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DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE E TECNOLOGIE  
AGRO-ALIMENTARI

**STAAA PhD OPEN DAY**

Dipartimenti di Eccellenza 2018-2022  
DISTAL The Nexus Approach for Sustainability in Agriculture,  
Food, Energy & Water

June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022

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# Agro-food system fairness and environmental sustainability from a consumer perspective

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Cycle: **XXXV**

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# Aim of the PhD

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Analyse **consumer purchasing behaviour** and **conceptualise fairness** from a consumer perspective

## Study 1 - Literature Review

*“Chocolate Consumption and Purchasing Behaviour Review: Research Issues and Insights for Future Research”*

## Study 2 - Research Paper

*“Does fairness matter? Consumers’ perception of fairness in the agro-food chain”*

## Study 3 - Research Paper

*“Scale development, validation and application. A tool to measure consumers interest on fairness in agro food chain”*

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## OBJECTIVES:

- ❖ **Conceptualise fairness value**
- ❖ **Promote fairness and sustainability** along the agro-food chain
- ❖ **Expand market segments** promoting fairness values consistently with consumer behaviour and preferences

# Why fairness?

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**Dissatisfaction** → Farmers' strikes against the processing industries in Europe. Wages did not allow to cover production costs.

**Unfairtrade practices** → «Agro-mafia», «Caporalato», «Double Auction», short-term contracts, weak communication among stakeholders, etc.

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## INCREASIGN INTEREST OF THE MAIN ORGANISATION AND RESEARCHER



The [EU Directive 2019/633](#) on unfair trading practices in the agricultural and food supply chain was adopted by the European Parliament and Council on 17 April 2019. EU countries were required to transpose the Directive into national law by 1 May 2021 and apply it six months later.

