Corporate Commitments and Human Capabilities:

* A Thematic Analysis of Corporate Social Responsibility in the Tanzanian Sisal Industry using Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach.
Abstract

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is an increasingly important aspect of a company’s image and has provided profitability by appealing to consumers. The Tanzanian sisal value chain provides an interesting case where newly established companies have the ability to incorporate CSR in their everyday work and create a sustainable environment where social and environmental aspects of responsibility are undertaken. The following thesis investigates corporate social responsibility within the Tanzanian sisal industry through a thematic analysis inspired by Martha Nussbaum's (2011) capabilities approach. The ten central capabilities presented by Nussbaum have been applied as codes on the available CSR work of the largest actors within the Tanzanian sisal industry. The aim of the research is to investigate what CSR strategies exist in the industry and to what extent the CSR work uplifts the livelihoods they affect. The theoretical framework will provide a guideline of one established theory that the available CSR work can be analysed. The analysis will, therefore, highlight potential pitfalls as well as good initiatives and policies in relation to Nussbaum's capabilities approach. The research concluded that two corporations out of the five largest in the industry have available CSR strategies: SFI Tanzania and the MeTL Group. The policies and projects within these strategies contain some of the predetermined codes. However, neither sufficiently addresses the ten central capabilities. After analysing the policies, it can be concluded that many of the ten central capabilities are not fulfilled in the investigated companies' CSR work.

Keywords: CSR, Sisal, Capabilities, Sustainability

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Giangiacomo Bravo for his valuable feedback and support throughout the thesis writing process.
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CSR      Corporate Social Responsibility
TSB      Tanzania Sisal Board

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1. Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been critiqued as a mainstream concept and its shortcomings in responsiveness to local context regarding social responsibilities. Contemporary discourse on sustainability has the tendency to place primacy on environmental aspects, which jeopardises the accountability for the social structures and livelihood situations within value chains (Hopkins, 2016, ch.1). Therefore, corporate policies and sustainability reports require further investigation to understand the accountability within the value chain to observe if social responsibilities are compromised within sustainability agendas. A thematic analysis of Corporate Social Responsibility within the Tanzanian sisal value chain has been conducted to investigate the CSR work conducted. Four main themes will be investigated: Body, Mind, Relations and Control. The themes will consist of predetermined codes that will enable the analysis to detect specific aspects of CSR in accordance with the theoretical framework. The study will focus on sisal production within Tanzania, where private and governmental actors are currently attempting to increase the production and export of sisal fibres. The main actors within the sisal value chain will be analysed to better understand the effects of the increasing focus on sisal production on the workers and the communities they affect.

Understanding the opportunities of thorough CSR strategies to address social and environmental responsibility will hopefully highlight previously undervalued and overlooked aspects of a corporation’s actual responsibility. In the following text, I will attempt to understand why certain aspects of CSR are not addressed in a corporation's sustainability work and how a different understanding of responsibility exists. The proposed understanding of responsibility is inspired by Martha Nussbaum's capabilities approach, where a corporation's responsibility should enable their workers to reach the necessary criteria for a decent life (Nussbaum, 2011, ch.2).

The outcome of the following research will hopefully highlight less acknowledged dimensions of corporations’ responsibilities and the potential to support the local livelihoods they affect. The investigation will also highlight potential inconsistencies and shortcomings in the available CSR
work, which may prohibit the strategies to provide the change and support they claim to provide. The study will structure its research through two research questions:

- What CSR strategies exist in the sisal industry in Tanzania that promote social sustainability?
- To what extent does CSR in the sisal industry support livelihood potentials?

1.1 Background on the Sisal Industry

Sisal fibres are harvested from the Agave Sisalana plant species, native to Mexico, and first introduced in 1893 to Tanzania (then Tanganyika), which developed the present industry (FAO, 2013). Sisal (or Agave Sisalana) plantations in Tanzania are primarily cultivated with an Agave hybrid to be higher yielding; however more susceptible to plant diseases (M K V Carr, Lockwood and W, 2012). Tanzania’s semi-arid climate and hot regions are favourable to the plant; therefore Tanga, Morogoro and Arusha are some of the main producing regions in the north (Mwimo et al., 2016, p.10). The cash crop peaked in the 1960s with around 240,000 tons sisal fibre, contributing to 35% of the country's export earnings and to over a third of wage employment (Sabea, 2001). However, competition from synthetic fibres (e.g.nylons) initiated a decline for natural fibres in production and market price (Mwimo et al., 2016). According to the Bank of Tanzania, the production in 1999 was down to less than 21,000 tons of sisal (Mwimo et al., 2016). Additionally, the nationalisation of sisal estates has been correlated with the production drop amongst other contingencies (Sabea, 2001). The production of approximately 32,445 tons of sisal in 2022, an increase of 15% from the previous year, placed Tanzania amongst the leading global producers, along with Brazil, Kenya, and Madagascar (WGC, 2023).
The raw material of sisal fibres, from the leaves, can be semi-processed into yarn, cordage or pulp (Figure 1), which later can be manufactured into various products such as carpets, ropes, gunny bags and a variety of paper goods. The cultivation begins once the plant is mature, after a two-year period the leaves can be manually harvested and then proceed to the primary processing stage. The leaves are processed through a decorticator machine to extract the fibres, constituting 2% of the plant; the rest are commonly discarded as waste (FAO, 2013). Afterwards, the fibres are dried in the sun and later brushed and then pressed into bales (Broeren et al., 2017). Farming plantations consist of estate and smallholder production; however, they differ from the primary processing stage onwards due to access to equipment. Large estates possess processing machinery, whilst smallholders engage with traders to send the harvest to central or estate processors. Secondary processing entails spinning the fibre into semi-processed products, which can be manufactured into different commodities, e.g. carpets, gunny bags or construction materials (Broeren et al., 2017). The output is sold domestically, regionally and primarily to international markets, encompassing 80% (FAO, 2013). The top importing countries between February 2022 and February 2023 were China, with a share of 62.5%, followed by Nigeria and Saudi Arabia (WGC, 2023).
The Tanzania Sisal Board (TSB) was established in 1997 by the “Sisal Industry Act No.2 of 1997” to regulate and promote industry development (FAO, 2013). TSB acts as the public sector actor (i.e. governmental institution) for public-private partnerships (PPP) with private sisal enterprises (MAFC, p.30). The significant domestic producers of Sisal in Tanzania consist of three actors: MeTL Group, Katani Limited, and SFI Tanzania. Combined, they produce most of the sisal used for first and second-stage processing, which is usually exported as raw materials or semi-processed goods used in overseas textile industries (Madenge, 2021). SFI Tanzania employs 1200 workers, many of whom are contract workers during harvest and reside at the plantation estates. Moreover, the company mainly produces fibres for export, which is prominent for most producing actors in Tanzania (SFI Tanzania, 2022). According to the Tanzania Sisal Board (TSB), 32,627 tonnes of Sisal fibre were exported in 2022, compared to 1,898 tonnes of semi-processed products (TSB, n.d.). MeTL Group, one of Tanzania's largest conglomerates, contributes to approximately 5% of the country’s GDP. Thus, the company is one of the few large Tanzanian companies in sisal production. Katani Limited worked closely with the Tanzanian authorities and gained access to state-owned estates after privatisation laws changed in the 90's. They did not produce the most sisal out of the three sisal; however, they built Hale's first sisal waste biogas power plant, utilising the waste product from sisal fibre production (Bymolt, 2017).

1.2 Background on CSR

Companies use Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) increasingly as a marketing tool to improve profitability and brand reputation. The European Commission (n.d.) defines CSR as the responsibility of enterprises for their impact on society. The impact includes policies addressing environmental, social, and governance topics to mitigate and prevent any negative impact they may cause, within their entire global supply chain. To what extent a corporation's responsibility should be covered is up for debate and varies from company to company. CSR strategies are often presented in companies' sustainability reports and are a tool to market a company's efforts to benefit the communities they affect (Sanclemente-Téllez, 2017). A mutually beneficial relationship of a CSR strategy has the potential to improve the livelihoods of the communities their businesses are affecting while still being profitable.
CSR strategies are not forced upon corporations and are usually voluntarily established to show consumers their responsibility and sustainability efforts (Pearson, 2007). In the 80s and '90s, consumers' demand for environmental sustainability increased. Voluntary Codes of Conduct (VCCs) were introduced to allay consumers from the issues of inadequate salaries and working conditions, rather than implementing regulations and conditions within the production chain. The pressure from consumers created a business case for corporations, especially in clothing and footwear, where a lack of responsibility negatively affected profitability, and the image of a responsible manufacturer could increase profitability. Levy Strauss, Reebok and Gap, amongst others, introduced VCCs, which usually followed some of the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) labour standards, for example, proscribing child and forced labour in production abroad (Pearson, 2007, p. 732). The VCCs allow corporations to take the amount of responsibility they feel necessary rather than state-led regulation, which results in CSR being subjective to each company. There are guidelines for what CSR should encompass however, these generally follow consumer trends and public interest. Currently, there is a big focus on environmental sustainability, therefore, the business case for CSR would encourage companies to focus their attention and strategies to address the current interests of consumers.

