, though I also traveled to surrounding communities in the *municipios* of Estelí, Pueblo Nuevo, Condega, and Dipilto. During the first six weeks of my experience, my focus was on further developing my Spanish language skills, allowing me to collect all of my data in Spanish without the use of an interpreter, though audio recordings of focus groups and interviews were transcribed by a Nicaraguan colleague. I translated the excerpts and quotations included in this

document into English and a native Spanish-speaking translator verified the translations. For all quotations, the original Spanish and translated English are included in Appendix 1.

After finishing my Spanish courses, I began to spend more time at la FEM, joining the technical staff on trips to the various communities and getting to know the women in the communities. This was valuable in terms of learning more about the organization but especially in terms of building a relationship with the technical team and the women in the communities. I did not conduct any formal interviews or focus groups during this first phase of the research project as the emphasis was on relationship-building and familiarization. After taking part in a number of events and learning about the organization and its members throughout March and April, I sat down with the directors of la FEM in late April to negotiate what types of research and knowledge sharing they felt they could benefit from and what I could share with the women in the communities through dialogic focus groups and interviews. The interviews and focus groups were conducted subsequent to these meetings. Participant-observation was an ongoing activity that spanned my entire immersion in the field.

3.4.2 Participant-Observation

Throughout my time at la FEM, I formally participated in and observed several events, gatherings, and meetings related to la FEM's work, the coffee trade, and Fair Trade as well as spending informal time familiarizing myself with the organization and informally conversing with staff or visitors. Many of the formal events and activities took place at the headquarters of la FEM in Estelí because of its central location and large capacity.

In addition to these centrally located events and daily observations in Estelí, I visited all four of the coffee-growing communities and three additional communities that la FEM works with. Most of the trips that I made to the communities were with members of la FEM's technical team in the area of production. I joined different members of this group on various community visits that they made to assess coffee production levels, evaluate the health of the coffee harvest, and to deliver items for the livestock and crop credit package. In addition, I was invited to take part in some health and education events in communities, most notably the chance to attend a theater production put on in three different communities by a feminist theater troupe. Although I mostly attended activities that are relatively common in la FEM's programming, I was also able to participate in a few seminal events, including the annual International Women's Day

celebration and event, visits from two United States-based coffee importers, and the Specialty Coffee Association of America's Annual Exposition.

In order to document these experiences, I recorded both observations as well as my own thoughts and feelings in detailed field notes that were written at home immediately following the experience. These two complementary parts of my field notes echo several authors' advice to include both a description of the experience as well as comments, perceptions, feelings, and interpretations. (91,92) During the course of the activity or event, where and when it was appropriate to do so, I took very brief notes in a small notepad. These served as reminders for the more detailed notes written later in the day. I created a new field note for each event and also attempted to write a field note every two to three days. In total, I generated 41 field note entries in addition to several reports written with a specific purpose.

3.4.3 Dialogic Focus Groups

The primary source of data for this thesis project is four focus groups, one in each coffee-growing community that la FEM works with. The focus groups that I facilitated were explicitly feminist in their conduct and were therefore more akin to "dialogic focus groups" (93)(p.377) than to "focus groups as 'instruments' of qualitative research" (p.375). In other words, the four dialogic focus groups were conducted similarly to participatory workshops rather than resembling structured group interviews.

The intended content of the focus group, though always amenable to the desires of the group itself, was developed in partnership with the technical team and directors of la FEM. After spending some time with the organization, I met with the directors to gather their feedback and input as to what they hoped to get out of the focus groups and, after we sketched out some ideas, I submitted the proposal included as Appendix 2. This proposal was supported by the directors and technical team of la FEM and became the agenda for the first focus group. After the first focus group, I adapted the proposal to increase the time for all items and to take out the final item because it did not resonate with the women's experiences.

Although they were guided by the experiences and discussions of the participants themselves, the dialogic focus groups generally followed a similar pattern. We began with introductions that included my own introduction and an open discussion of my research project and personal background. For the women's introductions, they were asked for their name as well as how long they have been involved in the coffee industry. Following that, the group

discussion turned to women's lived experiences in the production and trade of coffee. This discussion was facilitated by the presentation of three photographs that showed a woman picking coffee, a woman grinding coffee, and packaged coffee from Las Diosas sold by Just Coffee in the United States. These photographs (included in Appendix 3) were used to ground the discussion in the everyday actions and activities of the women. Based on the final picture, which included several certifications and the Just Coffee motto "Not just a market, but a movement", the conversation shifted to focus on the concepts of fairness, trade, movements, and markets in coffee and in women's lives.

At that point, the group transitioned to a small group exercise wherein the women unpacked the term "fair trade" and redefined it according to their own criteria and informed by their own experiences. Each group was given large pieces of poster paper and asked to explore the questions: (1) what is *your* fair trade? (What is fair trade according to you?), (2) what are the characteristics of your fair trade? and (3) what do you hope to achieve with your coffee? The groups discussed amongst themselves for 15-30 minutes and wrote their discussion points on the posters before coming back together as a large group. At that point, one representative from each group was nominated to present their group's poster and summarize their discussion. Finally, the focus groups finished with a more traditional style presentation that I gave on the history of coffee (with special attention to the role of women in that history), the origins of Fair Trade, and the Fair Trade standards.

In all of the communities, the group consented to having the focus group recorded and the audio was transcribed by a Nicaraguan colleague. In addition, the written materials from the small group exercise were collected and included as research data. All of the focus groups were done in Spanish.

Participants

I facilitated four focus groups in total – one in each of the communities with coffee cooperatives. Each focus group took approximately 4 hours and there were 12 women invited to each. Between 8 and 13 women attended each group. In addition, at least one representative of la FEM attended the focus group in three of the communities. The different representatives of la FEM participated in the focus group in different ways, some choosing to observe from the margins while others fully engaged with the group. In three communities, the focus groups were carried in the local group's *casa sede* (their local "headquarters") while in the fourth community,

where a *casa sede* has not yet been built, the focus group took place in one cooperative member's patio. Details of the focus group are summarized in the table below (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Focus group participants

Community	Community participants	Length	FEM technical team presence	Location	Group activity
Guasuyuca	13	4 hours, 15 minutes	2 observers	<i>Casa Sede</i>	2 groups of 4, 1 group of 5
Los Llanos	11	4 hours	1 observer (some participation)	<i>Casa Sede</i>	2 groups of 3, 1 group of 5
El Jocote	11	3.5 hours	1 active participant	<i>Casa Sede</i>	2 groups of 4, 1 group of 3
Dipilto	8	3 hours	None	Home patio	1 large group

Community leaders – those women who sit on the Development Committee at la FEM – selected the women who were to be invited to the focus groups. The technical staff at the main office of la FEM selected one community leader and introduced the outline of the focus group / workshop to them. After this brief overview, they asked the leader for the names of 12 women (including themselves) who they thought would be interested in participating in the focus group. Invitation letters (included in Appendix 4) were sent out to these 12 women with the details of the focus group as well as the time and place of the meeting. The FEM staff member who helped to send out the invitation letters did not attend any of the focus groups and therefore the representative of the FEM technical team at each focus group did not know whether or not any women declined the invitation to participate.

3.4.4 Interview

During the course of my fieldwork, I also conducted several interviews with coffee producers, la FEM staff, and coffee buyers. Interviews focus on the depth of participant's experiences and understandings and call to attention individuals' perspectives, values, and experiences. (82,91) As a result, with my research question built around experiences and perceptions, the in-depth interview represents an invaluable source of insight and learning.

In total, I conducted in-depth interviews with 8 individuals, including one representative of a coffee importer from the United States, one member of La FEM's technical team, and 6 women coffee producers and cooperative members. The interviews lasted between 25 minutes

and 1 hour and 10 minutes and were conducted in several participant-selected locations, including the FEM office (for the two “non-producer” interviews), women’s farms (where we would walk and talk), and women’s homes. Most often, however, the interview was accompanied by a tour of the woman’s farm. The interviews were not structured but did revolve around several select themes, based on the participant’s own experiences and perspectives.

Every interview was slightly different because of variations in women’s experiences and perspectives, though most were structured around some key themes. First, after describing the project and my own background, I asked the women to discuss their experience in the coffee industry, both before and after their involvement in the cooperative. The locations of the interviews – in women’s homes and on their farms – helped to ground the discussion in their own experience. Based on the women’s stories, the interview would proceed to explore several themes, including women’s experience with labeling initiatives, their perception of the link between coffee and health, their experience with organizing, the difference between their experience and the experience of male coffee producers, the role of la FEM in the community, and their experience as land owners. All of the interviews were conducted in Spanish, tape-recorded, and later transcribed by a Nicaraguan colleague.

Participants

Three of the interviewees were approached based on convenience and a referral from la FEM. In these three cases, the interviewee was also the female member of the household where I spent the night following the focus group. The homestay, though not the interview, was arranged by la FEM and representatives of the technical team were not told which women did or did not participate in an interview for the project. The interview and farm tour occurred after I had spent one afternoon and one night with the woman and her family. The other 3 coffee producers were approached based on referrals from the women with whom I stayed. These women, who were acting in their capacity as cooperative members and not as representatives of the broader la FEM organization, were asked to think of other women who might be interested and available to take part in the study. Based on these suggestions, I ask to be introduced to the potential participant by my homestay host and, after introducing the research project and procedures, I would ask if they were interested in participating in the project. The technical team at la FEM was not told which women were contacted nor which women agreed to participate in an interview.

3.4.5 Analytic Methods

Data analysis in qualitative research is an ongoing process that begins in the early phases of the research study. (92) Preliminary analysis already occurs in the conceptualization and framing of the research and continues through the data collection process as categories, ideas, and meanings are discovered, assessed, and understood. My field notes, which included analytic memos, were key to maintaining the momentum of this iterative process.

In general, I followed the analytic procedures described by Rossman and Rallis, (92) which include “organizing the data, familiarizing yourself with the data, generating categories and themes, coding the data, interpreting, searching for alternative understandings, [and] writing the report.” (p. 279) Inevitably, data analysis in qualitative research involves judgments about which data to prioritize and which to condense. (92) Both my research questions and conceptual frameworks guided these analytic decisions as some codes, categories, and themes were prioritized over others. Interpretation involved a constant back-and-forth between parts and wholes, trees and forests. As Rossman and Rallis (92) write, “you analyze the parts in order to see the whole; seeing the whole further illuminates the parts.” (p. 288)

In Nicaragua, all of my field notes, transcripts, pictures, and documents were saved as, or converted into, digital files. Upon returning to Canada, I imported these files into Atlas.ti software, which I used predominantly as an organizational tool to maintain all of the data in one place as well as to keep track of codes. With the notes and transcripts organized in the software, I proceeded to code the data both inductively and deductively. I started with a few basic codes, including “health”, “what is Fair Trade”, “gender”, and “empowerment”, that stemmed from the research question and theoretical frameworks. The majority of the codes, however, emerged from the data itself. I made analytical notes and memos referring to codes, quotations, and emerging ideas on an ongoing basis.

Importantly, guided by Devault’s discussion of feminist interviewing, (94) I used both transcripts and audio in my analysis. Prior to coding, I read the transcripts and listened to the audio recordings of all of the interview and focus group data. While coding, I read transcripts completely, listened to audio files in their entirety, and, when I identified particularly notable quotes, I would return to their audio to better understand their context, taking into account pauses, tone, and the other elements beyond the words written in the transcripts.

After fully coding my field notes and transcripts, I organized the codes based on frequency of use, pertinence to the research question, and presence of analytical comments and notes. This was done to make the amount of data manageable. I printed out all of the quotations that met any or all of these criteria (frequency, pertinence, or noteworthiness) and began to draw out both common themes as well as particularly surprising or noteworthy findings. The sections and headings in the results section emerged from this process and all represent inductive categories rather than pre-defined categorizations.

3.4.6 Theoretical Rationale

I carried out my research methods informed by the methodological writings of several authors. In particular, feminist approaches to focus groups and interviews were especially instructive in the conduct of those methods.

Participant-observation

In this thesis project, participant-observation was primarily used to understand context and familiarize myself with the work of la FEM. This resonates with Rossman and Rallis' (92) description of participant observation as "an overall strategy where the researcher is present in the setting experiencing and noting events". (p. 172) They go on to note that observations are a useful and appropriate method in order to understand context, gain personal experience, and see patterns. (92) In addition to generating its own unique data, participant-observation is intimately connected to other methods. Rossman and Rallis note, for example, that "...observations lead researchers to interviews, suggest questions they had not anticipated, and yield topics they might want to explore." (92)(p. 173) This occurred during my fieldwork as well, as participant-observation was the first component of my research project and informed the content of the subsequent focus groups and interviews.

Focus groups

According to Wilkinson, (95) focus groups are particularly valuable to feminist research because they are relatively "naturalistic" (p. 287), especially compared to the artificiality of structured, clinical interviews, they take into account social context and privilege interactions between participants in addition to the researcher-participant interactions, and they reconfigure the balance of power in research. Liamputtong and Ezzy (91) add that focus groups are particularly helpful when the objective of the research is to explore and better understand

participant's experiences and perspectives – a central tenet of this study and of feminist research more broadly.

Dialogic focus groups in particular serve as “important pedagogical sites” (93)(p. 377) wherein the focus is not on extracting information from research participants but rather to “[imagine] and [enact] the emancipatory political possibilities of collective work...” (p. 378) The goal in these focus groups is “to engage with people in their lived realities, producing and transforming them.” (p. 379) The data that emerged from these focus groups resulted from a commitment to mutual and collaborative learning rather than targeted data collection. By reconfiguring the power dynamic between the researcher and the researched, focus groups allow the participants to use their own meanings and language to define and set the research agenda based on what they consider to be important. The researcher is less able to direct the flow of ideas and experiences and it is instead the participants that take control of the process. (95) Though it can be unnerving for the researcher, it can also result “in better access to [participants'] opinions and conceptual worlds”. (95)(p. 281)

As is evident from this description, dialogic focus groups have an explicit commitment to social change and action. Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (93) write that “As problem-posing formations, [dialogic focus groups] operate locally to identify, interrogate, and change specific lived contradictions that have been rendered invisible by hegemonic power/knowledge regimes.” (93)(p. 382) Although I certainly do not claim to have foundationally transformed lived realities or inspired revolutionary changes, by designing and facilitating dialogic focus groups which align with the design and conduct of la FEM's consciousness-raising groups and feminist education programs, I do feel that the focus groups, in addition to generating rich descriptions and knowledge, did contribute at least a small step in the ongoing empowerment process that women in these rural communities are engaged in through la FEM.

Interview

The conversational design of the interview was an explicit methodological decision guided by the feminist approach to research that I draw upon. Several authors note the increasing importance of reconfiguring the researcher-participant relationship in interviews and encourage the interviewer to be more empathetic. (82,96) The essence of the interview, according to Fontana and Frey, (96) is “the establishment of a human-to-human relation with the respondent and the desire to *understand* rather than to *explain*.” (p. 130) The participants are not

“repositories of knowledge” (Holstein and Gubrium, in (91) (p. 57)), but rather “constructors of knowledge in collaboration with interviewers.” (p. 57) The interview changes, therefore, from being a supposedly neutral, patriarchal question-and-answer session to an active collaboration, a “meaning-making effort” (82)(p. 96) between the interviewer and the participant to construct meanings, learn, and share experiences. (96)

In all of the interviews, the participant’s experiences and meanings remained central, and no a priori categories were assumed. In discussing interviews as a feminist method, Devault (94) cautions against using taken-for-granted categories and concepts, noting the example of the problematic term “work” in feminist research. In many ways, women’s discussions of the ideas of Fair Trade, empowerment, and equity mirror this concept and confirm the importance of questioning dominant language and meanings (i.e., the meaning of Fair Trade advanced by FLO). The goal of the interview, then, rather than ascribing meanings and value to participant’s words, was to “permit the participants to freely articulate their worldviews.” (82)(p. 96)

Data analysis

My experience of immersion in the data and reading, re-reading, and coding data echoed that described by Liamputtong and Ezzy, (91) who note

the initial experience of immersion [in the data] may result in a chaotic confusion as a consequence of the complexity of the data and of exploring multiple possible interpretations. However, out of this immersion emerge new perspectives, new linkages, new understandings, and theories. (p. 257-258)

Although this project does not employ the methods of grounded theory, as theory-building was not its primary aim, I do share some approaches of grounded theory, most notably “an ongoing dialogue between pre-existing theory and new insights generated as a consequence of empirical observation”. (91)(p. 266) For this study, Labonte and Torgerson’s (69) framework of globalization and health provides a jumping-off point and is a central component of the dialogue that I hope to contribute to and maintain.

3.5 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a central component of feminist research. (82,86) Rossman and Rallis (92) define reflexivity as “looking at yourself making sense of how someone else makes sense of her world.” (p. 49) Essentially, it is the acknowledgement that “the personal biography of the researcher and the roles she takes influence the research.” (92)(p. 49) Although it is important to

note that I am a white male from Canada doing research with a feminist organization working with rural Nicaraguan women, I was working with a strong group of women who had declared an interest in better understanding experiences of gender equity, health, and Fair Trade. As a result, my position as a researcher cannot be categorized simply as that of an “outsider”. Naples, (97) writing from a feminist perspective, problematizes the simplistic insider/outsider dichotomy and notes that all individuals, including the researcher, constantly negotiate their “insiderness” and “outsiderness” and the relationship between the researcher and the researched is dynamic and fluid. (97) To facilitate this negotiation and to maintain a level of openness for both myself and the research participants, in all cases, whether I was at a special event, a routine field visit, or an interview, I never made any attempt to hide myself or my research project. I openly and honestly engaged with whoever approached me and openly discussed my project and my background.

3.6 Research Partnership

Closely related to the ideas of reflexivity, openness, and negotiating my position as a researcher is this project’s reliance on and contribution to an evolving research partnership that I was fortunate to be able to become involved with. I aimed from the outset to contribute to the burgeoning research partnership exploring, amongst other themes, gendered dimensions of Fair Trade, and considered la FEM as equal partners in my research process rather than simply a research site or a source of data. Beginning with a series of introductory meetings with la FEM – the first of which took place in Saskatoon before I had started writing my research proposal – I strove to involve the organization as equitable partners throughout the research process. Maintaining open and honest communication at all times, we identified and discussed issues and contradictions in need of investigation together, shared insights, planned future directions, and negotiated the most valuable knowledge sharing avenues. Developing the partnership requires input and buy-in from several different actors, but I believe that it ultimately results in a stronger, more valuable and grounded research project.

Based on this experience, I feel that despite the relatively short time spent by Master’s students in the field compared to the length of time that it typically takes to develop research partnerships in global health, it is possible for meaningful partnerships based on respect, cooperation, and reciprocity to develop at the Master’s level. I think that a key element to make a partnership successful despite a shorter timeframe and more prescriptive deliverables is the

positioning of a common goal (gender equity, for example) at the center of discussions rather than putting a person or institution at the center (see Figure 3.2). With a jointly valued goal or principle as a central and explicit objective, all of the stakeholders can begin to find common ground more easily than if an individual agenda (such as myself and my research) are considered to be the central element. In my research project, the initial research discussions began around issues of women's empowerment and gender equity. From there, despite different agendas, all of the partners were able to build a strong relationship. This value-centered approach changes the conduct of the research on the ground as well because the research must consistently refer back to how best to act on or contribute to a better understanding of the common principle, rather than focusing simply on data collection for the purpose of completing a thesis project.

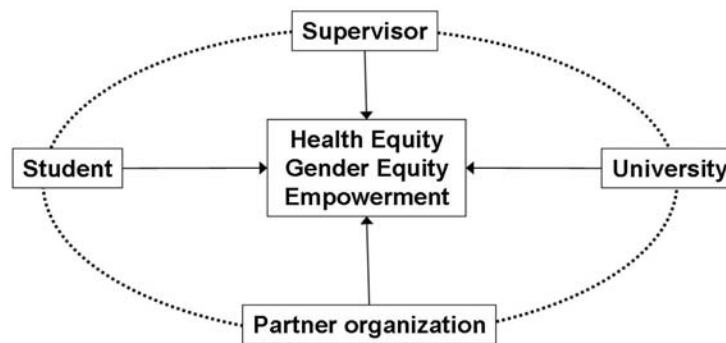


Figure 3.2 Partnership model

Partnerships do, however, require support from multiple stakeholders who are all committed to the broader central goal. For this project, I benefited from a supervisor willing to invite me into a very long-standing partnership; I benefited from an organization with a commitment to equity and an interest in Fair Trade; and I benefited from a strong institutional and departmental commitment to global health and equity in health research at the University of Saskatchewan. For my part, I believe that I offered the partnership a strong commitment to the ideals of health equity and gender equity, a commitment to reciprocity and knowledge sharing, and a willingness and desire to learn about the partner organization. Despite each stakeholder having different focus points and different desired outputs, by maintaining an overarching unity around broad concepts and ideals, these differences could be overcome.

3.7 Ethics

Given the importance of power relations and reflexivity in this thesis project, it was especially important to keep ethical considerations at the forefront throughout my fieldwork experience. I strove to conduct my research while maintaining a respect for research participants as the central ethical principle. This involved complete openness with participants regarding my background, my research objectives and questions, and my research methods. An important component of this openness was fully informed consent procedures, including verbal and written consents as appropriate. Another important ethical concern is reciprocity. Reciprocity and knowledge sharing began with the original negotiations regarding the study plan and the content of the dialogic focus groups and will be continuing with an ongoing sharing of findings with la FEM and the women coffee producers. This thesis study was approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board.

