Impetus for Change: How Sustainable is Sustainable Entrepreneurship?
A Discourse Analysis of Case Studies of Eco-Inclusive Enterprises in Africa & a Conceptualisation of Strong Sustainable Entrepreneurship

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Abstract

Despite the increasing popularity of the concept of entrepreneurship for sustainable development in both academia and policy making, there is no agreement on how this process should unfold and which objectives it should pursue. Perceived tensions between the paradigms of sustainability and economic development as well as a lack of shared definitions and assumptions lead to ambiguous understandings of the idea of sustainable entrepreneurship. This thesis uses the theoretical framework of ecological economics to investigate a leading discourse within the field of sustainable entrepreneurship and aims to clarify the underlying assumptions and implications of the current discourse. The analysed discourse is created by SEED, a global UN partnership which promotes entrepreneurship for sustainable development with a focus on African countries. The discourse analysis is conducted according to four analytical elements as defined by Dryzek (1997: 2013). The theoretical reflection of the discourse through the lens of ecological economics and its strong sustainability paradigm functions as a foundation for the conceptualisation of **strong sustainable entrepreneurship** from which implications for the current sustainable entrepreneurship discourse are derived.

**Keywords:** sustainable entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship for sustainable development, ecological economics, weak and strong sustainability, UN, SEED.
The problems we have created in the world today will not be solved by the level of thinking that created them.

- Albert Einstein (1946: as cited by Thompson, 1995)
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List of Abbreviations

MDG  Millennium Development Goals
SDG  Sustainable Development Goals
BoP  Base of the Pyramid
TBL  Triple Bottom Line
SS   Strong sustainability
WS   Weak sustainability
IUCN International Union for Conservation of Nature
UN   United Nations
UNDP United Nations Development Programme
UNEP United Nations Environmental Programme

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1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship has long been recognised as a powerful driving force for innovation, technological advance, and societal transformation (e.g. Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Wennekers & Thurik, 1999). In the tradition of a Schumpeterian perspective on innovation, entrepreneurship is seen as a highly influential activity that disrupt markets and thoughts by the use of creative destruction (Hart & Milstein, 1999; Schumpeter, 1942). Recent publications in the field of entrepreneurship therefore argue that because of their disruptive and innovative power, entrepreneurial activities could play a vital role in solving some of today’s most pressing issues related to sustainable development (e.g. Hockerts and Wüstenhagen, 2010; Parrish, 2010). The spectrum of entrepreneurial activity that aims at creating social and ecological value through market driven innovation has been named differently by different scholars in the field, e.g. social entrepreneurship, eco-entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship for sustainable development and sustainable entrepreneurship¹ (e.g. Binder & Belz, 2015; Hockerts & Wüstenhagen, 2010; SEED, 2018a). However, even though the concept of sustainable entrepreneurship is widely portrayed as a “panacea for many social and environmental concerns” (Hall, Daneke & Lenox, 2010, p.439) and becomes more relevant in both policy making and research, “there remain major gaps in our knowledge of whether and how this process will actually unfold” (Hall et al., 2010, p.439). This thesis aims to contribute to closing this gap by gaining insights into the underlying assumptions and implications of the current sustainable entrepreneurship discourse through a discourse analysis.

So how is this sustainable entrepreneurship discourse created and shaped? Alongside the academic attention for the concept, the potential of entrepreneurship for sustainable development is also recognised by international leading governance bodies, including the United Nations (UN), which support several initiatives that “seek to leverage entrepreneurship and creative thinking to strengthen sustainable development around the world” (UN, 2017). As one of the most powerful non-governmental organisations in the world (Common & Stagl, 2005), the UN are perceived as an opinion leader as well as major contributor and creator of the sustainable entrepreneurship discourse. The discourse analysis performed in this thesis therefore includes material from SEED, a UN funded programme that supports entrepreneurship for sustainable development. SEED (SEED, 2018a) is a global partnership which was created by three agencies of the UN: The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The programme focuses on eco-inclusive entrepreneurship and the green economy with the goal to support “innovative small-scale and locally driven entrepreneurs around the globe who integrate social and environmental benefits into their business model” (SEED, 2018a).

¹ In this thesis, the terms entrepreneurship for sustainable development and sustainable entrepreneurship are used interchangeable, although the difficulties and multiple understandings of development and its relation to sustainability are recognised (see Friman, 2002; Robinson, 2004).
Sustainable entrepreneurship is a concept that is widely discussed in academia, governance, and politics - Therefore the sustainable entrepreneurship discourse is complex and constantly evolving. Because of its complexity and diversity of its contributors, it lacks shared definitions of key concepts that define the discourse (Hall, Daneke & Lenox, 2010), such as the understanding of sustainability and sustainable entrepreneurship. This leads to the first research question of this study: **How is sustainable entrepreneurship perceived and portrayed within the discourse of SEED on entrepreneurship for sustainable development?**

While the dominant voices in the sustainable entrepreneurship discourse are strongly influenced by the ideas of conventional and established economic frameworks (Stål & Bonnedahl, 2016), alternative and unconventional concepts such as ecological economics promote more radical ideas: Rather than accepting the current social and economic systems as a given, they focus on transforming them, a process for which the innovative and disruptive power of entrepreneurship could be leveraged. However, the strong influence of conventional and established economic frameworks on the sustainable entrepreneurship discourse creates a risk of making it one dimensional. The current discourse is at risk of disregarding ideas from emerging, heterodox economic schools such as ecological economics (Stål & Bonnedahl, 2016) that advocate for a more holistic view of ecological and economic systems (Common & Stagl, 2005; Costanza, 1989; Daly & Farley, 2004). These ideas could make the discourse more inclusive and enrich it with alternative concepts and perspectives. Therefore, this thesis aims to identify the underlying assumptions and understandings of sustainability in both the sustainable entrepreneurship discourse created by the UN funded programme SEED, and the relatively new field of ecological economics. The results from this analysis will be used to explore opportunities of integrating alternative ideas into a new concept of sustainable entrepreneurship within the framework of ecological economics: strong sustainable entrepreneurship. Thus, this second research question of this thesis is: **How could strong sustainable entrepreneurship be conceptualised based on the reflection of the SEED discourse?**

First, an overview of the history of sustainable development as well as prevailing sustainable entrepreneurship concepts in the academic literature will be given in chapter 2. A theoretical framework derived from the emerging economic school of ecological economics will be added in chapter 3 to clarify and categorise the ambiguous understandings of sustainability in the current discourse about sustainable entrepreneurship. In chapter 4, the methodology of the discourse analysis as performed in this thesis will be described. Chapter 5 provides a discourse analysis on two series of case studies published by SEED. The theoretical framework created in chapter 3 will be used in chapter 6 to reflect on the analysis of the discourse, and to discuss the understanding of sustainability and sustainable entrepreneurship in the analysed SEED discourse. Finally, chapter 7 elaborates on both the reflection and the literature review to conceptualise strong sustainable entrepreneurship within the framework of ecological economics.
2. Literature Review

In this chapter, the current literature about the concept of sustainable entrepreneurship is reviewed. Literature about the related research fields of sustainable development and entrepreneurship is reviewed first to gain a holistic understanding of the concept, an overview of sustainable entrepreneurship literature follows in the final part of this chapter.

2.1 Sustainable Development

In order to review the concepts of entrepreneurship for sustainable development in the current literature, it is important to understand what sustainable development means and how the concept evolved. Therefore, this chapter gives a short overview of the history of sustainable development.

The concept of sustainable development emerged in the 1980s from the discourse around preservation versus conservation in the environmental literature in the 1960s and 1970s (Robinson, 2004). The environmental debate had been mostly centred around two opposing positions: on the one hand, the preservationist position that attributed an intrinsic value to pristine natural landscapes and was “often expressed in explicitly romantic or spiritual terms” (Robinson, 2004, p.371), and, on the other hand, the conservationist position which was often rooted in a utilitarian philosophy. The conservationist approach also favoured the protection of natural areas, but for reasons such as eco-tourism or future resource extraction by humans (Robinson, 2004). Robinson (2004) points out that “the spectrum between a utilitarian and a more spiritual approach to environmental concern remains as contested terrain” (p.371) in the current sustainability literature.

In the second half of the 20th century, the environmental debate shifted from questions about the protection of natural landscapes to concerns about issues of “pollution, non-renewable resource depletion, and population growth” (Robinson, 2004, p.371). Neumayer (2013, p.2) describes the debate about pollution as essentially an argument regarding the “‘sink’ side of the economy”, and the debate about production of consumption goods for a growing world population as an argument regarding the “‘source side of the economy” (Neumayer, 2013, p.2). The ‘Brundtland report’, published by the UN in 1987 was largely driven by these types of concerns. The report also focused the social dimension to sustainability, based on the assumption that “ecological sustainability cannot be achieved if the problem of poverty is not successfully addressed around the world” (Robinson, 2004, p.372). Another underlying assumption of the report was “that the solution to both over- and under-consumption, and thus the answer to environmental concerns, lie in promoting more, not less, human development, albeit development that was sensitive to environmental concerns” (Robinson, 2004, p.372). Robinson (2004) points out that the Brundtland report reflects a conservationist tradition and utilitarian philosophy: “Brundtland embodies an anthropocentric approach focussing on human needs” (Robinson, 2004, p.373) and “calls for great improvements in technology and efficiency” (Robinson, 2004, p.373). The role of natural capital as a “direct provider of utility in the form of environmental utilities” (Neumayer,
As emphasised by the preservationist position (Robinson, 2004), sustainable development is less present in the Brundtland report which is considered pathbreaking for the sustainable development discourse (e.g. Robinson, 2004; Hopwood, Mellor & O’Brien, 2005). The Brundtland report’s definition of sustainable development shows a clear prioritisation of human needs: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, p.44).

With the Brundtland report in 1987, the sustainable development discourse gained popularity. Besides the environmental critique on the human prioritisation, several non-economic theories referred to the sustainable development discourse. Out of these theories, the ‘capability approach’ could be called one of the most notable theories neglecting the economic aspect (Nussbaum & Sen, 1993; Sen, 1999). The importance of freedom, governance, and social & human capital were emphasised in these theories which contributed to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000. The MDGs aimed to mobilise the international community with a specific focus on eight goals. Out of these eight goals, six could be perceived as human focussed: poverty, primary education, gender equality, child mortality, maternal health, and diseases as HIV/AIDS. One of the goals could be perceived as environment focussed: environmental sustainability. The last goal includes the global partnership to ensure sustainable development (e.g. Sachs, 2012). Thus, the shift from the environmental debate in the 1980s as described by Robinson (2004) moved towards a debate clearly focussed on human needs.

Nevertheless, recent publications related to sustainability reflect a growing concern that further pressure on climate and ecosystems could lead “to a very different state of the Earth system, one that is likely to be much less hospitable to the development of human societies” (Steffen et al., 2015, p.737). Approaches to sustainability like the concept of planetary boundaries of Rockström et al. (2009), that highlight the limits of the Earth System, are conflicting with the predominant paradigm of social and economic development dependent on continuous growth (Stern, 2007). While the idea of sustainable development attempts to unite both paradigms - ecological sustainability on the one hand and economic development on the other - it “has been seen by some as amounting essentially to a contradiction in terms” (Robinson, 2004, p.369).

In 2012, at the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development, member states of the United Nations agreed on the concept of sustainable development in the form of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also known as Agenda 2030 (UN, 2018). The SDGs were adopted in September 2015 by the United Nations as the successor of the MDGs. In comparison to the MDGs, there are two main differences recognised. Firstly, the SDGs introduce a new understanding of sustainability, which includes economic, social and environmental dimensions and their related targets, without a clear distinction between the different dimensions (Hajer et al., 2015). Secondly, the geographical focus of the MDGs was mainly on the Global South, whereas the SDGs have a focus on both the Global South and North (Sachs, 2012). This shift towards inclusiveness is perceived as a broader acceptance of responsibility, where high-income countries do not only have the role of donors but are also perceived as responsible on both an
international and national level (Hák, Janousková & Moldan, 2016). Although the SDGs incorporated environmental dimensions into the development goals, several scholars suggested more precise statements about the boundaries of the planet (Hajer et al., 2015).

The SDGs cover several actors, sectors, and targets within the seventeen goals. Table 1 provides an overview of the goals which implicitly or explicitly refer to entrepreneurship.
Table 1.
Overview of the SDGs related to entrepreneurship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Key points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Affordable and Clean Energy</td>
<td>This goal aims at “access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all” and emphasises the importance of technological innovation to achieve this target.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Decent Work and Economic Growth</td>
<td>Technological innovation and sustained growth are identified as drivers of sustainable development and it is stated that “entrepreneurship and job creation are key to this”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure</td>
<td>“Technological progress is the foundation of efforts to achieve environmental objectives, such as increased resource and energy-efficiency. Without technology and innovation, industrialization will not happen, and without industrialization, development will not happen.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Responsible Production and Consumption</td>
<td>Its targets include “promoting resource and energy efficiency, sustainable infrastructure, and providing access to basic services, green and decent jobs and a better quality of life for all. Its implementation helps to achieve overall development plans, reduce future economic, environmental and social costs, strengthen economic competitiveness and reduce poverty.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Partnerships for the Goals</td>
<td>Supports market-driven innovation and calls for long-term investments “in critical sectors, especially in developing countries. These include sustainable energy, infrastructure and transport, as well as information and communications technologies”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Data for SDGs 7, 9 & 12 from UN (2018) and SDG 8 from UNDP (2018).
Since the Brundtland report in 1987, the concept of sustainable development has developed over the last decades, both within the UN as well as within the academic debate about it. The most recent anchor point in the history of sustainable development can be considered as the SDGs. The need for solutions to issues related to the economy, society, and the environment is widely recognised, although the approaches to finding solutions differ significantly. Within the recent conceptualisation of sustainable development within the UN, the role of entrepreneurship has been recognised, both implicitly and explicitly.

2.2 Entrepreneurship

In order to understand the role of entrepreneurship for sustainable development, a basic understanding of the concept of entrepreneurship is needed. Entrepreneurship for sustainable development as a field of research focuses on the impact of entrepreneurial activities, thus this chapter focuses on how entrepreneurial activity is perceived in the literature and how its role within society is portrayed. Just like the concept of sustainable development, the concept of entrepreneurship has significantly changed and evolved over time. It is widely accepted that the term was first defined by Cantillon (Zahedi & Otterpohl, 2015) as an application of the French word *entreprendre* which literally translates to *undertake*. Since then, various scholars from different disciplines have contributed to the development of the concept (e.g. Say, 1803; Schumpeter, 1942; 2008). Today, entrepreneurship is widely perceived as a central concept within economics, by both academics (e.g. Schumpeter, 1942; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Wennekers & Thurik, 1999) and institutions (GEM, 2017; OECD, 2018; UN, 2017). According to Shane & Venkatamaran (2000), the definition of an entrepreneur is not limited to an individual who creates a new business: Rather, entrepreneurship is concerned with the “exploration, discovery and exploitation of opportunities” (p.221-222). Entrepreneurship requires a connection between the presence of opportunities and the presence of individuals who discover and exploit these opportunities (Shane & Venkatamaran, 2000). This implies that entrepreneurship goes beyond the act of establishing a new business. According to Wennekers & Thurik (1999), there is a strong link between economic growth and entrepreneurship, as entrepreneurs can create structural changes within companies and markets. This approach derives from the contribution of Schumpeter (1942) who defines an entrepreneur as a person who converts an invention or idea into a successful innovation that can destroy established industries to make way for new industries and new ideas. For Schumpeter (1942), the dynamic disequilibrium caused by the disruptive innovations and the creative destruction of entrepreneurs is the norm of a healthy economy. Thus, the potentially disruptive and changing influence of entrepreneurial activity has a meaningful impact on society and economy which makes it an interesting concept for research on sustainable development.
2.3 Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development

In the following chapters, there is a review provided of concepts related to entrepreneurship for sustainable development - environmental entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship at the Base of the Pyramid (BoP) - before reviewing the research specifically addressing the concept of entrepreneurship for sustainable development.

