Consumer Attitudes to Ethically Labelled Products
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Summary

This report is an overview of academic research into consumer attitudes towards, and choice of, alternatives with ethical, in the sense of socially aware, product labelling. Nearly all research within this field has been conducted on consumers in (northern) Europe and in the USA. In certain literature on the subject, a broader definition is used of ethical product alternatives; normally products are included in that case with different types of environmental labelling. Socially responsible product labelling focuses on issues linked to how the production of labelled goods influences both the people as well as the local communities where the production of the goods takes place. In order for the product to be socially labelled it is necessary that active work is undertaken in the field of employee rights. Child labour and all forms of discrimination shall be actively opposed while democracy and the right to organise in the workplace, including the right to form trade unions, shall be promoted. The purpose of social labelling is that consumers in the developed world shall be given the possibility of choosing product alternatives that have a more favourable effect on the communities where the goods are produced. The Fairtrade label is the dominant social labelling; the lion’s share of the academic research into consumer attitudes to products with social labelling has been carried out with Fairtrade labelled product alternatives in focus.

Research has shown that a large share of the Swedish population knows the Fairtrade label and their trust in the Fairtrade label is relatively high. Women generally have a more positive attitude towards Fairtrade than men. To place greater emphasis on self-transcending values, i.e. to strive to transcend personal and individual interests and instead to work for the good of others (and in that case also others with whom one is not in direct contact) has been shown to increase the likelihood of having a positive view of Fairtrade. To strive for “warm relations” (to have close colleagues and friends and deep ties of friendship) are also associated with a positive attitude to Fairtrade.

Certain studies have investigated how much consumers are prepared to pay for a socially labelled product. The results vary quite sharply and the methodology in itself has also been criticised. Researchers in this field believe that the so-called “willingness-to-pay” studies function as a kind of attitude indicator, rather than a measure of how much one is actually prepared to pay. In studies where factors such as good working conditions are set against the products being produced in an eco-friendly manner, it has been found that the social, employee right aspects, and in particular the fact that no child labour has occurred, are shown to be more important than the fact that the products are produced in an eco-friendly way.
Introduction

Certain product alternatives have attributes that can be observed in a simple and straightforward way before they may be chosen. Other characteristics are more difficult to observe before purchase and it is only after a period of use that one can determine if the product in question had the desired features or not. Product alternatives may also be associated attributes that are not possible to discover even after purchase and subsequent use. Examples of such invisible attributes are where the product is manufactured in an eco-friendly way, where it contains genetically modified substances or where experiments on animals have been performed in the preparation of the product (the latter primarily applies to cosmetics). Where tuna (fish) is caught without dolphins coming to harm or where a pair of shoes have been made without the use of child labour in their production are further examples of invisible attributes (Hiscox, Broukhim & Litwin, 2011).

Different labelling systems, such as KRAV (www.krav.se) (a label promoting organic produce in Sweden), have the function of making visible otherwise invisible attributes. In the case of KRAV labelling, this relates to products that have been produced in a more eco-friendly way. As a result of an otherwise invisible attribute becoming visible it also becomes possible for the consumer to pay attention to the attribute. The fact that information about e.g. a product alternative’s environmental impact is made visible through a label does not mean, however, that the consumer will necessarily consider this in his/her choice of product.

The view of the decision-maker or consumer, as an individual who strives for satisfactory rather than optimal alternatives, where all aspects are considered, is associated with Herbert Simon and the research into bounded rationality (Simon, 1957: Gigerenzer & Selten 2002; Kahneman, 2003). Simon showed that we often lack possibilities of maximising our own choices. We do not manage to absorb and process all information in a rational manner. Instead we choose the first alternative which is sufficiently good. Where then, for instance, a product’s environmental impact is not especially important for a particular consumer he or she may, in order to simplify the decision process, wholly disregard the environmental aspects and choose instead an alternative that is satisfactory in other respects.

If one dislikes the production methods associated with a certain product alternative, or if one does not wish to support a particular company or organisation, it is possible to choose to boycott the product alternative, the company or the organisation. Where, on the other hand, one wishes to favour alternatives associated with certain production methods, or companies and organisations associated with a certain policy it is possible to seek out, as far as possible, certain product alternatives. Such a reverse boycott is sometimes termed “buycott” in English. Boycott and “buycott” can also be combined through e.g. boycotting the coffee X, and instead “buycotting” another coffee Y.

To the extent that the reasons for boycotting or “buycotting” are associated with invisible attributes, the consumer must in some way have acquired knowledge of these attributes. The labelling system, as mentioned, is a way of rendering visible the otherwise invisible. Since the labelling system, as a rule, is not used for making visible negative attributes less positive information on a product alternative must come from somewhere else, e.g. through mass media attention or information on the Internet. Alternatively, it is possible as a consumer to make the interpretation that product alternatives which are not labelled with e.g. an ecolabel, are associated with more negative environmental consequences. The absence of labelling, in that case, functions as a kind of negative marking.
The research shows that negative impressions, in general, tend to outweigh positive impressions. We often react more strongly to negative information compared with the corresponding positive information (see e.g. the survey article “Bad is stronger than good” by Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer & Vohs, 2001).

A consequence of this is that companies and organisations may have more to gain by avoiding being associated with something negative, e.g. in respect of the environment, ethics and so on compared with what they have to gain from being associated with something positive related to the same factors (Sankar & Bhattacharya, 2001). An additional consequence is that, all things being equal, for example the extent of information that the consumer has available, the tendency to boycott should be stronger than the tendency to “buycott”.

Experimental psychological research in respect of a hypothetical environmental labelling at three levels, positive (green), neutral (yellow) and negative (red), showed that those with little or no interest in environmental issues were not affected either by the positive or negative label. Those with a medium to strong interest in environmental issues showed, however, a stronger tendency to exclude the negatively labelled than to choose that with positive labelling (Grankvist, Dahlstrand & Biel, 2004).

At the present time there is no real negative environmental labelling (eco-labelling) of products. The reason for this is that environmental labelling is voluntary and, moreover, associated with extra costs. No producer wishes to pay extra to be able to label its products in a way that signals that it is worse than the average.

Energy labelling (Swedish Energy Agency, 2012) is based, however, on an original seven class efficiency scale which encompasses alternatives that also signal less advantageous outcomes in respect of the labelled product's energy consumption. Red (G) is used to indicate that the product consumes most energy, the scale goes via yellow labelling to the green (A) which indicates that the product is most energy-efficient. Since most products will meet the standards for A labelling (i.e. the alternative associated with the more negative outcomes has disappeared from the market), three new levels have been introduced i.e. A+, A++ and A+++ . The labelling covers white goods (domestic appliances), and, as of November 2011, also televisions. Energy labelling is mandatory within the EU through an EU directive (European Union On-Line, 2003). Without such an EU directive or other legislation which specifies that all products within the category, i.e. not only those with the most positive energy attributes, shall be energy marked a labelling that also indicated less favourable results would not have been possible.

To provide guidance to consumers concerning which seafood may be consumed without risk for overfishing there is, for example, a brochure with information on the respective fish species available on the World Wildlife Fund’s (WWF) homepage (www.wwf.se). A green signal means “Enjoy your meal” (Best choice of fish. The stocks of fish are abundant, well managed and fishing occurs in a more sustainable way), yellow stands for “Be careful” (Please reflect! There is a degree of uncertainty concerning the fishing and breeding methods employed) and red for “Leave it alone” (Avoid these fish altogether. They come from overfished stocks and/or are caught or bred in a manner that harms other marine species or the environment). The red signal may be said to be a negative labelling, with an encouragement to boycott, even if the labelling here is not directly on the product. The brochure that is obtainable from the WWF’s homepage is also available in pocket format, which makes it possible to take this along with you when shopping. (WWF’s Seafood Guide, 2012).