3.8 Limitations and Delimitations

The limitations of this research relate primarily to the fact that all of the research participants are members of all-women's cooperatives supported by la FEM, a relatively small feminist organization. La FEM has a unique approach to women's empowerment, coffee production, and cooperative organization and it is likely that this impacts women's perceptions of and aspirations for Fair Trade. I hope to have addressed this limitation by explicitly introducing la FEM's history, vision, mission, and program structure. Similarly, Nicaragua is a unique site with a unique history in terms of coffee production, cooperative organization, Fair Trade, and women's rights and this will have impacted women's insights as well. Finally, this research was conducted near the end of the coffee harvest and close to the time that most coffee producers would begin to receive payments for their coffee. This is likely to have influenced the women coffee producers' perceptions and experiences of Fair Trade and of coffee production more generally.

Additionally, this research was conducted in Spanish, which is a second language for me. I took measures to address this limitation – such as opting to employ a Nicaraguan colleague to transcribe the interviews and focus groups and reviewing translated quotations with a native Spanish speaker – but it may have created limitations for the research in the field as research participants may not have felt that they were being understood or may have adapted their words so as to facilitate my understanding instead of reflecting the complexity of their experiences.

The delimitations of this research arise primarily from the decision, taken to maximize the potential for learning and to ensure that a rich and detailed description is produced, to use a single case study design as opposed to multiple cases. Although la FEM is a revelatory, unique, and critical case (to use Yin's (90) terminology), there are nonetheless limitations that arise from this methodological decision. Because I am using only one unique case, the perceptions, experiences, and aspirations for Fair Trade shared by the women are intricately linked to their context and history and may not be representative of the experiences of other women in Fair Trade. Still, because the goal of my research is primarily to write women into the Fair Trade discourse and to give a voice to women rather than to generalize or combine experiences into a single, homogenous sentiment, I feel that this is not a major concern. The use of the Longwe empowerment framework (74) as well as the framework adapted from Labonte and Torgerson (69) also begins to address these delimitations as it allows locally relevant, grounded information to be inserted into a wider research dialogue with a common language and a common gaze.

Additionally, I did not design this study to be a conventional impact assessment and it therefore does not fulfill the call made in existing research to explicitly assess the impact of the Fair Trade criteria. Rather, this study takes one step back to explore the important foundational issue of what women experience in, and expect from, Fair Trade. I contend that assessing the gender equity principles of Fair Trade is a misguided endeavour if it is not clear that these principles represent women's hopes and aspirations for Fair Trade. Although impact studies certainly provide a context for my research and will likely inform the women's stories, my focus remains on describing the meaning of Fair Trade, gender equity, health, and empowerment based on women's experiences.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS FROM THE FIELD

The overarching research question that underpins this project is: what are women's perceptions, expectations, and aspirations with regards to Fair Trade certification? As discussed, this question is linked to a broader objective assessing the potential for Fair Trade, and alternative trade more generally, as an action on the social determinants of health. The findings from the field, therefore, have two complementary objectives. First, women's perceptions, experiences, and aspirations for fair trade are shared. Second, to set the stage for the discussion and synthesis of these findings, women's conceptualization of health is presented. To begin, however, I will briefly set out the context for both of these objectives by introducing "the story so far", or women's experiences prior to becoming involved with la FEM and Fair Trade.

In all sections, the primary source of data is the workshops that were carried out in each coffee-growing community as well as the individual interviews conducted with several women. There was high consistency in the findings between dialogic focus groups and individual interviews, including those interview participants who did not attend the focus groups, so I have not specified the source of each quote. Unless otherwise specified, as in the case with some excerpts from written workshop posters, the quoted excerpts were all verbal. Where appropriate, I draw on field observations and notes but these remain largely secondary to the interviews and workshops.

4.1 The Story So Far

One of the most salient themes that emerged from the data on women's experiences of and aspirations for Fair Trade was the perception that Fair Trade is one part of the ongoing story of each individual's life. To better understand these perceptions and aspirations, then, it is instructive to introduce "the story so far". When asked about their experiences before becoming involved with la FEM and before Fair Trade, the women shared stories about a past most often characterized by exploitation and marginalization. With their involvement with la FEM, however, and through their participation in cooperative and collective organization, the women noted that their lives have been changing. These changes are especially evident in terms of building knowledge and becoming visible participants in a variety of productive domains.

4.1.1 “What We Knew was Unfair Trade”: Exploitation in the Past

Several women in the communities shared stories of exploitation and marginalization in their past. In the context of coffee, this exploitation took place primarily at the hands of the male owners of large coffee farms, though some women referred more generally to a past of male domination. Women felt that their labour and time were exploited and not properly rewarded, often speaking in financial terms. As Reyna⁹ shared, “...in the past, we did not know fair trade, rather, what we knew was unfair trade...” For most women, although it was implied that the exploitation was not gone, their current situation was perceived to be better than before. Juana felt that she could dream again and felt that she was no longer living a life of dependency and slavery. Interestingly, she also felt that her past experiences were similar to those of many men in the community:

...I think that the dreams are different now [than before] because at that time we worked for the landowners but we did not have any achievements. The only achievement that we were left with was our wage. We went to work for a week, we would receive our wages every two weeks, we would buy daily [necessities] for our home and then we were left with nothing [...] The same thing happened even to men, because they worked in the haciendas and nobody had anything planted [for themselves], not a shrub nor corn, and nobody cultivated anything, they only earned money to buy food for the house and it was a life of bondage (slavery).

Maria noted that these past experiences of exploitation – experiences that were demarcated as occurring before the women became organized – were not gender-neutral, but rather were characterized by the domination of men over women in several spheres,

...well, before being organized, like the other women mentioned, some of the women worked for large landowners, [...] individuals that have large amounts of land, other [women] were cooks, and some of us lived subordinately to what the men said.

Often times, the stories of exploitation and hardship in the past – experiences which are neither forgotten nor vanquished completely – were told in narratives that defy quotable excerpts. In one community, Isabel shared the story of her youth. She described the labor that she did as a child as “slavery”. She began to work in a hacienda at the age of 8 in order to contribute to the survival of her family. These were long days that began at exactly six o’clock in the morning, meaning that she had to wake up at four o’clock. If you were not at work by six,

⁹ I have used pseudonyms in this chapter.

you would be allowed to finish off the week, but she noted that you would no longer have a job the following week. Although this was Isabel's personal story, a few other women in the workshop confirmed that it resonated with them as well. The best description of this condition was provided by Isabel's colleague who bluntly confirmed the story by interrupting her to say "we were exploited".

Set against this exploitative past, Fair Trade is seen by many women as a success. The word "*logro*" (achievement or accomplishment) was frequently used to describe Fair Trade. As Teresa shared with the group, "...we are not selling the coffee like we did before, when we sold it at street prices. Selling it through the fair trade market is an achievement we have had." Interestingly, most women relied on the feminine, first personal plural pronoun (*nosotras*) to discuss their perceptions of Fair Trade as a success story.¹⁰

4.1.2 "We as Women are Being [Slowly] Uncovered": Invisibility in the Past

Another perception of the past shared by women is that they felt invisible. They felt shut out of various spheres, such as the economic or productive sphere, and felt trapped in the home (the domestic or reproductive sphere), where they were not seen or heard. In the context of coffee production, this meant that women were shut out of income-generating activities, that they did not learn about coffee production, and as a result, they feel invisible in the story of coffee. After hearing a brief history of the coffee plant, Carmen shared that she does not see women reflected in the history of coffee, and that this invisibility carries on today for many other women.

...I think that the history of coffee, it comes from afar and we almost do not see ourselves reflected in it because although we have worked and everything, that was working for other people. As women we did not have that opportunity to cultivate our own parcels of land [...] there are some of us (women) who produce coffee but for the majority, there are only the large [landowners], like I was saying, in the patriarchy it is customary that only the males could do things.

Fatima felt that this patriarchal history is being turned around, and that women are becoming important visible components in various spheres from which they used to be shut out. She says,

¹⁰ In some cases, the women even created feminine versions of words that do not have feminine equivalents, like "*miembras*" to refer to female members of cooperatives (the correct Spanish word would be *miembros*, regardless of the member's gender).

...to me, it is like a history that is turning itself around [...] and I imagine that just like coffee was uncovered little by little, we as women are being [slowly] uncovered: we can also work and we can do the jobs that we had been told that only men could do. [They also said] that a woman could not be a businesswoman either, and today we can become and aspire to be businesswomen.

At several gatherings and events, the leaders of la FEM discussed gender as a social construct that can, as such, be deconstructed. Gabriela perceived the increasing role and participation for women as an example of this deconstruction, noting the way in which women have started to overcome this past invisibilization and how they can continue to do so,

...before, only the men had a right to produce, to get into the farm and to do productive activities. Now we [women] do all of that, therefore it is a deconstruction [...] I think of the way that our ancestors were educated, they were taught with the vision that only they [the men] could produce and so I think that with a lot of training, one can deconstruct that and have a better [...] gender equity.

4.1.3 “They Have That Support and They Feel Strong”: Becoming Organized

Another significant event that helped bring the women to where they are today was the experience of becoming and being organized. For most women, this meant being organized as a cooperative while for some others, it meant being organized as a collective as well. In all of the communities, being organized into a cooperative preceded involvement with Fair Trade but the cooperatives have continued to evolve since, accepting new members and, recently, discussing the possibility of joining together into a “union” of cooperatives which would give the women more control over various processes, including the FLO label which they currently obtain in partnership with a separate “union” of cooperatives. The role of cooperatives for Fair Trade, the future, and for health will be discussed later but it is important to note the role of cooperatives in the story so far as well. For Omara, becoming organized with other women as the foundational group for la FEM was a major milestone in her life story, sharing that

...At that time [around 1995], 12 women organized ourselves and started the struggle. [...] From then on, we have been freeing ourselves from that slavery – and we are not saying that it is not [still present] – but we are getting there and the story is long, [and] as Orilia said, the history of coffee is quite broad [and] there are painful pasts as well...

At a more local level, becoming organized as a cooperative gave the women access to knowledge, support, and a market that did not exist for them in the past, as Elena mentions

...the women are now saying that now that they belong to the cooperative [...] and are organized with the coffee, they feel more responsible, more supported. Why? Because in the past they sold the coffee to people, businessmen who exploited them. And now that they are organized [in cooperatives], the women process the coffee, market the coffee, and they know that there is a cooperative that will pay for it at a better price [than before]. They have that support and they feel strong...

4.1.4 “I have Learned that Which I Could Not Do Before...”: Education and Knowledge

For many women, the past was one of illiteracy and, in terms of the coffee trade, a lack of knowledge of production and processing practices. They characterize their lives in the past number of years (the years preceding Fair Trade) by a rapid growth in basic education and the acquisition and sharing of other knowledge in areas of health, gender, agriculture, and more. For some women, like Darling, this began with an introduction to basic literacy that has since flourished into the ability to assume various roles for the cooperative and for the community. Like many other women in the community, she acknowledges that although both the overall change process as well as the advancement of knowledge are moving forward, they are long, slow processes. She notes,

When I started, I started from nothing. I first began with the education group, I began to learn to read and to write because I did not know how. When la FEM came here to the communities, I did not know what it was to read or to write because parents hardly ever set that up for children. So this was my achievement that I had because things do not happen overnight, they are a lot of work [...] So that was the process, I was learning, and learning to value the new [skills], to raise consciousness [of women's roles] in the family, in the home, it was a lot of work, this, little by little...

As it relates specifically to coffee, several women identified and valued the knowledge that they have gained from their involvement in the cooperative and with la FEM. Whereas in the past many of the women did not know how to process coffee, they have learned to do so together to the point that la FEM and the Las Diosas brand now have some women trained as coffee roasters, which allows the women to control and carry out the entire coffee process from start to finish for the local market (roasted coffee beans are not exported, only green beans are). Patricia details the process of change and learning that has taken place in her life, sharing

This is a process that I have learned. I was not born a coffee producer, but through organizing myself with the women, I have learned that which I could not do before and now I am doing it. All of this is a process, a change in my life – to be a coffee producer, to have access to the Fair Trade market, to the

international market and the local market in Estelí, and to work on the farm jobs and to make fertilizers, all of that is a process of change in us women – a process that you will not see in women in other parts [of the country].

Here, as before, one can see that many of the women supported by la FEM acknowledge that they are in a unique position compared to other women across the country, many of whom they feel are still living in the aforementioned world of exploitation and domination that characterized the women's own pasts. Manuela notes that the development of knowledge related to coffee is a great success for the women, one of many that they have had together,

Another success that we have had is that before, they used to fool us because we did not know how much coffee one manzana would yield, how much we could cultivate. We did not know because we did not even go to the mills or to where they de-pulped the coffee cherries. But now that is not the case because now it is we (women) who go. We also know the quality of the coffee that goes to the drying mills and that which does not go we keep here to consume and so I say that this is also one of the successes that we have had...

4.1.5 “We are Very Grateful for la FEM”: The Role of la FEM in the Story So Far

For several women in each of the communities, la FEM is perceived as playing an important role in their life stories. For each of the important elements of the past that the women identified – including overcoming and continuing to fight exploitation, being made visible in various domains, advancing their knowledge, and becoming organized – la FEM was perceived as having a role to play. The perceived extent of that role differed between women. For some, la FEM was perceived to be largely in control of the process and directing the story while for others, the role was more that of a catalyst – putting women on a path and then letting them, as a collective or cooperative, continue onward and make their own way. Manuela felt this latter way, as she described her own newly acquired knowledge of the coffee process and shared that “...in fact, all of this we owe to la FEM because it is la FEM that directed us towards these points and from here forward it is just a matter of continuing onward.” Jacinta sees la FEM's role as indispensable to her experiences of change in the past, sharing that

...I thank la FEM because if it were not la FEM that saw us and that made us visible, we could not be organized women and we could not have formed a cooperative because if we were alone, we could not have [done] anything...

Thanking la FEM was a very common occurrence in the communities, regardless of whether any member of the technical staff was present or not. Luisa thanked la FEM for their

assistance in helping the women to escape the control and domination of the intermediaries in the coffee trade,

We are very grateful for la FEM because it is them who help us to move forward, because they helped us to obtain a fair trade, because before [fair trade], they [the coyotes] would take our coffee, and it was a steal for them.

These findings are not meant to suggest that the women of the four coffee-growing communities share a homogenous background. There are, however, a common set of broad, systemic challenges that the women faced, such as exploitation, invisibilization, and illiteracy, that they are continuing to fight. It is in this context that women's perceptions of, aspirations for, Fair Trade need to be situated. We now turn to these perceptions.

4.2 Perceptions and Experiences of Fair Trade

When asked about their perceptions of Fair Trade, women expressed a range of opinions. Positive aspects of Fair Trade were discussed and celebrated and challenges with the system were identified and shared. I have attempted to represent this range of perceptions and experiences in the sections below. I begin with two notable findings: the first describing women's views that Fair Trade is one step in an ongoing process and the second introducing the idea held by several women that Fair Trade requires prerequisite knowledge and capacity in order to be accessed. This latter finding is especially surprising because it counters the dominant narrative that Fair Trade brings knowledge and support to producers and instead suggests that Fair Trade requires that producers have substantial knowledge and support from the outset. Following this, I share women's experiences of the Fair Trade standards and end with an exploration of women's perceptions of pricing and valuation in Fair Trade as well as a summary of the other challenges that the women identified.

A note on terminology will be helpful in avoiding confusion in the following few sections of findings. As noted, when I use the capitalized term Fair Trade, I am referring to the certification initiative organized and monitored by FLO. When the term is not capitalized, as in fair trade, I am referring to broader ideas and a more general system of alternative trade. For the most part, women's perceptions and experiences are related to Fair Trade while their aspirations and visions for the future refer to fair trade.

4.2.1 “We See Another Dream [Realized]”: One Step in an Ongoing Process

The women coffee producers perceived Fair Trade to be part of their personal development and empowerment experience and not as a separate, or separable, initiative or intervention. Rather, Fair Trade is an experience that is interwoven into each individual's unique life story. As noted in the preceding section, this story, before la FEM, before being organized, and before becoming involved in Fair Trade, is one of perpetually moving forward and continuing to fight against oppression and marginalization. Fair Trade is perceived as a step down this road. As Carmela shared:

Fair Trade is a good help, because without Fair Trade, we would fall – we would fall backwards because we would have to go back to giving away our coffee again, they would take it from us cheap. Now that we have Fair Trade, we know where we will turn in our coffee... We do not want to turn back, we want to continue forward and strengthen ourselves as a cooperative...

Martha considered Fair Trade to be another accomplishment for the group of women as well as another link in the value chain that they have established, as she says “...we see another dream [realized], the achievement of being able to be trading with Just Coffee and being in Fair Trade which [...] is one more step in our value chain...”

4.2.2 “We Have to Have a Lot of Knowledge Accumulated”: Prerequisites for Fair Trade

A particularly noteworthy and surprising finding is the perception among women that Fair Trade requires prerequisite support, knowledge, money and organization in order to be accessed. Based on their own experience, many women feel that they would not be a part of Fair Trade if it were not for the leadership role taken on by la FEM in finding and entering the market as well as in paying for the certification. Perla notes,

...before being organized [...] we did not know how to export coffee, nothing. We sold it to intermediaries (coyotes). Since you are talking to me about the market and the movement, to me the movement would be like la FEM who sought us out, sought out a path for us, sought out a market for us and said ‘women, this would be good for you, you can do this’. And they not only said you can, but they also put us in the market. So I don’t know if this is right, but to me, the movement sought us out, introduced us to the market, and did all of the paperwork and procedures for us, everything so that we could sell our product. That was la FEM because we did not know anything about exporting, nor did we know anything about the market or fair trade. We knew none of that.

Some women also felt that Fair Trade requires, rather than results in, a high-level of specific knowledge and actions. In order to comply with the requirements of the inspectors, the cooperatives need to be well-organized and knowledgeable in various administrative areas, as Emma notes,

No, the certification does not provide us with knowledge but rather we have to have a lot of knowledge accumulated to present it to [the inspectors] – for example having the bookkeeping, having the [work] plan; having everything in order for when the inspectors come...

The women's perceptions reflect my own sentiments when I first read an explanatory document published by FLO that attempts to lay out the steps for farmers and organizations wishing to become involved with Fair Trade. In my field notes, I wrote:

In the Fair Trade explanatory documents, a few things jumped out. First, the 20 steps that they offer to producers to outline the steps towards certification are ridiculous. They are complicated [and] I could barely understand them (I am admittedly unfamiliar with coffee and cooperatives, but I like to think that I have pretty good reading skills and English is my first language).

It is worth mentioning that during the course of my fieldwork, the FLO inspectors did come to inspect a sample of the various cooperatives in the union of cooperatives that la FEM partners with to obtain the FLO label. I was not able to attend the inspection or the debriefing, but from the stories that I was told after the fact, the inspectors praised the women's cooperatives for their orderly and organized bookkeeping and records while asking other cooperatives in the union to improve their own administration. This was a point of pride for both the rural women and the technical staff at la FEM.

The knowledge perceived to be required for Fair Trade runs deeper than technical knowledge, however, as Elena shares her perception that the very concept of Fair Trade needs to be studied, debated, and discussed among the women, just as they have done in the past with the concept of gender-based violence.

...What is fair trade? As my *compañera* was saying, as rural women, we are not very clear on that – for example, when we talked to each other for the first time about what violence is, or how many types of violence exist, we did not know then. But now, with the progress we have had by participating in many workshops, we are clear on what violence is, how many types of violence there are here, and what violence can be. So this is how it can be with coffee. In order to better understand it, I think that we [need] to learn what fair trade is and what the entire coffee process is...

4.2.3 “They Make Do With It”: Fair Trade as Better Than Before

Women’s perceptions of Fair Trade were varied, as I will illustrate below, but a common finding that sits behind many of the remaining perceptions of Fair Trade is that the Fair Trade system is a better market and trading situation than the women experienced before. Whether the women perceived and experienced Fair Trade predominantly as a blessing or as a challenge, a number of discussions demonstrated that Fair Trade, especially in terms of price, was better than before. Yadira discussed this idea in her community, sharing insights from her group’s discussion:

The women said that currently they feel that they are being paid a price for their coffee that is “more or less”, not good, good. But, they said, they make do with it because [...] they are being paid a little bit more than the market they sold to before.

The perception that Fair Trade does not properly value and thus reward the work that the women are putting into the coffee was widespread, and is more fully discussed later, but even in this context of inadequate valuation, there was an acknowledgement that the price was nonetheless better than before. Two women discussed this in their community, noting that though fair, the price could be better,

Carolina: It is fair but not that fair because it is not an adequate price. If we start considering all of the numbers from the whole process that happens on the farm, it is not that fair.

Luisa: That is true. People do not give us the value that we deserve based on the process that we do. It is a big job for women and it is not that fair.

4.2.4 “Fair Trade Helps”: Contribution to Development

The perceived impacts of Fair Trade, especially the higher price and social premium associated with the label, were widespread. In different communities, women perceived Fair Trade to be playing a role in sending their children to school, strengthening the cooperative, improving food security, and more. There were perceived impacts of Fair Trade at personal, family, and community levels. In one community, Berta perceived Fair Trade to play a direct role in providing an education for her children and noted a future for women with Fair Trade that she did not see before.

...so the premium is a help for things that we need: for school supplies, getting kids ready for school, sending kids to class. Fair Trade helps because before, we did not have Fair Trade, ‘fair’ trade was people coming, weighing

your coffee, and taking it [at a low price] and we had no choice. Not now. Now we have a market that takes our coffee at a better price, we get a better price for our coffee. Before, they would take our coffee for 1,000 cordobas, maybe 800 and that was it, while Fair Trade pays what is fair and pays the full price and that is why I say that we are prospering with our coffee.

