

Master's Thesis International Business

Scaling for systemic change: a case study of how Tony's Choclonely leverages practices, resources, and strategies in its sustainable sourcing initiative

Radboud University



Name: Vera Ruiter

Student number: 1058429

Email: vera.ruiter@ru.nl

Supervisor: Dr. Priscilla Álamos-Concha

Second examiner: Dr. Julia Bartosch

Date: 16-06-2025

Wordcount: 13619

Abstract

This thesis explores how Tony's Choclonely scales its "Fight for Slave-Free Chocolate" initiative to achieve systemic change within the cocoa industry. Through a qualitative case study approach, it analyses the company's practices, resource allocation, and strategies, drawing from document analysis to understand its multifaceted approach. The findings reveal that Tony's Choclonely effectively scales its initiative by prioritising strategic partnerships across the supply chain, fostering direct relationships with cocoa farmers and collaborating with like-minded organisations. A commitment to transparency and long-term relationships builds trust and enables sustainable livelihoods for cocoa-growing communities. Relational, human, technological, and financial resources are utilised to drive innovation and expand impact. By creating awareness, leading by example, and inspiring others, Tony's Choclonely actively promotes systemic change, challenging exploitative systems and advocating for a fairer cocoa industry. This thesis provides theoretical implications for understanding Corporate Social Innovation (CSI) and scaling sustainable sourcing initiatives, highlighting a mutually beneficial relationship between social impact and economic viability. Valuable guidance for businesses seeking to create positive social impact while remaining profitable is offered, contributing to a more sustainable and ethical cocoa sector.

Table of Contents

1 Introduction	4
1.1 Practical relevance	4
1.2 Theoretical relevance	5
1.3 Objective, research questions and sub questions	6
1.4 Contribution	7
1.5 Outline of the thesis	7
2 Literature review and theoretical framework	8
2.1 Literature review	8
2.2 Theoretical framework	16
3 Methodology	17
3.1 Research strategy	17
3.2 Data sources	18
3.3 Methods of data collection	19
3.4 Data analysis and sensitising concepts	19
3.5 Quality criteria	21
3.6 Research ethics and integrity	21
4 Analysis	22
4.1 What practices is Tony's Chocolonely employing to effectively scale their "Fight for Slave-Free Chocolate" initiative?	22
4.2 What resources is Tony's Chocolonely employing to effectively scale their "Fight for Slave-Free Chocolate" initiative?	28
4.3 What strategies is Tony's Chocolonely carrying out to promote systemic change?	31
5 Conclusion and discussion	34
5.1 Conclusion	34
5.2 Theoretical implications	34
5.3 Practical and managerial implications	36
5.4 Research limitations and suggestions for further research	36
References	38
Appendix	43
Selection criteria table	43
Tools used for improvement	45

1 Introduction

1.1 Practical relevance

The food industry and its supply chains have substantial environmental and social impacts (Adams et al., 2022). Due to this impact, the industry experiences increasing pressure from consumers, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), governments and other stakeholders to enhance sustainability practices throughout their operations and supply chains (Adams et al., 2022). Corporate transparency regarding sustainability is increasingly demanded as leading companies are responsible for supply chain issues regardless of where the fault lies (Parmigiani et al., 2011; Saeed & Kersten, 2019). However, proactively implementing social and environmental sustainability can help build a positive reputation (Wolf, 2014). In addition to building a good reputation, drivers of sustainability are ethical motivations and management directives (Adams et al., 2022). Beyond the pursuit of external drivers, a core driver in the implementation of sustainability practices is the intrinsic desire to make positive environmental and social impact (Adams et al., 2022).

A case that illustrates that intrinsic motivation can trigger sustainability practices is Tony's Chocolonely's (TC) mission to fight for slave free chocolate (Tony's Chocolonely Netherlands, n.d.). They have built their business model around this mission to create social change with their sourcing practices, supply chain transparency, and pricing strategies (Tony's Chocolonely Netherlands, n.d.). In addition, their mission goes beyond their own operations as they actively advocate for industry-wide change, pushing for greater transparency and ethical sourcing in the chocolate industry (Tony's Chocolonely Netherlands, n.d.).

TC is using a proactive, strategic approach to address social and environmental challenges through developing and implementing innovative solutions to create both social and economic value. This is so-called Corporate Social Innovation (CSI) (Dionisio & de Vargas, 2020). CSI consists of a process of six different stages where the actors need to define a social problem, generate ideas, test ideas and engage with stakeholders, frame and showcase for legitimacy, scale to increase initiative's reach, and achieve systemic change (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a). This illustrates that CSI is not a singular event but an ongoing process that develops over time (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a). TC's CSI initiative 'sustainable sourcing' is now growing and scaling its impact to achieve systemic change. Moving into this last phase is crucial as it aims to address the root causes of the social

problem of modern slavery and create long-lasting transformative impact (Murray et al., 2010).

Thus, the food industry's significant environmental and social impact necessitates proactive and transparent sustainability initiatives (Murray et al., 2020; Adams 2022). The case of TC directly addresses a significant social problem and illustrates how transparent and proactive sustainability initiatives can confront environmental and social impacts within the food industry.

1.2 Theoretical relevance

Social innovations are new ideas, products, services, and models that adhere to social needs and generate new social relationships or collaborations, explicitly for the public and social good, addressing needs often neglected by markets or states (Murray et al., 2010). It is a complex process that changes basic routines, authority and resource flows, and social system beliefs, with the aim of making change at a systemic level (Westley & McConnell, 2010). Thus, social innovation is focused on both social and economic goals, where the value created is for the society as a whole rather than individuals. Considering the business context, Dionisio and de Vargas (2020) describe it as measurable and replicable initiatives that use a new concept or application of an existing concept to create both social and economic value. Adopting social innovations at the corporate level is called CSI (Dionisio & de Vargas, 2020).

In the food sector, which faces specific challenges in the context of sustainability and social responsibility (Hartmann, 2011), CSI is particularly significant. The food sector's impact is extensive because it depends on natural, human, and physical resources (Hartmann, 2011). In addition, as a basic human need, food production is subject of strong consumer views and a complex set of requirements regarding the production of raw materials, environmental impact, and social conditions (Hartmann, 2011). Last, the complex and hierarchical structure of food sector supply chains increases the likelihood of conflict (Hartmann, 2011). These characteristics highlight the need for innovative approaches that address both production efficiency and ethical considerations (Hartmann, 2011; Adams et al., 2022). Therefore, applying the principles of CSI is fundamental in transforming how food enterprises operate.

CSI can be seen as a transformative tool for Multinational Enterprises (MNEs), enabling them to identify business opportunities and co-create market-based solutions as an

integral part of their business strategy (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024b). Whereas co-creation emphasises the collaborative process and shared ownership of the outcome of CSI, Bitencourt et al., (2024) emphasise the enterprises' role in creating both social and economic outcomes. However, both views present CSI as an integral part of the enterprises' core activities. As mentioned above, six stages of the CSI process can be identified to reach optimal CSI impact, indicating that integrating CSI into core activities is a long-term process that develops over time (Murray et al., 2010; Herrera; 2015; Dionisio & de Vargas, 2020; Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a).

Although CSI has potential to address great challenges and create impact through systemic change, transforming a promising initiative into widespread impact remains an obstacle (Woltering et al., 2019). This transformation depends on effectively scaling social innovations. However, established approaches to scaling are proven insufficient due to their failure to adequately address the components that influence real-world implementation (Woltering et al., 2019). Thus, a gap in the literature remains regarding actionable insights into optimal combination of practices and resources in scaling efforts to reach systemic change (Rodríguez et al., 2020).

In addition, current research on sustainability in the food sector is discussed within the framework of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). However, limited attention has been paid to CSI in combination with the specific challenges of the food sector. Addressing this gap in the literature is essential as CSI moves beyond CSR (Bitencourt et al., 2024). Within the CSR framework, the concept of sustainability is mostly philanthropic, whereas CSI focuses on strategically integrating social and business goals (Bitencourt et al., 2024). This is also apparent in research by Dionisio and de Vargas (2020) who state that CSI is an advanced and comprehensive approach for companies to address social problems while achieving economic success. In conclusion, a gap in the literature remains regarding both CSI within the food sector and actionable insights on resources and practices for scaling efforts.

1.3 Objective, research questions and sub questions

This research aims to assess the effectiveness of sustainable sourcing practices and the resources that contribute to systemic change in the food industry, with a focus on TC's initiative, "Fight for Slave Free Chocolate". As a leading company in sustainable sourcing, specifically analysing its processes will uncover valuable practices and resources for promoting ethical sourcing and fighting slavery in supply chains.

This research aims to provide TC with an in-depth review of the strategies used to scale their sustainable sourcing initiative for systemic change. In addition, it will offer actionable insights for other organisations seeking similar impact and guide them in developing and implementing their own sustainable sourcing initiative to promote systemic change

The primary research question guiding this study is: “How is Tony’s Chocolonely scaling their sustainable sourcing initiative “Fight for Slave-Free Chocolate” for systemic change?” This question is addressed through exploring these sub questions:

1. What practices is Tony’s Chocolonely employing to effectively scale their “Fight for Slave-Free Chocolate” initiative?
2. What resources is Tony’s Chocolonely employing to effectively scale their “Fight for Slave-Free Chocolate” initiative?
3. What strategies is Tony’s Chocolonely carrying out to promote systemic change?

1.4 Contribution

This research offers both theoretical and practical contributions to the understanding of CSI and scaling sustainable sourcing for systemic change. The practical contribution of this thesis will be identifying specific practices and resources employed by TC to scale their initiative and promote ethical supply chain management. It will provide actionable insights and a practical guide for other companies in the food industry.

