

Master Thesis

Why do stakeholders join multi-stakeholder initiatives?

Investigating the motivations of businesses, business associations, and NGOs to participate in the Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile

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1 Introduction

Rana Plaza, a large commercial building in Bangladesh, collapsed on the 24th of April 2013. The building housed a clothing factory and more than 1,100 employees died that day (Demkes, 2018; Schuessler, Frenkel & Wright, 2019). This disaster was not just a singular accident; it was one from a big series (Reinecke & Donaghey, 2017). The Rana Plaza accident led to a global debate on working conditions of employees in Bangladesh (Frenkel & Wright, 2019). After the Rana Plaza accident, one of the initiatives that emerged to jointly deal with safety problems in clothing factories is the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh (or the Bangladesh Accord) (Demkes, 2018; Jastram & Schneider, 2015; Reinecke & Donaghey, 2017). Nowadays, the Bangladesh Accord consists of more than 200 brands, together protecting more than 1,600 factories and 2 million employees (Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, 2018). However, the Bangladesh Accord is not the only initiative that emerged after the Rana Plaza accident. The Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile (AGT) was set up on the 4th of July 2016 as a collaboration between participating businesses, labor unions, business associations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the Dutch government (SER, 2017a). In this study, the focus is on this initiative, which aims to protect human rights, animal welfare, and the environment (SER, 2017a).

Collaborations like the AGT are so-called multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs) in which several stakeholders work together to gain a mutual benefit (Airike, Potter & Mark-Herbert, 2016; Tanimoto, 2019). MSIs can be seen as a political form of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Tanimoto, 2019), because MSIs bring together different stakeholders to work on CSR issues that the government cannot solve itself. MSIs can provide learning platforms, develop norms for behavior, develop mechanism for compliance and provide certificates to organizations that comply (Palazzo & Scherer, 2010). Collaboration between various parties is necessary due to globalization of supply chains of garment businesses, making it increasingly difficult to address social and environmental issues (Bartley, 2007). Developing learning platforms, standards for behavior and compliance and certification mechanisms will allow for collaborative problem solving of complex problems in the garment industry, such as low wages and poor working conditions (Ashwin et al., 2020; Reinecke & Donaghey, 2017; Tanimoto, 2019). Reinecke and Donaghey (2017) explain that, although improving working conditions in the factories would be beneficial for the whole industry, individual businesses are not encouraged to do so, because they are disadvantaged when they are the only business investing in safety and sustainability. Besides that, single businesses do not have the willingness or incentives to stand up for safety and sustainability, nor do they have the power and the influence to achieve much on their own (Reinecke & Donaghey, 2017). For all these reasons, MSIs, like the AGT, are required to deal with the complex problems in the garment industry.

Although MSIs are required to deal with the complex problems of the garment industry, the interests of the different stakeholders are often not in line with their objectives (SER, 2016). To remain competitive, many businesses seek to lower their costs to be able to offer lower priced products and to make more profit (Aguilera, Rup, Williams & Ganapathi, 2007). MSIs on the other hand, want to improve working conditions, which leads to higher employee costs (SER, 2016). Business associations aim to support the business interests of their members. Investing in sustainability increase production costs for businesses (SER, 2016) and does not seem to be in line with the aim of supporting the business interests of their members. NGOs tend to distrust businesses and regularly launch campaigns against them rather than collaborate with them (Lehr, 2010; Roloff, 2008), while the AGT encourages NGOs to support businesses (SER, 2017c). Given these different and often conflicting objectives, the question then arises why these stakeholders would choose to cooperate and participate in MSIs, like the AGT. It is this question that this study is interested in.

The question of why different stakeholders participate in MSIs remains insufficiently addressed in existing literature, however. Some research focusses on the motivations of businesses to engage in MSIs (Airike et al., 2016). Recent research for instance indicates that businesses participate in MSIs to gain the collective advantage of overcoming complex challenges collectively (Roloff, 2008; Seuring & Gold, 2013; Svendsen & Laberge, 2005) and to propagate altruistic values (Svendsen & Laberge, 2005). Furthermore, engaging in MSIs is said to be motivated by self-interest because participation in MSIs is a cheaper, more efficient way to build relationships with stakeholders than traditional approaches (Svendsen & Laberge, 2005). Further motivations are learning opportunities and the decrease of unconstructive conflicts (Svendsen & Laberge, 2005). A last motivation is external pressures, for example lobbying by NGOs (Lehr, 2010).

Less research focuses on the motivations of other stakeholders, such as business associations or NGOs, to become members of MSIs. Vogel (2009) found that business associations might participate in MSIs as the content of the MSI is in line with the business interest for their members. Furthermore, another reason to participate in MSIs might be the fact that MSIs are seen as more 'legitimate' than business-driven programs in closing regulatory gaps that contribute to human rights abuses. These motivations of why business associations might participate in MSIs give a first insight, but the topic seems to be under-researched. This is also the case for motivations of NGOs. Because NGOs have social goals to improve society and need co-optation to achieve these goals, participating in MSIs can be a tool to achieve their goals (Van Tulder, Hoekstra & De Wal, 2011; Vogel, 2009). However, the topic of different stakeholders' motivations to participate in MSIs is under-researched.

The goal of this study therefore is to get insight into the motivations of businesses, business associations, and NGOs to participate in the AGT, in order to contribute to the existing knowledge about motivations of stakeholders to participate in multi-stakeholder initiatives and help closing the existing gap in literature. The research question is the following: 'How do businesses, business

associations, and NGOs motivate their participation in the AGT?’ This question will be answered by conducting interviews with stakeholders participating in the AGT and analyzing documents.

This study is theoretically relevant as it contributes to the literature on motivations of businesses, business associations, and NGOs to participate in MSIs. Understanding motivations of different stakeholders to participate in MSIs gives an idea about how MSIs emerge. This study tries to fill the gap in literature that exists due to the lack of research on the motivations of different stakeholders to participate in MSIs, especially for the business associations and NGOs (Airike et al., 2016). The findings of this study can broaden the understanding of what different stakeholders look for in an MSI (Baumann-Pauly et al., 2017). Furthermore, an idea of why different stakeholders participate in MSIs can broaden the understanding of how private MSIs emerge (Airike et al., 2016) and how private global regulation has to be designed in order to attract members (Baumann-Pauly et al., 2017).

This study is practically relevant, because global governance becomes more important to deal with the complex problems in global supply chains. It is therefore important to understand why different stakeholders participate in MSIs, as all stakeholders are important when maintaining MSIs (Jastram & Schneider, 2015). Different stakeholders support and guide businesses through the processes of the specific MSI and offer the MSI their specific knowledge and resources, which are necessary to tackle the problems together (Blitzer, Glasbergen & Leroy, 2012). The findings of this study can be used by the AGT to get an insight in why the different stakeholders signed the AGT and what they can do to motivate other businesses and NGOs to participate in the AGT too. Furthermore, with the knowledge about why different stakeholders participate in the AGT and what they value in it, the AGT can respond to the needs of the different stakeholders and by doing that becoming stronger in tackling the complex problems together (Ashwin et al., 2020; Soundararajan et al., 2019).

The study starts in chapter 2 with an overview of the existing literature about MSIs and motivations of stakeholders to participate in CSR initiatives and MSIs. The third chapter is about the empirical background, the general research strategy, an overview of methodological choices and research ethics. The fourth chapter consists of the findings of this study and will be continued with the discussion and conclusion in chapter five.

2 Theoretical background

This chapter starts with a definition of MSIs. MSIs are seen as a political form of CSR, which will be explained in the second part of this chapter (Tanimoto, 2019). Because MSIs are seen as a political form of CSR, the insights in why different stakeholders participate in CSR initiatives found in literature will serve as a starting point for this study. Looking at existing literature on motivations of different stakeholders to participate in CSR initiatives is important to get an impression about possible motivations to participate in MSIs. The last section will be about the motivations of different stakeholders to participate in MSIs.

2.1 Defining multi-stakeholder initiatives

Within the literature on MSIs, consistency about the terminology is missing (Airike et al., 2016; Soundararajan et al., 2019). Terms that are used are multi-stakeholder partnerships (Lundsgaarde, 2017; Seuring & Gold, 2013), multi-stakeholder collaborations (Airike et al., 2016), multi-stakeholder processes (Jastram & Schneider, 2015) and multi-stakeholder networks (Roloff, 2008; Svendsen & Laberge, 2005). Although literature uses different terms, in this study, the term multi-stakeholder initiative is used.

There are several definitions of MSIs, like “organizations from diverse sectors (private, public and not-for-profit) commit to working together in mutually beneficial ways to accomplish goals that they could otherwise not achieve alone” (Tanimoto, 2019, p. 707) or “a web of groups, organizations and/or individuals who come together to address a complex and shared cross-boundary problem, issue or opportunity” (Svendsen & Laberge, 2005, p. 92). Mena and Palazzo (2012, p. 528) define MSIs as “private governance mechanisms involving corporations, civil society organizations, and sometimes other actors, such as governments, academia or unions, to cope with social and environmental challenges across industries and on a global scale”. What these definitions have in common is the inclusiveness of different parties and collaboration towards a common goal or mutual benefit. Therefore, the definition of the MSI that will be used in this study is an imitation of Airike et al. (2019): ‘a positive way of the different stakeholders to work together to attain the mutual benefit’.

Although most definitions of MSIs refer to the cooperation of different stakeholders to gain a mutual benefit, they all refer to other actors as part of the cooperation. Often, researchers fail to define the term ‘stakeholder’ as part of the MSI (Roloff, 2008). According to Freeman (1984, p. 25) a stakeholder is “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the firm’s objectives”. He distinguished two types of stakeholders: the stakeholders that have a particular relation with the organization (like workers, customers and suppliers) and the group that become stakeholders by claiming a stake in the organization (like NGOs). Both types of stakeholders play a role in MSIs. Roloff (2008, p. 238) specifies the term ‘stakeholder’ in the context of the MSI: “a stakeholder is any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the approach to the issue addressed by the

network”. Stakeholders in MSIs can be private sector businesses, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, social movements, governments, and academia (Hassan & Lund-Thomsen, 2016; Mena & Palazzo, 2012). The different stakeholders that participate in the AGT are businesses, NGOs, the government, business associations and labor unions. Although business associations and labor unions participate in the AGT, these particular stakeholders are not participating in all MSIs (*e.g.* Fowler & Biekart, 2017; Airike et al., 2016).

Different forms of MSIs exist, ranging from compliance-based to collaborative-based initiatives (Soundararajan et al., 2019). MSIs can have four levels of involvement (Palazzo & Scherer, 2010). Firstly, they can provide learning platforms to share experiences and learn from each other. Secondly, they can develop norms for behavior, like codes, rules, recommendations or guidelines with regard to targets and actions. These norms for behavior have to be enforced and respected. Thirdly, MSIs can develop mechanism for auditing and compliance to the rules, like auditing participating businesses. Lastly, MSIs can provide labels or certificates for organizations that achieve the targets. The more levels of involvement exist in the MSI, the more different stakeholders are involved in the initiative (Palazzo & Scherer, 2010).

The different levels of involvement and the relevance of the MSI in general can be further clarified by two examples that are of great relevance in dealing with the side-effects of the global production chains in the garment industry: the Fair Labor Association (FLA) and the Fair Wear Foundation (FWF) (Roloff, 2008). The FLA emerged due to a lack of minimal labor standards in the supply chains of the garment industry with the aim of addressing labor abuses in global supply chains (Roloff, 2008). The FLA started to develop detailed labor standards that could be refined and adjusted over time (Lehr, 2010). The different actors in the MSI complemented their knowledge to inform the standards. The NGOs brought knowledge about the labor rights and the existing situation in the factories and businesses brought knowledge about the supply chains, developing a process of mutual learning and trust (Lehr, 2010). The FLA now ensures enforcement and mutual assurance by the use of independent auditors and is thus assured of better labor standards in the supply chains (Lehr, 2010).

The FWF did something similar as it defined common ethical standards in the garment industry and verified efforts to guarantee labor conditions within the supply chains of participating businesses (Jastram & Schneider, 2015). Among others, the FWF visits the businesses’ headquarters to assess their CSR management systems and to audit the factories. Furthermore, the collaboration provides knowledge and information exchange on topics like local legislation and labor standards to support organizations in fostering their CSR practices and thus jointly tackle the problem (Jastram & Schneider, 2015). These examples briefly show what activities of MSIs can be and what the benefits for the different stakeholders are.

2.2 Multi-stakeholder initiatives as a form of corporate social responsibility

In the above section, we clarified what MSIs are. In this section, the relationship between MSIs and CSR initiatives will be examined. It is important to clarify this relationship, because many researchers have investigated the motivations of stakeholders to engage in CSR and less the motivations of stakeholders to engage in MSIs. As MSIs are a form of CSR, the motivations of stakeholders to engage in CSR can be an aspiration or an idea about what possible motivations to participate in MSIs could be.

CSR is a widely used term, with different definitions (Vidaver-Cohen & Brønn, 2013). According to Vidaver-Cohen and Brønn (2013), CSR consist of three components: (1) being transparent and sincere, (2) taking care of the welfare of all stakeholders when taking management decisions and (3) striving to have a positive impact on the society and the environment, beyond minimal requirements of the law. The definition of Tanimoto (2019) also includes these three components. According to him, CSR is the responsibility an organization has “to incorporate social and environmental concerns into the management process, with fulfilling accountability to stakeholders” (Tanimoto, 2019, p. 704). Businesses have to take responsibilities for certain stakeholders and have to act according to ethical standards of behavior (Airike et al., 2016).

CSR initiatives of organizations can take various forms, including MSIs. Aguilera et al. (2007) distinguish between actions within businesses, like changing production methods in a more environmentally friendly way or changing labor relationships, and actions outside businesses, like “making infrastructure investments in local communities or developing philanthropic community initiatives” (Aguilera et al., 2007, p. 836). An example of CSR initiatives outside businesses are partnerships, like MSIs. These partnerships consist of different organizations, like businesses, governments, and NGOs, that together address a social, health or environmental problem (London, 2012).

The emergence of these partnerships can be explained by the fact that businesses were criticized due to their significant perceived role in social and environmental issues. Businesses start to think about forms of self-regulation, because the international CSR issues could not be solved by a single organization (Tanimoto, 2019). The traditional instrumental approach of single businesses that implement CSR activities was not enough to properly address complex problems, such as climate change, corruption, or human rights violations (Airike et al., 2016). Single businesses did not have the knowledge, power and influence to solve such complex problems (Reinecke & Donaghey, 2017). To solve the international CSR issues together, businesses, governments, and NGOs worked together to develop platforms, or MSIs, to define CSR standards and norms (Zeyen, Beckmann & Wolters, 2014). Therefore, MSIs are a subset of CSR initiatives (Tanimoto, 2019). Like CSR initiatives (Vidaver-Cohen & Brønn, 2013), MSIs have the components of transparency and sincerity, taking care of stakeholders and striving for a positive impact (Tanimoto, 2019). Mena and Palazzo (2012) see MSIs as a political form of CSR, because businesses step in, “where governments are not willing or not able

to play their regulatory role” (Mena & Palazzo, 2012, p. 527). In line with Mena and Palazzo (2012), MSIs are seen as a political form of CSR in this study.

2.3 Motivations to participate in corporate social responsibility initiatives

The section above explained that MSIs are a political form of CSR. The three components of CSR (Vidaver-Cohen & Brønn, 2013) are similar to those of MSIs. Because of this similarity, motivations to participate in CSR can give tentative ideas about motivations to participate in MSIs. This is important, because most research focuses on CSR and less on MSIs. However, because the MSI covers only one form of CSR and existing literature often focuses on CSR in general, the motivations may also differ. Because most of the research is focused on motivations of businesses to engage in CSR initiatives, the focus of this section is primarily on businesses, supplemented with motivations of business associations and NGOs.

