

Maritime Fair Transport

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Abstract

Inspired by maritime fair trade, Fair Transport is a concept occurring in line with the emerging issues in the transport sector: questionable quality of service, environmental impact, gender bias and decent work conditions. This paper presents a pilot study identifying perspectives and attitudes of a small group of young and adult generation (21-44 years) from maritime industry regarding the societal role of a fair transport system. The research method used consist in an online survey with 71 respondents from the international maritime sector, whose contribution was recorded for two months (October - November 2019). Primary results indicate that consumption behavior can be influenced by fair attitudes manifested in maritime business and this may lead to sectoral changes in the close future.

Key words: policies, gender, UN, development, seafarers

J.E.L. classification: L91, M50, D01

1. Introduction

The concept of maritime fair transport has evolved from previous fundamental studies of fair trade and maritime fair trade.

“Fair trade” emerged in international agricultural commodity chain as tool for creating markets opportunities for marginalized and small-scale farmers development. International trade networks dedicated to development of communities emerged between 1950-1960, enabling geo-economic connections between poor-resource Southern producers with Northern consumers. It has further evolved through multiple actors with various ideologies and aims. (Farnworth, 2008, p.7)

Fair trade is considered a response to international trading system inequalities. The concept ensures better prices and/or wages for producers to help address global poverty. Principles of the fair trade movement are: to create opportunities for economically disadvantaged producers; Accountability and transparency in order to avoid misleading information about how business is conducted; fair trading practices; Payment of a fair price; no use of child labor or forced labor; non-discrimination, gender equality, and freedom of association in unions; decent working conditions; capacity building through access to training opportunities; promoting fair trade and respect for the environment (Fairtrade Australia and New Zealand, p. 10)

Today, conventional trade is considered ‘unfair’ due to:

- lack of transparency and confusion within commodity chains, encouraging socially unjust practices to persist, e.g. use of modern slavery and child labor in agriculture or lack of decent labor conditions in the sector of transport;
- stakeholders benefit from low priced labor, typically made by women and particular castes. Even in our days, in some societies, social structures, family traditions, behavior, ideology and institutional relations do not discourage gender bias and this is affecting women rights to work in decent conditions, own capital, properties or land;

Within logistic chain, whole sellers, retailers and supermarkets, the most powerful buyers, opt for commodities and merchandise sold by large producers, multinational sellers and corporations with financial power developing large scale production with attractive pricing, in the detriment of small producers who are not only most disadvantaged within the supply chain, but are also affected by industrialization developed through non-environmental friendly methods of production and through non-healthy means of agriculture. (Farnworth, 2008, pp.1-2)

2. Theoretical background - Maritime fair transport

2.1. Maritime fair trade and maritime fair transport

The concept of *maritime fair trade* represents “organizations from shipping, transport, logistics or maritime trade sectors, which voluntarily implement and communicate a cumulation of four types of policies related to their employees, customers, competitors, suppliers and local communities, namely: social, safety and security, environmental and quality management policies.” (Dragomir, 2019, pp. 226-227). The use of the concept *maritime fair transport* is proposed to be used as dedicated exclusively for maritime transport sector while having the same background as maritime fair trade and fair trade: emphasizing, as ethical desiderates, the necessity of assuring quality, continuous improvement and responsibility in business, positive impact for the environment and an ethical and safe working environment.

The path of implementing, assuring and developing maritime fair transport is based on a clear vision of long-term sustainable development, as synthesized in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030.

2.2. Comparative perspectives between fair trade and fair transport

In the case of Fair Trade, „many consumers value goods produced in a socially and environmentally responsible manner” and „efficiency and welfare gains are possible from credible third-party certifications, like Fair Trade” informing consumers about the production and origin of the products (Dragusanu, Giovannucci and Nunn, 2014, p.233).