This research will contribute to the theoretical literature on sustainable sourcing, scaling, and systemic change by analysing mechanisms through which TC influences industry practices related to ethical sourcing. By providing empirical data on TC’s scaling efforts and their process into systemic change, theories on sustainable sourcing can be expanded. In addition, the gained insights could lead to the development of novel theoretical frameworks that explore relationships between scaling practices, resources, and strategies and their outcomes in terms of ethical sourcing and systemic change in the food industry.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

This thesis will further incorporate a literature review to identify, evaluate, and synthesise the existing body of literature. It will identify gaps in the literature for further investigation and demonstrate key theories, arguments, and debates. This will be followed by a theoretical framework that matches the research problem, driving how the research is carried out. After,

a methodology section where methodological choices are explained to enable others to understand and potentially replicate the study. It will link the research questions to the data collection and analysis. Then, the analysis will interpret the collected data to formulate answers to the research questions and achieve the research objectives. Last, the conclusion and discussion section will systematically bring together the different components of this research, answering the research question and placing it into a broader perspective.

2 Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1 Literature review

2.1.1 Corporate Social Innovation

Corporate Social Innovation (CSI) was first established by Kanter (1999), who proposes that strategic partnerships between the social sector and private enterprises will create sustainable and profitable changes for both parties, based on the idea that utilising resources to address societal issues enhances organisational growth. Mirvis et al. (2016) support this view by stressing the need for co-creation to provide sustainable solutions to social problems, which can lead to a competitive advantage. Thus, achieving both social and economic goals requires collaboration, however, internal efficiency is an equally important factor (Canestrino et al., 2015). Discovering new products and services that satisfy consumer needs while addressing broader societal goals requires internal processes as knowledge management and innovation management (Canestrino et al., 2015). The necessity of identifying drivers, obstacles, and enablers to foster the generation and implementation of ideas is crucial in CSI, emphasising the structural aspects and institutionalisation of CSI (Herrera, 2015). Here, CSI is defined as a measurable and replicable initiative that either introduces a new concept or applies an existing concept in a novel way to create shareholder and social value. While key factors and challenges of CSI are highlighted, practical steps or strategies are missing in the early phases of CSI research.

Embedding social innovation within companies can be done through implementing different stages of social innovation (Murray et al., 2010; Herrera, 2015; Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a). CSI is a dynamic process and can be seen as a sequence of activities and decisions (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a). To specifically examine this process within MNEs, Saka-Helmhout et al. (2024a) present the stages: defining a social challenge, idea generation,

piloting and multistakeholder engagement, framing and showcasing for legitimacy, creating shared value in the delivery of CSI output, and CSI impact. This framework provides an in-depth analysis, focusing on multistakeholder engagement, legitimacy building, and creating shared value.

2.1.2 Scaling Corporate Social Innovation

Scaling definition

Scaling is a crucial process for translating the initial success of innovation into a greater impact (Murray et al., 2010; Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a). While often understood as growth and expansion of an initiative, organisation, or its impact (Murray et al., 2010), effective scaling, is more nuanced. The objective is to generate a significant and lasting social impact (Westley et al., 2014). In CSI, scaling involves expanding the reach of a sustainable initiative beyond its original scope to affect more people across a large geographic area, surpassing local limitations and creating extensive positive change (Westley et al., 2014).

Scaling can be divided into five phases, identifying a need, planning the initiative, implementing a change, learning from the experience, and adapting the process (Rodríguez et al., 2020). During identification, the scalable unit is defined and assessed for its suitability for greater use (Rodríguez et al., 2020). MNEs will assess the viability and replicability of a business model, evaluating whether the model is ready to be utilised (Tippmann., 2023). In the planning phase, the feasibility and evidence to replicate the practice should be analysed to create a vision and plan for the scaling effort (Rodríguez et al., 2020). MNEs can focus on business model design that facilitates simultaneous replication (Tippmann et al., 2023). This is followed by implementation, which includes mobilising resources, engaging stakeholders, and building capacity through training (Rodríguez et al., 2020). In international scaling, managing speed and scope of scaling across borders and potentially using different entry modes is part of implementation (Tippmann et al., 2023). In the fourth scaling phase, progresses are monitored, outcomes are evaluated, and lessons learned are captured (Rodríguez et al., 2020). Sourcing, integration, and recombination of local and global knowledge is highlighted for learning in MNEs (Tippmann et al., 2023). The last phase is concerned with recognising that scaling requires flexibility and adjustment as it can be an unpredictable and complex process (Rodríguez et al., 2020). For MNEs, the adapting phase involves learning how to scale rapidly without compromising organisational processes (Tippmann et al., 2023). Thus, a general process of scaling has been established, however, it

should be considered that scaling practices vary depending on organisational goals (Tippmann et al., 2023).

Types of scaling

Scholars have identified different types of scaling. Murray et al. (2010) distinguish between market economy scaling, which prioritises maximizing profits, and social economy scaling, which emphasises impact over profits. However, achieving impact at scale requires a more complex approach than maximising reach or expanding an organisation (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a). Scaling requires significant internal transformation and innovation as the organisation develops new resources, processes, and structures to support persistent rapid growth (Tippmann et al., 2023). To achieve greater impact, MNEs should navigate stakeholder demands, strategically align CSI initiatives with core business objectives, and build robust institutional mechanisms for knowledge transfer and implementation (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a). According to Saka-Helmhout et al. (2024a), scaling can be divided into three types, scaling-out, scaling-up, and scaling-deep. Scaling-out refers to increasing the reach of the CSI initiative through geographic expansion and replication (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a). Moore et al. (2015) stress this by focusing on the quantity of beneficiaries reached, impacting greater numbers. The focus of scaling-up lies in achieving systemic change by influencing institutional structures through transformation in laws, policies, and regulations for long-term change (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a). Scaling-deep refers to creating an essential shift in societal norms and beliefs where sustainable practices, encouraged by the sustainability initiative, become fully integrated into societal culture, values, and expectation (Tabares, 2020; Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a). This goes beyond compliance with new regulations, it requires social acceptance and institutionalisation (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a). It is evident that, scaling-out primarily focuses on increasing the scope of a social initiative, whereas scaling-up and scaling-deep focus on achieving lasting impact by transforming systems and culture.

While these three scaling types focus on external reach and societal impact, Rodríguez et al. (2020) offer a complementary perspective that emphasises the importance of internal inclusivity in effective scaling efforts. This framework identifies four directions of scaling, scaling-up, scaling-down, scaling-in, and scaling-out. Scaling-up and scaling-out, also explained by Saka-Helmhout et al. (2024a), refer to creating systemic change by influencing broader social structures, and focus on geographic expansion (Rodríguez et al.,

2020). In addition, scaling-in refers to building the internal capacity of the organisation to deliver a sustainable initiative effectively, emphasising the importance of internal organisational changes for successful scaling (Rodríguez et al., 2020). Last, scaling-down focuses on the allocation of resources to support the implementation of a sustainable initiative which is crucial for ensuring that the benefits reach minoritised groups (Rodríguez et al., 2020). Whereas the three types of scaling proposed by Saka-Helmhout et al. (2024a) focus on firm-level factors that contribute to successful CSI scaling, Rodríguez et al. (2020), take a systemic perspective and emphasise the importance of inclusivity and contextual factors in designing effective scaling strategies.

Factors influencing the scaling process

Building upon the existing literature, Van Lunenburg (2024) further examines the role of initiator characteristics in influencing the scaling process. First, the scaling process is divided into two key components, mobilising stakeholders and maintaining effectiveness (Van Lunenburg, 2024). High entrepreneurial skills and a central position of the initiator are beneficial for mobilisation of stakeholders and retaining effectiveness, however, entrepreneurial skills are found to be more strongly associated with these components (Van Lunenburg, 2024). Thus, combining the abovementioned theories on scaling CSI, it can be found that the success of the scaling process depends on a combination of factors, entrepreneurial activity, internal firm-level factors, and the ability to adapt to external contextual influences.

Existing literature acknowledges the need for internal transformation, practical strategies, and effective resource allocation when scaling innovation. However, it lacks actionable guidance on managing this complex process, including optimal resource and practice allocation. This indicates that further research is needed to address these gaps and contribute to the understanding of CSI in both theory and practice.

2.1.3 Multinational Enterprises efforts for scaling

Scaling Motives

Organisational scaling includes the process of rapid, persistent growth that continues over time, rather than being temporary; and process growth outcome, how processes within an organisation evolve and improve to manage increasing size and complexity (Belitski et al., 2023). These key aspects of scaling require continuous knowledge acquisition and learning

on building a viable and scalable business model that is embraced throughout the organisation (Belitski et al., 2023). In this, Belitski et al., (2023) have indicated three perspectives on why MNEs incorporate scaling, the firm-centric approach, the combined internal and external aspects of the firms, and the location-centric approach. The firm-centric approach suggests that the primary motivators are internal to the company and directly tied to its own performance and competitive position. Companies pursue scaling for economies of scale, market dominance, replication of the business model, and geographic expansion (Reuber et al., 2021). The combined internal and external aspects of the firm approach posits that scaling is not solely about exploiting a company's existing knowledge and resources or about solely reacting to external knowledge of other organisations (Mihailova, 2023). Instead, scaling is most effectively driven by actively managing knowledge inside and outside the firm with the goal of increasing growth and speed of growth (Mihailova, 2023). Whereas the firm-centric and the combined internal and external approach suggest that scaling is implemented for direct economic motives, the location-centric approach is concerned with potential social benefits of scaling that can arise in the locations where the MNEs operate. It suggests that MNEs scale for knowledge spillovers both within organisation and to other firms to create opportunities for organisational learning and knowledge creation (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2011). While internal firm-centric factors are crucial for the ability of scaling, external knowledge spillovers from MNEs in a region significantly impact the speed, and persistence of growth (Belitski et al., 2023).

This aligns with the dual motive perspective where MNEs are driven by social impact and economic profitability or sustainability (Tippmann et al., 2023). Scaling to grow social impact and confront great challenges prioritises organisational viability over financial viability (Tippmann et al., 2023). In addition, moral motives for engaging in social initiatives are the ethical duty to give back to society; and strategic motives are driven by self-interests to maximise shareholder outcomes (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a). Scaling for economic value creation through strategies as economies of scale, enhancing legitimacy, and building a competitive advantage prioritises financial viability (Belitski et al., 2023). These strategies are driven by strategic motives as self-interest and a desire to maximise shareholder interests (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a).