Assuming that entrepreneurs have the ability to foster change, their potential to be a driver for sustainable development is obvious (e.g. Hart & Milstein, 1993; 2003; Parrish & Foxon, 2009). The aim of entrepreneurship for sustainable development is often perceived as balancing the triple bottom line (TBL) of social, environmental and economic interests (Belz & Binder, 2017). However, the boundaries between sustainable, environmental and social entrepreneurship are not clearly defined as the concepts show significant overlaps (Belz & Binder, 2017, Thompson, Kiefer & York, 2011). As the interest of this study is to recognise the potential and pitfalls of entrepreneurship for sustainable development, related concepts such as social and environmental entrepreneurship will be taken into consideration to define the field as accurately as possible. In Figure 1 are the different concepts visualised to generate an understanding of the differences in broad terms. The figure does not explicitly mention the concept of the BoP, because the visualisation includes the goals of entrepreneurship, while the BoP is defined by the focus on a specific market segment.

Figure 1. Related concepts of sustainable entrepreneurship. Reproduced from: Theorizing about sustainable entrepreneurship, by J.K. Binder, 2016, p.35.
While entrepreneurship for sustainable development is a relatively new field of research, related concepts such as social entrepreneurship are perceived as more established (Thompson et al., 2011). Thompson et al. (2011) suggest categorising entrepreneurs by looking at their objectives. On one hand, traditional entrepreneurs are expected to have an economic objective, prioritised over other objectives, while social entrepreneurs prioritise their social mission. Environmental entrepreneurs, on the other hand, prioritise their environmental objectives, while entrepreneurs at the BoP have a mission regarding developing markets, more specifically: issues such as poverty and inequality (Hockerts & Wüstenhagen, 2010). The three related concepts are reviewed in the following chapters.

### 2.3.1 Environmental Entrepreneurship

One of the concepts related to entrepreneurship for sustainable development is that of environmental entrepreneurship (Belz & Binder, 2017; Binder & Belz, 2015; Thompson et al., 2011). It is also called *green entrepreneurship* (Walley & Taylor, 2002) or *ecopreneurship* (e.g. Schaltegger, 2002; Schaper, 2002) in the literature. In 2002, the *Greener Management International* journal published a special edition on environmental entrepreneurship, edited by Schaper (2002). In this special edition, Schaltegger (2002) recognised the difference between traditional entrepreneurship and ecopreneurship, stating that the latter considers the relationship between potential market success and environmental progress. This definition of ecopreneurship is in line with Dean & McMullen (2007, p.58) who consider environmental entrepreneurship as “the process of discovering, evaluating, and exploiting economic opportunities that are present in environmentally relevant market failures”. The importance of business opportunities along with an environmental mission is emphasised by Schaltegger and Wagner (2011, p.222) who state that “ecopreneurs can be classified according to two criteria: (1) their desire to change the world and improve the quality of the environment and life; and (2) their desire to make money and grow as a business venture”. These two desires are perceived as equally important: The economic goal is perceived as an end in itself, and it does not only function merely as a means to the environmental goal. Belz and Binder (2017) conclude that this view contrasts with other related concepts of entrepreneurship for sustainable development, in which one aspect is prioritised over the other. However, other scholars (e.g. Tilley & Young, 2009) recognise two types of environmental entrepreneurs: The first type of environmental entrepreneur could be described as a conscious entrepreneur who recognises the potential for business activities in which the environmental interests are used as means towards the economic ends of the activity. The second type of environmental entrepreneur is perceived as more radical: His or her environmental interests are at the core of the business and thus prioritised over the economic interests of the business. This is in line with the approach of Gibbs (2006) who describes his concept of *ecological modernisation* as “a process of the progressive modernisation of the institutions of modern society, [in which] the basic argument is that the central institutions of modern society can be transformed in order to avoid ecological crisis” (Gibbs, 2006, p.66, for further exploration, see e.g. Hajer,1995). York and Venkataraman (2010) describe several approaches to
addressing environmental issues: governmental regulation, stakeholder activism, corporate social responsibility initiatives by individual businesses and other types of corporate activism. Holt (2003; 2010) explains the two-folded influence of environmental related policies on business activities. First, the decrease of environmental degradation that is caused by business activities, relates to the consumer opinion on the company and can therefore influence the business. Secondly, specific environmental related policies by governments - for example subsidising green energy sources like solar panels - could also reduce cost of environmental friendly business activities. Overall, environmental entrepreneurship literature emphasises the existence of entrepreneurial opportunities at the double bottom line of profitability and environmental responsibility (Binder & Belz, 2015; Meek, Pacheco & York, 2010; York & Venkataraman, 2010).

2.3.2 Social Entrepreneurship

Another field of research closely related to sustainable entrepreneurship is that of social entrepreneurship. Compared to related concepts of entrepreneurship for sustainable development, Thompson et al. (2011) recognise social entrepreneurship as the most developed field of research. Although there is still no singular definition of social entrepreneurship (Dacin, Dacin & Matear, 2010), there is an overall agreement within the literature that the social mission of the enterprise is prioritised over the financial goals (e.g. Mair & Marti, 2006). Zahra et al. (2009, p.522) define social entrepreneurship as “activities and processes undertaken to discover, define, and exploit opportunities in order to enhance social wealth by creating new ventures or managing existing organisations in an innovative manner”. Seelos and Mair (2005) view the economic value creation merely as a side effect of social entrepreneurship which is needed to sustain the organisation. Mair and Marti (2006) state that the main focus of the social enterprise is to create social value and that this social mission distinguishes social entrepreneurship from other forms of entrepreneurship. This is also recognised by Schaltegger and Wagner (2011) who emphasise that in a social enterprise, economic goals are a means towards the social goals. According to Dees (2001, p.2) “social entrepreneurs are one species in the genus entrepreneur. They are entrepreneurs with a social mission”. In this case, the concept of Schumpeterian creative destruction is therefore not only applied to markets but also explicitly to society and social issues. Hjorth and Holt (2016, p.53) emphasise this social nature of entrepreneurship, where the concept of entrepreneurship is inherent to “value-creation that change society for the better”. However, several scholars argue that the differences between social entrepreneurship and traditional entrepreneurship are often overstated in the literature (e.g. Austin, Stevenson & Wei-Skillern, 2006). Austin et al. (2006, p.3) state that “commercial entrepreneurship does benefit society in the form of new and valuable goods, services, and jobs, and can have transformative social impacts. Such transformations can even be a driving motivation for some commercial entrepreneurs”. Thus, instead of arguing for a dichotomy between social or non-social entrepreneurship, Austin et al. (2006) suggest a continuum, ranging from purely commercial entrepreneurship to purely social entrepreneurship. In this conceptualisation, even the extremes
on both sides of the continuum still contain elements of the other side. Overall, the perception of social entrepreneurship in the literature is ambiguous, with definitions ranging from both ends of the continuum as suggested by Austin et al. (2006). Often, the differences are in the details, e.g. varying assumptions of social entrepreneurs’ motivations.

2.3.3 Entrepreneurship at the Base of the Pyramid

Some authors view successful sustainable business models as essentially win-win situations that benefit all aspects of the TBL. One example of a concept driven by the idea of creating win-win situations in the business world is the concept of entrepreneurship at the so-called Base of the Pyramid (BoP). This concept derives from the work of Prahalad and Hart (2002) who propose that doing business with people living on less than 2 US$ per day, the consumers at the BoP, is an attractive yet untapped business opportunity. In Prahalad’s bestseller ‘The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid’, he argues that this consumer segment at the BoP could be estimated at 13 trillion US$. One of the most important claims of the BoP approach is that doing business at the BoP is not solely a business opportunity, but includes social missions as well, because the well-being of the poor would increase once they gain access to the mass market. A critique of this approach comes from Karnani (2007a, 2007b) who reviewed the cases of Prahalad (2004) and claims that the specific focus on products to consumers at the BoP would not increase their wellbeing but only increase their consumerism. Thus, opponents of the BoP approach argue that Prahalad’s suggestions lead to exploitation of the poor, instead of supporting them (Karnani, 2007a; 2007b; Seelos & Mair, 2005). As an alternative, several scholars proposed to include the BoP in international value chains, e.g. by creating jobs in developing countries (London & Hart, 2004; Karnani, 2007b).

2.3.4 Sustainable Entrepreneurship

Within the literature that focuses specifically on the concept of sustainable entrepreneurship, the majority focuses on the TBL: The entrepreneurial activity balances social, environmental and economic interests (e.g. Crals & Vereeck, 2004; Shepherd & Patzelt., 2011). According to Schaltegger & Wagner (2011), this balancing of the three aspects of the TBL could be done through entrepreneurial activity: With the establishment of a successful business, societal and environmental problems would be solved simultaneously and create a win-win situation. In line with this, the main motivational driver of sustainable entrepreneurs is perceived as profit orientation and self-interest, while the environmental and societal benefits are created through win-win situations (Cohen & Winn, 2007; Dean & McMullen, 2007; Parrish, 2010; Young & Tilley, 2006). For example, Wheeler et al. (2005) argue that entrepreneurial activities have the ability to improve the level of education, socioeconomic status, productivity as well as self-reliance of individuals and societies, particularly in developing countries. This argument seems to rely on the same rhetoric as the BoP literature which also assumes that economic empowerment directly or indirectly fosters social change (Dey, 2016).
However, some scholars (e.g. Hockerts, 2010) argue that pursuing value maximisation with the TBL will lead to a mission drift and finally the prioritisation of one aspect over the other two. In this case, the entrepreneurial activity would drift either towards the traditional, profit-driven form of entrepreneurship or prioritise the social or environmental interest and neglect its economic interests. Recently, several scholars have argued that incorporating the TBL in a business is an insufficient bar to qualify as entrepreneurship for sustainable development (e.g. Fuchs, 2017, Markman et al., 2016). They argue that the TBL is merely used as a justification for having the economic interest of the entrepreneurial activity on the same level as the ecological and social interests. Markman et al. (2016) argue for a change in perception of the TBL and suggest a stronger focus on the embeddedness of the economic activity within the social and ecological systems. Thus, the three different interests should not be balanced but prioritised in a way that gives more importance to the environmental and social systems.

While the idea of entrepreneurship for sustainable development is portrayed as a powerful tool for sustainable development by some scholars, it is seen as an inherent oxymoron by others (Hall et al., 2010). The latter often argue that there are significant, unsolvable tensions between the social, ecological, and economic interests of the entrepreneur (e.g. Alegre, 2015; Todeschini et al., 2017) that could prevent meaningful contribution of entrepreneurship to sustainable development. Parrish (2010) criticises that much of the research on entrepreneurship for sustainable development is based on the neo-liberal assumption that entrepreneurs are driven purely by profit-seeking motives and that because of this assumption, the field has been primarily occupied “the problems of developing market incentives and ‘win–win’ scenarios to motivate entrepreneurs to contribute to sustainable development” (p.510). In his study of sustainable entrepreneurship, Parrish (2010, p.521) therefore focuses on the “distinct ability of sustainability entrepreneurs to balance activities that benefit self, other people, and nature” and concludes that the field must look “beyond those entrepreneurs motivated primarily by self-interested profit seeking” (Parrish, 2010, p.521) to understand the full potential of sustainable entrepreneurship. In line with this, Schlange (2009) coined the term sustainability-driven entrepreneurship, emphasising the distinct motives and values that motivate entrepreneurs with a sustainable mission beyond profit orientation.

Pacheco et al. (2010) argue that an entrepreneur’s sustainable mission can generate a competitiveness problem: By effectively allocating resources to pursue a sustainable mission, entrepreneurs would risk a competitive disadvantage due to added costs. Their competitors who do not pursue a sustainable mission do not have to bear these costs, as they are not paying for the social and/or environmental externalities. This phenomenon is also called the green prison. This green prison could only be escaped by “altering or creating the institutions – norms, property rights, and legislation – that establish the incentives of competitive games” (p.464). This argument is in line with the observation of Meek, Pacheco & York (2010) who find that certain social norms and governmental regulations related to environmental and societal issues are positively influencing entrepreneurship for sustainable development. According to Thompson et al. (2015), this potential institutional change is recognised within the field of entrepreneurship.
for sustainable development, but specific research on the topic is scarce. The need for institutional change is also recognised by Pinkse and Groot (2015), as they recognise the need for sustainable entrepreneurs to become politically active. They propose three opportunities to create this change within the institutional framework: the formation of alternative coalitions to bypass the existing structures, the generation of specialised knowledge to emphasise the contribution to the collective interest, and the collaboration with existing structures to create mutual dependency. From this perspective, the role of entrepreneurship for sustainable development is more about the impetus for change, rather than balancing the three aspects of the TBL. Newey (2018) elaborates on this and creates a rather abstract terminology of the *transformative social entrepreneur*: He finds that the purpose of entrepreneurship for sustainable development “is to transform the prevailing political, economic and social system and ideology towards a new social vision” (p.20).

2.3.5 Summary of Literature Review and Research Gap

While the concepts of sustainable entrepreneurship that were reviewed in the previous chapters have some common ground in their definitions, the ambiguous perceptions of sustainability lead to varying, often conflicting definitions of sustainable entrepreneurship (Stål & Bonnedahl, 2016). The academic concept of sustainable entrepreneurship has evolved from the prevailing understanding of sustainable development as outlined before and seems therefore strongly influenced by it, making the sustainable entrepreneurship discourse one-sided and lacking essential sustainability ideas from other fields of research. Therefore, the following chapter will describe an alternative, more radical approach towards sustainability. The concept of ecological economics, from which the distinction between two sustainability paradigms - weak sustainability (WS) and strong sustainability (SS) - emerged, will provide a theoretical lens for this thesis.
3. Theoretical Framework

The aim of this chapter is to generate an understanding of the different approaches towards sustainability and how they are rooted in the academic debate by their economic foundation. First, the different perceptions of WS and SS are described. The in-depth description of the school of ecological economics, which is strongly related to the concept of SS, will provide deeper insights into the history, goals and underlying assumptions of SS as well as highlight the differences between SS and WS. The generated framework will function as a theoretical lens for the discussion and reflection of the discourse analysis in chapter 6 and as a foundation for the conceptualisation of strong sustainable entrepreneurship in chapter 7.

3.1 Weak versus Strong Sustainability

Analysing the sustainable development discourse from an economic perspective, Neumayer (2013) differentiates between SS and WS. As discussed later in chapter 3.2, the WS paradigm is reflected in the field of environmental economics, which incorporates many aspects of neoclassical economics, while the SS paradigm has many parallels to the relatively new field of ecological economics.

The WS paradigm can be described as an extension of neoclassical welfare economics. It is based on the assumption that natural capital is substitutable with produced capital (Neumayer, 2013): “According to WS, it does not matter whether the current generation uses up non-renewable resources or pollutes the environment as long as enough machineries, roads and ports as well as schools and universities are built in comparison” (Neumayer, 2013, p.1). Neumayer (2013, p.1) calls WS the “substitutability paradigm” and remarks that the concept reflects “resource optimism” (Neumayer, 2013, p.49) as it disregards the possibility of the depletion of so-called critical natural capital. WS assumes that natural capital is either super-abundant, that “the elasticity for substituting man-made capital for resources in the production function is equal to or greater than unity” (p.23) or that future technology will make natural resources substitutable (Neumayer, 2013). Neumayer (2013, p.23) stresses that “WS is built upon the assumption that natural capital is either abundant or substitutable both as an input into the production of consumption goods and as provider of direct utility”.