Aguilera et al. (2007) and Paulraj, Chen and Blome (2017) distinguish three categories of motivations of stakeholders to engage in CSR practices, which are instrumental, relational, and moral motivations. The instrumental motivations are based on the individual need for control people possess (Aguilera et al., 2007). Brønn and Vidaver-Cohen (2008) name this the ‘profitability’ motivations. Businesses and NGOs seek control as that can lead to the maximization of favorite outcomes. For businesses, an instrumental motivation is the achievement of competitive advantage (Paulraj, Chen & Blome, 2017). Stakeholders, like employees, customers, governments, and media tend to respond in a positive way to CSR initiatives from businesses (Agle, Mitchell & Sonnenfeld, 1999). This positive response to CSR initiatives leads to increased reputation, improved human capital and better innovative capacities, leading to better financial performances and an increased competitive position (Tang, Hull & Rothenberg, 2012; Vidaver-Cohen & Brønn, 2013).

Since CSR initiatives can lead to stronger competitive positions and increased reputations, another motivation for businesses to engage in CSR initiatives is window-dressing (Mena & Palazzo, 2012). Window-dressing is the introduction of CSR initiatives at a superficial level, so that it looks like the business acts in a responsible way, but the business only ceremonially complies to the rules (Tanimoto, 2019). CSR initiatives establish a minimal requirement and some businesses only engage at that minimal level or do not incorporate CSR in their practices at all, while reporting that they do (Tanimoto, 2019). A comparable motivation to engage in CSR is about greenwashing, which is claiming social and environmental contributions, while still continuing generating harms (Sheehy, 2015). The same motivation to engage in CSR may occur at the business association level (Sheehy, 2015).

NGOs also have instrumental motivations to engage in CSR initiatives, which are about scarce resources (Aguilera et al., 2007). For NGOs, the instrumental motivations may not be the most important ones. However, NGOs are dependent from resources, members and influence to survive

(Aguilera et al., 2007). NGOs engage in CSR initiatives and partnerships to gain more publicity and thereby more resources, members and influence (Aguilera et al., 2007).

Relational motivations are the second category of Aguilera et al. (2007). In this category, organizations focus on stakeholder interest, a collective identity, and long term legitimacy (Aguilera et al., 2007; Paulraj et al., 2017). Business associations develop CSR-norms in order to help businesses, their stakeholders, to remain socially legitimate (Sheehy, 2015). Legitimacy is defined by Scott (2008, p. 71) as: “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions”. This general perception, or the public expectations, for sustainability, transparency and equality in Scandinavian countries, is the motivation of Scandinavian businesses to engage in CSR initiatives and go beyond the law (Vidaver-Cohen & Brønn, 2013). CSR allows for the creation and strengthening of social relationships, as well as for the reduction of negative feelings associated with an alleged bad relationship between an organization and its community (Aguilera et al., 2007). The same holds for business associations. Business associations engage in CSR, for example, by developing code of conducts in order to increase the legitimacy of the industry (Sheehy, 2015). Thus, businesses and business associations engage in CSR in order to preserve social legitimacy, and avoid negative publicity to ensure long-term survival of the business and the industry (Paulraj et al., 2017; Sheehy, 2015). Relational motivations furthermore have to do with pressures (Paulraj et al., 2017). A pressure that can be felt by the business to engage in CSR is social requirements from the customer base and the market. Another pressure is competitive pressure, or the fact that other businesses engage in CSR and that the business wants to imitate (Paulraj et al., 2017).

NGOs also have relational motivations to engage in CSR; they want to develop relationships (Aguilera et al., 2007). NGOs are dependent of social relationships in order to be successful because they depend on many different stakeholders for grants and donations, among other things and to achieve their social goals (Aguilera et al., 2007). In CSR initiatives, NGOs get more social relationships and that can benefit their goals.

The third category of Aguilera et al. (2007) is about moral motivations to engage in CSR. In this case, the organization focuses on higher-order values (Brønn & Vidaver-Cohen, 2008; Paulraj et al., 2017). In contrast to the above motivations, a moral motivation for CSR is not a response to external pressures or expectations, but an intrinsic motivation to take care of society and the environment. Many businesses have a culture in which sustainability initiatives are seen as a moral ‘duty’ (Graafland & Van de Ven, 2006). In such businesses, investing in sustainability initiatives may not have any economic advantages. Individuals in organizations are concerned with justice and fairness and feel collective responsibility. These individuals bring their values in the organization and influence the management to act in altruistic ways towards a better society (Brønn & Vidaver-Cohen, 2008). NGOs also have the moral motivation of altruism, which is trying to make the world a better place (Aguilera et al., 2007). CSR initiatives can help to achieve higher-order values by engaging

different stakeholders and work together towards a better society (Paulraj et al., 2017). Business cultures based on sustainability ‘duties’ or individuals that feel responsibilities can be reasons for stakeholders to engage in CSR.

As mentioned above, businesses, business associations, and NGOs can have instrumental, relational and moral motivations to engage with CSR. In most cases, however, stakeholders have more motivations at the same time, which together lead to the decision to engage (Aguilera et al., 2007). Furthermore, certain motivations appear to be more important than others. The study of Paulraj et al. (2017) shows that for businesses, relational and moral motivations are the most important drivers for engaging in CSR. The motivations found to engage in CSR are used in this research to sketch an idea of what motivations could be to participate in MSIs. This is important, because research into MSIs is limited and the relationship with CSR can provide a more holistic view of motivations to participate in MSIs. The discussion (chapter 5) will look at whether the motivations found to participate in MSIs match those found to participate in CSR.

2.4 Motivations to participate in multi-stakeholder initiatives

In the above section a picture of the different types of motivations of stakeholders to engage in CSR initiatives is given. In this section, we will look at the motivations that can be found in the literature about participating in MSIs. Because most of the research is focused on motivations of businesses to engage in MSIs, the focus of this section is first on businesses, supplemented at the end with motivations for business associations and NGOs.

2.4.1 Motivations of businesses

Huijstee (2012) found several motivations for businesses to participate in a specific MSI. First, by participating in MSIs, businesses wanted to avoid government regulation and safeguard future supply of materials and input for the business processes. Furthermore, the businesses wanted to avoid reputation damage (Huijstee, 2012; Zeyen et al., 2014). Roloff (2008) found a somewhat similar possible motivation. Businesses try to “create pragmatic legitimacy by evaluating the expectations and self-interest of the business’ key stakeholders and by satisfying them to some extent” (Roloff, 2008, p. 246). Participating in MSIs could be a way to meet public expectations for sustainability, transparency and equality and to avoid negative publicity (Roloff, 2008). Airike et al. (2016) researched the motivations of three organizations that participated in MSIs and came to the conclusion that the legitimacy of operations of the organization was a secondary motivation for the case organizations. Besides the reason of legitimacy, businesses had the motivations of creating new markets, ensure long-term business continuity and operational efficiency, and attract human capital (Huijstee, 2012). Lundsgaarde (2017) also found the motivation of transforming markets by participating in a specific MSI and argues that businesses had clear economic rationales to participate. Zeyen et al. (2014) found

economic and self-interested motivations to participate in MSIs. Businesses tried to improve their reputation in comparison to other, poorly performing competitors.

Besides the possible motivation that participation in MSIs contribute to their competitiveness, businesses can also decide to participate in MSIs due to the pressure of external parties, like the government or NGOs (Lehr, 2010; Zeyen et al., 2014). NGOs started to campaign against brands and retailers when they became aware of the abusive working conditions in the clothing industry (Roloff, 2008). As result of NGO campaigns, brands, and retailers came together in MSIs like the Fair Labor Association to inspect working conditions in their supply chains, (Roloff, 2008). Tanimoto (2019, p. 708) gives an example that shows how the ‘Electronic Industry Code of Conduct’ emerged and how different businesses engaged in this MSI, because they “were not able to ignore criticism by and demands from NGOs in relation to their CSR procurement management in the global market”. Pressure from external parties might be a second motivation of businesses to participate in MSIs.

Another motivation to participate in MSIs found is the opportunity to overcome complex challenges together (Airike et al., 2016; Roloff, 2008; Svendsen & Laberge, 2005). Businesses together have more knowledge and more resources to implement innovative solutions to solve complex problems (Svendsen & Laberge, 2005). In MSIs, businesses can cooperate with other stakeholders, which also can be seen as a motivation to participate, as participation in MSIs is a cheaper, more efficient way to build relationships with stakeholders than traditional approaches (Svendsen & Laberge, 2005). By engaging in MSIs, businesses can learn from each other (Svendsen & Laberge, 2005). Furthermore, by working together businesses become familiar with each other and trust the norms and values of other businesses, so that unproductive conflicts between different parties can decrease (Airike et al., 2016). Cooperation might be another motivation of businesses to participate in MSIs.

A last motivation found is altruism and management values of wanting to create social value (Airike et al., 2016; Svendsen & Laberge, 2005). Airike et al. (2016) found the hope to transform the industry and being a beacon to others as a motivation to participate in MSIs. They found this motivation in their research on three businesses that participate in a certain MSI. Therefore, altruism and management values of wanting to create social value might be a fourth motivation of businesses to participate in MSIs.

2.4.2 Motivations of business associations

In the above section, the possible motivations of businesses are discussed. In this section, the motivations of business associations are elaborated on. Business associations are member organizations that represent the business interests of their members. From this point of view, one possible motivation to participate in MSIs seems obvious, namely to represent the business interest of the members. In an example mentioned by Vogel (2009), business associations participated in an MSI

because it was in the interest of the businesses to set up an MSI to avoid additional governmental regulation. The case of the FWF highlights another example, where the business associations could not support the ideas of the MSI because it went against the business interests of its members. Retailers spoke to various stakeholders in the MSI and concluded that NGOs placed too many demands on the model for regulating labor standards. The business association withdrew because participation in this MSI was not in line with their goal to support the business interests of their members. A motivation of business association to participate in MSIs can be to support the interests of the businesses, where the way differs per MSI.

In addition to supporting business interests, the image of the industry is important to business associations. Baumann-Pauly et al. (2017) argues that MSIs are driven by social pressure to close regulatory gaps that contribute to human rights abuses. Fransen (2012) argues that in order to close that gap MSIs and business-driven programs were developed. However, the business-driven programs, developed by business associations, only had business as members, while MSIs consist of different stakeholders, including NGOs. The advantage of participating in an MSI was the participation of NGOs, which performed the role of watchdog (Jenkins, 2002). Participation of critical parties gave the MSI more legitimacy than the business-driven programs (Fransen, 2012; Vogel, 2009). A motivation for business associations to participate in MSIs might be the fact that MSIs are seen as more 'legitimate' than business-driven programs in closing regulatory gaps that contribute to human rights abuses.

2.4.3. Motivations of NGOs

The above sections discussed the possible motivations of businesses and business associations. This section discusses the motivations that NGOs may have to participate in MSIs. Van Tulder et al. (2011) researched motivations of NGOs to participate in MSIs and found three main motivations: the contribution to the social goal achievement, influence in businesses and the generation of additional income. Lastly, Van Tulder et al. (2011) found the motivation of legitimacy, which also appear to businesses and business associations. The influence that NGOs can have in businesses by participating in MSIs seems to be a big advantage for NGOs. NGOs need power and co-optation with other parties to achieve their social goals (Van Tulder et al., 2011). The NGO can achieve power by being part of an MSI in which the relations between the different stakeholders are equal (Roloff, 2008). By having influence in businesses, NGOs want to achieve higher impact, for example by having large businesses, such as Wal-Mart, change their purchasing policies and achieve a large global social and environmental impact (Vogel, 2009). Furthermore, collaboration can lead to constructive actions that could not be initiated by a single NGO, as they do not have the power and resources themselves (Svendsen & Laberge, 2005). In this case, the influence in businesses, the availability of resources and

the related contribution to the social goal achievement seems to be motivations of NGOs to participate in MSIs.

Besides the contribution to social goal achievement and the influence in businesses, a motivation to participate in MSIs can be that the MSI is seen as a way to get out of the traditional lobby activities that do not seem to promote the strengthening of national and international regulations (Vogel, 2009). Instead of ‘naming and shaming’, some NGOs seem to choose to cooperate with businesses and business associations and taking part of the control over the activities within the MSIs. Seeing participation in MSIs as a way to lobby can be another motivation of NGOs to participate in MSIs.

2.4.4. Conclusion

This chapter discussed the motivations known from literature to participate in CSR and MSIs. The question of why different stakeholders participate in MSIs remains insufficiently addressed in existing literature, especially for business associations and NGOs (Airike et al., 2016). Many researchers focus on motivations to engage in CSR initiatives (Aguilera et al., 2007; Paulraj et al., 2017). These motivations can provide a more holistic picture of the possible motivations of different stakeholders to participate in MSIs, as MSIs are seen as a political form of CSR (Tanimoto, 2019). However, MSIs are only a sub-form of CSR, so there may be differences between the motivations to participate in CSR and MSIs. The discussion (chapter 5) will look at whether the motivations found to participate in MSIs are comparable with the motivations found to participate in CSR. This study uses an inductive approach to identify the motivations of different stakeholders to participate in MSIs. The theoretical background is used as an aspiration or an idea about what possible motivations are. These motivations are not directly asked for and this study is open for more motivations. This means that the motivations of the theoretical background are not used as starting points for the interview guide, but that the interview guide consists of open questions.

3 Methodology

This chapter gives an overview of the methodological choices made to achieve the goal of this study. The chapter starts with an introduction of the empirical background to get an understanding of the context in which the research took place. After that, the research design will be elaborated on. Next, the method for collecting data will be explained. Subsequently, the data analysis method will be explained, followed by the assessment criteria. Finally, the research ethics will be discussed.

3.1 Empirical background

This study focuses on motivations of different stakeholders to join the AGT. The AGT can be seen as an MSI, because the different stakeholder parties, which are businesses, business associations, labor unions and NGOs, work together to gain the mutual benefit of protecting human rights, the environment and animal welfare against side effects through the supply chain, which is in line with the definition used in this study (Airike et al., 2019; SER, 2017a). Although the government and labor unions also participate in the AGT, this study only focusses on businesses, business associations and NGOs. Because of time constraints, only stakeholders that appear the most relevant in the AGT are included. Businesses are chosen to be incorporated in this study because they form the core of the AGT; the whole initiative is aimed at improving their production chains. NGOs are chosen to incorporate because it became clear from the data that this stakeholder plays an important role in supporting the businesses. Lastly, business associations are chosen because it became clear from the data that the participating business associations had a huge role in initiating the AGT.

The AGT started on July 4th, 2016 and will remain in effect for five years (SER, 2017b). The business associations played an important role in forming the AGT. They came up with a vision for the future, but at the same time the government became involved in the discussion about the future of the textile industry. Two motions concerning the industry were passed by the House of Representatives. One of these was regarded legislations to oblige businesses in the textile industry to become transparent about their production chains; the other concerted establishing agreements with the textile industry to stop child labor in India. However, as stopping child labor in India was not established as a duty in the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), the European guidelines (Ruggie, 2008), the textile industry did not want to make agreements with the government about that. The business associations did not want to collaborate with the government and therefore had to devise a plan. Based on an investigation of the main problems in the industry, the part of the production chains in which these problems occurred and the countries, the business association started a multi-stakeholder project with the aim of solving ten prioritized problems. At the same time, the plan arose to make political agreements with sectors on how to make international production chains more sustainable. The textile industry was eligible, because they had major problems in international production chains and was on its way to solving these problems. In

May 2016, an agreement was reached and the AGT was launched. Currently, 48% of the Dutch garment-related businesses have joined the AGT, together with the Dutch government, five NGOs, two labor unions, and three business associations (Rutten & Oudendijk, 2019). The goal of the AGT is to have support of at least 80% of the Dutch garments and textile sector by the end of 2020 (SER, 2017a).