The strategic motives that MNEs have for scaling their operations can then be divided into two categories, instrumental motives and institutional motives (Brønn & Vidaver-Cohen, 2009). Instrumental motives, grounded in self-interest, focus on achieving tangible benefits as cost reduction, market dominance, and enhanced efficiency (Brønn & Vidaver-Cohen, 2009).

In contrast, institutional motives emphasise the legitimacy, seeking to meet stakeholder expectations, enhance corporate reputation, and align with prevailing societal norms (Brønn & Vidaver-Cohen, 2009). Incorporating both factors, results in more viable and sustainable business results. Thus, a sustainable scaling strategy navigates tensions, achieving financial viability while simultaneously creating favourable social and environmental outcomes.

Scaling Practices

Scaling practices encompass expanding an organisation's reach, it requires a deliberate and multifaceted effort to build and strengthen the internal structures, systems, and capabilities necessary to support persistent growth (Belitski et al., 2023). Essentially, it includes establishing a validated and replicable business model that demonstrates the essential potential for broader application of the innovation (Reuber et al., 2021). This ensures that the organisation can consistently reproduce success across different markets and contexts.

A key aspect of scaling involves stakeholder management and social embedding (McKague et al., 2015). This involves building and brokering relationships across the value chain to ensure acceptance of stakeholders of organisational activities, and community engagement to transfer practices that are sensitive to the local context. Furthermore, codesigning and coproducing with stakeholders to adjust to local needs are also part of effective scaling (London & Hart, 2004). Implementing these practices will create trust and shared value that drive sustainable growth. This aligns with, Reuber et al., (2021) and Saka-Helmhout et al. (2024a) who emphasise the role of collaboration in scaling. Through strategic alliances and active engagement with customers, suppliers, and competitors, MNEs can enhance their scaling efforts (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a). Cross-sector partnerships are highlighted as a mechanism for increasing impact, facilitating the MNE's external acceptance (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a). These collaborations are relevant for forming public-private partnerships, which provide an effective means to address sustainable development issues (Kolk & Lenfant, 2015).

In addition, strategic intent focused on strong morality on top of performance, and routinisation of CSI to maintain stakeholder engagement should be developed to enhance collaboration. Furthermore, organisations can enhance effectiveness by building capacity through targeted training programmes for local entrepreneurs and partners, empowering them to develop sustainable solutions and ensuring broader, more sustainable impact (London &

Hart, 2004). Thus, successful scaling requires an integrated approach combining internal capabilities with strategic external engagement and ethical considerations.

Resources for scaling

To ensure successful implementation and sustainability of scaling practices, several resource categories arise. First, knowledge and learning are central to the scaling process as it is considered the manifestation of excellence (Rodríguez et al., 2020; Shepherd & Patzelt, 2020; Belitski et al., 2023). In this, excellence is manifested in knowledge as routines, systems, and norms (Belitski et al., 2023). In addition, accumulating, communicating, relocating, and connecting knowledge are proposed to be drivers of scaling (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2020). However, next to the internal organisational capabilities, the external environment can play a significant role in providing resources for scaling (Tippmann et al., 2023). The presence of foreign MNEs can provide knowledge sources, increasing inter-firm interactions can then lead to organisational learning and capability development for enhanced scaling (Tippmann et al., 2023). In addition, Belitski et al. (2023) argue that international networks provide access to valuable knowledge that MNEs might need to scale their sustainability efforts. This external environment calls for internal capabilities (Rodríguez et al., 2020). An example of this is that stakeholder engagement is a key activity during the implementation phase of scaling, however, relational and network resources are needed for successful engagement (Rodríguez et al., 2020; Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a). Furthermore, Digitalisation has become a significant enabler and accelerator of scaling in a multinational context (Tippmann et al., 2023). Business models that influence affordability of digital technologies are crucial in scaling in international markets, which emphasises the importance of technological resources (Tippmann et al., 2023). This also includes the significance of financial resources, securing diverse income streams and budgets to ensure long-term viability (Murray, 2010).

Thus, companies must build dynamic capabilities to engage stakeholders effectively (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a). While financial, human, technological, relational, network, and organisational and process resources support scaling efforts, knowledge and learning resources are central for its success.

2.1.4 Scaling for Systemic Change

Systemic change goes beyond increasing the number of people affected, it aims to impact broad institutional systems to address the root causes of social problems (Saka-Helmhout et

al., 2024a). Achieving true impact requires transformation of underlying structures and processes that maintain these problems (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a). Key to systemic change is the identification of opportunities and barriers at broad institutional scales, which requires understanding of the complex social and political systems involved to create lasting change (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a).

Saka-Helmhout et al., (2024b) add to this definition two ways in which systemic change can occur. First, successful CSI can lead to the development of new legal structures or societal norms that support the social and economic goals pursued by the sustainability initiative (Onsongo, 2019). Second, CSI can create institutional advantages as improved government relationships, changes in labour conditions, and new social programs that change the landscape for future activities beyond the scope of the original initiative (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024b). However, systemic change is not a guaranteed outcome of CSI, to enhance the possibility of impacting institutional systems, organisations should proactively focus on creating shared value, building strong stakeholder relationships, and actively managing the transition to a more sustainable business model (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024b).

Longoni et al. (2024) define systemic change as a result of changes in the systems processes, paradigms, and structures, rather than changing rules and regulatory frameworks directly. Enterprises that participate in CSI are able to act as facilitators for systemic change due to their dual motives, combining social impact and economic profitability (Longoni et al., 2024). Three enablers for systemic change are identified: cognitive shift, stakeholder engagement and collaboration, and scalability (Longoni et al., 2024). First, a cognitive shift is a change in perspective on how a problem is addressed, going beyond organisational practices (Massa-Saluzzo et al., 2022). The second enabler is how enterprises collaborate with stakeholders as organisations, communities, and governments, to promote innovation and continuous learning, leverage resources and funding, and influence policies (Longoni et al., 2024). Third, scalability ensures efficiency, allowing enterprises to progress from localised initiatives into transformative movements, making lasting impact (Pal & Altay, 2019; Vedula et al., 2022). In addition, these enablers are manifested at three levels, the organisational level, the supply chain level, and the context level (Longoni et al., 2024).

Thus, current research on scaling CSI has addressed the types and motivations of scaling, but further research is needed to clarify the processes involved in effective implementation of scaling for systemic change (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2020).

2.2 Theoretical framework

The review of the literature has highlighted key concepts and relationships that support the theoretical framework outlined below.

2.2.1 Dual-Motives Perspective of Corporate Social Innovation

The core theoretical lens of this thesis is the dual-motive perspective of CSI (Tippmann et al., 2023; Longoni et al., 2024), recognising the interplay of ethical obligations and strategic organisational interest driving social initiatives. This framework is crucial as it addresses the tension between social impact and economic viability for scaling CSI in an organisation's approach. This research will examine how this interplay shapes scaling decisions.

2.2.2 Scaling types and systemic change

The different types of scaling proposed by Saka-Helmhout et al. (2024a) will be considered in this thesis. Scaling-out being the expansion of geographical reach and replication of the sustainable initiative (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a). Success here would be apparent through the increased number of companies adopting similar ethical sourcing practices. Scaling-up consisting of influencing broader institutional structures and policies (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a). Success might be indicated by the implementation of industry-wide standards for ethical sourcing. Scaling-deep includes the transformation of societal norms and beliefs (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a). In this scaling trajectory, success involves consumer behaviour shifts and corporate attitudes that prioritise ethical sourcing. This research will examine which scaling trajectories are prioritised by a leading company in a specific industry, analysing the practices, resources, and strategies employed to achieve success. The goal is to assess how these scaling efforts contribute to systemic change by influencing both practices of individual companies and the broader institutional landscape within the chocolate industry. Systemic change, the result of changes in the processes, paradigms, and structures, will serve as a target for evaluating the sustainable sourcing initiative's long-term impact (Longoni et al., 2024).

2.2.3 Resources allocation and organisational capabilities

The research will address the gap of optimal combination of organisational resources and practices to achieve successful scaling for systemic change. Internal organisational capabilities and external environment can play a significant role in providing resources for

scaling; however, knowledge and learning are central for scaling success (Murray et al., 2010; Rodríguez et al., 2020; Tippmann et al., 2023). Organisational capabilities is defined as the development of internal structures, systems, and capabilities (Belitski et al., 2023; Tippmann et al., 2023). The organisational capabilities that support scaling will be examined by looking at dynamic capabilities, the firm's ability to adapt, integrate, and re-allocate resources (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a).

This framework will prioritise the transition from scaling to systemic change, while acknowledging the dual motives driving organisations. The necessity of resource allocation and organisational capabilities in achieving this transition is recognised in influencing the success of scaling practices.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research strategy

A qualitative research strategy is implemented to explore and generate knowledge on the process of scaling for systemic change through collecting and interpreting textual material (Myers, 2013). A case study was performed to study a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context by using empirical evidence from one organisation (Myers, 2013). Case studies are particularly useful when examining organisations considered as leaders in their field, such as TC, to identify the key factors driving their success (Bleijenbergh et al., 2023). This approach provided thorough examination of TC and their sustainable sourcing initiative, allowing assessment of the processes that occur within a business context. The goal of the case study was to gain in-depth, contextual knowledge about a single case and explore the key meanings, characteristics and implications (Priya, 2021).

TC might be seen as one of the leading companies within the fair trade chocolate industry. The company has a mission to make 100% slave-free chocolate the standard and to address ongoing issues of child labour, forced labour, and inequality in the cocoa supply chain (Tony's Chocolonely Netherlands, n.d.). TC's sustainability initiative is a key component of their business model and will thus be suited as case for this research to gain an understanding about scaling for systemic change. Using this company as the single unit of

analysis, focusing on its specific details and characteristics, a deep understanding of social innovation within a real-life context will be gained.

As this research was aimed at theory development by exploring a single case in-depth to identify patterns, themes, or insights, an inductive approach was applied (Priya, 2021). This research will be extending existing knowledge based on document analysis, which fits with the suitability of inductive research for developing theories (Locke, 2007).

