

The role of NGOs in sustainable supply chain management: a social movement perspective

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to systematically review the academic literature on non-governmental organizations' (NGOs) role in sustainable supply chain management (SSCM) to develop a conceptual framework.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper conducts a systematic literature review through an analysis of 47 papers identified from peer-reviewed academic journals published from 2002 to 2020.

Findings – Adopting social movement theory and based on thematic findings, this paper proposes four steps and six propositions in the process of NGOs fostering SSCM. These include relative deprivation, political opportunities, resource mobilization and collective action, based on which we developed a conceptual framework regarding the role of NGOs in improving sustainability in supply chains. The proposed conceptual model opens a new avenue of research in NGO literature and several directions for further research.

Originality/value – This study may be the first to provide a systematic review of NGOs' role in improving sustainability in supply chains. Moreover, by borrowing the social movement theory from sociology, this paper able to propose a new conceptual framework with a research agenda so as to deepen the understanding of the phenomenon and provide directions for future research.

Keywords Sustainability, Supply-chain management, Systematic literature review, NGO, Social movement theory, Conceptual framework

Paper type Literature review

1. Introduction

In recent years, a vast amount of literature suggested that customers, competitors, regulators, suppliers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as primary stakeholders of socially responsible behavior (Buysse and Verbeke, 2003; Freeman and Reed, 1983). Generally speaking, stakeholders are individuals or groups that can influence the achievement of corporates' goals (Freeman, 2010). Under the context of supply chain management, Meixell and Luoma (2015) suggested that stakeholders can be divided into two groups: primary stakeholders (e.g. suppliers) and secondary stakeholders (e.g. NGOs). In many cases, they were recognized as external facilitators of sustainability in supply chains. For example, Zhu and Sarkis (2007) argued that pressures from stakeholders (e.g. customers, competitors and governmental agencies) create more innovations, which can lead to a more environmentally and socially sustainable supply chain. Similarly, Sarkis *et al.* (2010) and Wolf (2014) find that there is a direct and positive relationship between stakeholder pressure and sustainable supply chain management (SSCM). Many examples pointed out the importance to gain better understandings of the impact of external stakeholders on supply chain management (SCM) strategies to foster environmental or social sustainability. One of the examples is that an infomercial published by Greenpeace that connected an

advertisement for KitKat chocolate bars to rainforest deforestation (Wolf, 2014). Similarly, in another strand of research, NGOs have been considered as key stakeholders to develop socially sustainable supply chains. For instance, Rodríguez *et al.* (2016) found that NGOs can be in partnership with other stakeholders to foster social issues (e.g. poverty reduction) in supply chains.

Indeed, as one of the key stakeholders, NGOs are considered crucial external actors in developing initiatives and improving sustainability in supply chains (Rodríguez *et al.*, 2016). They play a significant role in sustainable development, particularly in terms of their partnerships with key stakeholders and serving the needs of individuals and communities alike (Kong *et al.*, 2002). From a sound scientific basis, many of these NGOs are developing a more sophisticated understanding of environmental problems and are developing effective solution strategies through strategic partnerships with businesses (Kong *et al.*, 2002). For instance, Nestlé worked with the rainforest alliance (RA) to promote economic, environmental and social sustainability across the supply chain by implementing the "Nespresso AAA Sustainable Quality Program" (Alvarez *et al.*, 2010; Nespresso, 2007). In addition, Stekelorum *et al.* (2020) found that the collaboration between NGOs and firms – especially smaller ones – has had both positive and strong effects on environmental and social corporate social responsibility (CSR). Yet, compared with other stakeholders (e.g. customers), little was known about the NGOs' role in SSCM.

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It has been acknowledged that NGOs are more effective at addressing many sustainable issues and managing supply chains to do so (Adivar *et al.*, 2010; Al Adem *et al.*, 2018; Rodríguez *et al.*, 2016). World Wide Fund for Nature's (WWF) Round Table on Responsible Soy (RTRS) initiative, for example, was designed to address the environmental and social issues (e.g. employees' rights) surrounding soy production (Jia *et al.*, 2020). In this, certain studies consider NGOs as transnational social movement organizations (SMOs) as having the tendency to act on global issues, such as international security (Khagram *et al.*, 2002). In this regard, social movement theory proposes that SMOs (e.g. NGOs) can impact policy-making processes at local, national or international levels (Church and Lorek, 2007; Soule and King, 2006). Although past studies have introduced the social movement perspective into supply chain research, a considerable number of questions regarding NGOs' engagement in supply chains are still unclear (Hyatt and Johnson, 2016). Thus, there is also a need to develop a new way to deepen the understandings of how NGOs collaborate with actors in supply chains to achieve a shared movement agenda. Also, we found a holistic review regarding this issue – namely, an understanding of the broader logic of how and why NGO initiatives help build SSCM – to be under-researched. To fill this gap, the constructs of this study (e.g. resource mobilization) are borrowed from social movement theory to describe the mechanism of NGO-led sustainable movement in supply chains.

In line with this, this study responds to the call by Islam and van Staden (2018) and O'Sullivan and O'Dwyer (2015) that the NGO movement can introduce sustainable practices in for-profit organizations (e.g. multinational companies) and their supply chains. Therefore, from a sustainable movement perspective, this study contributes to the existing understanding regarding the engagement of the non-profit sector with actors in the supply chain (e.g. for-profit actors). Moreover, in line with Islam and van Staden (2018), this study is not limited to discuss the social aspect of sustainable issues in supply chains. Rather, the conceptual framework in our research extends supply chain literature by investigating the mechanism regarding how NGOs are motivated to improve sustainability in supply chains. In so doing, it also contributes to advance the knowledge about how to make traditional for-profit supply chains sustainable (Rodríguez *et al.*, 2016).

Nevertheless, different from the existing review articles (Vogel, 2008), our review not only highlighted the importance of NGOs in business management but also addressed the mechanism of the collaboration between NGOs and other supply chain members. In addition, the existing academic literature addresses the role of NGOs under the context of international business (Teegen *et al.*, 2004) and general management studies (Baur and Schmitz, 2012; Guay *et al.*, 2004), while few of them are focused on supply chains. Hence, this study focuses on NGOs and seeks to analyze their role in SSCM. The research question is as follow:

RQ. How do NGOs support achieving sustainability in supply chains?

This paper is structured as follows: Section 2 presents the research methods. Section 3 identifies the themes in the

selected literature. Section 4 discusses both the evaluation of the theories used in existing works and the justification of the theoretical framework of this study. The discussion and proposed conceptual framework are developed and presented in Section 5. Section 6 will conclude this paper.

2. Research methodology

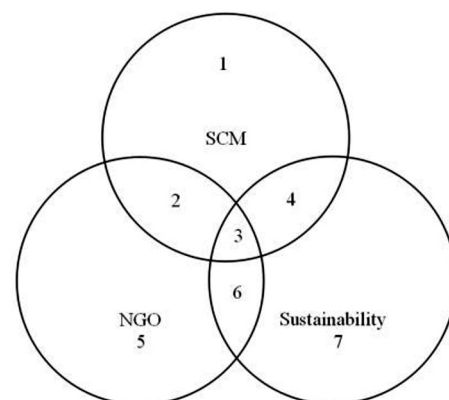
2.1 The literature review method

A systematic literature review (SLR) is adopted in this study and defined as a set of scientific strategies that limit bias by the systematic assembly, critical assessment and synthesis of all relevant studies on a specific topic (Cook *et al.*, 1995). In our context, to identify the specific topic, the first step is to narrow down the scope of our study. In line with this, a systematic literature search for peer-reviewed journal articles was carried out on Scopus and Web of Science (WoS). In this section, the justification of the literature search process is presented.

Generally, three categories of keywords (supply chain, NGO and sustainability-related) were used in the literature search. These three domains contain various combinations or overlaps, i.e. SCM AND NGO and NGO AND sustainability and SCM AND NGO AND sustainability. NGO-related keywords were included in all three so as to reflect the main focus. Simply put and as illustrated in Figure 1, the SLR is predominantly concerned with the works in areas 2, 3 and 6, while others were excluded due to a lack of focus on NGOs.

More specifically, area 2 concerns the interaction between “NGO” and “SCM” where a considerable number of articles regarding NGOs' operations in supply chains can be found. However, some of this group's articles tended to focus on topics irrelevant to SSCM and were thus excluded. In terms of area 3, the interaction between “NGO”, “SCM” and “sustainability” was able to be used to identify the literature addressing NGOs' practices or activities in the creation of sustainable supply chains. Moreover, although the literature involving “sustainability” and “NGO” (i.e. group 6) has been included, some of the articles were excluded as they focused on NGOs' roles in promoting sustainable development without mentioning supply chains. The articles in area 4 (i.e. the interaction between “SCM” and “sustainability”) were

Figure 1 Research scopes



excluded because of their singular focus on SSCM. In sum, the inclusive and exclusive criteria are illustrated in Figure 1.

The “advance search” was used in the databases. We adopted three groups of keywords based on the three domains, which included NGO-related keywords by referencing Brass *et al.* (2018) and sustainability and supply chain-related keywords by referencing Jia *et al.* (2018). The below table presents the keywords adopted in our study. The keywords adopted for the search are shown in Table 1.

Throughout this process, we chose peer-reviewed journals and papers published in the English-language as the primary search criteria. Regarding subjects, the articles were selected from “Business, Management and Accounting,” “Economics, Econometrics and Finance” or “Multidisciplinary” on Scopus and “Management,” “Business,” “Operations Research Management Science,” “Economics,” “Business Finance” or “Multidisciplinary Sciences” on WoS. Besides, as there is no access to full-text before articles were downloaded from Scopus and WoS, the

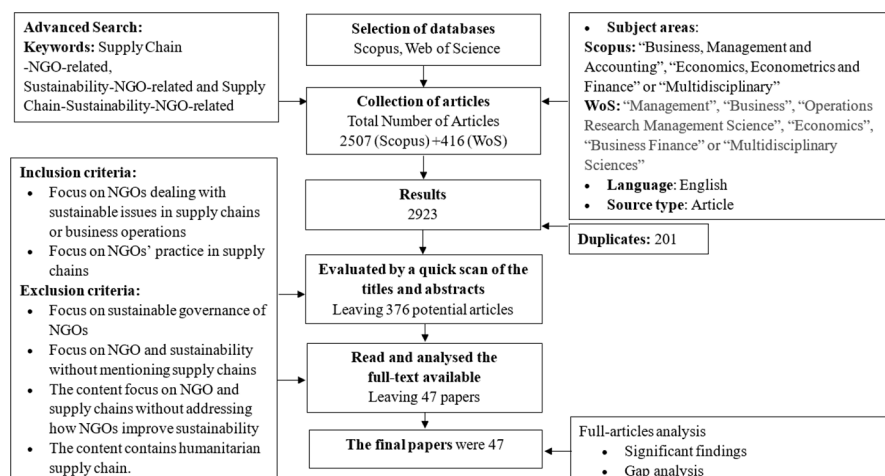
keywords were only used to search titles and abstracts during the initial literature search. Finally, the initial search result showed 2,923 related articles. Of these, 1,797 were found with NGO- and sustainability-related keywords, 858 with supply chain and NGO-related keywords and 268 were found with supply chain, sustainability and NGO-related keywords.