The SS paradigm, on the other hand, claims that the presence of natural resources is limited, and some natural resources are not substitutable (Dietz and Neumayer, 2006). Recent research related to the SS paradigm, such as work in the field of ecological economics or the concept of planetary boundaries (Rockström et al., 2009), emphasises the physical limits of the Earth System and the finite availability of non-substitutable resources such as climate and water. Thus, strong sustainability emphasises the importance of integrating all three dimensions of sustainability (social, ecological and economic), without substituting one type of capital for another (Neumayer, 2013). The preservation of natural capital, especially critical natural capital, is one of the most essential demands of SS advocates. Neumayer (2013, p.2) calls SS the “non-substitutability paradigm” and points out that “the essence of SS is that natural capital is
regarded as non-substitutable, in the production of consumption goods (‘source’ side of the economy), in its capacity absorb pollution (‘sink’ side of the economy) and as a direct provider of utility in the form of environmental amenities” (Neumayer, 2013, p.2). An overview of key themes across WS and SS is provided in Table 2.

Table 2.
Overview of key themes and their differences in WS and SS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WS</th>
<th>SS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural and produced capital are substitutable (Neumayer, 2013).</td>
<td>Natural and produced capital are not substitutable (Neumayer, 2013).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All natural capital is replaceable (Neumayer, 2013).</td>
<td>There is critical natural capital which cannot be replaced (Neumayer, 2013). Planetary boundaries exist (Rockström et al, 2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological innovations are likely going to solve environmental issues (Neumayer, 2013), e.g. climate change can be prevented by green energy.</td>
<td>Technological ‘enhancements’ of nature e.g. geo-engineering are high risk and a reflection of human hubris (Norgaard, 2010). Technological innovation should respect planetary boundaries and spare critical natural capital (Norgaard, 2010).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic growth is needed to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainability (Robinson, 2004).</td>
<td>A radical change towards degrowth is needed to achieve sustainability (Costanza, 1989; D’Alisa, Demaria &amp; Kallis, 2014).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hopwood et al. (2005) elaborate on the WS vs. SS debate: They argue that WS and SS are not two strictly separate concepts, but rather appear on a continuum marked by three different levels, all of which reflect different approaches to sustainability: status quo, reform, and transformation. The fundamental differences between WS and SS become visible in the ends of the continuum. While the WS related ‘status quo’ approach focuses on incremental changes within current societal structures, the SS driven ‘transformational’ approach demands radical changes in society to achieve sustainable development (Hopwood et al., 2005).

In the following chapter, the research field of ecological economics is introduced to gain a deeper understanding of the SS paradigm and the differences between WS and SS. The interpretation of sustainability in ecological economics has significant overlaps with the SS paradigm and can be seen as the theoretical foundation from which the SS paradigm emerged.
3.2 Ecological Economics

Several perspectives of ecological economics have been used in the literature on sustainable entrepreneurship (e.g. Hockerts & Wüstenhagen, 2010; Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011), typically with a strong focus on an inclusive perspective on nature, touching upon the described approach of SS. However, although some of the sustainable entrepreneurship literature has referred to ecological economics, there is a lack of conceptualisation of the relation between ecological economics and entrepreneurship (Stål & Bonnedahl, 2016). Thus, in this chapter, a closer look at ecological economics is provided to clarify the differences between WS and SS.

Emergence of Ecological Economics

The relatively new field of ecological economics emerged out of a critique of neoclassical economics, today’s leading field of economics (Common & Stagl, 2005; Costanza, 1989; Daly & Farley, 2004). Ecological economics addresses the “relationship between ecosystems and economic systems” (Costanza, 1989, p.1) and covers a broad range of disciplines and topics. The transdisciplinary field is often contrasted to the field of environmental economics which is more closely related to neoclassical economics (Costanza et al., 2016; Söderbaum, 2013). The field is defined by problems and challenges related to the impact of economic activity on the planet and its ecosystems as well as human well-being. The relationships between ecosystems and economic systems are seen as “the locus of many of our most pressing current problems” (Costanza, 1989, p.1), such as climate change, resource conflicts and wealth distribution. Ecological economics is meant to provide a new approach to the fields of both ecology and economics and, as a new field, recognise “the need to make economics more cognizant of ecological impacts and dependencies; the need to make ecology more sensitive to economic forces, incentives, and constraints” (Costanza, 1989, p. 1). This is in sharp contrast with the main argument - and therefore the legitimacy - of neoclassical economics, which relies on the assumption that societal resources are relatively scarce, and that the function of economics as a science is to analyse the optimal use and distribution of these scarce resources (e.g. Akerlof & Kranton, 2000; Colander, 2000; Friedman, 1953; Smulders, 2000). From an ecological economics perspective, it is not possible to make inclusive statements about the distribution of scarce resources, because it is perceived as impossible to gain enough knowledge about the world’s ecological and social systems to do so (Common & Stagl, 2005; Costanza, 1989). Instead of compensating for this lack of knowledge with simplifying assumptions, as it is commonly done in neoclassical economics (e.g. the neoclassical *homo oeconomicus* model), ecological economics suggests that economics should be practiced as a dynamic and changing process (Costanza, 1989). Ecological economics acknowledges the lack of secure knowledge about ecological systems and uses it as the starting point for further analysis (Daly & Farley, 2004; Røpke, 2005). This is also recognised by Stål & Bonnedahl (2016): They perceive the economic system as a subsystem of the biosphere. Another recognised difference between neoclassical economics and ecological economics is the level of analysis. Within neoclassical economics, the focus lies on the *economic principle*: an individual always aims to maximise the
utility and thrives for the optimisation of the result in marginal input and marginal output (Mankiw, 2004). From this perspective, processes on the macro-level are the sum of the processes of the individual, the micro-level. In contrast to the holistic approach of ecological economics, neoclassical economics therefore pays attention to the individual as the most important aspect of the economy (Hodgson, Samuels & Tool, 1994). An important aspect is that individuals are perceived - in economic terms - as relatively independent from external factors. From this derives the assumption that autonomous actors act purely rationally, and their behaviour could be explained by rational choices (e.g. Friedman, 1953). These assumptions are in strong contrast to the underlying assumptions of ecological economics. Here, the economy is perceived as embedded in complex social and ecological systems, thus individuals are dependent on and strongly influenced by these systems (Costanza, 1989; Røpke, 2005; Spash, 2017).

**Key Themes in the Field of Ecological Economics**
In order to gain a better understanding of ecological economics and its approach to sustainability-related research questions, three key themes of the field - (1) natural capital, (2) technology, and (3) economic growth – are presented and briefly discussed in this chapter.

(1) **Natural Capital**
One central aspect of ecological economics is its view of ecological systems and nature (Costanza, 1989). One of the main differences between neoclassical economics and ecological economics lies in the perception of natural versus man-made capital: While neoclassical economics assumes that they are interchangeable, the two forms of capital are defined as not interchangeable in ecological economics (Neumayer, 2013). Ecological economics view man-made and natural capital as complements but emphasise that non-linearities and critical levels in nature pose limits to exploitation. This is true especially for critical natural capital which is irreplaceable once exploited (Costanza, 1989; Daly & Farley, 2004; Neumayer, 2013). In ecological economics, man-made capital and natural resources cannot be fully compared using the same metric (Neumayer, 2013).

(2) **Technology**
The assumptions made about natural capital have implications for the perception of technological development as well: Ecological economics is highly sceptical of attempts to enhance nature through technology, e.g. through geoengineering (Klein, 2014, Norgaard, 2010; Stål and Bonnedahl, 2016). In ecological economics, the prevailing opinion is that technological innovation should respect planetary boundaries and spare critical natural capital (Neumayer, 2013).
(3) Economic Growth
Another common theme in the field of ecological economics is the assumption that the “age of economic growth is coming to an end” (Klitgaard & Krall, 2012, p.247). Costanza (1989) criticises the assumption of unlimited economic growth in current economic paradigms, both capitalist and socialist: “[T]his assumption allows problems of intergenerational, intragenerational, and interspecies equity and sustainability to be ignored (or at least postponed), since they are seen to be most easily solved by additional growth” (Costanza, 1989, p.2). In contrast to neoclassical economics, ecological economics, therefore, follows the principle of degrowth, e.g. assumes that natural capital and produced capital are not fully substitutable (Dietz and Neumayer, 2006), and states that “issues of sustainability are ultimately issues about limits” (Costanza, 1989, p.5).

Methodology of Ecological Economics
Ecological economics include neoclassical environmental economics and ecological impact studies as well as various other theories and ideas from both natural and social sciences (Costanza, 1989). There is a strong focus on interdisciplinarity in the field, and methodological pluralism is encouraged (Daly & Farley, 2004; Norgaard, 1989; Söderbaum, 2013). Norgaard (1989, p.37) states that the methodology of ecological economics is “committed to starting with both ecological and economic “genetic” material” and using both fields’ rich methodological histories to “understand a larger system than either economics or ecology seeks to understand” (p.37). Ma and Stern (2006) found that on one hand there is a significant overlap between transdisciplinary ecological economics and neoclassical environmental economics. On the other hand, there were significant differences in the research approaches of both fields, e.g. the fact that “ecological economics tends to cite (...) general natural science journals more often than environmental economics does” (p.491). These methodological differences point to discrepancies in underlying assumptions of ecological economics and neoclassical economics that point towards the differences between the paradigms of strong and weak sustainability as outlined by Dietz and Neumayer (2006). Neoclassical and ecological economics both recognised the limitations of our social systems (Spash, 2012). The limitations of our social systems have as main perceived implication that they hinder the possibility to have applicable solutions for the environmental crisis, what comes forward in the lack of social and operationalised solutions (van den Bergh, 2011). Although the limitations are in both approaches recognised, the foundation of the limitations derives from another point. Spash (2012, p.46) describes the problem of the neoclassical approach towards economy as a severe fallacy in the field’s core assumptions. He criticises “the pretence that there is no biophysical reality imposing limits, and economics can be value free”.

4. Methodology

Due to the interpretative nature of the study we chose a qualitative method, more specifically a discourse analysis approach. Within the discourse around entrepreneurship for sustainable development, the scope of this thesis includes knowledge and power representations. The method is used to examine the construction of the discourse within SEED and to be able to reflect on it with the proposed theoretical lens of ecological economics.

4.1 Discourse Analysis as a Method

Dryzek (2013, p.9) defines a discourse as “a shared way of apprehending the world. Embedded in language, it enables those who subscribe it to interpret bits of information and put them together in coherent stories or accounts. Discourses construct meanings and relationships, helping define common sense and legitimate knowledge”. Thus, a discourse is not just the representation of social reality, but also the construction of social reality through constructing meanings and relationships. The embeddedness of discourse within language is emphasised by the perception of language from this constructive perspective. Within this social constructivist approach, reality is perceived as social: What is perceived as reality, is in fact a social construction of our interpretation. Language cannot be perceived as an objective transmitter of communication: Foucault (1970, p.35) states that “language is not what it is because it has a meaning”. Thus, language is an important aspect within the discourse. The linguistic text is given meaning by the social context, including power relations among actors that use the text (Phillips, Lawrence & Hardy, 2004). This perspective on language and reality is fundamental to the construction of social reality (Phillips et al., 2004). Social reality is constantly changing and is created and generated by the interpretative function of semiotic systems, including language (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). The value of a discourse analysis thus lies in its capacity to reflect social context and change. This (trans)formation of discourses should be studied with specific tools to understand these contexts (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). As discourse analysis focus on social contexts, the specific methods or perspective used, differ depending on the context. The social context includes the broader political and economic contexts (van Dijk, 2008). Thus, in the following chapter, information about the material for the analysis is provided.

4.2 Selection of Material for the Discourse Analysis

As most states in the world are member states of the UN, the UN have a powerful position when it comes to shaping and defining specific concepts, in this case sustainable development (e.g. Common & Stagl, 2005; Costanza et al., 2014). The UN’s powerful position implies that they are not only representing a discourse, but also actively contributing to its creation. As described in chapter 2, the UN have contributed to the sustainable development discourse in various ways, including the implementation of the MDGs and more recently the SDGs. Although the importance of the SDGs within the academic (e.g. Hajer et al., 2015) and political debate is recognised this thesis does not focus explicitly on the SDGs in the following, but rather on the
implicit result of the incorporation of the SDGs, as the scope of this thesis is more specific on the intersection of sustainability and entrepreneurship. Within the UN, various related legal and representative agencies exist. The significance of these agencies such as the IUCN, UNDP and UNEP and their ability to shape concepts and discourses is recognised by a broad range of academic and political actors (Common & Stagl, 2005). As mentioned before, these three agencies IUCN, UNDP and UNEP founded the programme SEED in 2002. SEED’s focus is specifically on the role of entrepreneurship in sustainable development.

Because of the relevance of SEED within the creation of the sustainable entrepreneurship discourse, the discourse analysis in this thesis is conducted on a series of case studies conducted by SEED (2018a).

One important aspect of SEED’s (2018a) work is the annual SEED award competition. SEED awards are given to selected entrepreneurs who have the potential to promote sustainable development in their local communities. Since the start of the partnership in 2002, over 200 SEED awards were given to entrepreneurs globally. Another important aspect of SEED’s work is their published research reports where the most recent focus specifically on the TBL performance of enterprises. Since the latest reports are published in Spring 2012 and do not include the recent developments in sustainable development, there is chosen to not focus on this research reports. Thus, the focus is on the publication of several series of case studies that provide insights into the business models, challenges, and impact of some of the winners of the annual SEED awards. These case studies are published together with the Germany based research group aDelphi and the studies will serve as a foundation for the discourse analysis in this thesis. Because the businesses portrayed in the case studies have not only won a SEED award but have also been chosen by SEED as best practice examples that are given additional attention and prominence, they present relevant and suitable material for a discourse analysis of the entrepreneurship for sustainable development discourse. The case studies reflect SEED’s understanding of entrepreneurship for sustainable development, and therefore provide insights into the entrepreneurship for sustainable development discourse created by the UN.

The case studies are published on the SEED (2018a) website in the format of 10-12 page long digital brochures that can be downloaded. Each brochure includes information about the business model, organisational structure, partnerships and impacts of a selected SEED award winner. The impact analysis of the business is the core part of each case study and the key impacts are linked to specific goals within the SDGs. Overall, the brochures are clearly structured, written in a journalistic, easy-to-follow style, and include a variety of photos, graphics, videos, interviews and maps that visualise the results of the case study. In this thesis, the focus is on the written content of the last two published series of SEED case studies which include four case studies published in 2016 and six case studies published in 2018. In Table 3, an overview of the ten case studies is provided for the discourse analysis in the next chapter.
Table 3.

Overview of included case studies for the discourse analysis of this thesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Case Study</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Award Winner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belle Verte</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>Waste management</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASHKing</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Sanitation</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique Quality Product Enterprise</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YICE Uganda</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahelia Solar</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>Renewable energy</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safi Organics</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Women Recycling</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Waste management</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Trees for Africa</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalahari Experience</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste to Food</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Waste Management</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Data from SEED (2018h)

All ten case studies provide insights into the so-called “eco-inclusive enterprises” (SEED, 2018a) in African countries that won a SEED award between 2010 and 2017. More specifically, all case studies in 2016 have been conducted in South Africa, while the case studies published in 2018 cover businesses in different African countries. A closer look at the industry shows that four out of the ten case studies focus on resource usage in the agricultural industry, three cases focus on waste management and concepts of a circular economy, and three case studies cover different industries: sanitation, tourism and renewable energy. Every case study starts with a description of local challenges in the region where the respective enterprise is located, e.g. poverty and inequality issues, pollution and food insecurity, and an introduction of the enterprise and its approach to these challenges. Next, the partners of the enterprise are introduced, and the nature of the partnerships is described in detail. The analytical part of each case study consists of an impact analysis according to the TBL principle - social, economic and environmental impact - to which three specific SDGs are related. The related SDGs differ from case study to case study. Throughout the case studies, images, videos and quotes from different
stakeholders, e.g. partners, employees and founders of the enterprises are provided. Due to the scope of this thesis, only the written content of the ten case studies (text and the structure) is part of the discourse analysis. Each case study ends with an outlook, in which future plans of the enterprise are listed. A detailed overview of the case studies and the business models they cover can be found in Appendix I.

