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NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT: HOW A PRESENT TIME PERSPECTIVE CAN FOSTER SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Sustainable development research has assumed that organizations must make intertemporal trade-offs between benefits now versus benefits later. However, under extreme resource constraints, organizations are unable to sacrifice resources now for benefits later without risking their survival. In these conditions, prior theory has suggested that organizations would be present focused, making sustainable development elusive. Through an ethnographic study, we investigated how tea producer organizations in eight communities in East Africa confronting severe resource constraints acted for sustainable development. We discovered that a "present" time perspective is richer than has been described previously. Prior time research has described the present as a "moment" in time, which allows managers to juxtapose the present against the future to make the intertemporal trade-offs for sustainable development. However, our tea producers did not see the future as a trade-off with the present. We discovered that they see duration in the present—what we call a "long present." Because the present is long, they see connections among processes such as resource flows, which inspired incremental actions that continuously ease extreme resource shortages. We therefore offer an alternative to the trade-off thinking that currently dominates sustainable development discourse.

> The Long Now Foundation was established in 01996[1] (. . .) to become the seed of a very long-term cultural institution. (. . .) Upon moving to New York City, Brian Eno [a founding board member] found that "here" and "now" meant "this room" and "this five minutes" as opposed to the larger "here" and longer "now" that he was used to in England. We have since adopted the term as the title of our foundation as we try to stretch out what people consider as now.
>
> "About Long Now," Long Now Foundation (http://longnow.org/about/)

The decision between consuming now or later is a central concern of organizational research and practice. Prior work has recognized the challenges in making intertemporal trade-offs wherein organizations balance the short and long term through temporal ambidexterity (Slawinski & Bansal, 2015) or ambitemporality (Reinecke & Ansari, 2015). This prior work, however, has assumed that organizations have sufficient slack resources to allow them to defer benefits now for more benefits later.

However, in the case of severe short-term resource constraints, organizations may not have the luxury of delaying consumption. These organizations tend to focus on the present, with the future

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[1] "The Long Now Foundation uses five-digit dates, the extra zero is to solve the deca-millennium bug which will come into effect in about 8,000 years." (http://longnow.org/about/)

falling out of view (Bansal & DesJardine, 2014). Sustainable development, which requires meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future (WCED, 1987), becomes an elusive goal.

We were motivated in this project, then, to answer the following: *How are organizations that are under severe resource constraints able to act for sustainable development?* We answered this question inductively, in order to contribute to theories of time and sustainable development. We locate our empirical work in the context of eight tea producer organizations in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. We drew insights from participant observations, interviews, and the collection of drawings, documents, and artifacts.

The small-scale tea producer organizations in rural East Africa provide an extreme case of organizations that are under intense resource constraints to meet immediate needs. Hoping to escape the short-term resource trap, the tea producer organizations obtained Fairtrade certification, which promotes sustainable development (Fairtrade International, 2014; Nicholls & Opal, 2005). Fairtrade's intention was to foster a prosperous future by encouraging tea producers to invest the Fairtrade premium funds in projects that would leapfrog producers to a more desirable future, such as investments in schools and clinics. However, the tea producers did not always use the funds as Fairtrade intended and sometimes redirected the Fairtrade premium to make immediate and incremental improvements, such as small investments in beehives and in concrete benches for drying tea leaves.

Our analysis showed that the tea producers that redirected the funds held a very different time perspective from the time perspective of Fairtrade, and from that which is espoused in the existing literature on time perspectives. Current literature has suggested that organizations that are under tight resource constraints hold a present perspective, which is focused on the present *moment* in time. When the present is envisioned as a moment, the past and future become separate points in time. With this perspective, Fairtrade hoped to help producers leapfrog from the undesirable present to a more desirable future by sacrificing immediate benefits. However, some of our tea producers enacted what we call a *long-present* perspective that did not discriminate between the present and the future. These tea producers saw the present over a long duration, so that processes came into view, including resources. These producers saw resources as flows over time, rather than as stocks that required trade-offs between different points in time.

Our study makes two key contributions to the understanding of time perspectives and sustainable development. First, we provide a deeper understanding of a present time perspective by recognizing that it has duration, theorizing short-present and long-present perspectives, and developing their implications for organizations under severe resource constraints. Second, our findings and theorizing reveal the assumption of intertemporal trade-offs in existing approaches to sustainable development. The goal of sustainable development appears to imply intertemporal trade-offs when the present is perceived as a moment. However, this is not necessarily the case if the present is seen as an extended duration comprising interconnected processes. We show that sustainable development can also be achieved by recognizing resource *flows*, rather than *stocks* that require trade-offs, through a long-present perspective.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable Development and Intertemporal Trade-Offs

The consideration of time is fundamental to sustainable development, which requires organizations to meet "the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987: 43). What is consumed now, unless regenerated, leaves less to be consumed in the future. Furthermore, the availability of resources is embedded in the rhythms of the biophysical environment (e.g., the regeneration pace of topsoil, fish stock, or forest resources), which are not always controllable by human action and from which all resources ultimately derive (Adam, 1998; WCED, 1987). Thus, the key challenge of sustainable development is how to satisfy human and organizational needs under the real resource constraints over time. By using the term "real resource constraints," we highlight that the temporal attributes of resources to meet human and organizational needs (e.g., food, water, fuel) exist regardless of whether or how they are perceived.[2]

[2] We take a critical realist perspective, which assumes that the "real" world exists irrespective of the "empirical" understanding of it (Bansal, Kim, & Wood, 2018; Bhaskar, 1975).

In this context, researchers have emphasized the importance of making intertemporal trade-offs to ensure sustainable development (Bansal & DesJardine, 2014; Hahn, Figge, Pinkse, & Preuss, 2010). Trade-offs are "compromise situations when a sacrifice is made in one area to obtain benefits in another" (Byggeth & Hochschorner, 2006: 1420). Intertemporal trade-offs concern two different points in time, such as consuming something now or later (Hahn et al., 2010; Slawinski & Bansal, 2015). Such trade-offs assume that forgoing consumption at one point in time (e.g., the present) is necessary for obtaining benefits in another (e.g., the future). Based on the premise that sustainable development requires meeting the needs of future generations, organizations may sometimes need to make intertemporal trade-offs.

Time Perspectives that Prevent or Facilitate Intertemporal Trade-Offs

Researchers have flagged the perils of short-termism, which favors present needs over future needs. By privileging the short term, corporations fail to make long-term investments in research and development (R&D) and stakeholder relationships (David, Hitt, & Gimeno, 2001; Marginson & McAulay, 2008)—compromising not only long-term returns, but also sustainable development (Bansal & DesJardine, 2014; Flammer & Bansal, 2017; Slawinski & Bansal, 2015). Therefore, scholars have begun to pay attention to time perspectives that can counter short-termism and enable organizations to make the intertemporal trade-offs for sustainable development (Flammer & Bansal, 2017; Wang & Bansal, 2012).

In the research on time perspectives in organizations, the words that describe temporal depth (e.g., short and long) are often intermingled with temporal focus (i.e., past, present, and future focus). According to Bluedorn (2002: 141–142), *temporal focus* is defined as "the degree of emphasis on the past, present, future" and *temporal depth* refers to "the distance looked into past and future." While it has long been recognized that a focus on the past, present, and future is conceptually distinct from short and long term (Ancona, Okhuysen, & Perlow, 2001; Bluedorn & Denhardt, 1988; Shipp, Edwards, & Lambert, 2009), researchers have often conflated them, because the present is implicitly assumed to be a "moment"—without depth. As can be seen from the Bluedorn's definition, the concept of temporal depth has only been applied to the past and the future, excluding the present.

If the present is a moment, it seems logical to connect the present focus to a short-term orientation and the future focus to a long-term orientation. For example, corporate short-termism is described as overvaluing the present and discounting the future through net present value calculations, leading to underinvestment in activities for future benefits (Ali, 2016; Flammer & Bansal, 2017; Slawinski & Bansal, 2015). Similarly, Hofstede (1993: 90) characterized long-term orientation by "values oriented towards the future, like thrift (saving) and persistence." In Wang and Bansal's (2012) study of temporal orientation and social responsibility in new ventures, two out of the four items that measure a firm's *long-term* orientation describe a *future* focus: "your firm emphasizes basic research to build future competitive advantage" and "as your firm defines strategies, your major concern is how to build future competitive advantage" (Wang & Bansal, 2012: 1141).

When the present is assumed to be a moment, the goal of sustainable development appears to imply intertemporal trade-offs between stocks of resources in the present and the future. Prior research has thus investigated how organizations can adopt time perspectives that facilitate intertemporal trade-offs, such as a long-term orientation and a future focus, when their environment is often dominated by short-termism and overvaluation of the present. For example, Slawinski and Bansal (2015: 544) introduced the concept of *temporal ambidexterity* to describe "firms' attempts to balance their short-term and long-term needs." From a qualitative study of five firms in Canada's oil sands industry, they found that firms that "juxtapose" the short and long term are more likely to recognize the complexity of climate change and the need for integrated, multidimensional solutions. In contrast, firms that "polarize" the short and long term see the world through a short-term lens. Similarly, Reinecke and Ansari (2015: 632) studied the activities of Fairtrade International and developed the notion of *ambitemporality* to explain how organizations accommodate seemingly contradictory temporal orientations, such as balancing a focus on short-term deliverables with a long-term horizon to "enable impact over generations."

As such, scholars have recognized the importance for organizations to better incorporate long-term considerations into their business, for example by balancing short-term and long-term perspectives, so that they become more willing to make intertemporal trade-offs. While this approach has significant implications for organizations that are able to make such trade-offs, it also created an important blind

spot—some organizations under severe resource constraints may be unable to make any sacrifice in the short term, even when they fully understand its long-term benefits.

Organizations Trapped in Real Resource Constraints

The patterns of the relationship between the real resource constraints and different time perspectives are asymmetrical, because resource availability is a necessary but insufficient condition for organizations to incorporate long-term considerations. The presence of slack resources does not necessarily guarantee a long-term orientation or a future focus, but their absence makes organizations focus on the present.

The availability of slack resources has long been associated with an organization's ability to explore new opportunities for future returns, beyond exploiting current capabilities for immediate returns (Cyert & March, 1963; March, 1991; March & Simon, 1958). Slack resources provide important opportunities for firms to redirect part of their resources toward projects with uncertain and deferred outcomes, although firms often choose not to do so in practice (George, 2005; Voss, Sirdeshmukh, & Voss, 2008). While slack resources could afford organizations a long-term orientation, many organizations still focus on the short term for a variety of reasons, including perceived shareholder pressures or executive compensation that privileges short-term returns (Marginson & McAulay, 2008; Zhang & Gimeno, 2010). Thus, recognizing an organization's time perspective is important to understanding how slack resources are managed in making intertemporal trade-offs.