This research adopted an interpretivist perspective, assuming that reality is socially constructed and understood through the meanings individuals give to their experiences within a specific context (Bleijenbergh et al., 2023). Interpretivism embraces subjective ontologies, acknowledging that meaning is created through interactions and thus, reality is perceived differently by different people (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). It also acknowledges subjective epistemologies, where knowledge is constructed by understanding the meanings given to social phenomena (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Therefore, an insider perspective has been employed, emphasising engaged participation and interpretation (Bleijenbergh et al., 2023).

3.2 Data sources

In this thesis, various written and visual documents are used to explore what practices and resources are employed for scaling sustainable sourcing for systemic change within TC. Sixteen data sources were analysed, consisting of written industry reports as sustainability reports, supply chain reports, and government and regulatory reports; corporate publications focused on sustainable sourcing, ethical chocolate production, and scaling strategies; and visual aids were used to ensure triangulation within the research and ensure reliability (Morgan, 2022.)

The data sources were selected based on their relevance to the research question: “How is Tony’s Chocolonely scaling their sustainable sourcing initiative “Fight for Slave-Free Chocolate” for systemic change” as it should address the topics directly (Gray, 2017). In addition, documents were chosen for their authenticity and completeness, meaning they come from credible sources and contain sufficient detail (Maglaughlin & Sonnenwald, 2002). The quality of these sources was further assessed through examining the value and completeness of the material (Gray, 2017). Last, the purpose and source of the documents have been taken into consideration as potential biases or perspectives may influence the content (Maglaughlin & Sonnenwald, 2002). This ensures that the content can be contextualised and interpreted appropriately within its original intent. The specific quality criteria applied to each source are detailed in the appendix.

3.3 Methods of data collection

A document analysis was applied to understand the patterns and processes underlying a social phenomenon through existing textual or visual material (Bleijenbergh et al., 2023).

Conducting a document analysis avoids challenges related to fieldwork as participant availability, technological barriers, or ethical concerns (Morgan, 2022). In addition, document analysis provided the inclusion of diverse sources as institutional reports, newspaper articles, social media posts, photographs, and video (Priya, 2021). Furthermore, qualitative data is suitable for exploratory research and theory building which is consistent with the inductive research approach of this paper (Myer, 2013).

The data sources were accessed through TC's website and social media channels to ensure reliability on social and business activities, providing concrete examples; through Radboud University as its databases and personnel offer access to further research, reports and contacts that provide a high level of credibility and transparency; and snowballing techniques in which acquired documents have referred to other related documents (Du & Costello, 2025).

Thus, document analysis served as the primary data collection method, allowing for an open exploration of patterns and consistencies. From these patterns, statements and theories were explored which reflects a commitment to minimising existing theoretical assumptions (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020).

3.4 Data analysis and sensitising concepts

In line with the inductive research approach, this thesis followed the grounded theory approach to code data and inductive thematic analysis for explorative and practice-oriented objectives (Chapman et al., 2015). The coding process started with open coding, where documents were closely examined to recognise and name phenomena, leading to the creation of initial codes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Next, axial coding categorised and interpreted the initial codes into larger categories, exploring their relationships and identifying central themes. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Finally, selective coding was used to identify core categories that are essential to emerging themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During all stages of coding, the data was continuously compared and contrasted to refine and identify patterns, similarities, and differences and create categories (Chapman et al., 2015). This constant comparison consisted of comparing new data with previously collected data to identify

repetitive themes or concepts, comparing new data with existing codes to determine its fit with established categories, and comparing codes to see how they can be integrated into broader categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Whereas the coding procedure adopted the grounded theory procedure, this thesis did not aim to develop grounded or emergent theory. Therefore, the analysis of data was a bottom-up process that involves an inductive thematic analysis (Myers, 2013). This theory provided a method for detailed data analysis, encouraging constant interaction between data collection, coding data, and data analysis to create evidence to answer the research question (Myers, 2013). This approach allowed for analytical flexibility which is suitable for studies driven by research question and real-world issues, instead of aiming to create an abstract theory (Chapman et al., 2015)

Sensitising concepts were used to provide a comprehensive focus for observation, without inflexible definition of variables. The concepts suggested direction for empirical data and were used as a sense of reference and guidance (Bowen, 2008).

Sensitising concept	Authors	Dimensions
Dual-motives	Tippmann et al., 2023; Longoni et al., 2024	Financial goals, social impact goals
Scaling-out	Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a	Geographic expansion, replication
Scaling-up	Rodríguez et al., 2020; Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a	Policy transformation, systems change, structural changes
Scaling-deep	Tabares, 2020; Saka- Helmhout et al., 2024a	Cultural transformation, normative commitment, legitimacy
Practices for scaling	Rodríguez et al., 2020; Belitski et al., 2023; Saka- Helmhout et al., 2024a	Internal structures, phased approach, capacity building, collaboration, learning capabilities
Resources for scaling	Rodríguez et al., 2020; Belitski et al., 2023; Tippmann et al., 2023	Human resources, technological resources,

3.5 Quality criteria

Quality criteria of this thesis are mentioned to create transparency about how the research was conducted and how conclusions were reached, to establishing legitimacy of the findings. The general quality criteria are coherence, consistency, and transparency (Bleijenbergh et al., 2023). Coherence was maintained by ensuring a logical relationship between the research question, theoretical framework and methodological choices. In addition, concepts, methodology, and theories were applied consistently throughout the thesis. Transparency was achieved by explicitly explaining the choices made during the research process and the reasoning behind them. Transparency is especially significant as this research has an inductive approach, where the theoretical framework develops during the research process and patterns emerged from the empirical observations should be explained (Chapman et al., 2015).

Furthermore, construct validity, crucial for accurately observing scaling TC's sustainable sourcing initiative for systemic changes, was addressed through data triangulation. Triangulation was done to create comprehensible and accurate data, and increase the quality and credibility of content analysis (Chapman et al., 2015; Bleijenbergh et al., 2023). Through the use of multiple, varying data sources, a deeper and multi-faceted understanding of the scaling process and its development into systemic change was developed (Meyers, 2013). In addition, extensive reflexive memos about personal feelings and experiences during the research process were created to enhance self-reflection and verifiability, and act as an additional source of information to help understand and interpret the data (Chapman et al., 2015; Bleijenbergh et al., 2023). To increase the quality of the content analysis, this research was presented to other researchers to gain feedback on the data interpretation and meaningfulness of the analysis (Bleijenbergh et al., 2023).

3.6 Research ethics and integrity

Throughout this research, emphasis was placed on maintaining the highest ethical standards. The researcher committed to conducting the study with integrity, professionalism, and respect

for all participants and documents. This included transparency about research objective, avoiding biases, or manipulation. A respectful interaction with participants and commitment to upholding ethical standards were ensured.

Potential implications of the findings for TC, the chocolate industry, and overall discussions on CSI, scaling, and systemic change were considered. The goal was to positively contribute to organisational practices and social awareness; however, possible unintended consequences of the research were addressed responsibly. Thus, adherence to abovementioned ethical principles was central to this research, ensuring that it was conducted responsibly and respectfully.

4 Analysis

A comprehensive review of various documents was conducted to gather relevant information. This multi-source approach allowed for the identification of key practices and resources that enable TC to scale their “Fight for Slave-Free Chocolate” initiative. Through thematic analysis, recurring patterns related to partnerships, collaboration strategies, community development efforts, and communication methods were identified. Alongside how relational, human, technological, and financial resources support these practices. The following sections explore these themes in detail, providing an organised overview of TC’s scaling practices, resources, and strategies for systemic change.

4.1 What practices is Tony’s Choclonely employing to effectively scale their “Fight for Slave-Free Chocolate” initiative?

TC’s mission to eliminate slavery and exploitation from the cocoa industry requires a multifaceted approach, going beyond traditional business practices. This part of the analysis explores how TC effectively applies partnerships across various parts of the supply chain to achieve scaling of its sustainable sourcing initiative. Within these partnerships there are recurring themes of communication and long-term commitment to create an environment to tackle systemic issues within the cocoa sector.

4.1.1 Sourcing partnerships

Collaboration with cocoa farmers is fundamental to a sustainable sourcing mission. Tony's open chain works directly with farmer cooperatives, which are described as *"people-centered organizations with democratic management"*. Direct contact with farmers ensures traceability, allowing for the accountability and verification of ethical standards. This is explicitly stated in the annual report, *"Knowing the farmers we source cocoa from are and engaging in direct relationships with partner cooperatives means understanding bean origins, producers and related social and environmental factors, which are all vital to taking responsibility and driving meaningful change."* TC's online posts also emphasize traceability in their sourcing. They *"aim to trace every single bean"* to ensure responsibility and a living income price for farmers.

In addition, sourcing partnerships are key in improving farming processes and implementing strong agricultural structures. TC is using collective action to help farmers be self-sufficient, *"what we've what I've learned what I've seen in the past year in [name of the company]'s, is that our model works. We see it really helps to give a perspective to farmers, to help them grow out of poverty."* This quote from an interview on impactful CSI demonstrates that models are made for farmers to implement and improve their circumstances. The community development policy also demonstrates a commitment to developing resilient and successful communities by emphasizing approaches that address the causes of inequality and poverty, with a focus on physical and social infrastructure, *"Both community development and supply chain responsibility are needed. They are not mutually exclusive."* Thus, through sourcing partnerships and community development initiative, TC empowers cocoa farmers, fostering self-sufficiency and creating a more equitable and sustainable supply chain.

Creating an enabling environment for the farmers with programmes to improve healthcare access, educational facilities, and infrastructure are directly related to poverty metrics in farming regions. An example can be found in the development policy, *"Maxim Nyansa, Educate to Inspire and Edukans are all running Foundation projects focusing on improving quality education, supporting teachers and school leadership, and building problem-solving skills for primary school children."* These enabling environments are created through constant assessment, *"Annual needs assessments, as well as data from TOC's three core programmes (living income, child labour and deforestation) provide valuable insights and details on the trends and specific challenges facing each individual partner cooperative."* Furthermore, economic and social mobility within the cocoa-growing

communities is developed through women's empowerment programs, *"100Weeks breaks the cycle of poverty by giving women in the cocoa communities in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire unconditional cash transfers, access to savings groups, and life skills support."* Thus, TC's commitment to community development is apparent in it being an integral part of their sustainable sourcing strategy. Underlying issues that contribute to poverty and inequality are addressed to create a more resilient and equitable workforce. This approach benefits the cocoa farmers and communities, long-term sustainability and ethical integrity of TC.