4.3 Application of Discourse Analysis in this Thesis

According to Dryzek (2013, p.9) “language matters, because the way we construct, interpret, discuss and analyse sustainable development has all kind of consequences”. In this way, language consists of the hidden meanings within four analytical elements: Dryzek’s (1997: 2013) proposed method for analysing and identifying discourses, and the four key elements are used and extended in this thesis. The results of the discourse analysis will later be discussed using the theoretical lens of ecological economics. The four analytical elements - basic entities, natural relations, agents and their motives, and metaphors - for the discourse analysis are focussing on different levels of the discourse and are used as a methodological framework in this study’s discourse analysis.

Basic entities whose existence is recognised

The analytical key element basic entities whose existence is recognised relates to the ontology of the discourse. Within the Foucauldian discursive approach, truth effects are viewed as a creation of the discourse. In a Foucauldian tradition, they should not be perceived as objective or absolute, but rather as products (Foucault, 1970). In this thesis, this approach results in a focus on the taken-for-granted entities which are not questioned, but rather perceived as given. Friman (2002) emphasises the vital role of the understanding of the connection between the recognised entities. According to Dryzek (2013) are there some discourses that recognise - for example - the presence and influence of ecosystems, while other discourses do not have a concept of natural matter at all. Thus, to describe entrepreneurship for sustainable development, the recognition of specific entities and the taken-for-granted attitudes will provide insights into the nature of the different concepts.

Assumptions about natural relationships

The analytical element assumptions about natural relationships focuses on “the understanding of the nature of the interaction between basic entities” (Friman, 2002; Dryzek, 2013). In this research, this interaction includes sustainable development and entrepreneurship and their presentation and perception in the discourse. The relationship between discourses and knowledge is perceived by Dryzek (2013) as the legitimacy of knowledge within the discourse. Ziegler and Ott (2011) argue that philosophy of science and epistemological question are essential in the sustainability discourse. As this study focuses on fundamental aspects of the discourse, a minimum level of understanding about how knowledge is perceived and created must be reached. According to Dryzek (2013, p.18), these assumptions are shown by “notions of what is
natural in the relationships between different entities”. This implies that these relationships are not limited to relationships including nature but could be - for example - competition between human beings, cooperation at the foundation between human and nature or hierarchies related to gender, race, ecological sensibility and so forth.

**Agents and their motives**

*Agents and their motives* is the analytical element that describes the presence of individuals and collectives (Friman, 2002). The description of agents and their motives contributes to the understanding of the power dynamics within the discourse (Dryzek, 2013). As the discourse is presented as a story that is told, the presence of actors or agents is required (Dryzek, 2013). In this thesis, this element is not limited to human agents, – such as entrepreneurs, employees and members of local communities – but also takes nonhuman actors into account, such as (non)governmental organisations, local communities and businesses (Dryzek, 2013; Friman, 2002).

**Key metaphors and other rhetorical devices**

The rhetorical devices are identified to gain a deeper understanding of the worldview reflected in the discourse. In this thesis, this analytical element is used to analyse what knowledge is taken-for-granted when talking about entrepreneurship, sustainability and its connection. According to Fairclough (1995; 2003), a discourse analysis offers the possibility to define which ideological background is represented: Broad discourses - e.g. the sustainability discourse - contain various small and contesting discourses, e.g. WS and SS. In a discourse analysis, the “meaning relations between words and long expressions” (Fairclough, 2003, p.63) are essential for understanding dynamics within the discourse. The aim is to recognise the related entities, assumptions, agents and metaphors. Analysing key metaphors and rhetorical devices will help in understanding which assumptions are made when talking about the function of technology and innovation.

**4.4 Description of the Approach of the Analysis**

This chapter will explain the different steps we took to conduct our discourse analysis according to the previously described method. After the identification of the key materials for analysis, the analytical process was conducted. Firstly, all cases studies where multiple times read to generate a clearer understanding of the written content. Image and video content was not considered for the analysis due to the scope of this thesis. Secondly, the four analytical elements were used to analyse the selection of materials to develop an understanding about the interpretive nature of the process. This step in the approach was conducted separately by both authors. Thirdly, due to the interpretative nature of the study, the authors discussed together the preliminary analysis to generate an understanding of each other’s interpretation. Fourthly, all case studies were - together - analysed again with the preliminary analysis in mind, where the aim was to develop a deeper understanding of the analytical elements and the representation in the SEED discourse. Finally, the different recognised elements were categorised in themes. The findings of the
analysis are presented in the following chapter. It is important to understand that the interpretation as presented is the result of an elaborative and extensive process, but by no means the only possible interpretation of the materials.
5. Analysis of the SEED Discourse

The central narrative of the SEED case studies is ‘promoting entrepreneurship for sustainable development’ (e.g. SEED 2018b, p.1). However, within the series of case studies, the terminology sustainable entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship for sustainable development is not used at all. Nevertheless, the idea of entrepreneurship for sustainable development is central to the idea of change reflected in the SEED discourse on sustainable entrepreneurship.\(^2\) Within the discourse, the success of the presented business models is linked to green and inclusive growth which in turn have an effect on poverty and environmental degradation. Within the case studies, the impact of the different cases is related to the three pillars of economic, social and environmental impact, corresponding to the earlier described concept of the TBL. The following discourse analysis is conducted according to method presented in chapter 4. Examples and quotes from the case studies are used throughout to clarify and support the analysis. Appendix II includes additional quotes and material from all ten case studies which relate to the four analytical elements as presented in chapter 4.

5.1 Basic Entities Whose Existence is Recognised

Within the series of case studies, several basic entities are recognised without being formally named or defined - Their existence is assumed without further explanation. Identifying these basic entities will provide insights about underlying assumptions and world views reflected in the discourse: Which systems and entities are perceived as a given and taken-for-granted? Firstly, the entity of the (1) capitalist economy as well as the ambiguous role of (2) nature and its use as a resource are described. Finally, the recognised existence of (3) poverty and inequality is discussed.

5.1.1 Capitalist Economy

The presence of a capitalist economy and its focus on economic growth is presented as a given in the SEED discourse. The phenomenon of economic growth itself is not discussed or criticised in the case studies, although the function and consequences of economic growth are often mentioned and elaborated on.

Many of the case studies recognise that economic growth alone cannot solve issues such as poverty, gender inequality and food insecurity. One example is the case study of UQE: “In recent years [Ghana] has achieved sustained economic growth and reduced the number of people living in poverty. However, challenges such as gender inequality persist.” (SEED 2018d, p.4). The case study of UQE also mentions the issue of regional disparities when it comes to economic development: “Despite Ghana’s steady growth in recent years, not all regions have benefited. Many parts of the country continue to face challenges such as food insecurity.” (SEED 2018d, p.4). Negative environmental impacts of economic growth are also discussed, for example in the

\(^2\) In the following, the discourse of the two series of case studies of SEED on sustainable entrepreneurship will be referred to as the SEED discourse or the discourse.
case study of Belle Verte (SEED 2018b, p.4): “(T)ourism sector growth in recent years has resulted in significant negative environmental impacts, specifically in terms of increased waste”. However, economic growth within the system of a capitalist economy is overall portrayed as a desirable outcome of sustainable entrepreneurship and sustainable development. The case study of WASHKing (SEED 2018c, p.4) for example states that “(l)iving conditions and incomes in Ghana have improved significantly since 2005 as the result of 7% economic growth”. Similarly, the case study of Food And Trees For Africa (SEED 2016b, p.3) emphasises that communities and regions in which the enterprise operates “are in need of socio-economic development”.

5.1.2 Nature as a Resource

The SEED case studies mostly refer to nature in the form of resources. Nature is discussed in the context of human needs, such as nutrition, living environment and hygiene. This perception of nature is common throughout the SEED discourse but is not named or explicitly defined - The capacity and function of nature to fulfil human needs is taken-for-granted. For example, resources are often associated with food and energy production. One example is the case study of UQE (SEED 2018d, p.9) which states that the company’s “main environmental objectives are to promote and implement sustainable land management, regenerate formerly infertile lands, and improve the climate resilience of land and communities” to achieve food security. The case study of Sahelia Solar (SEED 2018f) focuses on using natural resources for sustainable energy production to meet the rising demand for energy while protecting natural capital: “The use of solar energy solutions reduces the local demand for timber and charcoal resources for household activities. (...) Furthermore, the eliminated need for kerosene and diesel to run generators and produce energy supports improvements in air quality and greenhouse gas emissions reductions” (SEED 2018f, p.9).

5.1.3 Poverty and Inequality

Most of the cases recognise the existence of poverty and inequality without giving a specific definition of poverty and inequality. In several cases, poverty is operationalised using a poverty rate, which reflects the percentage of people living below half the median household income of the total population, what generates the suggestion that the concept of poverty is relative. However, neither the consequences of, nor the reason for this perception of poverty are described - The existence of poverty and inequality seems to be taken-for-granted within the SEED discourse. There is a specific focus on rural poverty, one example is the case study of WASHKing which states that “(s)ocial inequality is rising, especially in rural areas” (SEED 2018c, p.4). A common narrative in the discourse is about the inequality between urban and rural areas in terms of profiting from economic growth in the country. Poverty and inequality are perceived as local challenges, and local solutions are emphasised. Within the discourse, there is a basic underlying assumption about the concepts of poverty and inequality which is not clearly specified or further discussed.
5.2 Assumptions about Natural Relations

In this chapter, a closer look is taken on how the relations between basic entities and other factors are described and portrayed. Three relations are identified as central to the discourse: the natural relation between humans and nature, the natural relation between economic growth and sustainable development, and the natural relation between the Global North and Global South.

5.2.1 The Relation Between Humans and Nature

The portrayal of the relation between humans and nature within the discourse is dominated by three key themes: (1) Human needs are prioritised, (2) nature is managed by humans, and (3) natural and produced capital are interchangeable.

(1) Human needs are prioritised.

Overall, the SEED discourse on sustainable entrepreneurship is characterised by an anthropocentric point of view that prioritises the needs of humans. Nature and natural resources are discussed in the context of their capacity to fulfil human needs.

Resources are also associated with food and energy production. One example is the portrayal of soil as a resource for farming. The case study of UQE for example states that “(t)he crop has both commercial and sustenance value and it helps to re-establish fertile soil.” (SEED 2018d, p.9). In the case study of YICE (SEED 2018e, p.4) it is stated that “sustainable agriculture aims at establishing an ecological balance to prevent soil fertility or pest problems”. Sunshine is portrayed – similarly to soil – as useful to produce energy in Sahelia Solar (SEED 2018f, p.5): “(T)here are many opportunities for off-grid solar energy in Burkina Faso. It is one of the sunniest countries in the world (...)”. The role of water as a resource for sanitation in the case of WASHKing (SEED 2018c, p.4) makes a similar point: “(C)ontamination of food and water due to insufficient hygiene often leads to diseases and stunted growth from malnutrition”. In the case study of the Kalahari Experience (SEED, 2016c), water is explicitly described as a resource that services the nature reserve and the humans living in it: “Water scarcity (...) is exacerbated by climate change, causing increasing pressure on the limited water resources servicing the park and communities” (SEED 2016c, p.2).

Overall, the relationship between humans and nature described in the discourse resembles a supply-demand relationship or a service relationship in which nature serves human needs.
(2) Nature is managed by humans.

The word *eco-inclusive*, which is prominent in the discourse and often used as a synonym for the word *sustainable*, implies that nature needs to be managed by humans: Ecosystems are *included* in business activities. In the SEED discourse, a business is seen as eco-inclusive if it considers environmental aspects in its business model (SEED, 2018a). One example for this is the definition of sustainable agriculture in the case study of YICE: “Sustainable agriculture aims at establishing an ecological balance to prevent soil fertility or pest problems” (SEED 2018e, p.8). Establishing an ecological balance is described as a desirable outcome, where the role of humans is to manage nature. In the case study of UQE (SEED 2018d, p.9), the emphasis is on the idea of “sustainable land management”, where the land should be managed in a sustainable way by humans. The case study of the eco-tourism enterprise Kalahari Experience (SEED, 2016c) which focuses on business activities in a nature reserve, shows a conservationist approach and implies that nature needs to be actively protected by humans, by the statement that the enterprise plays an important role in the “conservation of trees & birds” (SEED 2016c, p.5).

(3) Resources should be utilised efficiently.

Another prominent idea in the SEED discourse is that of a *circular economy*. The concept of a circular economy suggests that human economic activity and ecosystems can come together in a circular process where no material goes to waste (Stahel, 2016). Thus, in a perfect circular economy there is no resource depletion. Rather, for every unit of natural capital consumed, a value equivalent unit of produced capital would be created. The recycling business Belle Verte (SEED, 2018b) for example is characterised as eco-inclusive, because it has the mission of “removing waste from the Mauritian landscape” (SEED 2018b, p.9) and promoting a circular economy “using an innovative waste management system” (SEED 2018b, p.3). In a similar case, Safi Organics (SEED 2018g, p.1) aims to establish a “agricultural circular economy”. In the case study of Waste to Food (SEED 2016d, p.3) is stated that “the production of food that is not consumed wastes valuable resources, such as agricultural land, water and energy”.

The idea of the optimisation of resource-efficiency suggest that the relationship between humans and nature includes both the earlier two relationships but adds the dimension that the resources and therefore nature, should be used efficiently.
5.2.2 The Relation between Economic Growth and Sustainable Development

The discourse is focused on green and inclusive growth as well as the social and environmental impacts of entrepreneurship. One dominant narrative in the discourse is that sustainable entrepreneurs tackle local challenges using innovative solutions (SEED, 2018a). This perception of entrepreneurship - in the form of an enterprise - aims at creating a win-win situation by combining the different aspects of the TBL. The win-win situation is often portrayed as a combination of indirect impacts. Examples of these indirect cause and effect relationships include the improvement of economic productivity of 600 people because of their newly won access to a toilet which results in less cases of illness (WASHKing in SEED 2018c) and improvements in the education of children due to the increased income of their parents which they can partly invest in school fees and materials (Safi Organics in SEED 2018g). However, the SEED discourse also acknowledges the possibility of negative environmental effects of economic growth, such as pollution. Three key themes regarding the relation between economic growth and sustainable development have been identified within the discourse: (1) The role of technology, (2) empowerment through employment and (3) negative environmental impacts.

(1) The Role of Technology

Within the discourse, technology is described as a powerful tool that fosters inclusiveness, for example by enabling the poor to yield higher profits. The case study of YICE (SEED, 2018e) emphasises the capacity of mobile technology to solve unfair information asymmetries and therefore enable disadvantaged farmers to make informed business decisions. It is stated that the use of technology results in higher yields and “(i)ncreased profits for smallholder farmers” (SEED 2018e, p.8). The case study of Sahelia Solar (SEED, 2018f) portrays a technology driven business that uses modern solar technology to provide the poor with access to affordable and renewable energy sources: “The reduction (...) of costs associated with (...) diesel systems allows the community to draw higher profits from their activities” (SEED 2018f, p.8). The case study of Safi Organics (SEED, 2018g) mentions technology as a key enabler of the business model which aims “to reverse declining agricultural yields, improve the income and food security of local farmers” (SEED 2018g, p.4). The case study of UQE (SEED, 2018d), on the other hand, perceives the lack of agricultural technology as a factor that contributes to food insecurity and poverty in Ghana.