Warning texts on health hazards that are found on tobacco products may be mentioned as further examples of negative labelling.
Ethical and political consumption

In the book “The ethical consumer” by Harrison, Newholm and Shaw (2005), ethical consumers are defined as consumers who for political, religious, environmental, social or other reasons choose one product alternative before another. They all have in common that they lay emphasis on the effects that their choices have, in the first place for themselves, but also for the environment and for other people both near and far away. A person who chooses eco-labelled food products for the sole reason that he or she believes that these are healthier does not therefore meet the requirement for being an ethical consumer. The authors discuss the viewpoint that ethical consumption can be everything from selecting equity funds with an ethical focus, choosing products with labelling that signals that they are better from the viewpoint of environmental or working conditions for producers to boycotting companies owing to their environmental policy. The book also offers an overview of ethical consumption from both a philosophical and historical perspective.

The book “Political virtue and shopping: individuals, consumerism, and collective action” by Micheletti (2003) considers political consumption from a political science perspective. Political consumption is defined and studied by Micheletti as a form of “citizen engagement” in politics. This engagement may take a number of different forms. Both boycott and “buykott” for political, environmental, social and ethical reasons are indicated as examples of political consumption. Micheletti argues in favour of the proposition that political consumption both historically and in our own times has attracted women above all as a form of political expression. Political consumption, according to Micheletti, is also a more anonymous and risk-free way of expressing oneself politically compared with other types of political activism.

Social product labelling and Fairtrade

The present report is a survey of academic research, within or close to the subject area, concerning consumers’ approach to, and choice of, alternatives with ethical, in the sense of socially aware, product labelling. Almost all this research has been carried out on consumers in (northern) Europe and in the USA. Since a large amount of research within the area is still largely open to scrutiny the report provides a good picture of the state of knowledge within the aforementioned area.

Social product labelling focuses on issues connected with the rights of employees and how production of the labelled products affects people and the communities where the production takes place. The main purpose of social labelling may be said to be to enable consumers, principally in the developed world, to select product alternatives that have a more positive impact on living conditions (quality of life) for the least favoured producers in the developing countries.

The report mainly handles research relating to consumers’ attitudes to, and choice of, Fairtrade labelled products (www.fairtrade.se). Fairtrade is the clearly dominant social labelling programme and the major part of academic research into social labelling has been carried out with the focus on Fairtrade labelling or principles connected with this labelling programme.

The difference between Fairtrade and fair trade should be noted. (The latter here i.e. fair trade is translated into Swedish as “Rättvis Handel”). The term fair trade refers to trade that complies with the ten principles of the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO), the aim of which is to improve the situation for producers in developing nations, increase their access to markets in the
developed world and to work on behalf of sustainable development. For more information, you can refer to www.wfto.com.

Fair trade does not, however, include any specific labelling and products that comply with the standards of Fair Trade (Rättvis Handel) are to be found, above all, in World Shops. Fairtrade, on the other hand, includes certification and labelling. The international labour organization ILO (www.ilo.org) is the UN’s specialised agency for issues relating to employment and work. The ILO’s fundamental objective is to fight poverty and promote social justice. The ILO’s mandate includes promoting employment and better working conditions throughout the world, as well as safeguarding trade union freedoms and rights. The international criteria for Fairtrade are based on the fundamental ILO conventions on behalf of human rights at work that aim to foster economic development and increased concern for the environment. Fairtrade in Sweden was previously called “Rättvisemärkt”. Conventional retail outlets (e.g. supermarkets) are the main marketplace for Fairtrade-labelled products.

Figure 1. The international and the Swedish Fairtrade labels. See (www.fairtrade.net or www.fairtrade.se).

The criteria for Fairtrade certification can be summarised as follows:

- Growers/cultivators and employees obtain improved economic conditions
- Fairtrade puts a premium on investments in the local community and local activities
- Child labour and discrimination are counteracted
- Democracy and the right to organise are promoted
- Environmental care and ecological production are promoted

Fair trade (Rättvis Handel) and Fairtrade are thus two different systems. They function in parallel and sometimes overlap one another. A producer may be both a member of WFTO and Fairtrade-certified. Moreover, it should be mentioned that the term “Fair Trade” may be used when referring to both labelled and unlabelled products (www.fairtrade.net). It should be added that, in the literature referred to in this report, it is not always evident in which sense the terms fair trade, Fair Trade and ethical alternative have been employed.

One of the underlying principles for Fairtrade is that open and transparent trade relations exist between producers and trading partners. One goal is to buy directly from the producers in order to circumvent too many cost-increasing intermediaries. The trade process encompasses agreements on minimum prices as well as a price premium to be used for the purpose of implementing measures to develop the local community following democratic decisions (Fairtrade International, 2012). Examples of such development projects include building schools and paying school fees and scholarships.

In the book “Fair trade: market-driven ethical consumption” by Nicholls and Opal (2005), there is a survey of Fairtrade’s emergence and history, as well as the philosophy behind Fairtrade and other social product labelling.
The book argues that the fundamental difference between conventional trade and trade within the framework of Fairtrade is that the latter strives for co-operation rather than competition as well as for increased equality between the parties in the trading chain. “In simple terms, then, Fair Trade represents a new approach to the buyer-supplier transaction which aims at equality of exchange within a partnerships approach, underpinned by a developmental, rather than a confrontational, agenda” (Nicholls & Opal, 2005, p. 7). In the book it is also pointed out that supranational organisations such as the UN and the EU have drawn attention to Fairtrade as a significant alternative model for commerce. For more information on documents in which the EU has expressed itself positively on Fairtrade, see Fair Trade Advocacy Office (2012) and Hutchens (2009).


In the case of trade with Fairtrade-labelled product alternatives, compared with conventional commerce, greater consideration is given to the producer and seller’s situation and how the production and production methods affect the seller or the producer as well as the local community. In the literature about Fairtrade it is also pointed out that activities are carried out according to the principle of “trade not aid”. It is also asserted that with the introduction of product alternatives associated with higher ethical standards, the consumers’ possibilities of selecting alternatives which are more in line with their own values and their own lifestyle have increased (Chandler, 2006).

Even if Fairtrade is the dominant label in respect of products with a focus on social and employee rights, it should be pointed out that there are further labels that encompass social aspects and other considerations.

- Rain Forest Alliance (www.rainforest-alliance.org) is principally an environmental label that also includes standards relating to safeguarding the rights of employees and the local population.
- UTZ (www.consumer.utzcertified.org) is a certification program for coffee that includes both environmental and social criteria.
- KRAV (www.krav.se) is principally an environmental label which, however, also includes the requirement that due consideration be given to social and ethical aspects. A quotation from their homepage illustrates this: “A product cannot be KRAV labelled where, in connection with its production, the violation of human rights or social injustice occurs. KRAV enterprises cannot, for example, use forced labour or discriminate against people”.
- TCO labelling (www.tcodevelopment.se) is primarily an environmental label for IT products that incorporates certain social standards requiring that laws on health, safety and minimum pay for the producers shall be duly complied with.

Fairtrade in Sweden

In 1996 the non-profit association “Rättvisemärkt i Sverige” (Fair trade label in Sweden) was formed and the following year it was possible to purchase the first products with this label. Initially, the red and white fair trade symbols were used. As of 2004, the international Fairtrade certification label was introduced, which is green and blue against a black ground. In 2010 the
former “Rättvisemärkt i Sverige” label changed to communicate the international name, Fairtrade, in the Swedish market also (www.fairtrade.se).

**Knowledge about and trust in Fairtrade**

In 1997 an opinion survey was carried out in all the 15 EU member countries of that time in order to study, among other things, the attitudes of EU citizens to fair trade bananas. A representative sample was interviewed in each EU country. It was found that 29% of the total population of EU citizens knew about the fair trade concept and 11% had bought a product with this label on some occasion. There was, however, great variation between the countries. Sweden lay fairly near the EU average; in Holland, on the other hand, no less than 86% knew about the existence of fair trade and 47% had, at least on one occasion, bought a fair trade label product. It was also found that citizens of the EU member states on the Mediterranean knew of the fair trade concept to a significantly lesser extent.