We then evaluated by screening the title and abstract and followed the inclusive (i.e. the domains defined above) and exclusive criteria (Figure 2). When searching for NGO and sustainability-related literature, articles regarding NGO sustainability were excluded due to their focus on NGOs’ internal sustainability strategies without concerning partnerships with other actors. We initially identified 368 works for further evaluation. To identify articles for final review, full-text articles were assessed using the same criteria. Finally, we read and analyzed the full texts and identified 47 papers for final review. Among these, 6 were in the supply chain-NGO domain, 33 in the

Table 1 Keywords adopted for literature search

Cluster	Keywords on Scopus	Reference
NGO-related keywords	“Nongovernmental Organization” OR NGO OR “Government-operated NGO” OR GONGO OR “Social Responsible NGO” OR “Social Movement NGO” OR “Quasi-autonomous NGO” OR QUANGO OR “Social Purpose NGO” OR “International NGO” OR INGO OR “Foreign NGO” OR “Transnational NGO” OR “Activist NGO” OR “Advocacy NGO” OR “Operational NGO” OR “Grass-root NGO” OR “G-R NGO” OR “Northern NGOs” OR “Southern NGOs” OR “Non-profit Organization” OR NPO OR “Voluntary Development Organization” OR VDO OR “Voluntary Organization” OR VO OR “Hidden Stakeholder” OR “Third-party Auditor” OR “Action Group” OR AG OR “Third Sector” OR “International Activism” OR “Transnational Activism” OR “International Advocacy” OR “Transnational Advocacy” OR “International Advocacy Networks” OR “Transnational Advocacy Networks” OR “Socially Responsible Stakeholder” OR “Activist Stakeholder” OR “Community Voluntary Organization” OR “CVO” OR “Civil Society Organization” OR CSO OR “Humanitarian Organization” OR “Environmental Group” OR “Human Right Organization” OR “Development Aid”	Brass <i>et al.</i> (2018)
Sustainability-related keywords	“Corporate Social Responsibility” OR CSR OR “Triple Bottom Line” OR TBL OR Sustainability	Jia <i>et al.</i> (2018)
Supply chain-related keywords	“Supply Chain” OR “Value Chain” OR Procurement OR Purchase	Jia <i>et al.</i> (2018)

Figure 2 Review methodology



sustainability-NGO domain and 8 in the supply chain-sustainability-NGO domain.

A total of 47 papers published between 2002 and 2020 were identified. The last search was carried out in December 2020. Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of the papers by year.

Table 2 shows the distribution of our reviewed articles by the journal. Topping the list is the *Journal of Business Ethics*, in which five articles were found. This was followed by the *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, *Business & Society*, *Business Strategy and the Environment*, *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* and *Journal of Cleaner Production* with two articles. Aside from these, this topic appeared in 41 other journals, reflecting that the topic spans boundaries and encompasses different streams of research. In addition to these, of the 36 journals selected in this study, 31 of them are listed in Q1 or Q2 in the SCImago Journal Rankings (SJR), which indicates higher impacts on a certain subject. Compared with other journal rankings (e.g. Journal Citation Report), it is suggested that SJR can be chosen as the criteria to assess the quality of selected journals is because of its wider coverage of peer-reviewed journals in multiple disciplines (Delgado-López-Cózar and Cabezas-Clavijo, 2013).

Table 3 presents the distribution of the theories used in the reviewed literature. In this, five papers used stakeholder theory, three adopted a resource-based view and social movement theory, while two adopted social capital theory.

As presented in Figure 4, our reviewed articles contain 9 conceptual papers, 2 articles using a modeling approach, 28 qualitative case studies, 3 articles using the survey method and 5 articles that developed their work based on secondary data analysis. It can, therefore, be concluded that this is still an emergent field at an early stage of development, as evidenced by the high percentage of review papers and case studies (Figure 4).

2.2 Coding scheme

During the early stage of our study, our initial “data” was the articles collected from the database. In terms of the coding approach, we followed an inductive coding process proposed by Thomas (2003). In some studies, an inductive coding approach may be used to identify patterns in the data and establish themes (Schadewitz and Jachna, 2007). The outcome of such an approach is to transfer categories into a model or

framework that summarizes key themes or processes (Thomas, 2003). More specifically, the approach includes close reading of texts (i.e. read and select full-text downloaded from databases), creation of categories (i.e. after reading the full-texts we identified business-NGO partnership and other themes), overlapping coding and uncoded text (i.e. we found multi-stakeholder initiative, NGO certificate and some other themes not relevant in our context), coding revision and refinement of category system (i.e. when the themes were identified, discussions with other co-authors were carried out to ensure the themes were appropriate). Moreover, most qualitative studies use multi-coder agreement to ensure reliability (Carey et al., 1996) and validity (Mitchell, 1970). Hence, in this study, three researchers (i.e. independent coders) participated in the coding process. The themes identified from reviewed articles are subject to the final agreement of all independent coders by accepting the same set of codes and showing the same articles when using the same codes. Finally, the following themes were inductively identified: multi-stakeholder initiative in supply chains, political opportunity in cross-sector partnership, resource mobilization in cross-sector partnership and collective action in cross-sector partnership.

3. Thematic findings

Different from the shareholders, stakeholders are individuals or groups that have non-financial interests in the activities of the firm (Mitchell et al., 1997). In prior studies, NGOs are considered as one of the most critical stakeholders that reflect society and manifest societal movements (Crespin-Mazet and Dontenwill, 2012; Jackson and Young, 2016). Generally, Stekelorum et al. (2020) suggested that corporating with NGOs can help firms develop their opportunities for value creation. From the perspective of the relational view, firms operate in networks allowing them to create the value that they cannot create independently (Dyer and Singh, 1998). Here, relating these to our context, the multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs) led by NGO in supply chains is conceptualized as the institutional and organizational change that is initiated by various actors from different sectors (business, government and civil society) to carry out sustainable initiatives and achieve a

Figure 3 The distribution of reviewed articles by year

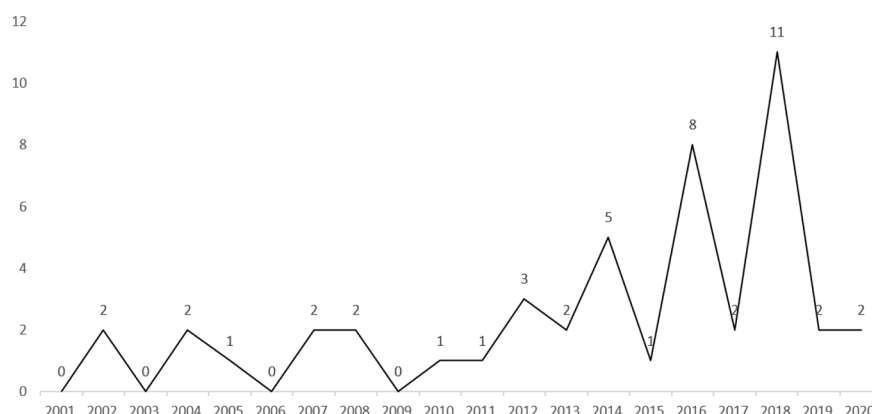


Table 2 The distribution of reviewed articles by journal

Area/Journal	No. of papers	Quartile
<i>Operations and Production Management</i>	5	
<i>Journal of Supply Chain Management</i>	2	Q1
<i>Journal of Operations Management</i>	1	Q1
<i>Production Planning & Control</i>	1	Q1
<i>Supply Chain Forum: an International Journal</i>	1	Q2
<i>General Management</i>	26	
<i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>	5	Q1
<i>Business & Society</i>	2	Q1
<i>Business Strategy and the Environment</i>	2	Q1
<i>Academy of Management</i>	1	Q1
<i>Accounting, Organization and Society</i>	1	Q1
<i>British Accounting Review</i>	1	Q1
<i>Business and Society Review</i>	1	Q2
<i>California Management Review</i>	1	Q1
<i>Critical Perspective on Accounting</i>	1	Q1
<i>European Management Journal</i>	1	Q1
<i>International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues</i>	1	Q3
<i>Journal of Business Research</i>	1	Q1
<i>Journal of Corporate Citizenship</i>	1	N/A
<i>Journal of Economics & Management Strategy</i>	1	Q1
<i>Journal of International Business Studies</i>	1	Q1
<i>Journal of Marketing Management</i>	1	Q1
<i>Philosophy of Management</i>	1	Q2
<i>Scandinavian Journal of Management</i>	1	Q2
<i>Strategic Management Journal</i>	1	Q1
<i>Corporate Governance: International Journal of Business in Society</i>	1	N/A
<i>Sustainability and Ethics</i>	8	
<i>Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management</i>	2	Q1
<i>Journal of Cleaner Production</i>	2	Q1
<i>Business Ethics Quarterly</i>	1	Q1
<i>Environment, Development and Sustainability</i>	1	Q2
<i>International Journal of Innovation and Sustainable Development</i>	1	Q3
<i>Sustainability</i>	1	Q2
<i>Public Administration and Sociology</i>	3	
<i>Elementa: Science of Anthropocene</i>	1	N/A
<i>Journal of Civil Society</i>	1	Q2
<i>The China Nonprofit Review</i>	1	Q3
<i>Other</i>	5	
<i>Organization and Environment</i>	2	Q1
<i>Journal of Industrial Relations</i>	1	Q1
<i>Land</i>	1	Q2
<i>Long Range Planning</i>	1	Q1
Total	46	

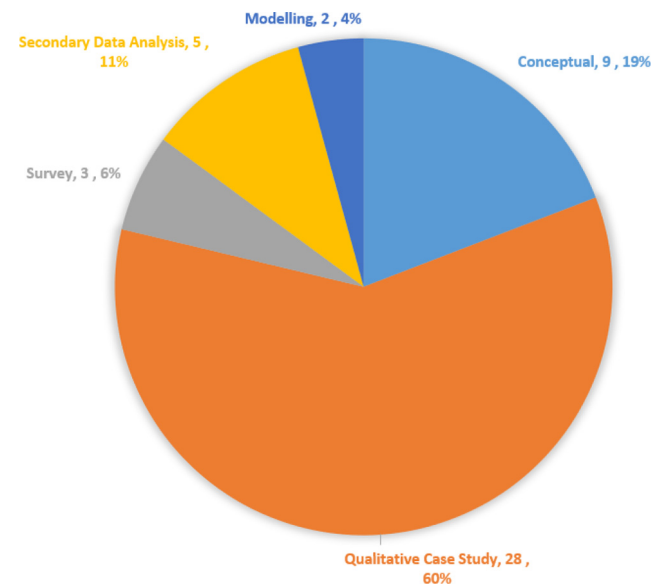
shared agenda (Hyatt and Johnson, 2016). The following section discusses the thematic findings.