She went on to note later in the interview,

This market (Fair Trade) is to help us out with the coffee production because at least Fair Trade is a help in our children's education; [...] it is a small help that they give us so that the kids can succeed in their studies because we cannot support their education due to a lack of work [outside of coffee], we only have the small bit of land that we work as a family to sell coffee and have something to eat...

The social premium was also seen as important at the cooperative level, since in most cases that money goes directly into the cooperative's own account. This money is crucial in supporting the cooperative and, as one of the cooperative administrators mentioned, is also therefore helpful in supporting the longer term activities of the cooperative in carrying on its vision and mission.

So far, we have seen [Fair Trade] in this way [as a way to continue fighting] because they say that if the FLO label is not there, then they will not give us the social premium, which is the only thing that supports us to capitalize the cooperative...

Elena sees Fair Trade as holding great potential value for other communities as well, sharing her view on the more direct relationships that many women perceive to be an important component of Fair Trade.

[Knowledge of Fair Trade] has not spread because there are still people near here where we live, for example, with no organizations, nothing. There are women who have coffee who are producing it and selling it to intermediaries. As soon as they have produced it, they sell it because they have to and they don't know anything about the market or Fair Trade – because if they did know, they would not sell it that way [to intermediaries].

In several communities, although the women did not know the specific standards, once they heard them, they felt that the standards did resonate for them and they saw their experiences reflected in them. As Teresa notes:

...there are some standards that escape us, but looking at them in this way... the most that we have worked on is to have equity and transparency and, as she said, to look for this development that we need as much in ourselves as in

our families and the community. We also contribute to the social development outside of our organization because, as we said, we support other women who also ask for help. As for transparency, we know that the money that the cooperative gets, everyone in our families sees and then we decide what we can do with it. The use of non-discrimination is another thing [that we also do]. All of that is what we are doing in theory and we are doing it in reality as well – we are not only saying it.

One perceived community level impact that also came up was the fact that the women were hiring, and paying fair wages to, workers in the community during the coffee harvest. Maria felt that the Fair Trade standard on contributing to development resonated very well in the cooperative, sharing her perception that

To me, [the Fair Trade standards] seem to be good. The first one says that it helps us to contribute to development. We know how to look for development. I like this first standard because we are looking for development – not backwards but rather to improve. I believe that we are all interested in that – that is why we are organized into cooperatives on the path to development because if that was not the case, we would not be in capacity-building activities, we would not be organized...

4.2.5 “It Helps to Evaluate if we are in Order”: Fair Trade as a Check

For some women, as well as for the technical team at the head office of la FEM, Fair Trade was seen primarily as a system of checks and balances on the efficient and effective functioning of the cooperative. One of the technical advisors working at la FEM mentioned to me that to him, the value of Fair Trade was in insisting on certain paperwork and practices that the cooperatives have already been trained to keep or do. In the communities, this view was reflected in the perception held by several women who felt that Fair Trade was more of a logistical concern, or simply a set of standards to be completed. Gloria took this one step further to echo the view of the la FEM technical staff, noting that the Fair Trade label serves a monitoring type of role,

I think that [the Fair Trade label] is important because it helps to evaluate if we are in order and if we are in harmony with the cooperative. Also, to see how the communication is and if we are in harmony with the environment.

In one community in particular, this perception of Fair Trade as a set of standards to be followed was expressed with more frustration, with Teresa sharing her perception of the importance of Fair Trade and organic certification.

Vince: And are these standards, processes, or certifications important to you?

Teresa: In order to market our coffee, we have to comply with that, but we know how we are making the coffee, cultivating it organically, but these are points that they demand in the coffee trade – that if we do not have the Biolatina [organic] label or the [FLO label], then they won't take our coffee. [...] So we have to comply even though we know that we are farming organically.

4.2.6 “For Me, My Valuation, I Feel that it is Still not a fair trade”: Value and Fair Price

As is evident in several of the quotes shared herein, a common theme that arose when women discussed their perceptions of Fair Trade was the idea of value and recognition – what is Fair Trade valuing, who is assigning the value, and what should be valued? The concept of valuation was central to women's aspirations for a fairer trade as well and there was widespread discussion of the perception that, although it is better than their experience in the past, the current Fair Trade system does not properly value women's efforts. Many women feel that the price that they are paid for their coffee, which is an indicator of how the coffee is valued, is too low and not commensurate to the work, money, and effort that they invest in the production of coffee. Virginia discussed how the coffee producers evaluate the price that they are paid and felt that with the minimum price as it is, producers are not left with enough money.

...we make a budget, from the moment that we plant the coffee, the entire production process [...] And so a fair trade is when I am covering all of the costs and I am left with a solvent profit. That is fair trade. But they (compañeras) are telling me that they still have costs even though they have sold the coffee... so I am not, we are not yet, it is not yet a fair trade because (Reyna: the money left over is little).

Although the price for their coffee is seen as better, several women in different communities disagreed with the term “fair”. When they reacted to the idea of “100% Fair Trade”, three women shared their view that while the work they do and the coffee they produce is fair and high quality, the price that they are paid is not,

Mariela: Sometimes, if we analyze the prices that exist, [we see] that it is not that fair. The effort that the women put into the coffee, from the start, the coffee-picking, [...] it is not that fair because the price stays very low. But the quality of the coffee is fair – I would say that [the quality] is fair.

Sara: We are heading towards fair trade, from what I understand, but not 100% (fair trade).

Vilma: The price that we are paid is not 100% fair, but the coffee is 100% quality.

As the start of that exchange notes, the women perceive Fair Trade and the minimum price to be excluding a number of the inputs that go into their coffee. This was a very common perception. As Julia notes,

...despite the fact that they pay us a good price, it still is not 100% fair trade. Because if we give you the list of expenses that we have, from picking the coffee [...] and even before that [picking] we take care of the coffee tree: we apply fertilizer, we clear the brush, prune the trees, all of this maintenance that we do for the coffee so that the tree bears this fruit. So this is the whole set of value that we give the coffee, and for it to reach a price as it says here of “fair trade”, for me, my valuation, I feel that it is still not a fair trade or fair pay, [...] being in cooperatives, certified, and everything – giving it this pile of value – putting all of this into the coffee. For us, it is not 100% fair trade...

The end of this statement is particularly interesting as it points to some women’s perception that being organized into a cooperative adds value to the coffee in and of itself (in addition to the more quality-oriented inputs discussed in relation to fertilizers, caring for the plants, processing the coffee, etc.). Susana added another dimension to the perception that non-coffee oriented inputs should be valued, noting “Also, that they value [the coffee] for the fact that it is women who produce it.”

The work that women perceive should be rewarded by a “fair price”, but that currently is not, includes their work and efforts outside of the production and processing of coffee. Mercedes shares that she appreciates the higher price and has used it to help her family, but that the extent of her work, which in this case occurs in the household, justifies a higher price,

...I feel very proud to be working in coffee because it is from there that we are getting the fair price at which we are selling, it is from there that we get all of the income to send children to school. I pray to God that there could be a higher price – higher because from the moment that we wake up [...] we work for our bread, and it is an enormous effort...

In addition to discussing their perceptions of what Fair Trade is valuing and what it should be valuing, several women also discussed who or what they perceive to be responsible for assigning value to their work and their product. In several communities, value is seen to be attributed by the label and FLO itself, with one group of women noting that fair trade “...is a label to distribute products that values the effort, work, and quality” and Sara noting her view that “[the] FLO label is that which gives the value to the product.”

For other women, however, value should arise from within, with the women themselves valuing their work and assigning value to the elements that they find important.

And with the organization, we women are organized, we value ourselves. For example, [...] if one is talking about coffee, we will not only talk about the coffee bean or the coffee tree, rather we are family, we talk about whatever we talk about and we consider ourselves (as women).

Johanna talked about the relationship between these two attributers of value, sharing her perception that,

...they say that if we are not a part of the FLO label, then they would not give us the social premium which is the only thing that helps us to capitalize the cooperative. But we were thinking of proposing that people believe in us that, yes, we are managing our parcels organically and managing the environment organically and that through this, then, they would believe that yes, our coffee is valuable because of the work we do and not because of the label.

This points to a perceived tension that exists in some communities between the Fair Trade label and women's sense of self and value. This tension will emerge more clearly and be explored more deeply in findings on women's aspirations for fair trade and the discussion section.

4.2.7 “All of Those Labels are Very Expensive”: Specific Challenges in Fair Trade

In addition to these concerns regarding the valuation of their coffee and their efforts by the Fair Trade label, some women identified additional challenges that have emerged through their experience with the FLO label. Many of these concerns, like those raised with the minimum price and the value attributed to their coffee, are fundamentally linked to the notion of “fairness”, with women stating that their experience may be good, but it is not fair. One particular aspect of Fair Trade that was perceived as unfair was the requirement that the producers or the cooperatives pay for the certification costs.

It is also not that fair because [...] we have to pay to be in Fair Trade. We need to have two labels, we need to have the Biolatina [organic] label and the FLO label in order to be able to sell to Fair Trade. That is why I say that it is not that fair because all of those labels are very expensive. We as small cooperatives could not afford to pay so we had to make an alliance with the UCA Miraflor (union of cooperatives) [...] and other cooperatives in order to afford to have the FLO label. That is why I say it is not that fair.

In the case of the four cooperatives supported by la FEM, the organization provides some financial support for these certification costs. Nonetheless, since many of the women perceive the future of the cooperative to be one of self-sufficiency and autonomy, they see the cost of the certification falling to them in the future and note that this will lower the price that each producer receives for their coffee.

Another factor that lowers the value that Just Coffee pays us is the payment for the organic certification [...] We can say that la FEM has supported [us] during all these years in paying the costs of certification, but as cooperative members, it will fall to us to pay that. That harms us – it lessens the price of each quintal because we have to pay for certifications – both Biolatina and the FLO label.

In one community in particular, Fair Trade certification was perceived in a relatively negative light beyond concerns related to cost and pricing. A few women in this community perceived Fair Trade as being something imposed on them from outside of the community. They described the standards as “obstacles”, redundant, and as not being a result of their choice. Gloria touched on several of these elements when she noted that,

...through picking the coffee, de-pulping it, and everything, we also go through a certification process and without this certification, we cannot pass to that point of Fair Trade, because if it does not go with the Biolatina [organic] label or the FLO label, they (the buyers) will not take the coffee. These are obstacles put on trading that if those three things are not included, we can't [pass to that point of Fair Trade]. As producers we have to comply with all of those standards in order to reach where the trade is...

In one community, after discussing the perceived value of their coffee and the role of the label as predominantly a monitor of activities that they are already doing, Darling questioned the need for the label. She questioned the need for standards when a transparent, trusting relationship between the buyer and the cooperative could ensure that the ideas of the Fair Trade label, such as cooperative organization, environmental sustainability, non-discrimination, and transparency, are nonetheless followed. A discussion with one of the directors of la FEM who was present at the workshop led to the realization that with the label comes the social premium, which plays an important role in supporting the cooperative. This seemed to satisfy Darling's concerns with the label and, for her, served as a justification for continued involvement in Fair Trade.

4.3 Aspirations for fair trade

In light of women's experiences and perceptions of Fair Trade, and in keeping with the mission of la FEM to empower rural women as they become protagonists in all aspects of their lives, the question becomes: where to next? The aspirations for fair trade shared by the women in the communities are instructive in detailing what fair trade should look like and what values should underpin the alternative trade system. They also describe a new mode of valuation and pricing based on the entirety of the women's experiences, both inside and outside of coffee. As noted before, Fair Trade will refer to the FLO system of certified products while fair trade will refer to broader notions of alternative trade.

4.3.1 “What is Your fair trade?”: Characteristics of fair trade

Women's descriptions of fair trade according to them – their hopes and dreams for alternative trade in coffee – included several elements. Notably, women described their vision of fair trade as being characterized by a direct and close relationship between themselves and the consumer, support for small cooperatives, especially women's cooperatives, the provision of high quality coffee, recognition and better valuation of the role and efforts of the women producing the product, and fairness for consumers. When asked about their aspirations for fair trade, virtually all of the women described the trade in partnership terms, acknowledging the importance of reciprocity, rather than simply asking for a higher price to be paid. It is important to note that these five characteristics – which were all mentioned by a number of women in different communities – affect all of the stakeholders in the coffee trade and includes an acknowledged responsibility for the women themselves (in continuing to produce and deliver high-quality coffee).

A key element of women's aspirations for fair trade is the existence of a direct relationship between producers and consumers with as few intermediaries or middlemen as possible. A small group of women in one community noted the importance of coffee consumers and buyers coming to meet the women producers to see how their coffee is produced and to develop a more personal relationship. Here, the importance of a close, direct relationship was not discussed in financial terms but was rather presented in terms of solidarity. The group noted, “The characteristics of a fair trade are better prices, solidarity, fairness, that there is interest in knowing the people that produce the products, and having a good relationship [between producers and consumers]...”

The perceived importance of this close relationship may be based on experience, as two major buyers from the United States did visit the women in the communities during my fieldwork experience. For other women, the hope for more direct relationships in fair trade was related directly to financial fairness for both producers and consumers.

...the direct relationship between the consumer and the producer is very valuable because a lot of the time, the cost of the intermediaries is where most of [the price] stays, and so in that way [with a more direct relationship] we can get a higher income and that is a support, a recognition of the effort of women, the effort of the cooperative, and that is why we say that fair trade is a relationship that should exist between the producer and the consumer, because that would be fair for us and fair for whoever is consuming the coffee as well.

Women's aspirations for fair trade also included a central role for women in general and a more explicit recognition of women's contributions to and efforts in the production of coffee. In two different communities, women's discussions on "what is your fair trade?" described the need for fairer trading systems to include and recognize women. In the community of Dipilto, the women included this aspiration amongst other considerations regarding fair pricing, work conditions, and the way the coffee is produced, and wrote:

What is your fair trade? To be fair during the production stage; organic coffee; fairness and equity; selling at a better price (a fair price); to receive a better price; to deliver high quality coffee; to value the coffee; to value the fact that it is produced by women; good work conditions for the producers...

In the community of El Jocote, a different group of women discussed their wish for a fair trade that takes women's needs and experiences into account. They shared: "What is your fair trade? To not have obstacles with certifications; to take women into consideration [and] value their work; to give more opportunities to small women's cooperatives..."

This group also noted their visions of a fairer trade that is more open to and gives more space to women's cooperatives. Cooperatives were perceived to be an important element of fairer trading systems, but this did not appear to refer to cooperatives in general. Rather, the women discussed their hope for a fair trade that supports small cooperatives of women. One group noted,

What are the characteristics of your fair trade? A direct relationship between producers and consumers; transparency in management and export processes; recognition of women's efforts [and] the quality [coffee] that they offer; support for small women's cooperatives.

4.3.2 “Fair trade is Something that is Well Paid”: Pricing and Value in fair trade

A very important aspiration for fair trade articulated by the women coffee producers is the desire for a more appropriate and accurate valuation of their coffee, which they feel would result in a higher price being paid for their coffee. This relates to the perception that the current system of Fair Trade does not take into account the entire coffee production process or the effort put forth by women in adding value to the product and as a result does not reward the women adequately. The perception of undervaluation by the current model of Fair Trade was introduced earlier. In this section, I share women’s aspirations for what should be valued, how it should be valued, and what that means in terms of price.

The most common aspiration for fair trade was the hope for a better price and a better recognition of women’s efforts in coffee. In one community, Marisol noted the direct link between fair trade and the price that is paid. When asked what she thought fair trade should be, she replied, “that the person selling the coffee is not being exploited [...] not being swindled. That what they are being paid is fair. Fair trade is something that is well paid.”

The notion of what a fair price might be was never discussed in terms of definite financial figures (i.e., in dollars and cents), but was rather linked to the idea of fair trade appropriately and adequately valuing the work that the women put into producing coffee. Several women spoke about the importance of educating buyers and consumers about the extent of the coffee production process and the role of fair trade to recognize the expansive workload that goes into coffee. Mercedes shared her group’s discussion, noting,

One [characteristic of fair trade] would be that the work that we do be recognized and valued. In other words, that people see what we do, the entirety of the coffee process. And being valued means that it is well-paid, that it is not just a little bit...

Veronica echoed this aspiration, sharing her group’s perception that a fair price is one that takes into account the entire coffee process, which the group felt is not in line with their current experience.

What is a fair trade? To sell at a good price, fair price; that the work in the entire coffee process is valued and recognized; that there is no violence and exploitation towards women. [...] We women organized in cooperatives would like to sell the coffee at a fairer price than that at which we are selling it now.

4.3.3 “Regardless of the Coffee Beans...”: Recognition Beyond Coffee

This last statement makes a noteworthy inclusion of fair trade including the end of violence towards women and the exploitation of women. This highlights a broader aspiration that was common in several communities, which was that fair trade should consider, recognize, and value efforts that occur outside of the realm of coffee. When asked what fair trade should look like, Rosa and her work group noted, “What is fair trade? It is a market that recognizes and values our efforts in the transformation of the land and our lives...” These life transformations begin at a very local level, and Inez describes a link that she sees between fair trade and equity in the household, noting,

...I say I am fighting for fair trade, I am fighting for my life! [...] So I say that [it is about] leaving the kitchen, not being only in the kitchen. Fair trade leads us to a better life with equity and fairness where our rights are respected, where the rights that we have are experienced in our homes as well. We should not remain only producing, and producing like slaves, and making fast money; no, fair trade is improving our lives more permanently. Bertilia: And so we are valued as women and producers; we are owners of our products, of our surplus [...] we decide what we will do...

In a different community, Teresa also expressed the idea that fairer trade should value experiences that are not directly associated with coffee, sharing her group’s discussion and noting,

What is fair trade? We responded that it is the chain of values and principles that we (women) exercise regardless of the coffee beans but rather that considers the effort of the women, we who have joined together as a cooperative so that we can place ourselves within the markets.

It was Inez again who hoped for fair trade to be incorporated into the broader feminist movement and the broader goals of the women in their community. She perceives a fairer system of trade as part of an ongoing fight against structural and systemic forces that are dominating and marginalizing women. Fair trade, if it is to be fair, cannot ignore these forces and must work to address them and to infuse them with the same values that it hopes to instil in the trading relationship.

We say that fair trade is where the work and effort of each woman is recognized, in order to break this patriarchal system and the domination that turn us into nothing. [Fair trade is] where we as women live without violence and that we are not only in the kitchen. That we are not only in the kitchen and that domestic work is shared. To us, that is fair trade. Because [...] if we

are producing and selling fair trade coffee and we are [still] dominated and mistreated, that is not fair trade...

4.3.4 “Solidarity, Equity, Democracy...”: Values and Principles of fair trade

In addition to describing more measurable and observable characteristics of fair trade, like direct relationships, the women also described a number of somewhat intangible aspects in their aspirations for fair trade. Unlike the other elements of women’s aspirations for fair trade, these concepts are more like base values and principles that should underlie fair trade and upon which the other, more observable aspects of fair trade would be built.

These values frequently came out as lists. When asked to discuss in a group what they considered to be characteristics of fair trade according to them, Sara shared the results of her group discussion, listing “Quality, quantity, fairness, equity, cooperation, opportunity, [and] producer-consumer relationships without intermediaries” as characteristics of fair trade. Here again, one can see the importance of direct relationships but more central in this list are values such as fairness, equity, and cooperation.

In a different community, similar values were described as essential to fair trade. When asked the same question, what are the characteristics of your fair trade, Rosa presented her group’s response, sharing,

Well, we wrote down this: solidarity, equity, democracy, [...] to be women’s coffee, to have a good production with good quality, to fulfill the contract that we make, [...] to fulfill the recommendations of the certifications that we have, to fulfill the requirements of the FLO label.

Solidarity is a particularly important value as it seems to be fundamental to a fair producer-buyer and producer-consumer relationship. It is again worth noting that even in aspirations for fair trade, the women see themselves as having responsibilities and a central role in this trading relationship. In Rosa’s group’s aspirations for fair trade shared above, the women still perceive themselves as having a contract to provide high quality, certified coffee and consider fulfilling that contract to be an element of a system of fair trade.

Perhaps the most important unifying element in women’s aspirations for fair trade, given the diversity of characteristics and values described as being desirable features of fair trade, is the fact that the women see themselves as capable, informed key stakeholders and as protagonists in the process of defining fair trade and working towards making that happen. The characteristics and values of fair trade introduced above provide a vision and a path for the future

of fair trade, but ultimately, fairness can only be assessed by the producers and by the women on the ground.

4.4 Hopes for the Future

In detailing women's perceptions of, and aspirations for, fair trade, a question that arises is: What is all of this aiming towards? We have seen that the rural women coffee producers supported by la FEM perceive Fair Trade as part of their life stories and embed it into their lives. Women's aspirations for fair trade involve changing trade to align it with their own vision of fairness, of self-value, and of moving forward. This raises the question, however, of where is this road heading? What are women's hopes and dreams for the future, both inside of the context of the coffee market and outside of it? These visions of the future are the focus of the next section.

4.4.1 “There is More to Travel”: Continuing Forward

A number of the women described the future as simply “carrying on” or “continuing forward”. The women see the process as an ongoing one and many wish to continue in the direction that they are going. Teresa notes that her ambitions for the future are “...to keep on working hard, to never go back. Those are our hopes. To carry on until God takes us.” Similarly, Erica sees the women's lives as a road that is far from over, noting “...we have travelled part of the road and there is more to travel...”