It also emerged that 74% of the interviewees stated that they would choose the fair trade bananas if they were available, cost the same and were of the same quality as the non-fair trade labelled bananas. In Sweden this share was 87% (which was the highest amongst the EU countries). Many of the EU citizens said that they were willing to pay more for fair trade labelled bananas. 37% said they were willing to pay 10% more, 11% that they were willing to pay 20% more and 5% that they were willing to pay 30% above the price for conventional, i.e. non-fair trade, bananas.

The investigation also showed that those who said they were interested in buying the fair trade alternative stated a preference that these were available in ordinary retail outlets. It was also found that a higher educational level had a clear connection both with higher awareness of the existence of a fair trade labelled alternative and the fact that these alternatives were purchased more often. There was also a link with a person’s political outlook, measured on a traditional left-right scale. To be further to the left had a link with higher awareness of fair trade, but above all there was a positive link with a stronger intention to choose these alternatives. In the survey the principal market for fair trade labelled products was identified as being found amongst the inhabitants of the Benelux countries, Scandinavia, Great Britain and Germany (European Commission, 1997).

In 2006, Upper Secondary School pupils in Sweden took part in a questionnaire about Fairtrade. The average age was 18 years and there was roughly as large a share of young females as young males. In the questionnaire a picture was presented of the Fairtrade label and 30% of those questioned stated that they recognised this (Grankvist, 2010).

A questionnaire was also carried out during 2008 with the respondents being students at a Swedish and a German university respectively, as well as a smaller number of persons who were personal contacts of the author of the paper. It emerged that 97% of the Germans and 94% of the Swedes had heard about Fairtrade (Nagel, 2009).

At the request of Fairtrade International a questionnaire was undertaken in April 2011 (by Globescan) covering 17 000 respondents in 24 nations. At least 500 persons took part from each country and the data collected was weighted to reflect demographic variables within the country in question. In Sweden the number of respondents was 1 027. The Fairtrade label was displayed and the respondents were asked if they recognised the label. 36% of the Swedish respondents stated that they had seen it often, a further 31% had seen it sometimes. All in all, this produced a level of recognition of 67%, which was 10 percentage points above the global average. The
highest recognition level was to be found in Great Britain with 96%. There then followed Ireland 91%, Switzerland 90%, Holland 86% and Germany 69%. Moreover, it emerged that in Sweden 34% had great trust in the Fairtrade label while 31% had some trust. Thus, 65% stated that the label was very trustworthy or fairly trustworthy. The corresponding statistic for Great Britain was 90%. Thereafter followed Ireland 88%, Switzerland 87%, Holland 85% and Germany 72% (Globescan, 2011).

During February 2012, 2,001 persons were interviewed which comprised a representative sample of Swedish Internet users between 15 and 79 years, with half of the interviewees being women (Fairtrade Kännedomsundersökning: TNS Sifo, 2012). In response to the question: “Certain foods and other products have labels that guarantee an environmental or ethical standard. Which products of this type have you heard about?” 35% of the interviewees stated Fairtrade or “Rättvisemärkt” (Fair trade labelled). It may be noted here that this related to what the respondents spontaneously thought of when the question above was asked. In response to the question: “Have you seen this label on any occasion?” with the Fairtrade label being shown, 70% recognised this label. In the group of female respondents, 78% recognised the label and in the group of younger females and males (15-34 years) no less than 90% recognised the Fairtrade label. In response to the question “What degree of trust have you in Fairtrade as product label?”, where answers were indicated on a scale from 1 (no trust at all) to 7 (very great trust), 14% indicated a seven and 23% a six. In total, 37% indicated seven or six on the scale, which can be interpreted as high or very high trust in the label.

Summary: Fairtrade is known by a large share of the Swedish population and the label enjoys a relatively high level of trust.

Sales statistics

In 2011, there were 1,311 product alternatives in Sweden bearing the Fairtrade label. On average, in Sweden, SEK 129 (about 14 EUR) per capita was spent on Fairtrade labelled products. Roses (11%) was the product with the highest Fairtrade label share. Corresponding statistics for other products with a relatively high market share for the Fairtrade label: Bananas (5%), coffee (5%), sugar (4%), honey (4%), cocoa and drinking chocolate (3%), tea (2%), chocolate (confectionery) (2%) and wine (1%) (Fairtrade Sverige, 2012).

Factors that may explain variations in attitude to Fairtrade and similar labels and principles

The research concerning attitudes to Fairtrade alternatives shows that there are large differences between individuals in viewpoints and attitudes. Some people have a great interest and are very positive; others have a weaker interest or show no interest at all in Fairtrade and other social labelling. An interesting question is what may explain this variation. The remaining part of the report will largely centre on what the research has shown are factors that are connected with, and can explain, why certain persons have a more positive attitude to product alternatives having the Fairtrade label or similar social labelling.
**Age, gender and income**

A questionnaire in the USA investigated if there were differences in the intentions to select Fairtrade alternatives depending on which generation one belonged to. Generation X was defined as those born between 1965 and 1975. When the survey was carried out they were in the age range of 29 to 40 years. Baby boomers were born in the period from 1946 to 1964, and the swing generation was born from the early 1930’s up to 1945. No significant differences were found between the generation groups in respect of attitude to, or intentions to choose, Fairtrade alternatives (Litrell, Youn & Halepet, 2005).

An interview survey was conducted in Great Britain with the object of better understanding older consumers’ reasons for choosing, or not choosing, products with social labels such as Fairtrade. Older consumers were defined as those people being over 50 years. The respondents, who were in the age range of 52 to 74 years, were recruited through notice boards in a church and a shop. All participants had at least some interest in social/community and consumer issues and knew what ethical and social product labels were intended to show. The survey demonstrated that the participants had a feeling of moral responsibility and viewed it as a social obligation or duty to choose ethical alternatives such as Fairtrade. Moreover, it was shown that they were ready both to boycott certain product alternatives and to “buycott” other more ethical alternatives. It also turned out that they considered that it should be easier to find ethical alternatives (Carrigan, Szmigin & Wright, 2004).

In a questionnaire survey with respondents from a small city/town in Great Britain, the aim was to study to what extent these made an active choice of ethical alternatives when purchasing different items. In addition to questions on choice of the Fairtrade alternative, there were also questions concerning the extent consideration was given to the ethical reputation of different companies and whether one bought presents in charity shops. It was found that women, to a slightly greater extent than men, chose ethical alternatives. The age of the person, however, had no connection with how often the respondents chose ethical alternatives (Pepper, Jackson & Uzzell, 2011).

A study from France, based on sales statistics of actual purchases made during the period between 2005 and June 2007, encompassed a total of 118 252 purchases from 5 668 different households. In the group that bought coffee at least once during the period in question, no connection was found between gender and age and how often the purchased coffee was Fairtrade label. Higher education and living standards (income) had a connection, however, to the extent that coffee with the Fairtrade label was more frequently chosen (Cailleba & Casteran, 2009).

From a questionnaire survey with Upper Secondary students in Sweden it emerged that young females indicated a significantly stronger preference than young males for the principles associated with Fairtrade (Grankvist, 2010).

Students at a higher education institution in Sweden participated in a questionnaire survey on attitudes to principles associated with Fairtrade. The average age was 26 years, the youngest participant was 18 and the oldest 46 years old. A majority, 80%, were women. It turned out that women were significantly more positive in their attitude towards the principles associated with Fairtrade. There was also a tendency for older students to be more positive than younger students (Grankvist, 2012).

During the winter/spring of 2010, a questionnaire was sent out to everyone over 15 years in a sparsely populated area in Sweden. The average age of the respondents was 53 years. The
youngest person to reply to the questionnaire was born in 1990 and thus 20 years old, whereas the oldest was born in 1921 and 89 years old. Women were more positively inclined to the principles behind Fairtrade than men, and older persons were more positive than younger (at least up to about 60 years of age). All in all, this means that a woman of 50 to 60 years of age was considerably more positive to Fairtrade than a man aged between 20 and 30 years (Grankvist & Öst, 2012).

A survey conducted at a Swedish university, where a study was made into how much the respondents were willing to pay for Fairtrade label coffee, found there was no significant difference in willingness to pay between women and men (Katz, 2009).

To summarise, it appears that women compared with men are at least equally or indeed more positively inclined towards Fairtrade and the principles associated with this social label.