Businesses that signed the AGT first have to investigate the production locations where the products of the business are produced and make a plan of action with risks and priorities in terms of human rights, animal welfare and environmental impact (SER, 2017c). For making plans of action, the AGT has set up a test system to guide businesses through the process of due diligence (SER, 2016; SER, 2017b). Due diligence is the research that has to be done in order to investigate whether businesses are involved in abuses with regard to human rights, the environment, and animal welfare (SER, 2017c). In the second year after signing, the businesses are required to start the execution of their plan of action with the help of the business associations, the NGOs and the labor unions (SER, 2017c). Every year, the businesses are asked to write a report to show the progress and to sharpen the goals. After the third year, the businesses themselves have to communicate with the public about their actions. For example, HEMA signed the AGT on July 6, 2016 and now produces annual sustainability reports. In this report, the production chain, the sustainable development goals, and the results can be found (HEMA, n.d.). By obligating businesses to be transparent about their actions, the AGT seeks to give businesses incentives to further improve the production chains.

3.2 Research design

The goal of this study is to give insight in the motivations of businesses, business associations and NGOs to participate in the AGT, in order to contribute to the existing knowledge about motivations of different stakeholders to participate in MSIs. To investigate the motivations of the different stakeholders, a qualitative research approach is applied. Qualitative research is about “collecting, analyzing and interpreting data by observing what people do and say” (Monfared & Derakshan, 2015, p. 1111). By using qualitative research, detailed and rich data are obtained which give an in-depth understanding of the phenomena under research (Monfared & Derakshan, 2015). Bleijenbergh (2015) states that qualitative research can be used to find out the motivation behind changes and choices, which suits the goal of this study to find out the motivation of different stakeholders to participate in the AGT. Furthermore, qualitative research is suited if the subject under research is relatively new (Putney, Green, Dixon & Kelly, 1999), which is the case in this study where the motivations of different stakeholders to participate in MSIs is under-researched and knowledge has to be gathered using an open mind.

Induction is an approach that allows for using an open mind (Gioia, Corley & Hamilton, 2012). In this approach the researcher goes out into the field, realizing that the main goal is to give respondents a voice in the early stages of data gathering and analysis. Giving respondents a voice in

early stages is relevant, because they know the situation from the inside and the researcher tries to understand that situation (Gioia et al., 2012). Giving the respondent a voice to explore his/her situation was essential in this study, because knowledge on why different stakeholders participate in the AGT was not available in advance. Before looking at the documents and respondents, some general insights have been gathered about why different stakeholders participate in CSR and MSIs, leading to a kind of approach that lies between induction and deduction. While we had some general insights beforehand, I was open to finding new insights and efforts are made to understand the situation of the different stakeholders in the AGT with regard to their motivations for participating in the AGT.

3.3 Data collection

The data sources used in this study are interviews and documents. Interviews are the main data source and have been chosen because they allow giving voice to the respondents in an open way, which suits the inductive approach that is applied in this study (Gioia et al., 2012). A total of 11 interviews were done with employees of the three different stakeholders included in this study. The respondents have been chosen to reflect participation within the AGT. Table 1 shows the different respondents with their respective functions in their organizations. Seven of the respondents represented businesses. Of these seven businesses, three are large (more than 250 employees) and four are small (5 to 60 employees). Four of the businesses fit the category fast fashion, where the business strategy of the retailer is to respond quickly to emerging fashion trends and consumer demand (Watson & Yan, 2013). Two of the businesses fit the category slow fashion, in which the retailer's business strategy is focused on quality oriented, timeless designs (Watson & Yan, 2013). One of the businesses only produces make-to-order items in a business-to-business market. Two of the respondents represented NGOs and one a business association. These respondents are selected because their work is related to the AGT. Lastly, one

Stakeholder	Respondent	Source
Business 1	R1 - CSR-manager	Interview <i>via</i> Skype
Business 2	R2 - Director	Interview <i>via</i> telephone
Business 3	R3 - Director Products and Operations	Interview <i>via</i> Skype
Business 4	R4 - Key account-manager	Interview <i>via</i> telephone
Business 5	R5 - Head supply management	Interview <i>via</i> Meets
Business 6	R6 - Director Procurement and CSR	Interview <i>via</i> Skype
Business 7	R7 - CSR-manager	Interview <i>via</i> e-mail
NGO 1	R8 - Corporate Alliance specialist	Interview <i>via</i> telephone
NGO 2	R9 - Programme Officer Human Rights and Businesses	Interview <i>via</i> telephone
SER	R10 - Coordinator of the AGT	Interview <i>via</i> telephone
Business Association	R11 - Senior consultant corporate responsibility	Interview <i>via</i> telephone

Table 1: overview of stakeholders interviewed in this study

employee of the Socio-Economic Council (SER) is interviewed. The employee of the SER is interviewed because during data analysis it became clear that this person played a big role in initiating the AGT. In the emergence period of the AGT, the respondent was part of one of the business associations. The information this respondent gave is used to analyze the motivations of business associations to initiate the AGT. The respondents all are somehow involved in the decision to join the AGT. In order to find respondents that were able to conduct an interview with, I contacted a random selection of businesses, all NGOs, a business association and the respondent of the SER *via* e-mail, LinkedIn, and telephone. The respondents are chosen by asking the companies if I could speak to the person responsible for the AGT.

When interviewing respondents, a semi-structured interview is used, to “obtain both retrospective and real-time accounts by those people experiencing the phenomenon” (Gioia et al., 2012, p. 19). The few interview questions that have been prepared are open-ended to create depth. I asked for further clarification when something came up that could answer the research question and therefore, the interview was largely formed by what the respondent said, according to the procedure of Gioia et al. (2012). This type of interview is appropriate for this study, as it allowed deviating from the interview guideline when something beneficial emerge for the results of the study that was not directly asked for, but simply mentioned. At the same time, the guideline ensured that all relevant topics are discussed. The interview started with general questions like: ‘what is your function?’ and ‘what is your role with regard to the AGT?’. The interview guidelines can be found in Appendix A. Attention is paid to the interview guidelines, as it is important to check whether the interview can provide an answer to the research question (Gioia et al., 2012). For that reason, the guideline was first ‘tested’ on fellow students, after which it was adapted. During the interview period, the interview guideline is reflected on after every interview and adjusted where necessary.

The second data sources are documents, which allow obtaining knowledge about organizations with a relatively small risk of socially desirable behavior (Bleijenbergh, 2015). A total of 15 documents are analyzed, as shown in table 2. Documents that are analyzed are CSR reports of the businesses that participate in this study *via* an interview, annual reports of three NGOs, documents of the AGT, and a document of the three business associations. These documents are all found online. The CSR-reports of the selected businesses, annual reports of three of the NGOs, and the sector plan of the three business associations were selected, because they consist of corporate strategies, policies

Stakeholders	Type of document	Amount of documents	Numbers
Businesses	CSR-reports and websites	4 reports and 5 websites	D1 – D9
Business associations	Sector Plan	1	D10
NGOs	Annual reports	3	D11 – D13
SER	Publication and Midterm Evaluation	2	D14 – D15

Table 2: Overview of documents analyzed in this study

and goals (Symon & Cassell, 2012) and therefore provide rich information about how the participation in the MSI can be motivated by these strategies, policies, and goals. Besides, examples of documents from the AGT that will be analyzed are the Publication (SER, 2016) and the Midterm Evaluation (Rutten & Oudendijk, 2019).

During the data collection, notes were made about what the informants said and I thought, felt, and saw (Gioia et al., 2012). The interviews are partly conducted in collaboration with other students, who also focus on MSIs, but with slightly different focus points. Both students brought their own questions to the interview. The interviews lasted between half an hour and an hour. As the recent COVID-19 outbreak and the current situation in the Netherlands (Rijksoverheid, 2020) restricted meeting respondents face-to-face, the interviews took place by telephone, *via* e-mail or *via* Skype or Meets. However, interviewing respondents by telephone or *via* Skype or Meets has several implications (Deakin & Wakefield, 2013). In terms of recruitment, telephone or Skype interviews provide flexibility in organizing the interview time, leading to increased willingness to participate (Deakin & Wakefield, 2013). In addition, the respondent could very easily withdraw from the interview, which is an advantage in terms of research ethics. However, interviewing *via* telephone or Skype, however, has some drawbacks (Deakin & Wakefield, 2013). The distance between the researcher and respondent could lead to less commitment of the participant in the process. According to Drabble, Trocki, Salcedo, Walker, and Korcha (2015) it is important, among other things, to respond to the content and the concerns of the respondents. Furthermore, the researcher has to communicate regard for the contribution of the respondent (Drabble et al., 2015). In this study, I tried

1 st Order Concepts	2 nd Order Concepts	Aggregate Dimension
Learning, getting information and support from parties within the AGT (63)	Information, tooling, and support	Motivations of Businesses
Learning from other businesses (21)		
Overcoming complex problems together (30)	Realizing impact	
Hope to transform the industry (18)	Intrinsic motivation	
Fits well with the vision (9)	Reputation	
Nice to show clients (23)	Pressure	
Responding to stakeholder expectations (16)	Encouragement for others	
Responding to legislative pressure (8)		
Beacon to others as a motivation to participate(6)		Motivations of Business Associations
Stimulate consumers to think about and buy sustainable (3)	Image of the industry	
Desire to respond to questions and critique (5)		
Desire to demonstrate that industry has improved (4)	Realizing impact	
Desire to solve complex challenges together (12)	Supporting businesses	
Ambition to make the industry more sustainable (5)		Motivations of NGOs
Desire to stand up for businesses (5)	Realizing impact	
Desire to guide businesses through process of due diligence (5)	Creating awareness and influence	
Solving complex challenges together (35)		
AGT imposes obligations on businesses (7)		
Creating awareness to human or animal rights (28)		
Chance to lobby (7)		

Table 3: Data-structure of concepts and dimensions found in this study (without quotes)

to use my relational skills effectively by demonstrate responsiveness and regard for the participant.

3.4 Data analysis

After conducting the interviews, the interviews are directly transcribed, so that the interview guide could be reflected on and adjusted before the next respondent was interviewed. The interviews were literally transcribed so that they are as close as possible to the respondent's original intention and the risk of self-interpretation remains limited. Dutch interviews were translated into English.

When analyzing the data, the Gioia method is used in line with the inductive character of this study (Gioia et al., 2012). The first step in the analysis process of the interviews and documents is open coding in which the interviews were read and, faithful to the respondents' terms, labels were attached to parts of the interviews (Gioia et al., 2012). To get an overview of the many different categories during the coding process, the ATLAS.ti software was used. After open coding, axial coding followed, which is the search for similarities and differences between the categories (Gioia et al., 2012). Categories that seemed to have many similarities were merged and relabeled with overarching names. The deeper structure behind the categories was explored by summarizing the respondent terms in the theoretical level of first and second order concepts and dimensions. These concepts and dimensions, or the data structure (Gioia et al., 2012), formed the basis for building a model. The data structure can be seen in Table 3, to get an idea of how concepts originated from the data. The data structure with inclusion of illustrative quotes can be found in Appendix B. The number behind the first order concepts refers to the number of times the code is used in the analysis. When certain encodings were included in the data structure, but had a low occurrence frequency, I went back to the data and saw whether different respondents may have used different terms to describe the same phenomenon (Gioia et al., 2012). Furthermore, a fellow student looked at the codes and we discussed them together. After building the data structure, a more dynamic model, which shows the experiences of the respondents in theoretical terms, was built (Gioia et al., 2012). This model will be elaborated on in chapter 4.

3.5 Research ethics

When conducting research, it is important to be aware of research ethics and to consider the impact of the study on others (Symon & Cassell, 2012). Research ethics are the "measure of the degree to which researchers adhere to the rules or laws, regulations, guidelines, and commonly accepted professional codes and norms of their respective research areas" (Steneck, 2002, p.2). Pimple (2002) distinguishes three categories in which a particular research project can be divided: is it true? Is it fair? Is it wise? These three questions will be answered to consider the research ethics of this study, in order to address the research ethics in a systematic way.

The question 'is it true?' refers to scientific integrity, or the relationship between the results of this study and the actual world (Pimple, 2002). To ensure that this relationship is consistent in this

study, the study collected data from the field without manipulation, falsification or fabrication of data. Furthermore, the researcher is aware of unintentional biases. In this study, the idea was present that businesses would participate in the AGT with the main aim of increasing their reputation and strengthening their competitive position. While attempts have been made to ignore this assumption, it may affect the way encoding and analysis has been performed.

Apart from the fact that the research must be ‘true’, it must also be ‘fair’. First of all, fair to other researchers, for example, by preventing plagiarism (Pimple, 2002). Furthermore, fair to the research ‘subjects’, or the respondents, and fair to institutions, or the participation organizations. To be fair to the respondents, prior to data collection, respondents are told that they are participating in master thesis research and that the objective of the study is to understand the motivations of different stakeholders to engage in MSIs. They are guaranteed that they could withdraw at any time. Furthermore, permission for audio recording is requested from the respondent, so that the interview could be transcribed afterwards. The respondent is guaranteed that the name of the organization (with the exception of the SER) is anonymized. Only the function of the respondent is mentioned (*e.g.*, owner or CSR manager).

Finally, the study has to be ‘wise’. The study has to contribute to a better world and more insights and knowledge (Pimple, 2002). With the knowledge gathered in this study about motivations of different stakeholders to participate in MSIs, MSIs can respond to the needs of the different stakeholders and by doing that, becoming stronger in tackling the complex problems together (Ashwin et al., 2020; Soundararajan et al., 2019).

4 Results

This chapter elaborates on the empirical findings of this study. First, the motivations of business associations to initiate and participate in the AGT will be addressed. Then, the motivations of NGOs to participate in the AGT will be elaborated on and finally, the motivations of businesses will be discussed.

4.1 Why business associations participate in the AGT

During data collection it became clear that the business associations were the initiators of the AGT, as is explained in the previous chapter. More specific, the interviewed business association (BA1) started to find a solution to the problems in the industry and later involved the other business associations. The business association had several motivations for initiating the AGT, which are the improvement of the image of the industry, the desire to realize impact in the textile industry and the desire to guide businesses through the process of due diligence. These motivations will be discussed in more detail in this section. The different motivations the business association had to initiate and participate in the AGT are summarized in Figure 1. The motivation that appeared most frequently in data analysis is the desire to realize impact. However, the initial motivation to initiate the AGT was about the image of the industry and therefore, this motivation is explained first.