Delivering a comparative approach of fair transport in relation to fair trade, a broad perspective would be also required on organizational and logistic various aspects regarding transport, monitoring, labeling, storage, proper communication at all levels and through various channels in relation to the cargo, special training of the personnel, selling points for cargo transported through fair transport etc. However, within the extent of this paper, discussion on fair transport remains at an initial basic level, targeting a primary analysis on the consumers perception regarding fair transport, as collected through the pilot survey.

„Empirical evidence based on conditional correlations suggests that Fair Trade does achieve many of its intended goals, although on a comparatively modest scale relative to the size of national economies” (Dragusanu, Giovannucci and Nunn, 2014, p.234) Benefits of the Fair Trade concept are recognized at all level countries and is expanding outside emerging economies. While objectives are high in Fair Trade, multiplicative positive impacts are already recorded in consumption patterns and consumer behavior. Effects of Fair Trade are also manifested along the supply chain. It is to be questioned the magnitude of the change and improvement in global trade that is expected to result from Fair Trade concept. Fair trade, as any other revolutionary concept or solution proposed for improving economic systems, will address inequalities once at a time, step by step. Considering one step is more than none, results of change brought by Fair Trade concept will be validated in time. Such approach is to be met within Fair Transport as well.

2.3. Fair transport and civil society

While poorly analyzed and researched by scientific basis, fair transport campaigns, movements and actions were delivered loudly and effectively in 2018-2019. Fair Transport Europe is a campaign developed by the largest transport workers union, pan-European, named the European Transport Workers' Federations (ETF), head-quartered in Bruxelles, Belgium, representing the

interests of over 5 million transport workers. In Table 1 below is represented some of the most representative societal actions organized by the ETF in Europe the first half of 2018, highly relevant for the development of fair transport concept:

Table no. 1. Representative events for fair transport (2018-2019)

Nr. crt	Date	Event	Transport sector	Location
1	February 22, 2018 -	A Czech driver won a case with ver.di union support for German minimum wage. The driver was being paid less than German minimum wage for work in Germany and he was entitled to receive €10 000 (project <i>Faire Mobilität</i>)	Road	Germany
2	February 28, 2018	Steering Committee for Cross-Border Cooperation: Railway unions from four countries met in Austria to build network for Fair Transport	Rail	Austria
3	April 27, 2018	Protest united European unions in defending SNCF public service railway	Rail	France
4	May 17, 2018	Fair Shipping Campaign for creation of a common European maritime space without social dumping and with decent working conditions for all crew.	Shipping	France
5	June 15, 2018	National maritime campaign SOS2020 fighting against social dumping and unfair competition in UK shipping	Shipping	UK
6	July 2, 2018	Fair transport TV campaign against social dumping for Romanian truckers	Road	Romania
7	July 6, 2018	BTB-UBT Campaign for fair road transport (social dumping and wage discrimination)	Road	Belgium
8	July 17, 2018	Amazon employees strike for safety, health and living standards	Logistics	Spain, Germany and Poland
9	July 24, 2018	DHL Express Turkey accepted to enter into negotiations with workers' union	Logistics	Turkey
10	August 1, 2018	Fair shipping in the Irish Sea campaign for social dumping affecting employment	Shipping	UK and Ireland
11	September 10, 2018	A Dutch court decide national labour rules apply to foreign drivers that are running freight operations from the Netherlands.	Road	Netherlands
12	22-27 March 2019	Fair Transport Week with 100 actions against social dumping in Europe for all modes of transport	All transports	18 countries+ Bruxelles

Source: <https://www.fairtransporteurope.eu/news/>

The magnitude of such social movements of workers and workers' unions indicate the concept of fair transport is effective and impactful. It is manifested in all major types of transport, including logistics, and in various countries in Europe, being expected to expand outside the continent. A major interest of fair transport protests planning is related to social dumping, i.e. practice of employers to use cheaper labor (e.g. of migrants) than is usually available at their site of production. Overall, protests related to fair transport are initiated by unions and are non-violent. It is recommended further research on the concept of fair transport in relation with the manifestation of the concept in the real life.