Political consumers are defined by Micheletti and Stolle (2005) as persons who, during the last twelve months, had either boycotted or “buycotted” certain products on political, ethical or environmental grounds. Consequently, a significantly broader definition than that which is the focus of this report. In a questionnaire survey from 2003, covering Swedes in the age range of 15 to 85 years, it was found that almost 50% of those questioned could be classified as political consumers. Women were political consumers to a somewhat higher degree than men, 52% and 43% respectively. The group of respondents aged between 30 and 39 years included the largest share of political consumers (56%). Higher education and income had clear links with an increased level of political consumption (Micheletti & Stolle, 2005).

The questionnaire survey “The European Social Survey” (http://europeansocialsurvey.org), with data from 22 countries in Western and Eastern Europe, from the period 2002-2003, showed that 34% of the adult population in Western Europe had both boycotted and “buycotted” on at least one occasion during the last twelve months. For Sweden the share was 60% and the proportion of women was higher (67%) than the proportion of men (54%). It also emerged that the proportion of boycotters and “buycotters” was highest in northern Europe (Micheletti & Isenhour, 2010).

In respect of political consumption, therefore, it appears that women have a more positive attitude than men.

**Fairtrade among other products in the shop**

In a questionnaire survey carried out in Belgium in 2004, variations were made in the settings in which Fairtrade label coffee was presented. The respondents were persons who were employed at two universities as well as employees at a large printing company. It emerged that they preferred to see Fairtrade label coffee in ordinary shops and supermarkets, and on the same shelf as other coffee. The fact that Fairtrade coffee was sold in special stores was an alternative that made the coffee significantly less attractive (De Pelsmacker, Janssens, Sterckx & Mielants, 2005).

Moreover, in a questionnaire survey with participants from a Swedish and a German university, it emerged that the respondents preferred to have the option of purchasing Fairtrade label coffee in ordinary retail outlets (Nagel, 2009).

Mention may also be made here of a survey carried out in France in 2002 where it was found that those who bought Fairtrade coffee in special shops for ethical and alternative products were
motivated by a desire to be eco-friendly and to participate in an alternative economy. Those who bought Fairtrade coffee in supermarkets did so on account of a wish to choose product alternatives that were associated with respect for human rights (de Ferran & Grunert, 2007).

To summarise, it is significantly more popular that the Fairtrade alternative is available where one goes to buy other products than that these alternative products are to be found in special shops.

**A question of duty, identity and what others think**

In a survey conducted in Great Britain, subscribers to a periodical on ethical consumption answered questions e.g. on the preference for ethical alternatives. It may be noted that the respondents in this survey may be assumed to be significantly more interested in ethical consumption than consumers in general. The results from the survey therefore may not apply to citizens of Great Britain in general terms. The authors of the survey argue for, and present data supports, the hypothesis that individuals who, to a greater extent, perceived a moral or ethical obligation to choose ethical or Fairtrade label alternatives also had stronger intentions to choose these alternative products. In addition, the extent to which they indicated that ethical consumption has come to be part of their own identity was shown to have a positive link with the intention to choose ethical alternatives (Shaw and Shui, 2002a) and (Shaw and Shui, 2002b).

Persons from Great Britain and Germany respectively took part in an interview study on attitudes to Fairtrade alternatives. All respondents belonged to the middle class and had a university education with about 75% being women. In the study data is presented which shows and it is argued that those who choose the Fairtrade alternative do so, at least partly, because they perceive that this is a part of their identity. The article also argues that the choice of Fairtrade alternatives may contribute to creating an identity for the consumer as ethical consumer (Varul, 2009). This argument is in line with the basic concept of the Self-perception theory, see e.g. Bem, 1972) which states that sometimes behaviour may come first, and that through observing one’s own behaviour one tends to draw conclusions on the attitudes and preferences one has. This only applies, however, where the behaviour is perceived to be voluntary. Where for some reason, of which one is not always wholly aware, one happens to choose e.g. the Fairtrade alternative one may, on the basis of this behaviour, therefore draw the conclusion that one has a positive attitude towards Fairtrade; in the longer term an identity as Fairtrade consumer may come to be developed.

Subscribers to one or several periodicals on ethical consumption were asked to participate in a questionnaire. Those who answered the questionnaire may be assumed to have a greater interest in Fairtrade and ethical consumption than the population (in Great Britain) in general. The respondents were divided into two groups, those who seldom or almost never or those who frequently bought Fairtrade alternatives respectively. For those included in the group of seldom/never, it emerged that the extent they believed that others chose the Fairtrade alternative had a clear link with the strength of their own intentions to choose these product alternatives. The extent that they perceived that one should choose ethical alternatives was another factor that could explain the strength of the actual intention to choose ethical alternatives. For those who chose Fairtrade more regularly, the level of perceived identity as a Fairtrade consumer was an important factor in the strength of the intention to choose Fairtrade alternatives (Ozcaglar-Toulouse, Shiu & Shaw, 2006).

A study carried out at university in Canada investigated how information on the choices made by other people in favour of Fairtrade products influenced sales of Fairtrade label coffee, sugar,
chocolate and so on, in the campus area. Those who took part in the survey were mainly students and employees at the university. Information that the Fairtrade alternative was popular at the university, and (false) statistics that showed that students at their own university bought Fairtrade products for, on average, larger amounts than students at a number of other universities, resulted in sales of Fairtrade products in shops on the campus having increased markedly (d’Astous & Mathieu, 2008).

Focus group discussions where all the participants subscribed to a publication on ethical consumption were conducted in Great Britain. Many ideas concerning the reasons why they were interested in, and chose ethical alternatives, emerged during these discussions. Among other things, it was stated that their opinions on ethical consumption had been shaped by family and friends, by ethically oriented organisations and by their religious convictions (Shaw & Clarke, 1999).

These results are wholly in line with much psychological research that has shown that we frequently use the viewpoints and behaviour of others, in particular people we perceive to be important, as guidelines for what we perceive to be desirable opinions or behaviour (see e.g. Cialdini 2001).

Summary: What one believes that others think, and to what extent one perceives that one should choose Fairtrade alternatives, can to a certain extent explain attitudes to these product alternatives. Those who frequently choose Fairtrade can come to identify themselves as Fairtrade consumers.

**Fairtrade and religiosity**

What today is ethical consumption and Fairtrade partly has its origin in religious milieus (Rignell, 2002; Nicholls & Opal 2005; Hutchens 2009). The connection between religiosity (religious mindedness) and preference for ethical or Fairtrade alternatives has been researched in two studies, one from the USA and one from Great Britain.

In the study carried out in the USA, persons were compared who identified themselves as Buddhists, Hindus, Christians, Catholics and Jews and a group defined as non-religious (in the sense that they did not identify themselves with any of the aforementioned religions). It was found that the links between the level of preference for Fairtrade and which religion one identified with, or if one did not consider oneself as belonging to any religion, were very weak. Religiosity, defined in this way, could therefore only to a very small extent explain the attitude of respondents to Fairtrade (Doran & Natale, 2011).

A questionnaire survey with respondents from a town in Great Britain (Pepper, Jackson & Uzzell, 2011) studied whether there was a connection between the level of religious mindedness and the level of socially aware purchasing. As a measure of religiosity a number of self assessments concerning central dimensions within Christianity were employed. It was found that a higher level of religiosity in this sense had a very modest, but positive link, with a stronger preference for Fairtrade alternatives. An interesting result was that those who tended to see God as loving, forgiving and helpful rather than strict and punitive also tended to have a more positive attitude to Fairtrade. To summarise: religiosity/religious-mindedness is not thought to have a direct relation with a preference for alternatives associated with Fairtrade.
**Fairtrade and values**

Values are a central concept with the science of psychology. One of the most widely diffused and influential definitions has been presented by Rokeach (1973, p. 5); “A value is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence”. Values resemble attitudes to the extent that they comprehend an appraisal of likes or dislikes. Values however, unlike attitudes, are few and relatively stable over time (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Personal characteristics are distinguished from values through tending to be descriptions of how people are, values are concerned with what people consider to be important, what they strive to attain or uphold (Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz & Knafo, 2002).