3.1 Multi-stakeholder initiatives involving or led by non-governmental organizations in supply chains
MSI in supply chains was conceptualized as:

Table 3 Distribution of underpinning theory

Theory	No. of papers
Stakeholder Theory	6
Social Movement Theory	2
Agency Theory	1
Cognitive Theory	1
Complexity Theory	1
Democratic Theory	1
Game Theory	1
Institutional Theory	1
Legitimacy Theory	1
Relational View Theory	1
Resource Mobilization Theory	1
Self-regulation Theory	1
Sense-making Theory	1
Social Capital Theory	1
Theory of Collaboration	1

Figure 4 Distribution of article types



[...] sites of institutional and organizational change, as structural mechanisms by which varied actors from different sectors (business, civil society, and government) set about achieving shared agendas of change that have evolved beyond the traditional boundaries of the sustainability movement (Hyatt and Johnson, 2016, p. 2).

To address challenges in sustainable development, MSIs involving or led by NGOs have emerged. Different from traditional regulations, MSIs are implemented by independent organizations (Cassel, 2001; Christmann and Taylor, 2001; Mena and Palazzo, 2012). In previous studies, the motivations of business-NGO partnerships have been highlighted. Generally speaking, the partnership between firms and NGOs aims to gain tacit knowledge or acquire technologies from partners (Inkpen, 2001). However, different from firm-firm collaboration, the NGO-business partnership allows both of them to gain reputation and legitimacy (Fontana, 2018; Guay et al., 2004; Lalzai and Rana, 2020; Yaziji and Doh, 2009), which, in turn, affects NGOs' competitive advantage and

capacities of attracting financial resources (Elkington and Beloe, 2010). Furthermore, using this strategy attracts more loyal customers, which leads to higher business revenues for firms in the long run (Hardy *et al.*, 2006). For instance, by adopting a CSR certificate in supply chains, a firm may be able to avoid a costly boycott by NGOs (Heyes and Martin, 2018) and improve workplace practices (Deegan and Islam, 2014) to reduce employee turnover (Lenssen *et al.*, 2008). In contrast, Graf and Rothlauf (2012) suggested that the loss of reputation and legitimacy of NGOs occurs when firms' behaviors damage NGOs' image (e.g. firms cooperate with environmental NGOs, while they produce environmentally questionable products).

The outcome of such a mechanism is to provide a platform for exchanging competences or resources among a wide range of supply chain actors. Overall, it can be used as facilitators (i.e. knowledge and resource transformation) or inspectors (i.e. develop plans for better supplier development outcomes) for supplier development projects (Liu *et al.*, 2018). For instance, WWF helps convene multi-stakeholder supply chain initiatives to change industry structures and the rule of games in markets (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012). Specifically, WWF's RTRS has developed a certification scheme to verify that producers comply with criteria (e.g. the well-being of the local population and respect for small-scale and traditional land use) and to encourage them to purchase certified products (Jia *et al.*, 2018; RTRS, 2013). Indeed, CSR combines sustainability with SCM. Its central idea is that corporations are intended to respond to the demands of stakeholders, such as NGOs in this instance (Freeman, 2010; Stekelorum *et al.*, 2020). In so doing, firms often collaborate with other supply chain members and actors across sectors to integrate the competences of all and to develop strategies with which to cope with the issues beyond their control. Likewise, environmental protection (Brooks, 2003), labor rights, gender equality and other social impacts, have also been discussed (Grosser, 2016; Vogel, 2008).

Furthermore, Pedersen and Pedersen (2013) and Selsky and Parker (2005) suggested that such collaborations can be the partnerships between governments and NGOs, businesses and NGOs and between businesses, governments and tri-sector collaborations. In the literature reviewed, the collaborations between government and business tend to be rarer due to fewer interactions with NGOs, while the NGO-government partnership is less concerned with business organizations. Therefore, MSIs can be jointly developed by firms and NGOs or collectively developed by firms, NGOs and governments. For example, by developing a sustainable reporting standard for corporates, the global reporting initiative is responsible for bringing their research expertise and networks; the multinationals are providing sites for the development and application of the framework, while the United Nations Environment Program is providing financial supports and a dissemination network (Waddell, 2000). It was also found that governments are more active during the implementation stage of the private voluntary initiatives (e.g. NGO supply chain initiatives), especially the initiative regarding international development, environmental protection and market transformation (Vermeulen and Kok, 2012).

In line with this, as governments engage with the multi-stakeholder supply chain initiative, the government-business-NGO partnership is another type of collaboration. Again, the

term NGO refers to any non-profit and private organization that seeks to serve specific social interests and create value by striving to achieve societal, political and economic goals (Teegen *et al.*, 2004). In this regard, NGOs may advance their aims through lobbying a wide range of stakeholders, including suppliers, national governments and inter-governmental organizations (Lambell *et al.*, 2008). Compared with governmental organizations, Rodríguez *et al.* (2016) found that NGOs can transfer local knowledge by applying their experiences to conduct sustainable development programs (e.g. poverty alleviation across supply chains). Hence, governments – through having non-replaceable capacities absent in NGOs and firms – may well be crucial actors. In the literature reviewed, the NGO-led supply chain initiatives involving governments refer to the government-business-NGO partnership.

Based on the above discussions, MSIs show themselves to be designed so as to obtain opportunities from the institutional environment and acquire resources to make joint efforts in sustainable projects. These elements are presented in the following sections.

3.2 Political opportunities in multi-stakeholder supply chain initiative

Again, the foundation of “movement” relies on “the chance for people to act together” (Goodwin and Jasper, 1999). In business studies, Schurman (2004) considered opportunities to be industrial in nature and argued that it may be aspects of the industry that provide stakeholders with the possibilities to achieve their goals. Thus, in our context, we suggest that the formation of and implementation of multi-stakeholder supply chain initiatives can be affected by existent opportunities in institutional, industrial and organizational settings. In a more specific vein, the “opportunity” is to respond to the expectations of key stakeholders. Once again, the central idea of CSR is to respond to stakeholder needs (Freeman, 2010). For instance, the government may enforce companies to improve their operations through economic policies (Ruggiero *et al.*, 2014). In other cases, to include green operations in supply chains, firms may seek to move beyond regulatory compliance (Hyatt and Johnson, 2016). In this case, the “opportunity” not only exists in the institutional or industrial environment but also includes the firms' internal motivation to pursue sustainable goals. For instance, the increasing need for supply chain sustainability and collaboration with non-traditional stakeholders (PwC, 2008). Collectively, many NGOs respond to these opportunities by collaborating with corporates and creating specialists in supply chains (Hyatt and Johnson, 2016). Thus, in our context, the “opportunity” can be provided by formal institutions or firms to carry out supply chain initiatives.

In many situations, governmental regulation is either absent or indirect. To fill the governance deficit, supply chain partnerships are developed to establish a “license” to seek endorsement from multiple stakeholders (Nikoloyuk *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, there is an emerging trend for governments, NGOs and business to collaborate to solve problems even they have different motivations to do so (Colaner *et al.*, 2018). In contrast to business-NGO partnerships, governments have greater powers to enforce regulations in government-business-NGO partnerships. In these, government support to NGO

initiatives is typically pivotal. Indeed, national and local governments are willing parties, seeking opportunities to form partnerships with other nations, organizations and the private sector (LaFrance and Lehmann, 2005). In this regard, government engagement occurs because of its power to easily enforce companies by directing customers' purchasing preferences, encouraging the media to improve firms' legitimacy with greener practices and imposing taxes on firms with unsustainable supply chain practices (Clemens and Douglas, 2006). Hence, in the existing literature, we found that the implementation of NGO supply chain initiatives requires the legitimacy provided by institutions. As also discussed earlier, another line of inquiry was suggestive of cross-sector collaboration being designed to mobilize resources that cannot be obtained separately in the short-term. Resource mobilization in cross-sectorial partnership is presented in the following section.

3.3 Resource mobilization in multi-stakeholder supply chain initiative

In recent decades, firms have become an integral part of the governance of global environmental issues, such as climate change, ozone depletion and deforestation (Andonova *et al.*, 2009; Bäckstrand, 2008; Forrer and Mo, 2013; Ménard, 2013; Ruggie, 2004). In this context, firms seek to pursue sustainable development and the partnership was conceptualized as a two-way exchange between business and government, while still needing the non-governmental sector (Doh and Teegen, 2002). Moreover, NGOs were viewed as value creators of supply chains, which firms are more willing to collaborate with them to find solutions (Hardy *et al.*, 2006). However, in many cases, firms and NGOs find it challenging to create solutions when they are working alone. When incorporating poor producers into supply chains to reduce poverty, firms find it difficult to start due to a lack of knowledge and potential risks of influencing firms' economic performance (London *et al.*, 2010), while NGOs lack the capacities to place the products of poor suppliers into the market (Rodríguez *et al.*, 2016). As such, the resources provided by the stakeholders to develop sustainable initiatives can be found in the literature reviewed – which is to be discussed below.

Theoretically, cross-sector collaboration is largely conceptualized as a partnership engaging two or more sectors jointly working to enact CSR and to address sustainable challenges (Bryson *et al.*, 2006; Husted, 2003; Idemudia, 2017; Stekelorum *et al.*, 2020). Both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations seek collaborative approaches when their own experiences and knowledge are insufficient to solve these challenges (e.g. sustainable issues) on their own (Blok, 2014). To mobilize resources, networks (i.e. supply chains) can be jointly built by NGOs and businesses to transfer new models, concepts and practices (Campbell, 2005). Such a network facilitates an increasing number of actors to access and translate movements into actions (Hyatt and Johnson, 2016), as well as providing a greater number of the required valuable resources (Harangozó and Zilahy, 2015; Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Shumate *et al.*, 2018). Collectively, partnerships are often regarded as win-win solutions for both society and business (Baur and Schmitz, 2012; Fordham and Robinson, 2018; Fontana, 2018). As such, a number of studies have viewed such

partnerships as a resource exchange for optimizing the outcome of shared goals. Hence, companies bring financial, technical and human resources, while NGOs contribute their local networks, legitimacy and market knowledge (Austin *et al.*, 2012; Dahan *et al.*, 2010; Googins and Rochlin, 2000; Yaziji, 2004).