However, the marketing potential of CSR is an increasing factor which can lead to less sustainable CSR strategies, and with the broad aspects of potential policies and initiatives, strategies can address many aspects of social responsibility that can easily be overlooked. Aspects that are not as marketable risk being ignored, which can undermine the strategies' effectiveness. Pearson (2007) used the maquiladoras in Mexico as an example: the company took pride in providing high salaries and employing large numbers of women. Nonetheless, the strategy did not account for the two-hour journey from the city where most of the workforce lived, nor the fact that over 200 females, the majority of employees of the maquiladoras, had disappeared since the mid-90s. The example highlights the risks of CSR strategies being used as marketing rather than a corporation's true intention to take responsibility.
1.3 Research Relevance & Problem

Social sustainability aims to enhance the opportunities for all people and build resilience and peaceful communities while empowering local agencies that are valued and accounted for by their governments (Sivaraman, 2020). In the case of sisal workers, the governing body is the local municipalities, the government and the corporations that employ them. CSR should and can promote social sustainability and holds the potential to enhance rural livelihoods by taking social responsibility. Hence, the concept of social sustainability can be applied to further understand the neglects and opportunities constructed by stakeholders in the sisal value chain through analysing the existing and implemented CSR strategies and sustainability efforts.

Multiple articles and reports mentioned the potential to expand the sisal fibre due to shifting trends away from synthetic fibres to natural fibres and due to the potential utilisation of the sisal waste, which can produce additional commodities such as fertilisers and biogas (Brüntrup et al., 2016; FAO, 2013). The suggested indication for increased investment in the sisal industry adheres to relevance to the analysis of existing research to understand potential risks and benefits for sustainability. Furthermore, sisal is a cash crop grown for market sales without contributing to household consumption, which argues for the relevance of ensuring social sustainability within the value chain (Todaro and Smith, 2012, p.648). Participation in sisal plantations shifts time invested from subsistence farming, common in rural households in developing countries, to sisal cultivation (Todaro and Smith, 2012, p.470). Thus impacting the division of labour and household dynamics. Pearson (2007) identifies the tendency to neglect the increased workload for women, emerging from social responsibility to provide for family needs through subsistence farming in combination with cash crop cultivation. Differences in household needs and conditions, i.e. intersectional traits, require responsiveness for certain compensation to ensure social accountability, which risks being undermined or neglected in the sisal industry.

Currently, there exists a research gap within Tanzania’s sisal industry in regard to social responsibility and sustainability. The literature review presented limited research on the actual effects and accountability of the sisal industry on smallholders' and participants' livelihoods in the crop plantations. Furthermore, country strategies such as SAGCOT (The Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania) promote public-private partnerships alongside other projects and policies that aim to transform the agricultural sector (Bassi, et al., 2018). Thus,
suggesting a risk for commercialising the crop qualities without responsibilities for mutual partnership with all stakeholders. Therefore, corporation processes in the sisal industry affecting smallholders and farmers will be investigated and analysed through relevant theoretical frameworks and concepts. The corporate sustainability process will be compared to similar industries and contexts to find similarities or differences between different CSR strategies. The increased investment in the sisal industry in Tanzania incentivises the relevance to investigate present CSR policies (Brüntrup, et al., 2016). Hence, to ensure that the participants' needs in the industry are met with relevant outcomes that account for the different local realities that foster sustainable development.

1.4 Objective & Research Question

The objective is to understand policies on sustainability in CSR strategies within the sisal industry in Tanzania. The research will analyse CSR strategies within Tanzania to contribute to a further understanding of the impact current actors have on the communities and workers their business affects. Moreover, the objective will be to highlight CSR work through an analysis of the existing policies anchored in an established theoretical framework. The objective will, therefore, also be to provide a further understanding of potential shortcomings and advantages of the current CSR work conducted in the Tanzanian sisal value chain through the lens of one theory of social sustainability.

- What CSR strategies exist in the sisal industry in Tanzania that promote social sustainability?
- To what extent does CSR in the sisal industry support livelihood potentials?

1.5 Disposition

The following study consists of 7 chapters with underheadings, including the introduction. Chapter one will introduce the topic, relevance and research objective as well as provide the structure of the study. The second chapter will introduce relevant literature and previous research in the field of CSR and sisal production in Tanzania, which will provide context and argue for
the research gap the study aims to target. Furthermore, chapter three will introduce the study's theoretical framework, which has been used in the analysis of the gathered material. The study will use the theoretical work of Martha Nussbaum (2011) to get an established framework of the necessities for a good quality of life. Nussbaum's capabilities provide a list of basic requirements every individual should have access to in order to have the ability to pursue “a dignified and minimally flourishing life” (Nussbaum, 2011, p.33). The theoretical framework provided by Nussbaum's theory will serve great use in my analysis of CSR strategies and sustainability work and will provide the codes through which I will apply to the gathered material.

Chapter four introduces the study's methodological framework to enhance its validity, reliability, and transparency. The chapter will outline the chosen method of qualitative thematic analysis; therefore, the gathered material will be investigated to spot codes and themes within them. The method will allow me to categorise parts of the material and look for larger themes within the selected data as a whole, which will become the study’s findings. Furthermore, the chapter will explain how the study’s material was gathered, what data was selected for the analysis, and the study’s limitations, delimitations, and ethical considerations.

The fifth chapter will provide the findings of the conducted research, the gathered material will be investigated, and the identified codes will be presented. The two corporations chosen will be further introduced, as well as a third large actor in the industry and other secondary sources that can provide more context to the study. The chapter will present each company through four subsections, one for each theme of the study.

Chapter six is the analysis of the gathered material, where the theoretical framework will attempt to answer the outlined research questions through the findings and research conducted. The chapter will be outlined through two sections, one for each research question. The first section will summarise the findings through text and a table presenting the identified codes within each primary source. The chapter will go further into the findings to answer the presented research questions. Lastly, chapter seven will conclude the study by providing a short summary and the concluding thoughts of the authors. Chapter seven will also present the research questions and provide an adequate answer through the findings and analysis of the study.
2. Previous Research

2.1 CSR & Sustainability

Michael Hopkins (2016, p.3) discusses the corporate social responsibility (CSR) business model of accountability and the tendency for the conceptualisation of sustainability within CSR. Hence, it means the company's commitment to responsible treatment of all stakeholders and accountability of social responsibilities. Hopkins (2016, ch.2) recognises shortcomings in CSR by linking critiques on sustainability and its mainstreaming as generating inaccuracy, which risks misleading initiatives. Hopkins (2016, pp.31-36) recognises that having sustainability as the core discourse risks misleading corporations with the tendency for the environmental sector to take primacy rather than comprehensive focus on all dimensions and stakeholders, thus minimising social responsiveness. Furthermore, Hopkins (2016, p.35) identifies that companies use terms interchangeably when committed to a sustainability agenda and often use corporate sustainability as the term to describe the company process. Additionally, Pearson (2007) describes CSR as an umbrella concept which manifests an interpretative nature that can serve different purposes.

CSR has been critiqued for overlooking contextual factors and, therefore, has limited accountability toward local realities in terms of livelihoods and environment. Research has investigated the feminisation of shea butter by analysing commercialisation policies and gender initiatives common in corporate strategies. Corporate policies impact the division of labour and need to investigate improved or declined quality of life (Friman, 2022). Scholars have expressed the need to improve the very essence of CSR strategies, pointing out embedded flaws that limit the potential of Corporate Social Responsibility. Instead of employing more women to address equality, a company should provide an environment where women can participate equally in the labour market. Such strategies will ensure safe transportation if the workplace is located far outside the cities, provide options for childcare to enable women to work without relying on relatives of staff, and actively work towards an inclusive environment where women are not only allowed into male-dominated positions but accepted, respected and given opportunities equal to their male counterpart (Pearson 2007).
In addition to insufficient Corporate Social Responsibility, scholars have found that many transnational businesses using CSR are at times also involved in human rights violations (Ntououme, 2023). The contrast of Corporations’ actively building and incorporating social responsibility in their business model while not addressing human rights violations showcases a contradiction. Ntououme (2023) has specifically focused on what the author refers to as “a blind spot in CSR”, where the requirements to uphold and fulfil human rights requirements focus on nation-states as responsible while businesses are not held accountable to the same standard. The research offers valuable insight into the gaps in current expectations placed on transnational businesses, especially in developing countries such as Tanzania.

“CSR-washing” is a term used to describe corporations exaggerating, misleading or, in some cases, lying about their CSR work to attract consumers. The term has been seen increasingly in published works, news articles and journals since the beginning of the 2000s (Pope and Wæraas, 2015). The increased scrutiny from both activist groups and consumers on corporations responsibility work led to many companies being called out for “CSR-Washing”. Since CSR is conducted voluntarily, no regulations are in place to prohibit companies from exaggerating, lying or misleading consumers through their CSR strategies. In the same way greenwashing is used by corporations to increase profitability, CSR-washing is used to mislead consumers by portraying themselves as more ethical and responsible than their competitors (Netto et al., 2020).