Research has shown that how great a weight an individual places on different values is connected with e.g. political attitude (Cochrane, Billig, & Hogg, 1979), attitude to more long-term sustainable consumption (Thogersen & Ölander, 2002), attitudes to genetically modified foods (Dreezens, Martijn, Tenbült, Kok, & de Vries, 2005) as well as preference for ethical alternatives (Shaw, Grehan, Shiu, Hassan, & Thomson, 2005).

Research has also shown that a value that is important to a particular person in all probability influences the behaviour if something in the concrete situation has reminded the person on the value in question (Seligman & Katz, 1996; Verplanken & Holland, 2002). The values that have been shown to have a connection with stronger preference for Fairtrade alternatives will consequently, to a greater extent, influence the choice of product alternative if something in the shopping situation/on the shopping occasion has drawn the person's attention to his or her own values.

One of the questionnaire tools that has been developed to measure how great a weight is laid on different values (value salience) is the List of Values (LOV). The tool has been developed with the intention of creating a list of values that is relatively short and contains questions that are perceived as relevant in everyday life (Beatty, Kahle, Homer & Mistra, 1985).

In the aforementioned questionnaire survey with Upper Secondary students in Sweden (Grankvist, 2010), it emerged that a stronger preference for the principles behind Fairtrade was directly related to laying greater weight on the LOV values “Warm relations with others” (to have close friends and deep ties of friendship) and “Self-realisation” (to make the most of one’s talents).

A survey where the participants were students at a higher education institution in Sweden showed, as the study referred to above, that a stronger preference for Fairtrade had a connection with placing greater weight on the LOV value “Warm relations with others”. It also emerged that placing greater weight on “Security” (to be secure and protected from mishap and assault) was directly related to a preference for Fairtrade. In the article it is mentioned that a possible explanation for the link between Fairtrade preference and the value “Security” could be that a sense of one’s own insecurity makes people more sensitive to, and observant of, other people’s lack of security. A consequence of this could be that these people are more positively oriented towards improving the conditions for unfairly treated farmers/cultivators and producers in developing countries (Grankvist, Lekedal & Marmendal, 2007).

Schwartz (see e.g. Schwartz, 1992) has presented a model with ten fundamental values. These are placed in a coordinate system with two axes. One of the axes has the endpoints “Self-
Transcendence” and “Self-Enhancement”. The other axis has the endpoints “Openness to Change” and “Conservation”. For an illustration of the model, please see Figure 2.

The two Self-Enhancement values are: Power (social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources) and Achievement (personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards). The two self-transcending values are: Universalism (understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature) and Generosity (Benevolence: preservation and enhancement of the welfare of the people with whom one is in frequent personal contact). It can be noted here that the value Benevolence/Generosity has the focus on persons one is regularly or frequently in contact with. Self-enhancing values are more fundamental in character and are developed at an early stage in life. The self-transcending values are the result of a socialisation process and to the extent they are developed this occurs later in life. The axis with the endpoints Self-Transcendence and Self-Enhancement may be understood as a dimension where different individuals, to varying degrees, strive to transcend personal and individual interests and instead work to be of benefit for others, alternatively strive in the first place to favour one’s own personal interests.

The two Openness to Change values are: Self-direction (independent thought and action choosing, creating, exploring) and Stimulation (excitement, novelty, and challenge in life). Hedonism (pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself) has elements of both Self-Enhancement and Openness to Change. The three Conservation values are: Security (safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self), Tradition (respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide the self) and Social Conformity (restraint of action, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms). The axis with the endpoints Conservation and Openness to Change may be understood as a dimension where different individuals, to varying degrees, oppose changes and instead strive for the security that can be provided by conforming to norms and social rules, or alternatively are open to new experiences and lay weight on their own and independent thoughts and ideas (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001).

It should be mentioned that the axes, or dimensions, should be perceived in terms of individuals who lay emphasis on values that belong to one of the endpoints also place less emphasis on values that belong to the other endpoint. Another central characteristic is that these axes or dimensions are independent of one another. This means that where an individual places him- or herself on the one axis/dimension says nothing about where he or she may place him-/herself on the other axis/dimension. Both these properties of the model have significant empirical support (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001).
In an aforementioned questionnaire study carried out in Great Britain 2006, the frequency with which respondents dedicated themselves to socially conscious purchasing (SCP) was measured; this being a somewhat broader concept than choice of Fairtrade alternatives. It was found that the two values that are included in the Self-Enhancement dimension in the Schwartz model had a positive connection with more frequent SCP. Moreover, it was found that the value Universalism had a stronger link than the value Benevolence/Generosity with SCP. The value Security/Safety had a negative link with SCP on the other hand (Pepper, Jackson & Uzzell, 2009).

A questionnaire survey, where the respondents comprised university students as well as consumers who visited websites where Fairtrade label products could be purchased, was conducted in the USA in 2007. A positive connection was found to exist between placing greater weight on the Self-enhancing values of Universalism and Benevolence/Generosity and indicating a stronger preference for Fairtrade alternatives. The link, however, was significantly stronger for Universalism than for the Benevolence/Generosity value (Doran, 2009: 2010).

The article discusses the fact that Universalism, unlike Benevolence/Generosity, does not make any clear distinction between benefitting one’s own group, i.e. those with whom one is in frequent contact, and the larger group of all people. To strive to a high degree for what is covered by the value Benevolence/Generosity may mean, argues the writer of the article, that concern for the welfare of, and the intention to share resources with, the larger group of all people must take second place. This could help to explain the weaker link between the emphasis on Benevolence/Generosity and the preference for the Fairtrade alternative (Doran, 2009: 2010).

The self-enhancing values had a clearly negative relation with the choice of Fairtrade alternatives which is wholly in line with the Schwartz model where Self-Enhancement stands in opposition to Self-Transcendence.

It was also found that where the accent was placed on Openness to Change values, there was also a direct relation with a stronger preference for the Fairtrade alternative. The article comments on the fact that greater weight placed on values that include openness to and curiosity about the new and unknown can foster what is necessary for taking the step of trying out Fairtrade alternatives.
The Security/Conformity/Tradition value had a negative link with preference for the Fairtrade alternative, which is in line with the Schwartz model since this is a value that belongs to the Conservation group which stands in opposition to the Openness to Change values (Doran, 2009: 2010).

In an aforementioned questionnaire survey, where the respondents were students at a higher education institution in Sweden, a direct relation was found between placing greater weight on the Self-Transcendence values, Universalism and Benevolence/Generosity and being more positive towards principles associated with Fairtrade (Grankvist, 2012).

During 2001 and 2002 interviews were conducted with persons in Great Britain who all had a stated interest in ethical issues. On the basis of the Schwartz model for values, questions were asked about what they considered to be the important and guiding principles in their choice of everyday consumer goods. It was found that principles associated with the Universalism value, and in particular the aspects that focused on pro-social action, were indicated as important by most people. Moreover, principles associated with Openness for Change, and the self-direction factor (to have one’s own ideas and to be able to act independently of others) were stated as being important. It was also found that multinational companies and supermarkets were perceived in a somewhat negative light, the authors interpreting this in terms of these ethical consumers laying weight on some kind of anti-capitalistic value. Consumer power, that is to say the consumer being able to exercise power through choosing more ethical alternatives, was indicated by the respondents as something clearly positive (Shaw, Grehan, Hassan & Thomson, 2005).

To summarise: The value “Universalism” (understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature) and, to a certain extent, also the value “Benevolence/Generosity” (preservation and enhancement of the welfare of the people with whom one is in frequent personal contact) have been shown to have positive links with stronger preference for principles associated with Fairtrade. A person with a more positive attitude to Fairtrade consequently places more emphasis on self-transcendent values than self-enhancing values. It may also be mentioned that greater emphasis on the LOV value “Warm relations with others” (to have close colleagues and friends and deep ties of friendship) was shown to predict a more positive attitude to principles associated with Fairtrade.