As Erica notes, with her use of a plural pronoun, for many women this road ahead, like that which they have already travelled, is one that is to be taken as a group. To this end, many women saw their future as being one to experience together with their family and the cooperative. Teresa pointed out the centrality of her family in her planning for the future and shared that

My hope is one day – you know that one thinks of the family – is to educate my family, to make over my house in order to have a decent home and, like they say, to prosper [...] I have the hope that through the cooperative, we will do something, we will not stay where we are, we will carry on...

4.4.2 “Alone, Nothing Can be Done”: Importance of the Cooperative and Being Organized

The importance of the cooperative and of being organized described in that preceding excerpt is something that shone through in women's aspirations for the future. Being organized was seen as an important way to help attain goals as well as being perceived in some cases as a prerequisite to achieving them – with the women acknowledging that alone, little further

progress would be possible. In two different communities, both Imelda and Julia articulated this latter perspective,

...because if you do not get organized [into a cooperative], you will always live the same way. In having an organized cooperative, you have some hope of prospering because if we are alone, without being in the cooperative, then [we] will not prosper...

...I think that always fighting together with the organization we will accomplish everything that we want to, because alone, nothing can be done.

In another community, Perla shared the importance of the cooperative for the future by detailing the activities that being organized and being united brings to the group. More than access to markets and improving production capacity, she sees the benefits of cooperation in terms of the knowledge sharing and learning that it brings, noting that “to be organized is very important, because in this way, everyone united, we share, we learn, and we achieve many things that we do not achieve [alone] in our homes.”

4.4.3 “That We Can Decide and Act For Ourselves”: Autonomy

Given the centrality of the cooperative in women’s aspirations for the future, it is important to note women’s hopes for the future of their cooperative. Sara sees the road ahead as eventually leading to a future of autonomy and self-sufficiency for the cooperative. She acknowledges the central role of la FEM in the effective operation of the cooperative at present, but, given where the cooperative started and the direction that it is going, sees a future where the cooperative can exist and thrive without la FEM. She notes,

...currently, [...] as a cooperative, we are still being supported by la FEM, so I think that one day, continuing the way we are, we can become autonomous, so we can manage our own [change] mechanisms, but for this we have to go on working little by little on the ideas, strategies, and objectives that each one of us proposes...

At a more foundational level, some women hoped for a future wherein they are autonomous and in control of themselves. After describing the domination that some women are experiencing at several levels, Blanca shares her group’s vision for the future in which the women feel firmly in control of their coffee, their income, and their lives.

That we can decide and act for ourselves, to feel in control. [...] Sometimes, women are dominated by their husband, by our parents, by the society in which we live, and so we would like to do something [but] we don’t do it because we want to please other people. [...] To feel in control is when we

can decide and say that this coffee that I got is mine. It is not my husband's, I will not wait for him to give me a quarter of it or half of it, but rather it is mine. I will go sell it and I will spend the money how I want. I will make myself pretty. I will get teeth [dentures]. I will dye my hair. I will do whatever I want. Let us be owners of, of (Diana: of ourselves)!

This striking example of what some women would like to do with the money they earn from coffee links very well to an anecdote that one of the directors of la FEM shared with me. In describing what it means to be empowered and to be in control of one's life, she shared the story of a woman who, upon receiving her payment for her coffee, went to have her teeth fixed. This woman chose to do that because that is what she thought she needed to do in order to live a happier, better life. To la FEM, that is indicative of an empowerment and sense of control as the woman feels that she has the power and ability to spend money on herself, to make herself happy.

4.4.4 “To Improve Production but also to Improve our Lives”: Coffee-Specific Hopes and Resulting Changes

When women discussed in small groups what they wished to accomplish with their coffee, they shared a diversity of dreams and ambitions for the future. In many cases, the women's hope for their coffee in the future was that it receives a better price than they have been receiving for it. With that aspired-to increase in income, several women described changes that would result in their life, from improving their homes and supporting their education and their children's education to food security, improving health, diversifying their land, and obtaining more land. Sharing her group's aspirations for the future, Juana notes,

First, we want to get a good price – one that truly is the fair price – because with this we could better maintain our parcels of land. Also, we want to improve our living conditions, have a decent home, good health, [and] education for ourselves and our children...

Similar to Juana's perception above, Carla felt that her aspirations for coffee were grounded in fundamental values of fairness and equity.

What do you want to achieve with your coffee? To obtain better earnings in order to improve our standards of life [...] To have a better market [...] with fairness and equity. To improve production but also to improve our lives. That there is fairness and equity and that our work is recognized.

Although the initial question that solicited many of these responses was framed in terms of coffee (what do you want to achieve with your coffee?), it is important to note that most of the women's hopes for the future involved activities that are not directly related to coffee. The interconnectedness and interdependence of coffee-related aspirations and more general life goals is evident in several responses that move from specific aspirations related to coffee production, such as an increase in yield, to broader goals such as breaking down gender inequities and patriarchal structures. One group notes,

What do you want to achieve with your coffee? That it is sold at a better price; that the trade is fairer; valuing the efforts that women put forth to achieve trade; that gender inequalities and power relations get broken; to have a market; [...] to maintain and improve the production of coffee for export.

In another community, one group's poster moves seamlessly from broad life goals to specific coffee objectives and then back out again to a wish to change societal ideas of womanhood and gender roles. When asked to write what they hope to achieve with their coffee, the group made a list that read,

To make our dreams come true. To produce more coffee than we are currently producing. To have our own mills and our own company. To be able to decide and act on ourselves. To feel in control. To become more familiar with coffee production and to not be stuck in the home [with the idea] that we were only created to reproduce.

4.5 Health

In linking these findings to the overall objective of health equity and assessing the potential for fair trade as an action on the social determinants of health, it is instructive to describe the women's own conceptualization of health so that these linkages may begin to be made. The perception and experience of health by women coffee producers on the ground demonstrates a broad conceptualization of health as a multi-faceted lived experience with a number of determinants. Health is intimately connected to a number of aspects of the women's lives, including the natural environment, their cooperative, their family, and their community. The coffee production process, from planting the coffee trees through to selling the beans and investing the income in whatever way they choose, has several links to health as well. The determinants of health discussed by the women are perceived to have both direct and indirect impacts on health, and sometimes both.

The material circumstances most frequently linked to health and happiness in the communities were income and the environment in which the women worked and lived, namely one characterized by organic production and cultivation methods. These two determinants of health were discussed by women very frequently in a number of different contexts and communities.

4.5.1 “Because it is Organic, We Live Healthily and Happily”: Organic Production and Consumption

Women placed a lot of importance on organic production as a determinant of health and, conversely, the use of chemicals and non-organic inputs as a determinant of ill health. As Reyna noted in a workshop,

...those of us that are organic producers are living with good health... I think if we used chemicals, then we would be sick, but actually because it is organic, we live healthily and happily, with energy to work...

In addition to the importance placed on organic production, a few women also added that organic consumption was equally important for health. Susana notes, “...if we consume organic things, organic products, we live healthy lives, whereas if we consume things with chemicals, we live sick lives and, at an early age, [our bodies] will fail.”

Similarly, in an earlier exchange, the links between production, consumption, and health were again made very explicit.

Vince: And how do you achieve good health?

Patricia: Well, managing the whole crop organically, consuming what we produce on the farm, that is how we achieve it.

The impact of organic production on health goes beyond the individual and is perceived by some women at a broader level. This broader level includes the perception that organic production improves the health of the family and the community, but also the perception that being involved in organic production is part of a larger fight against transnational corporations, patriarchal institutions, and harmful structures in society. Regarding the former, Juana notes, in regards to organic production, “...we are keeping our health, the health of others, and the environment in general because we are not contaminating...” In a different community, Sara noted very similarly the broader impact of organic production on health in not only her community, but in the other communities where the cooperatives are working,

...organic production is to protect our lives, [the lives] of others, as well as to protect the life of animals, birds, the environment, and in that way we are contributing [...] in our community and the communities of the other women...

Beyond the lived impacts of organic production and consumption, some women, and la FEM as an organization, feel that identifying themselves as organic producers aligns with their values and with their ongoing battles against larger structural phenomena. As an organization, la FEM situates organic production as one of many activities that it supports and undertakes in order to combat structural inequities. An excerpt from a field note written after an event for International Women's Day at the headquarters of la FEM illustrates this point, as I reviewed the day's events, writing:

[one of the directors of La FEM] was also highly and vocally critical of the dominant neoliberal economic system that she said was inherently grounded in these gender roles and in patriarchy... This system is an adversary that FEM and the communities have to combat with each small step. Every organic plant, she said, is a step against this neoliberal domination and its consequences.

One of the most frequent observations that I made in the field was the diversity that characterized each and every parcel of land owned by the women. Although this study focused on coffee, this was not the only crop being grown by the women. In amongst the coffee trees and on other sections of the land were several other crops, including, but not limited to, bananas, oranges, beans, cabbage, and corn, most of which were being grown using organic production practices. Although this might be due to the requirements of organic certification, the women also placed a great deal of emphasis and pride on organic production and valued it in and of itself.

4.5.2 “The Women are Always Happy Because They Have the Money for the Basic Needs”: Income and Health

The link between income, especially income from coffee, and health was identified in several of the research settings as being extremely important for health. This is discussed in a number of senses, including gross income acting as a sort of safety net to reduce vulnerability and income acting as a preventive mechanism to decrease exposure to factors causing ill health. In two different communities, similar ideas were shared along these lines.

...when we are producing coffee, that is the time that we have money. We have money, but don't think [that everything is smooth], sometimes we live through crises, sometimes we do not have [money for] food and we do not have anywhere to get it from. When we have that coffee production, there is everything. There is rice, there is everything we need, we bake, we make bread for our family, we also take advantage [of the opportunity] to go to the doctors for any issues we have because that is the moment when we have money and afterwards, we are left with nothing, waiting for the next year...

I imagine that, for example, there are some producers' houses that are in bad shape, so with that income they could improve their homes. Also, here the years are variable – there are years that are good and years that are bad in the winter, there are periods that the corn and bean yields are good, and periods that they are not – so in the periods where these crops do not produce well, it is with the income that comes from coffee that one buys food for their family.

Aida noted that the coffee harvest is a happy time for women because it allows them to join into the economy and, through coffee, "...the women are always happy because they have the money for the basic needs."

Income was also seen as being more directly related to health, rather than the relationship being mediated by an increased access to items such as medication, housing, and food. In one community, where the link between happiness and health had been discussed, in response to being shown a picture of a smiling coffee producer from a cooperative in another community, Inez noted pointedly "The more she picks, the more money, so she gets happy when the basket is being filled."

Another perceived facet to the link between income and health is the importance of control over income. In the words of Omara,

Although it is now common to see women picking coffee or participating in coffee production processes in many coffee farms, it is not as common to see such smiling faces because for many women, we go to work the land for others and we may not have the same conditions there as I would working on my own land. In addition, the landowners will pay me whatever they want and for that reason I think that it is important [...] to have the land in our names, to have possession of that piece of land, even if it is just a small parcel you already feel more satisfaction in knowing that what you are picking, or what comes from this land, will be yours...

This quote demonstrates not only the importance for health – here discussed in terms of "smiling faces" and "satisfaction" – of controlling one's own income, but also draws attention to the role of land ownership and autonomy for health.

4.5.3 “She is Nobody’s Worker”: Control and Health

In the context of Fair Trade and coffee production, two psychosocial determinants of health – locus of control and social support – were discussed with moderate frequency in various communities. Although these determinants were not discussed as frequently as income or organic production, they were nonetheless perceived to be factors that influence health.

The importance for health of being in control, or perceiving that one is in control, was already introduced in the presentation of the findings on income but some women took the concept of control further, describing the importance of controlling one’s own land, life, and body as well. In the realm of coffee production and Fair Trade, control is seen to have an important relationship to health. As Perla notes,

...even in this community there are many women who, as my daughter said before, have picked coffee for [other landowners] since they were young girls. This is not the same as this woman [in the picture] picking her own coffee, knowing that the basket is being filled, that the bag [of coffee] is being filled, and that means money in her pocket. That, then, is the difference between being a labourer for another coffee farmer and being the owner of your own coffee. There is a big difference for me, it is a beautiful experience and that is what she is reflecting in her face, in her smile.

In that same workshop, Carmen continued this discussion about the importance for health and happiness of being in control, sharing

I say that she is happy because it is not the same picking coffee in a hacienda that is going to take away one’s money... [and] one’s own [land] yields more because she is selling the coffee and she has more benefit. That is why she is happy – because it is her own, she is nobody’s worker.

In a different community, this idea of owning one’s own land and controlling one’s own income was described in terms of autonomy and freedom. This was well illustrated in one exchange,

Juana: ...She has her farm and she is happy and she does not have anyone to order her around

Ana: No, she does not have anyone to order her around...

[...]

Juana: She is free, she is free...

4.5.4 “We Are Out with Other Compañeras, Chatting, Making Jokes, Laughing”: Social Interaction and Relationships

In the same realm of psychosocial circumstances, the concepts of control and autonomy are perceived to exist alongside social interaction and relationships to promote health and development. This latter concept is introduced below and is followed in the next section with a more thorough exploration of women’s perceptions of the importance for health of being organized and being in a cooperative.

The coffee production process in all of the communities was presented as a very social, joyous time that was perceived to be good for the women’s health. Bertilia described this interaction, noting “...what happens is that while one is out doing this work, we are out with other compañeras, chatting, making jokes, laughing, everything...” In a different community, Carla shared a similar sentiment as we walked through her land together,

No, [the coffee process] isn’t difficult and I love doing it – it is beautiful, there is happiness, we live in an environment of harmony, chatting, conversation, happiness. When I go to pick coffee, sometimes I bring a radio for music and everybody sings.

In one workshop, the women also discussed the mechanisms through which this joyful, social atmosphere may be impacting health. Specifically, women talked about having the ability to share, to problem solve, and to go to one another for support.

...sometimes when I come to these workshops, it brings me happiness and helps me... I hear them talking like we are doing here and that [negative] thought that I have leaves because we are sharing everything that we feel, what we are, what we do, so the [negative] thought leaves because, because one shares it...

This supportive nature of the group impacts more than just happiness and touches on more profound levels of health, as Rosa noted later in the same workshop,

...sometimes for example a woman is in her house, completely emotionally sick with problems but, for example, in the group, one comes to the group and this person talks and that person talks, and so that person who is feeling sick emotionally becomes happy. I think that for emotional and spiritual health, in many ways there are changes in the relationships of us women.

Although a number of women did explicitly discuss the link between social relationships and health in the coffee realm, this link could be observed as well. The women, in addition to being members of the same cooperative and the same community, are also very close and very

friendly. A meeting would not take place without some sort of initial sharing, socializing, or conversation. This group of women – especially those living in the same community as inter-community linkages do not happen very frequently – are not simply business partners or members of an organization, they are also (or at least they act as though they are) friends. Although certain women, namely those that are on the administrative body of the cooperative, are in relative positions of power over the other cooperative members, this power differential did not visibly manifest itself during my time in the field, which was characterized predominantly by very cordial, friendly relationships.

One additional explicit health benefit that cooperative participation and membership appears to offer is knowledge (through access to and participation in workshops and seminars). Many of the women spoke evocatively of workshops that they attended in their community, around the country, and outside of Nicaragua. The knowledge gained at these events – from organic production methods to gender-based education – was described as being linked to health. As Emma noted in an exchange as we walked around her land,

Vince: And all of your pieces of land are organic or?

Emma: Everything organic

Vince: Is that important for you?

Emma: Yes, very important for health. Very important for health because there are no chemicals here, it is only organic fertilizer. All of that is very important and since I became part of the cooperative, it has been great for me because one learns to make fertilizers and everything.

In a different community, another woman shared a similar story about how she has learned about the existence and properties of various medicinal plants as a result of being organized into the cooperative. In that case, the mutual learning and knowledge-sharing supplemented a base of knowledge that had already been built up through knowledge passed down within a family.

4.5.5 “Those of Us That Do Not Produce Coffee are Happy Because it is the Same Success”: Solidarity and Health

The concept of solidarity was especially prominent in discussions of the women’s experience of Fair Trade as well as their aspirations for the concept of fair trade, but some women also perceived linkages to health that are worth noting here. Depending on the context and on the woman’s particular point of view, solidarity could mean solidarity among all women

around the world, among the women of la FEM, among women in the local community, or among all community members, regardless of gender.

One experience of solidarity and its relationship to happiness and health was shared in a workshop in one of the communities where coffee is not grown extensively. The community leader had invited a number of women who are not directly involved in coffee production to attend the workshop. These women, despite only growing a little bit of coffee on small parcels of land (often attached directly to their homes), participated in and contributed to the workshop as much as the women with larger parcels of land devoted to coffee. One of these women captured a dimension of this solidarity, as she described the successes that the cooperative has experienced since its inception before noting that,

...It is not FEM, either [that is controlling the coffee process], it is us, the women cooperative members, that are buying and exporting and those same women members that are producing the coffee. And those of us that do not produce coffee are happy because it is the same success, the success of the cooperative.

Solidarity among all women, articulated as a pride in producing women's coffee, and a desire to keep the coffee process local were also linked to health and happiness for Erica, as she shared,

...if I go to pick coffee at Marie Elena's, clearly I will go happy because I go as a woman to pick coffee that will be produced by a woman. But, for example, when people leave [the community] to pick coffee, emigrate to pick coffee, it is not with that same happiness.

4.5.6 Concept of Health

The link between various determinants and health are experienced and lived by the rural women coffee producers. All of these factors – income, organic production, control, autonomy, social support, organization, and solidarity – are perceived to play a role in women's health, wellbeing, and happiness. Although two of these factors, income and organic production, were more commonly mentioned as determinants of health, discussions of those other determinants took place in workshops in different communities, which seems to indicate that they are neither isolated nor individual ideas. This conceptualization of health as a multi-faceted, complexly determined experience was well-summarized by Veronica, who said,

I see that she is happy because, well, firstly I imagine that that smile reflects many things: [...] that she is the owner of her own land; that the coffee that

she has is producing well; that she says that she is organized and that she is already filling the basket and that means that she has quite a bit of production and so she is very happy because she is filling the basket.

4.6 New Conceptualization of fair trade

In light of these conceptualizations of health and women's perceptions of Fair Trade, their aspirations for the future, and their visions of a fairer system of trading coffee, there is evidence that Fair Trade needs to be reconceptualized for this group of rural women in order to become an effective action on the social determinants of health. As several of the interview and workshop excerpts above note, this group of women acknowledge that their experience is different from other women and from other coffee producers, but that should not be seen as a reason to discount their perceptions and aspirations. Rather, it should serve as an indication that if Fair Trade has empowerment and development as its objective, rather than aid, charity, or paternalism, then its objectives inherently call for a re-thinking and re-interpretation of Fair Trade that starts from the ground up.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

This project began from the premise that Fair Trade may represent an important potential action on the social determinants of health. In order to gain a better understanding of this potential, and to shed light on experiences of empowerment, health, and gender equity in Fair Trade, this thesis project was guided by the overarching research question: What are women's perceptions, expectations, and aspirations with regard to Fair Trade? Three sub-questions were also identified in order to guide the inquiry. These questions were:

1. Does Fair Trade need to be reconceptualized for women?
2. What are the impacts of la FEM's empowerment and conscientization activities on women's experiences of Fair Trade?
3. What are women's experiences of health in relation to Fair Trade?

In this discussion, I hope to bring to light the synergies that exist between health, Fair Trade, and fair trade. In describing these synergies, gaps appear which I believe hold great promise for the future of Fair Trade and other alternative trade initiatives in their pursuit of health equity, gender equity, and empowerment. Framing these issues in Longwe's empowerment framework (74) and the adapted globalization and health framework (69) provides a valuable lens in which to situate these future directions.

It is clear that Fair Trade is acting on certain key determinants of health. However, women's aspirations for fair trade illuminate several limitations to the existing form of Fair Trade as it is manifested on the ground. In order to be a truly sustainable and equitable action on the social determinants of health, Fair Trade must be experienced as more closely integrated into women's ongoing empowerment experiences. This appears to be where Fair Trade falls short. Women's experiences demonstrate strong linkages between elements of welfare, income, and Fair Trade, while their aspirations reveal that truly empowering control and equity remain, at present, aspirations.

In terms of women's experiences of Fair Trade, there are five areas that have been previously identified in the research literature where my methodological approach and findings come together to provide valuable insight. First, my findings highlight the importance of incorporating producers' voices into the Fair Trade discussion and speak to the need to broaden or challenge the definition of producer being used in Fair Trade discourse. Next, I explore Fair

Trade's potential and actual impact as an action on the social determinants of health aiming to promote gender equity, empowerment, and health. These insights introduce a crucial issue facing Fair Trade: the problematic and uncertain relationship between participation and empowerment. Longwe's (74) framework provides invaluable guidance here as I explore the meanings of those concepts in terms of women's experiences of, and aspirations for, Fair Trade. I then examine the role of contexts in mediating the relationship between Fair Trade, empowerment, equity, and health, and, guided by Labonte and Torgerson's (69) adapted framework, discuss the importance for Fair Trade of addressing broader, more structural issues. Finally, I address an issue raised by Lyon (40) as I end with a short discussion of the role of women's groups in Fair Trade and what they signify for the movement.