3. Pilot study for identifying consumer perspectives regarding a fair transport system

Further is presented the pilot study developed between October - November 2019 within Constanta Maritime University from Romania in cooperation with Ordu University from Turkey, aiming in identifying consumer perspectives and changed attitudes of young and adult generation (21-44 years) from the maritime industry in relation to the suggested concept of *fair transport*, as described previously in this paper.

3.1. Survey methodology

An online survey on the emerged concept of *fair transport* was planned and conducted within the above-mentioned universities in the departments sharing the same specialization in maritime and transport. A total number of 71 respondents from the international maritime sector has agreed to participate voluntarily and anonymously. The survey had a number of 10 multiple choice questions. The scope of the survey was to analyze and understand the societal role of a fair transport system, with remarks on the further impact of the concept within society.

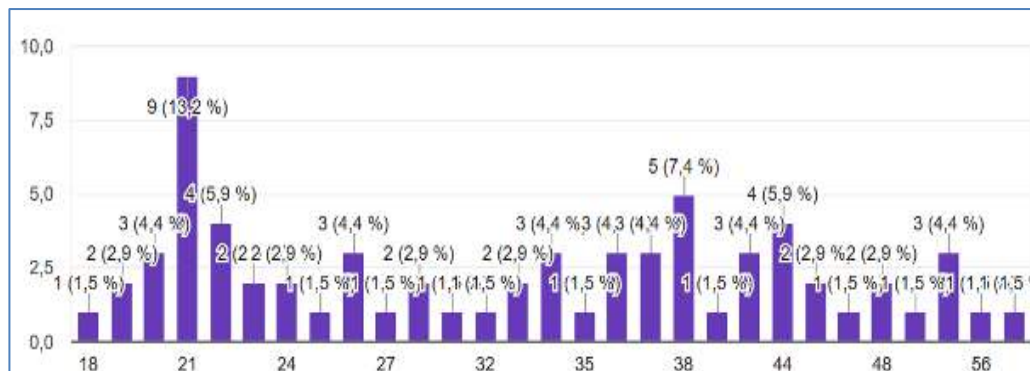
3.2. Results

The first three questions had the purpose to identify ordinary statistical data related to the background of the participants: institutional affiliation, gender and age. The respondents came mainly from shipping/ navigation business (27 replies out of the total of 71). Nearly half of the respondents (14) are from educational/academia, 8 from ship management business, 4 from crewing, 3 respondents from Transport (in general) and 2 are affiliated to surveyor business.

From the second question regarding the gender of participants, the resulted values confirm a clear statistic which is characterizing the biased maritime sector: male respondents are 46 out of 71, meaning more than half 64,7%. The number of male respondents (46) is double compared to the number of female (23). Two respondents preferred not to say their gender.

The third question indicates the largest proportion of the respondents are young adults (21 years old), as can be seen in the Figure 1 below.

Figure no. 1. Age structure of the respondents



Source: Authors' study

The age structure of the respondents is relevant for the analysis of further behavior and consumption patterns. Overall, the structure of participants' age is very scattered. Respondents having 21 years at the date of the study are representing 13,2% of the total respondents. They are considered by demographers as belonging to Generation Z, currently teenagers at the frontier to adulthood, most probably students very familiar to digital technology and comfortable with the large volume of information available on Internet and on social media. It is probable that such a group of respondents, which is able to get easily into contact with updated societal information, to develop a visible socially responsible attitude towards fair trade and to further manifest boycott towards the decision of consumption for products transported through unfair means.

The second significant percentage belongs to the age group of 38, known as Millennials, or Generation Y (or simply Gen Y), also comfortable in their usage of digital technologies and social media. According to a study recently presented by Forbes Millennials are large spenders, while they consider social responsibility and environmental friendliness when doing their purchases (C. Gui, 2019), so the second largest group of respondents in our survey seems to meet the same consumption behavior pattern.