In contrast, the absence of slack resources pushes organizations to focus on the immediate concerns, because organizations do not have the opportunity to make intertemporal trade-offs. For example, organizations with little current liquidity and uncertain future earnings cannot make long-term investments (Souder & Shaver, 2010). In addition, the durability of capital will likely decline because of capital resource constraints (Bromiley, 1986; Souder & Bromiley, 2012), suggesting that resource-poor organizations are unable to make long-term investments even when they perceive and desire the long-term benefits of doing so.

Researchers have noted that resource constraints and urgency can sometimes foster creative resource use by motivating actors to recombine existing resources in innovative ways (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Ganz, 2000; Sonenshein, 2014). However, such creative and resourceful actions are likely to generate immediate rather than deferred benefits, given that the process is driven by the sense of urgency. Furthermore, this type of bricolage requires at least some resource slack, but organizations experiencing prolonged periods of resource shortage must work to meet day-to-day needs without the time, mindspace, or resources to recombine existing resources. As an analogy, individuals, communities, and even animals are able to survive an ordinary drought that lasts a few months by finding alternative sources of water (e.g., plants), but their ability to find creative solutions significantly decreases over a prolonged, extreme drought, threatening their very survival unless they relocate. Research on poverty and temporality supports this point, showing that a severe shortage in income and resources makes individuals and organizations focus on the urgent needs for survival and prevents them from sparing resources for long-term development (Banerjee & Duflo, 2011; Becker & Mulligan, 1997; Fisher, 1930). Organizations facing severe resource constraints (e.g., on the verge of bankruptcy) are unable to invest resources for long-term benefits, as they struggle to maintain their day-to-day activities. Under such intense resource constraints, organizations tend to focus on the present.

With this background, we wanted to understand how organizations under severe resource constraints are able to act for sustainable development. We were motivated to study this question because existing approaches to sustainable development have assumed that organizations can make intertemporal trade-offs, but this assumption is flawed for organizations trapped in real resource constraints. We located our research in the context of rural East Africa, where the resource constraints are indisputable and salient to organizations. Specifically, we explored the dynamics created by adoption of the Fairtrade certification by tea producer organizations. Fairtrade seeks to encourage producers to think and act for the future despite intense resource constraints in the present. In the next section, we detail the methods before presenting the findings.

METHODS

Research Context

Our research context is Fairtrade-certified tea producer organizations in East Africa. Steeped in poverty, many rural farms in East Africa grow cash crops (e.g., tea, coffee, and cocoa) and operate as

small-scale producer organizations. Tea is an important cash crop in East Africa, with Kenya being the third largest tea producing country and the largest exporter of tea by volume in the world (FAO, 2013). The involvement of middlemen between producer organizations and markets, such as local and international brokers at the tea auction, typically means that margins on cash crops paid to producer organizations are small. As a result, tea producers—primarily consisting of tea farmers, as well as estate and factory workers—face the challenge of meeting immediate needs at the same time as working toward sustainable development.

The aim of Fairtrade certification is to alleviate poverty and contribute to the long-term sustainable development of producers. A product carries a Fairtrade certification mark when both producer organizations (e.g., farmers' cooperatives) and their trading partners (e.g., manufacturers, distributors, and retailers) comply with the Fairtrade standards. The Fairtrade certification standards for producer organizations comprise labor conditions (e.g., restrictions on child labor), environmental protection (e.g., limited use of pesticides), and the creation of democratic structures (e.g., producer cooperatives). The Fairtrade certification also mandates payment of the Fairtrade premium that forms a communal fund for investment in community development projects—e.g., building schools or health clinics. For example, tea producer organizations receive a Fairtrade premium at the rate of 0.50 USD per kilogram (kg) of processed tea (Fairtrade International, 2013). Producer organizations are required to form a local governing body (referred to as a "Fairtrade Premium Committee") to represent farmers and workers and manage how the premium is spent. This research site provides a rich context for exploring how organizations under severe resource constraints act for sustainable development, particularly by investigating tea producers' approaches to managing the Fairtrade premium.

Data Sources

Our primary data collection method is multi-sited ethnography (Marcus, 1995, 2011). Anthropologists use multi-sited ethnography to gain in-depth understanding of cultural meanings and experiences that are diffused across multiple sites (Coleman & von Hellermann, 2011; Falzon, 2009). The principle tenet of multi-sited ethnography is to *deepen* the understanding of interconnected phenomena by researching across spaces (Horst, 2009; Hovland, 2011; Marcus, 1995). Whereas a single-sited ethnography deepens insights by observing patterns over time, a multi-sited ethnography deepens insights by observing patterns across space (Falzon, 2009; Horst, 2009). In both methods, the field researcher seeks to understand the phenomena of interest from the perspective of the participants.

The first author spent five months in eight African tea producer organizations and their surrounding communities. The first round of fieldwork was conducted in East Africa between July and September 2010—the dry and low tea production season. This was followed by a two-month stay between December 2011 and January 2012—the wet and high tea production season. To prepare for immersion in the field, the first author participated in an eight-month training program about cultures, languages, and development issues in East Africa and engaged in part-time language training at weekly Swahili classes and private tutoring for 14 months. During the fieldwork, she spoke Swahili, wore local modes of dress, and acquired local names from different ethnic groups in the region. As she traveled in *matatu* minibuses local people affectionately referred to her as "*mzungu* in *matatu*," i.e., a foreigner on the public bus. In summary, she endeavored to experience and enact local norms and practices in the closest possible ways while fundamentally remaining an outsider (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Freilich, 1970).

Data were collected from Fairtrade-certified tea producer organizations in Kenya (Dubu, Kifaru, Kuro, and Nyuki), Tanzania (Samaki and Twiga), and Uganda (Kipepeo and Punda Milia). All of the names of the producer organizations in this paper are pseudonyms. The eight producer organizations were Fairtrade-certified in different years and collectively represent a history of Fairtrade tea certification in East Africa: Samaki (1998), Kipepeo and Punda Milia (1999), Twiga (2001), Dubu (2003), Kifaru and Nyuki (2006), and Kuro (2007). Thus, the field researcher was able to follow the development and diffusion of Fairtrade certification in the region by moving across sites, albeit retrospectively. Samaki is certified under the Fairtrade "Hired Labor" standards because the company is owned by external shareholders and employs workers in tea estates. The other seven organizations are factories owned by small-scale tea producers and thus certified under the "Small Producer Organizations" standards. The producer organizations collect sacks of green tea leaves from tea leaf collection centers; transport the sacks to tea factories to process the leaves into black tea; sell the black tea at the Mombasa tea auction through brokers, and occasionally through direct sales to

independent buyers; and arrange payments for tea farmers, estate workers, and factory workers. The data were collected from four principle sources: participant observation, interviews, freehand informant drawings, and secondary data. The data sources are summarized in Table 1 and described in more detail below.

Field observations. First, the field researcher participated in the everyday life and special events in tea producer organizations. A typical day in the field involved over 12 hours of interaction with informants, sharing meals together and sometimes staying in their homes overnight. The everyday experience includes picking tea leaves on the farms and plantations, weighing and collecting tea leaves at the green tea leaf collection centers, and working in the tea factories. The field researcher visited community projects funded by Fairtrade premium payments, shadowed visitors from Europe, and attended Fairtrade training sessions, Fairtrade Premium Committee meetings, and sensitization meetings in the villages.

The details of field observations on 119 occasions, counted by the number of meetings, events, or site visits lasting from half a day to multiple days, were recorded in over 500 typed pages of field notes. The first author wrote field notes with a pen and paper throughout the day to capture the details of interactions and observations, her emotions, and the reflection on her presence in the field. She also kept a time log of her activities and reflections on her own experience of time. The notes were typed up at the end of the day wherever possible. When no electricity was available, the researcher went through the written notes and wrote further reflections at night, and typed the notes at the earliest possible opportunity, always within a week.

Interviews. Second, the field researcher conducted 133 face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with tea farmers, estate and factory workers, managers, and board directors (elected among farmers) in tea producer organizations. In addition, 23 interviews were conducted with staff members of other organizations involved in Fairtrade tea business, including Fairtrade International (formerly known as Fairtrade Labeling Organizations International [FLO]), Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA), and the trading partners of producer organizations known as fair trade organizations (FTOs). Fifteen individuals were interviewed in both rounds of data collection in East Africa. The interviews, conducted in English and Swahili, were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim in the language of origin. The length of the interviews ranged from 30 minutes to three hours, with the majority lasting for about an hour.

In the first round of fieldwork, interview questions were framed broadly around the impact of Fairtrade on tea producer organizations and communities. The informants were asked to describe any positive or negative impacts that they had experienced since securing Fairtrade certification. Thus, the subject of time was not explicit in interview questions at this stage, yet many informants explicitly or implicitly referred to temporal issues. Building on the analysis of the first set of data, the questions during the second round of fieldwork explicitly addressed time-related themes—e.g., seasonal income fluctuation, household expenditure patterns, and bonus payment schedules.

Drawings. Third, the dataset includes 128 freehand drawings by 56 informants. Inspired by visual data collection methods used in organizational research to understand informants' interpretations beyond verbal descriptions (Meyer, 1991; Stiles, 2004; Zuboff, 1988), a sample of farmers and workers were invited to draw, and explain, the impact of Fairtrade on their lives. During the first round of fieldwork, the field researcher requested each informant to produce a set of two drawings that illustrate their life before and after obtaining Fairtrade certification. During the second round of fieldwork, informants were asked to depict a set of multiple drawings that represent their work and family life over an extended time period. For example, farmers and workers associated with organizations that had their Fairtrade certification suspended were invited to produce drawings about their experience before certification, between certification and suspension, during the suspension period, and after regaining the Fairtrade certification.