4.1.1 Image of the industry

The first motivation to initiate the AGT is to improve the image of the industry. This motivation

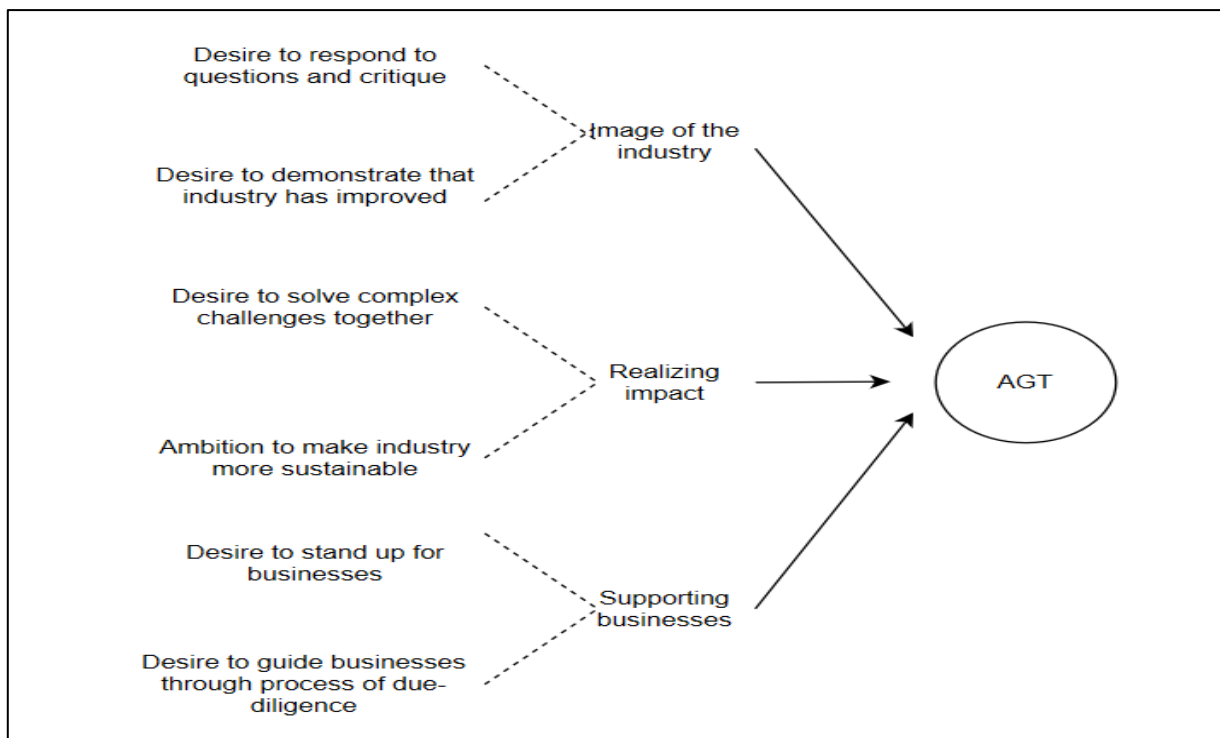


Figure 1: Motivations of Business Associations to participate in the AGT

consists of the desire to respond to criticism on the textile industry and the desire to be able to demonstrate that the textile industry is taking steps towards sustainability.

This section first addresses the desire to respond to the criticism on the textile industry. What emerges from the data is that it is often thought that the Rana Plaza disaster was the starting point of criticism on the textile industry and for thinking about working conditions in developing countries. Many critical reports write that the questioned image of the textile industry as a result of these disasters was the driving force behind the creation of the AGT. However, the origins of the principles of the AGT go further back in time. R11 says about Rana Plaza:

... I've got something like that that was maybe some kind of drop or a terrible drop, a huge drop. But work had been going on for a long time to make the industry more sustainable and several problems had come to light in the chain. And there was already a lot going on. We had been working on it for years and then came the Rana Plaza and then the whole world was over the industry. So it was all a much longer process that made this happens.

So, the questioned image of the textile industry as a result of disasters such as Rana Plaza was not a direct motivation to initiate the AGT. The process that made the emergence of the AGT happen began at the end of the last century, when many Dutch companies relocated their production to developing countries. NGOs, governments and the business associations in the textile industry started thinking about human rights in these countries. One of the initiatives that came up to tackle human rights in developing countries was the FWF; an MSI initiated by BA1 in which different stakeholders came together and set minimum requirements on the subject of human rights in developing countries. In addition to the FWF there were several other initiatives to meet the minimum requirements. Although initiatives such as the FWF and later the Amfori BSCI came on the market, individual companies and the business association received criticism and questions from NGOs on environmental and social issues. The business associations wanted a solution to the criticisms and questions they received from NGOs, among others. One of the respondents (R10) says:

Um, I then asked the board of BA1 if I could develop a meeting with the aim of getting out of the negative situation where you receive criticism every week, without actually having a good answer. So we had to start thinking about: what does it take to make things better? So that that criticism isn't denied, but is dealt with.

R11 confirms that BA1 faced the criticism and that something had to change so that BA1 would not “always have to defend our industry afterwards”. Initiating the AGT was seen as a way to respond to the questions and critique. The desire to get an answer to the criticisms and questions about the textile

industry is used five times in data analysis and is a first motivation underlying the initiation of the AGT.

However, the AGT was not directly present in response to the criticism. The first step in addressing the criticism was to create a vision on the future of the textile industry. In this vision (1) the continuity of the Dutch companies was the most important, (2) the goal was to achieve real impact in the production chains, (3) the starting point was responsibility, (4) it was clear that a learning process was needed and (5) cooperation with stakeholders was important, according to R10. The fourth and the fifth point of the vision are interrelated. Through a learning process, the industry wanted to make step-by-step changes in the right direction and BA1 wanted to be able to demonstrate that the industry is taking steps. However, to demonstrate that the industry is taking steps, collaboration with stakeholders was necessary. In a dialogue, the different stakeholders could express their opinions and have a say in what the industry has to change. R10 explains the need for such a dialogue by saying:

It's not up to us to judge whether we're doing well as a sector. We can say ourselves as a sector that we are doing well, but if the Clean Clothes Campaign, or MSI International or Greenpeace thinks we are doing it completely wrong, then they are often more right than we are. And then that criticism doesn't stop, so you have to talk to all parties in the chain, who are your stakeholders.

Furthermore, an independent entity that could give feedback on how the industry was doing was needed. R11 wanted supervision from an independent body, because of “the fact that we not only say 'yes they are doing a good job' as a sector organization. Because yes, it's quite unbelievable if we say that alone (laughter). Yes, that's why.” Inviting different stakeholders to the table and the need for supervision for an independent body was necessary in order to show that the industry has taken steps. Initiating the AGT with the independent secretariat of the SER was seen as a way to demonstrate that the industry had taken steps. The desire to be able to demonstrate that the industry had taken steps is used four times in data analysis and was the second motivation that formed the basis of initiating the AGT.

4.1.2 Realizing impact

Besides wanting to get an answer to the critique and being able to show that the industry improved, BA1 wanted to realize impact. The motivation of initiating the AGT to realize impact consists of the ambition to make the textile industry more sustainable and to be able to solve the complex challenges together. This section first addresses the ambition to make the textile industry more sustainable and then the desire to be able to solve complex challenges together.

In order to make the textile industry more sustainable, there were already several initiatives in the market. These initiatives were about codes of conducts and other statements for transparency, but it was experienced that they did not solve the problems. R11 says about this: “We heard more and more from politicians the desire for transparency they always talked about, while something like yes only pop the production locations on the internet is really not going to help sustainability.” Commitment to sustainability in the textile industry is what the business associations want. The sector plan of the three business associations INretail, Modint and VGT (D10) states:

It is the sector's explicit ambition to bring together as many sustainability activities as possible in order to achieve a circular clothing and textile sector by 2050 with good production conditions for people, animals and the environment, as envisaged in the Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile.

From the data, it becomes clear that the business associations want the textile industry to become more sustainable. Sustainability is also high on the agenda at BA1. The desire to make the industry more sustainable is a reaction to the developments in the textile industry with regard to human rights violations. The business associations have become aware of their role in these developments. They saw that the purchasing behavior of their member businesses influences the circumstances in the factories with regard to human and animal rights. R11 says about this: “And well, based on the need of our business association to make our industry an honest, clean, innovative industry, how do you say that, to get there again. Sustainability is simply a part of that”. Initiating the AGT was a way to start realizing the ambition to make the industry more sustainable. This ambition to make the industry more sustainable, because “we simply find it important that it is an honest and clean industry” (R11) is used five times in data analysis and is the third motivation that formed the basis for initiating the AGT.

BA1 realized that collaboration with other parties was needed to make the textile industry more sustainable. R10 argues that all the parties did do their best to solve the complex problems, but did not succeed. Businesses and business associations did develop code of conducts and certificates, NGOs wrote critical reports and labor unions published leaflets, but no one succeeded in solving the underlying problems. R11 agrees on the fact that all parties did try to do their best on their own, but that ‘finger pointing’ did not solve the problems. R11 says:

And, yes, we actually noticed that every time it was a little bit retrospective to soothe or solve or something like that and in the end we didn't come close to the solution. So we thought it would be better to work together with all those clubs instead of pointing the finger at each other, who's to blame for the situation. So in that way. That was one of the main reasons we'd rather work with you.

R10 agrees and says: “No one, no company, no trade union, no government, no NGO, no business association, can solve the problems on their own, so you have to work together, but you have to want to”. BA1 already had experience with collaborations with other parties in MSIs and saw this form of organizing as the only way to a solution. R11: “What we've also set up before is the Fair Wear Foundation, for example. There, too, we're in a multi-stakeholder partnership in the steering committee. And that's just, yeah, we think that's the only way to a solution”. Working together in order to solve the complex challenges in the production chains together is used twelve times in data analysis and is the fourth motivations that formed the basis for initiating the AGT.

4.1.3 Supporting businesses

Besides the ambition to make the textile industry more sustainable and to be able to solve complex problems together, the business association had the motivation of the desire to support businesses. This motivation consist of the desire to guide businesses through the process of due diligence and to be able to stand up for the businesses within the AGT. This section first addresses the desire to guide businesses through the process of due diligence and then the desire to stand up for the businesses within the AGT.

An important development in the emergence of the AGT was the emergence of the United Nation Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). The UNGPs set out the responsibilities for the situation in developing countries. R10 explains that before the emergence of the UNGPs, many businesses thought that their responsibility went no further than legal agreements with suppliers, without recognizing the responsibilities with regard to human rights in developing countries. However, the UNGPs established that governments have the ‘Duty to Protect’ and businesses have the ‘Business Responsibility to Respect’ and the duty to provide ‘Access to Remedy’ (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2014). According to the UNGPs, businesses have to respect human rights because “it is the basic expectation society has of businesses” (Ruggie, 2008, p. 5). Businesses have to “obey to the law, even if it is not enforced” (Ruggie, 2008, p. 8). Besides obedience to the law, businesses have to do due diligence; that is the process of ensuring compliance to the laws, but also minimizing the risks of violations towards human rights (Ruggie, 2008). Although businesses have the duty to protect human rights and provide access to remedies, the framework is a ‘soft framework’, meaning that there is no hard control over this. However, this ‘soft framework’ was seen as an ideal basis for an agreement between NGOs, labor unions and business associations. The various stakeholders therefore agreed to support the businesses in the steps of due diligence and to evaluate progress. BA1 agreed on this because they realized that businesses have the duty to respect human rights and the duty to provide access to remedies. BA1 wants to “provide the best possible guidance, but also with the guidance of those critical parties. ... We want to include them [businesses and NGOs] in the process and be transparent to each other in a safe environment. So that's what's

happening now” (R11). Guiding businesses through the process of due diligence is also a way to prepare the business for the future. R10 tells that in several countries, and also in the EU and the Netherlands, legislation is being made on child labor and due diligence. R10 explains the theory of the survival of the fittest: “the fittest is not the biggest or the strongest, but the fittest is the one that adapts best when the circumstances around you change”. In order to survive, businesses need to adapt their business model to changing legislations. The desire to guide businesses through the process of due diligence in order to prepare them for the future is used five times in data analysis and is a fifth motivation underlying the initiation of the AGT.

The business associations wanted to support the businesses in the process of due diligence, but at the same time BA1 wanted to stand up for the businesses within the AGT. The vision of the textile industry emphasized the importance of the continuity of the Dutch businesses and the tension between sustainability and competition in the textile industry. The businesses and business associations strive for a more sustainable industry, but at the same time the competition and the price pressure in the textile industry are high. As a result, businesses may be willing to invest in sustainability, but the success of the business depends on the willingness of the customer to buy a higher price for sustainability. R10 explains:

It was just very complicated to do this right, because there was competition in the market, so if your competitors can achieve low prices for the same product, or for the comparable product, yes, then you can't put a higher price on the market endlessly, under the guise of sustainability. Because then consumers will ignore you and your company will be gone. So, yes, that tension.

The competitive position of businesses was of big importance to the business associations. The document of the business associations (D10) shows the high competition with foreign businesses that do not invest in sustainability. Within the AGT, BA1 wants to ensure that efforts to be made by businesses remain realistic and that the competitive strength of the businesses remains at the same level. R11 says about this:

Uhm well, in general of course in discussions in the steering committee you notice, for example, that NGOs and trade unions always prefer to go as far as possible in their ambitions. And you notice that we have to give a reality check every now and then. Like: listen, they're not philanthropic institutions, not yet. So companies have to give you the time, or the means, to move forward sometimes.

The desire to stand up for businesses interests within the AGT is used five times in data analysis and is the sixth and last motivation to initiate the AGT. The different motivations the business association had to initiate and participate in the AGT are summarized and explained in Table 4.

Motivations Businesses	Explanation
Image of the industry	Business associations see the AGT as a means to respond to questions and critique and to demonstrate that the industry has improved.
Realizing impact	Business associations see the AGT as a means to achieve the ambition to make the industry more sustainable and to solve complex challenges together.
Supporting businesses	Business associations see the AGT as a means to guide businesses through the process of due diligence and want to stand up for businesses within the AGT.

Table 4: Motivations of business associations

4.2 Why NGOs participate in the AGT

Now the motivations of business associations to initiate and participate in the AGT are clear, the question is why the other parties wanted to join. This section will be about the motivations of NGOs. Analysis of data of three NGOs has shown that their objectives can be divided into two categories. The NGOs want (1) to create awareness to human or animal rights and (2) to realize sustainable improvements with regards to human or animal rights. To achieve these two goals, NGOs lobby and collaborate in strong collaborations. A summary of the motivations of NGOs to participate in the AGT can be seen in Figure 2. The motivation that appeared most frequently in data analysis is the desire to realize impact. However, before realizing impact, awareness have to be created and therefore, the motivation of creating awareness is explained first.

4.2.1 Creating awareness

The first motivation of NGOs to participate in the AGT is to create awareness to human or animal

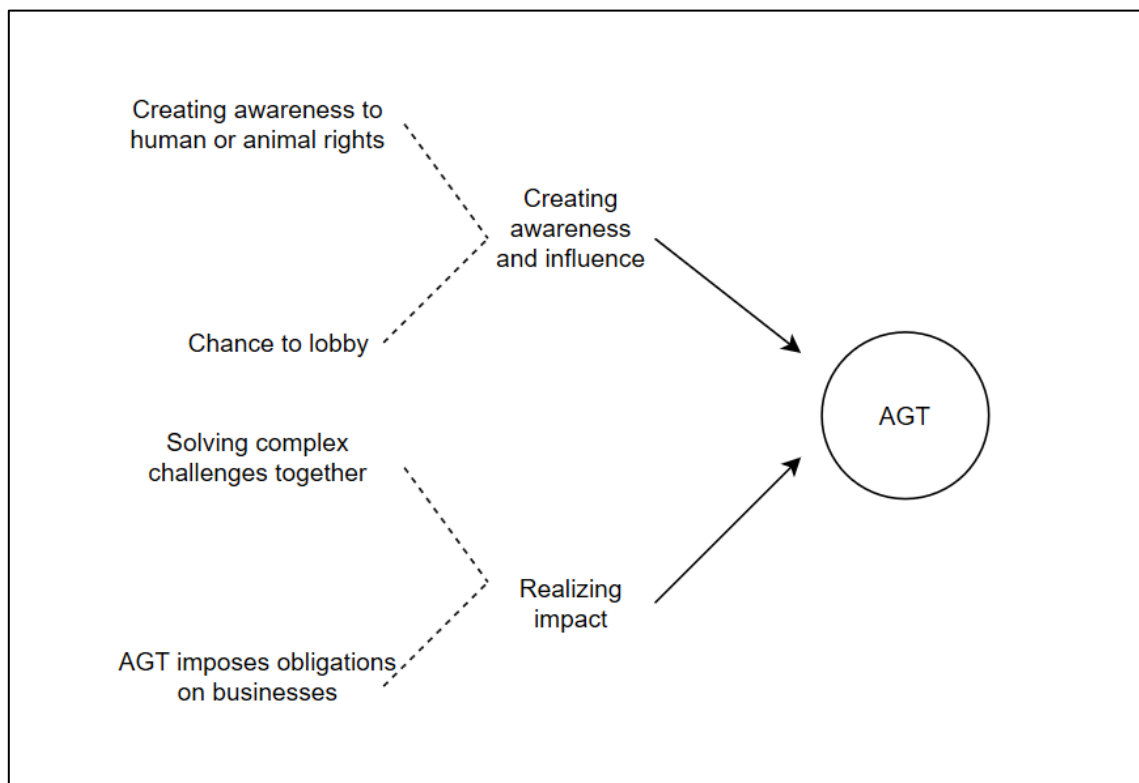


Figure 2: Motivations of NGOs to participate in the AGT

rights. Joining the AGT is a means to create this awareness and to lobby. This section first addresses the desire to create awareness and then the AGT as a means to lobby.