4.1.2 Mission ally partnerships

The document analysis repeatedly highlights that TC is using its five sourcing principles in their daily processes in addition to giving other companies the opportunity to use these principles in their business operations. Whereas, at first, this seems contradictory as TC can separate themselves with the competitive advantage of a good working model, they do this to impact a greater scale. This is explicitly stated in their annual report: *"Because, as an impact-led company, we strongly believe the only way to change the exploitation of West African cocoa farming families and rainforests is if we all collaborate closely in the supply chain and leave the competing to when we arrive on the supermarket shelves."* In addition, in an interview on impactful CSI through scaling, the emphasis was also on creating impact rather than creating revenue, *"I think a lot of companies would be hesitant to sort of give away their intellectual property and their network for free. But we do that because we are not in the world to just make money. We are in the world to change the [name of sector]."* Using the model in their own processes did create impact in their supply chain, however the impact was growing slowly and on a minimal scale. Collaboration with competitors then ensured that a bigger scale was reached with an overall more extensive impact which is apparent in the impact report, *"In 2019, Tony's Open Chain was created to open up this model to other companies in order to accelerate change in the cocoa sector and prove faster that the model could work at scale."* Thus, collaborating with other chocolate companies which implement similar missions are incorporated to extend Tony's open chain initiative and promote change.

In addition, models are adjusted to allies' needs to create long-term relationships. This is apparent in the impact report, *"Mission Allies can now choose between two bean processing models: Bean-to-Brand and Bean-to-Machine. While the level of traceability remains 100% for both models until the processor's doorstep, what happens at the processor level differs."* The importance of accumulating and protecting mission ally relationships is also apparent in TC LinkedIn posts, *"We (+ our 19 Mission Allies!) source cocoa*

responsibly, via our Tony's Open Chain initiative. This means fully traceable cocoa, higher long-term prices + investing in climate-smart cocoa practices." Companies and organisations that contribute to TC's mission are also explicitly drawn attention to *"Within the next 3 years, all cocoa in Albert Heijn's products – from chocolate bars to chocolate sprinkles – will be sourced through Tony's Open Chain, which will almost triple (!!) the number of beans they buy from our partner co-ops."* Thus, valuable knowledge is transferred in TC's business model to scale their sustainable sourcing initiative through the accumulation of mission allies.

4.1.3 Manufacturing partnerships

By collaborating with professionals within the manufacturing part of the supply chain, TC gains access to existing expertise. This allows them to increase production volume rapidly without the investment of time and capital which is required to build their own facilities. An example of TC partnering with big experienced manufactures to ensure the expansion of their mission is given in a documentary on the cocoa industry, *"So the smallest chocolate company from Holland teamed up with Barry Callebaut, which is the biggest chocolate manufacturer in the world."* Building a big network is key in scaling a sustainable sourcing mission as *"The chocolate chain is so vast and the amount in question so enormous, that it will take the buy-in of all the major players, if the plan is gonna work."*

In addition to expanding the scope, partnering with multiple manufacturing companies allows TC to reduce transportation costs, improve speed to market, and better serve local consumers. This results in TC being able to focus on core competencies as sourcing ethical cocoa, building brand awareness, developing innovative products, and driving positive social impact. This is apparent in TC's annual report, *"In the summer of 2023, we've added our latest co-manufacturer, World Finest Chocolate in Chicago, USA. This is a major step forward for us as we're trying to reduce the logistical and planning costs involved in getting 100% traceable chocolate to Choco Fans in the US."*

However, the main reason of these partnerships is still the social aspect of their CSI initiative, *"At Tony's, we decided to partner up rather than build it ourselves in order to ensure that other chocolate brands and private labels could have access to end-to-end segregated processing for liquid chocolate."* This shows that manufacturing partnerships allow TC to concentrate on their ethical sourcing mission, promoting a fairer cocoa industry, and create an expanding scale.

4.1.4 Advocacy partnerships

To promote their sustainable practices and create awareness, TC collaborates with other platforms and sites. They are on the forefront of a documentary on the cocoa industry, its pitfalls, and how to overcome these. In this documentary, the chief of TC stated that *“If you know what is going on in the beginning of the value chain, it is not possible to enjoy chocolate.”* This shows that TC is increasing reach and visibility of their message by speaking up for an ethical and fair cocoa industry through a platform that has different users from their own platforms.

The partnerships that help promote the sustainable sourcing mission and influence the cocoa industry are mostly apparent in TC’s LinkedIn posts, *“fairer future requires bold regulations. That’s why we co-signed a (very) serious letter to Ursula von der Leyen, together with our friends and fellow front-runners Patagonia, Oatly, Ecosia, Natura + Triodos Bank.”* Here, it is shown that TC collaborates with like-minded organisations while also engaging with governments and regulators as the European Commission to advocate for mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence legislation. They also engage in less formal collaborations to create awareness, *“Tony’s and GLASTONBURY FESTIVAL EVENTS LIMITED have joined forces with Oxfam GB to raise money to create an equal and fairer future without poverty– the root cause of exploitation in the cocoa industry.”* For this partnership, TC created limited edition chocolate bars with personalised wrappers and a chance to win festival ticket. This ensured that people bought more chocolate bars which were sustainably sourced while also creating awareness amongst new consumers. Thus, by strategically leveraging diverse platforms and partnerships, TC effectively extends its reach, engaging new audiences to create a broader awareness of the ethical challenges within the cocoa industry.

4.1.5 Communication

TC is constantly communicating with stakeholders to keep to one of their five principles, transparency. This is done through their annual reports, LinkedIn posts, and policy reports. An example of this is shown in their mission statement, *“We now include clear pay ranges in all our job listings, and we’re working closely with our hiring teams to prevent gender pay gaps.”* In addition, in their impact report they state that *“Traceability is key to taking responsibility.”* They adhere to this statement by using a tracking software throughout their supply chain, *“This allows us to foster a more transparent supply chain by knowing exactly where, when, how and by whom the beans were harvested and how they travel through the*

Tony's Open Chain value chain.” These quotes show that clear communication with multiple stakeholders ensures trust and accountability.

Furthermore, constant communication is used to engage stakeholders in TC's mission. In Tony's open chain impact report, it is apparent that regular surveys are conducted with various stakeholders to gather information on perceptions and priorities, *"Building connections means listening, too. This is why, twice a year, we send out Tony's Quest-CHEER-naire (aka our global engagement survey). It's our way of tuning in to all the things that really matter to Team Tony's – from engagement and work experience to autonomy, psychological safety, leadership and alignment with our mission"* This is also apparent in their community engagement report in which they state that *"Annual needs assessments, as well as data from TOC's three core programmes (living income, child labour and deforestation) provide valuable insights and details on the trends and specific challenges facing each individual partner cooperative."* As mentioned above, creating impact on a greater scale is done through collaboration with other companies sharing TC's mission of a sustainable supply chain. To enhance these relationships and make sure that they maintain the same mission, contracts are signed annually and rewards are given accordingly. This is explicitly stated in the community development policy, *"Partner cooperatives sign a contract each year with the Foundation, committing to report on progress towards realising their funded infrastructure projects. The grant from the Chocolonely Foundation is paid in two instalments for the execution and completion of their projects; each instalment is contingent on fulfilling reporting requirements."* This form of communication is used to build strong, resilient, and inclusive communities, as mentioned in the annual report, *"TOC also pays regular site visits to track progress and provide support to troubleshoot issues as needed."*, and community development policy, *"We maintain an ongoing dialogue with politicians, NGOs and academia to increase the pressure on the industry to adopt our 5 sourcing principles."* Thus, clear, transparent, and continuous communication is on the forefront of all TC's partnerships and business operations.

4.1.6 Long-term commitment

A key characteristic of TC's approach to sustainable sourcing is its dedication to long-term relationships and commitments. They are seen as a central requirement for fostering sustainable livelihoods, community empowerment, and ensuring real change within the cocoa industry. This is apparent as one of the five sourcing principles is *"Establishing long-term commitments to work together with cocoa farmers and partner cooperatives to address*

challenges and plan for the future.” The open chain impact reports states that TC has “*5-year commitments with 10 partner cooperatives to work together to address challenges and plan for the future.*” This allows for developing trust, implementing effective interventions, and realising tangible results. Long term vision is especially important in the cocoa industry where the “*future depends on the creation of systemic solutions to current realities.*” To provide farmers and partner cooperatives with more stability and less uncertainty, the open chain impact report states that asymmetrical contracts are implemented to buy fixed volumes of cocoa at set prices over multiple years. Indicating that TC is focusing their long-term impact on the whole supply chain. Thus, genuine sustainability and lasting positive impact is dependent on fostering lasting relationships that are built on trust and stability. Prioritising long-term commitments, TC empowers cocoa farmers and their communities to build resilient livelihoods, going beyond short term fixes.

4.2 What resources is Tony’s Choclonely employing to effectively scale their “Fight for Slave-Free Chocolate” initiative?

TC creates both financial and social value within their company, “*Part of our system change model is proving that Tony’s Choclonely is a commercially successful company. And luckily, we’re in good shape with the largest absolute growth in the company’s history.*” This section of the analysis will explore which resources TC is using to achieve these goals.