5.1 Producers' Voices

Importantly, this discussion is based on the experiences and aspirations of women coffee producers in rural Nicaragua. Producers' voices, especially women's voices, have been an important but missing component of the discussion on both the social determinants of health as well as Fair Trade. This occurs despite the fact that it is producers, the voices on the ground, that are best capable of informing and assessing action on the social determinants of health. As Vanderhoff Boersma (18) notes, coffee producers – and I would add women coffee producers in particular – are “in a privileged position to see the real nature of the problem”. (p. 59) These voices also “offer an alternative vision, a utopian perspective in the best sense of the word.” (18)(p. 53) The utopian vision and experiences shared by women in women's cooperatives are particularly important to explore and share because these may represent a reaction to perceived inequities in Fair Trade markets.

One of the issues involved in representing producers' voices and women's voices is that the language of “producer” and “farmer” can be problematic and needs to be carefully considered within Fair Trade standards and FLO's discourse. As Longwe (74) writes, one problem with initiatives like Fair Trade is that

the target group is often treated as an undifferentiated group of ‘people’ without recognizing the special needs of women; more likely, and worse, a male biased vocabulary is used to describe the target group which becomes ‘men’ rather than ‘people’: in this way the women of the target group actually disappear from sight – and from thought. Typically a project document describes the Third World farmer as ‘he’; but in actuality, the Third World farmer is usually a woman. (74)(p. 149)

In general, Fair Trade does use gender neutral language in its standards and documents but, by interacting with pre-existing assumptions, this may nonetheless render women invisible – a phenomenon that many of the women of la FEM had experienced in the past. The women’s conceptualization of a new fair trade included the specific and explicit acknowledgement and recognition of women’s coffee, women’s cooperatives, and women’s activities. This will, however, require a change in the assumptions that surround the terms “producer” and “farmer” in Central America.

By using potentially problematic language like “producer” and “farmer” without questioning the underlying assumptions and pre-existing endowments available to those groups, Fair Trade may be limiting its scope. As some women of la FEM noted, in order to access Fair Trade, they needed to accumulate knowledge and expertise in areas of production and organization that has historically been unavailable to them. By requiring this background before even entering Fair Trade, and assuming that all “producers” have this experience and backing, the system of standards and certifications is overlooking the obstacles to education and production opportunities that women have faced and continue to face.

5.2 Synergies between Fair Trade, Empowerment, and Health

When they are compared and contrasted, women’s experiences of Fair Trade and their aspirations for fair trade reveal important insights regarding Fair Trade’s actual and potential impact on health. There are valuable synergies perceived by women between Fair Trade and health in terms of environmental pathways, income, and cooperative organization. Women’s conceptualizations of health, however, also include the determinants of control, autonomy, and solidarity to the constellation of factors perceived to be influencing health. Importantly, these elements are not currently being experienced in Fair Trade but are instead situated as central elements of women’s aspirations for fair trade.

The environmental pathways connecting health and Fair Trade include a reduction in the use of chemicals, better crop diversity, the production and use of organic fertilizers and the subsequent recycling of organic waste, and the more efficient management of water. Women saw these practices as important to their health as well as the health of their families and communities. These practices are also seen as an integral part of the certification initiative for coffee production and as an important and desired element of an aspired-to fair trade. These

environmental pathways are also explicit minimum and progress requirements in the FLO standards for Fair Trade. It does appear, therefore, that environmental pathways provide an important synergy between health and Fair Trade, both in terms of women's current experiences of Fair Trade as well as their aspirations for fair trade.

A second linkage between health and Fair Trade being experienced by women occurs in relation to income and household expenditures. Although the women argue that neither their coffee nor their work is being fairly valued and recompensed, they do agree that their current experience as Fair Trade coffee producers is nonetheless better than their previous involvements in the coffee industry. As a result of the extra income from Fair Trade, women were able to spend more money on health care needs, improvements to land, education, and, importantly, themselves. Economic considerations are a central tenet of FLO's standards and can be seen in the requirements related to the payment of a minimum price, the social premium, and the provision of pre-harvest credit. Beyond income's perceived link to Fair Trade, however, the women also identified income as a key determinant of their health. They discussed income as both a safety net in case of adverse health events as well as a means to prevent illness and reduce exposure to illness-causing events.

A final linking element that women identified in the pathways between Fair Trade and health is cooperative organization. Cooperative organization is a prerequisite to Fair Trade involvement, with the FLO standards noting that small-scale coffee producers must be organized into cooperatives in order to be a part of the Fair Trade system. In terms of cooperative organization, the women of Las Diosas perceive and have experienced Fair Trade on the ground primarily as a check on their organization and as a means to verify their organization's administrative capacities. As it relates to health, women identified very tangible impacts of the cooperative and the broader organization (la FEM) on their health – such as the open sharing of concerns and the facilitated access to reproductive health services – but they also articulated intangible health impacts of organizations like social support and a sense of community.

Women's perceptions of Fair Trade reveal strong linkages between Fair Trade and health, which are connected through environmental pathways, income, and cooperative organization. There are, however, important, revelatory synergies between women's hopes for fair trade and their conceptualizations of health that demonstrate the limitations of Fair Trade with regards to health. While women see control, autonomy, and solidarity as determinants of their health, they

did not report seeing these elements in their current experiences of Fair Trade. However, these elements do appear in women's aspirations for fair trade.

When these findings are framed in terms of the adapted Labonte and Torgerson (69) framework, Fair Trade's perceived strengths and weaknesses are situated in relation to one another in an interesting way. While the linkages between Fair Trade and health occur predominantly within household and community contexts, linkages between fair trade and health occur predominantly within global and superordinate contexts. In other words, based on women's perceptions of Fair Trade and their conceptualization of health, Fair Trade is having an impact on proximal determinants of health, but is not having a strong perceived impact on structural determinants, which women also see as important. This lack of synergy between conceptualizations of health and experiences of Fair Trade beyond the cooperative and the community may be indicative of the current inability or unwillingness of the Fair Trade system to act on broader contexts and ideologies that impact health, despite women's hope that it may act on those areas as well. The Fair Trade standards and certification system prides itself on acting on the trade processes, not just the production process, so it is not unreasonable to expect it to act on, or at least comment on, things like direct marketing, government policies and World Trade Organization trade rules.

In particular, women's hopes for fair trade are that it be a trade relationship that values their activities more comprehensively – a valuation that includes fully acknowledging women's role in the entire production process and valuing women's efforts outside of the sphere of coffee production ("regardless of the coffee beans"). Women's aspirations for fair trade also include more direct relationships with traders and consumers, overcoming traditional gender roles and divisions of labour, gaining control over land and resources, and addressing daily challenges, like violence against women.

5.3 A New fair trade

For women, fair trade is a part of their story and a part of their fight. As a result, fair trade initiatives¹¹ must acknowledge the entirety of the women's situations and the systemic

¹¹ It is simple to dismiss the ideas of a "new fair trade" based on women's aspirations as fantastical, but it is important to recognize that initiatives built around several of the ideas described in women's aspirations do currently exist. La FEM works with two such initiatives. Though both are focus on different aspects of fair trade and operationalize these values in different ways, their activities nonetheless resonate with women's aspirations for fair trade. The first initiative, Café Femenino, is described at length by McMurtry (99) and involves, amongst other things, purchasing and marketing coffee produced by women as a separate product from coffee produced by men

challenges that they have faced and, to varying degrees, have started to overcome. In order to be fair and to contribute to empowerment and health, fair trade initiatives must acknowledge the systemic challenges that exist for women in many coffee-growing communities – challenges like illiteracy, exploitation, and invisibility – and start from there. In the case of the cooperatives supported by la FEM, Fair Trade is being woven into this story and has positively impacted women's lives in part by drawing on the gains already made at more structural levels by la FEM and their multi-pronged approach to equity and empowerment. In communities where Fair Trade cannot rely on this type of complementary work, although it may provide some very tangible benefits in the way of income generation, environmental improvements, and cooperative organization, these benefits may not be able to withstand the pressures structural determinants of health – the distribution of power and resources (1) that would, in those situations, go largely unchallenged. Several authors have expressed similar concerns regarding the relationship between Fair Trade and inequities in broader power relations. (18,45)

Despite not being perceived to be acting on these structural contexts, it is important not to omit from the discussion the finding that Fair Trade was perceived in almost all cases to be “better than before”. There is less exploitation than before, better prices than before, and more direct trading relationships than before. But “better” cannot, and should not, be equated with fair or empowering. Fair Trade is clearly having an impact on health, but when empowerment becomes the health outcome of interest, several new dimensions need to be considered. Most notably, as women's experiences of empowerment become stronger – as they move forward in their roads towards, or fights for, equity – they will demand more of Fair Trade, much like the women of la FEM. The nature of empowerment described by Longwe (74) is such that while action at the welfare level of empowerment can act on immediate circumstances and household contexts to generate important changes in women's lives, as women's empowerment increases, and especially as women producers pass through consciousness-raising activities, women will begin to seek and demand more equity and control in Fair Trade. The women of la FEM have clearly demonstrated this and have articulated their demands for fair trade.

and thereby adding value to it – value that is shared with the women producers. The second initiative, Just Coffee, withdrew from Fair Trade and decided to engage in their own fair trade. Amongst other activities, they focus on maintaining direct relationships with small cooperatives, organize group trips to coffee communities, facilitate producer-to-producer travel exchanges, and, in the case of the Las Diosas coffee, use pictures of the women coffee producers on packages of roasted coffee, which is marketed as both “Las Diosas” and “La FEM” coffee.

5.4 Participation and Empowerment

Empowerment is a central tenet of this discussion and a stated objective of Fair Trade. One of the key limitations of Fair Trade, however, is the widespread use of the word empowerment without a clear or explicit conceptual definition. As a result, based on women's experiences and perceptions, Fair Trade is primarily impacting women's lives at a welfare level of empowerment, which Longwe (74) notes involves meeting women's basic needs but "is not concerned with whether women are themselves the active creators and producers of their material needs". (74)(p. 151) This active involvement involves higher levels of empowerment, as shown in Figure 5.1. This mirrors both Longwe's argument about development initiatives more generally (74) as well as Pollack's (51) findings when she analyzed the FLO standards using the Women's Empowerment Framework. Though the welfare level is likely to be empowering for women in certain situations, especially in those situations where very little equity or development work has been done, when empowerment is conceptualized as a process leading to control and justice, (73) action cannot remain static at the welfare level.

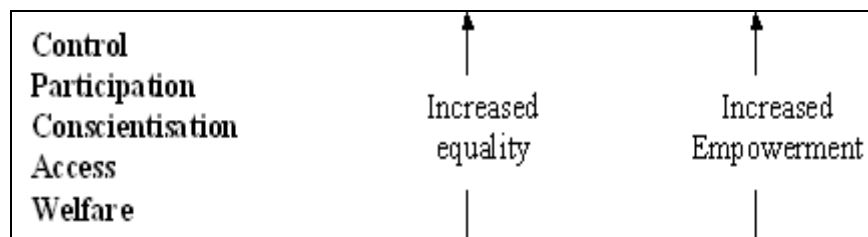


Figure 5.1 Longwe's empowerment framework (74)(p. 151)

Women coffee producers' aspirations for fair trade and their conceptualizations of health illustrate a desire amongst women to see fair trade move beyond welfare and towards control. Similarly, to be an action on the social determinants of health, fair trade should make more explicit commitments to equity in control and the entire empowerment process. It is higher levels of empowerment – moving towards the levels of participation and control in Longwe's (74) framework – that women do not perceive in their current experience of Fair Trade but do hope to see incorporated into a fairer system of trade. In particular, the women articulated their desire to see fair trade oriented so as to promote more control by expressing their hopes for such things as autonomy, opportunity, and equity in fair trade. Additionally, they argue that fair trade

should value how welfare is created and produced as they aspire for a more holistic valuation of their lives, work, and accomplishments both inside and outside of the realm of coffee production.

A focus on “control” instead of welfare will require a fundamental shift in the power dynamic of FLO and the existing Fair Trade system. Currently, decision-making power and control over standards and future directions in Fair Trade is in the hands of Northern stakeholders. (18,45) While this is not a significant concern at the welfare level of empowerment as long as material benefits are accruing in the community and for women, which does appear to be happening, truly empowering action on the social determinants of health must include more equitable power sharing. Practically, in order to develop a more comprehensive valuation in concert with consumers, traders, non-governmental organizations, and certification organizations, producers, and women producers in particular, must be considered equal partners. As a meaningful first step, Fair Trade and FLO should themselves become more democratic, representative, transparent, and accountable. According to Jaffee, (11) this remains a challenge for Fair Trade where

the legacy of colonialism that created the injustices underlying world trade continues to resonate, even within the alternatives that were created to redress these imbalances... [and] traces of this unequal history have been formalized into the governance structures of the fair-trade certifiers. (p. 228)

Dolan (45) and Rice (35) argue that Fair Trade’s apparent stasis at the level of welfare, coupled with the maintenance of control in the hands of Northern traders, corporations, and neoliberal market institutions, can be seen as the result of Fair Trade’s linkages to a market orientation. In their view, Fair Trade seeks predominantly to make free trade more efficient, not to transform it, and does so by “operating within the neoclassical paradigm”. (35)(p. 43) As a result, Fair Trade is ultimately promoting a problematic set of neoliberal economic assumptions and ideologies and therefore remaining “unable to address the underlying structures promoting women’s poverty and gender inequality in general.” (35)(p. 43) At the level of welfare, because the creation of wellbeing is not considered to be as important as the wellbeing itself, these underlying structures stay intact and assumptions remain unquestioned.

5.5 Importance of Contexts

In order for Fair Trade to become more closely aligned with women’s aspirations and hopes for the future, it must also work to act on these underlying structures that are contributing

to gendered inequities. Fair Trade already defines itself as unique amongst certification systems because it certifies the trade process, not only the production process. It is not unreasonable, therefore, for Fair Trade to negotiate standards or prerequisites for certain underlying structural issues like national policy, trading relationships, and land ownership as well.

In its current form, however, this is not happening. Fair Trade has taken economic processes and “unmoored [them] from social and political contexts”. (45)(p. 34) Dolan (45) argues that “the discourses of ‘empowerment’, ‘participation’, and ‘partnership’ that mark the inclusionary liberalism of fairtrade tend to mystify issue of ‘context and power’...” (p. 34) A new “re-moored” orientation is intricately connected to an explicit commitment to working towards higher “levels of equality” like conscientisation, participation, and control. (74) It is likely that a more explicit definition of empowerment – one that is fundamentally and explicitly linked to control – would by necessity “re-moor” Fair Trade to the contexts in which it operates because it is precisely those contexts where action would then be necessary.

The adapted Labonte and Torgerson (69) framework (Figure 5.2) provides a valuable framing for the multi-level orientation that Fair Trade requires if it is to move towards the equitable and empowering fair trade that women describe and aspire to. This new fair trade is characterized by maximal linkages to health and involves equitable control for all stakeholders. Framed in that light, while Fair Trade is making important contributions to women’s health at the household and local levels through its commitment to cooperatives, economic impacts, and environmental sustainability, in order to achieve this more profound change and empowerment, it must also aim to impact broader contexts where inequities occur and, in many cases, originate. As noted, Fair Trade has the capacity to work at these global contexts or, alternatively, to partner with organizations like la FEM that already do.

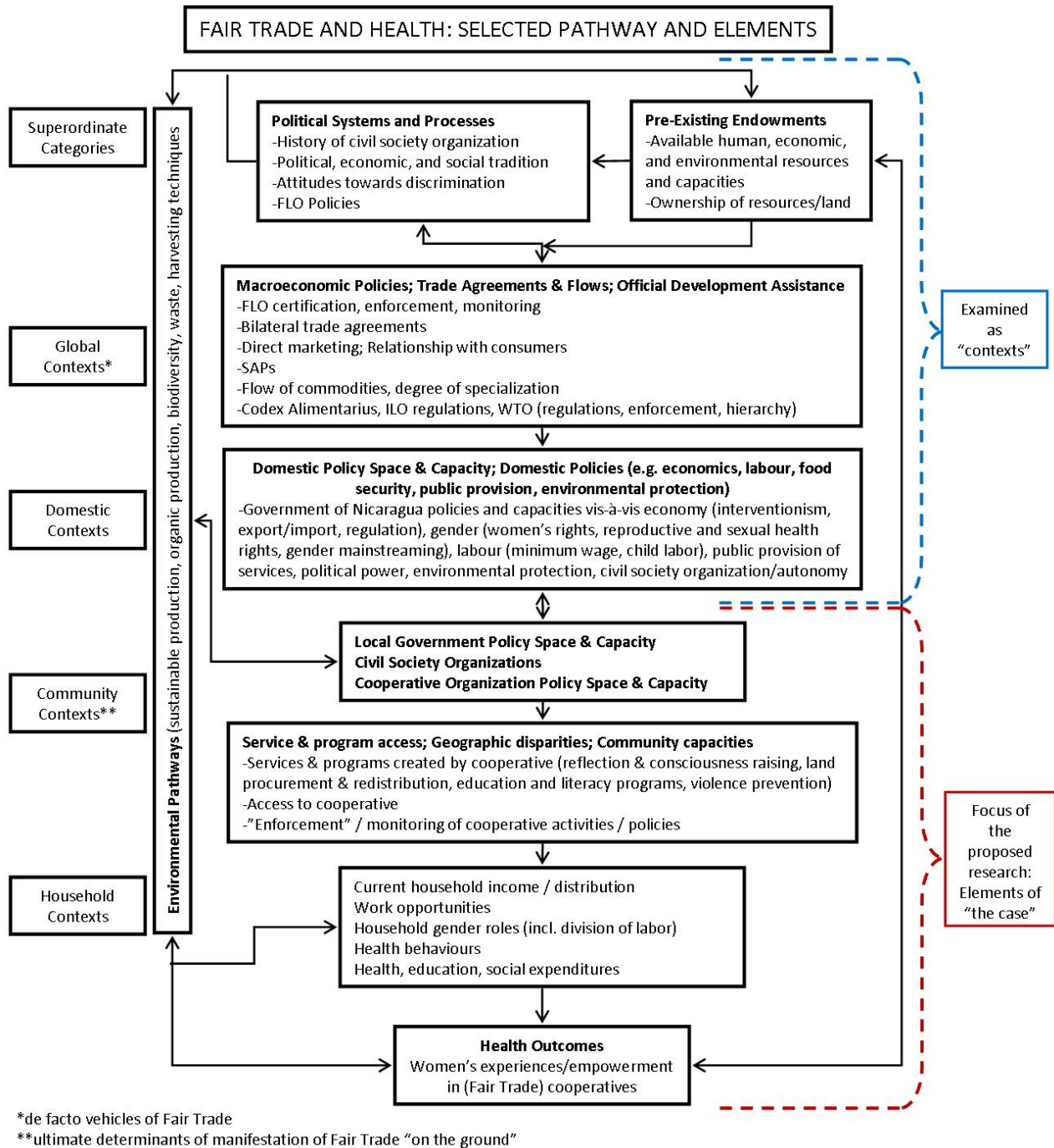


Figure 5.2 Fair Trade and Health framework. Adapted from Labonte and Torgerson. (69)

The women of the la FEM-supported cooperatives hope for more control, autonomy, and equity in fair trade and the adapted globalization and health framework provides a valuable tool to frame and direct this gaze. In particular, the women articulated their desire for Fair Trade to move beyond coffee and to value their experiences in areas outside of the realm of coffee and export commodity production. They also pointed to the need for fair trade to integrate an anti-violence focus and a challenging of household divisions of labour into its purview. The Labonte and Torgerson (69) framework provides valuable insight here, directing Fair Trade towards such pivotal areas as social norms and traditions, land ownership, and national government policies and programs. These areas influence health at a more structural level – they address the unfair distribution of power and resources – and are key contexts if Fair Trade is to become more empowering. Navigating these contexts may seem like a daunting task – and Fair Trade is by no means expected or capable of doing it alone – but a coordinated effort guided by an empirically-supported framework is an important step in moving past welfare and charity and towards true empowerment and control. In many ways, the women coffee producers’ weaving of Fair Trade into their lives provides an example of what this coordination could look like.

In their fair trade, women are demanding to be visible protagonists in the coffee value chain and this results in an important caveat for the Labonte and Torgerson (69) framework. In its current orientation, global contexts are related to more specific contexts, and ultimately to health, in a unidirectional manner. When empowerment (defined as a process leading to more control and justice) is the intended outcome of an action on the social determinants of health, however, then it must also be recognized as a source of upward pressure on broader contexts. In other words, as coffee producers, traders, and other stakeholders in a fair trade engage in conscientisation activities and move towards more equitable control over processes and resources, they will begin to identify other areas where inequities exist and advocate for changes in those areas. The women’s clear articulation of their aspirations for fair trade in this study is demonstrative of the bottom-up pressure that will begin to emerge in a new fair trade. This should ultimately be encouraged as all actions towards health equity benefit from this type of civil society engagement. (9)

What does this mean for Fair Trade? To start, I believe that it means a more political, active, and vocal participation of Fair Trade stakeholders, including producers, organizations, and consumers in broader contexts of international trade. Those stakeholders need to move

beyond charity and welfare and towards a focus on more participation, control, and the ability to exert upward pressure on health inequities. Although this appears to lean towards the “market-breaking” orientation of Fair Trade (the supposedly “purist”, but potentially limited, perspective) – and la FEM would certainly take that position – I would argue that this is not necessarily the case. Several women, in their descriptions of fair trade, included a role for a certification process and included several decidedly “market” concepts, like branding. I do not believe that the way towards empowerment and equitable control for women producers inherently requires a complete revolution or overhaul of the market system. Rather, it starts with listening to those on-the-ground who are experiencing inequity and powerlessness and responding to their perceptions, experiences, and aspirations. The women of la FEM have offered several telling aspirations for fair trade that serve as valuable starting points for this dialogue.

