CHAPTER 7

FAIR TRADE: TRENDS FOR THE FUTURE

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The development of the concept of fair trade corresponds to the culture of the modern world, which aims at eliminating conflicts and reaching agreements based on the win-win principle. The rich North, in an effort to protect its own markets as well as achieve economic development and the competitiveness of enterprises, uses the fair trade instrument to get rid of the problem of the unequal treatment of domestic and foreign manufacturers. Prosperity and economic development, as well as a lack of war and social unrest have fostered the development of the fair trade movement. But is fair trade merely a temporary fashion or is it a long-term trend that will continue to provide opportunities for growth and for increasing the competitiveness of companies that use it skillfully? In the first case, one would probably expect a rapid decline of interest in fair trade products and the emergence of an alternative movement that could offer effective ways of tackling the problems of social and economic inequality, as well as new forms of self-expression for consumers (Mruk 2012, p. 64). In order for fair trade to become a long-term trend, it is necessary to outline specific development scenarios connected with Fairtrade brand management and to forecast future levels in the social sensitivity of consumers.

Social justice and fair trade

The effectiveness of human activities in the socioeconomic sphere is associated with risk, which is an inevitable component of running any
business activities. In order to reduce this risk, efforts are made to forecast the future. In many areas, such forecasting is becoming more and more effective because of the development of research and knowledge, as well as new technologies. In the socioeconomic sciences, in which there is a large number of variables, including qualitative ones, which are difficult to measure, forecasting is a very difficult task. However, the need to predict the future is part of human nature (Czerwiński 1992), as evidenced by the growth in demand for services associated with divination, fortune-telling, and so forth. Bearing this human need in mind, we will focus our attention on considerations relating to future trends in the area of fair trade. These considerations will be associated with an experiment in abstract thinking rather than a prediction of the facts, which would be extremely difficult.

Remaining within the convention of a thought experiment, it is useful to mention the statement of Peter Drucker, who said that the best way to predict the future is to create it. This extremely interesting and provocative thought can be the basis for reflections concerning the theories and concepts associated with the formation of the entire socioeconomic sphere. In the economic sciences, various schools of thought have appeared, which at different times have affected ways of thinking and behaving (liberalism, interventionism, etc.). The situation has been the same in the social sphere, as well as at the interface between the social and economic spheres. The issue of fair trade concerns both the social and the economic spheres. Therefore, when considering the trends relating to fair trade, it seems appropriate to refer to the concepts of social and economic differences. One of these concepts emphasizes that every person from birth to death should be guaranteed a certain level of income. Although in the literature there are many terms relating to this approach, we will adopt the name of an unconditional basic income—a basic income for all. One of the authors who created and developed this concept is the Belgian researcher Philippe Van Parijs (2000). We mention this concept because it is connected to the idea of fair trade, which aims to involve the business and economic sphere in the attainment of socially important objectives. The notion of a basic income is being given more and more attention by various bodies that are considering the trends and prospects for the development of societies in the twenty-first century. Observing both current developments and the ongoing debates, one can state with a high degree of probability that interest in social justice in the world, including fair trade, will become greater and greater. In the future, there will be more theoretical considerations as well as practical ideas on an increasingly wider scale. Thus, in this case one can talk of a kind of a macro trend that will shape human activities. Other examples of similar macro trends