4.2.1 Relational resources

Understanding the limitations of individual action, TC emphasises the development of relational resources, fostering strategic partnerships with cocoa farmers, mission allies, and other stakeholders to drive collective action for a more fair and sustainable supply chain. This understanding is apparent in their annual report, “*It is only through collaboration that we can end exploitation in cocoa, which is why we partner with companies and other stakeholders to demonstrate a business model that works at scale.*” And their open chain impact report, “*But we can’t achieve this alone. To successfully increase volumes sourced using our 5 Sourcing Principles, we need a larger group of committed companies to join Tony’s Open Chain.*” In addition, expanding their geographical scale is done through collaboration with international companies, “*In the summer of 2023, we’ve added our latest co-manufacturer, World Finest Chocolate in Chicago, USA.*” These quotes illustrate that building and leveraging relational resources are essential for a more impactful movement. In this, direct relationships with

farmers and cooperatives in which building strong, personal connections is primary. This is apparent in an interview on impactful CSI, *“And yes the second thing is also to help them to adapt, not to adapt but also understand the partners sometimes. Understand them and be more aware of their culture and their traditions, its really important.”* This quote also underscores that it is vital to understand the cultural differences to build trust and understanding between collaborators. This statement from the annual report, *“TOC works closely with partner cooperatives, local civil society organizations, and government stakeholders to design and implement projects. This collaborative approach fosters local ownership and ensures that projects are culturally appropriate and sustainable”*, indicates that Tony’s open chain prioritises a bottom up approach for building capacity and engagement. The relational resources, strengthened by TC’s commitment to a local focus, drive effective and meaningful action. These community-based approaches help improve understanding of community goals to later align them with company goals.

4.2.2 Human resources

A big part of TC’s human resources consists of its workforce which is essential for driving positive change in the cocoa industry. The company’s approach to human resources is intertwined with its mission and values. The annual report indicates that TC is *“serious about Team Tony’s. At Tony’s, our commitment to ending exploitation in cocoa is the beating heart of everything we do. It’s why sooo many people are excited to join our team in the first place”* TC prioritises hiring *“the best and most diversly”* by *“strengthening our unbiased hiring process”* In addition, a focus is put on keeping talents in-house by *“internal talent mobility, giving employees the opportunity to grow within the company and gain valuable experience in different teams and markets”* The long term employment is fostered through a company culture of connection and inclusivity, this is apparent in the annual report, *“We celebrate with a bunch of rituals that bring us closer together and keep our values front of mind all year ‘round. From our always epic Happy New Book Year party.”* Furthermore, diversity, equity, and inclusion are valued, *“This year, we focused on identifying, reporting and addressing any gender pay gaps across all levels at Tony’s.”* Thus, by prioritising talent development, transparent hiring practices, and an inclusive culture, TC encourages a skilled workforce deeply committed to the company’s mission. This alignment between purpose and people is a driver of the ability to innovate and scale their mission to change the cocoa industry.

4.2.3 Technological resources

TC uses technological resources to enhance scaling within the cocoa industry. A more efficient supply chain is fostered through making data accessible and promoting technological literacy among partners. Constant assessment is done through technological tools, as mentioned in the annual report, *“Cooperative consultations were essential in identifying the practical challenges of transitioning to a digital financial system.”* This indicates that TC values data to make informed decisions.

Furthermore, cooperatives are empowered through data ownership, *“... ensuring that partner cooperatives can access and use the data from all implemented Tony’s Open Chain programmes.... This data ownership enables the partner cooperatives to better shape their programmes, revisit successful practices and explore new concepts that truly benefit cocoa farmers.”* This indicates that TC puts valuable, actionable data in the hands of farmers and cooperatives as *“Implementation of meaningful actions begins with actionable data.”* In addition, traceability and accountability are enhanced through technological resources. The open chain impact report states that *“... tracking the flow of beans, for example, allows for better scrutiny of payment flows, enabling cooperatives to address any issues that arise throughout this process in a targeted manner.”* This indicates that because of technological systems, partners experience benefits, for example, fair payments and independency. Thus, by empowering cooperatives with accessible data and promoting traceability, TC effectively leverages technological resources to enhance local ownership, continuous improvement, and long-term sustainability necessary to scale its impact across the cocoa industry.

4.2.4 Financial resources

A key element of TC’s financial resource management is the diversification of funding sources. An example is given in the open chain impact report, *“We raised further funds from our existing investors to enable investments in our rapidly expanding supply chain and welcomed a new investor on board”* and *“Cooperatives also serve as valuable service providers to each other, generating income in the process... Through these collaborations, cooperatives not only enhance their capabilities but also help strengthen the broader Tony’s Open Chain cooperative portfolio as it continues to grow.”* This indicates that, beyond their earned revenue, TC actively pursues external funding to innovate and reach greater scale.

In addition, TC obtains profits by mission ally contribution as apparent in the open chain impact report, *“Tony’s Open Chain revenues consist of programme fees, governance fees and a risk margin, all three of which are paid by our Mission Allies.”* This shows that

the revenue TC makes is put towards scaling their mission and creating greater impact. This is also apparent in an interview on impactful CSI, *“And that share is increasing. So, we invest a lot in our external growth. We became market leader in their Netherlands two years ago.”* The financial resources are central in growing their mission of sustainable sourcing. Thus, by reinvesting profits and securing external funding, TC creates a cycle of investment where financial resources are strategically allocated to grow the sustainable sourcing initiative and expand positive impact on cocoa-growing communities

4.3 What strategies is Tony’s Choclonely carrying out to promote systemic change?

Going beyond ethically sourcing their own products, TC aims to drive systemic change within the cocoa industry. The root causes of exploitation and inequality are addressed to create a more sustainable sector. TC has created an impact strategy that consists of three pillars: *“1. creating awareness of the issue and mission 2. leading by example to show that slave-free chocolate and a profitable business can go together 3. inspiring others in the industry and government to act.”* This section will explore how this “road map” guide their approach to transforming the cocoa sector.

4.3.1 Creating awareness

TC was *“born as a journalistic project, creating awareness amongst consumers of chocolate that there are very big problems in the cocoa supply chain.”* As stated in an interview on impactful CSI. This indicates that the company started out with a clear mission of creating awareness on *“Deforestation, illegal child labour and even forced labour.”*

TC creates tangible representations of inequality in the chocolate industry to help their mission resonate with consumers. As stated in the annual report *“Damn tasty, unevenly divided chocolate bars.”* This shows that they increase the visibility of the problem to every customer by incorporating it in their product. In addition, they use *“Bold storytelling to make our mission resonate”* Examples of this are in their LinkedIn posts, *“Here’s what we demand”, “The time to act is now!”, “And from this month onwards, we’ll be sweetening your feed with our “Bar of the Month” series”* They create a sense of urgency by using strong language; however, they also use words in a playful manner to attract customers to participate in TC’s mission. This bold storytelling is also apparent in the appearance of chief chocolate officer of TC in a documentary on the chocolate industry, *“if you know what is*

going on in the beginning of the value chain, it is not possible to enjoy chocolate.” With this statement he calls upon people to do research on how their chocolate is made before consuming it.

In addition, creating awareness for systemic change of the sustainable sourcing initiative is also done through public advocacy and legislation. TC implements an active role in advocating for mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence legislation by creating direct engagement. An example of this is stated in the annual report, *“Tony’s Open Chain provides a straightforward solution for environmental and human rights due diligence in the cocoa industry, enabling real, lasting and systemic change.”* This indicates that they have created Tony’s open chain for other companies to participate in, making due diligence easily accessible for other companies. This direct approach is also apparent in the LinkedIn posts, *“We gathered 66k signatures to present to Commissioner Didier Reynders, made noise in Brussels, and signed letters and statements together with the hashtag#CocoaCoalition.”* This shows that TC aims to *“raise the floor on standards”* by working with governments and regulators and directly engaging individuals to promote legislations to hold businesses accountable. Thus, by combining awareness of the cocoa industry’s inequalities with tangible solutions and advocacy for systemic change, TC inspires consumers to demand greater accountability and drive real progress to a fairer future.

4.3.2 Leading by example

TC has created their own sourcing model and internal practices to demonstrate how ethical and profitable chocolate production is possible. They are representing a *“farmers-first approach”* that prioritises human rights and environmental protection to address systemic inequalities. This is apparent in their five sourcing principles as stated in all documents, *“Traceability, a higher price, the long-term, strong farmers, and improved quality and productivity”* How they lead by example in traceability is apparent in an interview on impactful CSI *“Our own traceable supply chain, where we lead by example and we show how you can source differently and create more equality in the chain, equal business relationships, and thereby support farmers to get out of poverty.”* In addition, TC pays a higher price to cocoa farmers by including a living income reference price as stated in the annual report, *“On the living income front, I’m proud as ever that Tony’s and all Tony’s Open Chain Mission Allies paid a Living Income Reference Price (LIRP) for 100% of our cocoa.”* In the impact report, the long term impact is highlighted through, *“Our approach fosters a credible and scalable approach, with Tony’s Open Chain having long-term*

agreements with 10 partner cooperatives.” The strong farmers pillar is apparent in the interview on impactful CSI, *“we support cooperatives in becoming more professional member organizations and providing better services to their member farmers.”* Last, the mission lock shows commitment to improving quality and productivity, *“training farmers to improve their productivity and cocoa quality as well as their agricultural knowledge on crops.”* Through these quotes, it is apparent that TC demonstrates that implementing the five sourcing principles creates commercial success, proving that sourcing sustainably will still make a company scalable globally and successful. The annual report supports this, *“This year, our accelerating growth trend continued. We grew the business by 33% and delivered over €200m in net revenue.”* Thus, TC’s dedication to its five sourcing principles provides a tangible roadmap for other companies. It demonstrates the potential for ethical and profitable chocolate production and inspiring a broader shift towards more sustainable practices across the entire cocoa industry.

4.3.3 Inspiring others

To scale their impact beyond their own supply chain, TC encourages other companies to adopt their model. This is first done through their open chain which is, as stated in the impact report, a *“collaborative initiative to accelerate change in the cocoa sector by enabling other businesses to source cocoa in line with Tony’s five sourcing principles.”* In addition, the interview on impactful CSI, *“The more chocolate we sell, the more cocoa we can buy. The more chocolates our mission allies sell, the more cocoa we can buy collectively.”* This indicates that they scale their initiative through volume to achieve greater impact and lasting change. This scaling through volume is also apparent in the willingness to share their models, programmes, and cooperative networks with competitors. As mentioned in the impact report, *“scalable, cost-neutral business model for the industry at large, allowing pre-competitive collaboration on cocoa.”* This highlights their belief that cooperation is essential to achieve their mission. Thus, by showcasing its success and offering easy to implement models, TC inspires other companies to participate in the *“fight for slave-free chocolate”*. This ensures effectively scaling its positive impact and fostering a more sustainable cocoa industry as a whole.