In line with these, many studies have acknowledged that SCM seeks to obtain environmentally and socially friendly materials, although some of these resources can be hard to come by (Awaysheh and Klassen (2010), Hingley *et al.* (2013); Weisbrod *et al.* (2016), Wu and Pagell (2011). Generally, firms strive for competitive advantages and value creation, while NGOs and governments focus on achieving public objectives (Chatain and Plaksenkova, 2019; Di Domenico *et al.*, 2009; London and Rondinelli, 2003). In particular, partnerships with NGOs can raise awareness of issues relevant to the common goals of all actors (e.g. supply chain members) involved (LaFrance and Lehmann, 2005), as well as influence policy and ensure the implementation of projects (BASD, 2004). In addition to this, the private sector can be mobilized to provide specialized technical knowledge and skills (Darnall *et al.*, 2018; Lodsgård and Aagaard, 2017; UN, 2004). This is to say that the collective action of all three parties has the potential to overcome governance deficits (Bäckstrand, 2008) and bridge the gap between actors. By doing so, they can address global environmental or social challenges that cannot be effectively regulated by a single sector in the short term (Child and Faulkner, 1998; London and Rondinelli, 2003; Westley and Vredenburg, 1991). Furthermore, additional studies have highlighted resource mobilization as another practice of cross-sector partnership. Specifically, NGOs tend to leverage firms' market power to mobilize the industry as a whole (Schlegelmilch and Simbrunner, 2019; Konefal, 2013; O'Rourke, 2005). As such, resource exchange is another theme to be here discussed.

From the NGOs' perspectives, such a platform provides technical expertise that assists firms in executing certain activities – for instance, the activities that facilitate multi-stakeholder agreement on certain issues in the supply chain – and realizing change and relational support (Hyatt and Johnson, 2016). Moreover, Gualandris *et al.* (2015) reported that the technical roles of NGOs include activities that enable firms to execute certain activities and realize change. One of the examples is that the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) provides professional supports regarding fleet management and energy-efficient transportation in supply chains for FedEx (Gualandris *et al.*, 2015). Similarly, the partnership between McDonald's and the EDF developed an environmentally friendly packaging to replace polystyrene clamshells in supply chains, which was also adopted by other fast-food chains (Livesey, 1999).

On the other hand, such collaboration is desired by NGOs for financial reasons (Hoffman, 1999). Moreover, larger NGOs are more likely to seek partnerships to improve their reputation and capacities (Al-Tabbaa *et al.*, 2014). Nevertheless, from a business perspective, such a collaboration can be beneficial for several reasons, including reputation enhancement (Falck and Heblich, 2007) and coordination with stakeholders (Moosmayer and Davis, 2016). NGOs also provide legitimacy for firms to make efforts through MSI collaboration by

providing unique technical supports (Hyatt and Johnson, 2016). In addition to these, relational support includes the activities that allow firms to engage with other stakeholders to prioritize issues, design the change for a sustainability agenda and finally reach multiparty agreement on sustainability issues in supply chains (Gualandris *et al.*, 2015). For example, in the “Dirty Gold” campaign led by Earthworks, Oxfam and other supply chain actors, conservation international (CI) was developing a standard involving supply chain actors (e.g. mining companies and manufacturers) in the mining industry (Smith and Crawford, 2019). In this, CI was also performing coordination to handle administrative functions among supply chain members, as well as bridging between the supply chain actors and those outside of the supply chain interested in environmental and social outcomes (Hyatt and Johnson, 2016). Furthermore, Rodríguez *et al.* (2016) investigated how and why NGOs mobilize their own and a firm’s resources to enhance social sustainability in supply chains, arguing that such a practice can be implemented without creating trade-offs between social and economic outcomes. Considering these competencies, the central idea of the partnership is that both parties pursue shared goals beyond their initial capabilities by combining their resources and skills and sharing common potential risks (de Lange *et al.*, 2016; Pedersen and Pedersen, 2013).

In contrast to business–NGO partnerships, initiatives involving actors from all three sectors tend to focus on large-scale national or international multi-sector projects (Selsky and Parker, 2005). Several studies have considered the business–NGO partnership to be a competence combination, while others have discussed how governmental organizations play key roles in the business–NGO partnership. From the point of view of governance, such partnerships emphasize the partnership role in its capacity to bridge the national governments’ governance gap (Bäckstrand, 2008). Compared with businesses and NGOs, engagement with governmental organizations is more oriented toward involving formal institutions or regulations, while firms and NGOs are more heavily geared toward strategic considerations and mission-focused practices. Interactions between NGOs and business include NGOs pressuring businesses through customer preference and marketing campaigns to develop an ethical code for their supply chain practices (Heyes and Martin, 2018; Perez-Aleman and Sandilands, 2008; Rausch and Gibbs, 2016). Collectively, we found that NGOs typically collaborate with other supply chain members to acquire resources with which to conduct sustainable initiatives. The outcome here is the development of initiatives which – in the context of our study – refers to collective action. As such, collective actions in multi-stakeholder collaboration need to be discussed.

3.4 Collective action in multi-stakeholder supply chain initiative

As discussed in the previous section, the first type of collaboration is the business–NGO partnership. Benstead *et al.* (2020) and Huq *et al.* (2016) noticed that NGOs have engaged with buying firms in the Bangladesh garment industry to improve social standards (e.g. provide; training and develop skills for workers). The reason is that NGOs alone cannot create changes in corporate accountability; instead, it can when

it works in a “team” (Deegan and Islam, 2014). Indeed, although many institutions are powerful players in their own right, they cannot operate without interacting across multiple sectors (Colaner *et al.*, 2018). Hence, many NGOs and other civil society organizations are part of the organizational networks to make joint efforts to push companies and governments to implement workplace social responsibility policies (Church and Lorek, 2007; Dicken, 2003; Hughes *et al.*, 2007; Islam and van Staden, 2018; Kong *et al.*, 2002; Sokphea, 2017; Yang and Chan, 2011). Likewise, Fordham and Robinson (2018) also suggested that NGOs collaborate with companies to implement best practices on sustainable issues (e.g. environmental protection and human right issues). For instance, Oxfam’s “Women-Food-Climate” initiative allows key stakeholders (e.g. small-scale farmers) to push the African Government to enact substantive changes to empower small-scale farmers and improve livelihood that benefits surrounding communities (Gualandris and Klassen, 2018).

Recently, Moosmayer and Davis (2016) reported that NGOs not only comment on the activities of firms but also collaborate with firms to influence practices and behaviors undertook by others (e.g. firms’ suppliers). In global supply chains, for instance, NGOs provide supports for poor suppliers in emerging markets to upgrade and meet new sustainable standards (Perez-Aleman and Sandilands, 2008). Such collaborations were discussed by a certain number of studies. For example, Fung *et al.* (2001) suggested that sustainable movement includes two stages: in the first stage, the NGOs pressures the multinationals to develop an ethical code of conduct for supply chain practices. Afterwards, companies and NGOs establish partnerships to work on joint projects. One of the examples is that the International Cocoa Initiative is working with a number of leading food businesses (e.g. Marks & Spencer) to train different cocoa suppliers and farmers on child labor issues in the cocoa sector (Liu *et al.*, 2018).

Leadbitter and Benguerel (2014) listed the approaches available to the private sector for improving sustainability in the tuna industry: codes of practice and environmental management plans, retailer procurement policies and supply chain agreements and certification. Considering the supply chain structure, Villena and Gioia (2018) indicated that such a collaboration tends to be more successful when businesses collaborate with multiple, rather than a few, NGOs. In the retail sector, Bloom (2014) and Lillywhite (2007) found that a partnership with NGOs facilitates the shifting of power between supply chain members, while the rights of those at the bottom of the pyramid can be better guaranteed. This tends to result in NGOs having an increased capability of improving efficiency within the supply chain.

However, other research has suggested that collaboration can impact NGOs. Broadly speaking, the outcome of the partnership not only addresses environmental and/or social issues but also enhances the understanding of how best to improve sustainability in supply chains (Hahn and Pinkse, 2014). In this regard, it provides an effective platform for an NGO to accomplish its mission and enhance its capacities and standing among other NGOs (Hahn and Pinkse, 2014). Another line of research suggests that one of the outcomes of the collective action is that both parties are capable of providing resources to fill the deficits of governance or management. In

line with this, NGOs often provide such resources as customer feedback, knowledge of customers' needs and access to local gatekeepers and networks (Dahan *et al.*, 2010). Using this, firms can thus improve their market knowledge (e.g. customers' demand for socially sustainable supply chains). Other studies have concluded that collaboration enhances a firm's reputation (Idemudia and Ite, 2006; Spar and La Mure, 2003) and employee satisfaction (Idemudia and Ite, 2006; Kourula and Halme, 2008; Spar and La Mure, 2003), as well as helping it gain recognition from local communities (Kemp, 2010).

4. Discussion

Following the previous section's thematic discussion, the justification of the theoretical and conceptual framework is presented below.

4.1 Evaluation of existing theories in non-governmental organizations research

From the articles reviewed above, the adopted theoretical frameworks can be classified into several groups. First, several works considered NGOs' operations in supply chains from a resource management perspective. In these, the theoretical frameworks, including the resource mobilization theory (Yang and Chan, 2011), the resource exchange theory (Fordham and Robinson, 2018) and the resource-based view (Fontana, 2018; Nezakati *et al.*, 2016), were used to analyze what types of resources can be used to create values in supply chains, why such resources are influential for multiple parties and how such resources can be mobilized.

Second, the reviewed scholars discussed relevant issues from the perspective of organizational legitimacy. In line with this, legitimacy theory (Bloom, 2014; Stekelorum *et al.*, 2020), moral self-regulation theory (Schlegelmilch and Simbrunner, 2019) and co-regulating theory (Nezakati *et al.*, 2016) were used. Collectively, these perspectives suggest that, within cross-sector partnerships, actors can be influenced by legitimacy (e.g. norms) proposed by institutions and set by other actors. Such a perspective can be suitable for evaluating organizations' legitimacy statuses or the extent to which they can be morally judged as being valuable to society.

Moreover, the cross-sector partnership has been seen by some as coordination among various actors or stakeholders and stakeholder theory (Colaner *et al.*, 2018; Fordham and Robinson, 2018; Guay *et al.*, 2004; McDonald and Young, 2012; Moosmayer and Davis, 2016) and multi-stakeholder theory (Nezakati *et al.*, 2016) were used to explain (among other questions) how NGOs build multi-stakeholder platforms and collaborate with other stakeholders in supply chains and why NGOs are influential in SCM or business operations among other stakeholders. The relevance of this is due to, in stakeholder theory, as a secondary stakeholder (i.e. a stakeholder that influences a company's survival and/or success but is not essential for its survival [Clarkson, 1995]), NGOs not only influence other stakeholders along the supply chain but also work in conjunction with them (Moosmayer and Davis, 2016; Perez-Aleman and Sandilands, 2008).

In another line of research, studies focusing on how NGOs are able to create social values across sectors have tended to use

social capital theory (Johnson *et al.*, 2018; Rodriguez *et al.*, 2016) to analyze this ability among cross-sector partnerships. The social capital perspective, based on the network model, emphasizes the closeness among actors in partnerships seeking to achieve shared goals (e.g. environmental protection). This perspective is related to the quality of ties, including shared beliefs, the diversity of actors and the value of resources embedded in the networks available to actors (Johnson *et al.*, 2018).