A brief anecdote demonstrates what it may mean to be concerned with broader contexts. During my time in Estelí with la FEM, a group of potential coffee buyers came to visit the organization to assess the possibility of a commercial relationship and to discuss the terms of that relationship. This was a relatively significant potential purchaser of Las Diosas coffee and prior to the first of a series of meetings between the buyers and la FEM, I stopped in to see one of the directors of la FEM. While I had expected her mind to be on the meeting and on details related to coffee production and Fair Trade, the leader told me that she was overwhelmed not because of the meeting, but because of an anti-abortion march that was taking place that same morning. The local Catholic schools had been shut down and attendance at the march was reportedly obligatory for students from those schools. The director said that both the march and the school policy were unacceptable and she felt that la FEM had to respond and she was considering how they could best do so – possibly a press conference or a written response. Here she was, minutes away from what I perceived to be a relatively important business meeting about coffee and she was not concerned about polishing the PowerPoint, checking sales figures, or reviewing notes, but rather first and foremost on her mind was dealing with an anti-abortion march that was happening in town.

5.6 Role of Women’s Groups

The women of la FEM acknowledge that they are in a unique situation and that their experiences are different from those of other women. This should not, however, mean that they should be considered a niche or a fad. Rather, based on their perceptions of Fair Trade and

aspirations for the future, Las Diosas should be seen as a reaction to being underserved by Fair Trade in mixed cooperatives.¹² These are women who are becoming more empowered and demanding more control and are finding it impossible to achieve that equity in control and participation in mixed cooperatives, where women's empowerment is rarely an explicit concern.

For la FEM, Fair Trade emerged as one tool in the ongoing fight for women's rights, equity, and empowerment. It was not accessed as a means to capitalize on a market niche or to fulfill consumer demand for women's products. Rather, it was incorporated as one component of the broader change agenda and has since morphed into a platform through which women have been able to demonstrate and develop their skills, knowledge, and capacities in coffee production and cooperative organization. In their hopes for fair trade, women articulated the importance of small women's cooperatives and their perception that this is intricately linked to fairness and equity. To pass this off as a niche market – or to brand a product in that way – is to overlook the deeper message being shared: that mixed cooperatives, conventional coffee trading channels, and existing Fair Trade have not responded to these women's needs and aspirations in terms of empowerment, control, and equity.

5.7 Summary

Fair Trade is providing tangible benefits to the women of la FEM and it is having an impact on women's health, especially through income, cooperatives, and environmental pathways. However, in order to be successful and sustainable as an action on the social determinants of health and in order to be truly fair and equitable, Fair Trade must be more explicitly oriented towards women's empowerment. This is where it falls short. Fair Trade, based on women's current experiences of its standards, inspections, and processes, is primarily impacting women's lives at the welfare level of empowerment. Although women may receive material benefits at this level, they may not themselves be "the active creators and producers of their material needs" (74)(p. 151). The women of la FEM, who are already engaged in a process of empowerment, are experiencing consciousness-raising, participation, and control levels of empowerment and, as a result, are demanding more of Fair Trade, all the while acknowledging the gains that it has given them. In order for Fair Trade to become a truly

¹² This view represents one of the options suggested by Lyon, (40) who notes that "future research is needed to determine whether these various [all-women initiatives] simply represent a novel marketing trend or if the growing number of women only fair-trade coffee cooperatives is indicative of the failure of traditional groups to adequately serve their interests." (p. 266)

empowering action on the social determinants of health, it must more clearly define empowerment and orient itself towards more equitable control and changes in structural power relations.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This study seeks to better understand women's experiences and perceptions of Fair Trade, as well as their aspirations for fair trade, in order to insert those views into ongoing discussions of the alternative trading system's future direction. At a time when Fair Trade is struggling to define itself in relation to neoliberalism and globalization, it is imperative for the voices of those most affected by Fair Trade to be heard and shared. Unfortunately, Fair Trade has thus far been characterized by gender-blind research and a focus on the general category of "producers" and, as a result, women's voices have been left out. For an alternative trade system claiming to be equitable and empowering – and a system that holds potential as an action on the social determinants of health – this is not acceptable. This study begins to address this problem by exploring and sharing the views and lived experiences of a group of women coffee producers supported by a strong feminist organization in rural Nicaragua.

Guided by the women coffee producers' own words and grounded in complementary feminist and social determinants of health-based approaches to research, the concepts of equity and empowerment emerged as focal points of this research. Using these concepts to organize women's perceptions and aspirations, it became clear that although women experience Fair Trade as being better than before, they do not perceive it to be equitable or empowering. Rather, it brings tangible material benefits in terms of higher income and environmental sustainability, but it does not result in more control, autonomy, and value. It is these latter elements that women hope to see in fair trade.

As an action on the social determinants of health, I still believe that Fair Trade holds great promise. Women are already experiencing benefits from their involvement in Fair Trade but, if it is to effectively address both the conditions of daily living and more structural determinants of health, FLO and the certification-based Fair Trade system must learn from women's aspirations as they identify critical missing elements in the current manifestation of Fair Trade. FLO includes empowerment as a stated objective (32) and it should therefore encourage this type of producer engagement in defining the future of the system. When empowerment is defined as "a social-action process that promotes participation of people, organizations, and communities towards the goal of increased individual and community

control...” (73)(p. 198), coffee producers engaged in these processes should be encouraged to aspire to increased levels of equity in Fair Trade.

The role of women and women’s cooperatives in setting this agenda cannot be understated. Women have been largely omitted from existing research and discussions of Fair Trade, but my study has illustrated the passion and insight that women can bring to this area. Women want to be protagonists in the Fair Trade story and they do not want to be lumped together under a generic “producer” heading. From an organizational perspective, women coffee producers do not see their cooperatives as tools to access niche markets or unique brands. Rather, in the case of the cooperatives supported by la FEM, they are a reaction to feeling invisible and underserved by mixed cooperatives and the traditional manifestation of Fair Trade. This is made evident by the aspirations of several women for fair trade to value the fact that they are women producers and to value the entirety of their work and effort beyond simply the production of coffee. Women perceive Fair Trade as one part of their ongoing story and hope that Fair Trade can have an impact on different parts of that story rather than acting only in the economic realm.

I believe that this research leads to several interesting avenues for future research. First and foremost, having demonstrated the importance of elucidating and sharing women’s perceptions of, and aspirations for, Fair Trade, the experiences of women in different women’s cooperatives and in different regions should be brought to light in order to more equitably represent women in both academic research and Fair Trade discourse. Importantly, the experiences of women coffee producers should not be assumed to be homogenous. Rather, the diversity of women’s experiences should be highlighted.

Furthermore, in order to develop a more nuanced understanding of the role of women’s cooperatives in Fair Trade – and to assess the contention that they represent a response to perceived inequity in Fair Trade rather than a means to access a niche market – it would be instructive to carry out a comparative case study exploring both women’s cooperatives and mixed cooperatives. As noted, la FEM is an explicitly feminist organization with specific ideas in terms of women’s empowerment and development. In order to better understand women’s perceptions of Fair Trade, experiences from a variety of situations should be sought.

An additional avenue of inquiry presents itself as a result of the social determinants of health framing that I used in this project. Based on the synergies between women’s perceptions

of Fair Trade and their conceptualizations of health, Fair Trade does appear to represent an important potential action on selected social determinants of health. However, the gaps between Fair Trade and health illuminated by women's aspirations for fair trade call into question Fair Trade as a potential action on globalization – “the quintessential upstream variable”. (68) More research is needed to explore additional linkages and gaps between Fair Trade and health and to determine how Fair Trade might more effectively act on upstream variables that influence health. The adapted Labonte and Torgerson (69) framework is a valuable tool for this type of research and, if used consistently, could contribute to the development of a strong evidence base to support the push for more equity in Fair Trade.

Importantly, the voices and aspirations of women coffee producers, women's cooperatives, and women's organizations provide a way forward for action and inquiry in gender, health, and fair trade. Fair Trade is neither a starting point nor an ending point. Rather, the women of Las Diosas have integrated Fair Trade into their lives and their stories and, instead of stopping, have oriented themselves towards where this story should go next. It is in these visions of an equitable future that they have provided valuable horizons¹³ for research and action. Given the depth of change in their lives so far, these horizons – which will change as the story of fair trade continues to be experienced and interpreted in other communities – cannot simply be dismissed as fantastical or unachievable but must always remain in our line of sight if we are to work towards social justice and health equity.

¹³ With thanks to Darrell McLaughlin for his valuable suggestion of the notion of horizons for fair trade.

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Appendix 1: Original quotes with translation

Page	Original	Translation
60	...no se conocían el comercio justo, sino lo que se conocían es, es el comercio injusto...	...in the past, we did not know fair trade, rather, what we knew was unfair trade...
60	...yo pienso que los sueños son otros verdad porque en ese tiempo mireen compañeras trabajábamos para los terratenientes pero no teníamos ningún logro el logro que nos quedaba solo era el salario íbamos a trabajar una semana pero por el sueldo ya se nos pasaba la quincena ya veníamos a comprar el diario [...] ya quedábamos sin nada [...] y hasta los hombres les pasaba lo mismo porque ellos trabajaban en las haciendas nadie tenia sembrada una mata de maíz nadie, nadie cultivaba solo se ganaban los riales para comprar la comida de la casa y era una vida esclavizada...	...I think that the dreams are different now [than before] because at that time we worked for the landowners but we did not have any achievements. The only achievement that we were left with was our wage. We went to work for a week, we would receive our wages every two weeks, we would buy daily [necessities] for our home and then we were left with nothing [...] The same thing happened even to men, because they worked in the haciendas and nobody had anything planted [for themselves], not a shrub nor corn, and nobody cultivated anything, they only earned money to buy food for the house and it was a life of bondage (slavery).
60	...bueno antes de estar organizadas como le platicaban las compañeras algunas le trabajaban a los grandes terratenientes, [...] los que tienen grandes cantidades de tierra pues y otras eran cocineras y otras vivíamos subordinadas a lo que decía el hombre	...well, before being organized, like the other women mentioned, some of the women worked for large landowners, [...] individuals that have large amounts of land, other [women] were cooks, and some of us lived subordinately to what the men said.
61	Fuimos explotadas	We were exploited
61	...ya no vendemos ese café como antes lo vendíamos a un precio de la calle verdad y el logro que nosotros hemos tenido verdad es venderlo por medio de un mercado justo...	...we are not selling the coffee like we did before, when we sold it at street prices. Selling it through the fair trade market is an achievement we have had.
61	...yo pienso verdad que en la historia del café en realidad viene desde allá y que casi no nos mirábamos reflejada en ella verdad porque es cierto que aunque nosotras verdad hemos trabajado y todo pero era para otras personas que lo trabajábamos y como mujeres pues no teníamos esa oportunidad de cultivar nuestras parcelas [...] ya hay mujeres que producimos café pero en la mayoría solo hay los grandes como decía el en el	...I think that the history of coffee, it comes from afar and we almost do not see ourselves reflected in it because although we have worked and everything, that was working for other people. As women we did not have that opportunity to cultivate our own parcels of land [...] there are some of us (women) who produce coffee but for the majority, there are only the large [landowners], like I was saying, in the

	patriarcado solo se manejaba que el varón podía hacer las cosas...	patriarchy it is customary that only the males could do things.
62	...para mí verdad que, que es como una historia que viene, viene dando su vuelta verdad [...] y me imagino verdad que así como el café verdad poco a poco fue siendo descubierto nosotras también como mujeres estamos siendo descubiertas que también podemos trabajar también y que podemos ejercer los trabajos que solo nos habían dicho que los varones podían...que...la mujer no podía ser una empresaria tampoco verdad y que hoy podemos llegar a ser, aspirar a ser unas empresarias	...to me, it is like a history that is turning itself around [...] and I imagine that just like coffee was uncovered little by little, we as women are being [slowly] uncovered: we can also work and we can do the jobs that we had been told that only men could do. [They also said] that a woman could not be a businesswoman either, and today we can become and aspire to be businesswomen.
62	...antes solo los hombres tenían derecho de producir a meterse a la finca y hacer actividades, pues, productivas y ahora nosotras hacemos todo eso entonces es una desconstrucción [...] Yo pienso que la forma de la educación de nuestros antepasados ellos se construyeron con esa visión de que solo ellos podían producir entonces yo pienso que con tanta capacitación, se puede desconstruir eso y tener una mejor [...] equidad de género	...before, only the men had a right to produce, to get into the farm and to do productive activities. Now we [women] do all of that, therefore it is a deconstruction [...] I think of the way that our ancestors were educated, they were taught with the vision that only they [the men] could produce and so I think that with a lot of training, one can deconstruct that and have a better [...] gender equity.
62	...en ese tiempo nosotras verdad nos organizamos 12 mujeres y, y comenzamos con la lucha [...] así pues nos hemos venido independizando mejor dicho de esa esclavitud que todavía no decimos que estamos...verdad pero que ya vamos en el camino y que la historia es larga pero como dijo Orilia, pues...entonces la historia del café es bien amplia bien... hay pasadas dolorosas también...	...At that time [around 1995], 12 women organized ourselves and started the struggle. [...] From then on, we have been freeing ourselves from that slavery – and we are not saying that it is not [still present] – but we are getting there and the story is long, [and] as Orilia said, the history of coffee is quite broad [and] there are painful pasts as well...
63	...ahora las mujeres dijeron ellas que ahora que están en la cooperativa [...] organizadas con el café, se sienten como más responsables, mas apoyadas ¿por qué? Porque antes lo vendían a personas así comerciantes que les explotaron. Y ahora ya organizadas, ellas procesan su café, sacan el café, y saben que existe	...the women are now saying that now that they belong to the cooperative [...] and are organized with the coffee, they feel more responsible, more supported. Why? Because in the past they sold the coffee to people, businessmen who exploited them. And now that they are organized [in cooperatives], the women

	una cooperativa que se lo paga mejor precio. Y ya tienen este respaldo y se sienten como, como con fuerza...	process the coffee, market the coffee, and they know that there is a cooperative that will pay for it at a better price [than before]. They have that support and they feel strong...
63	cuando yo comencé verdad, yo comencé desde cero porque realmente primero comencé con el grupo de educación, comencé verdad por lo menos a aprender a leer a escribir porque no sabía, cuando vino la FEM aquí a las comunidades verdad no sabía lo que era leer ni escribir pues porque los padres casi no lo ponían a uno entonces ese fue verdad mi logro que yo tuve verdad, a través porque las cosas no van de la noche a la mañana, cuestan, [...] bueno ahí fue el proceso, fui aprendiendo y aprendiendo a valorar lo nuevo, a hacer conciencia verdad porque cuesta para hacer conciencia en la familia, en el hogar, cuesta, este poco a poco...	When I started, I started from nothing. I first began with the education group, I began to learn to read and to write because I did not know how. When la FEM came here to the communities, I did not know what it was to read or to write because parents hardly ever set that up for children. So this was my achievement that I had because things do not happen overnight, they are a lot of work [...] So that was the process, I was learning, and learning to value the new [skills], to raise consciousness [of women's roles] in the family, in the home, it was a lot of work, this, little by little...
63 - 64	Este es un proceso que yo he ido aprendiendo no nací productora de café pero a mediado que me organice con las mujeres fui aprendiendo lo que antes no hacía ahora lo hago y todo es un proceso un cambio que hubo en mi vida y ser productora de café y también tener el acceso de poder vender al mercado del comercio justo al mercado internacional y local en Estelí...y trabajar en las labores que se realizan en la finca y hacer abonos orgánicos, todo eso es un proceso de cambio en nosotras las mujeres que no en todas las partes va a ver ese cambio usted en las mujeres.	This is a process that I have learned. I was not born a coffee producer, but through organizing myself with the women, I have learned that which I could not do before and now I am doing it. All of this is a process, a change in my life – to be a coffee producer, to have access to the Fair Trade market, to the international market and the local market in Estelí, and to work on the farm jobs and to make fertilizers, all of that is a process of change in us women – a process that you will not see in women in other parts [of the country].
64	También un logro que hemos tenido nosotros es que talvez antes verdad nos daban vuelta [...] porque talvez no sabíamos cuanto una manzana iba a dar de café no sabíamos cuanto podíamos cosechar y no sabíamos porque no íbamos ni a los beneficios no íbamos ni donde despulpaban el café, y ahora no porque ahora somos nosotras las que	Another success that we have had is that before, they used to fool us because we did not know how much coffee one manzana would yield, how much we could cultivate. We did not know because we did not even go to the mills or to where they de-pulped the coffee cherries. But now that is not the case because now it is we (women) who go.

	vamos, sabemos también la calidad del café el que va para el beneficio y el que no va para el beneficio ese lo dejamos para el consumo y entonces yo digo también que ese es uno de los logros que nosotros hemos tenido...	We also know the quality of the coffee that goes to the drying mills and that which does not go we keep here to consume and so I say that this is also one of the successes that we have had...
64	...realmente todo esto se lo debemos a la FEM porque la FEM es la que ella nos ha encaminado hasta esto puntos y de aquí en adelante solamente es seguir adelante	...in fact, all of this we owe to la FEM because it is la FEM that directed us towards these points and from here forward it is just a matter of continuing onward.
64	...le agradezco también verdad a la FEM porque si no fuera la FEM que nos viera que nos haiga visto nosotras no podíamos ser unas mujeres organizadas no podíamos formar una cooperativa porque si nosotras estamos solas no podíamos nada...	...I thank la FEM because if it were not la FEM that saw us and that made us visible, we could not be organized women and we could not have formed a cooperative because if we were alone, we could not have [done] anything...
65	estamos bien agradecidas con la FEM porque la FEM es la que nos ha sacado adelante nos ha sacado adelante en la forma porque ella nos ha ayudado a conseguir un comercio justo para nosotros, porque antes nos quitaban el cafecito se lo llevaban	We are very grateful for la FEM because it is them who help us to move forward, because they helped us to obtain a fair trade, because before [fair trade], they [the coyotes] would take our coffee, and it was a steal for them.
66	Es una buena ayuda el comercio justo, porque sin el comercio justo se nos cae, nos caemos nosotros para atrás porque tendríamos que volver a regalar otra vez el café de nuevo, nos quitan el cafecito barato. Ahora que tenemos el Comercio Justo ya sabemos adonde lo vamos a entregar... No queremos volver atrás, queremos seguir y fortalecernos como cooperativas...	Fair Trade is a good help, because without Fair Trade, we would fall – we would fall backwards because we would have to go back to giving away our coffee again, they would take it from us cheap. Now that we have Fair Trade, we know where we will turn in our coffee... We do not want to turn back, we want to continue forward and strengthen ourselves as a cooperative...
66	...vemos otro sueño más el logro de poder estar en el comercio con Just Coffee y estar en el Comercio Justo que [...] es un paso más a nuestra cadena de valores...	...we see another dream [realized], the achievement of being able to be trading with Just Coffee and being in Fair Trade which [...] is one more step in our value chain...
66	antes de estar organizada [...] nosotras no conocíamos como exportar el café ni nada se lo vendíamos a intermediarios (Vte: Ah si) y entonces como me estas hablando de mercado y un, y un, y un movimiento verdad entonces para mi el	...before being organized [...] we did not know how to export coffee, nothing. We sold it to intermediaries (coyotes). Since you are talking to me about the market and the movement, to me the movement would be like la FEM who sought us out,

	<p>movimiento fue como la fundación entre mujeres que nos busco, nos busco el camino, nos busco mercado y ella dijo ‘mujeres esto les conviene, mujeres ustedes pueden hacer esto’ y no solo nos dijo pueden sino que también nos metió al mercado entonces no se si esta bien que, que para mi el movimiento que nos busco, que nos dio a conocer mercado nos hizo todos lo tramites y todo para que nosotros pudiéramos vender nuestro producto fue la Fundación entre Mujeres porque nosotros no conocíamos nada de exportación (Vte: Si) ni de mercado ni de comercio justo nada de eso sabíamos</p>	<p>sought out a path for us, sought out a market for us and said ‘women, this would be good for you, you can do this’. And they not only said you can, but they also put us in the market. So I don’t know if this is right, but to me, the movement sought us out, introduced us to the market, and did all of the paperwork and procedures for us, everything so that we could sell our product. That was la FEM because we did not know anything about exporting, nor did we know anything about the market or fair trade. We knew none of that.</p>
67	<p>no la certificación no da conocimiento sino que mas bien es que nosotras tenemos que tener acumulados un montón de conocimientos para presentárselos a ellos por ejemplo tener la contabilidad, tener la planificación, tener todo en regla para cuando viene la supervisión...</p>	<p>No, the certification does not provide us with knowledge but rather we have to have a lot of knowledge accumulated to present it to [the inspectors] – for example having the bookkeeping, having the [work] plan; having everything in order for when the inspectors come...</p>
67	<p>...¿cuál es mercado justo? como decía la compañera, como mujeres rurales no lo tenemos muy claro, como por ejemplo cuando nosotros nos hablamos por primera vez ¿qué es violencia?, o ¿cuántos tipos de violencia existe? Entonces como mujeres rurales lo desconocíamos pero ahora con, con lo del avance que hemos tenido el participar en muchos talleres, entonces ya tenemos claro que es violencia, cuantos tipos de violencia aquí, como será la violencia. Entonces así sería con eso del café. Creo que capacitarnos bien sobre lo que es mercado justo, sobre lo que es todo lo del proceso del café para saber [...] mejor.</p>	<p>...What is fair trade? As my <i>compañera</i> was saying, as rural women, we are not very clear on that – for example, when we talked to each other for the first time about what violence is, or how many types of violence exist, we did not know then. But now, with the progress we have had by participating in many workshops, we are clear on what violence is, how many types of violence there are here, and what violence can be. So this is how it can be with coffee. In order to better understand it, I think that we [need] to learn what fair trade is and what the entire coffee process is...</p>
68	<p>Ellas decían de que, de que hoy se sientan ellas de que los están pagando el café a un precio mas o menos, pues mas o menos, no bien bien. Pero si, decían ellas, nos conformamos porque [...] se lo pagan un poquito mas que la plaza mas antes que vendían.</p>	<p>The women said that currently they feel that they are being paid a price for their coffee that is “more or less”, not good, good. But, they said, they make do with it because [...] they are being paid a little bit more than the market they sold to before.</p>