The SEED discourse often describes technology as supportive to help humans to manage nature and natural resources. Generally, technology is associated with positive outcomes and effects in the case studies. The technology narrative of the discourse portrays technology as a key driver for the sustainable impact of the business model. For example, technology is associated with innovativeness, and the two words are often paired. The case study of YICE (SEED 2018e, p.6) states that “the enterprise has developed an innovative technology” which is essential to its business model and enables its positive effects on the environment. In the case study of Safi Organics (SEED 2018g, p.8), it is emphasised that the business “has created an innovative value chain in the waste management sector by using technology”. The business model of Waste to
Food (SEED 2016d, p.3) is characterised by its “innovative processing system”. The solar technology of Sahelia Solar (SEED 2018f, p.8) is described as “more efficient and cost effective” as well as more reliable than the alternative of conventional diesel motors. In the case study of YICE (SEED 2018e, p.8), it is stated that the technology offered by the business results in “more efficient (...) agricultural production”.

Technology is associated with eco-friendliness, e.g. as an enabler for waste reduction and the use of sustainable food and energy sources. The case study of Waste to Food (SEED, 2016d) states that the enterprise has “developed a combination of technologies to overcome the widespread disposal of organic waste to landfills in South Africa” (SEED 2016d, p.3). The case study of Sahelia Solar (SEED 2018f, p.6) states that “the shift to a clean energy source allows organisation members to contribute to climate change mitigation and improve air quality”.

(2) Empowerment through Employment

In most of the case studies, economic development is associated with job creation. The case study of WASHKing (SEED 2018c, p.8) for example highlights that the business “provides employment and training for local artisans”. UQE (SEED 2018d, p.4) is portrayed as supportive of the local community because of the job opportunities the business creates: “The enterprise established a partnership with a local women’s association to support its activities by employing the women members”. Many of the case studies also point out that additional indirect job opportunities are created through the business activities: “Belle Verte aims to expand employment, directly within its business and indirectly through its partner businesses and the provision of an informal platform for local waste collectors” (Belle Verte in SEED, 2018b, p.8). Job creation and employment are in turn associated with empowerment: “The main economic objective of UQE is to ensure the economic empowerment of local women through cultivating, harvesting and processing fonio” (UQE in SEED 2018d, p.8). The case study of YICE (SEED 2018e, p.8) describes how the business empowers not only economically, but also socially: The activities carried out by the business “instill confidence and leadership skills in the farm agents” as well as “improve their income and livelihoods”. The case study of Kalahari Experience (SEED 2016c, p.3), a business that employs members of the indigenous San people as tourist guides, states that while “job creation is a key objective” and has a positive impact on the “purchase power for over 60 people” (SEED 2016c, p.5), the social impacts of the business go beyond economic empowerment: “By establishing community groups, developing skills, and most importantly, by recognising the San traditions and culture, the San community regains a sense of self-worth” (SEED 2016c, p.5). The case study of All Women Recycling (SEED, 2016a) emphasises the business’s policy to employ exclusively female workers. It is stated that the company’s aim is to “provide marginalised groups in society with new opportunities to improve their lives” (SEED 2016a, p.5) and concludes that as a result of their employment, “these isolated segments of society are now empowered and can actively take part in society” (SEED 2016a, p.5).
(3) Negative Environmental Impacts

One of the assumed natural relations is that certain aspects of economic growth are causing negative environmental impacts: “Alongside overall economic growth in Mauritius, tourism sector growth in recent years has resulted in significant negative environmental impacts, specifically in terms of increased waste.” (Belle Verte in SEED 2018b, p.4). The case study of Sahelia Solar (SEED, 2018f, p.4) states that “(t)he increased demand for wood fuel contributes to deforestation and associated impacts, including desertification and biodiversity loss.”. In the discourse, negative environmental impacts are viewed as a common consequence of human economic activity. Thus, the focus is not on removing negative impact per se, but on decreasing the negative impacts of business activities. For example, the discourse describes an enterprise as eco-inclusive if it decreases pollution, increases efficiency of resource use or promotes ‘organic’ farming practices. The case study of All Women Recycling (SEED 2016a, p.5) states that their “main environmental objective is to reduce plastic waste pollution by cutting the number of PET bottles ending up in landfills or being illegally dumped in the environment“, in the case of Safi Organics (SEED 2018g, p.9) it is emphasised that the environmental impact of the business activity aims to “reduce the burden of chemical fertilisers on the local environment”. A focus on efficient resource management is present in the case study of Belle Verte (SEED 2018b, p.8) which describes states that the aim of the enterprise is to “stimulate the waste economy, by providing a place where waste materials can be sold, recycled, upcycled and converted into saleable products “. In the case study of YICE, (SEED 2018e, p.9) the promotion of “organic farming practices” is portrayed as the main positive environmental impact of the enterprise. A similar statement is made in the case study of Safi Organics (SEED 2018g, p.9), which emphasises that the enterprise has “trained 400 local farmers in the use of the Safi Organics organic fertiliser” and therefore achieved a positive impact on the environment (SEED 2018g).

5.2.3 The Relation between Global North and Global South

The SEED discourse is further shaped by underlying power dynamics between agents from the Global North and the Global South. Agents from the Global South are often described in a passive manner, e.g. they get empowered, jobs are created for them, their livelihoods are improved. Examples for this include the case study of YICE which mentions that one goal of the enterprise is to “instill confidence and leadership skills in the farm agents” (SEED 2018e, p.9) as well as the case study of Safi Organics (SEED 2018g, p.8) which states that “Safi Organics has improved livelihood opportunities for farmers”. It is also interesting to note that many of the founders or managers of the businesses described in the case studies are from the Global North, even though all the businesses are in Africa, in the Global South.

The case study of Kalahari Experience (SEED, 2016c) reveals how indigenous communities are viewed within the discourse in terms of power dynamics. The indigenous community is described as “one of the oldest groups of people on the planet” (SEED 2016c, p.3), and their culture and way of life are described as unfit for the present. One of the challenges identified in the case study is the “lack of education and management skills in the community” (SEED 2016c,
(SEED, 2016c). It is emphasised that the enterprise described in the case study, which employs members of the indigenous community as tourist guides, creates a positive social and environmental impact. The fact that the enterprise employs members of the community in modern business activities is interpreted as a successful solution to conflicts between the indigenous community and conservation agencies as it prevents the San people from having to “rely on natural resources in the park, which can be in conflict with conservation objectives” (SEED 2016c, p.3). It is stated that the business “increases productivity and brings about an important impulse to the village development” (SEED 2016c, p.5). Although the word is not used, there is an underlying idea of a status quo of “civilisation” which the indigenous community is expected to follow and adjust to.

The case study of UQE (SEED, 2018d), on the other hand, shows a different approach and expresses appreciation of indigenous practices and knowledge. The described business model is based on a traditional crop which had been forgotten about: “Fonio was once a major food crop across West Africa and is known for is nutritional value, taste and adaptability to local climate and soil conditions. However, the introduction of rice and other cereal crops largely replaced fonio. UQE believes in fonio’s commercial potential and identified community members who were still growing the crop for local consumption.” (SEED 2018d, p.4)

5.3 Agents and their Motives

The third analytical element focuses on the main agents recognised in the case studies. This includes both human and nonhuman agents who play a key role within the discourse. The main agent within the SEED discourse is perceived to be the (eco-inclusive) enterprise. The other recognised agents within the discourse - local individuals, local communities, local businesses, governmental and non-governmental organisations - are all related to the enterprise. They are either enabling the enterprise to create impact, and/or they are benefitting from the enterprise’s impact.

5.3.1 Main Agent - the Enterprise

The enterprises are often personified and described in a way that suggests that they are acting autonomously. Often, it is suggested that the enterprise itself has the ability to undertake activities: “The enterprise recycles “(All Women Recycling in SEED 2016a, p.3). Similarly, the enterprise YICE (SEED 2018e, p.4) is portrayed as having “trained a group of farm agents to act as (...) community leaders”. In the case study of Belle Verte (SEED 2018b, p.4) states that “Belle Verte and its partners promote a circular economy”. Besides that, the described motives of the enterprise often include specific goals. For example, WASHKing (SEED 2018c, p.4) “aims to eradicate open defecation and poor sanitation”. As the motive of the enterprise is described as creating impact on the three dimensions of the TBL - economic, social and environmental - this impact is related and generated by the relationships with other agents which are analysed in the following chapter.
5.3.2 Benefiting Agents

Firstly, the economic motive of the enterprise is often related to profitability and the business’s revenue and profit are highlighted in each case study. The economic value creation for the local community is emphasised in the discourse, as for example is clearly stated in the case study of Sahelia Solar (SEED 2018f, p.8), which states that the enterprise “allows the community to draw higher profits from their activities”. In the same case study, the key economic impact is portrayed by the “livelihood improvements for low income customers and communities” (SEED 2018f, p.9). The impact of local business-to-business relationships is perceived as an economic impact for the local community as well, as presented in the case of UQE (SEED 2018d, p.4): “(T)he enterprise engaged with local landholders and wider communities”. Besides the economic impact on local communities, an economic impact of the enterprise on local individuals is recognised as well. The creation of employment opportunities and generation of income for local individuals is perceived as one of the most important impacts of the enterprises. The case study of WASHKing (SEED 2018c, p.8) for example names “long-term improvements in productivity and consistent incomes” as major impacts of the enterprise.

Secondly, social impacts on benefitting agents are recognised. The employment of individuals within local communities is perceived as meaningful regarding social factors such as education, skill acquisition and enhanced self-confidence. This is exemplified in the case of All Women Recycling (SEED 2016a, p.3), which emphasises the enterprise’s success in promoting “skill development and training”. Several cases also show a focus on the increase of female employment and training. Examples include the case study of UQE (SED 2018d, p.8) which “increased female farmers income” and the case study of YICE (SEED 2018e, p.8) which focuses on the “training of female farm agents”. Different from the portrayal of the enterprises which are often personified and described as independent actors, members of local communities are often described in a passive way: They are employed, are given opportunities, etc. This portrays them as less powerful compared to the enterprises. This becomes evident for example in the case study of All Women Recycling (SEED 2016a, p.4) which states that “by expanding its portfolio, AWR empowers more marginalised segments of the community”. The case study of YICE (SEED 2018e, p.8) makes a similar statement: “[The enterprise’s] focus on female smallholder farmers, evidenced in the training of female farm agents, contributes to female empowerment in Uganda.”

Thirdly, the increase of resource efficiency as well as decrease of pollution are often mentioned as key environmental impacts. For example, in the case of WASHKing (SEED 2018c, p.9) the environmental impact is defined as “water savings and waste reduction from the use of 29 biodigester toilets”. A similar approach can be identified in the cases related to waste management. One example is the case study of Waste to Food (SEED 2016d, p.5), which states that environmental benefits are achieved “by reducing the amount of food waste in landfills”. Besides the focus on resource efficiency, the decrease of pollution is also perceived as a key objective. In the case of All Women Recycling (SEED 2016a, p.5) is stated that the “main
environmental objective is to reduce plastic waste pollution by cutting the number of PET bottles ending up in landfills or being illegally dumped in the environment “.

Thus, recognised social agents in the discourse include individuals, local communities and partners. In Table 4, the areas of impact on the related agents are portrayed to summarise the presence of the different agents and how they are related to the central agent, the enterprise, in the discourse. The most important take-away from this analytical element is the central role of the enterprise.

Table 4.
The benefits for the related agents created by the enterprise. Based on analysis in chapter 5.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Impact / Beneficiary</th>
<th>Type of Impact</th>
<th>Description of Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local individual</td>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Generation of income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Increase of employment: female / youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Development of skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local community</td>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Economic growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Increased sum of employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>Decrease of pollution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.3 Enabling Agents

Besides the beneficiaries, there is another group of agents portrayed within the discourse: the enabling agents. The main role of these agents within the discourse is to enable the enterprise in pursuing their activities. One of the characteristics of the enterprises as described in the case studies is the importance of partnerships with other organisations, including (non-)governmental organisations and local businesses. Local businesses are portrayed as both beneficiary as well as agents to enable the enterprises. In the case of Waste to Food (SEED 2016d, p.4), the business partner Pick n Pay enables the enterprise: Pick n Pay “source and deliver organic waste to W2F and offer marketing and packaging advice”. A similar relationship is portrayed in the case of Belle Verte (SEED 2018b, p.7) and their business partner BAZ Recup: “BAZ Recup sorts, and upcycles waste collected by Belle Verte and sells new upcycled products back to the community “. Besides local businesses, the role of (non-)governmental partners within the discourse is perceived as important. For example, in the case study of Safi Organics (SEED 2018f, p.6) the governmental organisation Kenyan Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation (KARLO) is portrayed as a key enabler as well as beneficiary of the enterprise. Their relationship is described as mutually beneficial: On one hand, “KARLO supported Safi Organics with the initial testing of their products and continues to assist in training farmers in organic production and
facilitate farmers’ access to technical specialists and soil scientists. On the other hand, “Safi Organics provides KARLO with information and data needed to develop a rice value chain training manual for local farmers” (SEED 2018f, p.6). A similar win-win relationship is described in the case of WASHKing (SEED 2018c, p.6), where the non-governmental organisation Global Youth in Environmental Sustenance (G-YES) is perceived as an important partner: “(W)orking with WASHKing provides G-YES direct access to relevant market-based solutions. G-YES supports WASHKing to generate value along the value chain by promoting WASHKing’s activities and linking potential customers with the enterprise”.

Finally, the role of SEED in promoting the enterprises’ activities is also emphasised. In the case study of Safi Organics (2018g, p.7), Kennedy Mbeva (SEED Advisor, African Centre for Technology Studies) is quoted with a statement about the impact of SEED: “The work with SEED helped them improve the robustness of their business plan and made them understand that it is a moving document”. A similar quote can be found in the case study of UQE (SEED 2018d, p.7), in which the founder and CEO of the enterprise, Salma Abdulai, is quoted: “Developing our business plan with SEED resulted directly in getting funding for key infrastructure”.

5.3.3 Summary of the Agents

Two main motives of these agents are recognised: Either they enable the enterprise to pursue and undertake its activities, or they benefit from the activities of the enterprise. Several agents have a mutually beneficial relationship with the enterprise - They both benefit and enable the enterprise. Figure 2 depicts the relations between the different agents as portrayed within the SEED discourse.

![Figure 2. The relations between the different agents. Own illustration based on analysis in chapter 5.3.](image-url)
5.4 Key Metaphors and other Rhetorical Devices

This chapter will analyse the use of metaphors and other rhetorical devices that characterise the discourse and provide insights into the underlying world views and assumptions of the discourse. These three devices analysed in this chapter are the anthropomorphization of nature, the narrative of civilisation and cause and effect relationships.

5.4.1 Anthropomorphization of Nature

The anthropomorphization of nature and natural elements is a recurring theme in the discourse. For example, in the case study of UQE (SEED 2018d, p.4, p.8, p.9), the terminology “infertile [...] lands” is used - The adjective infertile in connection with soil gives it a human quality, specifically a female quality. This suggests that nature should be fertile, nurturing humans to fulfil human needs. The same anthropomorphization of nature occurs in the description of “poor soil conditions” (SEED 2018d, p.9). The characterisation of the soil is dependent on its utility for humans. In the same case study, the oxymoron “indigenous crop” can be found (SEED 2018d, p.1). The word indigenous implies that something or someone is or originating or occurring naturally in a particular place, which in this case is in contrast with the meaning of crop, a plant that can be grown and harvested extensively for profit or subsistence. The association of the attribute indigenous with a crop used for farming implies that nature is naturally managed by humans. This personification of nature is also done in the case of Kalahari Experience (SEED 2016c, p.2): “Water scarcity (...) is exacerbated by climate change, causing increasing pressure on the limited water resources servicing the park and communities”. The idea that water services communities emphasises nature’s utility for humans.