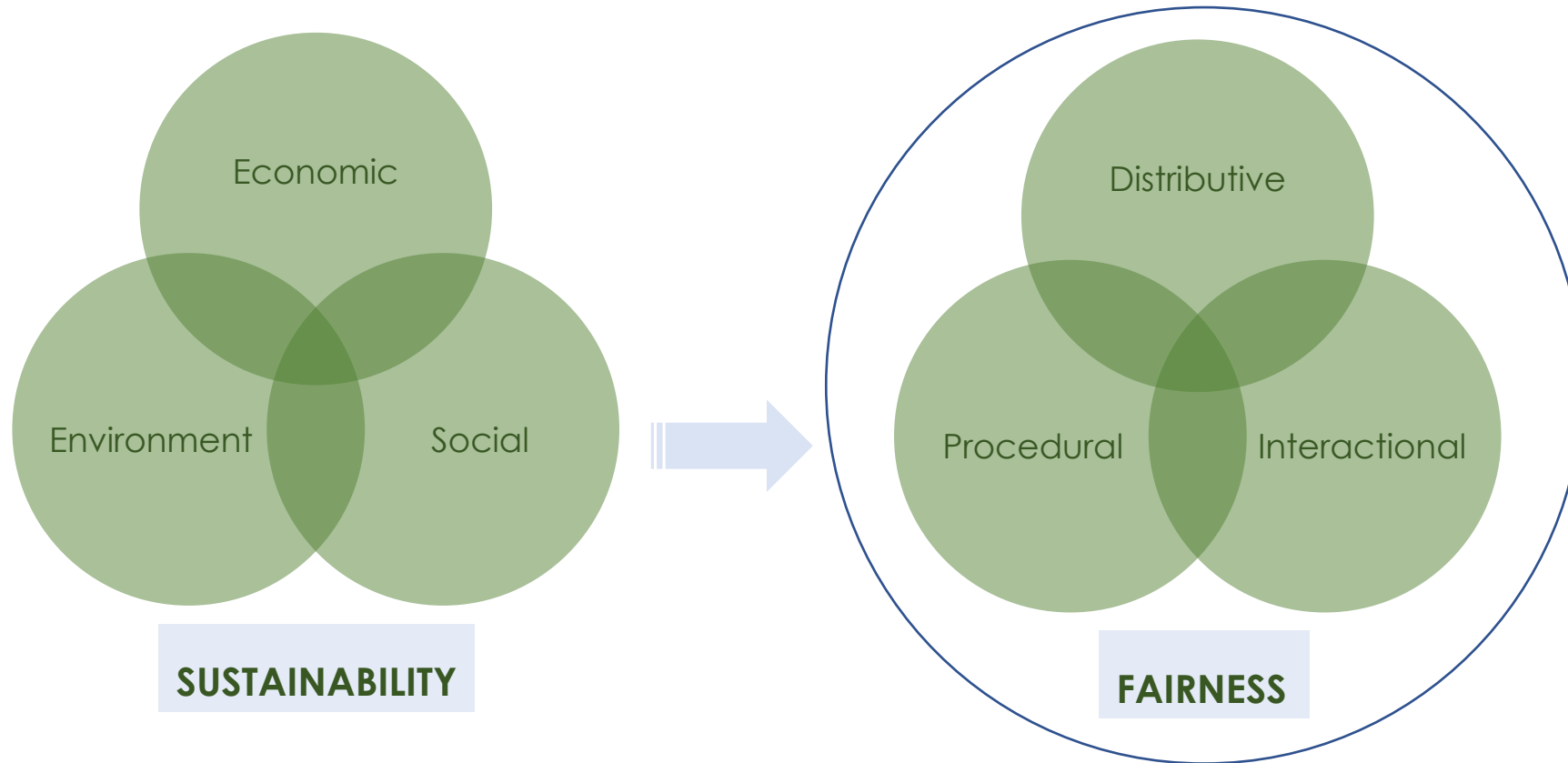
# Multidimensionality of food products

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- ❖ Consumers choose food products **balancing these attributes**
- ❖ There is **no unique definition** of fairness along the agri-food chain
- ❖ The concept of fairness **changes according to the point of view**
- ❖ The concept of fairness is a **multifaceted construct** consisting of several dimensions