The emergence of CSR-washing followed consumer's increasing demand for social sustainability, it is used to attract consumer groups through advertisement and general brand attitudes. As previously mentioned, the demand for increased social and environmental sustainability has increased both the tendencies of CSR-washing and companies filling the market with more sustainable products. Researchers have attempted to measure the level of consumer valuation of social sustainability. Their research also came across contradictory results, such as surveys claiming that consumers value CSR products and companies taking responsibility, while other surveys show that most consumers are not willing to pay premium prices for CSR products (Pope and Wæraas, 2015, p.186).
2.2 The Sisal Value Chain

Bibliographic database searches of academic journals with the topic of sisal have indicated a limited focus on the sisal industry within social science. On the database ScienceDirect, research on sisal is firstly published in journals subject areas of material science (5,275 results), secondly in engineering, and thirdly in agriculture and biological science (ScienceDirect, 2023). Hence, focusing on resources properties, environmental sustainability and future prospects of sisal fibre (Meng, et al., 2023; K. Suraparaju, et al., 2022; T. Latha, 2023, et al., 2023). Results for sisal in the subject area of social science were ranked second to lowest in the number of journal publications (414 results). Much of the research mentions sisal without being the main topic, often as a factor as a contextual factor to other cash crops or similar fibre resources such as bamboo or abaca. The limited published work on sisal within social sciences advocates the relevance of additional research in the sisal literature through a social science approach.

A social science article studied Tanzania's large-scale land acquisitions (LSLAs) to understand livelihood and environmental impacts (Atuoye, et al. 2021). The analysis applied theoretical concepts of political ecology, including different dynamics of inequalities, land-grabbing and power dynamics, to understand land utilisation in Tanzania. A primary impact of LSLAs was increased food insecurity, partly due to unpredictable weather variabilities. The findings suggested the need for prioritising policies for smallholder farmers to increase their resilience to climate change vulnerabilities (Atuoye et al. 2021). Furthermore, it points towards policy as the potential to support social responsibilities to increase livelihood resilience and potential. Therefore, understanding what the existing CSR addresses and not addressing from the perspective of people's needs is important to support livelihood sustainability.

Sustainable practices, cultivation and collaboration throughout the sisal value chain present an opportunity for Tanzania, corporations, smallholders, farmers and plantation workers to meet the growing export demands while uplifting rural livelihoods. However, reports identify shortcomings within the value chain, and the reality of the impacts on rural livelihoods and smallholders is not necessarily coherent with the claims. Tanzania currently produces 40,000 tons of sisal annually, and the industry consists of 100,000 individuals employed. There is currently an effort by the Tanzanian Sisal Board (TSB) to promote smallholder participation in
the industry through projects such as the Agricultural Sector Development Programme Phase Two (ASDP II) (Brüntrup et al., 2016). Commercialisation efforts, such as the ASDP II, had limited effectiveness in increasing small-scale farming productivity but remain a priority (Beleko and Urassa, 2018, pp. 114). Research on socioeconomic factors and their effects on smallholders' productivity and profitability in the sisal industry remains limited. However, case studies in districts of Tanzania have researched how factors such as the gender of the head of households, the area of available land and years of experience in the sisal industry affect the productivity and profitability of smallholders (Beleko and Urassa, 2018, pp. 117-118). The trends recognised by the study suggest that literacy, gender, area of available land for cultivation and economic status of the smallholders are all linked with the productivity and profitability of the smallholders.

3. Theoretical Framework

Amartya Sen’s (1988, ch.1) capability approach analyses subjective well-being and assesses the quality of life through the core concepts of Capabilities and Functionings. Capabilities are connected to the concept of freedoms as a variable to measure the agency to access opportunities to achieve subjectively valued functionings. Additionally, Sen’s concept of conversion factors, or various conditions, identifies resources or means that serve capabilities to be achieved and realised (Sen, 1988, ch.1). The capability approach recognises and conceptualises social sustainability through people’s perspectives on barriers and opportunities for well-being. Promoting capabilities goes beyond providing resources; the theoretical perspective includes latent or less visible aspects of life to measure real values of livelihoods by recognising the preferences and priorities for certain capabilities.

Functionings refers to a person’s ability to do (i.e. execute) or achieve a state of being. Sen relates the state of ‘beings’ with examples of being well-nourished, being sheltered or being educated, whilst ‘doings’ could be riding a bike (Sen, 1988). The functionings of ‘doings’ and ‘beings’ are subjectively valued and, therefore, of different importance, thus exist without a universal metric index or indicators. Sen continues by recognising the relation between functionings and material possessions as means to achieve desirable achievements, such as being sheltered. The possibility of utilising a commodity varies between people due to different
capabilities. Furthermore, owning resources does not ensure the ability for conversion of the resources for improved well-being. Such physical or material factors are termed Conversion factors and also include public goods or provisions. Moreover, functioning is the subjective desired achievement to improve the personal quality of life and is realised through individual capabilities.

Capabilities represent the opportunities or freedoms for individuals to achieve valued functions in different aspects of life (Sen, 1988, pp.16-17). Sen’s divides the concept of freedom into negative and positive freedoms. Negative freedom focuses on the absence of constraints, whilst Positive freedom refers to the ability to choose and is also described as a separate functioning. Hence, subjective enjoyment can differentiate between two individuals with the same achieved functioning if one had no option but to choose the functioning whilst the other chose the functioning despite other options. Hence, the former had less agency or freedom of choice. Sen describes the dimension of freedom through the functioning of fasting; for religious reasoning, the (positive freedom of) choice entails a certain degree of being hungry. However, a person in poverty will also be in a state of fasting, however, due to the negative freedom or without the capacity to choose a state of not being hungry (Sen, 1988, p.18). Moreover, capabilities include the concept of freedom and the opportunity to choose the desired functionings to improve aspects of life to enhance well-being. Thus, capabilities are the core dimension for analysing the quality of life.

Martha Nussbaum is one scholar who has developed the capability approach to include formalised aspects of capabilities a person should attain as the minimum requirements for social justice (Nussbaum, 2011, p.18). The notion of social justice emphasises factors for equality and equity, such as fair opportunities, privileges and access to resources. In the research, the theory developed by Nussbaum will examine determinants or themes within corporate sustainability policies’ and actions' ability to be socially sustainable in relation to the adequacy of CSR to address the local context and social justice.

According to Martha Nussbaum, the Capability Approach can be applied to assess the quality of life and social justice (Nussbaum, 2011, ch.2). Firstly, Nussbaum identifies the approach to
respect the power of self-determination and, therefore encompassing pluralist values. Meaning the capability achievements must be understood from the narrative of the person since central life aspects are different in quality and quantity depending on the person. Secondly, social injustice and inequality are the result of capability failures due to discrimination and marginalisation, which identifies the government and public policies as primary culprits (Nussbaum, 2011, ch.2).

Nussbaum developed Sen’s Capability approach to incorporate basic social justice into her “capability-based theory of justice” (Nussbaum, 2011, p.19). The version includes ten central indicators in the concept of Capabilities, to uphold a minimum threshold level. The Central Capabilities are formulated in relation to what a decent political order should conform to enable people's ability to pursue “a dignified and minimally flourishing life” (Nussbaum, 2011, p.33). Nussbaum (2011) acknowledges the list as a proposal rather than a fixed reality to allow potential contestation to remove or add a central aspect (p.36). The minimal threshold requirements for human dignity or social justice are defined in the ten Central Capabilities:

1. **Life** - without premature death, living the full and normal length of a human life.
2. **Bodily Health** - for a good life, include aspects of shelter, nourishment and reproductive health.
3. **Bodily Integrity** - as the ability of choice in reproduction or movement and safety from violence.
4. **Sense, Imagination, & Thought** - as means to be fostered and cultivated by education or other institutions. Imagination with thought as means towards innovation and work, such as (however not limited to) areas of music, literacy, religion. The freedom of the mind to express and partake in opinions and experiences.
5. **Emotions** - for things and people, without fear or concerns.
6. **Practical Reason** - likewise critical reasonings to conceive opportunities of liberties, needs protection of consciousness and religious choice.
7. **Affiliation** - (A) towards others, respecting individuals and social interactions. (B) towards one-self, realising self-worth and treated with dignity. All without discrimination of “race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion, national origin” (Nussbaum, 2011, p.34).
8. *Other Species* - of animals, plants and all environments, are cared for and living in balance with people.


10. *Control over one’s nature* - (A) Political participation, the right to influence choices affecting one’s life, though freedom of speech and association. (B) Material rights and freedom, to property, employment, and to enter relationships with mutual recognition in work.

The central capabilities are the *Threshold of Capabilities*; the list adheres to individuals with a minimum standard of necessary capabilities for a life with social justice and human dignity. The abstract list is suggested to be specified within constitutional laws, with potential for elaboration. Nussbaum asserts recognition of the list as a social minimum with necessary conditions for social justice, however, not as the solution to all distribution issues. Hence, an approach for assessing institutions and policies through the lived experiences. Promoting capabilities goes beyond providing resources; the theoretical perspective includes latent or less visible aspects of life to measure real values of livelihoods by recognising the preferences and priorities for certain capabilities.