The drawing method was particularly useful when interviewing female tea farmers and workers in the rural villages of East Africa, as cultural traditions in some communities discourage women from speaking about their feelings and opinions openly to outsiders. Furthermore, communicating information through images is a well-established practice in East Africa due to low literacy rates—e.g., the use of the symbols of candidates and political parties on a ballot paper (Halimoja, 2005/1974; Reynolds & Steenbergen, 2006). The interview and drawing methods complemented each other in that informants were also encouraged to narrate detailed accounts to explain their drawings. The field researcher asked a series of specific questions to

TABLE 1
Summary of Data Sources

Data Source	Tea Producer Organizations								Others		Total
	Dubu	Kifaru	Kuro	Nyuki	Kipepeo	Punda Milia	Samaki	Twiga	Europe	E. Africa	
Site visits—observations											
Tea field—tea picking		1	2	1	5	5		2			16
Factory—operation	1		2	1	2	1		1			8
Collection center—tea leaf collection	2	2	6	5	2	2		1			20
Fairtrade projects	4	3	7	7	5	7	5	2			40
Farmers' meetings					1						1
Training sessions							2		1		3
Premium committee meetings			1								1
Annual general meetings									1		1
Campaign meetings									4		4
Public events									24		24
Tea auction										1	1
Total	7	6	18	14	15	15	7	6	30	1	119
Interviews											
Managers	4	7	4	5	14	7	3	2			46
Board directors	1	3	3	1	1	1		1			11
Farmer representatives	3	2	5		3	2		1			16
Worker representatives	3	1	2		2	3	1				12
Farmers	7	1	6	4	5	2		1			26
Workers	1				8	4					13
Community	2			4		2		1			9
FTO/FLO/KTDA staff									13	9	22
Tea broker										1	1
Total	21	14	20	14	33	21	4	6	13	10	156
Drawings[a]											
Managers	1 (2)				1 (2)	1 (2)					3 (6)
Board directors		1 (2)				1 (2)		1 (2)			3 (6)
Farmer representatives	3 (8)	1 (2)	4 (8)		3 (10)	3 (8)		1 (2)			15 (38)
Worker representatives	3 (8)	1 (2)			2 (6)	2 (6)	1 (2)				9 (24)
Farmers	2 (4)	7 (14)	5 (10)	3 (6)	2 (4)	1 (4)		1 (2)			21 (44)
Workers					4 (8)	1 (2)					5 (10)
Total	9 (22)	10 (20)	9 (18)	3 (6)	12 (30)	9 (24)	1 (2)	3 (6)			56 (128)

[a] The number in brackets reflects the total number of drawings produced by the respective participants.

understand the meanings of images, which led to in-depth conversations with farmers and workers. These conversations were recorded and transcribed later. We present a selection of informants' drawings with quotes from their own explanations in the findings.

Secondary data. Finally, we collected a large volume of secondary data throughout the fieldwork—e.g., Fairtrade standards and compliance criteria (English and Swahili); Fairtrade training materials for producers; annual reports and financial statements of producer organizations, including the Fairtrade sales data and premium payments over time; green tea leaf collection receipts for farmers; marketing materials of producer organizations; tea auction catalogs; industry reports in the tea sector; and campaign materials in Europe, including producer stories and impact reports. The field researcher also had access to the visitors books at tea producer organizations, which show the records of Fairtrade audits, buyers' visits, and other special events. The documents provided background information about Fairtrade certification and tea producer organizations, and supplemented the informant accounts and field observations.

Data Analysis

The subject of "time" emerged as a recurring theme during the data collection and analysis process, and the first-hand experience of everyday life helped the field researcher to further explore the implicit dimension of time that is difficult to access from a distance (Bourdieu, 1977; Malinowski, 1927; Perlow, 1999). While the data analysis was an iterative process that encompassed the whole research period, there were four distinct stages of analysis.

During the first stage, interview transcripts and field notes were coded by the first and third authors. We also thematically coded the informants' drawings and related explanations (Ball & Smith, 1992; Rose, 2007). The presence of multiple rhythms in tea producer organizations, often in relation to the seasonal patterns of rainfall, emerged as an important theme during the coding process. Through an iterative process that moved between the data analysis and the literature review, specifically with the conceptualization of sustainable development as managing needs and resources across time, we recognized the importance of temporality. At this point, we decided to depart from highly structured coding methods in order to better see the rhythms of tea producers and illuminate the part of our data that could best reveal the phenomenon (Bansal & Corley, 2011; Geertz, 1973).

In the second stage, we analyzed the impact of Fairtrade interventions and producers' actions to coordinate needs and resource flows. We created a list of typical needs and resources of tea producers from the empirical data, and mapped them over time by approximating the monetary values for the needs and resources. Based on cost and revenue estimates, we produced diagrams to illustrate the temporal flows of needs and resources (e.g., school fee payment cycle, seasonal income fluctuation), and noted how they were deeply embedded in the rhythms of the social and biophysical environment (e.g., school terms, rainfall patterns). Subsequently, we examined how some Fairtrade interventions adversely affected the temporal flows of needs and resources, as well as how tea producer organizations sought to coordinate those flows. We continued to sketch diagrams to visually represent the impact of temporal coordination on the flows of needs and resources. This analysis helped us to understand the difference between the interventions of Fairtrade (i.e., reinforcing intertemporal trade-offs) and the actions of producers (i.e., building resources through temporal connections).

In the third stage of data analysis, we reanalyzed interview transcripts, field notes, drawings and secondary data with a revised focus on time perspectives and actions of Fairtrade and producers. For example, we investigated the words with which different actors framed the short and long term, the present and future. This process enabled us to clearly distinguish between Fairtrade's perception of the present as a moment (e.g., an average daily income) and the producers' perception of the present as an extended duration (e.g., peaks and troughs of resource flows across seasons). This distinction, in turn, led us to theorize how perceptions of the present (i.e., short-present and long-present perspectives) were associated with different ways of acting for sustainable development, with important implications for organizations under severe resource constraints.

In the fourth and final stage of data analysis, at the suggestion of reviewers, we reanalyzed the data with a focus on interactions between Fairtrade and producers. Specifically, we reanalyzed 10 vignettes that had emerged as the most illuminating stories in the previous stages of analysis. As the first six stories were about Fairtrade's initiatives (e.g., building schools and clinics, prohibiting child labor), we reanalyzed them in terms of Fairtrade's initiatives, producers' reactions, and the outcomes of interactions. Similarly, we went deeper into four stories about producers' initiatives (e.g., beekeeping, concrete benches) and reflected on Fairtrade's approaches to related issues, producers'

actions, and the outcomes of their interaction. This process helped us to realize that Fairtrade's interventions helped producers, but not in the way originally intended. Producers enacted a long-present perspective oriented toward sustainable development by redirecting Fairtrade resources and other forms of support toward immediate and incremental improvements. Based on these insights, we deepened our theorizing to explain how a long-present perspective can be enacted when organizations have access to additional resources that can be used for an immediate and gradual increase in resources.

FINDINGS

The findings are presented in three subsections. In the first, we describe a time perspective of producers that is characterized by a strong focus on the present. When producers decided to obtain Fairtrade certification to pursue development, they often expected immediate benefits. In the second subsection, we describe a time perspective that underpinned the ambition of Fairtrade to help producers to leapfrog from the undesirable present (i.e., poverty) to a more desirable future. Despite the best intentions, Fairtrade inadvertently imposed a heavy burden on producers by pressuring them to sacrifice immediate needs in order to secure future development. The perception of the present assumed in Fairtrade's future focus anchors our discussion of a "short present" in the theorizing section. The final subsection is at the heart of our theoretical contribution, wherein we describe a new time perspective that was enacted through the interaction between producers and Fairtrade. Here, producers focused on an extended present rather than a distant future. Unlike the trade-off thinking between the present and the future, producers made immediate and incremental improvements within an extended present, which helped them transition to the long term through temporal connections. This time perspective anchors our theorization of a "long present."

Producers Focus on the Present

Our data suggest that tea producers exhibited a strong focus on the present. "We need to collect enough for today. The idea of telling me that in 20 years, I will. . . [Laugh] It doesn't, doesn't count," said a tea farmer at Kifaru. The present focus can be first and foremost explained by the pressing need to survive, because producers often struggled to meet even the most basic needs of eating sufficient calories each day. Farmers and workers would frequently skip meals and go through the day with only multiple cups of *chai* (milky and sugary tea), occasionally with *chapatti* (flatbread), boiled yams, or arrowroot. In the field, the researcher often skipped lunch together with tea producers, and found it difficult to go through the day with only *chai*. Many times, she wrote "hungry" and "so starving" in the margins of her field notes, always in her native language so that any of her literate East African informants would not understand her discomfort and show sympathy. The urgency of needs, which drove the strong focus of producers on the present, was encapsulated in the following remark of another farmer at Kuro: "if you're told to eat next year but if you're hungry now, you want to eat now."

The present focus was further reinforced because producers often faced adversity, which was difficult to predict and control, whether it be natural disasters (e.g., severe frost and drought that crippled the growth of tea leaves in the region for several months in 2009) or social and political turbulence (e.g., ethnic violence and conflicts that erupted following the contested presidential election in Kenya in 2007). "Anything can happen here, so we just hope for the best," said a worker at Nyuki. For example, producers were unable to control or even predict the timing of power cuts, which heavily affected tea production because fresh tea leaves must be processed within 24 hours of plucking. "At times the power is off, like the whole day. And if you find leaves that become bad, they have to be thrown away. We are depending on electricity and nothing can be done until it gets solved," explained a worker at Punda Milia. The difficulty to foresee and control future events discouraged producers from planning for the future, according to a manager of Kifaru: "We don't want to take a project that will take five or 10 years, that will take three, four, five years to finish. We don't know what's going to happen in two to three years."

At the same time, tea producers did not want to remain trapped in poverty, and aspired for development. This explains why producers collectively decided to obtain the Fairtrade certification, despite the significant investment of time, effort, and money to secure and maintain the certification. "You pay auditing fees, certification renewal fees, and there are things you have to comply with, you have to go through auditing. . . it's time-consuming and it costs," explained a manager of Kipepeo. The main motivations for producers to seek Fairtrade certification were to sell their tea to the Fairtrade

market and benefit from the Fairtrade premium (i.e., extra resources designated for expenditure on community projects), as described by a manager of Kifaru:

> Originally we were aware of Fairtrade through some visitors from [the name of a UK-based multinational retailer], and even before we got Fairtrade certified, they used to buy from us. But [a part of] their markets demanded that the producer be Fairtrade certified [...] so we were interested in expanding our market. [In addition,] we were aware of a factory like Dubu, which had already been certified, and we knew the premium would be of benefit to the members.

It is important to note that tea producers often expected to gain immediate benefits from the Fairtrade certification. At Samaki, the Fairtrade premium had been used for purchasing iron sheets to roof grass-thatched houses. Although the iron sheets were supposed to provide long-term health, safety, and sanitation benefits, many workers decided to sell them for cash to "put food on their table." A manager recalled that the Fairtrade certification auditors criticized the misuse of funds: "Later auditors found out, and it became a problem because it was just like giving away money." Similarly, a manager of Dubu explained the dynamics of elections, which happened every three years to elect board members among farmers and every year to elect Fairtrade premium committee members among farmers and workers:

> You see, if the project takes too long, he [a board member or a premium committee member] will be kicked out just because of that. When the elections come, they [farmers and workers] will say, they have elected somebody who's not active. They'll kick him out.

The strong focus of producers on the present markedly differed from the time perspective that underpinned the Fairtrade standards and interventions. In the following subsection, we discuss the time perspective of Fairtrade and tensions that emerged after producers secured Fairtrade certification.