In contrast, Hyatt and Johnson (2016), Islam and van Staden (2018) and Sokphea (2017) have viewed such collaborations as sustainable movements and have used the social movement perspective to analyze how NGOs and other actors facilitate change within current institutional environments. These studies have tended to be oriented toward the process by which NGOs act as drivers of both supply chain MSIs and their outcomes. Indeed, movement-related perspectives have provided an angle from which to understand how and why MSIs are led by NGOs in supply chains. However, it should be stated that the lenses used in these works are limited as they fail to explain how external institutional conditions shape the movements. On the other hand, the movement perspective provides a holistic angle from which to interpret how NGOs drive sustainability in supply chains.

4.1.1 Social movement theory

Based on a review, Davis *et al.* (2008) argued that social movement theory has only recently been adopted into mainstream organizational studies. The theory proposes that SMOs can impact policymaking processes at local, national or international levels (Church and Lorek, 2007; Soule and King, 2006). In the context of NGOs, the theory suggests that NGOs can be change-making agents by providing new solutions to specific problems or by presenting themselves as "alternative democratic voices" (Soule and King, 2006). Therefore, by considering NGOs' ability to provide new solutions to existing issues, partnerships with such organizations are also able to play a "problem-solving" role in addressing unsustainable issues in supply chains. In this regard, our central assumption is that social movement theory can be adopted as a tool to analyze how and why "movements" can be made by NGOs in supply chains.

4.2 Constructs of the social movement theory

To develop our theoretical framework, we selected relative deprivation, political opportunity, resource mobilization and collective action – which are most commonly discussed in social movement theory. Each of the theory's constructs is illustrated in Table 4.

4.2.1 Relative deprivation

Pettigrew (2015, p. 12) defined relative deprivation as "a judgment that one's in-group is disadvantaged compared to a relevant referent and that this judgment invokes feelings of anger, resentment and entitlement." In sociology, relative deprivation illustrates the process of intra-group inequity to explain the motivations and implications of social behaviors (Flippen, 2013). The relative deprivation perspective assumes that "utility is a function not only of one's consumption but also of the consumption level of others in one's reference group" (Flippen, 2013, p. 1165). Specifically, relative deprivation experience contains three psychological processes: cognitive

Table 4 Overview of constructs in social movement theory adopted in this study

Constructs	Description	References
Relative deprivation	It is the absolute level of deprivation of individuals or partly, the feeling of dissatisfaction and injustice	Stouffer, 1962; Pettigrew (1967); Smith <i>et al.</i> , 2012; Walker and Smith, 2001; Flippen, 2013; Pettigrew, 2015; Oberschall, 2017; McCarthy and Zald, 1973; Hess and Korf, 2014
Political opportunities	The opportunities to mobilize and launch movements	Orwell, 1984; King, 2008; Tarrow, 1983; Baser (2015); Koinova (2011); Sökefeld (2006); Wayland (2004)
Resource mobilization	The process of securing essential resources for collective actions	Jenkins, 1983; McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Tarrow, 2011; Tilly, 1978
Collective action	The process by which SMOs take collective actions to pursue their goals	Snow <i>et al.</i> , 1986; Sökefeld, 2006

comparisons, cognitive appraisals of disadvantage and the angry and resentful consideration of disadvantage as unfairness (Pettigrew, 2015). From the perspective of NGOs, such a “comparison” and “feeling[s] of unfairness” could be seen as the identification of gaps after comparing NGOs’ home and host countries or between their goals and the current state of their situation. In our context, although relative deprivation was not identified in the thematic analysis, we introduced this construct from social movement theories into the conceptual framework so as to explain the motivation of sustainable “movements.”

Under the context of SCM, past research revealed that poor producers in global supply chains are barriers to implementing sustainability standards as they are unable to upgrade to meet the new standards (Conroy, 2009). In response to this, multinationals are seeking solutions to close the gap between their sustainability standards and suppliers’ capacities, especially when they deal with poor producers in developing countries. Islam *et al.* (2020) investigated NGO’s evaluation of multinationals’ and their suppliers’ human right performance in developing countries, suggesting that NGOs are not satisfied with the current human rights performance of multinationals and suppliers and capable of tackling these issues. The Starbucks and CI alliance, for example, required small suppliers in developing countries to change their existing production practices by investing time and resources to acquire new skills and improve infrastructure (Perez-Aleman and Sandilands, 2008). The smallholders engaged with multiple stakeholders, which includes NGOs, multinationals, local producers and governmental agencies for improving farming practices and more financial resources (Perez-Aleman and Sandilands, 2008).

4.2.2 Political opportunities

In other words, the foundation of social movements is dependent on “the chance for people to act together” (Goodwin and Jasper, 1999). In this vein, scholars have proposed the notion of political opportunities to explain the formation of social movements. In many cases, governmental regulation is either absent or indirect. To fill the governance deficit, supply chain partnerships are developed to establish a “license” to seek endorsement from multiple stakeholders (Nikoloyuk *et al.*, 2010). Hence, in our context, we argue that the formation and implementation of supply chain initiatives can be affected by existent opportunities in institutional, industrial and organizational settings.

Similarly, McAdam (1996) argued that political opportunity contains four elements: “the openness or closure of the institutionalized political system,” “the stability or instability of elite alignments,” “the presence or absence of elite allies and the state’s capacity” and the “propensity for repression.” In the current study, institutions refer not only to governmental institutions but also to the businesses that collaborate with NGOs. As such, the “openness of the institutionalized system” can be the extent to which governments – as well as business – are willing to accept new SCM practices introduced by the NGOs. Likewise, the “alliances” can refer to partnerships with governmental institutions, as well as businesses. Collectively, “political opportunities” not only rely on the alignment of political entities but also the recognition of business (e.g. focal companies). Relating this to our context, “political opportunity” can be understood as “institutional opportunity.” Therefore, we argue that “institutional opportunities” is the second construct adopted in our study.

4.2.3 Resource mobilization

NGOs tend to leverage firms’ market power to mobilize the entire industry and influence customers’ consumption tendencies (Schlegelmilch and Simbrunner, 2019). In other words, to mobilize and change their current practices, firms are required to comply with the new models developed by NGOs. Given that firms must also comply with self-regulation policies developed by private actors (NGOs), they are also “seeking to move beyond regulatory compliance to include green operations and supply chain practices often found that required resources were lacking in the firm’s strategic core” (Hyatt and Johnson, 2016, p. 3). As such, constructs regarding resource mobilization in supply chains must be addressed. Indeed, as with SMOs, an NGO’s success requires sufficient resources, such as money, facilities, land, labor, legitimacy and technological expertise (McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Tilly, 1978).

Walmart, for instance, mobilized a large and university-based MSI initiative with the Sustainability Consortium to develop product sustainability standards in its supply chains (Hyatt and Johnson, 2016). Generally, NGOs provided skills to build local networks with farmers, firms and other local organizations. Besides, the multinationals provided financial and technical assistance, while the local government formulated policies to develop the capacity of key services that may be unavailable in the developing countries. The successful implementation of resource mobilization is affected by three elements: the degree of authority and the delegated agents of

social control, the degree of differentiation and the pre-existing organizational structure (Brown and Kalegaonkar, 2002; McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Yang, 2005). In this sense, NGOs' capacity to collect resources is crucial to the organization of movements. Collectively, in our context, resource mobilization is led by NGOs to prepare for supply chain initiatives.

4.2.4 Collective action

Again, NGOs cooperate with firms because they view the CSR initiative as an activity to shape corporate mindsets (Baur and Schmitz, 2012). Past sociological research has predominantly been concerned with mobilization and collective action has been based on the interactions of like-minded networks (McAdam, 2010). For example, Greenpeace convenes stakeholders on sustainability initiatives through its advocacy to drive industry-wide adoption of ozone-sensitive refrigerant technology (Hartman and Stafford, 2006). Likewise, after the initiation of the roundtable on sustainable palm oil (RSPO), 1.5 million tons of crude palm oil produced by 11 companies have been certified (Nikoloyuk *et al.*, 2010). By doing so, every supply chain members (i.e. from oil palm growers to retailers) should participate (Nikoloyuk *et al.*, 2010). Additionally, they have further analyzed collective action during movements and campaigns (Benford and Snow, 2000). Here, in sustainable movement, collective actions are related to changing political and corporate opportunities, scientific influence and the agendas of charitable foundations (Brulle and Jenkins, 2005).

According to Wojcieszak (2011), three components are included in the process by which collective action is conducted, namely, identity, injustice and agency. More specifically, the identity component emerges when an individual identifies their group and recognizes that other groups hold different interests and values (Wojcieszak, 2011). In other words, this component defines the concept of "we," which is in opposition to the concept of "they." Moreover, the injustice component arises when a situation is considered "unfair" in a certain social setting (McAdam, 2010), which can be defined as the acceptance of shared values among actors. Finally, the agency component concerns individual or group recognition that

collective action is the solution to unjust situations (Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2013), which may refer to joint efforts with NGOs to pursue common goals. Taken as a whole, relating these to our context, collective action is the joint project carried out by NGOs and actors in supply chains. Hence, in our proposed conceptual framework, we consider "collective action" as NGO-led MSI. The following section presents the discussions of the development of the conceptual framework.

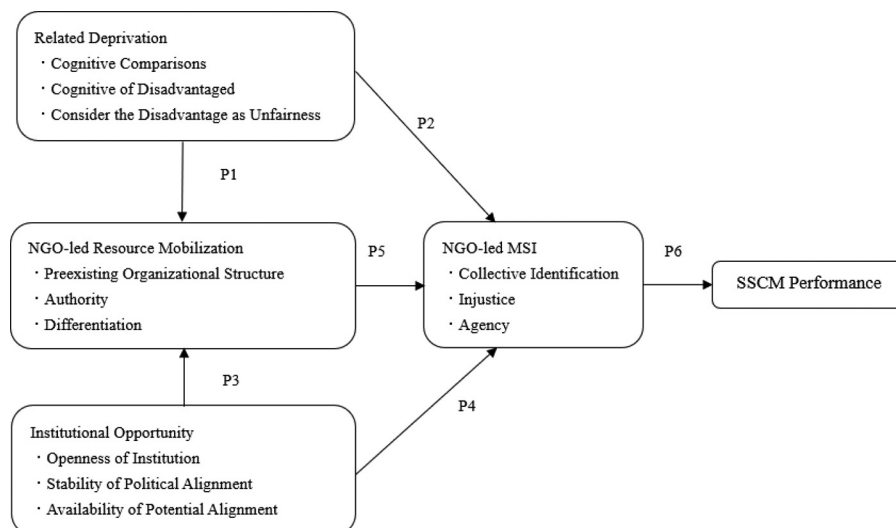
4.3 The conceptual framework

The first three elements on the left of Figure 5 are related to the government, while the middle element is relevant to the supply chain. Based on the constructs of the social movement theory discussed in the previous section, we proposed the conceptual model illustrated in Figure 5. Each proposition presented in the model is discussed in the following sections.