According to Sen, the aim of the Capability approach is to evaluate the achievements of capabilities through the value they hold in relation to subjective well-being and quality of life (Sen, 1988, ch.1). Sen argues that the decision of capabilities requires a democratic decision in society not to restrict the social choice over valued capabilities. Nussbaum’s institutionalisation of the central capabilities is debated to reduce the adequacy of representation. The principle, according to both Sen and Nussbaum, perceives people with different potentials due to different social and political identities and have the possibility to be realised or impeded through factors and dynamics in the surroundings (Nussbaum, 2011, ch.2). From the theoretical understanding, aspiring toward social sustainability should incorporate principles that serve peoples’ capabilities in a constitutional framework and policies (Sanz Ponce, *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, the core capabilities by Nussbaum operationalise a relationship between social justice and corporate policies to evaluate the accountability toward social realities to be supported within an industry to understand the scope of social sustainability.
4. Methodological Framework

4.1 Qualitative Desk Study
The research will be conducted through a qualitative desk study with an abductive approach. The desk study method analyses existing data from official statistics and previous research, i.e. secondary data, to contribute a further understanding through the intended research objective (Bryman, 2021, ch.14). Desk study analysis has a priority to analyse and interpret data, rather than produce new data. The secondary analysis supports this research focus to investigate existing corporates’ responsibilities towards social sustainability, hence requiring an analysis of the data through a theoretical framework to contribute to a further understanding.

4.1.1 Ontology
Ontological Standpoint of this research adopts constructionism inquiry since the ontology acknowledges that social structures produce objectives and realities in the form of biases, stereotypes and meanings that must be considered in the data collection and analysis (Bryman, 2016, pp. 29-30). Thus supporting the analysis to understand social structures enforced and/or produced by CSR. The ontological standpoint is presented to enhance the transparency of the study and allow the reader to understand the potential biases of the authors. The study has implemented methodological guidelines and analytical structures to minimise the interference of personal biases to the study’s result and reasoning, which will be introduced later in the chapter.

4.1.2 Epistemology
The epistemological standpoint of interpretivism focuses on attempting to understand the case context through the local context. The epistemology will support an understanding of the everyday impacts of corporations' effects on local livelihoods and smallholders in the sisal value chain. Additionally, interpretivism will assist in putting policies, corporate strategies and theoretical concepts against each other to attempt to understand the interconnections and broader context of the case (Bryman, 2016, pp. 26). Similar to the presented ontological standpoint, the study’s epistemological standpoint is presented to increase its transparency.
4.1.3 Logic of Inquiry

Abductive reasoning favours the thinking of theory and data simultaneously, thus not constricting a fixed process between the theory and research but rather allowing a dynamic logic of inquiry without distinct stages (Bryman, 2021, p.22-3). Abduction aims to understand rather than explain the relationship between theory and data. Thus, generates reasoning which originates with observations to be tested through a theory, moreover to develop an understanding by moving between the literature and observations (Bryman, 2021, p.22-3). The intention to understand the extent and existence of sustainability through the reality of sisal labourers is beneficial through the logic of interpreting the data by applying the capability approach to contextualise the relationship. Moreover, the abductive approach acknowledges the dynamics of capabilities and functionings by Sen (1988), which supports a contextual analysis of social sustainability. Furthermore, the reasoning will assist the research objective to investigate various perspectives in order to understand the context dynamics, allowing the recognition of different realities of cases through the theoretical lens (Bryman, 2021, ch.16). In accordance, Denmark (et al., 2002) identifies the usability of abductive reasoning when the research objective seeks to understand, rather than explain. Hence, providing a deeper understanding of CSR relationships with sustainability to identify relevance and insight of interactions and practices associated with the sisal value chain.

4.2 Thematic Analysis

The method of qualitative thematic analysis is applied to identify and establish themes or patterns relevant to this thesis research objective within the collected secondary data (Bryman, 2016, p.584). The research method allows the development of an understanding of similarities, patterns and categories that create or reinforce social structure in the sisal industry. A thematic analysis will analyse available reports, articles and official documents. The research design will inquire into subjects and topics through different stakeholders’ reports and academic research to develop an understanding of the existing social responsibilities in Tanzania. Additionally, to further understand corporate responsibilities towards meeting local needs, the analysis investigates the underlying intention of projects and associated substantial effects and outcomes. The thematic analysis will assist in describing the material by identifying different research
aspects. Hence, data coding will outline emerging patterns or themes to develop a narrative from the codes that analyse the research objectives (Bryman, 2021, pp. 537-541).

Figure 2: Overview of Themes

The research followed Braun and Carke’s (2006) six steps to structure the research and analysis process. In accordance with Clarke and Braun, the gathered material has been divided into four main themes consisting of multiple codes organised by Nussbaum's ten central capabilities. The following codes and themes are presented in Figure 2. The four themes portray the main patterns of the theory to analyse broad aspects of Nussbaum's central capabilities within CSR to understand social sustainability.

Nussbaum's ten capabilities target different aspects of freedom; I argue that the different aspects can be grouped based on their characteristics. The first three capabilities target the physical and bodily aspects of freedom. An individual's right to life, bodily integrity and health, therefore the first three capabilities will outline Theme 1: Body. Theme 2: Mind covers capabilities 4-6: Sense, emotions and practical reason due to the psychological and internal welfare of subjective freedoms. The third theme, Relations, encompasses capabilities 7-9: Affiliation, Other Species and Play, representing the individual choice and interactions of one's surroundings. The final theme is Control, which consists of one capability: Control over one's nature (10). I argue that the tenth capability is not a good fit in the previous themes and is too important to leave out of the analysis; therefore, I chose to create a fourth and final theme. The codes will be used to
identify the relevant characteristics of the primary and supporting material, while the themes will allow the analysis to target four essential considerations for CSR and highlight hidden aspects of social structures that support or hinder social sustainability.

4.3 Data Selection

The data consists of a sample of available and relevant articles, policy documents, sustainability reports, and project reports. The secondary analysis allows priority for investigating the data and findings to contribute with additional interpretations (Bryman, 2021, ch.14). Hence, applying this research narrative with the theoretical framework through existing research data to build on existing knowledge to increase a contextual understanding. By combining case studies with corporate policies and documents, the research can investigate the themes which construct and distribute responsibilities within the industry. The research approach will investigate the written language that influences and generates social structures and hierarchies. Thus, text analysis becomes relevant to contribute research from data collection to account for subjective and multiple experiences.

The data collection was conducted by locating the main actors within the sisal value chain in Tanzania. The five main actors were coherent within multiple sources. After locating the relevant actors for the primary data, I searched the actor's own websites and did general searches of their company names. The research discovered that the sisal value chain consists of many smaller actors, such as contract farmers and smaller cooperatives. However, due to the small share of sisal's annual production and export in Tanzania, I decided to focus on the larger actors. 5 large actors were continuously mentioned from multiple sources regarding Tanzanian sisal production: Amboni Plantations Limited, LM Investments Limited, MeTL Group, Katani Limited, and SFI Tanzania. Therefore, I selected to focus on the 5 actors that were mentioned as the largest producers from multiple sources. After deciding on the number of actors to focus on for the analysis, I started to investigate each actor deeper to gather material and increase the understanding of them as actors and their role in the Tanzanian sisal value chain.
Two of the five actors had readily accessible websites showcasing their sustainability and social responsibility work in different forms. The three remaining actors, Amboni Plantations Limited, Katani Limited and LM Investments Limited, lacked websites and/or material regarding their companies' sisal production. The lack of CSR strategy can be further discussed in the analysis. Therefore, the primary material will focus on two of the five originally large actors: MeTL Group and SFI Tanzania. Two of the five relevant actors had websites with sufficient material for the size of the analysis; some websites contained CSR strategies and annual monitoring reports where one of the companies allocated their social responsibility to a company foundation. The difference in the corporation's approach to sustainability will give nuances to the analysis where I can identify similarities and differences between the two unique approaches.

The strategies and foundation will be used as the primary material to analyse the policies and responsibilities each corporation upholds. To enhance the primary material for the analysis, supporting material will be complemented to strengthen, oppose or broaden the context of the sisal value chain and the corporation's social responsibility. The supporting material was partly found and saved during the research on the topic, and additional material from the companies' websites provided more insight into their day-to-day operations as well as established literature. Supporting material consists of actors invested in the value chain and relevant to the topic, such as reports from Oxfam (2013) and the German Development Institute (2016) and additional sources providing the necessary context for the analysis. The primary data was selected due to the limited material available of relevant actors working on social sustainability and CSR, which caused some actors not to be included in the material. A saturation of material has been met, and sufficient material has been collected for the analysis to be completed.

4.4 Limitations & Delimitations

The research gap arises from limited published research on corporate social responsibility within the sisal industry in Tanzania. Moreover, limited research investigates the effects of corporate operations and sustainability agenda on communities or small-scale farmers in the sisal industry. The research gap requires me to look at similar cases to utilise the available data in accordance with this research objective to investigate the sisal value chain.
The thesis will rely on the primary data and supporting material to understand the environment and context of smallholders within the sisal industry. Published data produced by companies and the government do not ensure a critical standpoint, which must be considered and applied when coded and analysed to account for potential latent contexts.

The focus on Tanzania becomes a delimitation in the representation of countries and cases within the sisal industry. However, the case sample will contribute to a further understanding of the influence of corporate dynamics on local contexts. The research will take primacy in analysing social and environmental dynamics and less within aspects of economics as it falls beyond my academic field.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

The desk study encompasses reduced ethical risks since the research methodology sources from existing data; therefore ethical consideration becomes less relevant for consideration.

5. Research Findings

The Body was one of the primary aspects targeted in the gathered material. The subchapter will present the findings of Codes 1-3 (figure 2), where physical health and safety were the common targets for companies to ensure their employees. It was not surprising to me that Theme 1 was recurring in CSR strategies since it is a very important aspect of responsibility while also being one of the more “marketable” aspects to address as a company.