Fairtrade's Future Focus Assumes a Short Present

Fairtrade aimed to contribute to the socioeconomic development of producers over the long term, as described in an annual report of Fairtrade International: "Fairtrade is about empowerment and *long-term development,* as farmers and workers transform deeply ingrained problems step-by-step *to build a better future* for themselves, their families and communities" (Fairtrade International, 2014: 4 [emphases added]). The words "long term" and "future" frequently appeared together in documents and conversations, pointing to Fairtrade's strong future focus in conceiving long-term development. The following excerpt from a fair trade organization's pamphlet illustrates an emphasis on trade for long-term development beyond immediate poverty relief (e.g., aid):

> Trade is the only sustainable way to address world poverty. Aid can address *short-term* crises in response to natural disasters, famine or war, but it is not a *long-term* solution. [. . .] Those in developing countries often lack the opportunity to use their skills and abilities in ways that will *build secure futures* for themselves and their communities. Helping someone to engage in trade and benefit from it offers them a route to *a brighter future*. (Emphases added)

Furthermore, Fairtrade's vision of a better future was contrasted with a problematic present, characterized by poverty and lack of development. The present state of producers was commonly described as living below "the poverty line"—i.e., an average income of 1.25 USD per day. The snapshot of sufferings in the present was compared with another snapshot of a brighter future, as can be seen from a five-year strategic plan of Fairtrade International:

> *The World Today.* [. . .] Small-scale farmers who are essential to the food security of millions in the developing world can't feed their own families adequately. Despite the wake-up call of Rana Plaza, millions of hired workers still toil for poverty wages in dangerous conditions.
>
> *The World We Want.* [. . .] Changes that could lead to a very different world in 2020, a world where: The benefits of trade are distributed more equitably. Human rights are respected at every stage of the value chain, from the largest multinational to the smallest producer organization. Business does better. Fairness and justice come first. Governments and policymakers actively foster the environment required for trade to drive living income and living wage. (Fairtrade International, 2016: 6–7)

The aspiration to leapfrog from an undesirable present to a more desirable future underpinned the two types of interventions in the Fairtrade certification system. Firstly, Fairtrade provides resources to help producers build a more desirable future, most importantly through payment of the Fairtrade premium. Secondly, Fairtrade standards prohibit certain practices (e.g., child labor, excessive overtime), because they are considered to be undesirable dimensions of the present and an impediment to future

development. Yet we found that some Fairtrade interventions unintentionally exacerbated resource scarcity for tea producers, undermining the livelihoods of the very communities they were trying to help.

Education and health for a desirable future. Fairtrade International and trading partners in the West encouraged producer organizations to spend the Fairtrade premium on building, renovating, or expanding schools and clinics, because education and health care projects were considered to be important for a desirable future. The following remarks from a staff member of Fairtrade International, addressed to the worker representatives of Samaki during a Fairtrade training session, illustrate how the strong focus on building a better future led Fairtrade to favor such actions as investing resources into education:

> So many organizations are throwing away [the] premium [on the] wrong things. It's important to invest [the] premium in projects that will benefit the community for many years to come. How many of you have taken your children to colleges using premium money? [Several producer representatives raise their hands.] Very good. You need to think about life after Fairtrade, life after Samaki. And the life of your children for many years to come.

According to the report "Monitoring the scope and benefits of Fairtrade: 5th edition" published by Fairtrade International in 2013, "around 25 percent of the Fairtrade Premium was used for community projects, such as supporting local schools or health services". However, infrastructure projects created an additional need for constant cash infusions. Schools had to be maintained, most importantly by paying teachers' monthly salaries, because the number of government-paid teachers was often not enough in rural schools and many teachers were therefore privately hired. For example, Dubu invested the Fairtrade premium in building a new primary school in which only four of the 11 teachers needed were assigned, and therefore paid for, by the government. To pay for the additional seven teachers, the new school charged higher fees than did other established schools that had more government-paid teachers. As a result, tea producers in the area had a more accessible school for their children yet needed to use their limited resources to afford the higher school fees. Producers thus had to sacrifice meeting their immediate needs (e.g., by reducing food consumption to pay for school fees) for benefits in the future (e.g., greater income from better employment opportunities for educated children).

Similarly, investing the Fairtrade premium in new health clinics would incur additional costs to fund health professionals' salaries and purchase medicines. When the field researcher visited a clinic at Punda Milia in 2010, a clinician talked about the difficulty of securing medical supplies:

> We're struggling to purchase drugs. I'd love to be able to use some [Fairtrade] premium for drugs. That would be very beneficial. But it's not possible, because the premium only funds infrastructure, like buildings, something that lasts. We can't use it for consumables.

In 2012, when the field researcher returned to the same clinic, a nurse explained that their clinic could not afford the price of medicine and was unable to provide health care services for farmers, workers, and their family. She illustrated the changes in a series of drawings (Figure 1) and described them in these words:

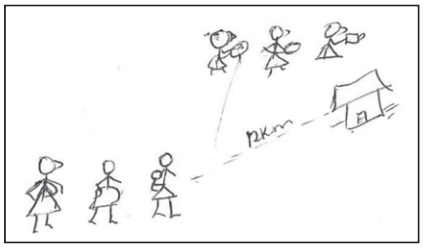
> Before Fairtrade, mothers were carrying their babies and walked a long distance to the health center. After Fairtrade, we have this clinic, where people sit and wait for the doctors to come and help them. Now, here our patients are wondering where to go. Now drugs are not here, so they have to walk a long distance again.

The Fairtrade interventions were intended to provide resources for a more desirable future, such as better opportunities for educated children and a healthier life. However, building schools and clinics often created additional resource needs (e.g., to pay for salaries and consumables) and thus aggravated resource scarcity for producers, reinforcing trade-offs between immediate needs and future development.

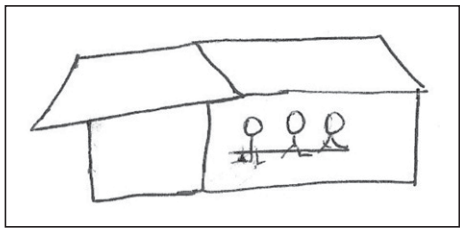
The prohibition of child labor to escape an undesirable present. Fairtrade interventions also prohibited or restricted practices that were perceived to be undesirable, such as child labor, excessive overtime, and pesticide use. For example, Fairtrade standards emphasized the importance of children's education and prohibited child labor, with the exception of children working on their parents' farms after school or during holidays. Despite the emphasis on education for benefits in the future, the restriction on child labor had an immediate and negative effect on the income of tea producers. We present a pair of drawings related to this issue in Figure 2. A tea farmer at Kuro contrasted her life before and after the Fairtrade certification in

FIGURE 1
A Nurse's Drawing on Fairtrade and a Clinic at Punda Milia

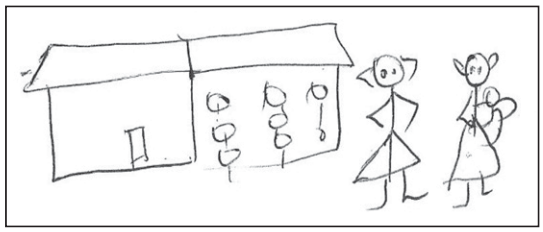
(1) Before Fairtrade



(2) After Fairtrade



(3) Recent Years



these drawings, and further explained them in the following conversation with the field researcher.

> Farmer: This is me, my husband, and my children [pointing to people in the drawing on the left side]. So we used to pick [tea leaves], all of us. I didn't know that it was child labor. Now, after Fairtrade, I know that they have to go to school. So it's just me and my husband in the farm. Our children go to school.
>
> Researcher: Thank you very much! [. . .] And do you have a bigger land after Fairtrade? The size of your tea farm looks bigger here [pointing to the drawing on the right side].
>
> Farmer: Oh no, they're exactly same. It's bigger here because we have to pick more tea [leaves] now.
>
> Researcher: Oh I see, you mean that you and your husband have to pick more tea leaves, because your children go to school.
>
> Farmer: Yes, yes.
>
> Researcher: I understand. Then how do you manage your farm now? How do you pick all the tea leaves without your children working in the farm?
>
> Farmer: Sometimes, we have *kandarasi* [i.e., casual, contract-based workers; tea pickers in this case]. But sometimes it's difficult to pay them, so we just pick less. We get fewer kilograms [of tea leaves].
>
> Researcher: I see. . . and does it mean that you get less money?
>
> Farmer: Yes, yes. Because it's 12 bob [= Kenyan Shillings] per kilo.

From the perspective of Fairtrade, the prohibition of child labor was framed as a positive action toward a more desirable future. For example, a staff member of Fairtrade International explicitly mentioned the issue of child labor during a training session and stressed that education provides greater benefits for the children in the future: "they go to school, find better jobs. . . it's a bigger benefit." However, tea producers faced acute and immediate needs, which made it difficult for them to pay tea pickers instead of using family child labor. At Kuro, child labor silently persisted and Fairtrade certification was temporarily suspended. A tea farmer recalled the Fairtrade certification audit, which had led to the suspension of Fairtrade certification, and the producers' subsequent efforts to recover the certification:

> The auditor went to the field and saw a kid plucking tea. The boy was out of school as he failed to pay fees. His father was employed in that farm as a picker, and the boy worked together with his father. The auditor took it seriously, and we were suspended. Now the boy is back [at] school. We had to prepare a letter from the teacher, a letter from the farm owner to promise that he'll never employ a kid, a letter from the factory... also his register to show that he is attending school, and exam records.

The story of certification suspension and recovery reveals that Fairtrade interventions led to two different kinds of unintended consequences. Firstly, despite the best intentions to build a better future (e.g., ensuring regular school attendance for children's education and

FIGURE 2
A Farmer's Drawing on Fairtrade and Child Labor

Note: "Maisha/familia/kazi yako kabla/baada ya Fairtrade" translates as "Your life/family/work before/after Fairtrade."

better prospects), prohibiting practices such as child labor without addressing its immediate effect on household income risked imperiling tea producer survival. However, producers still wanted to maintain the Fairtrade certification to gain access to markets and the Fairtrade premium. This led to the second unintended effect, in that Fairtrade interventions inadvertently pushed producers to find ways to meet immediate needs while complying with the Fairtrade standards (e.g., sending children to school). In Table 2, we summarize the prominent Fairtrade initiatives, producers' reactions, and the outcomes of their interactions.

Producers' Present Focus Can Imply a Long Present

From the perspective of Fairtrade, an important obstacle for sustainable development and building a better future was the tendency of producers in extreme poverty to focus on the present and prioritize their immediate needs. For example, during the training sessions for producer representatives at Samaki, a trainer and staff member of Fairtrade International emphasized that "it is important to educate workers to think about *kesho* [a Swahili word for 'tomorrow']." She also said "hawajui" (i.e., "they don't know/understand") several times to indicate that workers did not understand the importance of thinking about the future. While our data support that producers had a strong focus on the present, sometimes in a seemingly short-term-oriented way (e.g., selling iron sheets for immediate cash), we also found that producers tended to conceptualize the present as an extended duration.