One of the goals of the three NGOs is to create awareness to human or animal rights. The annual report of NGO3 (D13) says: “the aim of our campaigns and educational work is to inform the public about animal suffering, and to bring about sustainable improvements for animals...”. Informing the public is important to the strategy of NGOs. NGO3 sees participation in the AGT as a significant step, because the Netherlands is the first country that involves animal rights in an MSI in the textile industry, according to their annual report (D13). The AGT seems to be a way to supplement campaigns and media-activities of NGO3 that address animal violations in the textile industry. The aim of informing the public and creating awareness can also be seen in the annual report of NGO2 (D12). One of their four basic activities is to create “social awareness of human rights violations and abuses in production chains”. The subject of human rights violations is complicated, because it is integrated in the production chains. R8 tries to illustrate this by an example of child labor:

Because if you start looking at: where is the real child labor, you just notice that because of all the interventions that are carried out, there is actually a focus on child labor that is shifting deeper and deeper into chains ... Where you can think of forms like an employee working in a first tier factory of the production chain, so the link you actually, the last link in the chain before it goes to the shops, that... there you will encounter little child labor. They are well regulated, they are relatively safe, they have their affairs reasonably in order, so of course that can always be improved, but as a worker you don't have the circumstances you have in mind, but what you can have is that the employees are parents who don't get paid enough, yes, so they have to let their children work in other sectors.

R8 calls this situation a ‘disguised’ form of child labor, because the organization itself does not have the children at work, but creates the conditions for child labor in other industries. Joining the AGT is the ideal way to create that social awareness of human rights violations and abuses in production chains, as the AGT facilitates the meeting of businesses that together have the aim of improving production chains. The AGT facilitates the process of coming together and then provides a platform in which is room to have a dialogue with businesses. R8: “So instead of having to pull very hard to get a conversation at one company, we can now stand in front of a group of fifty companies and tell them what we do and why it's important at once”. The midterm evaluation (D15) points on the added value the AGT has for NGOs, because “they can apply an ‘insider approach’ rather than being limited to the role of a watchdog”. At the start of the AGT, creating awareness for integrated problems like child labor was really difficult, R8 mentions. Businesses did only look at their own factories and were scared to look outside the factory walls. Three years ago, R8 explained that only getting the children out of the factories is not fighting against child labor. What is required is to think in systems and

collaborations. R8: “And now, three years later, they themselves say: well, if we want to do something with this, we have to look at the context and how we contribute to it. That sounds small, but that's a huge change in mentality”. A change in mentality is also what R9 sees. Businesses realize that they have a role in cross-factory problems. However, some problems are rooted in cultures of countries, like gender-discrimination in India. R9 does not expect businesses to solve the gender-discrimination problem; however, this respondent wants to create awareness to the fact that businesses could make a difference on factory level. Creating awareness by changing mentalities and learning businesses to look at themselves was used twenty eight times in data analysis and is a reason why NGO1 have participated.

NGOs go beyond just creating awareness; they also try to influence decision-making by lobbying. NGO1 states in their annual report (D11): “Politicians are more inclined to support policy changes if they are given the urgency to do so through media and lobbying”. One of the activities of NGO2, established in D12, is “advocacy and policy influencing in politics and business”. The AGT fits NGOs well, because “this is just part of the lobbying that NGO1 also does towards sectors, towards government” (R8). From that perspective, NGO1 joined the AGT to ensure that social rights are taken into account. The same holds for NGO2. R9 says about this:

Well, among other things, it was seen by us as one of our lobbying activities. So, yes, what I said earlier is that we are a kind of lobbying club that deals with the issues in business, the social issues that we encounter in factories and in the chains of companies. And, of course, it [joining the AGT] is a way of influencing them, for example by putting certain issues on the agenda and also, well, by arguing for what we think companies should do.

It became clear that the AGT for NGOs was a chance to have an influence in the industry. R8 says about this:

So Minister Kaak who came up with a proposal to draw up Agreements, yes if you are a lobbying organization like us, then it is and not even a choice whether you participate in it, these are opportunities that come once in a lifetime and you have to step on them.

From the data, it became clear that NGO1 and NGO2 see the chance to create awareness to human rights and to have influence in businesses as a motivation to participate in the AGT. In the AGT, the NGOs try to address issues that are relevant to their goals and try to come to a sort of consensus. From the annual report of NGO3 (D13) it became clear that NGO3 shares the goal of creating awareness to human or animal rights with the other two NGOs. Influencing businesses and governments through lobbying by being part of the AGT came up seven times in data analysis and is one of the motivations of NGOs to participate in the AGT.

4.2.2 Realizing impact

Besides creating awareness to human or animal rights, the NGOs want to realize sustainable improvements. This motivation consists of the desire to work together to solve complex problems together and the fact that the AGT imposes obligations on businesses. This section first addresses the desire to solve complex problems together and then the obligations businesses have within the AGT.

Realizing impact is the second goal of NGOs. The annual report of NGO3 (D13) states: “we offer sustainable solutions for animals in need”. The policies of NGO3 are focused on structural solutions in the future. The same holds for NGO1. As of a few years ago, NGO1 realized that in order to achieve sustainable improvements with regards to human rights, global production chains had to be changed. Instead of helping humans that are victims of misconduct within global production chains, NGO1 wanted to create a system that is self-sustaining, respects children’s and human rights, and meets their basic needs. Therefore, NGO1 based their joint strategic plan on realizing impact in global production chains. The AGT suited well in this plan on realizing impact in global production chains. R8: “so this [joining the AGT] was just a great opportunity for NGO1 uh is still a great opportunity to make an impact to meet the mandate to stand up for the respect of children's rights”. NGO2 too wants to achieve sustainable improvements. The AGT “is related to the mission and vision of our organization”, according to R9. And further:

Well, at the end of the day, of course, we want to see an impact on the level of working conditions and the environment in chains. So that's why we joined in. That those workers eventually get better wages, better conditions. Yes, to be able to work in decent working conditions. That there will also be sustainable structures in which workers can monitor their working conditions and raise issues if something doesn't go well.

In order to achieve sustainable improvements, collaboration is important, NGO2 states in D12: “Cooperation at national and European level is an important means for the organization to achieve the intended changes”. Within the AGT, the NGOs collaborate with businesses in specific projects. Since a few years, businesses invite NGOs to give advice on their plans of action and talks about the problems they face. With the networks and expertise of the NGOs, NGOs can help businesses to improve their production chains so that in the end the whole production chain improves and rights are respected. The knowledge of NGO2 stems from their investigations. NGO2 talks to employees of the factories and obtains an image of the real situation. Businesses can use the investigations of NGO2 in combination with their own audits. Furthermore, NGOs can link businesses to other parties due to the extensive network of NGO2. If a business wants to know how the working conditions in a certain factory are, NGO2 brings the business in contact with a local labor union. Due to their networks and expertise, NGOs can help businesses with improving their production chains in order to solve complex

problems together. Being able to solve complex problems together is used thirty five times in data analysis and is a third motivation of NGOs to participate in the AGT.

In order to be able to solve complex problems together, it was important for NGOs that companies were obliged to cooperate. The slogan of the AGT is, according to R8, “voluntary, but not without obligation”. The AGT gives markers that the businesses have to comply with. For NGO2, a duty on transparency within the AGT was the strongest motivation. The fact that businesses have to submit a list with production locations provides NGOs the opportunity to investigate the working conditions in those factories. The transparency is not only about the first-tier suppliers, but also much deeper in the chain, which motivated NGO2 even more. NGO1 too saw the importance of transparency. R8 says about this: “If you're talking about transparency, for example. ... from my point of view I think yes guys, come on, don't dribble, just say it and then we can all do something together”. Doing something together is required in order to achieve the concrete milestones the businesses have to achieve. R8 knows that the milestones that businesses have to achieve are difficult. However, R8 is happy that the AGT has these milestones. R9 agrees with that by seeing:

Yes, and because of the fact that at the moment that companies sign, there really are obligations for them, I think that's the most important thing. That it doesn't have a non-committal character at the moment you sign and that you really need to show something.

The non-committal character of the AGT makes it possible for NGOs to have expectations of businesses. R9: “But the AGT does provide the framework within which we can simply have these expectations of companies. The companies know that too”. The fact that the NGOs were able to have these expectations is used seven times in data analysis and is the fourth motivation for the NGOs to participate in the AGT. The different motivations NGOs had to participate in the AGT are summarized and explained in Table 5.

Motivations Businesses	Explanation
Creating awareness and influence	NGOs see the AGT as a means to create awareness to human and animal and as a means to lobby.
Realizing impact	NGOs see the AGT as a means to solve complex challenges together and realize impact, as the AGT imposes obligations on businesses.

Table 5: Motivations of NGOs

4.3 Why businesses participate in the AGT

Now the motivations of business associations and NGOs are clear, the question is why businesses want to join. Most of the businesses knew about the existence of the AGT through BA1. BA1 sent newsletters with developments about the AGT in the textile industry to her members. Not all businesses heard about the AGT *via* BA1 and not everyone knew about the AGT from the beginning in July 2016. For example, B4 knew about the AGT from its client and took the first step in calling the SER about the AGT. However, all participating businesses have joined the AGT and have their

motivations to do so. Businesses join the AGT because they want the information, tooling and support offered by the AGT, because they want to realize impact, because they have an intrinsic motivation, because of an increased reputation, because they respond to stakeholder pressure or because they want to encourage others to think about sustainability too. This section discusses the motivations of businesses to participate in the AGT, which are summarized in Figure 3.

4.3.1 Information, tooling and support

The first category of motivations has to do with information, tooling and support. This motivation consists of the information, tooling and support businesses get from the different parties within the AGT and of the fact that businesses want to learn from other businesses. This section first addresses the information, tooling and support businesses get from the different parties within the AGT and then the fact that businesses learn from each other.

The most common motivation to become a member of the AGT is the information and support that businesses receive from the AGT itself and from the participating parties. This motivation was found sixty-three times in data analysis. In the official publication (D14), the AGT promised to “provide individual companies with tools to prevent and combat (potential) negative impacts of their own company or business relations in the production or supply chain if these occur”. The tools to prevent and combat (potential) negative impacts were reasons for some businesses to join the AGT. R3, for instance, says:

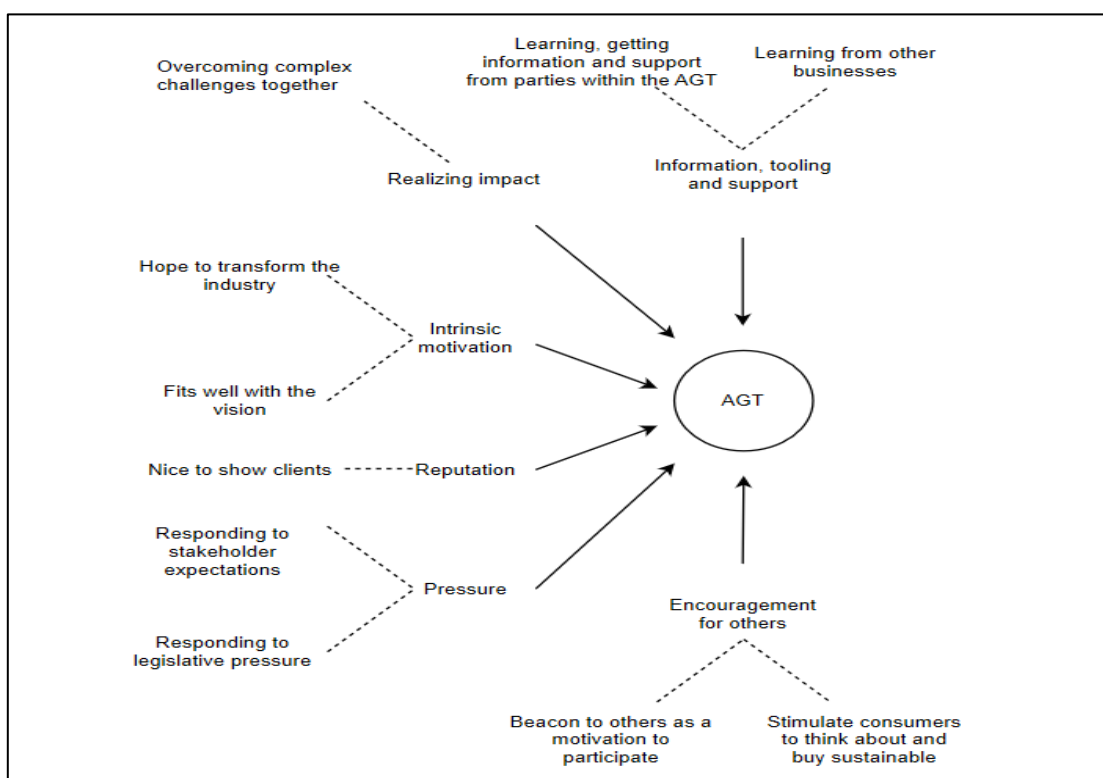


Figure 3: Motivations of businesses to participate in the AGT

Uhm, I had hoped that with this, through my participation, we would just get some more information of how we can do that to get our chain more transparent and get more tools about living wage for example uhm yes that's actually the most important thing.

B3 is not the only business that has joined the AGT because they want to get more tools and information on sustainability issues. Before joining the AGT, most businesses already invested in sustainability, but without clear objectives or a consistent plan. For them, the AGT provides guidance in the process of becoming more sustainable. R2 says about this:

Yeah, what I said is that we really want to go in the sustainable direction with B2 and that's what we're doing. In small steps. We were working on making processes more sustainable, with solar panels, using less water, and also with sustainable materials, organic cotton or recyclable plastic, we were working on that, but yes, it hadn't really gotten into the policy plans or anything like that. It was not entirely clear, not really a step-by-step plan.