Willingness to pay more for Fairtrade alternatives

During 2010 interviews were carried out with more than 26 000 citizens in the 27 EU member states. The interview questions mainly dealt with the attitudes to, and viewpoints about, international trade. In Sweden, 79% of the interviewees indicated they were willing to pay more for products from companies that respected the rights of employees and that applied high social standards in their activities. The figure for EU citizens on average was 41%. Moreover, it emerged that 79% of the Swedes were willing to pay more for products in order to benefit developing countries. For EU citizens on average the figure was 35% (European Commission, 2010).

During 2006 phone interviews were carried out in the USA, the results being weighted to give a more balanced picture of adults in the USA. It appeared that 65% considered that a guaranteed minimum level in respect of living standard was an inviolable human right. Those who stated that they regularly drank coffee were asked if they were willing to pay extra for Fairtrade coffee. More than 75% stated that they were willing to pay at least equivalent to 16% more for Fairtrade label
coffee. More than 50% indicated they were prepared to pay 33% more (Hertel, Scruggs & Heidkamp, 2009).

Employees at a large university in Belgium participated in a questionnaire survey of willingness to pay extra for a cup of Fairtrade coffee. On average, the respondents were prepared to pay a premium of 10%. When the study was carried out there was in actual fact a premium of 27% on a cup of Fairtrade coffee and it was found that 10% of the respondents were prepared to pay such a high additional price. Those who answered the questionnaire were younger than the average in Belgium and better educated (De Pelsmacker, Driesen & Rayp, 2005).

After being informed about the meaning of the Fairtrade labelling of coffee people were asked in a supermarket in the USA if they were willing to pay more for coffee with this label and, in such a case, how much more. It was found that on average they were willing to pay 3% more for coffee bearing the Fairtrade label. Women with relatively high incomes and higher education were the group that indicated they were willing to pay most for the Fairtrade label coffee (Loureiro & Lotade, 2005).

A questionnaire survey with students at a Swedish university revealed that, on average, they were willing to pay a 20% higher price for Fairtrade compared with conventional coffee. It also turned out that 40% did not know whether the coffee that they could buy in the university area was Fairtrade label or not (Katz, 2009).

Studies where one is encouraged to indicate how much, or how much more, one is prepared to pay for a product or service have been criticised. The reliability of the information that is produced in the course of such willingness-to-pay studies has been questioned by, among others, Daniel Kahneman. See e.g. Ritov and Kahneman (1997) who put forward the argument that readiness to pay does not offer a good and reliable appraisal of how much an individual is actually prepared to pay. Higher stated willingness to pay should, according to Ritov and Kahneman, only be interpreted as a sign of a more positive attitude towards the product or service in question.

Ritov and Kahneman also put forward the argument that when respondents assess the willingness to pay for a single factor without at the same time needing to adopt other factors there is a significant risk that the willingness to pay is overrated. A better way of finding out how important a certain factor is may therefore be to ask questions where the respondents are made to set different factors against one another. Some studies, however, have been carried out where a study has been made of how much extra consumers have actually paid for Fairtrade alternatives.

A field experiment was carried out in 2002 in a department store in the USA. There were two separate stands with sports socks placed next to one another. They were identical apart from there being socks labelled with good working conditions (GWO) on one of the stands with the subtext “no child labor, no sweatshops, safe workplaces”. The socks without labelling were sold for a dollar a pair (i.e. a low trade price). The price for the labelled socks was varied during the time that the study was ongoing. It was found that when the price was the same for labelled and unlabelled socks 49% chose the socks with the GWO labelling. When the price for the labelled socks was raised by 5%, 10%, 20%, 30% and 40% respectively it was found that between 25% and 30% of the customers chose the labelled variant.

The housing area where the study was carried out was characterised by the average income being slightly lower than the national average and fewer had been in higher education than the average for the USA. There was also a relatively strong union tradition in the area. Which role this played was, however, impossible to determine. From the article it emerged that it was difficult to obtain
permission to carry out the field experiment, they asked 31 different department stores before they obtain permission from one of them to carry out the study (Prasad, Kimeldorf, Meyer & Robinson, 2004).

During the period March 2007 to August 2009 there was carried out, with its base in the USA, a field experiment on the auction site eBay on the Internet. Each auction was carried on over a period of 3 days and the object that was on sale was newly roasted whole coffee beans, with three items of one-pound packets (3 x 0.45 kg). The authors of the article argue that purchasers on eBay are at least equally price sensitive as other consumers and, on average, coffee beans are sold on eBay for a 30% lower price than in the shops. The field experiment was so arranged that an auction where Fairtrade label coffee was for sale was always in progress parallel with another auction where similar, but not Fairtrade label, coffee was being sold. A total of 130 + 130 = 260 auctions within the framework of the study were carried out. There were 780 persons involved as bidders, certain bid for both alternatives, others only on one of them. A total of 142 persons were successful bidders at one or more of the auctions and the buyers were to be found in the USA and Canada. On average, 23% more was paid for the Fairtrade label coffee (Hiscox, Broukhim and Litwin, 2011).

Schollenberg (2012) has presented results based on data from actual purchases carried out in a representative selection of supermarkets (total of about 3,000) in Sweden during the period March 2005 to March 2008. It emerged that the average premium payable by the consumer for coffee bearing the Fairtrade label was 38%.

Summary: There is a relatively high willingness to pay extra for alternatives associated with Fairtrade. It is possible that this should be interpreted, in the first place, as the respondents expressing a positive attitude towards these alternatives.

Fairtrade compared with other attributes

Students at a business school, a number of members of Amnesty International, in Australia, as well as a mixed group of students in Hong Kong were included in a study into the relative importance of different aspects in the perception of how attractive trainers were. The ethical attributes were that no child labour had occurred, that at least minimum wages had been paid, there were no sweatshop conditions (hazardous working environment) and the work facilitated an acceptable living standard for the workers. The fact that no child labour occurred was stated as the single most important ethical aspect. When all attributes, i.e. also physical attributes, were included, it was only the trainers’ fit that was more important than the fact that no child labour had occurred in the course of production. The fact of no child labour was thus adjudged to be more important than the shoe’s weight, its shock absorption capacity and the sole’s durability. The authors of the article noted that despite the ethical aspects on production of the shoes being indicated as very important, the respondents were strikingly ignorant about the working conditions of those producing the shoes that they themselves used. The respondents had significantly better knowledge on their own shoes’ physical attributes (Auger, Burke, Devinney & Louviere, 2003).

A questionnaire survey with respondents from Germany, Spain, USA, Turkey, India and South Korea comprised about 100 persons from each country; in all cases this was a representative sample from the middle class in the relevant country. A number of factors associated with social, environmental and ethical aspects in production of different merchandise were introduced and set against one another in an experimental design. The purpose was to investigate which factors
were rated as most important as well as if there were differences in the ratings between the countries.

That fundamental human rights, as described in the UN’s declarations, were observed was rated the most important factor. That child labour did not occur i.e. that companies did not use workers under the minimum legal age for working in the relevant country, was another almost equally important factor. Safe working conditions, i.e. that the companies followed the rules and procedures for creating a safe, good and secure working environment for the employees was also rated as important. The fact that a basic living standard could be achieved for the employees and that no discrimination occurred on grounds of gender, religion or race were also considered to be important factors. These factors were rated, in roughly the aforementioned order, as important, or very important, in all the participating countries. It may be noted however that the factor of no child labour was deemed to be considerably less important in South Korea and the factor of no discrimination on grounds of gender, religion or race was assessed to be significantly less important in India.

Additional factors that occurred in the survey were that at least the minimum wage was paid to the workers, in accordance with regulations in the relevant country. Other factors focused on animal rights, e.g. that animals were not treated in a cruel manner in testing of new products, that animals were not exterminated in forest felling or that animals were not used in a cruel way as entertainment. The fact that the product could be disposed of without causing damage to the natural environment was an additional factor, as well as it being possible to have the product recycled. An additional factor that arose in the survey was whether it was legal to form trade unions in the country, and that companies did not attempt to prevent or limit union activities. For these factors, there were relatively large differences between these countries in terms of how important they were considered to be. However, it is worth mentioning that the factor of animal rights was rated significantly lower in South Korea than in the other countries (Auger, Devinney & Louviere, 2007).