In conclusion, TC pursues systemic change through the interplay of awareness, setting an example, and collaborative empowerment. By broadcasting the truth about exploitation, practicing ethical sourcing at scale, and providing models for others to follow, TC seeks to

pull down exploitative systems. Furthermore, they want to create a future where a fair and responsible cocoa industry is standard. This commitment highlights the dedication to a lasting transformation within the cocoa supply chain.

5 Conclusion and discussion

5.1 Conclusion

This thesis has explored how TC scales its “Fight for Slave-Free Chocolate” initiative for systemic change, providing insights into practices, resources, and strategies employed.

First, TC scales through a multi-faceted approach of collaborative practices. These include, supporting equitable sourcing partnerships, building mission-ally partnerships to expand reach, engaging in manufacturing partnerships for efficient production, and participating in advocacy partnerships to influence the industry. Throughout these partnerships, transparent communication is ensured and long-term commitments are fostered for sustainable change.

Second, TC employs a combination of relational, human, technological, and financial resources. The emphasis on relational resources allows for effective collaboration, investment in human resources ensures talent and mission alignment, technological resources facilitate supply chain transparency, and financial resources enable scaling initiatives and provide economic stability to cocoa farmers.

Last, TC promotes systemic change by creating awareness through bold storytelling, leading by example through its sourcing model, and inspiring other industry actors to act. This integrated strategy disrupts exploitative practices, advocates for fair compensation, and promotes collaboration. The analysis shows that TC’s success lies in its ability to intertwine these practices, resources, and strategies. Besides contributing to a more sustainable and ethical cocoa sector, TC offers a compelling business model for other businesses that want to create positive social impact while remaining profitable.

5.2 Theoretical implications

This research, employing an inductive approach, provides several theoretical implications for understanding CSI and the scaling of sustainable sourcing initiatives. It contributes to a

nuanced understanding of how firms can effectively leverage practices and resources to achieve systemic change within multifaceted sectors as the food industry.

The analysis challenges the traditional view of the dual-motives perspectives as proposed by Tippmann et al. (2023) and Longoni et al. (2024) by highlighting a mutually beneficial relationship between ethical commitment, innovation and market success. While previous research proposes the dual-motives as a trade-off, this thesis suggests that strong ethical commitment can drive innovation and enhanced financial performance. This builds upon Porter and Kramer (2011) in highlighting shared value creation and incorporates ethical concerns into the business strategy.

Second, this research shows the critical role of cocoa farmers in local communities, which is unlike scaling models that encourage a top-down, organisation-led approach (Westley & McConnell, 2010). Active participation and contributions of stakeholders are not solely a means of gaining approval, they are a source of innovation and legitimacy for the scaling process. TC allows farmer agencies to improve quality and productivity, contrasting strategic models, suggesting a more decentralised, community-driven approach to scaling.

Third, this thesis builds on literature on stakeholder engagement (McKague et al., 2015; Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a). The analysis highlights the fundamental role of legitimacy and transparency in fostering strong, long-term relationships with stakeholders. While stakeholder engagement is a key strategy for successful scaling, this research suggests that a genuine commitment to ethical principles and transparent practices promotes trust and commitment, driving more efficient collaboration. The success of project depends on financial and strategic support as well as a sense of moral alignment with the project's goals and values.

Furthermore, while resource allocation is often viewed through a lens of internal efficiency and strategic alignment (Tippmann et al., 2023), the analysis highlights decentralised resource allocation and empowerment of local actors. An example of this is that TC creates programmes and facilities for farmers to develop their operations, in addition to paying fixed prices. This allows for financial independence and building capacity of cocoa farmers to ensure long-term growth. The decentralisation of resources contrasts with Rodríguez et al. (2020) who emphasise top-down strategic direction, rather than localised control.

Last, this research challenges the dominant model of scaling which presents scaling-out, scaling-up, and scaling-deep as separate phases (Saka-Helmhout et al., 2024a). This thesis suggests that these types of scaling, in practice, are interdependent and complementary.

This is shown in TC's approach where efforts to expand the reach of their model (scaling-out) through mission ally partnerships are connected to advocacy for industry-wide policy changes (scaling-up) and efforts to transform consumer perceptions and societal norms (scaling-deep). Therefore, a holistic approach to scaling, integrating strategies across all three dimensions, is necessary for achieving meaningful and lasting systemic change.

By confirming, challenging, and extending existing theories, this research provides a more refined understanding of how businesses can effectively scale social innovation and drive systemic change. These insights provide a foundation for future research and offer valuable guidance for companies seeking to create social impact on large scale.

5.3 Practical and managerial implications

This research offers practical recommendations for stakeholders that aim to foster sustainable sourcing and systemic change. Managers should adopt a dual-motive approach, embedding ethical considerations into their core business model, prioritising impartial supplier relationships. This builds long-term brand loyalty and market gain. Invest in strong, transparent relationships with suppliers, NGOs, and other stakeholders to drive collective action. Communication about sourcing practices should be transparent to engage consumers through authentic storytelling. In addition, robust tracking systems to measure and communicate social and environmental impact should be implemented.

Policymakers can support sustainable sourcing through legislation, including mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence. They can incentivise collaborative sustainability initiatives and promote transparency with traceability technologies. Consumers can demand transparency from brands and choose products from companies that are committed to ethical practices, even if it means paying a premium. Organisations that advocate for sustainable sourcing should be supported to create the collaborative action for sustainable sourcing. By implementing these recommendations, all stakeholders can contribute to a more sustainable and fair food system.

5.4 Research limitations and suggestions for further research

This research, while providing valuable insights into TC's approach to scaling sustainable sourcing, is subject to limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. A significant challenge was the difficulty in securing direct interviews with key employees.

This constraint led to a reliance on document analysis. While this approach allowed for a comprehensive examination of the company's publicly stated strategies and practices, it lacked the depth and nuance that direct interviews could have provided. Future research would benefit from incorporating primary data gathered through interviews to offer a more complete perspective. However, it can be noted that TC's commitment to transparency provided a rich online information source. Their extensive reporting, detailed descriptions of sourcing practices, and open communication about their challenges offered a level of insights that is scarce in other organisations. This mitigated, to some extent, the lack of direct interview data.

In addition, this thesis focussed on TC's perspectives and inputs, the analysed data mostly reflects TC's public narrative, which may be prone to self-promotion or strategic framing. The lack of alternative perspectives from within the organisation or external stakeholders limits the ability to critically assess the company's claims. It might be interesting for future research to gather perspectives from various stakeholders beyond TC's public narrative to critically assess the initiative's claims and impact.

Despite these limitations, this research offers valuable insights into the practices, resources, and strategies employed by Tony's Choclonely to scale their "Fight for Slave-Free Chocolate" initiative. The findings provide a foundation for future research and offer practical guidance for organisations that seek to create social impact.

References

- Adams, D., Donovan, J., & Topple, C. (2022). Sustainability in large food and beverage companies and their supply chains: An investigation into key drivers and barriers affecting sustainability strategies. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 32(4), 1451–1463. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.3198>
- Alharahsheh, H., & Pius, A. (2020). A Review of key paradigms: positivism VS interpretivism. *Global Academic Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(3), 39-43. <https://doi.org/10.36348/gajhss.2020.v02i03.001>
- Argote, L., & Miron-Spektor, E. (2011). Organizational Learning: From Experience to Knowledge. *Organization Science*, 22(5), 1123-1137. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1100.0621>
- Belitski, M., Martin, J., Stettler, T., & Wales, W. (2023). Organizational scaling: The role of knowledge spillovers in driving multinational enterprise persistent rapid growth. *Journal of World Business*, 58(5), 101461. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2023.101461>
- Bitencourt, C., Zanandrea, G., Froehlich, C., Agostini, M. R., & Haag, R. (2024). Rethinking the company's role: Creating shared value from corporate social innovation. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, 31(4), 2865–2877. <https://doi.org/10.1002/csr.2723>
- Bleijenbergh, I., Lansu, M., & Van Engen, M. (2023). *Qualitative research in organisations*.
- Bowen, G. A. (2006). Grounded theory and sensitizing concepts. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(3), 12–23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690600500304>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Brønn, P. S., & Vidaver-Cohen, D. (2009). Corporate motives for social initiative: Legitimacy, sustainability, or the bottom line? In *Springer eBooks* (pp. 91–109). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0818-1_7
- Canestrino, R., Bonfanti, A., & Olliaee, L. (2015). Cultural insights of CSI: How do Italian and Iranian firms differ? *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 4(1), 12. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13731-015-0026-4>
- Chapman, A. L., Hadfield, M., & Chapman, C. J. (2015). Qualitative research in healthcare: An introduction to grounded theory using thematic analysis. *Journal of the Royal*

- College of Physicians of Edinburgh*, 45, 201 - 205.
<https://doi.org/10.4997/jrcpe.2015.305>
- Dionisio, M., & de Vargas, E. R. (2020). Corporate social innovation: A systematic literature review. *International Business Review*, 29(2), 101641.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2019.101641>
- Du, X., & Costello, K. L. (2025). Information snowballing: information practices in the context of sustainable food practices. *Journal of Documentation*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jd-08-2024-0200>
- Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Aldine Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203793206>
- Gray, D. E. (2017). *Doing research in the business world*. SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4236/epe.2013.54B154>
- Hartmann, M. (2011). Corporate social responsibility in the food sector. *European Review of Agricultural Economics*, 38(3), 297–324. <https://doi.org/10.1093/erae/jbr031>
- Herrera, M. E. B. (2015). Creating competitive advantage by institutionalizing corporate social innovation. *Journal of Business Research*, 68(7), 1468–1474.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.01.036>
- Kolk, A., & Lenfant, F. (2015). Cross-Sector collaboration, institutional gaps, and fragility: The role of Social Innovation Partnerships in a Conflict-Affected region. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 34(2), 287–303. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jppm.14.157>
- Kanter, R. M. (1999). From spare change to real change: The social sector as beta site for business innovation. *Harvard Business Review*, 77(3), 122–132.
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/10387574>
- Locke, E. A. (2007). The case for inductive Theory building†. *Journal of Management*, 33(6), 867–890. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206307307636>
- London, T., & Hart, S. L. (2004). Reinventing strategies for emerging markets: beyond the transnational model. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 35(5), 350–370. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8400099>
- Longoni, A., Luzzini, D., Pullman, M., Seuring, S., & Van Donk, D. P. (2024). Social enterprises in supply chains: driving systemic change through social impact. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, 44(10), 1814–1830. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijopm-10-2023-0835>
- Maglaughlin, K. L., & Sonnenwald, D. H. (2002). User perspectives on relevance criteria: A comparison among relevant, partially relevant, and not-relevant judgments. *Journal of*