R2 saw the AGT as a chance to work out what they were already doing and get support for it. R6 already had a CSR-policy, but wanted to get professional tools to make the policy more concrete and realistic. An example of a tool to support the CSR-policy is a questionnaire in which is established what is expected of businesses with regard to due diligence. By obtaining tools, participation in the AGT was seen by as an additional motivation to take the next step into a sustainable direction. Furthermore, the AGT accelerates the progress because of the deadlines and the reliable, supporting information from the different parties. Among others, this information is shared in webinars, day meetings, and workshops. An example of this is a day meeting on the due diligence process at the beginning of the AGT. In addition to group meetings, businesses can also ask NGOs or other parties for help. The AGT is referred to as a 'large thinktank' because of the different parties willing to provide support and share their thoughts together. Respondents motivate the decision to participate in the AGT by the fact that others share their thoughts on what could be improved. R3 says: "don't just think on your own that you've chosen the best way, but yes, let people take a critical look at your procurement process and think along with you". The ability to get information, tooling, and support is the first motivation businesses had to participate in the AGT.

Moreover, businesses motivate their participation in the AGT with the fact that they want to learn from other businesses. This motivation is found twenty-one times in data analysis. R5 points to the transfer of knowledge with other businesses. This respondent says: "Now we could learn from how they did it, or from Amfori who was in it, too. How WE deals with it, or Hunkemöller or whoever. You could do things faster because you had a lot of knowledge on loan". R1 agrees and reads the reports other businesses share and learns from them. At the AGT meetings, CSR-managers can talk to

each other about CSR topics and learn from each other, for example from best practices. R4 explains that best practices are shared in meetings. R2 has shared his knowledge by means of a presentation on the production chain and procedures of B2. By sharing knowledge, businesses can learn from each other and that formed the second motivation of businesses to join the AGT.

4.3.2 Realizing impact

The intrinsic motivation to change the textile industry was present (see next section), but at the same time the businesses knew that they could not achieve much on their own. “As a company, in the countries where you produce, you can't do that much on your own. You really need the power of the collective, the collaborations, to make an impact” (R1). For example, human rights violations in China where involvement of the government is needed to have an impact. The government can then contact other governments or share information that businesses will never have access to. R6 talks about an example where collaboration with labor unions was necessary, because a factory could not pay a minimum wage. In addition to governments and labor unions, NGOs are also an important party to involve in the due diligence process. Another respondent mentions the problems of women's rights in India. The leverage that B5 had in the factory was small, but B5 could join a project that has much more impact in collaboration with NGOs that had much more knowledge on the subject. These three examples show that real impact can be made if businesses collaborate with other parties. In addition to other parties, businesses see that they also need other businesses that are present in the same factories to have sufficient leverage to initiate changes. R3 was happy to see that some big companies joined the AGT. R3 hoped that these companies produced in the same factory as B3 so that together the businesses would have enough influence to initiate significant improvements. In the case of B3, however, it turned out that they shared factories with only one, even smaller, company, so there was little more leverage. However, the third motivation many businesses had to participate in the AGT was to make overcome complex challenges together.

4.3.3 Intrinsic motivation

Besides businesses join the AGT to realize impact, they also have an intrinsic motivation. This motivation consists of the hope to transform the industry, and the fit of the AGT with the vision of the business. This section first addresses the hope to transform the industry, and then the fit of the AGT with the vision.

Most respondents indicate that the textile industry is a polluting industry and that something has to change. R4 knows that the textile industry ranks second as the most polluting industry. In line with R4, R1 states that the AGT would not exist if there were no problems in this industry. Some of the respondents indicated that they had mixed feelings about the practices at the factories. After Rana Plaza, R6 realized: “Yeah, it's not working. The way we do it, with the limited resources, well, it's not

gonna work”. The respondents feel an intrinsic motivation to contribute to a better world. R6 feels a moral duty when it comes to suppliers. R5 also feels a moral duty to suppliers, but also to the environment. R5: “Because clothing is super bad, in production, and also in the handling once it is used. When it's thrown away. So that's what we feel responsible for, that's why we're working on more sustainable raw materials”. R5 argues that management support is needed to join the AGT and take steps towards sustainability. R1 agrees. In the case of B1, the CSR-manager R1 is part of the strategic team. The CEO who founded the business is still in the organization and feels the intrinsic motivation to take care of the suppliers. B4 also feels the intrinsic motivation to take care of the suppliers and the environment. This intrinsic motivation is the basis of the organization. B4 finds it self-evident to prevent all kinds of violations of human and animal rights and want to motivate others to prevent violations as well. B4 has joined the AGT with the goal of fair production all over the world, also in countries other than the production countries of B4. R6 shares this goal and says: “not only from companies, but also from NGO's and stakeholders, that together we try step by step to buy yes, a piece of fair clothing, more sustainable clothing”. The hope to transform the industry together was found eighteen times in data analysis and is the fourth motivation businesses have to participate in the AGT.

In addition to the hope to transform the industry, the AGT fits well with the visions of some businesses. B5's CSR-report (D3) states: “part of our mission is that we cause no unnecessary harm and improve social and environmental circumstances. Day by day, together with our suppliers and partners, we will work on a better world for our and future generations”. This mission to prevent violations and work towards a better world is in line with goal of the AGT. B2 also wants to work towards a better world. They have a mission of openness and transparency, in which the decision to join the AGT fits very well. R2 says:

But in the end we did decide to sign, because we also have a vision of our own and that's to strive for transparency and sustainability, so it also fitted in very well with our street [fitted our strategy], the AGT, with what we are working on.

The AGT also fitted in with the business model of B4. R4 says: “I just think that we belong there”. Not because B4 had the mission of openness and transparency, but because B4 already complied with the rules about violations of human and animal rights. B4 finds it self-evident that, for example, discrimination, child labor and forced labor are prevented and that the entire production process is clear. For this reason, employees of B4 visit the factory during the production process. That is why B4 has outsourced the production to countries that are no more than 3 hours flying from the Netherlands. Furthermore, the business has production in the Netherlands. In the production countries, the Dutch or European laws must be complied with, which minimizes the risks of violations to human and animal rights. Moreover, B4 wants to develop high quality, timeless fashion that can be worn for more than a few seasons. For all these reasons, the AGT fits well with the vision of B4. The fact that the AGT

fitted well with the vision of the businesses is found nine times in data analysis is the fifth motivation business has to participate in the AGT.

4.3.4 Reputation

Besides the motivation of joining the AGT to get information, tooling and support businesses have the motivation of reputation. This motivation consists of the desire to show the customer that the business signed the AGT and is taking steps with regard to sustainability.

Joining the AGT and making the participation public is also seen as a way to show customers that the business is aware of the violations in the production chains and that the business tries to minimize its own risks of violations. Although no business gives this motivation as the most important one, it came up twenty three times in data analysis. R4 explains that by signing the AGT, B4 can show what is important to them. R4: “And by signing the AGT, you indicate that you're serious about this. And that you stand by it”. B4 knows that the textile industry is polluting. By means of transparency B4 wants to show that they are doing their best to be as less polluting as possible. By showing that the business signed the AGT, the clients also know that the business gets feedback on what can be done even better. The same goes for R2. This respondent goes further in explaining that B2 joined the AGT to retain large clients that attach importance to sustainability or are themselves members of the AGT. In that case, B2 does “the homework” for the clients. R2 likes to show his clients that B2 is participating in the AGT and that the business is really taking steps. R2 says: “That was also so that was very nice to show to customers of “well, we are signers” and if you are a signer, you are really obliged to show results”. For B2 and B4 it was a positive point to show that the business signed the AGT and that the business is obliged to show results. This does not directly apply to B3. R3 says that B3 does not want publicity for participation in sustainability initiatives. B3 waited six months to join the AGT because they did not want publicity. R3 says:

I thought yeah, I don't need to be the first to get my name in the paper, like, "I'm taking part in". Because there are quite a few in the market who want to support these kinds of initiatives right away just for the sake of publicity, we are a bit averse to that.

B3's CSR report (D2) also points to the aversion to publicity regarding B3's CSR policy: “B3's CSR policy is not meant to play on the public opinion, nor will B3 actively seek media attention”. For B3's clients, joining the AGT does not seem very important. The clients do not know what the AGT means and attach more value to participation in the BSCI. Somewhere in the interview, however, it becomes clear that R3 shows clients that B3 signed the AGT to show that the business is aware of the risks in the production chain. Publishing that the business signed the AGT is allowed. All businesses participating in this study show their participation on their websites and in their CSR reports. Although

respondents from the businesses do not see reputation as the main motivation to join the AGT, one respondent from one of the NGOs thinks that businesses could participate in order to avoid reputational damage. However, this is not confirmed by the interviews or the CSR reports. What is confirmed by the interviews and CSR reports is that some businesses joined the AGT to show their clients that they signed the AGT and that they are taking steps towards more sustainable business practices. So, the sixth motivation businesses had to participate in the AGT had to do with reputation.

4.3.5 Responding to stakeholder pressure

Another motivation to participate in the AGT has to do with pressure. This motivation consists of responding to stakeholder pressure and responding to legislative pressure. This section first addresses the motivation of joining the AGT as a response to stakeholder pressure and then the motivation of joining the AGT as a response to legislative pressure.

A pressure that can be seen in the textile industry is a societal call for sustainability. Most of the interviews reveal the expectation that customers will want to know where the products come from in the future. The sector plan of the business associations refers to a report by one of the business associations predicting that customers will attach increasing importance to sustainability. The same is stated in the publication of the AGT (D14): “They [signatories of the AGT] anticipate inevitable developments in social expectations with regard to international CSR and international chain responsibility in the garments and textile sector; they are therefore better prepared for the future”. R6 agrees that participation in the AGT is a means of being prepared for a future “In which the consumer will ask a lot more about: where is it made? And how is it made? So in that sense I think you have a big blind spot when you say: well I uh I think I can go on like this”. Although many respondents refer to the customer’s wish to know where the products come from, R5 thinks that that wish does not yet exist. R5 explains that B5 tries to produce sustainably, but that the motivation to do so is purely intrinsic. For example, B5 wants to do more with recycling, but the customers do not want to pay more for recycled garments. R5 says about this: “To do this in a cost responsible way is a huge challenge. We do it ourselves, it costs us money. But the customer doesn't care that much. Unfortunately. So the real change will have to come from there. I guess”. After the question whether R6 thinks customers really care where the products come from, R6 also says that the customer still have to be convinced of the choice for sustainable textile. This points to a contradiction; on the one hand customers are expected to become more critical, but on the other hand customers do not really care yet.

In addition to pressure of the societal call for more sustainable products, some of the businesses also feel other pressures. B6 felt pressure from its clients. The clients wanted B6 to develop strict rules regarding social compliance. R6 explains: “There was coercion... a coercive uh, yeah, call it a... let's say we do business with you, but only on those terms. That was it. So you were forced into more sustainable procurement”. This social pressure was not about joining the AGT, it was about

commitment to CSR in general. In the case of B4, one of their major clients is a member of the AGT. The client pointed B4 to the AGT and thought the AGT would fit B4. Although the client recommended B4 to the AGT, B4 did not feel any social pressure to join the AGT, in contrast to the pressure B6 felt to engage in CSR. B3 felt pressure from other stakeholders to join the AGT. R3 says about this:

Yes, and it's actually, you know in the Netherlands there is not so much, uhm, this is actually the initiative that was also very much stimulated by the government, also in the media. There was also a bit of social pressure to become a member.

R3 explains that B3 felt social pressure because of the criticism of the textile industry in the media and the fact that a minister spoke negatively about the textile industry. Furthermore, B3 felt pressure due to the fact that a large group of Dutch businesses had already joined the AGT. This form of pressure did not appear in the other interviews. However, the pressure from different stakeholders such as customers, the government, the media or competitors together is used sixteen times in data analysis and forms the seventh motivation of businesses to join the AGT.

In addition to pressure from stakeholders, there is also pressure from legislation. The legislative pressure is not on joining the AGT, but on doing due diligence. As explained above, businesses have the responsibility to respect human rights, provide access to remedies and conduct due diligence, as set out in the UNGPs and OECD-guidelines. While this is a sort framework, it is expected that due diligence will be required by law. There is already a law on ‘prevention of child labor’ which stipulates that products must be 100% child labor free. By joining the AGT, a business is more likely to comply with this law. Furthermore, the European Union is talking about laws on due diligence. By joining the AGT, businesses comply with that law and at the same time receive support in complying with it. R1 knows about the expected legislation and finds it positive that they have already joined, so that B1 comply already with the laws. The Midterm Evaluation says: “Interestingly, the evaluation shows that companies would not be surprised if in the near future due diligence legislation will be adopted. They believe that the AGT prepares them in case this indeed happens”. R6 also finds the legislation positive for those businesses that have already joined the AGT. In the case of

Motivations Businesses	Explanation
Information, tooling and support	Businesses see the AGT as a means to receive information, tooling and support while doing their due diligence.
Realizing impact	Businesses see the AGT as a means to overcome complex challenges together.
Intrinsic motivation	Businesses have an intrinsic motivation and see the AGT as a means to contribute to a better world.
Reputation	Businesses see the AGT as a means to show clients that they are aware and working on the risks in global production chains.
Pressure	Businesses see the AGT as a way to respond to stakeholder pressures.
Encouragement for others	Businesses participate in the AGT as an encouragement for others to do so too.

Table 6: Motivations of businesses

legislation, participation in the AGT is an opportunity to stand out from the competition. This motivation is used eight times in data analysis. Legislative pressure to do due diligence is an eight motivation of businesses to join the AGT and get support to do due diligence.

4.3.6 Encouragement for others

Another motivation to join the AGT is to be an encouragement for others. This motivation consists of encouragement for other organizations to join the AGT too, and for customers to think about sustainability and to buy sustainable garments. This section first addresses the motivation of joining the AGT as an encouragement for other organizations and then as an encouragement for customers.

The motivation to join the AGT to encourage other organizations to join too is only found in one of the interviews. B4 joined the AGT for the reason that it wanted to commit them to the AGT and stimulate others to do the same. R4: “We just want to be one of the signatories and of course we also want to encourage other people to join and we just think it's important”. R4 thinks it is important to stimulate others to join too, because of the fact that the impact becomes bigger if more companies do due diligence and B4 really wants to improve the fashion industry. When deciding to join the AGT, one of the reasons was the amount of influence B4 could exert on other companies to become a member. B4 wanted to stimulate and inspire other businesses within the AGT with their way of doing business. Stimulating other businesses to join the AGT too and to do due diligence was one of the motivations of B4 to join the AGT.

In addition to stimulating other businesses to join the AGT, B4 also wants to stimulate the customer to think about sustainability and to buy sustainable garments. R4 says:

... It's also often read on our website what exactly we do and people think more about it as well. You often see that people now come into contact with the AGT who also read it. So it not only stimulates other companies, but also the consumer to think about it and I think that's very nice that you uh actually stimulate consumers to think about it and to buy more sustainable.

R4 sees that there are two different groups of customers. One group is aware of violations in production chains and only wants to buy sustainable garments and another group that was not aware of the violations, but that start thinking about it after reading about the AGT. Stimulating consumers to think about sustainability and to buy sustainable is one of the motivations why businesses join the AGT. Table 6 shows the motivations found for businesses together with their explanations.

4.4 Comparison of stakeholders

Once all stakeholders have been discussed individually, the results will now be compared. Figure 4 shows the motivations the different parties have to participate in the AGT. The motivation that is

shared with all stakeholders is the desire to realize impact. All stakeholders realized that something has to change in the global production chains and that no single stakeholder would be able to solve the problems on its own. The shared motivation of realizing impact provided the ability to work together and have a shared goal.