In a survey conducted in Belgium in 2004 (De Pelsmacker, Janssens, Sterckx & Mielants, 2005), coffee was presented with different kinds of labelling. The Fairtrade labelling was defined as a label guaranteeing a fair price for the farmers/cultivators in the developing countries, something that made it possible for them to invest in their production methods with a view to the future. In addition, there was social labelling; this was defined as guaranteeing that the product was produced in a manner providing for human rights, e.g. no child labour or forced labour occurred and that the workers had the right to form trade unions. A bio-based labelling was defined as that indicating that no herbicides, other non-natural substances or genetically modified ingredients were used. Eco-labelling was defined in terms of as little energy, water and hazardous substances as possible being used and, where possible, recycled material being used in production. An additional factor was whether there was further information on what the labelling signified on the back of the pack or not. For each combination of attributes the respondents stated how attractive the coffee was. It emerged that the Fairtrade label was the type of labelling that increased the coffee’s attractiveness the most. The social labelling enhanced the coffee’s attractiveness also, but to a lesser degree. The eco-labelled coffee and bio-based labelled coffee was clearly less attractive than the coffee with the Fairtrade or social labelling respectively. It also emerged that additional information on the back of the pack concerning the meaning of the different labelling meant that the coffee was rated as more attractive (De Pelsmacker, Janssens, Sterckx & Mielants, 2005).

A study conducted in France (year 2005), investigated whether the participants were willing to pay more for a chocolate bar if it was eco-labelled (organic), had a socially responsible label (Fairtrade) or had both labels. It was found that roughly half the hundred or so participants were
not interested in paying any more for a chocolate bar with eco-labelling or social labelling. All in all, the average premium price that was specified for chocolate bars with both labels was more or less equally large which may be interpreted in terms of the environmental and social aspects respectively being rated on average of equal importance (Dider & Lucie, 2008).

Summary: The fact that decent social and employment conditions are observed is apparently perceived as being at least as important, or indeed more important, than that the products are made in an eco-friendly way.

Most of the studies presented above illustrate that a large proportion of consumers, both in Sweden and in similar western countries, have a positive attitude towards Fairtrade and the principles associated with this and other ethically labelled products. The readiness to pay slightly more for these product alternatives would seem in general to be fairly considerable. There are, however, studies that point in a wholly different direction and that question the value of many of the surveys presented in this report.

In focus group interviews where the participants were from Great Britain, university educated and between 18 and 25 years, it emerged that none of the participants had ever boycotted a product. When the moderator of the interviews mentioned a company (Nike) which had a poor reputation concerning conditions of work for their employees in developing countries it emerged that all except one of the participants knew about this. All of them said, however, that they would continue to buy products from this company, despite its poor ethical standing. One respondent stated the opinion that without companies as that mentioned those who were now employed under poor conditions would not have any jobs at all. All of them said, however, that they would continue to buy products from this company, despite its poor ethical standing. One respondent stated the opinion that without companies as that mentioned those who were now employed under poor conditions would not have any jobs at all. The participants said they were dissatisfied in respect of low pay for e.g. producers of chocolate, but they said they were not willing to boycott or pay 10 to 15% more for similar chocolate that had been produced under better working conditions for the employees. They also pointed out that there was not much they could do about the fact that products such as e.g. chocolate were produced under poor working conditions (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001).

Cowe and Williams (2000) commented on the fact that many are positive towards ethical alternatives but that considerably fewer actually choose these product alternatives. They used the concept of a 30:3 syndrome. About 30% of the consumers say that they are, as a rule, positive about ethical alternatives but just below 3% decide to purchase these alternatives. Cowe and Williams also considered whether a possible explanation for this may be that in questionnaires and interviews specific questions are often asked, though without context, about the respondent’s preference for ethical alternatives. However, once in the retail environment a whole host of factors have an influence on which product alternatives are actually chosen.

Twenty consumers from each one of the following eight countries was interviewed in depth; China, India, Turkey, Australia, USA, Germany, Sweden and Spain. One subject that was taken up during the interview was the working conditions for those producing the goods in developing countries. A popular brand of trainers was mentioned. It turned out that the interviewees were remarkably uninterested in the ethical aspects associated with production of goods in developing countries. The degree of lack of interest did not appear to have any connection with the interviewee’s social position in the community, their financial circumstances or which country the person concerned came from. The authors argue the case that it is perhaps simpler to indicate socially desirable responses in a questionnaire than during an hour long interview (Belk, Devinney & Eckhardt, 2005).
These studies may give a picture that the positive attitude to Fairtrade and other ethical alternatives that emerge in different surveys (see e.g. Prasad, Kimeldorf, Meyer & Robinson, 2004; European Commission, 2010; Globescan, 2011; Fairtrade Kännedomsundersökning: TNS Sifo, 2012) mostly relates to wishing to appear in a positive light.

It is well known in psychology that the tendency to answer in a manner so that one appears in a more favourable light can be a source of errors (Nederhof, 1985: Steenkamp, de Jong and Baumgartner, 2010). This varies between individuals, nevertheless, and certain persons are more inclined to indicate socially desirable responses or embellished answers than others. Through employing verification questions in questionnaires, for example, which are specially designed to measure the tendency to state socially desirable responses one can obtain an estimate of how strong a person’s tendency is to state such an answer. The information can then be used, with the aid of different mathematical methods, to adjust for tendencies to offer socially desirable responses in e.g. questionnaire data (Nederhof, 1985).

The great majority of studies into the attitude to Fairtrade labelled alternatives lack a standard of measurement for tendencies to socially desirable responding. There are certain exceptions however.

In a questionnaire survey from Great Britain, a positive link was found between the tendency to socially desirable responding and the fact that the respondents, to a greater degree, stated they made active choices of more ethical product alternatives. The connection, however, was relatively weak and statistically insignificant (Pepper, Jackson & Uzzell, 2011). In another similar questionnaire survey a similarly weak link was found between the tendency to socially desirable responding and how frequently one stated that one chose ethical alternatives (Pepper, Jackson & Uzzell, 2009).

In the study with respondents coming from a sparsely inhabited region of Sweden, it was found that the link between the tendency to give socially desirable responses and the extent that the respondents stated they were sympathetic to the principles associated with Fairtrade was very close to nil (Grankvist & Öst, 2012). Moreover, in a survey where students at a higher education institution in Sweden answered a questionnaire containing questions on e.g. preference for principles associated with Fair Trade, the connection with the tendency to socially desirable responding was practically non-existent (Grankvist, 2012).

Summary: A stronger inclination to give socially desirable responses does not appear to have any clear link with a more positive attitude towards alternatives associated with Fairtrade.

**Obstacles**

A questionnaire survey from the year 2000 in Finland showed that ethical principles were seen as important in production and commerce. A majority believed that a company’s ethical profile influenced their own buying habits. It also emerged that the positive attitude to ethical principles far from always resulted in actual purchases of ethical alternatives. The major obstacles that emerged in the survey were the difficulties in obtaining information on ethical alternatives and the fact that the ethical alternatives were not available. For certain of those questioned the higher price was also an inhibiting factor (Uusitalo & Oksanen, 2004).

A questionnaire survey into attitudes to, and purchases of, Fairtrade alternatives was carried out in Belgium during 2003. It emerged that many respondents considered that the Fairtrade
alternatives were too expensive and that it was too difficult to find these alternatives. A shortage of information on what Fairtrade means was stated as the most important reason by many people as to why Fairtrade alternatives were not purchased. Many demanded general information on Fairtrade, as well as information about where these product alternatives were available to purchase. More information about Fairtrade was demanded on the Fairtrade labelled products themselves. The most important reason why the Fairtrade alternative was purchased was stated as being that one wished to give farmers and producers in the developing countries a fairer price for their products (De Pelsmacker, Janssens, Sterckx & Mielants, 2006).