68	<p>Sra: es justo pero no tan justo porque no es el precio adecuado porque si nos ponemos a sacar numeros conforme todo el proceso que se hace en la finca no es tan justo</p> <p>Sra: Esa es la razón, el valor no se nos da el valor que es merecido con el proceso que hacemos pues y que es un trabajo grande para la mujer, no es tan justo</p>	<p>Carolina: It is fair but not that fair because it is not an adequate price. If we start considering all of the numbers from the whole process that happens on the farm, it is not that fair.</p> <p>Luisa: That is true. People do not give us the value that we deserve based on the process that we do. It is a big job for women and it is not that fair.</p>
68 - 69	<p>...entonces ese premio es una ayuda para lo que nos hace falta para los útiles de la escuela de los chavalos alistar, los chavalos mandarlos a clase [...] es una ayudita que tenemos del comercio justo, porque antes no teníamos el comercio justo, el comercio justo era que venían le medían su cafecito se lo llevaban ya no había nada que hacer y ahora no, ahora nosotros tenemos un comercio que nos lleve el café para mejor precio, un mejor precio que tenemos del café pero y antes no antes se lo quitaban 1000 pesos, 800 y hasta ahí llegaba mientras que el comercio justo le paga lo que es justo le paga su precio completo y por eso digo que estamos saliendo adelante con el café.</p>	<p>...so the premium is a help for things that we need: for school supplies, getting kids ready for school, sending kids to class. Fair Trade helps because before, we did not have Fair Trade, 'fair' trade was people coming, weighing your coffee, and taking it [at a low price] and we had no choice. Not now. Now we have a market that takes our coffee at a better price, we get a better price for our coffee. Before, they would take our coffee for 1,000 cordobas, maybe 800 and that was it, while Fair Trade pays what is fair and pays the full price and that is why I say that we are prospering with our coffee.</p>
69	<p>Ese mercado es para sacarnos adelante con la producción de café porque por lo menos es una ayuda el comercio justo en el estudio para nuestros hijos [...] es una ayudita que nos dan para que ellos salgan adelante, con el estudio porque nosotros no podemos mantenerles el estudio porque no tenemos un trabajo solo el de las parcelitas que vamos a trabajar las familias para vender el café y tener con el que comer...</p>	<p>This market (Fair Trade) is to help us out with the coffee production because at least Fair Trade is a help in our children's education; [...] it is a small help that they give us so that the kids can succeed in their studies because we cannot support their education due to a lack of work [outside of coffee], we only have the small bit of land that we work as a family to sell coffee and have something to eat...</p>
69	<p>Hasta el momento lo hemos visto así verdad por la forma de que se dice que si en sello FLO no esta pues no nos dan el premio social que es el único que nos apoyaría a capitalizar la cooperativa...</p>	<p>So far, we have seen [Fair Trade] in this way [as a way to continue fighting] because they say that if the FLO label is not there, then they will not give us the social premium, which is the only thing that supports us to capitalize the cooperative...</p>
69	<p>no se ha extendido por que todavía hay</p>	<p>[Knowledge of Fair Trade] has not</p>

	<p>gente por ejemplo aquí, aquí cerca donde nosotras vivimos (Vte: Si) no hay ningún organismos no hay nada y hay mujeres que tienen café y que lo están produciendo y que lo venden a intermediarios ya, ya cuando ya lo producen ya se lo van a entregar por la misma necesidad y que no conocen nada de mercado ni de comercio justo (Vte: Si) pero si ellas conocieran no lo venden así</p>	<p>spread because there are still people near here where we live, for example, with no organizations, nothing. There are women who have coffee who are producing it and selling it to intermediaries. As soon as they have produced it, they sell it because they have to and they don't know anything about the market or Fair Trade – because if they did know, they would not sell it that way [to intermediaries].</p>
69 - 70	<p>...los requisitos verdad hay algunos que se nos escapan pero ya mirándolo así pues porque lo mas que hemos contribuido nosotros es a tener equidad y transparencia y como decía ella buscar ese desarrollo que necesitamos que tanto en la persona más como en la familia y la comunidad y contribuimos también al desarrollo social ya fuera de la organización de nosotras porque como le decíamos apoyamos a otras mujeres que también solicitan apoyo y eso de tener transparencia verdad y ya sabemos que lo que entra a la cooperativa que toda la familia lo vea y que pues se decida que se puede hacer con eso que entra y también el uso de no discriminación es otra cosa que también...todo eso pues es lo que nosotros manejamos en el concepto y que lo ejercemos pues es realidad, no es que lo decimos.</p>	<p>...there are some standards that escape us, but looking at them in this way... the most that we have worked on is to have equity and transparency and, as she said, to look for this development that we need as much in ourselves as in our families and the community. We also contribute to the social development outside of our organization because, as we said, we support other women who also ask for help. As for transparency, we know that the money that the cooperative gets, everyone in our families sees and then we decide what we can do with it. The use of non-discrimination is another thing [that we also do]. All of that is what we are doing in theory and we are doing it in reality as well – we are not only saying it.</p>
70	<p>Sra: a mi me parece que es bueno verdad, porque en el primero dice que nos ayuda a contribuir al desarrollo nosotros sabemos como buscar un desarrollo, me cae bien este primer requisito porque buscamos un desarrollo no para atrás sino que para mejorar...creo que todas estamos por ese interés por esos estamos organizadas en cooperativas en ruta a desarrollo porque si no fuera así no estuviéramos en capacitaciones no estuviéramos organizadas.</p>	<p>To me, [the Fair Trade standards] seem to be good. The first one says that it helps us to contribute to development. We know how to look for development. I like this first standard because we are looking for development – not backwards but rather to improve. I believe that we are all interested in that – that is why we are organized into cooperatives on the path to development because if that was not the case, we would not be in capacity-building activities, we would not be organized...</p>
70	<p>bueno yo pienso que es importante</p>	<p>I think that [the Fair Trade label] is</p>

	<p>porque ahí es donde nos viene a valorar si estamos bien en regla, si estamos, no se, en conjunto con la cooperativa a ver como, como es la comunicación y todo si estamos con el medio ambiente también</p>	<p>important because it helps to evaluate if we are in order and if we are in harmony with the cooperative. Also, to see how the communication is and if we are in harmony with the environment.</p>
70 – 71	<p>Vicente: y son importantes para ustedes esos requisitos, esos procesos o los sellos?</p> <p>Teresa: para comercializarlos tenemos que cumplir con eso pero nosotros sabemos el café como lo estamos haciendo como se esta cultivando de manera orgánica pero como son puntos que se exigen en la comercialización que si no va eso de, ese el sello de Biolatina o el del... no lo reciben [...] entonces tenemos que cumplir aunque sepamos nosotras sepamos que estamos cultivando orgánico</p>	<p>Vince: And are these standards, processes, or certifications important to you?</p> <p>Teresa: In order to market our coffee, we have to comply with that, but we know how we are making the coffee, cultivating it organically, but these are points that they demand in the coffee trade – that if we do not have the Biolatina [organic] label or the [FLO label], then they won't take our coffee. [...] So we have to comply even though we know that we are farming organically.</p>
71	<p>...nosotros hacemos un presupuesto, verdad, desde del momento de que sembramos, verdad, todo el procesamiento del café. [...] Y entonces el mercado justo es cuando yo estoy sacando todos los costos y me quedo una ganancia solvente. Eso es el mercado justo. Pero ustedes me están diciendo, verdad, que están con los gastos y que aun con lo que han vendido... Que no estoy, entonces no están todavía, no todavía es un mercado justo porque... (Sra: es poquito los excedentes que quedan...)...</p>	<p>...we make a budget, from the moment that we plant the coffee, the entire production process [...] And so a fair trade is when I am covering all of the costs and I am left with a solvent profit. That is fair trade. But they (compañeras) are telling me that they still have costs even though they have sold the coffee... so I am not, we are not yet, it is not yet a fair trade because (Reyna: the money left over is little)</p>
71	<p>Mariela: Pero a veces nosotras si analizamos por los precios están que no es ni tan justo viene a dar a la o sea el esfuerzo que hacemos las mujeres desde el punto donde comienza ya el corte [...] no es tan justo porque viene a quedar muy bajo el precio pero que si es justo por lo que en lo de la calidad si diría yo que es justo...</p> <p>Sara: Vamos encaminadas al comercio justo a lo que yo entiendo. Pero no el 100%</p>	<p>Mariela: Sometimes, if we analyze the prices that exist, [we see] that it is not that fair. The effort that the women put into the coffee, from the start, the coffee-picking, [...] it is not that fair because the price stays very low. But the quality of the coffee is fair – I would say that [the quality] is fair.</p> <p>Sara: We are heading towards fair trade, from what I understand, but not 100% (fair trade).</p>

	Vilma: No es 100% justo el precio que se paga pero el café si es 100% de calidad.	Vilma: The price that we are paid is not 100% fair, but the coffee is 100% quality.
72	...a pesar pues de que nos pagan un buen precio verdad, todavía no es el 100% comercio justo, justo. Porque si le damos la cadena de gastos que nosotras hacemos, hasta, desde el corte [...] y todavía de esto atrás nosotras le damos un tratamiento al café en planta donde le ponemos: el abono, la chapia, la deshije, todo el mantenimiento que le hacemos el café para que el nos de, este, frutos entonces toda esa cadena de valores que le damos a el verdad y para que el pueda llegar a un precio como dice aquí “comercio justo” verdad, que para mi pues mi modo de valorar, siento que todavía no es un comercio justo verdad, un pago justo, [...] ya en cooperativas, certificadas y todo dándole ese montón de valores que le digo, poniéndole todo eso...entonces para nosotras todavía no es el 100% comercio justo...	...despite the fact that they pay us a good price, it still is not 100% fair trade. Because if we give you the list of expenses that we have, from picking the coffee [...] and even before that [picking] we take care of the coffee tree: we apply fertilizer, we clear the brush, prune the trees, all of this maintenance that we do for the coffee so that the tree bears this fruit. So this is the whole set of value that we give the coffee, and for it to reach a price as it says here of “fair trade”, for me, my valuation, I feel that it is still not a fair trade or fair pay, [...] being in cooperatives, certified, and everything – giving it this pile of value – putting all of this into the coffee. For us, it is not 100% fair trade...
72	También que lo valoran por el hecho de ser mujeres las que lo producimos.	Also, that they value [the coffee] for the fact that it is women who produce it.
72	...yo me siento muy orgullosa de trabajar en el café porque de ahí hay del precio justo que estamos vendiendo porque de ahí sacamos todo los ingresos para mandar los niños a estudiar y yo le pido al Señor pues que sea mas precio, mas alto porque nosotros desde que ya nos levantamos es, a, echamos la tortilla [...] hacemos el oficio y es un esfuerzo grandísimo...	...I feel very proud to be working in coffee because it is from there that we are getting the fair price at which we are selling, it is from there that we get all of the income to send children to school. I pray to God that there could be a higher price – higher because from the moment that we wake up [...] we work for our bread, and it is an enormous effort...
72	Es un sello que sirve para distribuir productos que sí valora el esfuerzo y el trabajo y calidad...	...is a label to distribute products that values the effort, work, and quality...
72	...sello FLO es el que le da el valor al producto.	[The] FLO label is that which gives the value to the product.
73	Y que con la organización, estamos las mujeres organizadas, nos valoramos nosotras mismas. Por ejemplo, [...] si se trata de hablar del café, no solo vamos a hablar del grano de café, de la planta de	And with the organization, we women are organized, we value ourselves. For example, [...] if one is talking about coffee, we will not only talk about the coffee bean or the coffee tree, rather we

	café, sino que estamos familizadas. Hablamos de lo que estamos hablando y nos tomamos en cuenta nosotras mismas.	are family, we talk about whatever we talk about and we consider ourselves (as women).
73	...se dice que si en sello FLO no esta pues no nos dan el premio social que es el único que nos apoyaría a capitalizar la cooperativa pero nosotros pensábamos en hacer propuestas de que la gente tenga la crea, y crea pues en nosotras que sí nosotras manejamos las parcelas orgánicas y manejamos el ambiente orgánico y que por medio de eso pues ellos crean que sí nuestro café vale por lo que trabajamos y no por el sello.	...they say that if we are not a part of the FLO label, then they would not give us the social premium which is the only thing that helps us to capitalize the cooperative. But we were thinking of proposing that people believe in us that, yes, we are managing our parcels organically and managing the environment organically and that through this, then, they would believe that yes, our coffee is valuable because of the work we do and not because of the label.
73	Hasta también que no es tan justo Vicente porque [...] tenemos que pagar para poder estar en el comercio justo tenemos que tener 2 sellos, tenemos que tener el de Biolatina y el del sello FLO para poder estar, estar...poder vender al comercio justo por eso le digo yo que no es tan justo porque todos esos sellos son bien carísimo por ejemplo nosotros como cooperativas pequeñas no ajustábamos a pagar entonces tuvimos que hacer alianza con la UCA-Miraflor [...] y las otras cooperativas para poder ajustar a pagar para poder tener el sello FLO, porque le digo yo que no es tan justo	It is also not that fair because [...] we have to pay to be in Fair Trade. We need to have two labels, we need to have the Biolatina [organic] label and the FLO label in order to be able to sell to Fair Trade. That is why I say that it is not that fair because all of those labels are very expensive. We as small cooperatives could not afford to pay so we had to make an alliance with the UCA Miraflor (union of cooperatives) [...] and other cooperatives in order to afford to have the FLO label. That is why I say it is not that fair.
74	Otro punto que nos disminuye el valor que nos paga Just Coffee que es en el pago de la certificación orgánica [...] digamos nosotras podríamos decir de que la FEM ha apoyado durante todos estos años en el pago de las certificadora pero a nosotras nos tocará como socias ir pagando eso, eso nos perjudica pues por lo que merma en el precio de cada quintal porque tenemos que pagar la certificación tanto de Biolatina como del sello FLO	Another factor that lowers the value that Just Coffee pays us is the payment for the organic certification [...] We can say that la FEM has supported [us] during all these years in paying the costs of certification, but as cooperative members, it will fall to us to pay that. That harms us – it lessens the price of each quintal because we have to pay for certifications – both Biolatina and the FLO label.
74	...por medio del corte, despulpado y todo eso también pasamos por un proceso de una certificación que sin esa certificación no podemos pasar a ese punto del	...through picking the coffee, de-pulping it, and everything, we also go through a certification process and without this certification, we cannot pass to that point

	comercio justo porque ya si no va con ese sello de la Biolatina o del sello FLO ya no reciben el café, son trabas que se ponen en la comercialización que si no van esas tres cosas no podemos, también como productoras tenemos que cumplir con todos esos requisitos para poder llegar allá donde están el comercio...	of Fair Trade, because if it does not go with the Biolatina [organic] label or the FLO label, they (the buyers) will not take the coffee. These are obstacles put on trading that if those three things are not included, we can't [pass to that point of Fair Trade]. As producers we have to comply with all of those standards in order to reach where the trade is...
75	Las características del mercado justo son mejores precios, solidaridad, justicia, se interesa por conocer las personas quienes producen los productos y por mantener una buena relación...	The characteristics of a fair trade are better prices, solidarity, fairness, that there is interest in knowing the people that produce the products, and having a good relationship [between producers and consumers]...
76	...la relación directa entre consumidor y productor es muy valiosa porque muchas veces el costo de los intermediarios es donde, donde se queda, pues, la mayor cantidad y entonces de esa manera nosotras podemos recibir mas ingresos y eso es un apoyo para la o un reconocimiento al esfuerzo de las mujeres al esfuerzo de la cooperativa y por eso decimos pues de que un mercado justo es una relación que debe existir entre el productor y el consumidor porque sería justo para nosotros y justo para quien lo consume también	...the direct relationship between the consumer and the producer is very valuable because a lot of the time, the cost of the intermediaries is where most of [the price] stays, and so in that way [with a more direct relationship] we can get a higher income and that is a support, a recognition of the effort of women, the effort of the cooperative, and that is why we say that fair trade is a relationship that should exist between the producer and the consumer, because that would be fair for us and fair for whoever is consuming the coffee as well.
76	¿Cuál es un mercado justo? Ser justo en el momento de producción, café orgánico, con justicia y equidad, vender al mejor precio (precio justo), recibir mejor precio, entregar buena calidad de café, valoran el café, valoran por ser producido por mujeres, buenas condiciones para las productoras...	What is your fair trade? To be fair during the production stage; organic coffee; fairness and equity; selling at a better price (a fair price); to receive a better price; to deliver high quality coffee; to value the coffee; to value the fact that it is produced by women; good work conditions for the producers...
76	¿Cuál es su mercado justo? No tener trabas con certificaciones; tomar a las mujeres en cuenta, valorando su trabajo; darles mas oportunidad a las pequeñas cooperativas de mujeres...	What is your fair trade? To not have obstacles with certifications; to take women into consideration [and] value their work; to give more opportunities to small women's cooperatives...
76	¿Cuáles son las características de su mercado justo? Relación directa entre productoras y consumidores; transparencia en el proceso de manejo y	What are the characteristics of your fair trade? A direct relationship between producers and consumers; transparency in management and export processes;

	exportación, reconocimiento del esfuerzo de las mujeres en la calidad que ofrecen; que apoye a las pequeñas cooperativas de mujeres.	recognition of women's efforts [and] the quality [coffee] that they offer; support for small women's cooperatives.
77	Que no esta explotado el que esta vendiendo [...] o sea, no esta estafando, que es justo, pues, lo que están pagando. Comercio justo es algo que esta haciendo bien pagado	That the person selling the coffee is not being exploited [...] not being swindled. That what they are being paid is fair. Fair trade is something that is well paid.
77	Uno sería que el trabajo que realizamos sea reconocido y valorado. O sea reconocido que, que, que vean lo que hacen, lo del todo el proceso del café. Y valorado es que sea bien pagado, que no, no sea por una poca...	One [characteristic of fair trade] would be that the work that we do be recognized and valued. In other words, that people see what we do, the entirety of the coffee process. And being valued means that it is well-paid, that it is not just a little bit...
77	"¿cuál es un mercado justo?". Vender a un buen precio, justo, que el trabajo en todo el proceso del café sea valuado, reconocido, que no exista violencia y explotación hacia la mujer. [...] Las mujeres organizadas en cooperativas quisiéramos vender el café a más precio justo del que vendemos.	What is a fair trade? To sell at a good price, fair price; that the work in the entire coffee process is valued and recognized; that there is no violence and exploitation towards women. [...] We women organized in cooperatives would like to sell the coffee at a fairer price than that at which we are selling it now.
78	¿Cuál es un mercado justo? Un mercado que reconozca y valore nuestros esfuerzos en la transformación de la parcela y nuestras vidas...	What is fair trade? It is a market that recognizes and values our efforts in the transformation of the land and our lives...
78	...digo yo estoy luchando por un mercado justo estoy luchando por mi vida. [...] Entonces yo digo yo que eso ya salir de la cocina, ya no estar solo en la cocina. Nos llevan comercio justo a un mejor de vida con equidad y justicia donde respetan nuestros derechos, donde la casa también se viva con los derechos que tenemos. No solo que quedamos produciendo y, produciendo como esclavas, y haciendo dinero, dinero, dinero, no el comercio justo no va enriqueciendo a nosotras mismas. Sra: Y nos valoran de que ya como mujeres somos productoras, nosotros, somos dueñas de nuestros productos, de nuestro excedente [...] Nosotras decidimos que lo que vamos a hacer.	...I say I am fighting for fair trade, I am fighting for my life! [...] So I say that [it is about] leaving the kitchen, not being only in the kitchen. Fair trade leads us to a better life with equity and fairness where our rights are respected, where the rights that we have are experienced in our homes as well. We should not remain only producing, and producing like slaves, and making fast money; no, fair trade is improving our lives more permanently. Bertilia: And so we are valued as women and producers; we are owners of our products, of our surplus [...] we decide what we will do...