4.3.1 Relative deprivation and non-governmental organizations-led resource mobilization

As mentioned above, relative deprivation emphasizes feelings of dissatisfaction (i.e. the occurrence or motivation of social movements), while resource mobilization assumes that a successful movement cannot occur without the preparation of essential resources. In social movement studies, these two theories are linked. The relative deprivation perspective assumes that social movements are more likely to take place – because of increased motivation – when feelings of dissatisfaction are stronger (Watanabe, 2007). In our context, this process could be stronger when a gap emerges between supply chain practices and the standards proposed by NGOs. Indeed, it is argued that movements cannot be successful without supporters (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). In line with this, Donati (1992) pointed out that resource mobilization includes internal (e.g. mobilize members) and external process (e.g. SMOs obtain resources from their environments). Hence, it is assumed that the feelings of dissatisfaction (i.e. relative deprivation) are the trigger for other elements (e.g. resource mobilization) of movements. In our context, when

Figure 5 Proposed conceptual framework



NGOs are engaged in supply chain initiatives, they take a leading role (e.g. create deprivations) to mobilize human resources within supply chains (e.g. employees in the focal company) and other resources from the environment (e.g. legitimacy from the institutional environment). By doing so, grassroots can be better mobilized, even when their participation within the movement is low (Lehrner and Allen, 2008). Collectively, individuals and groups mobilized by NGOs begin mobilizing other resources to prepare for possible movements when the feeling of unfairness or injustice serves as motivation. In other words, when a larger gap can be identified by NGOs in supply chains, people are more motivated to mobilize resources to make “preparations.” Hence, based on the discussion, the first proposition is hypothesized as follows:

- P1. NGO-led resource mobilization is positively influenced by relative deprivation in supply chains.

4.3.2 Relative deprivation and non-governmental organizations-led multi-stakeholder initiative

According to Watanabe (2007), the greater the gap between people's level of expectations and the level of actual fulfilment, the greater is their dissatisfaction. In response to this increased level, people are more likely to participate in social movements. The linkage between relative deprivation and social movement is grounded in longstanding principles of social psychology. Relative deprivation has generally been considered an essential cause of collective action in prior research. Justino (2009), for example, argued that individuals are driven to join collective actions by the need to improve extremely low living standards rather than for personal profit. In other words, individuals are motivated by deprivation in collective protests. However, relative deprivation is positively related to engagement in protests when it occurs in circumstances where the institution is open. This is to say that, although relative deprivation can encourage individuals to participate in a collective protest, it is not in itself a sufficient cause of social movement activities (Davies, 1962; Geschwender *et al.*, 1969; Gurr, 1969). Beaton and Deveau (2005) found that relative deprivation based on inter-group comparison may be associated with certain types of collective actions. The impact of relative deprivation's economic variables, for instance, is dependent on the structure of current political opportunities. In this sense, the different degrees to which efforts are required by collective actions are in need of identification and analysis. In this study, NGOs' motivation to conduct further work is considered relative deprivation. Simply put, by identifying more gaps in supply chain practices, NGOs are motivated to make more joint efforts with supply chain actors. Again, in our context, collective action is the NGO-led initiatives in supply chains. Bearing this discussion in mind, we propose a second proposition:

- P2. NGOs are more likely to conduct MSI when they have deeper relative deprivation.

4.3.3 Institutional opportunities and non-governmental organizations-led resource mobilization

Political opportunities, which play a key role in facilitating political mobilization, are the external constraints and opportunities that affect access to resources and the chances of

realizing collective goals (Koopmans and Statham, 1999). Specifically, an organization's potential for resource mobilization is affected by authorities and the delegated agents of social control (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). Support from an authority or the openness of an institution, for instance, can provide important resources and both reduce the autonomy of an SMO, as well as threaten its stability, which can consequently impact its development. Increased legitimacy, for example, allows NGOs to improve their capacities to survive by gaining greater access to resources (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Similarly, a working relationship or political alignment can enhance public recognition to access decision-making procedures and public subsidies with greater resources (Goodwin and Jasper, 1999). Relating this to our context, NGOs' capacities to collect resources for sustainable supply chain initiatives are likely enhanced when external institutions (e.g. governments) provide more opportunities. For instance, political connection in China increases a firm's access to information, improves its reputation and increases its financial performance (Wang and Qian, 2011). In line with this, Oberschall (2017) found that NGOs do not need to struggle to mobilize resources when it gains legitimacy. For instance, government recognition is one of the major indicators for the success of a movement (Stapleton, 2013). Collectively, influenced by NGOs, the effects of political opportunities can be enhanced when it is accepted by institutions (e.g. government and senior managers of focal companies). Through considering the above discussion, we can formulate the third propositions:

- P3. The institutional opportunities of an NGO are positively related to its ability to mobilize resources.

4.3.4 Institutional opportunities and non-governmental organizations-led multi-stakeholder initiative

As stated above, political opportunity assumes that political structures and an institution's degree of openness, influences the occurrence of social movements. Although the political opportunity is not significantly necessary for the occurrence of collective action or social movements, a social movement cannot occur “if the political opportunity structure is closed” (Watanabe, 2007, p. 811). Specifically, the degree to which a supply chain faces resource mobilization is affected by the authorities and the delegated agents of social control (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). This situation also occurs when deprivation is high or when resources are sufficient. In line with this, a “sustainable movement” conducted by NGOs and other supply chain members occurs when such relative deprivation practices are not accepted by institutions. That said, sustainable initiatives cannot take place when organizational legitimacy has not been granted. Hence, we argue that NGOs tend to be more active in making joint efforts with actors in the supply chain when the number of opportunities available is increased. Taking the above into consideration, we present the following proposition:

- P4. With more institutional opportunities, NGOs have higher possibilities to conduct MSI.

4.3.5 Non-governmental organizations-led resource mobilization and non-governmental organizations-led multi-stakeholder initiative

Past research has acknowledged that organizations must first acquire political opportunities and control sufficient resources before conducting collective actions (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). Khawaja (1994) suggested that the possibility of collective protest depends on the availability of resources. In other words, the more resources people have, the more risks they can take and the more they can conduct or participate in actions. For SMOs, for instance, funds may be desired to sustain collective action. Another example of this could be that the greater the increase in time available, the more time is required to create new SMOs. When compared with deprivation, resource mobilization is a more important determinant of the emergence and success of collective action (Buechler, 1993; Hunter and Staggenborg, 1986). Similarly, Klandermans (1997) found that grievances alone cannot formulate collective action without the preparation of resources at the level of the individual, social or political. In line with this, as NGOs take the leading role to mobilize or organize supply chain actors to carry out supply chain initiatives, they may have more capacities to success when they have more resources. Relating these with our context, collective action is NGO-led multi-stakeholder supply chain initiatives. In sum, this study argues that when NGOs have a more effective ability to implement sustainable initiatives, more collective actions (i.e. NGO-led MSI) can be expected in supply chains. Based on these notions, we propose the fourth proposition:

- P5. NGO-led MSI in supply chains can be easier to carry out when more resources are mobilized.

4.3.6 Non-governmental organizations-led multi-stakeholder initiative and sustainable supply chain management

In sociology, resource mobilization and collective action are based upon the interactions of like-minded networks (McAdam, 2010) and can be used to analyze the collective action of movement gatherings and campaigns (Benford and Snow, 2000). Collective action has been defined as a voluntary action taken by at least two individuals – acting independently or with external support (e.g. from NGOs) – to pursue common interests or objectives (Devaux *et al.*, 2007; Marshall and Scott, 1998; Sandler, 1992). This notion was first proposed in a situation where the collective management of shared resources (e.g. water in shared rivers) was required by stakeholders (Röling, 2002). More recently, the adoption of MSIs has been a potential method in which to support stakeholders' formation, implementation and monitoring of CSR standards in global value chains (Dolan and Opondo, 2005; Henkle, 2005). Such collaborations are critical to the implementation of CSR schemes that ensure compliance with and improvements to, industrial standards (Lund-Thomsen and Nadvi, 2010). In our context, collective action can be seen as the implementation of NGO-led MSIs so as to accomplish sustainable objectives in supply chains.

In supply chains, collective action or MSI is required for the pursuit of higher goals. Ring and Van de Ven (1994, p. 96) suggested that the collaboration of supply chain members can be understood as “a form of cooperative inter-organizational

relationships, which are socially contrived mechanisms for collective action.” Certain research has explained the collaboration of participants in supply chains as a way of accepting specific roles with which to perform functions and pursue common goals when each participant's role is believed to be effective in building a more effective and productive supply chain (Ketchen and Giunipero, 2004). In SSCM literature, sustainable collective action has been discussed in terms of global standards (e.g. SA 8000), encouraging various actors to take responsibility and strive toward sustainable supply chain objectives (Beske *et al.*, 2008). In line with this, Carmagnac and Carbone (2019) discussed the governance and organizing principles of a multi-stakeholder initiative (the RSPO) when promoting sustainability in the palm oil supply chain at the transnational level. They argued that certain sustainable issues, such as deforestation, can be more effectively tackled collectively than by companies alone.

Throughout this study, we have proposed that the implementation of more effective sustainable NGO initiatives is aimed at improving sustainability in supply chains. Therefore, the last proposition reads as follows:

- P6. NGO-led MSI improves sustainability performance (i.e. economic, environmental and social sustainability) in supply chains.

5. Future research directions

In this study, we have reviewed 47 academic papers and proposed a conceptual framework (Figure 5) to show how NGO initiatives help build SSCM. In our proposed conceptual model, based on the social movement theories, the mechanisms regarding how NGOs develop sustainable supply chains was illustrated. For example, we suggested that NGO-led resource mobilization is motivated by relative deprivation, which is moderated by NGOs. In the following section, we will discuss the areas which will benefit from further research.

First, it has been noted that a considerable number of studies argue that NGO supply chain initiatives are built upon the resource acquisition of supply chain members, while the understandings of industry-specific resources are rarely presented. As such, a question arises: how can NGOs mobilize industry-specific and/or national-specific resources from government, businesses and other actors to implement their sustainable initiatives? One of the questions which therefore needs to be addressed is how can NGOs mobilize governments to provide more authority or legitimacy (i.e. specific resources given by governments).

Second, the influences from external institutions, from a resource dependency perspective, has been relatively under-discussed. Engagement with governments, for instance, could be problematic in circumstances where the power allocation among actors conflict with one another (e.g. governments being charged in an NGO-led supply chain initiatives). As such, how external institutions (e.g. the openness of institutions) can shape the implementation of sustainable initiatives, engage with government and seek opportunities provided by governmental institutions requires further attention.

Next, the impacts of supply chain initiatives have been relatively untouched in prior research. The outcomes of joint projects in supply chains relate not only to how sustainability can be improved but also to how these improvements can be institutionalized into broader society – especially when governmental organizations or policymakers are engaged. The following question therefore arises: how can such partnerships build collective identifications and influence institutional settings to move toward facilitated ones? This requires further analysis of the changes led by NGOs on organizational or industrial levels.

