FAIR TRADE COFFEE: GOING BEYOND CERTIFICATES

WHY COFFEE?
- Coffee is one of the most traded soft commodities.
- Price fluctuations lead to crises in many coffee value chains.
- The majority of coffee is produced by smallholders, who are heavily relying on cash crops.

WHY ALTERNATIVE TRADE ARRANGEMENTS?
- Alternative trade is used as a means to empower producers by paying higher prices and maintaining stable market links.
- Certification is used as an effort to create comparable standards and shared minimum requirements.

STATE OF THE RESEARCH AND RESEARCH GAP
- Limitations of the certified market leave scholars questioning if certifications are the right means to transform the global trade market.
- Scientific endeavours are mostly assessing the limitations of the certified fair trade market.
- Participatory and transdisciplinary efforts are rarely conducted.
- Beyond the scope of the certified fair trade market, niches of alternative trade arrangements exist that have the potential to effectively address smallholder empowerment.

RESEARCH DESIGN

1. SCIENTIFIC PERCEPTIONS OF FAIR TRADE
- Overview: Generating a systematic overview about scientific practices and perceptions about the field of fair trade.
- Methods: Systematic Literature Review.
- Expected Results: Scientific literature is mostly focussing on the certified Fair Trade market. The majority of scholars are evaluating impact and effectiveness of certifications. Point of observation is either consumers or producers. Participatory or transdisciplinary approaches are rare in that field of research.

2. ANALYSIS OF NICHEs IN ALTERNATIVE TRADING PRACTICES
- Overview: Identifying novel approaches in the field of alternative trading practices apart from the certified fair trade market.
- Methods: Participatory observation, network analysis, qualitative interviews.
- Expected Results: Fair trading actors within the niches of the Fairtrade sector have deep rooted knowledge that hold valuable insights to advance fair trading practices in the mainstream.

3. UPSCALING OF TRADE MECHANISMS
- Overview: Creating visions for effective empowerment through fair trading practices.
- Methods: Formative scenario analysis.
- Expected Results: The transdisciplinary setting should function as a boundary object that enables actors to create effective empowerment of smallholders while still conserving biodiversity at the place of origin.

RESEARCH QUESTION
How can trade relations be designed that enable an effective empowerment of smallholders while still conserving biodiversity at the place of origin?

KEY REFERENCES

Sahal 1985, p. 79

Geels & Schot 2003

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