78	¿Cuál es el mercado justo verdad?...nosotras respondimos es la cadena de valores y principios que ejercemos las mujeres sin importar los granos de café sino mirar el esfuerzo de las mujeres ya que nos juntamos como cooperativa para así insertarnos a los mercados	What is fair trade? We responded that it is the chain of values and principles that we (women) exercise regardless of the coffee beans but rather that considers the effort of the women, we who have joined together as a cooperative so that we can place ourselves within the markets.
78 – 79	Nosotras decimos que el mercado justo es donde se reconoce el trabajo y el esfuerzo de cada mujer, por romper este sistema patriarcal y el dominio que se nos hacen nada. Donde las mujeres vivamos sin violencia y que no estemos solo en la cocina (Sra: Buenas). Que no estemos, que no estemos solo en la cocina y que se comparte el trabajo domestico. Para nosotras eso es el comercio justo. Porque si [...] vamos estar produciendo café y vamos a vender al comercio justo y siempre vamos a estar dominadas y maltratadas, no estamos haciendo, verdad	We say that fair trade is where the work and effort of each woman is recognized, in order to break this patriarchal system and the domination that turn us into nothing. [Fair trade is] where we as women live without violence and that we are not only in the kitchen. That we are not only in the kitchen and that domestic work is shared. To us, that is fair trade. Because [...] if we are producing and selling fair trade coffee and we are [still] dominated and mistreated, that is not fair trade...
79	Calidad, cantidad, justicia, equidad, cooperación, oportunidad, relación entre productoras y consumidores sin intermediarios	Quality, quantity, fairness, equity, cooperation, opportunity, [and] producer-consumer relationships without intermediaries.
79	Bueno, nosotros pusimos así: solidaridad, equidad, democracia, [...] por ser café de mujeres también tener una buena producción con buena calidad, cumplir con el contrato que hacemos [...], cumplir con recomendaciones de las certificaciones que nos hacen, cumplir con los requisitos del sello FLO	Well, we wrote down this: solidarity, equity, democracy, [...] to be women's coffee, to have a good production with good quality, to fulfill the contract that we make, [...] to fulfill the recommendations of the certifications that we have, to fulfill the requirements of the FLO label.
80	...seguir adelante nunca hay que retroceder, esas son las esperanzas de nosotros seguir adelante hasta que Dios nos lleve.	...to keep on working hard, to never go back. Those are our hopes. To carry on until God takes us.
80	... tenemos un camino recorrido y falta más que recorrer.	...we have travelled part of the road and there is more to travel...
80	Mi esperanza es algún día ser mas por lo menos usted sabe que uno lo que piensa es en la familia preparar mi familia, preparar mi casita para tener una casita digna como dicen para seguir adelante	My hope is one day – you know that one thinks of the family – is to educate my family, to make over my house in order to have a decent home and, like they say, to prosper [...] I have the hope that

	[...] tener la esperanza de que por medio de la cooperativa vamos a hacer algo, no vamos a quedarnos aquí hay vamos a seguir adelante...	through the cooperative, we will do something, we will not stay where we are, we will carry on...
81	...porque si no se organiza siempre va a vivir lo mismo igual y es que tener una cooperativa organizada tiene algun esperanza de salir adelante porque si solo estamos así sin estar cooperada entonces no va a salir adelante...	...because if you do not get organized [into a cooperative], you will always live the same way. In having an organized cooperative, you have some hope of prospering because if we are alone, without being in the cooperative, then [we] will not prosper...
81	...yo pienso verdad que luchando siempre unidas verdad con la organización vamos a lograr todo lo que queremos... porque separadas no se hace nada.	...I think that always fighting together with the organization we will accomplish everything that we want to, because alone, nothing can be done.
81	...estar organizadas es muy importante, porque así todas unidas, compartimos, aprendemos, y logramos muchas cosas que no logramos en nuestras casas.	To be organized is very important, because in this way, everyone united, we share, we learn, and we achieve many things that we do not achieve [alone] in our homes.
81	...ahorita [...] como cooperativa estamos siendo todavía apoyadas por Fundación entre Mujeres entonces pienso eso pues que algún día nosotras siguiendo como estábamos, podemos llegar a ser autónomas que nosotras podamos ejercer ya nuestros propios mecanismos pero esto tenemos que ir trabajando poco a poco, las ideas, las estrategias, los objetivos que cada una de nosotras nos proponemos...	...currently, [...] as a cooperative, we are still being supported by la FEM, so I think that one day, continuing the way we are, we can become autonomous, so we can manage our own [change] mechanisms, but for this we have to go on working little by little on the ideas, strategies, and objectives that each one of us proposes...
81 - 82	Que podamos decidir y actuar sobre nosotras mismas, sentirnos dueños. [...] A veces las mujeres estamos dominadas por el esposo, por nuestros padres, por la sociedad en que vivimos entonces queremos realizar algo o hacer algo y no lo hacemos por darle gusta a las demás personas. [...] Y sentirnos dueñas es de que podamos disponer y decir este café que saque es mío, no es de mi marido, no voy a esperar que el me de la cuarta parte o que me de una mitad sino que es mío, yo lo voy a vender y lo voy a, voy a ponerlo que yo quiero, voy a ponerme	That we can decide and act for ourselves, to feel in control. [...] Sometimes, women are dominated by their husband, by our parents, by the society in which we live, and so we would like to do something [but] we don't do it because we want to please other people. [...] To feel in control is when we can decide and say that this coffee that I got is mine. It is not my husband's, I will not wait for him to give me a quarter of it or half of it, but rather it is mine. I will go sell it and I will spend the money how I want. I will make myself pretty. I will get teeth

	bonita, voy a ponerme los dientes, voy a pintar mi pelo, lo que yo quiero. Seamos dueñas nosotras de, de (Sra: de nosotras mismas)...	[dentures]. I will dye my hair. I will do whatever I want. Let us be owners of, of (<u>Diana</u> : of ourselves)!
82	Primeramente queremos lograr un buen precio que verdaderamente sea el justo porque así le daríamos mejor mantenimiento a nuestras parcelas, también queremos mejorar nuestras condiciones de vida, tener una vivienda digna, tener buena salud, educación para nosotros y nuestros hijos...	First, we want to get a good price – one that truly is the fair price – because with this we could better maintain our parcels of land. Also, we want to improve our living conditions, have a decent home, good health, [and] education for ourselves and our children...
82	Que quieren lograr con su café? Obtener mejores ganancias para mejorar nuestros niveles de vida. [...] Tener un mejor mercado [...] con justicia y equidad. O sea, pues, producir mejor, pero también mejorar nuestra vida. Que hay justicia y equidad y que se reconozca nuestro trabajo.	What do you want to achieve with your coffee? To obtain better earnings in order to improve our standards of life [...] To have a better market [...] with fairness and equity. To improve production but also to improve our lives. That there is fairness and equity and that our work is recognized.
83	¿Qué quiere lograr con su café? Que se venda a mejor precio que sea mas justo el comercio valorando el esfuerzo que realizan las mujeres para lograr el propósito de comercialización, que se rompan las desigualdades de género, relaciones de poder, tener un mercado, [...] mejorar y mantener las producciones de café para exportar.	What do you want to achieve with your coffee? That it is sold at a better price; that the trade is fairer; valuing the efforts that women put forth to achieve trade; that gender inequalities and power relations get broken; to have a market; [...] to maintain and improve the production of coffee for export.
83	Realizar nuestros sueños. Producir más del que producimos. Tener nuestros propios beneficios y tener nuestra propia empresa. Que podamos decidir y actuar sobre nosotras mismas. Sentirnos dueñas. Familiarizarnos más con la caficultura y no ser sometida al hogar y que solo fuimos creadas para procrear.	To make our dreams come true. To produce more coffee than we are currently producing. To have our own mills and our own company. To be able to decide and act on ourselves. To feel in control. To become more familiar with coffee production and to not be stuck in the home [with the idea] that we were only created to reproduce.
84	...las que producimos orgánicos vivimos con una salud buena...si [...] usáramos químicos yo creo que viviéramos enfermas pero realmente como es orgánico vivimos sanas, alegre con energía para, para trabajar	...those of us that are organic producers are living with good health... I think if we used chemicals, then we would be sick, but actually because it is organic, we live healthily and happily, with energy to work...
84	...si consumimos cosas orgánicas, productos orgánicos vivimos sanos y en	...if we consume organic things, organic products, we live healthy lives, whereas

	cambio si consumimos cosas con químico vivimos enfermos y a temprana edad vamos a fracasar	if we consume things with chemicals, we live sick lives and, at an early age, [our bodies] will fail.
84	Vte: y como logran ustedes la buena salud? Sra: bueno, manejando todo el cultivo orgánico, consumiendo lo que nosotras producimos en la misma finca así lo logramos	Vince: And how do you achieve good health? Patricia: Well, managing the whole crop organically, consuming what we produce on the farm, that is how we achieve it.
84	...estamos conservando nuestra salud, la salud de otras y el medio ambiente en general porque no se esta contaminando...	...we are keeping our health, the health of others, and the environment in general because we are not contaminating...
85	...la producción orgánica es para proteger nuestras vidas la de los demás, también se protege la vida de los animales, de los pájaros, el medio ambiente, verdad y así contribuimos [...] en nuestra comunidad y los de los demás compañeras	...organic production is to protect our lives, [the lives] of others, as well as to protect the life of animals, birds, the environment, and in that way we are contributing [...] in our community and the communities of the other women...
86	...[cuando nosotras] estamos en la producción de café es el momento donde tenemos dinero, (Vte: Si) tenemos dinero, y entonces no creas pasamos por unas crisis que, que a veces que no tenemos para la alimentación, aha, y no hayamos de donde agarrar. Cuando nosotros tenemos esa producción de café ahí hay de todo ahí hay arroz hay todo lo que podemos, hornamos, hacemos pan para la familia entonces aprovechamos también para ir donde los médicos que tenemos tal cosa que tenemos porque es el momento donde tenemos dinero y después quedamos sin nada esperando el otro año	...when we are producing coffee, that is the time that we have money. We have money, but don't think [that everything is smooth], sometimes we live through crises, sometimes we do not have [money for] food and we do not have anywhere to get it from. When we have that coffee production, there is everything. There is rice, there is everything we need, we bake, we make bread for our family, we also take advantage [of the opportunity] to go to the doctors for any issues we have because that is the moment when we have money and afterwards, we are left with nothing, waiting for the next year...
86	me imagino verdad que por ejemplo hay casas de las productoras que están en mal estado entonces con esos ingresos se mejoran las viviendas, también verdad hay aquí los años son variables hay años que son buenos y años que son malos en el invierno, hay épocas que se da bien el maíz y los frijoles y hay épocas que no, entonces en la época que no se dan bien esos siembros con los ingresos que	I imagine that, for example, there are some producers' houses that are in bad shape, so with that income they could improve their homes. Also, here the years are variable – there are years that are good and years that are bad in the winter, there are periods that the corn and bean yields are good, and periods that they are not – so in the periods where these crops do not produce well, it is

	vienen del café se compra la comida para la familia	with the income that comes from coffee that one buys food for their family.
86	... siempre alegra a las mujeres porque tienen donde sacar fondo para las necesidades.	...the women are always happy because they have the money for the basic needs.
86	Entre mas corta, mas dinero, entonces se alegra que va llenando la canasta.	The more she picks, the more money, so she gets happy when the basket is being filled.
86	Aunque es común ahorita ver este en muchos cafetales las mujeres cortando café o participando en la producción este, no es tan común verle la cara así tan sonriente porque muchas, este vamos a trabajarle a otros verdad y talvez no como las condiciones con las que voy a trabajar en mi propia parcela además me van a pagar lo que ellos quieren y entonces pienso que por eso es importante [...] tener la tierra a nuestro nombre o ser, tener posesión sobre ese pedazo de tierra por mínimo que sea la parcela pero ya te se sentiste mas satisfacción al saber que lo que estas cortando o lo que sale de ahí va a ser tuyo...	Although it is now common to see women picking coffee or participating in coffee production processes in many coffee farms, it is not as common to see such smiling faces because for many women, we go to work the land for others and we may not have the same conditions there as I would working on my own land. In addition, the landowners will pay me whatever they want and for that reason I think that it is important [...] to have the land in our names, to have possession of that piece of land, even if it is just a small parcel you already feel more satisfaction in knowing that what you are picking, or what comes from this land, will be yours...
87	...incluso en la comunidad hay muchas mujeres que como decía mi hija anteriormente desde chavalitas han cortado café pero en otros dueños y no es lo mismo como esta ella ahí cortando su propio café saber de que cómo decía ella la canasta se le esta llenando se le va a llenar el saco y eso significa dinero para su bolsillo entonces esa es la diferencia en ser un peón de otro cafetalero a ser dueña de su propio café hay una diferencia muy, para mi que es una experiencia muy bonita que es lo que refleja ella en su semblante, en su sonrisa.	...even in this community there are many women who, as my daughter said before, have picked coffee for [other landowners] since they were young girls. This is not the same as this woman [in the picture] picking her own coffee, knowing that the basket is being filled, that the bag [of coffee] is being filled, and that means money in her pocket. That, then, is the difference between being a labourer for another coffee farmer and being the owner of your own coffee. There is a big difference for me, it is a beautiful experience and that is what she is reflecting in her face, in her smile.
87	Yo digo que ella esta alegre porque no es lo mismo cortar en una hacienda que va a agarrar uno el rial [...] lo propio le rinde mas porque ella lo vende y tiene mas	I say that she is happy because it is not the same picking coffee in a hacienda that is going to take away one's money... [and] one's own [land] yields more

	<p>provecho por eso ella esta alegre porque ya es propio de ella, no es trabajadora de nadie</p>	<p>because she is selling the coffee and she has more benefit. That is why she is happy – because it is her own, she is nobody's worker.</p>
87	<p>Sra: ...tiene su finca y alegre y ella no tiene quien la mande verdad Sra: No ella no tiene quien la mande [...] Sra: es libre, ella es libre...</p>	<p><u>Juana</u>: ...She has her farm and she is happy and she does not have anyone to order her around <u>Ana</u>: No, she does not have anyone to order her around... [...] <u>Juana</u>: She is free, she is free...</p>
88	<p>...sucede eso verdad que con mientras uno anda haciendo este trabajo andamos con varias compañeras platicamos y... hacemos chistes nos reímos y todo verdad...</p>	<p>...what happens is that while one is out doing this work, we are out with other compañeras, chatting, making jokes, laughing, everything...</p>
88	<p>No, no es pesado y me encanta es bonito hay alegría, este, vivimos en un ambiente de armonía, de platica, de conversación, de alegría (Vte: Si) porque yo cuando vengo a cortar a veces traigo un radio hay para música y todos cantan.</p>	<p>No, [the coffee process] isn't difficult and I love doing it – it is beautiful, there is happiness, we live in an environment of harmony, chatting, conversation, happiness. When I go to pick coffee, sometimes I bring a radio for music and everybody sings.</p>
88	<p>a veces cuando yo vengo a estos talleres a mi me tré de alegría y de una ayuda, [...] los oigo platicar así como estamos aquí nosotros ya cuando ya se me quita ese pensamiento que yo tengo porque estoy, estamos compartiendo todo lo que nosotros sentimos, lo que somos, lo que hacemos, entonces hay se me quita algo el pensamiento a uno porque, porque lo comparte</p>	<p>...sometimes when I come to these workshops, it brings me happiness and helps me... I hear them talking like we are doing here and that [negative] thought that I have leaves because we are sharing everything that we feel, what we are, what we do, so the [negative] thought leaves because, because one shares it...</p>
88	<p>...a veces talvez por ejemplo este una mujer en la casa [...] esta ahí toda acomplexada toda como con problemas y que...pero ya por ejemplo en el grupo ya yendo al grupo habla esto habla el otro entonces ya se alegra aquella persona que anda enferma emocionalmente entonces ya se alegra entonces yo pienso que en la salud emocional y espiritual en muchos aspectos hay cambios en la relacion de nosotras las mujeres</p>	<p>...sometimes for example a woman is in her house, completely emotionally sick with problems but, for example, in the group, one comes to the group and this person talks and that person talks, and so that person who is feeling sick emotionally becomes happy. I think that for emotional and spiritual health, in many ways there are changes in the relationships of us women.</p>
89	<p>Vte: y todos sus pedazos de tierra son orgánicos o?</p>	<p><u>Vince</u>: And all of your pieces of land are organic or?</p>

	<p>Sra: todo orgánico</p> <p>Vte: es importante eso para usted?</p> <p>Sra: si muy importante para la salud.</p> <p>Muy importante (Vte: para la salud) para la salud pues (Vte: como) porque no hay químicos no hay químicos aquí solo es cosa de abono orgánico muy importante eso todo y desde que me organicé [...], para mi es muy bonito porque uno aprenda a hacer los abonos y todo.</p>	<p><u>Emma</u>: Everything organic</p> <p><u>Vince</u>: Is that important for you?</p> <p><u>Emma</u>: Yes, very important for health. Very important for health because there are no chemicals here, it is only organic fertilizer. All of that is very important and since I became part of the cooperative, it has been great for me because one learns to make fertilizers and everything.</p>
90	<p>...No es la FEM tampoco, somos las mismas miembras de la cooperativa que lo compramos y exportamos y allí las mismas miembras las que producen, pues, y las que no producen nos alegramos porque el mismo logro por que la cooperativa</p>	<p>...It is not FEM, either [that is controlling the coffee process], it is us, the women cooperative members, that are buying and exporting and those same women members that are producing the coffee. And those of us that do not produce coffee are happy because it is the same success, the success of the cooperative.</p>
90	<p>... si yo voy a cortar el café a la Marie Elena, claro yo voy a ir alegre porque voy como mujer a cortar el café que va a ser producida de una mujer. Pero, por ejemplo, cuando salen a cortar así, a emigrar a cortar, no es con la misma alegría, verdad.</p>	<p>...if I go to pick coffee at Marie Elena's, clearly I will go happy because I go as a woman to pick coffee that will be produced by a woman. But, for example, when people leave [the community] to pick coffee, emigrate to pick coffee, it is not with that same happiness.</p>
90 – 91	<p>Yo miro que ella esta alegre por, bueno en primer lugar me imagino que esa sonrisa refleja muchas cosas [...] ser dueña de su propia parcela, de que el, el café que tiene le esta dando producción y dice que esta organizada y que ya esta llenando la canasta y eso significa que tiene bastante producción y entonces esta muy alegre porque la esta llenando</p>	<p>I see that she is happy because, well, firstly I imagine that that smile reflects many things: [...] that she is the owner of her own land; that the coffee that she has is producing well; that she says that she is organized and that she is already filling the basket and that means that she has quite a bit of production and so she is very happy because she is filling the basket.</p>

Appendix 2: Workshop / focus group plan submitted to la FEM

PROPUESTA DE MINI-TALLER PARTICIPATIVO SOBRE LAS EXPERIENCIAS DE LAS MUJERES EN EL CAFÉ Y EL COMERCIO JUSTO

Objetivo general:

Tomar conciencia sobre el papel de las mujeres en la cadena del café y contribuir a un proceso de alfabetización económica asociado con los mercados internacionales del café.

Objetivos específicos:

- Visibilizar las actividades de las mujeres en la cadena del café.
- Ubicar el café y los mercados del café en sus contextos históricos, con énfasis en la representación y papel de las mujeres en la cadena del café.
- Facilitar una discusión crítica sobre los mercados internacionales del café y discutir los modelos alternativos que existen, como el Comercio Justo, incluyendo los debates claves frente a los alternativos.
- Construir colectivamente una definición de justicia en los mercados del café y conceptualizar un mercado utópico para las mujeres productoras.

Programa propuesto:

Apuntes	Actividades	Metodología	Tiempo
Bienvenida	1. Presentarse 2. Compartir objetivos 3. Explicar programa	Cada uno se presenta, explica sus expectativas del taller.	15 min.
Dinámica	Actividad de rompehielos para montar la energía		10 min.
Experiencias	Compartido de experiencias con la cadena del café, con las certificaciones y con los mercados internacionales	- Reflexión sobre fotos (mujeres productoras, la venta del café, precios del café, marcas, consumo, etc.)	40 min.
Esperanzas (¿cuál es la finalidad por lo cual trabajamos?)	Exploración de las esperanzas de las mujeres con su café y con las certificaciones Creación de una definición comunitaria de mercado justo y/o utópico del café.	- Grupos pequeños de 4-5 mujeres notan sus esperanzas y lo que quieren lograr a través de su café. - Cada grupo conceptualiza un mercado o sistema de comercio que podría ayudarles a alcanzar sus objetivos - Ponen una definición utópica en la pared.	30 min.
PAUSA / FRESCOS			
Historia	1. ¿Por qué son las experiencias en el café así? La importancia de la historia. 2. Presentación de la historia del café y los mercados alternativos (enfoque sobre relaciones de poder y rol de mujeres) 3. Historia propia de la comercialización del café	- Discusión abierta sobre la importancia de la historia. - Exposición sobre la historia del café y el comercio justo - Comparte de historias personales - ¿Qué significa esta historia?	30 min.

Debates claves	Introducción a un debate clave en el sistema comercio justo (un mercado alternativo). Implicaciones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exposición corta del debate: ¿mercado o movimiento? - En grupos pequeños, discusión y notación de las características, ventajas, y desventajas de cada posición. - Ubicarse en el debate, discutir las implicaciones (actividad participativa y dinámica) - En gran grupo, discusión de las implicaciones del debate en la comunidad 	30 min.
Resumen	Resumen y preguntas		10 min.
ALMUERZO			

Appendix 3: Photographs used in the dialogic focus groups





Appendix 4: Invitation letters for dialogic focus groups sent to la FEM members

Note: The actual invitation was also stamped signed by one of the directors of la FEM

Estimada compañera _____,

Usted está invitada a participar en un taller participativo sobre las mujeres en el café, los mercados internacionales del café y la certificación del Comercio Justo.

El taller ocurrirá en la Casa Sede de su comunidad de _____ el _____ . El taller durará aproximadamente 3 horas e incluirá frescos y un almuerzo.

El taller forma también una parte de un proyecto de investigación de maestría. El día del taller, con el consenso del grupo, yo tomaré notas y usaré estas notas para mi proyecto. Una descripción completa de la investigación será dado el día del taller.

En espera que sea de su interés, lo espero:

Le saluda atentamente,

Vincent Terstappen