Furthermore, in terms of the operations of NGOs in supply chains, the issue of shared leadership could raise the following questions: how can collective identification or shared values for improved leadership among stakeholders be built and how can collective actions across sectors be implemented? Additionally, the initial motivations of sharing particular resources or pursuing shared goals could require further clarification. Hence, more studies are needed to more aptly explain the outcomes of collective actions initiated by NGOs.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, social movement theory is a rich perspective from which to understand how organizations successfully mobilize resources to enact reforms and reach their political goals (McAdam et al., 2003). However, this theoretical framework has been relatively less adopted as compared to other theories (e.g. stakeholder theory). Meanwhile, the above-mentioned discussion revealed that social movement theory can be adopted to capture SMOs' (NGOs) operations regarding creating changes in society at large. Hence, we also suggest that the research of social movement theory in the context of SCM is another potential area for future research.

6. Conclusions

Throughout this study, we have sought to systematically analyze the existing literature and develop a conceptual framework and propositions. Certain important findings can be identified. First, as our conceptual framework was developed, it deepened the understanding of how NGOs operate to improve sustainability in supply chains. Second, based on a theoretical framework borrowed from sociology (i.e. social movement theory), our study found that, by identifying relative deprivation, political opportunities and resource mobilization, NGOs can conduct collective actions to improve sustainability in supply chains. Finally, the proposed and developed conceptual framework and research agenda can be tested by future empirical research.

Overall, the contributions of this study could be said to be threefold. First, this may well-be the first study to provide a systematic review of NGOs' role in improving sustainability in supply chains. Second, the conceptual framework proposed in this study deepens the understanding of the role of NGOs in SSCM. Third, by introducing and adopting sociology's social movement perspective, we opened the possibility of building a new theoretical framework for future SSCM studies. Fourth, this study extended social movement theory into the context of SCM with a more holistic understanding of NGOs' role in supply chains, which also opens an avenue for novel empirical study in the future.

For practical implication, we suggested that enterprises (especially multinationals) should view NGOs as their supply chain members and deepen the understandings of supply chain projects initiated by NGOs. In particular, the senior managers in the firm play a key role in providing “opportunities” for NGOs to carry out supply chain initiatives. Hence, NGOs not only need to “lobby” governmental agencies to legitimate their activities but also pay attention to identify supporters among key personnel in firms. In so doing, NGOs can be in partnership with actors in supply chains to mobilize resources and change SCM practices. For policymakers, especially those in developing countries, the social implication of this study suggested that a process and industry-specific policy or framework is needed to understand and support NGO initiatives in supply chains. By doing so, NGOs can act as facilitators external to supply chains, rather than hidden stakeholders without legitimacy. Therefore, regulations or frameworks to differentiate NGOs from those without significant contributions to improve SCM practices are essential. For instance, by creating a more supportive atmosphere of the corporate world and civil society, policymakers can promote the development of environmentally and socially responsible supply chain practices (Davis and Moosmayer, 2013).

Our study, however, is not free of limitations. First, based on the gaps and discussions in this paper, it can be noted that a considerable number of studies argue that NGOs' supply chain initiatives are built upon the resource acquisition of all supply chain members, while an understanding of the industry-specific resources has been left relatively under-explored. Following this thread, another limitation concerns the questions regarding how NGOs mobilize governments to enforce their initiatives. Besides, in terms of the selection of reviewed articles, some of the articles reviewed in this study were not from high-ranked journals. Therefore, studies in the future can use articles from journals from higher qualities. Finally, this study sought to systematically review the existing literature and propose a conceptual framework for the research scope. Although a qualitative method can be adapted to provide an in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon, it is constrained by the limited number of samples. Furthermore, relationships are difficult to identify in qualitative data. Hence, opportunities abound for further research, including the empirical test of the causal relationships in the conceptual framework, which can be examined by scholars in the future.

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Appendix

No.	Author	Result	Method	Theory
1	Baur and Schmitz (2012)	In this article, we show how increasing demands for accountability directed at both businesses and NGOs can have the unintended effect of compromising the autonomy of nonprofits and fostering their co-optation	Conceptual	
2	Benstead <i>et al.</i> (2020)	This paper responds to calls from the literature to investigate the modern slavery detection process and provides empirical evidence involving collaboration with a large multinational NGO and another of the audited supplier's customers. Findings are presented from a first-hand account of the detection process and suggest that a targeted audit is more likely to identify key indicators of modern slavery. Evidence is also provided of the company's remediation process, which includes partnering with a local NGO to empower workers and collaboratively develop suppliers	Qualitative case study	
3	Blok (2014)	The authors explore four characteristics of the concepts of identity, unity and difference which are presupposed in the partnership and collaboration literature and point at their metaphysical origin. Based on our analysis of these four characteristics, the authors show the limitations of the metaphysical concepts of identity and difference in the case of cross-sector partnerships (CSP) for wicked problems like sustainable development	Conceptual	
4	Bloom (2014)	The findings of this study suggest that a lack of supply chain transparency, NGOs' negotiation between commercial and aid-oriented goals and the potential to exclude producers from development projects threaten NGOs' legitimacy. These findings illustrate the difficulties of embedding philanthropic activities in market-based systems and demonstrate how multi-stakeholder collaborations may be influenced more by commercial priorities than the elements of a partnership. Ultimately, development NGOs are products of neoliberal, hybrid governance, even as their activities are expected to ease the transition of small-scale producers into this system	Qualitative case study	
5	Chatain and Plaksenkova (2019)	Our analysis reveals that firms are at risk of finding themselves in a "valley of frustration," capturing just enough value to justify establishing the new supply chain, but without the hope of capturing more than this minimum amount of value. This situation arises when the NGO is making effort above its preferred level to ensure the formation of the supply chain, but as a result, tightly controls its effort. As a result, the firm does not capture more than the minimum necessary	Modeling	Game Theory
6	Church and Lorek (2007)	The paper looks at NGOs activities in sustainable production and consumption and the obstacles being faced. It identifies lessons for policymakers seeking to engage civil society and makes recommendations on how academics can co-operate more effectively with civil society. Insights are drawn from recent studies on stakeholder involvement in the international political process and a series of surveys and semi-structured interviews	Qualitative case study	
7	Colaner <i>et al.</i> (2018)	We have argued that given the scope of our social and environmental problems, there are important limits when a single actor or institution is involved. A particular institution will have much good to offer, but membership in a particular sector introduces important limits. A for-profit business may recognize the long-term profitability of sustainable development, but it may face greater pressure from investors over short-term earnings. Or a non-profit may look to improve a particular aspect of a problem without having the resources to address a systematic change that is necessary to prevent that problem from recurring in the future	Conceptual	Stakeholder Theory
8	Dahan <i>et al.</i> (2010)	In this paper, we stress four strategic imperatives for the success of corporate-NGO developing market partnerships: innovative combinations of the firm and NGO resources and skills; the importance of trust-building and fit between the two organizations' goals; and supporting and understanding the local business infrastructure and environment	Qualitative case study	
9	Darnall <i>et al.</i> (2018)	It is found that consumers' trust in government and environmental NGOs to provide credible environmental information encourages consumers' use of ecolabels sponsored by these entities and consumers do not differentiate between certified versus uncertified ecolabels in the presence of trust. By contrast, consumers' distrust of private businesses to provide credible environmental information discourages their use of business association-sponsored ecolabels. However, these	Secondary data analysis	Cognitive Theory

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No.	Author	Result	Method	Theory
10	Davis and Moosmayer (2013)	ecolabels may be able to overcome consumer distrust if their sponsors certify the ecolabels using third-party auditors This paper investigates the negotiation process over environmental responsibilities in Apple's global supply chain between a Chinese group of environmental NGOs and the world's most valuable brand. The paper demonstrates the value of linguistic approaches to understanding how norms and practices of environmental supply chain responsibility are developing in the Chinese context and how civil society actors and corporations are contributing to their construction. Our study has implications for MNCs with supply chains in China, as well as for NGOs and others with interests in environmental supply chain responsibility	Qualitative case study	
11	de Lange <i>et al.</i> (2016)	Conclusions are that mutual adaptation and cooperative resolutions are more likely when organizations either share these capabilities or compensate for each other's shortcomings and make trade-offs that align with joint strategic objectives	Conceptual	Complexity Theory
12	Deegen and Islam (2014)	This paper investigates how social and environmental non-government organizations (NGOs) use the news media in an endeavor to create changes in the social performance and associated accountability of multinational buying companies' (MBCs') supply chains located in a developing country. Our results show that social and environmental NGOs strategically use the news media to effect changes in the corporate workplace and related disclosure practices. More particularly, both the NGOs and the news media representatives stated that NGOs would be relatively powerless to create change in corporate accountability without media coverage	Qualitative case study	
13	Fontana (2018)	This study makes three contributions to the CSR literature. First, it finds that the firm and NGOs select each other based on their resources, but for different reasons. Second, it demonstrates that NGOs adjust to corporate demands, but whether this hampers mission integrity depends on the balance between current and future potential for resource acquisition. Finally, it shows the influence of the Swedish context on CSR, arguing that public opinion can be shifted through policymaking	Qualitative case study	
14	Fordham and Robinson (2018)	The study illustrates the benefit of creating CSR within a pluralistic space to enable stakeholders to work constructively with corporations to improve CSR outcomes, including delivering strategic benefits tailored to the local level	Qualitative case study	Stakeholder Theory
15	Grosser (2016)	This paper addresses the challenge of including a plurality of civil society voices and perspectives in business–NGO relations and in CSR as a process of governance. The paper contributes to CSR scholarship by bringing insights from feminist literature to bear on CSR as a process of governance and engaging with leaders of women's NGOs, a group of actors rarely included in CSR research	Qualitative case study	
16	Gualandris and Klassen (2018)	This study begins with several key differences to explore how interventions are delivered and then, how international non-governmental organizations' (INGOs) supply chains must be aligned. In doing so, at least three critical factors must be taken into account to improve alignment: stakeholder-induced uncertainty; supply chain configuration; and supply chain dynamism	Qualitative case study	
17	Guay <i>et al.</i> (2004)	In this paper, it is clear that NGOs are increasingly influential actors in the political-economic landscape. Their emergence has added a new dimension to corporate governance and disrupted traditional relationships between investors, boards of directors and corporate officers. As NGOs have grown and matured, both as individual organizations and on a collective level, they have come to occupy an important and influential position in corporate governance and society	Conceptual	Agency Theory and Stakeholder Theory
18	Hahn and Pinkse (2014)	We carve out the partnership characteristics that determine the effects of competition on the effectiveness and thus the suitability of partnerships as a private environmental governance mechanism. Our analysis suggests that benefits for society at large will be confined to cases where cross-sector partnerships are carefully designed to achieve effective private governance of global environmental issues	Qualitative case study	Institutional Theory
19	Harangozó and Zilahy (2015)	This paper presents the results of research examining the relationships between non-governmental organizations and businesses based on the stakeholder theory of the firm. The results show that small and medium-sized enterprises rank the importance of different stakeholders similarly to larger businesses and often engage in cooperation with non-governmental organizations. It is also demonstrated that cooperative strategies constitute an	Survey	Stakeholder Theory