- the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 53(5), 327–342. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.10049>
- Massa-Saluzzo, F., Luzzini, D., & Ricucci, R. (2022). How social entrepreneurs create systemic change. In *Springer eBooks* (pp. 193–209). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-14216-1_10
- McKague, K., Zietsma, C., & Oliver, C. (2015). Building the social structure of a market. *Organization Studies*, 36(8), 1063–1093. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840615580011>
- Mihailova, I. (2023). Business model adaptation for realized international scaling of born-digitals. *Journal of World Business*, 58(2), 101418. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2022.101418>
- Mirvis, P., Herrera, M. E. B., Googins, B., & Albareda, L. (2016). Corporate social innovation: How firms learn to innovate for the greater good. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(11), 5014–5021. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.04.073>
- Moore, M., Riddell, D., & Vocisano, D. (2015). Scaling out, scaling up, scaling deep: Strategies of Non-profits in Advancing Systemic Social Innovation. *Journal of Corporate Citizenship*, 2015(58), 67–84. <https://doi.org/10.9774/gleaf.4700.2015.ju.00009>
- Morgan, H. (2022). Conducting a qualitative document analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 27(1), 64-77. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5044>
- Murray, R., Caulier-Grice, J., & Mulgan, G. (2010). *The open book of social innovation*. NESTA/Young Foundation. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230367098_2
- Myers, M. D. (2013). *Qualitative research in business & management* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications. <http://www.gbv.de/dms/zbw/574672206.pdf>
- Onsongo, E. (2019). Institutional entrepreneurship and social innovation at the base of the pyramid: the case of M-Pesa in Kenya. *Industry and Innovation*, 26(4), 369–390. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13662716.2017.1409104>
- Pal, R., & Altay, N. (2019). Identifying Key Success Factors for Social Enterprises Serving Base-of-Pyramid Markets through Analysis of Value Chain Complexities. *Journal of Business Logistics*, 40(2), 161–179. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jbl.12212>
- Parmigiani, A., Klassen, R. D., & Russo, M. V. (2011). Efficiency meets accountability: Performance implications of supply chain configuration, control, and capabilities. *Journal of Operations Management*, 29(3), 212–223. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jom.2011.01.001>

- Priya, A. (2021). Case study methodology of qualitative research: Key attributes and navigating the conundrums in its application. *Sociological Bulletin*, 70(1), 94–110. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038022920970318>
- Reuber, A. R., Tippmann, E., & Monaghan, S. (2021). Global scaling as a logic of multinationalization. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 52(6), 1031–1046. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41267-021-00417-2>
- Rodríguez, A. M. S., MacLachlan, M., & Brus, A. (2020). The coordinates of scaling: Facilitating inclusive innovation. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 38(6), 833–850. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sres.2740>
- Saeed, M. A., & Kersten, W. (2019). Drivers of Sustainable Supply Chain Management: Identification and Classification. *Sustainability*, 11(4), 1137. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11041137>
- Saka-Helmhout, A., Álamos-Concha, P., López, M. M., Hagan, J., Murray, G., Edwards, T., Kern, P., Martin, I., & Zhang, L. E. (2024a). Stakeholder engagement strategies for impactful corporate social innovation initiatives by multinational enterprises. *Journal of International Management*, 30(4), 101159. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intman.2024.101159>
- Saka-Helmhout, A., Álamos-Concha, P., Polo-Barceló, C., Edwards, T., & Murray, G. (2024b). Corporate social innovation by multinationals: A framework for future research. *International Business Review*, 33(5), 102273. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2024.102273>
- Shepherd, D. A., & Patzelt, H. (2020). A call for research on the scaling of organizations and the scaling of social impact. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 46(2), 255–268. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1042258720950599>
- Tabares, S. (2020). Insights from corporate social innovation: a research agenda. *Social Enterprise Journal*, 16(3), 317–338. <https://doi.org/10.1108/sej-08-2019-0057>
- Tippmann, E., Ambos, T. C., Del Giudice, M., Monaghan, S., & Ringov, D. (2023). Scale-ups and scaling in an international business context. *Journal of World Business*, 58(1), 101397. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2022.101397>
- Tony's Chocolonely Netherlands. (n.d.). *Tony's Chocolonely - Together, we'll end exploitation in cocoa*. <https://nl.tonyschocolonely.com/en>
- Van Lunenburg, M. (2024). Scaling of social initiatives: the role of entrepreneurial skills and positions. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijpsm-12-2023-0374>

- Vedula, S., Dobliger, C., Pacheco, D., York, J. G., Bacq, S., Russo, M. V., & Dean, T. J. (2022). Entrepreneurship for the Public Good: A Review, Critique, and Path Forward for Social and Environmental Entrepreneurship Research. *Academy of Management Annals*, 16(1), 391–425. <https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2019.0143>
- Westley, F., & McConnell, J. W. (2010). Making a difference: Strategies for scaling social innovation for greater impact. *The Innovation Journal: The Public Sector Innovation Journal*, 15(2).
<https://www.vancouverfoundation.ca/sites/default/files/documents/Westley-Frances-Antadze-Nino-2010-Making-a-difference-Strategies-for-scaling.pdf>
- Westley, F., Antadze, N., Riddell, D. J., Robinson, K., & Geobey, S. (2014). Five configurations for scaling up social Innovation. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 50(3), 234–260. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886314532945>
- Wolf, J. (2013). The relationship between sustainable supply chain management, stakeholder pressure and corporate sustainability performance. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 119(3), 317–328. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1603-0>
- Woltering, L., Fehlenberg, K., Gerard, B., Ubels, J., & Cooley, L. (2019). Scaling – from “reaching many” to sustainable systems change at scale: A critical shift in mindset. *Agricultural Systems*, 176, 102652. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.agsy.2019.102652>

Appendix

Selection criteria table

Sources	Selection criteria	Origin
Policy report: community development policy	Broader initiative against slave labour by addressing systemic issues in cocoa-growing communities. Official policy document of Tony's open chain, enhancing credibility. Systemic change through community development	Tony's Chocolonely's website
Policy report: human rights and environmental due diligence	Addresses broader systemic changes needed to fight for slave-free chocolate. Official position paper from Tony's Chocolonely/advocacy document.	Tony's Chocolonely's website
Policy report: deforestation policy	Key strategy in scaling sustainable sourcing through environmental factors.	Tony's Chocolonely's website
Policy report: community development policy	Tackling root causes of unethical labour through investment in cocoa-growing communities. Collaborative approach with Chocolonely Foundation and partner cooperatives.	Tony's Chocolonely's website
Policy report: chemical management policy	Child labour and unsafe working conditions. Scaling impact through reducing chemical use and safer alternatives.	Tony's Chocolonely's website
Tony's Chocolonely annual fair report 2022/2023	Practices, results, and future plans. Efforts in addressing child labour, deforestation, and farmer poverty. Financial statements and mission allies. Addressed to stakeholders as advocacy document.	Tony's Chocolonely's website
Tony's Chocolonely annual fair report 2023/2034	Practices, results, and future plans. Efforts in addressing child labour, deforestation, and farmer poverty. Financial statements and	Tony's Chocolonely's website

	mission allies. Addressed to stakeholders as advocacy document.	
Tony's mission lock	Unique governance structure to safeguard Tony's Chocolonely's mission of eliminating child and illegal labour in the chocolate industry. Making the initiative's goals sustainable on long-term. Internal framework and commitments. Key actors.	Tony's Chocolonely's website
Tony's open chain impact report	Tony's open chain is a direct extension of Tony's Chocolonely's mission. Practices and resources of the initiative are discussed. Strategies for systemic change.	Tony's Chocolonely's website
LinkedIn posts	Less formal, real-time insights. Multifaceted approach to promote change.	LinkedIn (social media)
Interview 1	Direct, firsthand insights on scaling approach. About whole supply chain.	Via supervisor
Interview 2	Practical realities and challenges of Tony's sustainable sourcing initiative. Corporate level. Cultural sensitivity and local context.	Via supervisor
Cocoa barometer 2022	Broad report on cocoa industry. Systemic issues and stakeholders. Background information.	Cocoa barometer site
Netflix series rotten, episode bitter chocolate	Partnerships for awareness and within cocoa supply chain. Leading role of Tony's Chocolonely	Netflix (online streaming service)
YouTube video: we accidentally started a chocolate company – now it brings in \$162 million a year	Interviews and on-location footage. Challenges in scaling and operating Tony's mission. Profit vs. mission.	YouTube (online streaming service)
YouTube video: winst en impact maken met chocolade – Tony's Chocolonely in zaken	Real-world impact and challenges through interviews. Outside perspective.	YouTube (online streaming service)

YouTube video: Tony's FAIR 2021 - Next Level	Discusses practices as building partnerships, empowering farmers, and advocating for industry change. Resources as financial investments, human capital, and collaborative networks for industry wide impact	YouTube (online streaming service)
--	--	------------------------------------

Tools used for improvement

To improve the quality of this thesis, generative AI tools have been used as a supplementary resource. Prompts as ‘what is a synonym for...’, ‘can you evaluate this text on spelling and interpunction’ were utilised to enhance vocabulary and grammatical accuracy. Throughout this process, careful consideration has been taken to ensure that no confidential data was used as input to ensure integrity and confidentiality of private information.