Mind will highlight the emotional and psychological rights and less noticeable aspects of CSR. The rights to freedom of expression, education, and given opportunities for liberties. The theme will focus on Codes 4-6: Sense, Imagination and Thought, Emotions, and Practical Reason. The material does not address Theme 2 to the same capacity as Theme 1. This was expected due to the less noticeable impact of CSR policies addressing Codes 4-6. Theme 1 provides the
opportunity for concrete policies directly impacting the workforce while being more marketable than those addressing Theme 2.

From Nussbaum's ten central capabilities, a macro-dimension for social justice was the theme of relations. The theme represents the requirements for affiliations, other species and play (presented in Figure 2) as indicators of social sustainability in corporate policies. Accountability of affiliations would address potential discriminatory structures of workers' intersectionalities, such as race, ethnicity or sexual orientation, to facilitate protective and supportive conditions for social interactions. The relationship towards other species of the environment indicates the conditions to utilise natural resources without degradation. Play embodies the freedom to engage with others or oneself in activities supporting creativity and new relationships.

The theme of control intends the provision of freedoms within an individual's environment over material and political participation and influence. The capabilities are necessary to provide a threshold level of social justice in people's lives to realise their full potential. Control in the political sector includes rights for participation in political choices affecting one’s livelihood and the freedom of speech and associations. Material control provides rights for property and employment, hence the conditions to work under fair labour conditions and freedom for practical reasons over various choices.

5.1 SFI Tanzania Ltd

*SFI Tanzania Ltd* (SFI) is a relatively new company that was established in 2013. SFI is an agroforestry company focusing on afforestation and sisal plantations. The company is a subsidiary of Sustainable Forestry Investments B.V. in the Netherlands. SFI provides annual monitoring reports and a regularly updated CSR Policy document on their website. The Policy document will be complemented by the monitoring reports to add additional context to the CSR work of SFI Tanzania Ltd.
5.1.1 Theme 1: Body

The first identified codes for Theme 1 are under the “Safety at work” section. Codes 1: Life, and 2: Bodily Health, are more directly addressed than Code 3: Bodily Integrity. The codes can be found in SFI’s discussion of “…within reasonable bounds, all employees will be provided a safe working environment…” (SFI Tanzania Ltd, 2016, p. 2). Basic safety, complemented with points of safety training and equipment provided by SFI, outlines their approach to a sustainable and safe work environment, following the workplace risk analysis and Occupational Health and Safety Act (2003). The section also mentions the aim to provide employees with water from safe sources when possible; the policy does not state why it is an aim and not guaranteed.

The same section of the policy document establishes that there is a clinic on the estates with a trained nurse where employees are provided free medical care. It also states that a selection of employees are trained in first aid. Here, Code 2: Bodily Health is addressed and can be identified. Furthermore, agreements with nearby hospitals have been made to ensure injured employees receive immediate treatment, “arranging administration after treatment”. Permanent staff, however, are provided national health insurance. The difference or number of permanent staff compared to employees is not specified on their website, but it would be valuable information since there seems to be a difference in their policy document. I have reached out to SFI Tanzania Ltd for clarification. The website claims the company to have 1200 employees, and the company have been asked if 1200 are considered permanent staff or casual employees to understand to what extent the policies stretch (SFI Tanzania Ltd, 2016, p.2).

SFI mentions under the section “Environmental sustainability” (p.3) that the use of chemicals will be limited. Although it might be targeted at the environment, the limited use of chemicals can be connected to Code 1. Long-term exposure to certain chemicals used in agroforestry, such as insecticides, fungicides and herbicides used in similar settings, can be a serious health risk (Azembouh, Nyong and Bernard, 2021). Therefore, limiting the use (to what extent is not mentioned) can benefit the long-term well-being of the employees working in the plantations.
5.1.2 Theme 2: Mind

SFI Tanzania CSR policies containing Codes 4-6 were as previously mentioned not as thorough as other themes. However, policies such as prohibiting any form of discrimination, direct or indirect or any other form of harassment. The policy does not explain how the policy is enforced in day-to-day work or how the company works to provide an environment that is unhampered by discrimination. The policy contains all three codes to varying degrees due to the broad description of the policy. Other policies continue with SFI’s protection against discrimination and establish that: “The recruitment, selection and appointment process is clear and transparent, unhampered by any form of discrimination.” (SFI Tanzania Ltd, 2016, p.2).

Other policies within the theme, Mind, ensure that no forced or child labour is allowed, which in itself might not directly link to Code 4: Sense, Imagination and Thought; however, with the information provided by SFI themselves, I know that most of the 1200 employees are housed on the estates. Because most of the employees live on the estates, their families and children are most likely to also live on housing available on the estates. SFI mentions that schools and other “amenities” are provided to the people housed on the estates. Therefore, by firmly prohibiting any form of child or forced labour despite children being available on the estates and providing them with education, an environment that is cultivated by education and Code 4 can be found in the policy (SFI Tanzania Ltd, 2016).

5.1.3 Theme 3: Relations

SFI Tanzania Ltd’s company values link to various codes within the theme of Relations. The section on the integrity of stakeholders and employees addresses rules of compliance and expectations towards the company, additionally offering non-specified equal opportunities (SFI Tanzania Ltd, 2016). Furthermore, SFI’s policy promises the absence of harassment and discrimination, which addresses the dimension of affiliation to meet the needs for respect and dignity. Code 7: Affiliation can be identified through the company and the local communities that are incorporated through various principles. SFI ensures prioritising local employment and respecting local customs, simultaneously prohibiting cattle grazing, hunting within estates, and limiting wood logging (SFI Tanzania Ltd, 2016, p.3; SFI Tanzania Ltd, 2023, p.8). The SFI
Tanzania Ltd Public Monitoring Report 2022 reported 111 stakeholder meetings as a means to uphold good relations with authorities, local communities, suppliers and other stakeholders (SFI, Tanzania Ltd 2023).

SFI’s accountability toward the central capabilities of other species is addressed in the environmental section, with an effort toward reducing waste and responsible cultivation of the existing ecosystem. Projects have included forest nurseries with different seedlings of indigenous tree seeds and, recently, fruit seedlings (SFI Tanzania Ltd, 2023). The seedlings are an effort to re-establish the natural ecosystem lost from overgrazing and are planted in expanding protecting areas of the estates. Additional care for the estate's surroundings is incorporated in fire prevention efforts to balance the lack of fire-fighting equipment through cooperation with formal fire training and fire-and-rescue service. The Kwamdulu estate reduced fire incidence from 24 to 12 between 2021 and 2022 (SFI Tanzania Ltd, 2023, p.6). The Monitoring Report of 2022 indicates various care and responsibility toward ecological sustainability under various sub-sections. Biodiversity studies to protect flora and fauna, water conservation protected within buffer zones and soil erosion prevention through field observations. Environmental sustainability is extensively covered in SFI’s Monitoring Report and therefore contains Code 8: Other Species.

5.1.4 Theme 4: Control

The CSR policy of SFI contains low emphasis in regard to opportunities to influence company operations within community areas. The ability to influence politics is not directly addressed; however contains restrictions over the freedom to control or engage in daily chores such as wood collecting and cattle grazing. The regulations are coupled with opportunities for intercropping due to dependence on subsistence farming. Intercropping allows cultivation between the sisal crops to utilise the land. However, the dry climate has resulted in low participation, with 15 farmers signing during 2022 compared to 144 the previous year (SFI, 2023). The project presents an opportunity for cooperation with the local community on the estates. SFI’s policy and activities suggest opportunities for influence. However, it is unclear as to the extent the local communities' voices have on decision-making. Therefore, Code 10: Control can be identified.
5.2 MeTL

Mohammed Enterprises Tanzania Limited (MeTL) is one of the largest trading conglomerates in Tanzania, producing and selling agricultural, industrial and consumer goods across Eastern and South Africa. MeTL contributes roughly 5% of Tanzania's GDP and employs 38,000. MeTL’s approach to CSR differs from that of other companies. The current president and founder's son, Mohammed Dewji, started the “Mo Dewji Foundation.” the foundation, as it will be referred to from now on, is financed by Deji himself and the MeTL group. The Foundation is where all the trials of CSR work lead to. MeTL's quarterly review of their CSR work and impact on Linkedin shows projects by the foundation, and on MeTL’s website, the “Giving back” section and CSR showcase the foundation. Therefore, the foundation's projects, vision and goals will be used for the analysis and findings with supporting material that will be introduced when used.