When the field researcher asked producers about their current situation or challenges, they often responded by explaining seasons and other cycles, even if the researcher had not made any reference to those longer time frames. Specifically, the producers' description of their current state usually encompassed at least one full calendar year, which included two dry seasons (January to March and July to September) and two rainy seasons (April to June and October to December) with some variations across different regions and years. As tea leaves grow more quickly in the rainy season and tea producers were paid per kg of tea leaves (e.g., 12 shillings per kg in Kenya), farmers harvested more tea leaves and generated higher income in the rainy season. In contrast, their income dropped in the low producing dry season, as explained by a tea farmer at Dubu in the following conversation. Notably, this particular conversation happened during a rainy season (December 2011), yet the farmer still described difficulties in the dry season:

> Researcher: What are the challenges you are *currently* facing? [Emphasis added]
>
> Farmer: The low season. They're very difficult times. Very difficult times. Particularly we realize, sometimes, maybe bad enough, you realize that maybe weekly you pluck only three times. Only three days in a week. Then you suffer because it's paid by kilogram.

TABLE 2
The Interaction between Fairtrade and Producers in the Initiatives of Fairtrade

	Fairtrade's Initiatives	Producers' Reactions	Outcomes of Interactions
Iron sheets (Samaki)	Provided Fairtrade premium to buy iron sheets (to replace grass-thatched roofs) for benefits on health and sanitation in the future.	Workers sold iron sheets for cash in order to meet immediate needs.	Fairtrade auditors problematized the "misuse" of funds. Workers "became hostile," according to a manager.
Building a school (Dubu)	Provided Fairtrade premium to build a school for a better future (i.e., better opportunities for educated children in the future).	Producers wanted education and a better future for children, yet found it difficult to pay school fees due to urgent survival needs.	The school fees increased (to pay teachers' salaries) in the new school. Parents tried to pay school fees but sometimes could not afford them, so children were in and out of school.
Building a clinic (Punda Milia)	Provided Fairtrade premium to build a clinic for health benefits in the future.	Producers wanted healthcare services and liked the new clinic. However, the premium was only for the building and it was difficult to buy medicine and pay for salaries. Producers wanted to use premium to pay for medicine and consumables.	Producers tried to keep running the clinic, but it was often out of medicine. Eventually the clinic became an empty building.
Child labor (Kuro)	Fairtrade standard prohibited child labor and mandated children to attend classes instead of working on the tea farm, in the pursuit of benefits in the future (i.e., better opportunities for educated children in the future).	Wanted education and a better future for children. However, producers found it difficult to sacrifice the immediate household income (which became reduced if children did not work).	Child labor persisted, which led to the suspension of Kuro's Fairtrade certification. Producers had to find ways to meet immediate needs while complying with the Fairtrade standards.
Overtime (Samaki)	Fairtrade standard limited overtime (48 hours per month) throughout the year because excessive overtime was seen as problematic for workers' health and quality of life.	Overtime was seasonal. Workers liked overtime because it was an opportunity to accumulate money during the high production season. Managers also preferred overtime—otherwise, they had to "hire and fire" workers every season.	Overtime persisted, which led to the suspension of Samaki's Fairtrade certification. Producers had to find ways to manage seasonality while complying with the Fairtrade standards.
Training (Samaki)	Provided Fairtrade training sessions to teach and promote a future focus, assuming that producers were too focused on the present and had to be educated to understand the importance of thinking about the future.	Understood the importance of development, although producers found it difficult to sacrifice the present for the future due to urgent survival needs.	Producers found training sessions helpful, not in becoming focused on a distant future, but in developing ideas to make improvements in their immediate circumstances.

Producers further described their present state across seasons by explaining that most food crops could only be grown in the rainy season. Many farmers produced a small amount of food crops (e.g., maize, *matoke*, and cabbages) in addition to tea, so they would consume their own food crops and buy additional food items as needed during the rainy season. However, they had to buy food almost entirely from the market in dry months, when food prices were much higher and their income from tea was at its lowest level. A tea farmer at Kifaru explained the challenge: "in this [dry] season food becomes expensive, it is scarce by nature. You have tea but you cannot eat the tea, can you?" The monthly income of tea factory workers also decreased during the dry season, compared to the rainy season when they had longer overtime hours paid at premium rates. In the words of a tea farmer at Kipepeo, "we all hate this dry season."

The producers' perception of a present that extended beyond a moment was also evident in their accounts of loan cycles. Due to the seasonal income fluctuation, producers would borrow money in the dry season and settle the debt in the rainy season. The timing of borrowing and repaying loans was further influenced by other cycles, such as a

schedule of school fees (levied in January, May, and September in most communities) and a payment schedule in tea factories (e.g., an annual "bonus" in October in Kenya). When the field researcher asked a question about the greatest challenges producers were *currently* facing, several farmers and workers described annual cycles of high and low production seasons, school fee payments, and taking loans:

> School fees are much higher in January [than fees in May or September]. Many people borrow money in January, especially if they have children in secondary schools or colleges. Then they clear the debt in the bonus month [in October]. The interest can be high because you can't pay between January and October.
>
> [According to the Fairtrade standards,] overtime should not exceed 48 hours per month. But tea is very seasonal, it's difficult to meet the standard during the high season. We have to process leaves, otherwise the leaves go bad.
>
> Most of the farmers are in debt from SACCOs [Savings and Credit Co-operatives] because we take loans in the low season. We live on debt throughout the year, and we clear the debt in the bonus month. That's the cycle. We need to break that cycle.

From such illustrations we started to see that producers perceived the present as an extended duration, rather than a moment. They described the present as comprising ups and downs across seasons and other social and biophysical cycles, never as a point in time that can be synthesized into an average piece of information (e.g., whether their average income was above or below the poverty line of 1.25 USD per day). This time perspective opened up different ideas for using the Fairtrade premium than either to simply meet present needs or to leapfrog from an undesirable present to a more desirable future. Producers did not explicitly frame their actions as long-term development, yet the effects were immediate, incremental, and connected to the longer term. These producers did not disconnect their present from the future, but devised actions that transitioned the present to the future. We present two vignettes to illustrate such interconnections in practice.

A story of beekeeping. Producers at Nyuki decided to invest part of the Fairtrade premium in purchasing beehives. The idea emerged because producers tried to find a solution to better manage their hardships in dry seasons, based on the understanding that breaking the cycle of seasonal poverty was a key to overcoming chronic poverty. A manager at Nyuki explained the evolution of the project:

> The idea came when we were discussing about most tea farmers going hungry during dry season. Then a swarm of bees just passed by my office and we started discussing them. . . and an idea was born and became a project incorporated in what we were starting at [the name of a Eucalyptus forest]. Local farmers thought about the swarm bees' pathways at the forest. Later we met an old bee keeper in [the name of a neighboring community] who came up with the idea of passion [referring to the nectar from passion fruit flowers] as food for bees to increase honey production.

Beekeeping activities created an additional resource flow that complemented the resource cycles of farming. Unlike the pattern of tea and food crop production, honey production declined in the rainy season because nectar from flowers becomes more watery with a lower level of sugar and heavy rainfalls prevent bees from foraging. A manager of Nyuki said, "During wet season they [bees] are less active, they're more in the hives and end up eating a lot of stock honey." The production of honey peaked in the dry season when sunny weather following rainfalls promoted a good flower nectar flow and created a natural environment conducive to bee foraging behavior. Furthermore, the reduction in time required for tea farming during the dry season provided an opportunity for farmers to allocate two or three days per week to beekeeping activities, including harvesting, purifying (by filtering honey through sieves and warming), and packaging honey for sale. Most farmers at Nyuki managed between 10 and 20 beehives and generated income from the sale of honey in the dry season.

Thus, the beekeeping project had both immediate and longer-term effects on the livelihoods of producers. The initiative alleviated hardships by providing income from the sale of honey in the immediate dry season, which was part of the extended present of producers. This had further implications of relieving some of the burdens of paying debt interest in the subsequent rainy season, because producers did not have to borrow as much as they had in previous dry seasons. Moreover, tea producers were able to generate extra income from honey sales without reducing the preexisting income flows from tea, by utilizing extra time during the dry season. As a result, the total amount of resources was increased, which in turn had a long-term impact on reducing chronic poverty in an incremental and cumulative manner.

In addition to providing beekeeping opportunities for tea farmers, Nyuki located beehives in a collectively managed forest. The eucalyptus forest was initially created to supply firewood for the tea factory. While the forest project was independent of Fairtrade certification, Nyuki spent the Fairtrade premium to introduce beehives and passion fruit vines in the eucalyptus forest. In this ecosystem, eucalyptus and passion flowers attracted bees, which were in turn important pollinators. The ecosystem involved multiple rhythms in that the full growth of eucalyptus trees takes about seven years, honey can be harvested two to three times a year, and the passion vines bear fruit about six months after planting, with a lifespan of about four years. Given the collective nature of the project, any profits generated from the sale of honey and passion fruit within the forest were transferred into the Fairtrade premium funds, which were then reinvested to purchase more beehives. Thus, Nyuki's beekeeping project also created an amplifying cycle of Fairtrade premium. When the field researcher visited the eucalyptus forest, a manager at Nyuki proudly discussed their initiative beyond the conventional practices of Fairtrade:

> If you look at every tree now, we have put beehives at every corner. So [we have] the relationship with bees. And an idea came, why don't we plant passion [vines] to attract them [bees], and also for commercial purposes? So we started this [passion fruit project]. That is not a Fairtrade kind of project. So we're actually seeing. . . what we thought was Fairtrade is not what is Fairtrade today. It's not just the market of tea. We're seeing so many other integrated revenues and all that will add up in the end to improving the socioeconomic [status] of farmers.

Being deeply embedded in the rhythms of the biophysical environment, tea producers of Nyuki were able to appreciate the interconnectedness of the rhythms, such as the rhythms of tea, bees, eucalyptus trees, passion fruit, and rainfall. The immediate and incremental benefits from the beekeeping project were built into longer-term development through temporal connections. Not only were tea producers able to smooth out the peaks and troughs of resource flows, they enhanced the total amount of resources by accommodating multiple rhythms with different yet complementary temporal patterns (e.g., tea production in the rainy season and honey production in the dry season). Furthermore, some of the rhythms were deeply connected and mutually reinforcing (e.g., passion fruit production improved honey production and vice versa), creating an opportunity to amplify overall resource flows and generate extra resources for reinvestment.

Although the idea of beekeeping was quite different from how producers were expected to use the Fairtrade premium (e.g., building a school or a clinic) and therefore "not a Fairtrade kind of project" in the words of a Nyuki manager, it is important to recognize that producers conceived the project only after they obtained the Fairtrade certification. While the pattern of resource scarcity in dry seasons might have been a long-term concern for producers, the extra resources designated for community development (i.e., the Fairtrade premium) enabled producers to discuss how they might be able to use the resources in more effective ways. As the Fairtrade standards required producers to form a governing body (i.e., Fairtrade Premium Committee) to discuss where to spend the Fairtrade premium, producers explained that they became better positioned to collectively address long-standing problems. A farmer at Nyuki explained such effects of Fairtrade:

> We have not been getting a lot [referring to the amount of the Fairtrade premium Nyuki received], but [what] we've been getting is assisting us. [. . .] Beforehand, it was not very easy, because it is your tea, and my tea, so I go my way, you're going your way. But today's time, through the premium, we're able to come together more often, to decide what to do with the premium.