In the case study of Belle Verte (SEED 2018b, p.8), the objective of the enterprise is described by the metaphor: “[to] establish an ecosystem that creates a value for waste products”. This metaphor suggests that humans are able to establish an ecosystem, where the meaning seems to include to generate a situation where waste products have value. However, this is in contrast with conventional definitions of ecosystems, where the ecosystem includes complex interactions within the biosphere related to the physical environment (e.g. Common & Stagl, 2005; Daly & Farley, 2004). Thus, this metaphor tries to make a harmful human activity (waste production) sound as if it was a natural system (an ecosystem). A similar metaphor is used in the case study of Sahelia Solar, which repeatedly mentions the term “clean energy” (SEED 2018f, p.6, p.8). “Energy” could be perceived as the operationalisation of natural resources for human use, although the “clean” aspect suggests no impact on the environment.

5.4.2 Narrative of Civilisation

In some of the case studies, rhetorical devices are used to portray a perceived difference between the indigenous and the “civilised”. For example, in the case of the Kalahari Experience (SEED 2016c, p.3), it is stated that “through its inclusive approach, [the enterprise] (...) aligns the needs and values of the community with conservation”. Additionally, the product as offered in the Kalahari Experienced is described as “authentic eco-tours” (SEED 2016, p.3) - The authenticity
from the local community and the concept of a touristic eco-tour seems to be a contradiction in terms. In the same case study, a dehumanising metaphor is used to describe the indigenous community, which again portrays the perceived distance between indigenous and “civilised” communities: “During apartheid the San population was socially and politically invisible” (SEED 2016c, p.3).

5.4.3 Portrayal of Cause and Effect Relationships

In several cases, social, environmental and economic impacts are incorrectly portrayed as direct results of the enterprises’ activities, although the “cause and effect relationship” is actually not traceable or it is an unspecified indirect relationship.

Within the case study of the Kalahari Experience (SEED 2016c), a vague description of a relationship between the enterprise’s activities and various social impacts is given: “[The enterprise addresses] high unemployment and poverty among the Khomani San by rebuilding identities and cherishing ancestral traditions and conservation” (SEED 2016c, p.3). However, the meaning of unemployment and poverty within the framework of ancestral traditions of an indigenous community seems to be rather unclear or even contradictory. The same problem exists with the relationship between the cherishment of ancestral traditions and fighting unemployment and poverty. A similar portrayal of a questionable cause and effect relationship can be found in the case study of Sahelia Solar (SEED 2018f, p.4), in which it is stated that “85% of rural households remain reliant on greenhouse gas emitting kerosene and diesel for lighting and power generation. The use of these energy resources contributes significantly to climate change.” This statement implies that rural households of Burkina Faso significantly contribute to climate change. However, this statement is not specified or backed up by facts - Therefore it seems controversial to name some of the poorest households in the world as significant contributors to climate change. Another unjustified cause and effect relationship is portrayed in the case study of All Women Recycling (SEED 2016a, p.5): It is stated that their “main environmental objective is to reduce plastic waste pollution by cutting the number of PET bottles ending up in landfills”. As the enterprise’s approach is to upcycle the PET bottles into a new product, the lifetime use of the plastic material is extended. However, this does not actually relate to the amount of plastic ending up in landfills. The upcycled products also have a lifespan - Once consumers throw them away, they will end up in landfills as well.

The examples listed above show that unjustified, vague or non-transparent cause and effect relationships are repeatedly portrayed throughout the SEED case studies. A possible reason for this could be that the authors of the case studies aim to euphemise the environmental and social impacts of the enterprises.
5.5 Summary of the Analysis

Within the SEED discourse, there are several aspects recognised related to the analytical elements as proposed in chapter 4. Table 5 presents an overview of the analytical elements of the discourse analysis and key aspects within the elements.

Regarding the recognised basic entities, there are three main aspects recognised: capitalist economy, nature as resource and poverty & inequality. Following, the assumptions about natural relations include three key aspects. The first key aspect is about the natural relationship between humans and nature. Within this aspect, there are three sub aspects recognised: human needs are prioritised, nature is managed by humans and that natural and produced capital are interchangeable. The second key aspect is the relation between economic growth and sustainable development. This relationship is characterised by the relationship and influences of technology, empowerment and environmental degradation. The third relation as recognised is the relationship between the Global North and the Global South which is portrayed as an unequal relationship in terms of power dynamics. While analysing the element of agents and their motives, the central role of the enterprise is recognised. The other agents, including local communities and individuals and their various partners including SEED are recognised in their role as enabler or beneficiary of the enterprise. Finally, the key metaphors and rhetorical devices recognised in the discourse include the anthropomorphization of nature, the narrative of civilisation and the portrayal of cause and effect relationships. These rhetorical devices function mainly to support and exemplify the basic entities and the assumptions about natural relations.
Table 5.
Overview of the analytical elements and recognised (sub)aspects. *Own illustration based on analysis in chapter 5.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Element</th>
<th>Key Aspect</th>
<th>Sub Aspect</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basic Entities Whose Existence is Recognised</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Capitalist economy</td>
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<td>Nature as a Resource</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poverty and Inequality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assumptions about Natural Relations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humans and Nature</td>
<td>Human Needs are Prioritised</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature is Managed by Humans</td>
<td>Nature is Managed by Humans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources Should be Utilised Efficiently</td>
<td>Resources Should be Utilised Efficiently</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Growth and Sustainable Development</td>
<td>Role of Technology</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Employment as Empowerment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative Environmental Impact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Global North and Global South</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Agents and Their Motives</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Enterprise</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefiting Agents</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Enabling Agents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Metaphors and Other Rhetorical Devices</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Anthropomorphization of Nature</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Narrative of Civilisation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Portrayal of Cause and Effect</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Reflection of the Discourse

In this chapter, the analysis of the SEED discourse from the previous chapter is reflected and discussed within the theoretical framework of ecological economics. The three identified themes from chapter 3 - natural capital, technology and economic growth - are explored in further detail through the lens of ecological economics.

6.1 Natural Capital

As described in chapter 5, the SEED discourse’s perception of nature is predominantly one of nature as capital and a resource for human use. In many of the SEED case studies, the relationship between humans and nature resembles that of a service relationship, in which nature serves human needs. This portrayal of natural capital is manifested in the SEED discourse’s common anthropomorphization of nature as shown in chapter 5.2.4. The discourse’s representation of natural capital as a means to humans is in line with the WS paradigm which views natural capital as a provider of direct or indirect utility (Neumayer, 2013). This view is in sharp contrast with the perception of ecological economics where human activity and the resulting economic system are perceived as embedded subsystems of the biosphere (Daly & Farley, 2004; Stål & Bonnedahl, 2016). This view suggests an emphasis on a more holistic perception of nature. While the SEED discourse reflects the assumption that nature needs to be managed by humans, and that natural capital should be used to fulfil human needs, ecological economics views this status quo of a service character in the relationships between ecosystems and humans as “the locus of many of our most pressing current problems” (Costanza, 1989, p.1).

Another difference with regards to natural capital between the SEED discourse and ecological economics lies in its assumptions about the availability of natural capital as well as the substitutability of natural and man-made capital. While ecological economics follows the principle of degrowth and assumes that “issues of sustainability are ultimately issues about limits” (Costanza, 1989, p.5), the physical limitations of natural resources and the boundaries of Earth system are not acknowledged or problematised within the SEED discourse. The risk of resource depletion as a direct result of ongoing economic growth is not specifically discussed within the SEED discourse. Furthermore, the SEED discourse’s narrative of a circular economy points to the underlying assumption that man-made capital could substitute natural capital at least in some cases: As discussed in chapter 5, the concept of a circular economy indirectly suggests that natural and produced capital are interchangeable, and that human economic activity and ecosystems can come together in a circular process where no material goes to waste. In a perfect circular economy, there is no resource depletion. This again reflects the WS paradigm which Neumayer (2013, p.1) calls the “substitutability paradigm” because of its assumption that “natural capital is either abundant or substitutable” (Neumayer, 2013, p.23). One could argue however, that the SEED discourse is also characterised by its focus on decreasing harmful impact of human activity on the environment, e.g. pollution, and the efficient use of natural
resources, e.g. through recycling and upcycling. This could be interpreted as a reflection of the SS paradigm which is built on the assumptions of ecological economics. SS emphasises that natural resources are limited, and that natural capital is not fully substitutable (Dietz and Neumayer, 2006). However, while there is a focus on efficient use of natural resources, the SEED discourse neither acknowledges the existence of critical natural capital nor the physical limitations to human activity, e.g. planetary boundaries. Its approach to natural capital as well as the relation between humans and nature is therefore overall stronger associated with the WS than the SS paradigm and shows significant discrepancies with the theoretical framework of ecological economics.

6.2 Technology

The SEED discourse overall portrays technological innovation as a positive factor for sustainable development and can be described as slightly techno-centred, which is in line with the WS paradigm. As shown in chapter 5, the SEED discourse portrays technology as a powerful tool that enables humans to manage nature and natural resources in an efficient way and which helps businesses to become eco-inclusive. Generally, technology is associated with positive outcomes and desirable effects in the SEED discourse. The technology narrative of the discourse portrays technological adaptation as a key driver for the sustainable impact of the business model. Often, the adaptation of new technologies is closely connected to the narrative of a circular economy. One strong example for this is the description of an innovative technology for waste treatment in the Waste to Food case study: The adapted technology is portrayed as an enabler for a circular economy which would result in the substitutability of natural and man-made capital as shown in the previous chapter. Overall, the SEED discourse shows a strong focus on the importance of innovative technology for sustainable development and portrays technological adaptation as a potential solution to environmental issues. This is in line with the WS paradigm which includes the assumption that future technology will make natural resources substitutable (Neumayer, 2013). In contrast, ecological economics is not techno-centred and has a clear normative implication that technological innovation should respect planetary boundaries and spare critical natural capital (Neumayer, 2013). Ecological economics’ assumption that man-made capital cannot fully replace natural capital, which is also included in the SS paradigm, sets a clear limitation to the power of technology and its capacity to support sustainability. This limitation to technology and technological innovation is not represented in the SEED discourse.
6.3 Economic Growth

Within the SEED discourse, economic growth is portrayed as a desirable outcome of sustainable entrepreneurship. As shown in chapter 5, there is a strong focus on innovation that goes along with financial value creation as well as job creation and production and consumption of goods. One recurring narrative in the SEED discourse is that of employment as empowerment: Employment and income are often directly associated with social and personal empowerment. This advocacy for economic growth is in line with the WS paradigm which perceives economic growth as one of the requirements to achieve sustainability. This interpretation of economic growth contrasts with SS and ecological economics, where limits of growth are emphasised. One important demand within the field of ecological economics is the call for a radical change towards degrowth. Within the SEED discourse, the existence of physical limits to growth, such as planetary boundaries, are not acknowledged. Rather than advocating for a decrease of consumption and resource use as is done in ecological economics, the SEED discourse focuses on ways of making consumption and production less harmful and in that sense more sustainable. One example for this is the case study of All Women Recycling (SEED 2016a), a business that produces unique gift boxes out of discarded plastic bottles. This case study emphasises the positive environmental impact of the business because it is reducing plastic waste that ends up in landfills. Through the lens of ecological economics, the degree of sustainability of this business model would be questioned: rather than challenging the status quo of an economic system that produces large amounts of plastic waste, it merely turns the discarded plastic into a new product which will also end up in a landfill eventually. Thus, in this perspective fights this business model rather the symptom than the disease.

6.4 Summary of Reflection

Overall, the SEED discourse reflects core ideas of the WS paradigm and is strongly influenced by neoclassical principles. Thus, this discourse can be located towards the WS side on the continuum of WS and SS as proposed by Hopwood et al. (2005). While the discourse shows strong elements of ecological concern, e.g. addressing environmental issues such as waste or climate change, it is also techno-centred and reflects the WS paradigms in many of its key themes, e.g. that adaptation of technology has the capacity to solve environmental problems and that economic growth is desirable and necessary for sustainable development. Essential ideas of ecological economics and the SS paradigm, such as the acknowledgment of limits to economic growth and the non-substitutability of natural and man-made resources are contradicted or missing from the SEED discourse. Table 6 shows a summary of the SEED discourse’s view on key themes within the WS and SS paradigm.
Table 6.
Overview of key themes and their differences in WS and SS in comparison to the SEED discourse. *Own illustration based on analysis in chapter 6.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>WS</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>SEED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natural Capital</strong></td>
<td>Natural and produced capital are fully substitutable because all natural capital is or will be replaceable in the future (Neumayer, 2013).</td>
<td>Natural and produced capital are not fully substitutable, because there is critical natural capital which cannot be replaced (Neumayer, 2013).</td>
<td>Natural and produced capital are (mostly) substitutable, therefore e.g. enabling a circular economy in which no resources go to waste.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technology</strong></td>
<td>Technological innovations are likely going to solve environmental issues and make all natural capital replaceable (Neumayer, 2013).</td>
<td>Technological innovation should respect planetary boundaries and spare critical natural capital (Norgaard, 2010).</td>
<td>Technological innovation is essential for sustainable development and has the capacity to foster economic growth while lessening harmful impact on the environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Growth</strong></td>
<td>Economic growth is needed to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainability (Robinson, 2004).</td>
<td>A radical change towards degrowth is needed to achieve sustainability (Costanza, 1989; D’Alisa, Demaria &amp; Kallis, 2014).</td>
<td>Economic growth is essential for sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and inequalities, although it can have negative effects on the environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, there are several aspects within the SEED discourse that seem not to fit within the framework of ecological economics. In chapter 5, several key themes with a social nature are recognised, as for example the focus on poverty and inequality, while ecological economics does not seem to provide a framework for these issues. In the next chapter, the recognized gaps in the current discourse and theoretical framework will elaborated on to conceptualise ‘strong sustainable entrepreneurship’.
7. Strong Sustainable Entrepreneurship

In the previous chapters, the SEED discourse was analysed and reflected regarding its key themes and assumptions. Together with the theoretical framework provided in chapter 3, the analytical work of chapter 5 and 6 leads up to main contribution of this thesis: the conceptualisation of sustainable entrepreneurship within the framework of ecological economics. More specifically, this thesis aims to conceptualise entrepreneurship under the paradigm of SS which closely relates to the field of ecological economics. This conceptualisation of strong sustainable entrepreneurship will use the reflection of the SEED discourse as a starting point. Firstly, the focus is on specific aspects that come forward in the differences between the approach of ecological economics and the representation of the SEED discourse. These aspects are evaluated within the framework of ecological economics to define the related assumptions and implications of the concept of strong sustainable entrepreneurship. Finally, the scope of strong sustainable entrepreneurship is narrowed down to point out the concept’s possible use cases as well as practical implications for the current sustainable entrepreneurship discourse in general as well as the one created by SEED and the UN.

7.1 Key Learnings from the Discourse Analysis and Reflection

(1) Relation Between Humans and Nature

One of the key findings of the reflection of the SEED discourse in chapter 6 was that the relationship between humans and nature as portrayed in the SEED discourse resembles a service relationship, in which nature serves human needs. Evaluated under the SS paradigm, this implies the need to rethink the relation between humans and nature. From the viewpoint of ecological economics, there should be a shift from a service relationship between nature and humans towards a more holistic approach that views entrepreneurship as embedded within social and ecological systems. Stål and Bonnedahl (2016, p.76) state that “all activities must respect the interdependence of systems and species, and biophysical constraints over time and space”.