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No.	Author	Result	Method	Theory
20	Heyes and Martin (2018)	important and effective component of non-governmental organizations' behavior toward businesses and that the indirect influence of the civil sector is as important as its direct impact NGO-operated environmental and social labeling schemes are now a key feature of the landscape within which many firms operate. All sorts of stakeholders are willing to reward a firm that goes about its business in a "responsible" way, provided that this behavior is certified. We provide the first formal analysis of the incentives facing an NGO in designing the scope of its labeling scheme in a setting in which it competes with other NGOs for adoptions and impact	Modeling	
21	Hyatt and Johnson (2016)	We describe a set of roles consisting of third-party facilitators (3PF), fourth-party facilitators (4PF) and fifth-party facilitators (5PF) serving in increasingly strategic roles with increasing numbers of actors and with increasing potential for co-creation of value in global supply chains. Reframing non-governmental organizations as members of supply chains instead of outsiders provides a dramatically different perspective. This explicit acknowledgment of membership can help business and NGO managers to rethink their roles and motivations and to find collaborative solutions in the steady transition to more sustainable supply chains	Conceptual	Social Movement Theory
22	Idemudia (2018)	First, the case study suggests that business–NGO partnerships are likely not a panacea for resolving corporate–community conflicts. This is partly because such partnerships are more useful for conflict prevention, rather than conflict resolution. Second, our findings seem to also suggest that the effectiveness of a business–NGO partnership for peace is based on both the internal dynamics of the partnership and the nature of the stakeholder relationship context within which the partnership functions	Qualitative case study	Sense-making Theory
23	Islam and van Staden (2018)	We find that collaboration with NGOs, as social movement organizations and activist protest lead to more comprehensive and therefore more transparent disclosures. Our findings suggest that NGO collaboration with corporations has a higher impact on corporate conflict mineral disclosures if activist protest against corporate activities regarding conflict minerals is present	Secondary data analysis	Social Movement Theory and Theory of Collaboration
24	Islam et al. (2020)	This paper investigates how particular stakeholder groups, such as labor rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs), question and even challenge the moral power of multinational companies (MNCs) to maintain human rights in their supply chains in Bangladesh. The findings show that MNCs' and their suppliers' workplace human rights performance in Bangladesh, as perceived by labor rights NGOs, is inconsistent with MNCs' public disclosures on human rights	Qualitative case study	
25	Kong et al. (2002)	In this article, two essential factors for success have been identified: first, consumers need to feel empowered to make a difference through their behavior. Second, they should also be able to improve their quality of life. Furthermore, direct consumer outreach and partnerships with retailers are recommended as an effective means of changing consumption patterns	Qualitative case study	
26	Kourula and Halme (2008)	Different corporate responsibility (CR) types involve different forms of cooperation ranging from sponsorship to partnership. Furthermore, CR integration and CR innovation seem to have more potential for long-term positive business outcomes than philanthropy. In terms of societal outcomes, CR innovation seems to have the highest potential in creating local income-generating mechanisms and supporting local self-sufficiency. A main suggestion of the study is that more in-depth case studies of CR projects should be conducted to develop and improve indicators for business and societal outcomes	Secondary data analysis	
27	Leadbitter and Benguerel (2014)	In this study, the authors suggested that the sustainable seafood movement has proven persistent and adaptable and this is increasing the number of retailers seeking sustainable tuna. In a demand-driven market economy, this growth will surely be influential	Qualitative case study	
28	LaFrance and Lehmann (2005)	In this paper, the authors examine the underlying drivers of corporate organizational behavior from the theoretical perspectives of both legitimacy and stakeholder needs and discuss the challenges of gaining insight into why corporations embrace public-private partnerships	Qualitative case study	
29	Lillywhite (2007)	This article discusses the experience of the Brotherhood of St Laurence in China that stems from the fact that the Brotherhood owns a Chinese manufacturing enterprise and wishes to ensure that its practices are socially responsible	Qualitative case study	
30	Lodsgård and Aagaard (2017)	The findings reveal different scenarios of how companies approach CSR and NGO collaborations in their value propositions and value creation through collaborative activities across core	Qualitative case study	

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No.	Author	Result	Method	Theory
31	McDonald and Young (2012)	business functions. The findings reveal that the type of value creation originates from the way the business–NGO collaborations are applied across the companies' collaborative activities in communication, human resource management (HRM) and sustainable innovation/R&D. The research demonstrates that cross-sector environmental partnerships are a positive mechanism to enact CSR. With key variables in place, cross-sector partnerships have the potential to be rejuvenated and expand beyond initial aims or expectations. Moreover, such partnerships are capable of generating environmental and/or social value in a way that engenders employee and community buy-in and adds to organizational culture building	Qualitative case study	
32	Mena and Palazzo (2012)	This conceptual paper examines the conditions of a legitimate transfer of regulatory power from traditional democratic nation-state processes to private regulatory schemes (such as MSIs). In this study, we identify MSI input legitimacy criteria (inclusion, procedural fairness, consensual orientation and transparency) and those of MSI output legitimacy (rule coverage, efficacy and enforcement) and discuss their implications for MSI democratic	Conceptual	Democratic Theory
33	Ménard (2012)	In conclusion, expanding the work of local environmental NGOs (ENGOS) could be beneficial to locals in developing countries impacted by climate change; however, additional funding would be needed. Carbon markets could play an important role, which seeks to couple greenhouse gas (GHG) mitigation projects with development in poor countries	Qualitative case study	
34	Moosmayer and Davis (2016)	In our investigation of supply chain responsibility discourse, we find that organizations adopt distinct variants of the cosmopolitan language. Our second main finding is that companies appear to use cosmopolitan language to build supply chain responsibility (SCR) discourse that supports their positions. Our findings suggest that it may be worth further exploring if the choice of cosmopolitan discursive strategies may be guided by the cultural and institutional "rootedness" of organizations	Secondary data analysis	Stakeholder Theory
35	Nezakati <i>et al.</i> (2016)	This study found that NGOs support MNCs can lead to MNCs reputation and empowering, whereas this relationship makes some barrier in SMEs' sustainability practice by increasing costs of new market entry. Moreover, SMEs can use NGOs support to remove adoption barriers and increase their profits	Conceptual	
36	Pedersen and Pedersen (2013)	By combining a case-study approach with a broader stakeholder analysis, the article finds support for previously identified success factors in the partnership literature, whereas legitimacy threats seem to be less of an issue. The authors highlight the importance of context for understanding the processes and outcomes of partnerships	Qualitative case study and survey	
37	Perez-Aleman and Sandilands (2008)	This article examines how standard making and implementation resulting from MNC-NGO alliances can create conditions that foster inclusion and upgrading of small-scale producers in a supply chain. It demonstrates that including poorer producers from developing economies requires an active assistance approach to address the complex challenges of creating more responsible supply chains	Qualitative case study	
38	Rausch and Gibbs (2016)	In this study, the increasingly complex property arrangements include ownership of multiple properties by a single producer, use of rental properties owned by others and soy and cattle production on a single property. This complexity could create loopholes allowing soy associated with deforestation to enter the supply chain. Comprehensive soy-governance strategies that include more robust procedures for verifying the provenance of soy across all properties, that account for the entire property rather than only the area planted to soy and that use more transparent verification systems could achieve greater reductions in deforestation	Survey	
39	Rodríguez <i>et al.</i> (2016)	First, engage with partners who can connect the firm with a pool of resources that it can- not presently access. Second, resources will need adaptation to the local context before undertaking any supply management initiative with poor suppliers. Third, invest in knowledge transfer routines and logistical resources to successfully integrate poor suppliers. Finally, govern buyer-supplier relationships through relational mechanisms based on procedural fairness	Qualitative case study	Social Capital Theory
40	Schlegelmilch and Simbrunner (2019)	Our research findings demonstrate that moral cleansing (meaning the increased likelihood of demonstrating prosocial behavior after doing something self-indulgent) can be transferrable into practical managerial measures	Qualitative case study	Self-regulation Theory (continued)

No.	Author	Result	Method	Theory
41	Shumate <i>et al.</i> (2018)	The results demonstrate that non-profits differ from their business counterparts, communicating more cross-sector partnerships, rarely offering industry exclusivity and presenting distinctive patterns of relationships within the social issue industry	Secondary data analysis	
42	Sokphea (2017)	These empirical findings suggest that actions of civil society organization's (CSOs), especially those using the international supply chain movement approach (ISCMA), are not necessarily effective in this context. To ensure the effectiveness of CSOs' actions within transnational advocacy networks (TANs), one has to consider not only the local political contexts, particularly when the government and the companies are politically tied together but also the ambiguous roles and power of international communities and stakeholders in the supply chains	Qualitative Case Study	
43	Stekelorum <i>et al.</i> (2020)	In this study, we investigate the extent to which cooperation with international NGOs influences corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices and supplier assessment in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The results indicate that this cooperation has a positive direct effect on supplier assessment. Furthermore, our examination of the multiple mediating roles of the SME CSR dimensions (i.e. economic, social and environmental) reveals that cooperation with international NGOs positively and significantly influences supplier assessment through the economic and environmental CSR dimensions, whereas the relationship is negative through the social dimension. Also, the paper reveals that SMEs can enhance supplier assessment provided they have developed simultaneously cooperation with international NGOs and the environmental and economic CSR dimensions. Moreover, our findings reveal that SMEs' size matters in the relationships between cooperation with international NGOs, CSR practices and supplier assessment	Secondary data analysis	Legitimacy Theory and Relational View Theory
44	Teegen <i>et al.</i> (2004) JIBS	viability. We identify important questions raised by incorporating NGOs into our conceptualization of global context and we challenge three basic tenets of international business (IB) theory: the definition and dynamics of an institutional field, the relevance/centrality of firm-government (i.e. two-sector) bargaining model and the pre-eminence of the firm as the global organization of interest within the field. We conclude by offering suggested research directions that should serve as catalysts for this new and potentially rich area of future IB research	Conceptual	
45	Villena and Gioia (2018)	This study reveals that many lower-tier suppliers address their environmental and labor issues passively and constitute the riskiest suppliers in a supply network; provides a grounded theoretical framework for managing a sustainable supply network that accounts for multiple network members, as well as three sustainability dimensions (the 3Ps: profit, people and the planet); and shows how processes MNCs use to manage their suppliers differ from processes these suppliers use with their own (lower-tier) suppliers. The study reveals the practices that leading sustainable MNCs use to manage their supply networks and provides important future research directions	Qualitative case study	
46	Weisbrod <i>et al.</i> (2016)	The framework, a result of a collaboration between a consumer goods company and non-governmental organization (NGO), applies multiple methods across four principles: life cycle perspective; food security impact; environmental and social risks; and (4) sustainability claims. The framework can be used to assess risks from production to post-consumer use	Qualitative case study	
47	Yang and Chan (2011)	The case analyzes show that Chinese NGOs' promotion of CSR has been confined to strategic organizational activities and has not developed into institutionally diverse models	Qualitative case study	Resource Mobilization Theory

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