5.2.1 Theme 1: Body

One section of the Mo Dewji Foundation projects is designated “Health”. The section describes the foundation's efforts to identify and support high-impact healthcare projects to strengthen the quality and reach. The overarching focus of the health projects by the foundation centres around the cancer treatment of children. The foundation provides free chemotherapy drugs to children receiving treatment and a nutrition program for children in treatment. The program also provides income-generating training for the parents of the children and a networking program with the goal of any child in Tanzania being within a four-hour journey to a treatment centre. The projects mainly contain Code 2; they do not target Code 3, and its goal is to support life without premature death, so Code 1 is targeted but cannot be assured, unfortunately (Mo Dewji Foundation, n.d.). The CSR work of MeTL is very specific, and since the responsibility work is structured through a foundation rather than a policy document for the company and a complementary foundation, many aspects of CSR are lost in MeTL’s strategy. However, MeTL was awarded “the best employer” award for 2023 by the Tanzania Union of Industrial and Commercial Workers (TUICO) in the Ilala region. Two other companies within the MeTL Group were also awarded the same award in other regions, but the motivation for the award was not presented (MeTL Group, 2023). The award itself is not a certification for good CSR but should be noted when assessing MeTL's responsibility.
5.2.2 Theme 2: Mind

MeTL places a lot of importance on community impact and education in their CSR work with recent projects such as “School visit” where the factories opened up for interested students. The project would contain Code 4 and does not provide much more detail due to it being the most recent project enacted. Similar projects are regularly done by the foundation with different demographics ranging from high school to university students. A third project addressing Code 4 is the yearly Graduate Development Project. The project allows recently graduated local youths to take part in a structured yearlong internship program in their chosen field under professional mentorship (MeTL Group, 2023). The foundation has provided scholarships for higher education to over 150 individuals during its course. The foundation does not provide further information on overarching projects containing any thematic codes for Theme 2 in the section “Education.” However, in the Section on “Health”, which was described in Theme 1, the project “School & Play” provides “professionally tailored educational and play therapy support programs to children undergoing cancer treatment at Muhimbili National Hospital.” (Mo Dewji Foundation, n.d.) The project also addresses Code 4. Codes five and six could not be identified in the projects portrayed on the website (Mo Dewji Foundation, n.d.).

5.2.3 Theme 3: Relations

The play therapy project that was previously mentioned and contained Code 4: Sense, Imagination and Thought. The same project assisting children undergoing treatment addresses Code 9: Play since it provides the children with educational and therapeutic opportunities and creates an environment where they can enjoy a break from their treatments and unfortunate situations. MeTL does not address the last code of Theme 3, Code 7: Affiliation. MeTL’s (2023) Company Profile section on “Our Commitments” acknowledges corporate responsibility for social development under initiatives by the Mo Dewji Foundation (p.36). Clean water programmes are efforts to increase access to safe drinking water by building wells in rural areas. Additionally, MeTL has established recycling plants and offers free collection and transportation to recycling companies with plans to further investments in recycling machinery. The profile
promotes different commitments to care for the environment, such as beach clean-ups and plastic collection. The clean water programmes and recycling initiatives contain Code 8: Other Species; however, they lack reports of accomplished projects from the goals and objectives.

5.2.4 Theme 4: Control
CSR policies by MeTL are rather unclear with regard to democratic membership influence and control in decision-making. The company do project an interest in sustainable development and does mention community concerns; however remains weak on actual rights and areas for participation. MeTL does not address aspects of central capabilities for Theme 4: Control, although it could be considered within activities such as beach clean-ups, as it engages local participation.

5.3 Katani Ltd
Katani Ltd. has been one of the leading actors since the Tanzanian government's privatisation of some sisal estates in 1998. Katani Ltd owned both estates, worked on projects with the UN and Oxfam, and established the first biogas powerplant fueled by Sisal waste. I initially found multiple reports mentioning Katani in the sisal industry but struggled to find many recent articles and websites regarding their involvement in Tanzania. Katani Ltd chairmen and board members were prosecuted for economic sabotage, money laundering and conspiracy to commit a crime. Katani Ltd acquired loans from the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) to boost production. The loans amount to over $16 million, and s.h. 1.6 billion was spread out through different loans, while it was only reported that $1.4 million was repaid. Katani was also accused of selling government properties and stakes in estates owned by the Tanzanian authorities (The Citizen, 2020). The material that will be analysed will consist of Katani Ltd's international CSR policies. In the analysis, the accusations and implications will be further discussed while focusing on the responsibility Katani claims and aims to take.
5.4 TSB

All previously analysed actors act in accordance with Tanzanian law and the laws and regulations established by the Tanzania Sisal Board (TSB). When the board was formed from “The Sisal Industry Act 1996”, replacing the act of 1973 and becoming the first regulations that are currently affecting the sisal industry were introduced. The mentioned act and the “Sisal Industry Regulations” (2011) will be used to provide context to the baseline of responsibility the corporations are expected to provide.

5.4.1 Theme 1: Body / Theme 2: Mind

Theme 1: Body is not a prevalent topic in the 1996 act. This is not surprising to me since the structure of the board and its functions are the primary focus of the document. It is stated that employees of the board are entitled to “a superannuation fund and a medical benefits fund the officers and employees of the Board:” (TSB, 1997, p. 5). This does not, however, target smallholders or industry workers. No codes were identified except for the medical benefits fund (Code 1), which only affects a limited number of people within the sisal industry. The Regulations Act of 2011 does not address Theme 1, and the focus is the procedure of sisal cultivation, contract farming, etc. The document provides no real guarantees to employees within the sisal value chain regarding Theme 1. Theme 2 is addressed in neither document which was to be expected.

5.4.2 Theme 3: Relations / Theme 4: Control

The third theme, starting with Code 7, i.e. affiliation, is touched upon in the Sisal Industry Act of 1996, as the subsections on the function of the board are stated to act without prejudice (TSB, 1997, p.3). Moreover, prescribing a code of conduct without discrimination. Additionally, the same subsection declares TSB with responsibility to control pests and diseases. Hence, addresses a certain degree of the central capability of caring for other species, which is Code 8. Moreover, the third theme is, to a certain degree, included in The Sisal Industry Act of 1996. However, any dimension of Code 9: the freedom for enjoyment, remains absent. As mentioned, various
subsections address the political order and responsibilities within TSB and the agenda-setting role of the stakeholders in the industry.

6. Analysis

After a review of the available documents and strategies of Corporate Social Responsibility in the Sisal value chain, the lack of available CSR or sustainability documents was not expected due to the size of the companies. Out of the five major sisal corporations, only one had an actual policy document; another one’s approach to CSR was through a foundation, and three corporations lacked a published CSR strategy. A summary of each corporation's strategies will be presented to provide a more structured overview to answer research question one: What CSR strategies exist in the sisal industry in Tanzania that promote social sustainability? By understanding the actuality of CSR work through research question one, the analysis can move forward in an attempt to answer research question two: To what extent does CSR in the sisal industry support livelihood potentials?

6.1 What CSR strategies exist in the sisal industry in Tanzania that promote social sustainability?

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<tr>
<th>The mes:</th>
<th>Codes:</th>
<th>SFI Tanzania Ltd</th>
<th>McTL Group Ltd</th>
<th>Katani Ltd</th>
<th>TSB</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Code 1: Life</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Code 2: Bodily Health</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Code 3: Bodily Integrity</td>
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<td>Code 4: Sense,</td>
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Table 1 presents the identified codes for each investigated company.

6.1.1 SFI Tanzania Ltd

Theme 1 was a big focus of SFI Tanzania's policy document; the direct and indirect safety of its employees had multiple policies, and all three codes were able to be identified. Code 3 (figure 2) was the least mentioned. Parts of it were identified in the anti-harassment policy, which the researcher considers to be a form of violence, with no mention of reproduction rights or other forms of violence. The employees are, of course, protected from physical violence in accordance with national law. Code 2 (figure 2) was the most commonly identified in Theme 1. Shelter is provided to employees at the estates; however, employees are encouraged to live outside of the estates. Reproductive health was not mentioned in the strategy. The strategy also refers to the risk analysis of the workplace and the Occupational Health and Safety Act (2003), which sets some of the guidelines for safety and resulted in SFI gaining its OSHA certification.
The identified codes of Theme 2 in SFI’s CSR strategy mainly revolve around anti-discriminatory rules and ensuring a work environment unhampered from violence; however, how this is enforced and ensured in reality and everyday work is not mentioned. Another way SFI’s strategy addresses Theme 2 is through the provided housing and amenities that come with the estates' housing. Schools and “other amenities” are provided to the families and workers of the estates according to their company profile. It should be mentioned that the strategy states that workers are encouraged to live outside of the estates, which leaves room for an explanation that SFI has yet to provide. Together, the strategy touches all three codes to varying degrees; I would, however, argue that neither of the codes is addressed thoroughly.

Theme 3, relations, covers both SFI’s relations to the local community around them and the environment they operate within. The theme, therefore, covered social and ecological aspects of their relations to their surroundings. Code 7: Affiliation was identified through the anti-discriminatory and harassment policies and regularly scheduled stakeholder meetings to ensure good relations are kept with local authorities and communities, as well as annual monitoring reports. Their ecological relations are met through Code 8: Other species, where SFI conduct biodiversity studies of the native flora and fauna, and reestablishes native ecosystems lost from overgrazing and cultivation of existing ecosystems through various projects. Increased fire prevention through formal training and projects to balance the lack of fire-fighting equipment available. Code 8 is the most thoroughly addressed code that I encountered and a substantial part of SFI’s CSR strategy.