Therefore, producers attributed the success of projects such as beekeeping to the Fairtrade certification, even though their choices had not always been fully appreciated by the staff members of Fairtrade International and other fair trade organizations. Producers also noted that Fairtrade-related meetings and training sessions pushed them to think more about making improvements in their lives. "Now I think big, as there are all sorts of meetings you go through and what you learn this and that, so I have come to think big," said a worker at Punda Milia. As such, producers found the Fairtrade certification helpful, albeit not exactly in a way intended by Fairtrade interventions. Instead of becoming focused on a distant future as desired by Fairtrade, producers became better able to make immediate improvements within the extended present by interacting with Fairtrade.

A story of concrete benches. We observed a similar pattern of actions at Kuro, where producers spent part of their Fairtrade premium on building concrete benches to replace wooden benches at the

tea leaf collection centers. After picking tea leaves at the farm, producers brought them to the nearest collection center once or twice a day. Upon arrival at the collection center, tea farmers and estate workers poured the green tea leaves onto sorting tables (commonly referred to as benches) and exposed them to the air by lifting handfuls of leaves into the air and letting them fall back onto the benches (a process labeled *airing*). Subsequently, the tea leaves were transported to the factory to ensure that processing started within 24 hours of leaf harvesting. The careful postharvest handling of green tea leaves at the collection centers was critical to the quality of black tea, as the leaves had to be kept as fresh as possible until they reached the factory.

Concrete benches improved the quality of green tea leaves by preventing premature fermentation at the collection centers. A tea farmer explained the difference between concrete and wooden benches: "Fermentation shouldn't start at the collection center. It should start at the factory. If you put leaves on wooden benches, fermentation starts from there. But you can delay fermentation with concrete benches." Furthermore, leaves easily fell through the cracks of wooden benches while farmers and workers were airing them. As a result, tea producers had to constantly pick up fallen, and often damaged, leaves from the floor. In contrast, solid concrete benches improved the quality of leaves and provided a better working environment by reducing the chance of leaves falling. In addition, when compared to wood, the concrete benches were easier to clean and kept green leaves cooler and fresher. The field researcher visited a collection center and met tea farmers who were excited about the recent introduction of concrete benches to their collection center:

> Researcher: Do you know about Fairtrade?
>
> Farmer 1: Fairtrade, yes. Fairtrade is good. It has done good things, like building this [touching a concrete bench].
>
> Farmer 2: It saves money [for] farmers.
>
> Researcher: Oh, why does it save money [for] farmers?
>
> Farmer 2: Because we're supposed to do it [building concrete benches]. Have you visited any other centers?
>
> Researcher: Yes, I've just been to [the name of another collection center with wooden benches].
>
> Farmer 3: Oh, so she can compare.
>
> Farmer 2: You can see the difference, uh?
>
> Researcher: Yes, I saw wooden benches there.
>
> Farmer 3: So, you know, before even they [pointing to a pile of tea leaves on concrete benches] used to fall even on that side, and we had to pick, but now we don't [laughing].
>
> Farmer 2: Whatever falls, it's a waste.

The premium investment in building concrete benches had both immediate and longer-term impacts on the level of income for tea producers, since high-quality tea that started fermenting only in the factory achieved higher prices at auction. As a result, concrete benches reduced the duration of acute resource scarcity, as though rainy seasons had been extended and dry seasons had been shortened. Therefore, concrete benches had an impact on both cyclical poverty (by reducing the duration of suffering) and chronic poverty (by increasing the total amount of resources) for producers. Before obtaining the Fairtrade certification producers were aware of the difference between wooden and concrete benches, but it was difficult for them to make the first investment due to severe resource constraints. By using the cash infusion from the Fairtrade premium for the initial investment, Kuro found a way to transition toward long-term development through incremental and interconnected improvements. Given both its immediate and lasting effects, the concrete bench project was very popular among tea producers, as observed by a member of Kuro Premium Committee:

> When we have Fairtrade premium, we [the Premium Committee members] ask how they [farmers and workers] want to use the money. And we number them according to priority. Concrete benches at collection centers, they were priority number one. There are 42 collection centers at Kuro, and we built concrete benches for six of them. When we ask now, concrete benches for other collection centers are still coming up high. There were other things, water tank[s] and electricity, but concrete benches were the number one priority.

Despite the positive impacts of concrete benches on resource flows, tea producers found it difficult to convince trading partners who preferred them to spend the premium on infrastructure for education or health care. A member of Kuro Premium

Committee recalled her experience of working with a fair trade organization in the UK:

> People in the UK, even [the name of a manager], they don't understand why we want to fund concrete benches. They were asking, "can you do something else, like hospitals?" But concrete benches are important for leaf quality, because fermentation has to start at the factory, not at the [collection] center. Farmers are supposed to build collection centers and concrete benches from their pocket, and it's very expensive. That's why farmers want to use premium for concrete benches and they're very happy with it. But people in the UK, they don't understand.

The buyers' criticism about the concrete bench project demonstrates the gap between the principles and practices of Fairtrade certification. According to the Fairtrade standards and training materials, producer representatives were encouraged to make democratic decisions based on the proposals of farmers and workers about how to spend the Fairtrade premium. In practice, Fairtrade International, certification auditors, and trading partners in the West all influenced the choice of projects to be funded by the premium, often by expressing their preferences for certain projects (e.g., schools, clinics) or discomfort with others (e.g., concrete benches). Despite such tensions, the principles of Fairtrade in advocating producers' own decision making still provided a space for producers to make and defend their choices, as can be seen from the stories of beekeeping at Nyuki and concrete benches at Kuro. Thus, producers did not adopt the time perspective of Fairtrade (i.e., an ambition to leapfrog from an undesirable present to a more desirable future); instead, they enacted a different time perspective of the present as an extended duration when they were interacting with Fairtrade and trying to find ways to meet their immediate needs while complying with the Fairtrade standards. Moreover, the Fairtrade certification was critical for producers' actions and outcomes because tea producers redirected the Fairtrade premium to make immediate improvements that also transitioned toward the long term. Table 3 outlines producers' initiatives, together with Fairtrade's approaches to related issues and the outcomes of their interactions. In the next section, we theorize the concepts of short-present and long-present perspectives and their implications to sustainable development.

THEORIZING PRESENT TIME PERSPECTIVES

Sustainable development requires organizations to meet the needs of present generations, without compromising the needs of future generations (WCED, 1987). Assuming that organizations have slack resources that can be transferred from the present to the future, sustainability researchers have investigated the relationship between different time perspectives and intertemporal trade-offs (Bansal & DesJardine, 2014; Reinecke & Ansari, 2015; Slawinski & Bansal, 2015). However, sustainability researchers have had less to say about how organizations manage under extreme resource constraints, when they are unable to forgo consumption now for benefits later without compromising their immediate survival.

In our fieldwork, we observed that tea producer organizations in East Africa focused on the present under severe resource constraints, and yet also wanted to escape the poverty trap through Fairtrade certification. However, we found that the efforts taken by Fairtrade to move tea producers toward a more desirable future were not always effective. Fairtrade interventions, which often required producers to sacrifice present needs for future benefits, did not always succeed in improving the livelihoods of producers in a sustainable manner. Instead, they often exacerbated immediate resource scarcity, unexpectedly forcing producers to find ways to meet their urgent needs while complying with the Fairtrade standards.

In this context, some tea producer organizations used the Fairtrade premium in ways that were at odds with Fairtrade's intentions. Even though tea producers appeared to take a short-term-oriented approach to using Fairtrade premiums, some of these producer initiatives led to long-term outcomes that fostered sustainable development, without entailing the trade-offs required by Fairtrade's initiatives. Our analysis suggests that, through their interaction with Fairtrade, tea producers enacted a time perspective different from what has been discussed in prior research. Grounded in our findings, we deepen theorizing of present time perspectives. In so doing, we put into sharp relief the trade-off thinking assumed by sustainable development researchers and suggest an alternative approach to achieving sustainable development.

Short-Present Perspective

The present as a discrete moment. Prior literature on time perspectives in organizations has implicitly considered the present as a moment in time. As a result, a present focus often implies a short-term orientation; similarly, a future focus implies a long-term

TABLE 3
The Interaction between Fairtrade and Producers in the Initiatives of Producers

	Fairtrade's Approaches	Producers' Initiatives	Outcomes of Interactions
School fees in the bonus month (Nyuki)	Constant emphasis on the importance of children's education (e.g., prohibiting child labor and mandating school attendance) for a better future, although Fairtrade was not particularly interested in the timing of school fee payments or bonus payments.	A school in the Nyuki catchment area (unofficially) allowed parents to pay school fees for the whole year in October (the bonus month), to break the debt cycle (i.e., borrowing money to pay school fees in January and paying interest until the loan was repaid in October).	Incremental improvements in the livelihoods of producers by reducing the need to get a loan (to pay school fees) and pay interest. (Producers found a way to meet immediate needs while complying with the Fairtrade standards and meeting Fairtrade's expectation for children's education.)
Savings scheme (Kipepeo)	Provided Fairtrade premium to set up microfinance schemes (to make small loans), because microfinance was seen as an effective way to build a better future by development organizations. No particular interest in seasonality.	Did not like loans, because they required interest to be paid. Instead, producers preferred saving schemes, whereby they could save a small amount of money in the rainy season for the following dry season. Kipepeo set up a collective savings scheme, which allowed a preagreed amount to be automatically deducted from monthly earnings (only during the rainy season) for withdrawals in the dry season.	Incremental improvements in the livelihoods of producers by reducing the need to get a loan during the dry season and pay interest. (Producers redirected Fairtrade's initiative—microfinance, in this case—to an alternative that was better aligned with their seasonal realities.)
Beekeeping (Nyuki)	Provided Fairtrade premium, which was used by producers for a beekeeping project. Fairtrade as a whole (e.g., standards) did not pay much attention to seasonality. However, a local staff member of a British fair trade organization (based in Nairobi) understood the importance of seasonality and actively supported the beekeeping project.	Tried to find a way to better manage dry seasons. Observed bees and realized that beekeeping might be a good activity for dry seasons. Used the Fairtrade premium to purchase beehives and equipment for beekeeping (and honey production) during dry seasons.	Incremental improvements in the livelihoods of producers, because additional income from beekeeping helped producers to escape the debt trap (by reducing the need to get a loan during the dry season) and increased the overall income. (Producers redirected the Fairtrade premium to initiate their own project.)
Concrete benches (Kuro; also Nyuki)	Provided Fairtrade premium, which was used by producers to install concrete drying benches, although some of the buyers did not like the project—e.g., a senior manager of a British fair trade organization (based in the UK) asked if producers could do something else, like building a hospital.	Used Fairtrade premium to build concrete benches at collection centers, to break the cycle of low-quality tea (because fermentation started at collection centers when the leaves were kept on wooden benches) leading to low income for producers.	Incremental improvements in the livelihoods of producers, because the concrete benches helped to produce better-quality tea, which led to higher tea prices in the market and ultimately higher income for producers. (Despite some trouble with buyers, producers were able to redirect the Fairtrade premium, at least for some collection centers, because buyers were supposed to respect the producers' own decisions according to Fairtrade principles.)

orientation (e.g., March, 1991; Marginson & McAulay, 2008). Although Bluedorn (2002) distinguished between temporal focus and temporal depth, his framework also implies that the present is a moment without depth. While the concepts of temporal focus and temporal depth are conflated because the causes and effects appear to be similar, our paper shows that there is an important

distinction that helps to explain the implications of time perspectives for sustainable development.