Besides a similarity, the stakeholders also have differences in motivations. Businesses have six motivations, while business associations have three and NGOs only have two. Moreover, the motivations of businesses are diverse. Businesses have instrumental (like their reputation), relational (like the response to stakeholder pressure) and moral motivations (like the intrinsic motivation). The moral motivations and relational motivations, however, were most often found in data analysis. Business associations have three motivations to participate, but these are also diverse. The motivation of image of the industry is an instrumental motivation, while supporting businesses is a relational one and realizing impact is a moral one. For business associations, the moral motivation of realizing impact is the most heard one. NGOs have fewer and less diverse motivations. The motivations are both moral ones; creating awareness and realizing impact. The consistency of motivations could mean that the objectives of the AGT fit well with the objectives of NGOs, leading to clear rationales to join. Moreover, due to the nature of their organization, NGOs have the legitimacy to commit to their moral goals, such as reducing violations of human and animal rights. However, businesses and business associations have more diverse priorities. Businesses have for example, the priority of sales levels, reputation towards consumers, and ethical behavior. In line with these diverse objectives, it is logically that businesses have more diverse motivations to join the AGT. It is important to say that businesses did not have just one motivation to participate. For all businesses a combination of motivations led to the final decision to participate.

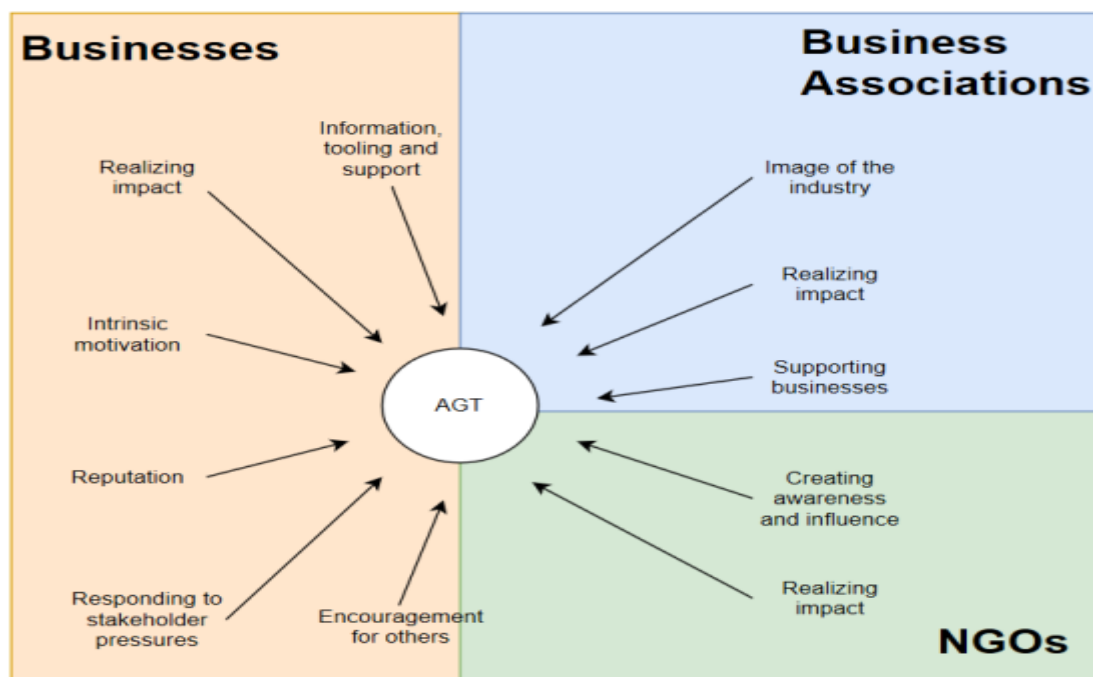


Figure 4: Motivations of business associations, NGOs and businesses

5 Discussion

In this chapter, first an interpretation of the results will be given in light of the theory discussed in chapter 2. Second, the theoretical contribution will be explained, followed by practical implications, limitations and recommendations for further research.

5.1 Interpretation of results

The goal of this study is to get insight into the motivations of businesses, business associations, and NGOs to participate in the AGT, in order to contribute to the existing knowledge about motivations of different stakeholders to participate in multi-stakeholder initiatives and help closing the existing gap in literature. The research question is the following: ‘How do businesses, business associations, and NGOs motivate their participation in the AGT?’ In this section, the outcomes of this study will be discussed in the light of existing literature. First, the motivations of businesses will be discussed.

5.1.1 Motivations of businesses

Based on the findings of this study, five general motivations of businesses to participate in the specific MSI are found: information, tooling and support, realizing impact, intrinsic motivation, reputation, pressure, and encouragement for others. First this section will address findings of this study in light of the motivations of businesses to engage in CSR and then to participate in MSIs.

The motivations found in this study are very similar to the motivations found to participate in CSR found in literature. Aguilera et al. (2007) mention three categories of motivations for CSR: instrumental, relational, and moral motivations (Paulraj et al., 2017). The motivations found in this study all fit in one of the three categories of motivations. For example, the motivation of pressure for example fits the relational category, in which engaging in CSR is seen as a means to maintain long-term legitimacy. Businesses are trying to maintain legitimacy by meeting public expectations for sustainability (Scott, 2008; Vidaver-Cohen & Bronn, 2013). Also in line with Paulraj et al. (2017), this study found that the relational and moral categories are most important in deciding to participate in MSIs. By comparing the motivations found in this study with the motivations found in CSR literature and fitting these in the categories of Aguilera et al. (2007) this study shows that the motivations of businesses to engage in CSR can also be used to look at motivations to participate in MSIs. This can be explained by the generality of the categorization of Aguilera et al. (2007). The model deals with general categories that can apply to different industries and different forms of CSR, rather than with individual, situation-dependent motivations.

Contrary to the literature on CSR, this study did not find the instrumental motivations of window-dressing or green-washing. The reason for this is the design of this specific MSI. By signing the AGT, businesses are obliged to achieve results and are controlled by the independent secretariat of the SER, so that window-dressing or green-washing is not possible. The fact that these motivations are

not found in this study is important, because this emphasizes the fact that motivations some motivations are MSI-specific, as the designs of MSIs can differ. Furthermore, it stresses an even higher importance of the relational and moral motivations, which is in line with the findings of Paulraj et al. (2017).

Now we will continue to the motivations of businesses to participate in MSIs. Most motivations found in this study confirm with the motivations found in literature. The intrinsic motivation to transform the industry for example is also found by Airike et al. (2016), Roloff (2008) and Svendsen and Laberge (2005). Besides that, the first part of the motivation of encouraging others, the desire to encourage other businesses to participate in the AGT is also found by Airike et al. (2016). However, the second part of the motivation, the desire to encourage customers to think about sustainability, is not found by other researchers. Although not much research is done towards motivations, the motivations that are found give already a very complete picture of reality. The fact that the findings of this study are very similar to motivations found in literature is important, because this shows that the motivations to join MSIs are similar over industries. This study has also contributed to the existing knowledge by finding an extra motivation. The addition of this extra motivation can be explained by the design of the AGT. The businesses participating in the AGT belong to the last parts of the production chains and are close to the customers. This gives them the opportunity to influence the customer. This difference is important, because it shows that although many motivations are similar, there are also motivations that are MSI-specific.

5.1.2 Motivations of business associations

Beside businesses, this study looked at business associations. Based on the findings of this study, three general motivations of businesses associations to initiate the specific MSI are found: improving the image of the industry, realizing impact and supporting businesses. First this section will address findings of this study in light of the motivations of business associations to engage in CSR and then in light of the motivations to participate in MSIs.

The motivations found in this study deviate from the motivation of business associations to participate in CSR found in literature. In the literature, only one motivation is found; one that is about green-washing (Sheehy, 2015). This motivation is not found in this study. The motivations for CSR found in literature thus cannot be transferred to motivations for MSIs. The difference with literature can be explained by the design of the MSI. The business associations researched in this study wanted to improve the image of the industry, but also wanted to be able to demonstrate that the industry had taken steps. For that reason, they invited NGOs to keep the role of watchdog, so that green-washing was not possible. This study expands the literature on motivations of business associations to engage in CSR, because this topic was under-researched and literature gave a too narrow view.

The motivations found in this study are similar to the motivations of business associations to participate in MSIs, found in literature, however, the view of literature was too narrow. Supporting businesses is a motivation that is also found by Vogel (2009) and the motivation to improve the image of the industry is also found by the Fransen (2012). This study contributes to the literature about motivations of business associations to participate in MSIs by confirming the motivations of supporting businesses and improving the image of the industry and by adding the motivation of realizing impact. The fact that the motivation of realizing impact is not found earlier can be explained the fact that also this topic is under-researched and the view in literature was too narrow.

5.1.3 Motivations of NGOs

Beside businesses and business associations, this study looked at NGOs. Based on the findings of this study, two general motivations of NGOs to participate in the specific MSI are found: creating awareness and realizing impact.

The motivations found in this study deviate from the motivation of NGOs to participate in CSR found in literature. The literature on CSR found the instrumental motivation of getting scarce resources, like resources, members, and influence by engaging in CSR initiatives (Aguilera et al., 2007). This motivation is partly confirmed by this study. NGOs aim to create awareness and by being part of an MSI they gain access to and influence in motivated businesses. However, the part of getting more resources and members is not confirmed by this study. Aguilera et al (2007) also found the relational motivation of improved relationships for grants and donations and to achieve their social goals. This motivation is also only partially confirmed by this study. The NGOs did not participate in obtaining grants and donations, but did see the MSI as a way to achieve their social goals, *i.e.*, achieving impact. Finally, a moral motivation that Aguilera et al (2007) found is confirmed by this study. The fact that the motivations found in this study only partly match the ones found in literature can be explained by the design of the AGT, in which the additional funding NGOs get by being part of the AGT does not outweigh the costs they have to make.

Now the motivations found in this study will be discussed in light of the motivations of NGOs to participate in MSIs. The motivations found in this are very similar to the motivations found in literature. The motivation of contribution to social goal achievement and the influence in businesses (Van Tulder et al., 2011) are comparable with the motivations found in this study. However, this study did not find the motivation of the generation of additional income and of legitimacy (Van Tulder et al., 2011). The deviation with regard to additional incomes is also partly the result of the design of the AGT, as explained above.

5.1.4 Conclusion

This study tried to fill the gap in literature that exists due to the scarce research done on the motivations of different stakeholders to participate in MSIs and especially for business associations and NGOs (Airike et al., 2016). This study shows that different stakeholders have different motivations. For example, businesses have much more motivations than business associations and NGOs. Businesses and business associations both have motivations from all three categories, while the motivations of NGOs are mainly moral and relational. However, all three stakeholders focus on the moral and relational motivations. This can be explained by the fact that it has been demonstrated that the textile industry is a highly polluting industry and that all parties are aware of this, partly due to the high level of publicity given to the problems in this industry. At the same time, all stakeholders have the awareness that different stakeholders are needed to tackle the complex problems. The finding that moral and relational motivations have the highest priority is thus related to the specific industry in which the AGT finds itself.

Literature on motivations for CSR for businesses fits in with this study on motivations for businesses to participate in MSIs. In the case of businesses, the motivations for CSR can be translated into motivations for MSIs. Literature on MSIs also gave a clear picture, even though this study added one motivation. The fact that the findings of this study fits well with the motivations found in literature is due to the fact that the motivations for CSR found in literature are generally applicable and the motivations found for MSIs gave a clear picture anyway. Things were different for the literature for business associations. In the literature on CSR, only one motivation for business associations to engage in CSR was found and this gave a way too narrow picture of reality. The motivations on CSR in this case could not be transferred to motivations for MSIs. The literature on MSIs was more exhaustive, although this study adds another motivation to that literature. Lastly, the literature on motivations of NGOs to engage in CSR gave a reasonable picture of the motivations for MSIs, however, could not be transferred directly, because the motivations found in this study are slightly different. The literature on MSIs already gave a clear picture of the motivations of NGOs to participate in MSIs. In conclusion, it can be said that the motivations for CSR can be transferred to MSIs only for businesses. For business associations and NGOS too many motivations are missing or deviate too much from the motivations found in this study. In many cases, the reason for this is the design of this specific MSI. The motivations to participate in MSIs already give a fairly complete picture of the different motivations, although for businesses and business associations a few have been added to the existing literature, due to the fact that the topic was under-researched and the view of literature was too narrow.

5.2 Theoretical contribution

The previous section discussed the interpretation of the findings in light of the existing literature. This section will focus on the contribution of this study to the knowledge about motivations of different stakeholders to participate in MSIs. This study first, tried to fill the gap in literature that exists due to the scarce research that is done with regards to motivations of different stakeholders to participate in MSIs and especially for the business associations and NGOs (Airike et al., 2016). Prior studies have started to investigate motivations, but have carried out their research in specific industries and often only included motivations of businesses (Airike et al., 2016; Lundsgaarde, 2017). The motivations of business associations and NGOs have only been investigated by a few researchers that found only a few motivations. This study took an inductive approach and tried to get a holistic view of the motivations the different stakeholders had. This study focused on the textile industry and got a picture of the motivations that are important to the AGT. By providing rich information about the specific MSI and the industry, this study can be used as an inspiration or an idea of what motivations of different stakeholders in other MSIs inside and outside the textile industry might be.

Secondly, this study contributes to the literature about MSIs by linking the motivations of different stakeholders to participate in CSR with the motivations of different stakeholders to participate in MSIs. By finding similarities and contradictions, more knowledge is gained about the relationship between those two fields of literature. For example, the literature on motivations to engage in CSR gives a more detailed picture of the motivations to participate in MSIs, by adding a framework that could be used to categorize the motivations to participate in MSIs. However, this seems to be only the case for the motivations of businesses. For the motivations of business associations and NGOs, literature on CSR is too narrow and the motivations found in this study deviates from those found in literature. The reason for this could be that the topic of motivations for business associations and NGOs to engage in CSR is also under-researched. More research is needed to clarify the relationship between CSR and MSI, especially for these two stakeholders. Furthermore, this study provides new insights in the role of MSIs in CSR research (Airike et al., 2016). MSIs are seen as a political form of CSR and in that sense this study provides more insight into motivations of different stakeholders to participate in CSR.

5.3 Practical implications

Besides being theoretically relevant, this study is also practically relevant. The goal of the AGT is that in 2020 at least 80% of the Dutch garments and textile industry have signed the AGT. However, from the interviews it became clear that this goal is too ambitious and that the AGT has to work hard to motivate other businesses to join. The businesses argued that they would be happy if more businesses joined the AGT. For instance for the fact that they want the whole industry to buy sustainable and that more leverage will be achieved if big businesses like H&M joined, but also because they would find it more fair as other businesses had to deliver the same efforts. In order to motivate these other

businesses to join the AGT, I recommend the steering group of the AGT to look at the motivations businesses have to join the AGT and check whether the parties that encourage businesses to join the AGT make use of these explicit arguments. The findings of this study can be used by the steering group of the AGT to get an insight in why the different stakeholders signed the AGT and what they can do to motivate other businesses, business associations, and NGOs to participate in the AGT too. Furthermore, the motivations found in this study can help policy makers and stakeholder groups to develop more robust strategies for encouraging businesses to join the AGT (Paulraj et al., 2017).

Furthermore, with the knowledge about why different stakeholders participate in the AGT and what they value in it, the AGT can respond to the needs of the different stakeholders and by doing that becoming stronger in tackling the complex problems together (Ashwin et al., 2020; Soundararajan et al., 2019). The steering group of the AGT could look at the efforts the businesses have to make in order to do their due diligence. In this study, it appears that the businesses struggle with the time they have to spend on 'running the business' and the time that is needed to put in the efforts that have to be made for the AGT. One of the respondents even considered stopping their membership. Besides the efforts members have to put in the AGT, it became clear that not all businesses appreciate the content of the workshops, because it seemed not to be useful in their phase of the process. In order to fit in with what businesses expect and value from the AGT, I recommend that the steering committee looks at the relevance of the content and the efforts needed to achieve the deadlines of the AGT. This can be done by means of in-depth interviews to investigate the different phases that businesses go through and to draw up a plan containing, for each phase, what businesses need and what is feasible to achieve.