In focus group interviews, carried out in Great Britain, the higher price for ethical alternatives was the factor mentioned most frequently as the reason why these product alternatives were not selected more often. Lack of knowledge on ethical alternatives was mentioned as a further reason for why these products were not chosen. It also emerged that greater emphasis was placed on avoiding, or boycotting, unethical products than actively choosing ethical alternatives. It also turned out that certain of the participants had a feeling that ethical statements were perhaps only an additional marketing ploy in order to set a higher price and exploit the customer's benevolence. Many of the participants believed that the major part of the extra premium which they paid for ethical alternatives did not in fact reach the producers or the farmers/cultivators. The participants also expressed a degree of guilt that they did not buy ethical products sufficiently often; however they also expressed doubt that their choice of ethical alternatives would really have made any difference (Bray, Johns & Kilburn, 2011).

In a questionnaire survey with students at a Swedish and a German university it emerged that the most important reason why they chose Fairtrade alternatives was that they wished to help people in the developing countries. The second most important reason was that it made them feel better. The most important reason why they did not buy the Fairtrade alternatives was that the price was too high. That they did not know where they could buy Fairtrade products, and that they did not have sufficient information on these product alternatives, were additional explanations why they did not choose the Fairtrade alternatives (Nagel, 2009).

Based on interviews with persons from Great Britain, all of whom were relatively interested in and knowledgeable about Fairtrade, Chatzidakis, Hibbert and Smith (2007) discuss the fact that we often seem to make use of what are called neutralising techniques so as to avoid experiencing conflicts and bad conscience, despite the fact that we do not act in line with our values and intentions. As an example of such strategies, when it comes to explaining away why one does not choose ethical or Fairtrade alternatives despite intentions to do so, they mention that one says to oneself that the product alternative was too expensive or more expensive than one had thought, that too little information was available, that Fairtrade alternatives were insufficiently advertised or that these were hard to find in the shops. It is also possible to persuade oneself that Fairtrade is too marginal to play any role and that the whole things is perhaps only a marketing ploy for charging an unreasonably high price. Chatzidakis, Hibbert and Smith put forward the argument that with the help of these and other neutralising techniques it is possible to retain positive attitudes to ethical alternatives, at the same time as one never or very seldom chooses these product alternatives.

Carrington, Neville and Whitwell (2010) discuss and analyse whether the reasons for the difference between intentions and actual purchases of ethical alternatives can be explained by the fact that once in the shop one faces a much more complex situation than when answering questions in interviews or questionnaires. Factors such as it being more difficult to find the Fairtrade alternatives than one had expected, or that the price of conventional coffee was perhaps discounted and significantly lower than expected which meant that the price differential with the
Fairtrade labelled coffee was greater than expected, are all examples of unforeseen situation factors that may contribute to the intentions expressed in the surveys not resulting in actual purchases.

An additional example of an inhibiting factor is that once in the shop, and in the presence of other persons, one perhaps discovers that one does not wish to appear as too extreme an ethically committed person and therefore refrains from buying products with ethical labelling. The authors argue that this type of limitation and unforeseen factor in the shop may possibly explain why one does not act in line with one's values and intentions to a greater degree. Intentions expressed in an interview or questionnaire, without taking on board all the factors in a complex purchasing situation are, in other words, perhaps worse predictors of actual behaviour than what is frequently thought.

An additional aspect is that purchases of many day-to-day commodities are a relatively common occurrence which is carried out in familiar and stable environments and most often with a satisfactory result. These factors have been shown to increase the probability that a habitual behaviour is developed (Ouellette & Wood, 1998). Individuals with strongly habit-controlled behaviour have been shown to allot less time and effort into seeking different alternatives. One contents oneself doing, or choosing to do, what one usually does (Verplanken, Aarts, & van Knippenberg, 1997). Habitual behaviour may therefore be a factor that makes it hard for new factors, such as placing greater weight on ethical alternatives, to influence which product alternatives one actually chooses. That purchases of day-to-day commodities are frequently habit-controlled may, to a certain extent, be relevant for the choice of Fairtrade label alternatives, even if the Fairtrade products with the largest market share (roses, coffee and bananas) are perhaps not the most typical day-to-day consumer products, at least in terms of the frequency with which they are purchased.

The research related to bounded rationality (Simon, 1957: Gigerenzer & Selten 2002: Kahneman, 2003), mentioned in the introduction, may provide an additional reason why the positive attitude to Fairtrade and other alternatives is not shown more clearly in actual shopping behaviour. One is frequently satisfied with alternatives that are perceived to be sufficiently good, and whether or not the product alternative is Fairtrade labelled is, when set in relation to other factors, perhaps not sufficiently important.

To summarise: Inadequate information on ethical or Fairtrade alternatives, unsatisfactory availability and the fact that these alternatives are perceived as being too expensive are all factors that are stated as reasons why these alternatives are seldom or never chosen. Mistrust of (lack of confidence in) the Fairtrade label and the fact that old habits tend to steer behaviour are additional grounds that can play a certain role in this context.

To move from intention to action

In the literature related to the research into strategies for carrying intentions into effect, a central concept is found in “Implementation intentions”, see e.g. Gollwitzer and Brandstatter (1997) and (Gollwitzer, 1999). Intentions relate to what one wants or aims to achieve. Implementation intentions or plans are for when, where and how these intentions shall be carried into effect. Plans may be fairly simple hypothetical strategies that one can repeat mentally in order to prepare for how to behave when one finds oneself in situations where the intentions can be realised. For instance, “if a situation arises when I can choose Fairtrade label coffee, then I shall choose this alternative”.

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Such plans as “if the situation X arises then I shall do Y” for how the intention shall be successfully implemented have been shown to help us, partly in remembering our intentions to do Y and partly in starting to carry out the new behaviour in order to achieve Y, but also to screen us from other and competing goals or intentions in the concrete situation (Achtziger, Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2008). An example of such a hypothetical plan can be “if I’m in the store where I usually do my shopping, then I shall choose Fairtrade label bananas”. If the behaviour is steered to a larger extent by such hypothetical plans it then tends to become more automatic, more instinctive, and less influenced by distracting factors in the situation. One tends also, to a greater extent, to discover opportunities where the intentions can be implemented (Gollwitzer, 1999). Research has shown that this type of mental plan for achieving what one intends to achieve often increases the probability – and to a significant degree – that the goal intentions are actually fulfilled. For an outline/survey see e.g. Gollwitzer and Sheeran (2006).

In conclusion, it should be mentioned that Andorfer and Liebe (2011) in a review article on Fairtrade research have pointed out, as has also appeared in this report, that most studies have focused on attitudes towards, or intentions of, choosing Fairtrade alternatives or alternatives associated with Fairtrade principles. Few studies measure the actual consumer behaviour in choosing or not choosing these product alternatives. Andorfer and Liebe point out also that many studies are based on random samples which are probably not wholly representative for the population as a whole in a particular country. It is, therefore, often difficult to generalise the results from the studies to encompass a larger group. Andorfer and Liebe call for larger studies with representative samples and preferably ones where some measure of the tendency to socially desirable responses is included in the studies. The author of the report here can only concur with their remarks and echo their call.

Conclusions

- A large proportion of the Swedish population know about Fairtrade. The attitude to the label is mainly positive and the level of confidence/trust is relatively high. Women are generally more positive to the Fairtrade alternative than men.

- What one thinks that others think and the extent to which one perceives that one should choose Fairtrade alternatives, may partly explain the attitude to Fairtrade labelled products. Those who place great emphasis on the “Self-Transcendent” values of “Universalism” and “Benevolence/Generosity” tend to be more positively inclined to principles associated with the Fairtrade label. To place great weight on having “Warm relations with others” is a further factor that is connected with having a more positive attitude to Fairtrade.

- That social and employment conditions are satisfactory is perceived as being at least as important, or more important, than that the products are produced in an eco-friendly manner.

- It is preferable for Fairtrade label products to be on sale where other everyday products are bought (e.g. supermarkets).

- Inadequate information, unsatisfactory availability, the fact that one is steered by old habits and that the Fairtrade alternatives are perceived as too expensive are all factors that
prevent consumers with a positive attitude to Fairtrade from choosing these product alternatives.

References