Control, or Theme 4, was the least prevalent theme in SFI’s strategy. There are projects incorporating local communities to engage and influence parts of SFI's operations. Such as communities being allowed to intercrop between the rows of sisal and therefore, provide land that can be used to enhance the everyday lives of local communities affected by the corporation. The effectiveness of said project can be questioned, though, only 15 farmers participated in the intercropping initiative in 2022. The strategy also imposes restrictions on local communities, such as monitored firewood collection and a restriction on cattle grazing on the land owned by SFI.
The overall CSR strategy SFI Tanzania provides covers most codes; some codes, such as Code 8 are addressed thoroughly, while others, such as Code 3 are barely addressed. Codes such as Code 10 control were expected not to be addressed to the same extent as others since it is not a priority to most companies or employees. A surprise of mine was the unclear distinctions as to whom the policy would affect, which will be analysed further, as well as contradictions between SFI’s stance and the many employees housed in the estates. The strategy can be linked to parts of Nussbaum's theoretical reasoning and the selected codes; however, simply identifying links to the theory does not necessarily address the capability adequately.

6.1.2 MeTL Group
For a company of MeTL's size and outspoken goal of changing lives and creating self-sufficient and prosperous communities, their available information regarding their projects and responsibility work does not hold up to standard. When visiting their website, there is a “CSR” tab where they have written shortly about their goals with CSR through the Mo Dewji Foundation. After investigating the foundation's own website, there seems to be a lack of CSR and projects targeting the actual employees or immediate communities MeTL affects. The project reflects a charity organisation and targets vulnerable individuals throughout Tanzania, there are great initiatives, such as providing free chemotherapy drugs to children. The initiatives are objectively good and help hundreds of children. However, the projects the foundation creates are not accompanied by any available CSR policies or projects directly helping their own workers.

The projects on the foundation's website do, however, contain Codes 1 & 2, “Health” being one of the three focuses on their website and after investigating the largest focus of the foundation, it was not surprising that Theme 1: Body would be prevalent in their projects. The codes were identified in projects providing free nutritious meals to children battling cancer, increasing the availability of treatment facilities throughout Tanzania. The foundation’s projects only contain one code for Theme 2: Code 4: Sense, Imagination and Thought. The code is identified from play therapy and similar projects alleviating stress and helping the same children undergoing cancer treatment. The last codes identified were Codes 8: Other Species and 9: Play, both
addressing Theme 3: Relations. Theme 3 was addressed through projects such as beach clean-ups, recycling initiatives (Code 8) and the play therapy project mentioned in Theme 2 which also targets Code 9: Play. Lastly, Theme 4: Control was not identified in MeTL’s work. There were projects engaging local communities; however, political participation, the right to influence, and material rights were addressed explicitly enough to warrant Code 10: Control to be identified.

The MeTL group's CSR strategy is done through a charity foundation funded by the company. The initiatives and projects are not bad projects for a charity organisation or foundation, but claiming the projects as their CSR strategy and work leaves much to desire. It is not the intention to call MeTL irresponsible or conduct claims of CSR-washing, however, the lack of available policies or documents for a company of their size is questionable. SFI is comparably a much smaller actor in Tanzania, and although they are of similar size within the sisal industry, there is a big gap in their take on CSR. There is also a discrepancy to the extent the two companies approach their responsibility work through Nussbaum's (2011) theory. Simply by looking at Table 1, it is clear that SFI covers the central capabilities, while MeTL focuses on very specific projects and aspects of the capabilities.

6.1.3 Katani Ltd

Katani was mentioned in the findings since it was multiple times mentioned as one of the largest actors in the industry, they worked on projects with Oxfam and the Tanzanian government, such as the “Lead Firm Model”. In reality, though, Katani Ltd stole money from the government and Agricultural Marketing Cooperative Societies (AMCOS), which was a big part of their projects to encourage and support smallholder farmers in the industry. Katani’s scandal provides hesitation to the genuineness and execution of claims of responsibility. Their corruption and crimes should not affect the analysis or genuinely of the other companies looked into, however, I would argue that it is important to recognise that a company in the industry that was considered a big part in the development of the sisal industry and smallholders participation in the market. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind when assessing CSR strategies and policies that cannot be confirmed and do not provide any substantial evidence of responsibility. Monitoring reports are good; however, they are conducted by the same organisation, and objective assessment and
scrutiny of Corporations claiming to take on responsibility is necessary to ensure CSR-washing is actively combated.

6.1.4 TSB

“The Sisal Industry Act 1996”, created during the formation of the Tanzanian Sisal Board, sets the foundation of each sisal company’s basic rules and regulations. The document does not focus on CSR and therefore, many codes were unidentified. However, the TSB has the impact and power to push regulations and requirements onto corporations operating within the industry. Codes 1, 8, and 10 were identified in the document. Code 8: Other Species were the main code identified due to regulations regarding pests, the environment and plant diseases. Neither codes were thoroughly addressed, which was expected; Code 1: Life only provides benefits to employees of the TSB and Code 10: Control targets stakeholders in the industry.

6.2 To what extent does CSR in the sisal industry support livelihood potentials?

The first research question presented was: “What CSR strategies exist in the sisal industry in Tanzania that promote social sustainability?” Although Table 1 presents four actors, two of which address many of Nussbaum's (2011) ten central capabilities, there is currently only one established CSR strategy: SFI Tanzania. The other company, MeTL, showcases how easy it is for corporations to claim to take responsibility while disregarding major aspects of it. MeTL has a section on their website titled “CSR” where they introduce their foundation as shown in the findings. However, when investigating the projects from the standpoint of CSR rather than a charitable foundation, not much is actually done to promote opportunities or take responsibility. There are no policies to increase the conditions of its employees or take responsibility for the large amounts of communities and environments they affect and are dependent on. MeTL contributes roughly 4% of the Tanzanian GDP and claims to uplift Tanzanians; however, there is much room for improvement in their CSR work (MeTL, 2023). No other companies investigated presented any forms of CSR, and the regulatory body of the TSB does not seem to impose much regulation regarding social or environmental responsibility.
The second research question: “To what extent does CSR in the sisal industry support livelihood potentials?” can only be partially answered from the material available and research possible through a desk study. The optimal route to answer the question to its fullest extent would require multiple interviews where workers and smallholders cannot only voice their opinion of how the policies and rights ensured e.g. SFI’s CSR strategy is upheld. It would also need to establish what they would consider an optimal CSR strategy, which would most likely differ from Nussbaum’s (2011) ten central capabilities and, therefore, my codes and themes. Therefore, the question will be answered through the means available to me and through an established, broad theory of necessary components to enjoy social sustainability and justice. In this section of the analysis, I will bring up inconsistencies in the findings and material from the companies investigated for a deeper analysis of the actual policies, rather than the frequency they were encountered in the material.

One inconsistency I quickly discovered was the contradictory attitude towards the estate housing provided to workers and their families. In their company profile, easily accessible to any visitor of their website, they seem to promote the amenities the estate housing provides many of the workers. However, in their policy document, they clearly state that they do not prefer to house residents on the estates (SFI, 2016, p.2). The combination is not necessarily alarming, and without conducting further research through interviews or observations, an explanation is yet to be provided. In general, estates and plantations are in rural parts of Tanzania, and commute to and from work could, therefore be a driver to the decision to live on the estates. The cost of living could be another factor; short quotes from employees are presented on the website, where some employees are thankful for the reliable housing, water and electricity. A fairly simple yet impactful implementation that SFI could provide, which would also promote their employees living outside the estates, is shuttle services for employees living in nearby towns and villages. The shuttle transport would be extra costs for the company, but would significantly improve the freedom of the workers that can either not afford a car or the transport costs to get to and from work. The initiative could link to Code 4 since it enables the worker and their family to have the freedom to reside in a community where not only education is available but also other forms of creativity, institutions and other opportunities. It would link to code 10 due to the increased
independence and freedom to influence the worker and his family's life by not being dependent on the worker's job for housing, education and community.

A potential risk with employees living on the estates is an increased dependency towards their employers. While it is good that good housing (the estate housing is not shown on the website) and education is available for children at the estate, communities families become a part of all are dependent on the worker of the estate to remain at the job. The power dynamic, therefore is more asymmetrical compared to an estate worker living outside the estate with external communal and institutional ties. Said worker can switch jobs, quit or simply not fear his employer to the same extent as the worker whose family’s housing, education and community depend on his employment.

During the CSR policy document, SFI’s policies mention the terms permanent staff, full-time employees, casual staff, and part-time employees. It does not state the difference between permanent staff and casual staff, and nowhere is it stated how many of the 1200 employees are considered permanent staff. The difference in wording might seem unnecessary, but the major benefits within the policies are always targeted to “permanent staff” or “full-time”, while when describing the company and the impact it produces, the term employees are used. While hiring seasonal staff within the agricultural sector is nothing new or surprising, it is hard not to initially believe that all the 1200 employees proudly presented in some parts can participate in the great policies for “permanent staff”. There is a combination of SFI proudly presenting a policy while subtly changing the phrasing of whom the policy concerns, while the overarching document and “impact” seem to take responsibility for their “employees”. As was mentioned in the findings, SFI was contacted to clarify: They did not respond. I will not argue for a particular implication of their subtle changes of wording in some policies but believe it to be important for the reader to understand.

Section 4.3 reveals that two out of the five largest corporations had a form of CSR policy. The fact that a new industry such as the sisal industry in Tanzania, which has gained investments and attention from global actors and private corporations in a growing market for sustainable fibre and goods, lacked a general consideration for a well-established framework of CSR was not
expected. In the literature review, the hope for a win-win situation and opportunity of economic growth while benefiting smallholders and production workers was presented and can be found in the CSR strategies of SFI and MeTL. However, very little importance seems to be placed on the latter part of the said win-win situation. Without state regulation and by using voluntary initiatives such as projects through foundations or a CSR strategy, the demand for thorough responsibility seems to be satisfied. There is a dichotomy of wanting to highlight the good initiatives some companies within the value chain are contributing in relation to the non-existing responsibility work presented by the majority of the major actors. However, it is also clear that the provided CSR policies and initiatives are far from the potential that lies within CSR.