5.4 Reflection and limitations

Although this study contributes to literature and has practical implications, the study also has limitations. One of these limitations has to do with my role as a researcher. Although I have tried to remain free from researcher biases in order not to influence the results of this study, I am aware that by talking to the respondents I felt more involved with the subject and threatened to take over the positive impression that the members of the AGT outlined. By being aware that this affected my point of view and would weaken my critical view of the matter, I was able to get to work with it and tried to step into the matter again. Furthermore, I involved a fellow student, who immersed himself in more or less the same subject, in my data analysis and together we came to the same results, showing that the findings are credible.

Secondly, in identifying the motivations of the different stakeholders, only the motivations of businesses, business associations, and NGOs are considered. Although the labor unions and the government could play an equally important role, they have been left out of account due to time constraints and a first impression that the other actors played a more important role. Ignoring two parties is a limitation, because a holistic picture of motivations of all different parties within the AGT has not been obtained, so a part of the puzzle is missing. As a result, based on this study, the AGT

might not be aware of the motivations of the labor unions and will not be able to optimize its strategy for this stakeholder.

A third limitation is the fact that for some stakeholders, the decision to participate in the AGT was more than three years ago. Most respondents I spoke to were part of the decision to participate in the AGT, although some did only hear of the decision, because the ones that took the original decision left the organization. Because the decision to participate is relatively long ago, space for biases is created (Schacter, 1999). The bias of transience, or the fact that “memory for facts and events typically becomes less accessible over time” (Schacter, 1999, p. 184), may have influenced the results of this section. Some respondents might originally have participated for other reasons than they think they do now, because of “distorting influences of present knowledge, beliefs, and feelings on recollection of previous experiences” (Schacter, 1999, p. 193). Additionally, it can be difficult to describe motivations behind the decision, because the decision was made in conjunction with others.

5.5 Further research

Based on these limitations, some recommendations for further research can be formulated. First, more research is needed on the motivations of business associations and NGOs to participate in CSR and MSIs to see if the motivations found in this study give a holistic picture. On the basis of these studies, it can then be examined how motivations for CSR and MSIs with respect to business associations and NGOs relate to each other. Furthermore, in order to get a full insight into what different stakeholders are looking for in an MSI, further research should focus on all stakeholders participating in a particular MSI. In the case of the AGT, more research is needed to also look at the motivations of the government and labor unions. Besides including all participating stakeholders, research should be done focused on other industries, so that at the end the motivations can be summarized and generalized to other industries as well. By getting a more comprehensive understanding of the different motivations, the motivations found in this study can be tested.

In addition to investigating the motivations of different stakeholders to participate in MSIs, research should focus on factors and processes that explain the emergence of MSIs in order to be able to gain knowledge on how to consciously set up MSIs to solve complex problems together. It was outside the reach of this study to look how well the AGT managed to really solve the complex problems with regard to the global production chains of the textile industry; however this would be an interesting further step. Further research could focus on the effectiveness of MSIs in actually solving the complex problems and comparing them with, for example, regulations; another way to tackle the complex problems.

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Appendix A: Interview guideline

Good morning/afternoon (name),

Thank you very much for your participation in my research. I want to ask you some questions about the participation of your organization in the Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile, or the AGT.

The interview will take a maximum of an hour to an hour and a half. The information you give in this interview is treated confidentially and will only be used for research purposes. Names and other confidential data will be anonymized. Do you still agree with recording this interview?

After completing my master thesis, you will receive a copy of our final report, containing insights about the AGT and the participants.

(Questions in *italics* are intended to be used optional.)

General

- Can you shortly introduce your organization?
- What is your function within the organization?

Becoming part of the AGT

- What is your role with regard to the AGT? *And the decision to participate?*
- How did the organization become involved in the AGT? *What did you know about the AGT in advance?*
- How did the organization came up with the idea to join? *What considerations were taken into account when deciding to participate in the AGT ?*
- What does subscribing the AGT entail for your organization? *To what extent is your organization involved in the AGT?*

Motivations to participate in the AGT

- What were the main reasons for signing the AGT?
- What are the advantages of signing the AGT? *What are the benefits for your organization specifically?*
- What advantages did you know in advance?
- What is the main interest in the AGT for your organization?
- What does the organization now expect from the AGT?
- What do you see as the main motivations for other organizations to sign the AGT?
- To what extent would you recommend similar organizations to sign the AGT? Why?
- What did the organization achieve by participating in the AGT?

Closing

- Are there important issues that have not been discussed during the interview?
- Do you have questions yourself?

Thank you very much for your cooperation in my research! I am going to transcribe and analyze this interview. Do you mind if I contact you if something is not clear to me or if I have further clarifying questions? And besides, can you recommend someone I could interview? After completing my research, I will email you the report.

Appendix B: Datastructure

Quotations	1 st Order Concepts	2 nd Order Concepts	Aggregate Dimension
<i>R6: You have a certain moral duty that you feel when you buy, uh, but the AGT gives you clearer tools and, uh, procedures, uh, rules to enhance your, at least that impact. To offer you some, yeah, some more professional tools, which in the end, makes your International CSR policy a little more concrete and realistic.</i>	Learning, getting information and support from parties within the AGT (63)	Information, tooling and support	Motivations of businesses
<i>R1: That fist together. What you can't do in your uppie. And also sharing information and learning from others and yes, that. Both, so to speak. It goes together a little bit.</i>	Learning from other businesses (21)		
<i>CSR-report B3: Through the AGT these parties are joining forces and will work together on concrete improvement and enhancing sustainability of the international clothing and textile manufacturing production chain.</i>	Overcoming complex problems together (30)	Realizing impact	
<i>R4: Yeah, that there's just fair production all over the world. I2: Yes. R4: Yes, and it's also important to us in the countries where we don't produce then.</i>	Hope to transform the industry (18)	Intrinsic motivation	
<i>R2: But in the end we did decide to sign, because we also have a vision of our own and that's just to strive for transparency and sustainability, so it also fitted in very well with our little street, the AGT, with what we are working on.</i>	Fits well with the vision (9)		
<i>R3: So eh it was more out of curiosity and still just eh also let your customers eh say that you are a member of the AGT. And that you are really aware of the risks in the chain.</i>	Nice to show clients (23)	Reputation	
<i>R2: I think for the clothing industry, they really see that the market is changing. Consumers are also becoming more critical, of course.</i>	Responding to stakeholder expectations (16)	Pressure	
<i>Midterm Evaluation: Interestingly, the evaluation shows that companies would not be surprised if – in the near future - due diligence legislation will be adopted. They believe that the AGT prepares them in case this indeed happens.</i>	Responding to legislative pressure (8)		
<i>R4: We just want to be one of the signatories and of course we also want to encourage other people to join and we just think it's important.</i>	Beacon to others as a motivation to participate(6)	Encouragement for others	
<i>R4: You have to say very often that people now come into contact with the AGT and read it. So it not only stimulates other companies, but also the consumer to think about it and I think it's very nice that you uh next to other companies actually also stimulates consumers uhm yes to think about it and to buy more sustainable.</i>	Stimulate consumers to think about and buy sustainable (3)		

Quotation	1 st Order Concepts	2 nd Order Concepts	Aggregate Dimension
<i>R10: Uhm I of course had some experience with the companies that were members of BA1 and what the struggle was and one of the things that became clear was that the industry as a whole was increasingly being questioned about environmental and social conditions, without there really being an adequate response.</i>	Desire to respond to questions and critique (5)	Image of the industry	Motivations of Business Associations
<i>R11: Well, that we don't always have to defend our industry afterwards, but that we can explain much more about what our industry is doing and what steps are already being taken. And that we can also do more back and forth</i>	Desire to demonstrate that industry has improved (4)		
<i>Sector Plan: We are convinced that a common approach, in addition to the individual performance and initiatives of our companies, will have the greatest impact.</i>	Desire to solve complex challenges together (12)	Realizing impact	
<i>Sector Plan: It is the sector's explicit ambition to bring together as many sustainability activities as possible in order to achieve a circular clothing and textile sector by 2050 with good production conditions for people, animals and the environment, as envisaged in the Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile.</i>	Ambition to make the industry more sustainable (5)		
<i>R10: Uhm well, in general of course in discussions in the steering committee you notice, for example, that NGOs and trade unions always prefer to go uh as far as possible in their ambitions. And you notice that we have to give a reality check every now and then. Van: listen, they're not philanthropic institutions, not yet. So, so companies, uh, have to give you the time, or the means, to move forward sometimes.</i>	Desire to stand up for businesses (5)	Supporting businesses	
<i>R10: And so we want our members to be able to make use of a collective, a group of companies, that you can learn from each other but also from all parties in the steering group in that process of sustainability. ... So we actually said that we actually want to follow the most important international guidelines because that is already a soft law framework. That means that it is actually a framework that every company should comply with, but there is actually no hard control over that yet. And that's where the companies actually want to provide the best possible guidance, but also with the guidance of those critical parties.</i>	Desire to guide businesses through process of due diligence (5)		

Quotation	1 st Order Concepts	2 nd Order Concepts	Aggregate Dimension
<i>R8: It is much more sustainable if you ensure that the production chain respects children's rights and human rights than if we, uh, provide those same children and people who are the victims of improper treatment with direct support from uh say crèches or food or education systems that we create and maintain. What you want is to create a system that uh that sustains itself uh and and within that uh respects children's rights and human rights and meets those basic needs.</i>	Solving complex challenges together (35)	Realizing impact	Motivations of NGOs
<i>R9: Yeah, and that's because when companies sign, there really are obligations for them, I think that's the most important thing. That it doesn't have a non-committal character at the moment you sign and that you really need to show something. So yes. And that's a good offer for us, because working with companies has always been fairly new to us, so we didn't do that, we were much more of a campaign organization. But the AGT does provide the framework within which we can simply have those expectations of companies.</i>	AGT imposes obligations on businesses (7)		
<i>Annual Report NGO2: The foundation does this by means of the following activities: c. social awareness of human rights violations and abuses in production chains</i>	Creating awareness to human or animal rights (28)	Creating awareness and influence	
<i>R8: And then we sat down at the table and dealt with the Agreements. Well, because it's important that those social components and the rights components are not forgotten. This is just part of the lobbying that NGO1 does, of course, towards sectors, towards government.</i>	Chance to lobby (7)		

Appendix C: Research Integrity Form

Name: Johanneke de Bruin	Student number: s4737040
RU e-mail address: j.debruin@student.ru.nl	Master specialisation: Organizational Design & Development

Thesis title:

A multi-stakeholder initiative in the Dutch garment industry: Discovering the motivations of businesses, NGOs and the government to participate in the Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile

Brief description of the study:

Why do different stakeholders participate in multi-stakeholder initiatives? This question has only been partially answered in existing literature, as the main focus is on motivations of businesses and a holistic picture is missing. Nevertheless, Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives (MSIs), in which different stakeholders work together to gain a mutual benefit, are necessary because globalization of supply chains of clothing companies makes it increasingly difficult to address social and environmental issues. The aim of this study was to gain insight into the motivations of businesses, business associations, and NGOs to participate in a Dutch MSI; the Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile. This study found different motivations for the different stakeholders. It appeared that businesses motivate their decision by a desire to receive information, tooling and support, a desire to realize impact, an intrinsic motivation, increased reputation, a response to pressure, and a desire to stimulate others. The business associations participated in order to improve the image of the sector, create impact and supporting companies. Finally, the NGOs participated in order to create awareness and realize impact. These findings contribute to the knowledge about CSR and MSIs in particular and have various practical implications for the AGT steering committee.

It is my responsibility to follow the university's code of academic integrity and any relevant academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of my study. This includes:

- providing original work or proper use of references;
- providing appropriate information to all involved in my study;
- requesting informed consent from participants;
- transparency in the way data is processed and represented;
- ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data;

If there is any significant change in the question, design or conduct over the course of the research, I will complete another Research Integrity Form.

Breaches of the code of conduct with respect to academic integrity (as described / referred to in the thesis handbook) should and will be forwarded to the examination board. Acting contrary to the code of conduct can result in declaring the thesis invalid

Student's Signature:

Date: 22 May 2020



To be signed by supervisor

I have instructed the student about ethical issues related to their specific study. I hereby declare that I will challenge him / her on ethical aspects through their investigation and to act on any violations that I may encounter.

Supervisor's Signature:

Date: 2 June 2020



Appendix D: Consent Form submission in the Radboud thesis Repository

Radboud University Nijmegen (hereafter Radboud University) has set up a thesis repository. The purpose of this repository is twofold:

1. To archive theses for a minimum period of seven years, in accordance with legal requirements (Wet versterking kwaliteitswaarborgen hoger onderwijs, Art. 7.3, lid 5).
2. Wherever possible and allowed, make theses available to potential users inside and outside Radboud University.

This supports the process of creation, acquisition and sharing of knowledge in the educational setting.

The repository serves as an archive in which all theses will be included. This consent form serves to also enable the publication of those theses.

By submission and publication in the theses repository copyright is not transferred. Therefore, students can at any time revoke their consent for publication.

Rights and obligations of the student

If the student grants permission to Radboud University to make his/her thesis available within the thesis repository to users inside and outside Radboud University, the student states that:

- Users are allowed to use the thesis private study and/or educational and research purposes, in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act (Auteurswet), with full mention of the name of the student and the location of the thesis.
- Neither the organization offering internship nor the client of the thesis has any objections against making the thesis publicly available in the thesis repository.
- The student has obtained permission from the copyright holder of any material used in the thesis to incorporate this material as part of the thesis in the theses repository and make it available to others inside and outside Radboud University.
- The student grants Radboud University the right to make the thesis available in the thesis repository for a minimum period of seven years, barring earlier withdrawal by the student. Permission to make the thesis available to third parties will take effect on the date indicated on this form.
- The student grants Radboud University the right to change the accessibility of the thesis and limit it if compelling reasons exist.

Rights and obligations of Radboud University

- The student's non-exclusive license grants Radboud University the right to make the thesis available to users inside and outside Radboud University.
- Radboud University is allowed to include the thesis, in accordance with legal requirements, in the theses repository for a minimum period of seven years.
- Radboud University can make the thesis freely accessible for users of the theses repository inside and outside Radboud University and allow them to use the thesis for private study and/or educational and research purposes, in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act (Auteurswet), with full mention of the name of the student and the location of the thesis.
- Radboud University will ensure that the author of the thesis is listed and make clear that if the thesis is used, the origin must be clearly stated.
- Radboud University will make clear that for any commercial use of the thesis the student's explicit consent is required. In relevant cases, explicit consent of the organization offering internship or the client of the thesis is required as well.
- Radboud University has the right to change the accessibility of the thesis and limit it if compelling reasons exist.

Rights and duties of the user

As a consequence of this consent form a user of the theses repository may use the thesis for private study and/or educational and research purposes, in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act (Auteurswet), with full mention of the name of the student and the location of the thesis.

Student number : s4737040

Student name : Johanneke de Bruin

Thesis title : A multi-stakeholder initiative in the Dutch garment industry: Discovering the motivations of businesses, business associations and NGOs to participate in the Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile

- ☐ **Yes, I grant permission to make available my thesis with the above title in the Radboud thesis Repository.**
- ☐ No, I do not grant permission to make available my thesis with the above title in the Radboud thesis Repository, but the thesis is allowed to make available with effect from (temporary embargo).
- ☐ No, I do not grant permission to make available my thesis with the above title in the Radboud thesis Repository (permanent embargo).

Signature:

Date: 15 June 2020

