

**Re-mapping the Americas: Globalization, Regionalization and the FTAA**

**CONFERENCE PAPER ABSTRACT**

***“The Politics of Fair Trade Negotiations for the Americas***

***in the Changing World Order: Another Perspective”***

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How do the Americas, during this era of the US-led, post-Cold War globalization project, effectively emphasize the need for fair trading arrangements, as opposed to free trading arrangements, in trade negotiations? Are there theoretical principles which emphasize the fairness we seek to inform our practical approaches to such negotiations? Could the political realities at play accommodate these considerations?

Contemporary theories of justice and fairness are dominated by a distributive paradigm, in which the focus is on the possession of material goods and social positions. Such a general distributive focus, however, obscures other pertinent issues of historical, political and socio-economic significance which must be taken into consideration if fairness is to be achieved. I contend that justice, to be effective, must be situated in the concrete significances of the society outside of those who philosophize about it and effect it. I argue that instead of focusing on distribution, any concept of justice should commence with a consideration of the “vulnerable” position of the region. I also argue that to translate any such theoretical critique of justice into a useful reality, we may look to the principles of equity in international law and apply same to our negotiations of international trade agreements.

There is a need to re-examine the political dimensions of the purely distributive approach which is the market-centered hallmark of the developed world. That approach both ignores the peculiarities of the Americas and protects powerful and wealthy interests by using the loopholes of “foreign aid” and debt forgiveness, which primarily serve public relations purposes and dispense with international justice obligations.