When the survey respondents were asked:

"If you were able to choose between buying maritime fair trade products (i.e. products transported by maritime fair trade companies, which implemented and comply to social policies (including gender equality policy), safety & security policies, environmental policies and quality management policies) OR buying similar products transported by unfair maritime trade companies, would you choose to boycott unfair maritime trade (by purchasing the products transported by maritime fair trade companies instead of buying similar maritime unfair trade products)?" the largest group of respondents (38 replies, meaning 53,5 % of total respondents) replied "Yes, I would buy maritime fair trade products to boycott maritime unfair trade". The statistics can be seen in Figure 2 below.

Figure no. 2. Behavior towards boycotting maritime unfair transport goods

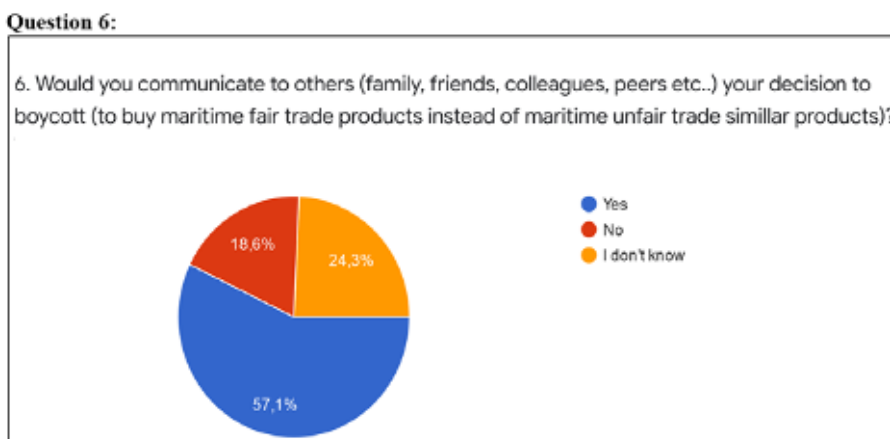


Source: Authors' study

The statistics indicate a clear socially responsible attitude towards the perception and consumption behavior of the largest share of the respondents. An interesting result is seen for the second group of respondents: 31% of the respondents would not know how to proceed or how to reply, while the smallest share has replied negatively: "No, I would not boycott". Would have been expected the percentage of respondents replying evasive "I don't know/ Not sure" to have been recorded as below the number of negative replies. Such situation might be explained by the new perspective that maritime fair transport brings, possibly unexpectedly, in report to the conventional.

The next question is considering communication behavior of the "unexpected": "Would you communicate to others (family, friends, colleagues, peers etc..) your decision to boycott (to buy maritime fair trade products instead of maritime unfair trade similar products)?" The majority (40 replies out of 71) replied positively in regard to communication of the boycott decision. The ratio structure of negative replies and replies of the undecided has remained the same, as indicated in Figure 3 below, as validating the previous statistics.

Figure no. 3. Communication behavior in case of boycotting goods transported unfair



Source: Authors' study

It is noticed a slight increase of only 3.1% for the persons that would not communicate their own decision to boycott, while also a slight increase of 3.6% in the number of persons that would communicate in case of boycott. Considering the predisposition of Millennials and the Generation Z to communicate easily through social media, the values obtained might be confirmed.

Finally, regarding the question whether the respondents would invite or suggest others to boycott, the largest share, of 53.5%, replied Yes (would invite), while the undecided (28,2%) replied "I don't know" and the negative answers were recorded by the lowers share, of 18.3%.

4. Conclusions

The pilot study presented in this paper had the purpose to make a primary analysis for the consumption behavior and socially responsible attitude of teenagers and adults from the maritime sector. Results indicate the largest share of respondents is open to manifest and communicate their behavior to boycott products that were not transported by companies complying to the minimum 4 criteria of fair transport: implemented social policies (including gender equality policy), safety & security policies, environmental policies and quality management policies.

Further research is needed in expanding the knowledge over millennials versus Z generation consumption patterns for cargo transported through fair transport.

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