We found in our data that the present can also have depth. Individuals and organizations can differ in their view of the present. Some perceive a short present, which aligns with prior research and the perspective of Fairtrade in our study, while others perceive a long present, which aligns with the perspective of some of our producers.

We define a *short-present perspective* as a way of perceiving the present as a discrete moment that is separate from moments in the past and the future. Seeing the present as a moment drives a comparison among states in different time periods or different contexts. In our data, Fairtrade spoke to an aspiration of building a better future that could pull producers out of the undesirable present state. Much like taking a snapshot at a point in time, Fairtrade described the short present in a static state. This state was used to make comparisons to other states, such as in other countries (e.g., poverty in developing and development in the West). As a result, Fairtrade tended to see and describe different states, much like describing issues in pictures, such as poverty, child labor, and excessive overtime. The measures used to describe such states were also static points, often measured by a stock of resources—e.g., an average daily income of 1.25 USD as a measure of extreme poverty. From this perspective, the desirable future state was often envisioned as the opposite of the undesirable present state—e.g., reduced child labor, reduced working hours, and a larger stock of resources.

Real resource implications: Intertemporal trade-offs. From a short-present perspective, development requires investing resources now for benefits later. To make the significant shift from the undesirable present to a more desirable future, actors are sometimes required to make major resource sacrifices (such as producers in our data)—e.g., children must stop working with the family, so they can go to school, lowering household income needed for immediate needs. Giving up some benefits in the present is seen as a worthwhile investment to leapfrog *from* the undesirable present *to* a better future. As such, the short-present perspective reinforces intertemporal resource trade-offs.

Investing resources in projects with deferred outcomes might work well for individuals or organizations that can afford to make immediate sacrifices. Our study highlights, however, that this approach does not work for organizations that are unable to make intertemporal trade-offs due to severe resource constraints. Despite Fairtrade's best intentions to alleviate poverty, their efforts often failed because tea producers could not prioritize the future over the present (e.g., giving up the immediate income from child labor for the future benefits of education). Similarly, organizations facing bankruptcy do not have the luxury to think about present-day investments for future benefits; these organizations just need to survive the present. The intertemporal choice to sacrifice present needs for an abstract future is difficult for individuals or organizations under very concrete and acute resource constraints.

Long-Present Perspective

Present as an extended duration. Some of the tea producers in our study enacted a *long-present perspective*, which we define as a way of perceiving the present over an extended duration, constituted by processes that are inseparable from one another. In our data, several tea producers described their present state as a span of time comprising interconnected processes, including those related to resource flows. Instead of comparing their present condition to a better future, these producers described the present as a dynamic flow of interconnected activities and resources, such as their experiences in the rainy and dry seasons, school fees and bonus payment schedules, and the annual cycle of borrowing and repaying loans. Often, a discussion of one event seamlessly involved a discussion of other events, as these tea producers did not see them as separate events. These tea producers consistently expressed the present in words that connected many events throughout the calendar year, probably because this represented a full cycle of crops and income. The events were intricately woven together and could not be deconstructed into a single process or a discrete point in time. The present is thus not an instant, but an extended duration, so that the present, past, and future are inseparable, connected by a set of processes that seemed to only end when the next year of crops and income began.

Whereas the short present lacks depth and can be represented as a point in time or snapshot, the long present permits actors to see the flow of resources in overlapping cycles and interconnected rhythms (e.g., seasons, payment schedules, tea production cycles, and the rhythms of bees and agricultural crops). These dynamics enabled tea producers to act upon the connections across different aspects of their life. The producers could not talk about tea farming without thinking about the seasons, or schooling without connecting to tea production cycles and

payments schedules—all of which had resource implications.

Connections to the philosophy of time. Our concept of a long-present perspective resonates with philosophical thinking on time perspectives (James, 1890; Mead, 1929, 1932; Russell, 1915). In the philosophy of time, it has long been recognized that the past, present, and future arise from the subjective experience of time, unlike other temporal concepts such as "earlier" and "later," which might physically exist even in the absence of human experiences (Russell, 1915). The subjective experience of the present frequently involves the duration of "the specious present—varying in length from a few seconds to probably not more than a minute" (James, 1890: 642), within which some parts of the present are inevitably earlier than other parts (Mead, 1929, 1932; Russell, 1915). The adjective "specious" highlights that our tendency to perceive the present as a short moment is superficially plausible but fundamentally incorrect. In the words of James (1890: 609), "the practically cognized present is no knife-edge, but a saddle-back, with a certain breadth of its own on which we sit perched." The specious present is commonly extended in everyday discourse—e.g., the "present year" and the "present generation"—and further enlarged and enriched through the collective construction of living history (Becker, 1932).

The idea of the extendable present can be further illustrated through the metaphor of a melody, in that "there must be an interpenetration of the different notes in order that there may be a melody" (Mead, 1936: 297). Much like a melody, which cannot be conceived by hearing individual notes in separation, the perception of the extended present involves not only a longer duration but also a recognition of connections across multiple processes. Just like some people hear individual notes and others seek to hear melodies, we found that Fairtrade saw the present as discrete from the future, whereas tea producers were more likely to see connections through processes. While the discussion of the specious present and its extension has remained largely abstract in the philosophy of time, our study shows the enactment of a long-present perspective and its implications for the management of resource flows and sustainable development.

Real resource implications: Building resources through temporal connections. A long-present perspective, such as that taken by the tea producers in our study, does not require leapfrogging from an undesirable present to a desirable future because the present is not seen as a discrete state. Instead, the tea producers engaged in actions that make small, incremental, and connected improvements within what they considered to be still the present, based on deep understanding of the dynamics and complexity of resource flows across seasons. The incremental changes within the long present gradually build into bigger improvements in the long term, rather than through a dramatic shift.

Using resources for benefits in the present might appear to be short-term oriented for those holding a short-present perspective, because the steps seem small and the benefits are realized almost immediately. In our study, Fairtrade managers and staff members did not always appreciate the actions of producers, which appeared to be short-term oriented. Through the lens of the long present, however, these actions enabled an immediate and incremental increase in resources, which helped producers increase resources gradually for greater benefits. By seeing the connections in the underlying cycles of their existence and across the different elements of the systems on which they depend, producers were better able to see a continuous transition rather than a discrete leapfrog. Our findings illuminate that such transitions can be a powerful way to enable sustainable development, especially under severe resource constraints.

Enactment of a long-present perspective. One could argue that producers developed a long-present perspective because they were deeply embedded in biophysical systems filled with multiple overlapping cycles (e.g., seasons and the ecological rhythms of different plants and animals). Such ecological embeddedness might explain why the producers' description of the present almost always involved at least one full calendar year across seasons that guided all aspects of their life, rather than seeing the present as a discrete state.

However, ecological embeddedness cannot be the whole story. The long-present perspective was enacted in actions oriented toward sustainable development (e.g., beekeeping, concrete benches) when producers were interacting with Fairtrade. The tensions between Fairtrade's time perspective and the producers' real resource constraints that were exacerbated by some of the Fairtrade interventions put the producers' long-present perspective in sharper relief, by pushing producers to find ways to meet their immediate needs while complying with the requirements of Fairtrade.

Most importantly, Fairtrade provided producers with slack resources for community development (i.e., Fairtrade premium), which could be redirected

to an initial investment for incremental and gradual improvements. Producers were unlikely to have even considered or been able to implement projects, such as beekeeping and concrete benches, without the additional resources. Although the amount of slack resources needed for this purpose was often much smaller than what was needed for projects with deferred outcomes (e.g., the costs of purchasing beehives versus constructing a new school), the presence of just enough slack resources to initiate the momentum was essential for the enactment of a long-present perspective. Furthermore, the producers noted that the new governance structure to discuss the choice of projects (i.e., Fairtrade premium committee) and other Fairtrade-related meetings and training sessions were helpful for them to devise and implement actions to make immediate and incremental improvements.

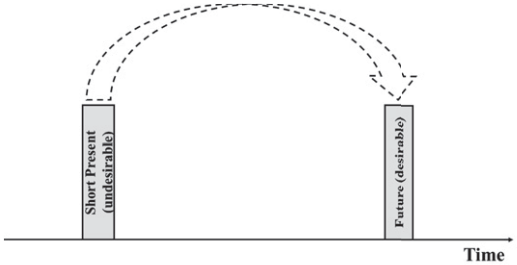
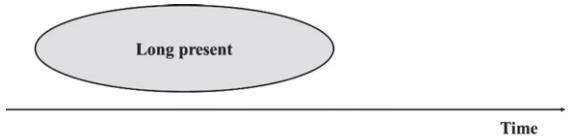
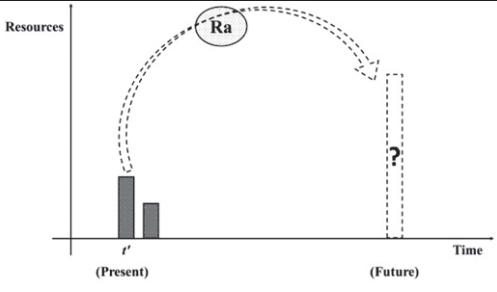
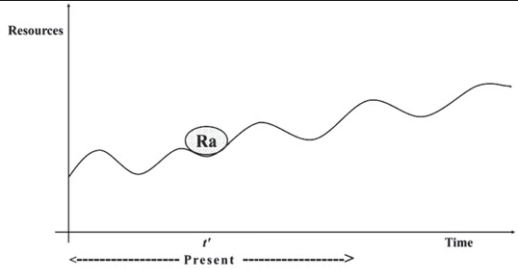
In this regard, the role of Fairtrade was crucial for helping producers move toward sustainable development, even though producers' actions were clearly different from what Fairtrade envisaged as pathways for sustainable development. Instead of focusing on the distant future as advocated by Fairtrade, producers enacted a long-present perspective by redirecting Fairtrade's support and resources to make incremental and continuous improvements. The principle of Fairtrade in respecting the decisions of producers was fundamental for making this shift happen. We summarize the implications of short- and long-present perspectives on real resources in Table 4.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESEARCH ON TIME PERSPECTIVES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Theorizing Present Time Perspectives

We advance the existing understanding of a present time perspective by conceptualizing short- and long-present perspectives and their implications for managing the real resource constraints. In prior literature, a

TABLE 4
Present Time Perspectives and Their Implications for Real Resource Flows

	Fairtrade: Short-present perspective	Producers: Long-present perspective
Time Perspectives		
Real Resource Implications	 • *t'* = Point of actions: Investing resources for benefits to come much later, to move from an undesirable way of life to a more desirable future. • Ra = Additional resources (Fairtrade premium) that are invested in projects with deferred outcomes. • The actions can reduce resources in the immediate term and thus aggravate resource constraints. The actions aim to increase resource stocks in the future, but the outcome is uncertain.	 • *t'* = Point of actions: Incrementally using resources to allow more benefits now, in ways that would continuously generate benefits. • Ra = Additional resources (Fairtrade premium) that are used for an immediate and incremental increase in resources. • Resources continue to increase gradually over time.

present focus has been conceptualized as short-termism—the preference for instant rewards and little consideration of long-term consequences (e.g., Bluedorn, 2002; Hofstede, 1993). However, the tendency to associate a present focus with a short-term orientation is valid only if the present is conceived as a discrete moment. By recognizing that the present has a depth, we help to discriminate between a present focus and short-termism. Whereas a focus on the short present may imply short-termism, a focus on the long present does not.