# Fairness goes beyond sustainability

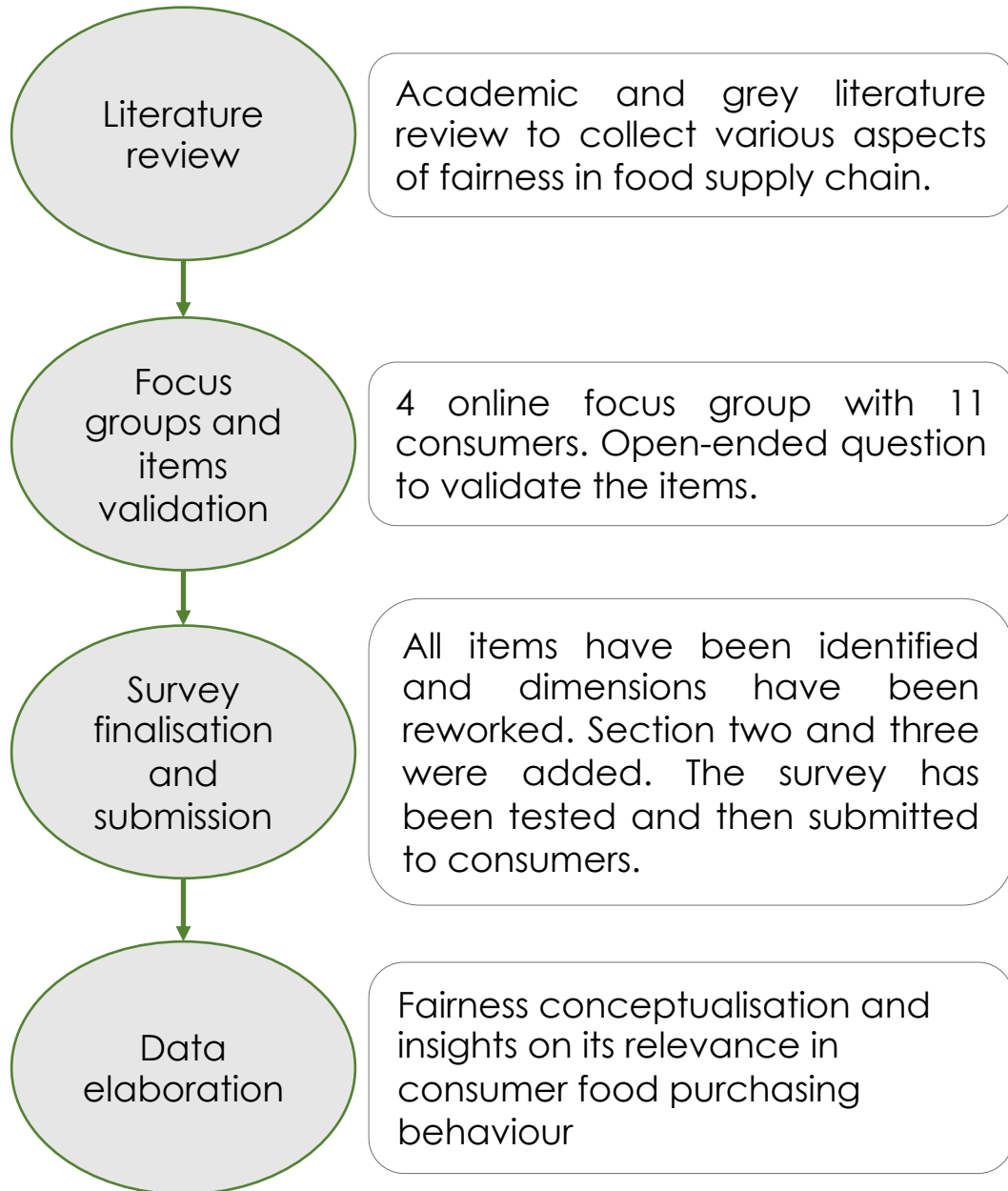


❖ In general, **FAIRNESS** can be seen as people's **aversion to inequity**

❖ **Outcome** refers to **PRICE**

- ❖ Distributive fairness → fairness of outcome
- ❖ Procedural fairness → ways in which outcomes are achieved
- ❖ Interactional fairness → behaviour of the trading partners

# Study 2 – Fairness conceptualisation



## Study 2 – Highlights

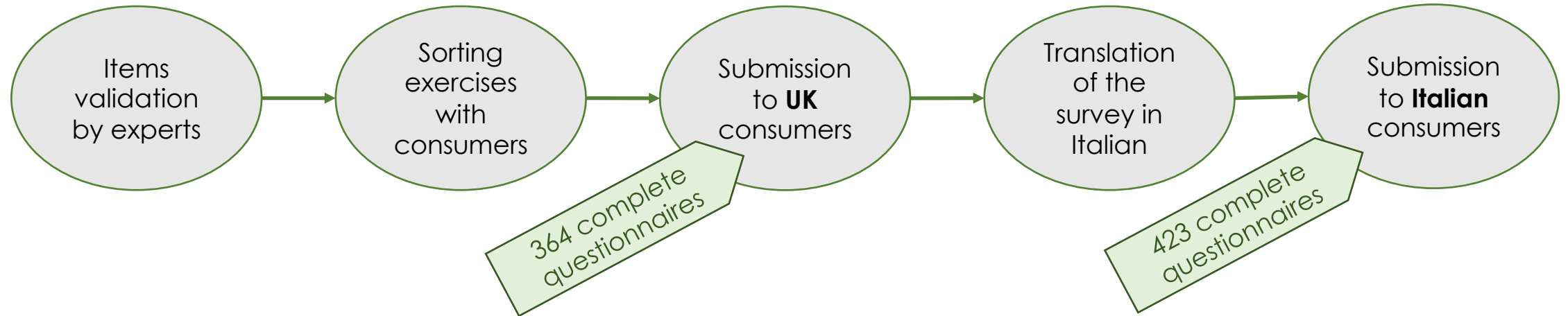
- ❖ This research confirms the environmental dimension within the concept of fairness
- ❖ *Short chain, networking, and product characteristic* are new dimensions of fairness
- ❖ Taste is the first driver of consumption. **Environmental fairness is more important than farmers receiving a fair price**
- ❖ Socio-demographic characteristics and level of fairness understanding moderately impact on the purchasing behaviour of products with price fairness for farmers attribute
- ❖ Age influences consumers' purchasing behaviour towards fair products

	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Taste</b>	6.0	1.1
<b>Seasonality</b>	5.8	1.3
<b>Local product</b>	5.6	1.4
<b>Environmental sustainability</b>	5.4	1.6
<b>Value for money</b>	5.2	1.5
<b>Fair price for farmers</b>	4.9	1.8
<b>Habits</b>	4.7	1.5
<b>Promotion/offer</b>	4.4	1.6
<b>Packaging</b>	4.4	1.8
<b>Vegan/Vegetarian</b>	4.0	2.1
<b>Nutritional/health label</b>	3.8	1.9
<b>Lack of time</b>	3.4	1.8
<b>Brand</b>	3.3	1.7

## Study 3 – Scale development and validation

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- ❖ The objective is to develop a tool **to measure** consumers' interests and **willingness to buy** fair products
- ❖ Joint project with the Newcastle University Business School
- ❖ Submission to IT and UK consumer



### Future steps:

Scale development: Exploratory factor Analysis

Scale validation: Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Reliability test (convergent and divergent analysis)

Test of validity: Predictive validity to determine if scores predict future outcomes



## Conclusions and future researches

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- ❖ Fairness is a multi-faceted construct that goes beyond the concept of sustainability.
  - ❖ It not only refers to price
  - ❖ Consumers have a key role in shaping the market



**Politics and organisations should bear in mind that in order to promote fairness, such as fair price for farmers, care for the environment or good workers condition, they should ensure a basket of tangible and intangible food product attributes appreciated by consumers**

Thank you!

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