Within the SEED discourse, and most clearly visible in the case study of the Kalahari Experience, there is a tendency to disregard or override indigenous knowledge. The case study of the Kalahari experience (SEED, 2016c) for example describes the enterprise’s practice of teaching members of the indigenous community about “the use of water, (...) conservation of trees & birds, (...) endangered species, and (...) waste collection” (SEED, 2016c, p.5) in so-called environmental awareness camps and lists this practice as a positive environmental impact of the enterprise. This portrayal of ancestral habits as inferior to institutional conservation efforts contradicts the view of ecological economics. Ecological economics promotes a different approach to indigenous communities and their knowledge: Costanza et al. (2014, p.244) emphasise the importance of “providing secure property rights to indigenous people in the management of forests, fisheries, and other environmental resources” and state that respecting indigenous knowledge about managing these resources “could provide significant improvements with respect to (...) sustainability”. Thus, instead of trying to teach indigenous people how to
approach sustainability, strong sustainable entrepreneurship would turn this dynamic around and prioritise the practices and attitudes of indigenous and local communities. Strong sustainable entrepreneurship would recognise and value indigenous knowledge about the relation of humans and nature, while accepting and respecting the complexity and unpredictability of ecological and social systems.

(2) Technology as Societal Innovation
The SEED discourse focuses on the use of technology in terms of resource-efficiency, lessening harmful impact on the environment and increasing the competitive position of the enterprise. This vital role of technology contrasts with a SS perspective, where the limited reliance on technological development is emphasised. This is expressed by Stål and Bonnedahl (2016, p.76) who state that “value creation cannot depend on transformation of virgin material or non-renewable energy”. Although it is important to recognise this limitation within the framework of ecological economics, this does not categorically dismiss technology as a catalyst for societal innovations. Thus, in the framework of strong sustainable entrepreneurship, technology would be used in a way that does not have the ambition to enhance or replace nature. Neither should it use technology to merely lessen the negative environmental impact of business activities, therefore addressing symptoms rather than underlying problems. Strong sustainable entrepreneurship would respect the non-substitutability of natural and produced capital and therefore refrain from using technology to replace or enhance natural capital.

(3) Economic Growth
The SEED discourse’s strong focus on economic growth contradicts the notion of SS. However, although branches within ecological economics emphasise the need for economic degrowth, the aim of strong sustainable entrepreneurship could focus on challenging the status quo of economic growth, rather than focusing specifically on degrowth. The reason for this limitation is the aim of entrepreneurial activity to disrupt markets and industries, which in some cases could come along with economic growth. The major difference between sustainable entrepreneurship under the SS instead of the WS paradigm would therefore be that economic growth is not a declared goal of strong sustainable entrepreneurial activity. Rather, it would emphasise limits to growth. In their conceptualisation of strong sustainable entrepreneurship, Stål and Bonnedahl (2016, p.76) state that “alternative for markets are needed for the creation and distribution of value”. Strong sustainable entrepreneurship would not take economic growth as a given and question it as a metric for successful entrepreneurial activity. Rather than promoting economic growth, strong sustainable entrepreneurship should define alternative metrics for entrepreneurial success, such as social and ecological value creation rather than financial value creation.
(4) Societal Issues: Poverty and Inequality

Several key findings of the analysis of the SEED discourse do not fit within the framework of ecological economics. The SEED discourse shows a strong focus on social equality issues and emphasises the need for change to resolve issues such as gender inequality and poverty. Regarding social issues, the SEED discourse challenges the status quo and advocates for change: It focuses on social and economic _empowerment_ as one of the key goals and impacts of sustainable entrepreneurship. However, these social issues and aspects of human wellbeing are not named or discussed in the field of ecological economics. Therefore, in the opinion of the authors, this finding from the discourse analysis of the SEED discourse can add a valuable element to the conceptualisation of strong sustainable entrepreneurship which is missing in the framework of ecological economics. The fourth aspect of _societal issues, poverty and inequality_ is therefore added to the concept of strong sustainable entrepreneurship to enrich the concept and make it more inclusive.

Empowerment within the SEED discourse is described mainly in the context of financial empowerment and strengthening of purchasing power and consumerism. This interpretation of empowerment closely relates to the BoP arguments of Prahalad and Hart (2002), who focus mainly on consumerism. However, the SEED discourse’s approach to empowerment exceeds the BoP approach of Prahalad and Hart and includes elements of their critics’ arguments as well. The main critique on the original BoP concept comes from Karnani (2007a, 2007b) who states that increased consumerism does not necessarily lead to increased wellbeing. Instead, Karnani (2007a, 2007b) argues that rather than focusing only on consumerism, global supply chains should be more inclusive of poor communities and individuals, in order to create employment opportunities and thus increase overall wellbeing. This is in line with the SEED discourse’s interpretation of employment as empowerment.

The goal of the eradication of poverty and inequality is added to the conceptualisation of strong sustainable entrepreneurship in this thesis, because of its capacity to contribute to a more inclusive concept. While this element of societal issues is not specifically included in the framework of ecological economics, Markman et al. (2016) attempt to unite the two approaches: They state that economic activity is embedded within social systems. These social systems are in turn embedded in larger ecological systems. Thus, strong sustainable entrepreneurship could include a focus on societal issues if the previously described conditions related to the embeddedness of entrepreneurship within ecological systems are met.
7.2 Conceptualisation of Strong Sustainable Entrepreneurship

As discussed in chapters 5 and 6, the SEED discourse focuses strongly on the activities of the enterprise and portray it as an active and powerful agent. This interpretation of entrepreneurial activity is in line with the neoclassical perspective of the individual as a rational entity, driven by economic motives. Contrary to the SEED discourse, ecological economics emphasises the embeddedness of the individual within complex ecological and social systems. In this sense, the focus on a rational entity would not meet the basic assumptions of ecological economics. The focus of entrepreneurship on an entity per se does not exclude ecological economics if the influence and relationships with ecological and social systems are recognised. This could be for example, the individual as entrepreneur acting within the ecological and social systems.

As stated in the literature review, Hjorth and Holt (2016) emphasise that ‘the entrepreneurial’ should not be understood as a synonym for ‘economic enterprise’, although they are frequently associated. This emphasis is needed to look beyond the narrow definition of entrepreneurship within neoclassical economics which emphasises market driven innovation and financial value creation. Most definitions of entrepreneurship are derived from the Schumpeterian perspective on creative destruction (Schumpeter, 1942). However, when approaching this concept of creative destruction from a different angle, the interdependence of entrepreneurship and economic or financial goals doesn’t have to be accepted as a given. In this sense, creative destruction could be perceived as a radical change from existing structures - The focus of entrepreneurial activity then could be on redefining or changing the perception of value-creation. As Hjorth and Holt (2016) focus on “value-creation that changes society for the better”, Stål & Bonnedahl (2016) claim that there is a need to redefine values with alternatives to markets. This alternative interpretation of entrepreneurship does not specifically lead to a contradiction with the ecological economics assumptions.

The embeddedness of values within entrepreneurship emphasises the strong social and human focus of the concept, due to the social nature of the meaning of values. This does not lead to an immediate conflict with ecological economics, as long as entrepreneurial activity accepts the complexity of the ecological and social systems and does not try to overrule them. Thus, the SS driven approach towards entrepreneurship should include a strong focus on radical change and redefining values with a specific focus on societal change. By doing so, the scope of strong sustainable entrepreneurship shifts towards the generation of disruptive change as a result of the entrepreneurial activity. This does not conflict with the focus of Shane and Venkataraman (2000) on opportunities, although there should be noticed that the ‘opportunity’ could only be described as an opportunity after the realisation of change.

Strong sustainable entrepreneurship could therefore be defined as

*activities and processes undertaken to create non-economic value by the disruption of the current status quo and the stimulation of radical change, while recognising the embeddedness and interdependence of human activities within complex ecological and social systems.*
7.3 Practical Implications for the Sustainable Entrepreneurship Discourse

By performing an analysis on a discourse, the analysis inherently also contributes to a discourse. When gaining insights about how the concepts of sustainability and entrepreneurship are perceived when one talks about the combination of the concepts, the aim is to contribute inherently to the current state of the world around us. Thus, the practical contribution of this theoretical study is to generate awareness and understanding within academic research and within the UN about the underlying assumptions and implications of the current sustainable entrepreneurship discourse, and to encourage them to rethink these assumptions in order to work towards a more sustainable world.

So how can this new concept of strong sustainable entrepreneurship be used in practice? Perhaps the most immediate contribution could be this: As a first step, strong sustainable entrepreneurship could provide a framework for a re-evaluation of sustainable entrepreneurship activities and ideas. The four elements of the conceptualisation of strong sustainable entrepreneurship as described in chapter 7.1 could for example be used to re-evaluate the entrepreneurial activities described in the SEED case studies: Does the approach respect critical natural capital, and if so, how? Does it acknowledge limits to growth, and if not, how could this aspect be added? Does it respect the non-substitutability of natural and produced capital? Does the activity contribute to the eradication of poverty and inequality, if so, in which way? Using the concept of strong sustainable entrepreneurship for re-evaluation, could make the SEED discourse more inclusive and add valuable new perspectives from the field of ecological economics.
Limitations and Further Research

In the opinion of the authors, this thesis has succeeded in answering the research questions as well as exploring related problems and ideas. However, due to the limited scope and time of the research, there is ample space and opportunity for further research. A deeper analysis could provide a more nuanced perception of the discourse. This could imply - for example - the use of materials from different moments in time, to recognise the development and evolvement of the discourse. It must be noted that the portrayed SEED discourse only covers the two series of cases studies, although the entire SEED discourse includes more than that, e.g. research reports. Also, images and videos from the case studies were excluded from the discourse analysis in this thesis. Thus, the portrayed discourse should be seen as an impression of the narratives rather than the only one. At the same time, the SEED discourse is part of the larger relationship between agencies of the UN - So again, it is not the main nor the only discourse, but one of many. Therefore, the discourse could also be expanded to include more documents from other UN related institutions, as well institutions outside the UN. The contribution of this thesis is inherently related to its limitations. Due to the interpretative nature of the study, the analysis does not represent a conclusive nor universal truth. However, the analysis and reflection of the SEED discourse functioned as the foundation of the conceptualisation towards a more general approach.

The used theoretical framework of ecological economics had limited usage for the implications of societal issues, although the importance of the issues became clear during the analysis. Therefore, elaboration on the framework of ecological economics with a specific focus on societal issues could contribute to a more holistic framework. Because of the theoretical nature of the study, the proposed definition of strong sustainable entrepreneurship is rather broad and should not be seen as a conclusive or final definition. It is, in fact, rather the opposite: a starting point to elaborate on. Further research could contribute by (1) including social theories within the definition of strong sustainable entrepreneurship and (2) recognising practical examples of this type of entrepreneurship to learn from.

During the analysis, the way the SEED discourse portrayed differences in knowledge and skills between the Global North and the Global South, was perceived as disturbing by the authors. This thesis did not have the required framework to perform a deeper analysis of this phenomenon. Further research on this phenomenon could contribute to making the SEED discourse more inclusive. In our opinion, the idea that the Global North has more skills and knowledge when it comes to sustainability and sustainable entrepreneurship, conflicts with the opening quote of this thesis: “The problems we have created in the world today will not be solved by the level of thinking that created them.” (Albert Einstein, 1946, as cited by Thompson, 1995).
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# Appendix

## Appendix I - Overview of the Enterprises in the Case Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Business Model</th>
<th>Sustainability Impacts</th>
<th>Founder</th>
<th>No. of fulltime Employees</th>
<th>Annual Turnover</th>
<th>Annual Profit</th>
<th>Partners</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belle Verte (SEED, 2018b)</td>
<td>Provides innovative waste management solutions, establishes a recycling value chain and creates and sells upcycled waste materials and goods.</td>
<td>Reduction of waste in landfills and the environment, job creation, public awareness creation about waste</td>
<td>Dieudonne Kwame Agudah</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60,000 USD</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Institute du Bon Pasteur (local organisation that promotes public health)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- PLANKTON Recycling Plant (local glass recycling business)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- BAZ Recup (Local business that sells upcycled products)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WashKing (SEED, 2018c)</td>
<td>Designs, sells, installs and provides maintenance services for eco-friendly biodigester toilets in poor urban households.</td>
<td>Improves hygiene and sanitation which reduces diseases, job creation, reduces environmental pollution through open defecation</td>
<td>Dieudonne Kwame Agudah</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11,250 USD</td>
<td>2,662 USD</td>
<td>- UNICEF Ghana (International NGO)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor (International NGO)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Global Youth in Environmental Sustenance (Local NGO)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Reob-Fekams Microfinance Company (Microfinance Organisation)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Ga West Municipal Assembly (Local Municipality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique Quality Product Enterprise (SEED, 2018d)</td>
<td>Purchases fonio in bulk from farmers, pays a processing fee to the processors, and sells the final product under the label Dim Fonio to domestic and international markets.</td>
<td>Job and income source creation, empowerment of female farmers through providing access to farming land, introduction of a climate resilient crop improves food security</td>
<td>Salma Abdulai</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42,000 USD</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Pagsung Women Association (Local business that processes the fonio)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (Research partner that provides testing and quality control)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Send Ghana (International NGO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YICE Uganda (SEED, 2018e)</td>
<td>Provides services to smallholder farmers through mobile technology, e.g. access to</td>
<td>Improves food security, improves farmers' incomes,</td>
<td>Noah Ssempijja</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7,400 USD</td>
<td>2,700 USD</td>
<td>- Agro Market Days (National business that develops and operates the mobile technology that YICE uses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Key Activities</td>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>Lead Contact</td>
<td>Number of Jobs</td>
<td>Total Investment</td>
<td>Jobs for Women</td>
<td>Other Impact</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sahelia Solar (SEED, 2018f)</td>
<td>Designs and supplies a range of solar energy systems to commercial, residential and industrial clients with a payment system that allows low income customers to pay in instalments.</td>
<td>Reduces fossil fuel consumption and preserves trees by offering an alternative energy source to wood, job creation.</td>
<td>Serge Eloi Ouedraogo</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safi Organics (SEED, 2018g)</td>
<td>Produces agricultural inputs such as fertiliser and soil treatments from waste.</td>
<td>Creates a circular economy that reduces waste and carbon footprint and increases farm yields and incomes.</td>
<td>Samuel Rigu</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42,000 USD</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Kenyan Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation (Government organisation that supports in testing products and training farmers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Women Recycling (SEED, 2016a)</td>
<td>Makes greeting cards and gift boxes out of discarded plastic bottles and sells them nationally and internationally through distributors.</td>
<td>Creates jobs for unemployed women, creates income source for waste collectors, recycles waste and reduces the amount of waste in landfills.</td>
<td>Lynn Worsley</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>USD 68,300</td>
<td>USD 8,200</td>
<td>Fetola (National consultancy that provides strategy consulting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Trees for Africa (SEED, 2016b)</td>
<td>Runs multiple programmes centred around sustainable agriculture and food production.</td>
<td>Improves food security, plants trees, raises public awareness about climate change.</td>
<td>Christopher Wild (Executive Director)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>USD 1,300,000</td>
<td>USD 67,000</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (National Government body that provides funding and resources)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Person</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Sponsors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Khuin Kwa Khomani (SEED, 2016c)</td>
<td>Offers authentic eco-tours by the local Khomani San community within and around the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park</td>
<td>Dirk Pienaar</td>
<td>USD 24,000</td>
<td>USD 20,000</td>
<td>Department of Tourism, especially the Northern Cape Tourism Authority, Open Africa (Local company that attracts tourists to the eco-tours), Bushman Council (Community based organisation that represents the local community), Peace Park Foundation (Non-profit organisation that has a mandate to develop communities and business activities through wildlife conservation), Woolworths (Corporate sponsor), Pioneer Foods (Corporate sponsor), EU (Sponsor)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waste to Food (SEED, 2016d)</td>
<td>Recycles food waste from large producers, such as retailers and hospitality groups, into vermicompost and sells it to commercial clients. Creates jobs and additional incomes, reduces waste in landfills as well as carbon emissions</td>
<td>Roger Jaques</td>
<td>USD 44,500</td>
<td>USD 1,700</td>
<td>Pick n Pay (Supermarket chain that provides funding and waste), Don't Waste Services (National waste management business that provides training and funding), Philippi Economic Development Initiative (Local NGO that provides funding and administrative support), City of Cape Town (Local government, provides funding and land), Community Work Programme (provides manpower and technical assistance)</td>
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</table>
Appendix II – Quotes for the Analysis per Case