Recent organizational studies have begun to explore connections between the past, present, and future in the process of identity construction (Schultz & Hernes, 2013) and strategy making (Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013), moving beyond conceptualizing the future as separated and disconnected from the past and the present. The recent interests in process ontology, which have viewed the world as constantly "becoming" (Langley & Tsoukas, 2017; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002), have further propelled theorization of the inseparable nature of the past, present, and future (Garud & Gehman, 2012; Hernes, 2017; Reinecke & Ansari, 2017). Nevertheless, the *ontological* insights that processes are in constant becoming do not directly speak to the *epistemological* phenomenon that actors still construct boundaries between their perceived past, present, and future. Our study shows that actors perceive the present in a certain duration (rather than as endless becoming), yet in different lengths. Thus, we take an important step to unpack different present time perspectives (i.e., short- and long-present perspectives) and their implications for managing limited resources for sustainable development (i.e., reinforcing intertemporal trade-offs versus building resources through temporal connections), beyond the recognition of temporal connections across the past, present, and future in process studies.

The Limits of Intertemporal Trade-Offs Under Severe Resource Constraints

The definition of sustainable development seems to emphasize trade-offs by stating that the needs of the present should not compromise the needs of the future. It is no wonder that researchers have highlighted the importance of intertemporal trade-offs—choosing between meeting needs now or later (Hahn et al., 2010). Prior research has investigated how organizations can balance different time perspectives (e.g., short-term and long-term perspectives) so that they become more willing to make intertemporal trade-offs (Reinecke & Ansari, 2015; Slawinski & Bansal, 2015). However, firms are constrained from investing resources for benefits to come much later if they face intense resource constraints, such as insufficient cash flow to maintain current operations (Souder & Shaver, 2010).

Our study offers an alternative perspective. By investigating organizations that are under severe resource constraints, we found that organizations are able to escape the poverty trap, not by sacrificing the present needs for future benefits, but by making an immediate and incremental increase in resources that will be connected to a gradual increase in resources over time. Thus, we shift a focus from making intertemporal trade-offs to building resources through temporal connections in the pursuit of sustainable development.

By conceptualizing time as a point, resources are fixed thereto. Thinking about resources at a different point in time requires intertemporal trade-offs; when consumed, finite resources disappear. Consuming now or later becomes a trade-off. However, many resources are regenerated, dynamic, and substitutable in the right conditions—e.g., the regeneration of topsoil, fish stock, or forest resources (WCED, 1987). In this regard, sustainable development entails understanding interconnectedness across complex social and ecological systems and the different speeds at which these systems cycle through creation, regeneration, and demise (Holling, Gunderson, & Peterson, 2002; Redclift, 1987; WCED, 1987). Thus, the key challenge of sustainable development is to satisfy essential human needs by adequately coordinating the rates of consumption and regeneration of resources, rather than to privilege the future at the cost of the present. By recognizing that the present can be a longer duration of time comprising interconnected processes, we put into sharper focus a view of sustainable development that is not about trade-offs, but about connecting processes that govern the availability of real resources.

Implications for the Practice of Sustainable Development

Our research also provides implications for the practice of sustainable development, especially in the context of international development. International development is an important agenda of public and private organizations, with an annual

spending of 138.5 billion USD on aid by governments and other agencies (OECD-DAC, 2014) and active involvement of nongovernmental organizations and other civil society organizations, social enterprises, and corporations (Brown, 2008). Critical for the success of development programs is a deep understanding of complex local contexts in which organizational actions for social and economic development unfold (Bitzer & Glasbergen, 2015; Mair, Martí, & Ventresca, 2012), often better comprehended by indigenous peoples and local communities than external experts and organizations (Banerjee, 2008; Dewulf, Craps, & Bouwen, 2005; Whiteman & Cooper, 2000).

In this paper, we focused on temporality among various aspects of local and indigenous knowledge that are relevant to sustainable development. The analysis of Fairtrade interventions in our study reveals the importance of understanding time perspectives and real resource constraints in the local context. Nevertheless, we do not discount the value of development interventions, because even making incremental improvements based on a long-present perspective often requires an initial investment of resources. In our research context of rural East Africa, tea producers redirected part of the Fairtrade premium to make an initial investment for an immediate and continuous increase in resources—e.g., purchasing beehives and building concrete benches. Furthermore, we note that an exposure to the time perspective of Fairtrade (e.g., through meetings and training sessions) was useful for producers to enact their long-present perspective, albeit in different ways from the original intention of Fairtrade. Our study suggests that development organizations can provide more effective interventions by understanding and relating to the relevant social and biophysical rhythms, and working together with local organizations and communities who are deeply embedded in those rhythms.

Limitations and Future Research

We theorized the long-present perspective from tea producer organizations that are deeply embedded in biophysical systems in rural East Africa. The research context provided an extreme case of resource-poor organizations caught in the survival trap. While we believe that the conceptualization of short- and long-present perspectives has broader implications for organizations in both developed and developing countries, this will require further empirical investigation. Given that time perspectives have been strongly associated with cultural differences (Hall, 1966, 1983; Hall & Hall, 1990), it will be important to investigate the enactment of short- and long-present perspectives in different cultural and geographical spaces. In particular, we suggest that future research explores the presence and conceptualization of a long-present perspective and the transition toward sustainable development in developed-country market economies where everyday realities are relatively disconnected from biophysical systems.

Our focus on temporality means that other relevant themes outside the scope of this study are worthy of investigation. We acknowledge that there are other reasons why Fairtrade interventions are not always effective. For example, previous studies have noted that the unequal power relationship between buyers in the West and producers in developing countries fundamentally restricts the benefits of Fairtrade, despite the explicit goal of Fairtrade to challenge power dynamics in international trade and empower producers (Blowfield & Dolan, 2010; Dolan, 2010; Reinecke, 2010). Furthermore, the Fairtrade system is based on the process of formal standardization, certification, and auditing, which creates a form of control over producers (Dolan, 2010; Raynolds, 2002). Prior research has questioned the effectiveness of certification approaches to sustainable development, highlighting that global certification schemes primarily serve the legitimacy of corporations and civil society organizations (Brown, 2008; Glasbergen, 2013), with limited or questionable outcomes for producers in developing countries (Bitzer & Glasbergen, 2015; Derkx & Glasbergen, 2014). While these are important topics that have been addressed by other scholars, we have focused our study on an underexplored issue with far-reaching implications for the research on time and sustainable development. Our data show how Fairtrade actively intervened in the decisions and actions of producers with the best intentions to pull them out of the undesirable present toward a better future, based on the assumption that producers might make short-term-oriented decisions and actions. We thus provide a novel explanation for the phenomenon that is related to, yet irreducible to, the mechanisms of power and control and leave opportunities to connect power and control to our work on time for future research.

Despite these boundary conditions, our study provides new concepts and theory generated from an extreme case of organizations under severe resource constraints. We believe that the concepts of short- and long-present perspectives have potentially important implications for a broad range of organizations in both developed and developing countries, much beyond the context of Fairtrade and certifications. We envision exciting future research avenues to explore how organizations make transitions toward sustainable development through temporal connections, ultimately inspiring a new paradigm for sustainability research and practice beyond trade-off thinking.

A Parting Image

Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is an exposition of time. In the famous tea party scene, the Hatter sits at a large table with the March Hare and Dormouse, drinking tea. It seems that the Hatter has quarreled with Time, so the personified version of Time has fixed the Hatter and his friends at six o'clock—tea time. "It's always tea-time, and we've no time to wash the things between whiles," (Carroll, 1998: 104) complains the Hatter, who keeps moving round the table together with his friends in search of clean cups. Here, tea time is understood as a period of actions and interactions, rather than a moment at 6 p.m., which allows the Hatter and his guests to continue their lives and conversations within a span of time (Beer, 2011).

The extended six o'clock in Wonderland has striking similarities with the time of tea producers in East Africa. Measured from daybreak and sunset, Swahili time consists of 12 hours of daylight and 12 hours of darkness. *Saa moja* (literally "the first hour") in the morning is translated into 7 a.m., which corresponds to the first hour of daylight because the sun generally starts rising at about 6 a.m. Similarly, *saa moja* in the evening corresponds to 7 p. m. (i.e., the first hour of darkness), because the sun usually sets between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m., with relatively little variation throughout the year. During her fieldwork, the first author noticed that tea producers often referred to an approximate time by speaking of the hours in Swahili (e.g., *saa moja, saa mbili. . .*), which might be related to the processes of sunrise and sunset that unfold within a span of time, rather than at an instant. Tea producers added the word *kamili* when they needed to speak of an exact hour—e.g., *saa moja kamili* (exactly one o'clock)—just as they specified "right now" as *sasa hivi* instead of *sasa* ("now"), which implied a longer present.

Whether we perceive time as a discrete moment or an extended duration has important consequences. The predominant understanding of the present as a moment underpins and reinforces the emphasis on intertemporal trade-offs in the pursuit of sustainable development. When the present is reduced to a moment, it is separated from other moments. Events are seen as points in time and become disconnected from each other, even though events may unfold over a longer period of time in interconnected ways. For example, if eating a piece of bread today versus tomorrow are seen as discrete events, then it makes sense to see the choice as a trade-off—one cannot do both. From this perspective, actors recognize that if they eat the piece of bread now, they will lose the opportunity to eat it later, when they may need it more. However, when the events are seen as connected, the actors might see that eating the piece of bread today could give them the energy needed to acquire a piece of bread tomorrow. By exploring such dynamics for organizations under severe resource constraints, our study provides languages and frameworks to rethink sustainable development beyond the emphasis on intertemporal trade-offs.

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