The second research question I sought to answer was: To what extent does CSR in the sisal industry support livelihood potentials? I want to clarify that CSR strategies and responsibility work by corporations need to be contextualised in their approaches. Even within the sisal value chain of Tanzania, different regions, estates and communities would require varying approaches. Understanding the circumstances, environment and people the strategy should target is vital in producing a better CSR strategy. Therefore, suggestions, criticism and opinions of the presented CSR work are through the lens of Nussbaum's capabilities approach and general critique/guidelines for more inclusive, successful and responsible approaches to CSR. The extent to which the presented CSR work uplifts rural livelihoods is hard to answer; it is dependent on some forms of subjectivity, which is why it will be linked to the theoretical framework. Therefore, the result will hopefully highlight some of the good policies and initiatives while highlighting pitfalls and flaws that can be addressed to improve the current responsibility work in the industry.

In the Tanzanian sisal industry, there is currently one established CSR strategy. One other company talks about their CSR and showcases how easy it is for corporations to claim to take responsibility while disregarding major aspects of it. MeTL has a section on its website titled “CSR” where it introduces its foundation; as shown in the findings, not much is actually done to promote opportunities, increase the conditions of its employees or take responsibility for the large amounts of communities and environments they affect and are dependent on. MeTL contributes roughly 4% of the Tanzanian GDP and claims to uplift Tanzanians; however, there is
much left to desire in their actual policies and responsibilities (MeTL, 2023). Funding a foundation that helps children with cancer is hard to criticise, and the projects themselves provide good outcomes, but does MeTL’s “CSR” work actually help uplift the livelihoods of their own employees and communities? According to their own information regarding their CSR, it is hard to imagine. I am not trying to accuse any company of CSR washing, yet a company’s responsibility work does not have to be considered CSR washing to be considered underdeveloped and shallow.

The actual CSR strategy existing from SFI Tanzania is also hard to examine without further information and research. There were tendencies in the available information that may point to some of their most impactful policies being unavailable for the people needing them the most. Their strategy does, however, cover much more than their competitors; the policies are not groundbreaking, and to what extent they uplift rural livelihoods is hard to measure. There is also a risk of dependency for the workers, so even if their housing programs and estate communities provide an opportunity for better housing conditions, it is entirely dependent on employment. Their intercropping projects seem really great, unfortunately, it is not being used to a large extent by nearby communities. I am uncertain as to why it is not used as much; however, if communities are close enough to where the distance to the areas selected for intercropping is reasonable, the project would provide a great opportunity to nearby communities.

7. Conclusion

In the concluding parts of the presented research paper, the authors will summarise the contents, provide additional thoughts and findings not relevant enough to be presented in the paper and attempt to answer the research question of the study:

- What CSR strategies exist in the sisal industry in Tanzania that promote social sustainability?
- To what extent does CSR in the sisal industry support livelihood potentials?

Sisal used to be a predominant export good of Tanzania before the emergence of synthetic fibres. However, the demand for natural fibres is on the rise again, providing an opportunity for the
country, companies and smallholders within Tanzania. CSR is an increasingly important aspect of a company’s image and has provided profitable returns by appealing to consumers. The sisal value chain provides an interesting case where many newly established companies have the ability to incorporate CSR in their everyday work and create an environment where responsibility to those the industry affects is undertaken. The current responsibility work conducted is not well researched despite many of the projects introduced involving smallholders and sustainability as central aspects. Therefore, I believe there is relevance to investigating the responsibility work conducted to highlight potential pitfalls or advantages within the current strategies. Previous research primarily targets the environmental aspects of sisal and its benefits for Tanzania, with social sustainability as a factor mentioned in some of the research. Other scholars have analysed CSR in general in Tanzania. The material was analysed through Martha Nussabbaum's capabilities theory (2011), which provides ten central capabilities required for each individual to have the ability to pursue “a dignified and minimally flourishing life” (Nussbaum, 2011, p.33). The theory will be used to anchor the analysis to a developed theory to provide quality of life; it will target an existing research gap in a relatively new and unexplored aspect of the emerging sisal industry in Tanzania.

The chosen method for the research is a thematic analysis, and four themes were established: Body, mind, relations, and control. Each theme consists of assigned codes, which consist of each one of the ten capabilities. The four themes highlight four aspects of Nussbaums ten capabilities and will be applied to the gathered material. The material analysed in the research is primarily CSR strategies or sustainability reports of the main actors in the selected industry. The five main corporations were initially chosen and narrowed down to two companies: MeTL and SFI Tanzania, as the other three corporations lack any form of available CSR policies. The main limitation of the research is the limited previous research available; therefore the material consists mainly of primary material from the corporations, reports or previous research that could have been beneficial to get another perspective on the execution and implementation of the policies. The absence of responsibility work in most of the actors investigated provides a vague but important finding for the first research question: What CSR strategies exist in the sisal industry in Tanzania that promote social sustainability? There currently exists one actual policy
document and one foundation conducting “CSR”. The foundation does not provide any clear guidelines, and the projects do not provide the actual employees any guarantees of benefits.

After analysing the available material and investigating the content, the second research question can be addressed: To what extent does CSR in the sisal industry support livelihood potentials?

In the Tanzanian sisal value chain, there is currently one established CSR strategy, which is an unexpected result in itself, and the lack of interest in CSR is concerning. One other company talks about their CSR and showcases how easy it is for corporations to claim to take responsibility while disregarding major aspects of it. MeTL has a section on its website titled “CSR” where it introduces its foundation; as shown in the findings, not much is actually done to promote opportunities, increase the conditions of its employees or take responsibility for the large amounts of communities and environments they affect and are dependent on. MeTL contributes roughly 4% of the Tanzanian GDP and claims to uplift Tanzanians; however, there is much left to desire in their actual policies and responsibilities (MeTL, 2023). Funding a foundation that helps children with cancer is hard to criticise, and the projects themselves provide good outcomes, but does MeTL’s “CSR” work actually help uplift the livelihoods of their own employees and communities? According to their own information regarding their CSR, it is hard to imagine. I am not trying to accuse any company of CSR washing, yet a company’s responsibility work does not have to be CSR washing to be considered underdeveloped and shallow.

SFI Tanzania Ltd has the only CSR strategy in the industry, and the strategy provides good additions to the Tanzanian laws such as excluding child labour, which set an age limit of 14. It provides anti-discriminatory and harassment laws and ensures a (to the fullest extent) safe work environment where employees are protected from physical and psychological violence. There are also initiatives that allow for controlled firewood collection and opportunities for local communities to use the land for intercropping. SFI provides many of its employees with the option of housing with schools and ‘other amenities’ to the families living on the estates. The policy document is a step forward compared to MeTL’s and provides policies helping the workers, their families as well as the local communities and environment. There are, however,
concerns regarding some of their policies. There is different language used depending on the policies, in their policy document, there seems to be a difference between permanent staff and employees. The fact that many employees' families live on the estates is also something SFI does not prefer according to their CSR strategy; however many employees do, and I can only speculate as to why that is. Therefore, the provided responsibility work is far from what it has the potential to be.

While researching the subject and attempting to understand the actors and industry, I constantly found dead ends, websites and articles sometimes linked to websites that could not be accessed. I found this strange; it could be explained by unfinished websites and company logistics since the industry is fairly new. However, many of the companies have been involved for at least three years, which should be sufficient time to create a website where the functions are accessible to the visitors, otherwise, the function or link should simply be removed. The fear I had was that some parts of the websites, policies and information from the companies were at best (and expected) exaggerated, and in the worst case, such as Katani, lies.

Voluntary codes of conduct, CSR strategies, and similar concepts that corporations use to take responsibility for a safer, healthier, and more orderly way of doing business have the potential to change livelihoods and provide opportunities to people and communities. The potential, however, depends on the knowledge and ambition to create a contextualised strategy that does not simply ease consumer concerns or as a tool for marketing. The purpose of the responsibility work should be to give back to the communities, workers and environment that allows for the corporations to function, and by executing and providing genuine responsibility, many of the goals that CSR have been used to achieve before would be possible.

After conducting this research, it became clear how easy it was to give an impression of responsibility at first glance. When initially gathering material and deciding the corporations for investigation, it seemed to be three companies that worked with CSR through projects and policies. In reality, that number quickly dropped to one company. MeTL is the primary example of realisation since they clearly state CSR on their webpage. It is not until one looks into their projects and foundations that it shows how little is done for the tens of thousands of employees
and workers. MeTL is a large enough corporation to create a CSR strategy and policy document. They are very aware of the existence of CSR, and therefore, it is disappointing to realise the extent of their CSR work. Therefore, further scrutiny of existing CSR work and continued consumer pressure for responsibility by corporations is deemed necessary due to the lack of international regulation.

In order to properly grasp the extent to which the investigated corporations address CSR and how an optimal CSR strategy would be within the Tanzanian sisal value chain, future field research through both observation studies and interviews would be required.
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