II.I Basic Entities Whose Existence is Recognised

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study</th>
<th>Basic Entities Whose Existence Is Recognised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belle Verte (SEED, 2018b)</td>
<td><strong>Capitalist Economy:</strong> “In recent years Mauritius has achieved limited, but steady economic growth.” (p. 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Nature as a Resource:</strong> “improper waste management endanger(s) biodiversity, human and animal health, and groundwater and landscape resources.” (p. 4)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Poverty &amp; Inequality:</strong> “Despite a lower overall poverty rate, levels of poverty vary greatly from region to region.” (p. 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WASHKing (SEED, 2018c)</td>
<td><strong>Capitalist Economy:</strong> “relevant market-based solutions”</td>
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<td><strong>Nature as a Resource:</strong> “improves local water quality” (p. 8), “create cleaner local environments” (p. 8)</td>
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<td><strong>Poverty &amp; Inequality:</strong> “Social inequality is rising, especially in rural areas” (p. 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unique Quality Product Enterprise (SEED, 2018d)</td>
<td><strong>Capitalist Economy:</strong> “market-leading approach” (p. 4), “UQE has created a market for fonio” (p. 4)</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Nature as a Resource:</strong> “crop for local consumption” (p. 4), “[the crop] has lots of nutritional properties” (p. 5), “The crop has both commercial and sustenance value and it helps to re-establish fertile soil.” (p. 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Poverty &amp; Inequality:</strong> “Achieving gender equality is not only important to human rights agendas, but impacts on other areas of social and economic development.” (p. 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YICE Uganda (SEED, 2018e)</td>
<td><strong>Capitalist Economy:</strong> “insufficient capital, and limited market access” (p. 4), “fair market prices for produce” (p. 4), “Insufficient finance limits farmers’ ability to access land” (p. 7)</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Nature as a Resource:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Capitalist Economy:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sahelia Solar (SEED, 2018f)</td>
<td>“customer-oriented technical assistance and after-sales services” (p. 7), “allows low income or capital poor customers to pay in instalments” (p. 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safi Organics (SEED, 2018g)</td>
<td>“most adolescents and young adults face high levels of unemployment” (p. 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Women Recycling (SEED, 2016a)</td>
<td>“Government statistics clearly show that women are less likely than men to be employed or economically active and they represent a large proportion of those doing unpaid work.” (p.3) “the above evidence strongly suggests that young black women are particularly vulnerable when it comes to unemployment and as a result they represent a large proportion of those living under the food poverty line.” (p.3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Capitalist Economy:</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Trees for Africa (SEED, 2016b)</td>
<td>“are in need of socio-economic development.” (p.3)</td>
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<td><strong>Poverty &amp; inequality:</strong></td>
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<td>“In 2015, Oxfam reported that over half of South Africans lived below the national poverty line and more than 10% live in extreme poverty. In terms of inequality, the World Bank shows that South Africa is amongst the most unequal societies in the world; estimating that the bottom 20% receives less than 5% of the national income compared to the wealthiest 20% receiving more than 60%. Meanwhile, unemployment currently stands at 26.7%, the highest rate on records since 2008.” (p.3)</td>
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<td><strong>Nature as a Resource:</strong></td>
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<td>“increasing demand on water, food and energy will only exacerbate the current pressures on natural resources” (p.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khuin Kwa Khomani (SEED, 2016c)</td>
<td><strong>Capitalist Economy &amp; Poverty and Inequality:</strong></td>
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<td>“the community suffers from high unemployment, poor education, and a lack of access to basic services such as health, water and education. As a result, poverty rates are high amongst the community” (p.3)</td>
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<td><strong>Nature as Resource:</strong></td>
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<td>“Water scarcity is a constant struggle, which is exacerbated by climate change, causing increasing pressure on the limited water resources servicing the park and communities. “(p.3)</td>
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<td>“demonstrate to tourists how to use local resources sustainably as part of the San culture.” (p.5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waste to Food (SEED, 2016d)</td>
<td><strong>Capitalist Economy:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Creating economic opportunities” (p.1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Capitalist Economy &amp; Poverty and Inequality:</strong></td>
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<td>“Philippi is an area of Cape Town with a population of nearly 200,000. While it has promising potential for growth due to the existence of the Philippi Industrial Area, the Philippi Horticultural Area and the recently developed Philippi Village, this low income settlement still faces serious poverty” (p.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td><strong>Nature as a Resource:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Furthermore, the production of food that is not consumed wastes valuable resources, such as agricultural land, water and energy” (p.3)</td>
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<td>“By reducing the amount of food waste in landfills, W2F contributes to climate change mitigation and the improvement of water resources.” (p.5)</td>
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II. Assumptions about Natural Relations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study</th>
<th>Assumptions about Natural Relations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belle Verte (SEED, 2018b)</td>
<td><strong>Humans and Nature:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“promote a circular economy using an innovative waste management system.” (p. 4)&lt;br&gt;“remove discarded waste from streams, rivers and beaches, to benefit the local environment” (p. 8)&lt;br&gt;<strong>Economic Growth and Sustainable Development:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“aims to expand employment” (p. 8)&lt;br&gt;“tourism sector growth in recent years has resulted in significant negative environmental impacts, specifically in terms of increased waste.” (p. 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASHKing (SEED, 2018c)</td>
<td><strong>Humans and Nature:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“These environmental impacts are directly linked to human health risks relating to water borne and vector borne diseases” (p.9)&lt;br&gt;“improve the environment” (p. 5)&lt;br&gt;“contamination of food and water due to insufficient hygiene often leads to diseases and stunted growth from malnutrition” (p. 4)&lt;br&gt;“run programs and initiatives that focus on solutions to environmental degradation” (p. 6)&lt;br&gt;<strong>Economic Growth and Sustainable Development:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“ Improves the economic productivity of over 600 people provided with access to toilets” (p. 8)&lt;br&gt;“Living conditions and incomes in Ghana have improved significantly since 2005 as the result of 7% economic growth” (p. 4)&lt;br&gt;“a business approach to sanitation could improve people’s lives as well as improve the environment” (p. 5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Unique Quality Product Enterprise (SEED, 2018d) | **Humans and Nature:**<br>“sustainable land management” (p. 9)<br>**Economic Growth and Sustainable Development:**<br>“has achieved sustained economic growth and reduced the number of people living in poverty” (p. 4)<br>“economic empowerment of local women through cultivating, harvesting and processing fonio” (p.8)<br>“Food insecurity is compounded by several factors, including (...) the lack of agricultural technology.” (p. 4)<br>**Global North & Global South:**<br>“UQE promotes the expansion and harvesting of fonio crops using
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Humans and Nature:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Economic Growth and Sustainable Development:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Global North &amp; Global South:</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YICE Uganda</td>
<td>“Sustainable agriculture aims at establishing an ecological balance to prevent soil fertility or pest problems” (p.4)</td>
<td>“Innovative mobile technology” (p. 4)</td>
<td>“instill confidence and leadership skills in the farm agents” (p. 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(SEED, 2018e)</td>
<td>“improve land management, thus increasing yields, preserving soil ecosystems and positively impacting soil and water quality” (p. 9)</td>
<td>“empower smallholder farmers to achieve sustainable incomes by improving their productivity” (p. 8)</td>
<td>“recommendations based on local knowledge and traditional methods” (p. 6)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>“The technology offered by YICE provides farmers with accurate market information” (p. 8)</td>
<td>“The technology offered by YICE provides farmers with accurate market information” (p. 8)</td>
<td>“achieving its goal to integrate technology into traditional farming practice” (p. 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahelia Solar</td>
<td><strong>Humans and Nature:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Economic Growth and Sustainable Development:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Global North and Global South:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(SEED, 2018f)</td>
<td>“The use of solar energy solutions reduces the local demand for timber and charcoal resources for household activities. (...) Furthermore, the eliminated need for kerosene and diesel to run generators and produce energy supports improvements in air quality and greenhouse gas emissions reductions” (p.9)</td>
<td>“provision of income for technicians within the clean energy sector and decreased consumer spending on energy through the use of more efficient and cost effective solar and hybrid systems” (p. 8)</td>
<td>“The use of clean energy technology reduces both the urban and rural impacts of wood burning using traditional energy systems.” (p. 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safi Organics (SEED, 2018g)</td>
<td><strong>Economic Growth &amp; Sustainable Development:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“The increased demand for wood fuel contributes to deforestation and associated impacts, including desertification and biodiversity loss.” (p. 4)&lt;br&gt;“to reverse declining agricultural yields, improve the income and food security of local farmers” (p.4)&lt;br&gt;“has created an innovative value chain in the waste management sector by using technology” (p.8)&lt;br&gt;“reduce the burden of chemical fertiliser on the local environment” (p.9)&lt;br&gt;“trained 400 local farmers in the use of the Safi Organics organic fertiliser”. (p.9)&lt;br&gt;“Approximately 61.4% of Kenya's total surface area is characterised by a high level of soil degradation. In particular, human activities, including the destruction of vegetation, overgrazing and excessive forest conversion, play a significant role in this development.” (p. 4)&lt;br&gt;“encourage technology generation to improve the lives of farmers” (p. 6)&lt;br&gt;“Safi Organics has improved livelihood opportunities for farmers.” (p. 8) <strong>Global North &amp; Global South:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“Prior to their involvement with Safi Organics, local farmers were unaware of this sustainable, local alternative to chemical fertilisers.” (p. 9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Women Recycling (SEED, 2016a)</td>
<td><strong>Economic Growth &amp; Sustainable Development:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“provide marginalised groups in society with new opportunities to improve their lives” (p.5)&lt;br&gt;“these isolated segments of society are now empowered and can actively take part in society”. (p.5)&lt;br&gt;“Main environmental objective is to reduce plastic waste pollution by cutting the number of PET bottles ending up in landfills or being illegally dumped in the environment.” (p.5)&lt;br&gt;“the main environmental objective is to reduce plastic waste pollution by cutting the number of PET bottles ending up in landfills or being illegally dumped in the environment” (p.7) <strong>Humans and Nature:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“For instance, water erosion, soil acidification and soil fertility degradation now all affect land productivity “(p.3)&lt;br&gt;“lacks access to land to cultivate food; and water shortages create significant challenges in the production of food” (p.3)&lt;br&gt;“by a legacy of unsustainable land management practices and a lack of access to services, infrastructure and technical farming knowledge.” (p.3) <strong>Economic Growth and Sustainable Development:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“Development of innovative projects that remain ahead of the game” (p.5)&lt;br&gt;“Tackles food insecurity, unemployment, environmental degradation and climate change by creating greenbelts of community gardens and trees and</td>
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<td>Food &amp; Trees for Africa (SEED, 2016b)</td>
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by empowering emerging organic farmers.” (p.3)

**Global North and Global South:**
“FTFA matches the sponsors’ objectives (e.g. food security, climate change mitigation, employment, etc.) with FTFA’s most suitable projects and with the schools, farmers, or communities’ needs.” (p.3)
NB: Sponsors are almost all Global North.
“...prevent erosion but also regenerate and rehabilitate the land. Furthermore, in all their educational programmes on environmental awareness, FTFA also includes wider issues of environmental education, such as sustainable water usage or waste & recycling.” (p.5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Khuin Kwa Khomani (SEED, 2016c)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Humans and Nature:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Water scarcity (...) is exacerbated by climate change, causing increasing pressure on the limited water resources servicing the park and communities” (p.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“land dispossession” (p.3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“conservation of trees &amp; birds, on endangered species” (p.5)</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Growth and Sustainable Development:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“job creation is a key objective” (p.3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“purchase power for over 60 people” (p.5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“By establishing community groups, developing skills, and most importantly, by recognising the San traditions and culture, the San community regains a sense of self-worth” (p.5)</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global North vs. Global South:</th>
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<tr>
<td>“Khuin Kwa Kgalagadi Experience (KK) offers authentic eco-tours within and around the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. What sets KK apart from other tours, is that the enterprise is led by the ‡Khomani San community and the tours embrace the traditions of the ‡Khomani San culture. This offers visitors not only the opportunity to see the extraordinary landscapes and biodiversity of the region, but also to experience life through the eyes of the ‡Khomani San descendants, one of the oldest groups of people on the planet.” (p.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The lack of education and management skills in the community” (p.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Funds generated from the park fees have hardly trickled down to the community, forcing the ‡Khomani San to rely on natural resources in the park, which can be in conflict with conservation objectives.” (p.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“To achieve a successful partnership, it is essential to align the needs and values of the local communities with those of conservation institutions through joint decision making.” (p.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“increases productivity and brings about an important impulse to the village development” (p.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Waste to Food (SEED, 2016d)

**Humans and Nature:**
“The vermicompost and organic practices also enhance the soil structure by improving water infiltration and reducing erosion” (p.5)
“provides waste management skills training to W2F” (p.4)

**Economic Growth and Sustainable Development:**
“has developed a combination of technologies to overcome the widespread disposal of organic waste to landfills in South Africa, while at the same time contributing to employment and food security.” (p.3)
“With their innovative processing system” (p.3)

II. III Agents and Their Motives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study</th>
<th>Agents and Their Motives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Belle Verte (SEED, 2018b) | **Local Community:**
  “introduces new waste management concepts to the community” (p. 9)
  “partnerships with local businesses, municipalities and community groups” (p. 4)

**Local Individuals:**
“Employment of 10 local workers” (p. 8)
“generates a local market for waste collectors who earn an income from recycling local waste” (p. 4)

**Local business & non governmental organisations:**
“Through partnerships with local businesses, municipalities and community groups, Belle Verte facilitates local workshops and public cleanups across the islands’ beaches, rivers, and the ocean” (p.4)

“Institute du Bon Pasteur (IBP) is a local organisation that has worked in tandem with Belle Verte from the outset of Belle Verte’s establishment” (p.6)
“Plankton established a business and associated infrastructure that enables Belle Verte to collect glass from households and small businesses at a central facility.” (p.6)

“BAZ Recup sorts, and upcycles waste collected by Belle Verte and sells new upcycled products back to the community. Through this partnership, BAZ Recup ensures a steady supply of raw materials to construct products such as furniture and is able to create local income generation opportunities by employing local artisans.” (p.7)
| WASHKing (SEED, 2018c) | **Local Community:**  
> “Local communities, and especially children playing outside, benefit from the cleaner environment provided by the installation of toilet facilities” (p. 8)  
> “In collaboration with local partners, WASHKing helps low income customers to receive micro loans that are paid back in instalments.” (p.4)  
> **Local Individuals:**  
> “Provided jobs, income and training for 22 local artisans” (p. 8)  
> “long-term improvements in productivity and consistent incomes” (p. 8)  
> **Enterprise:**  
> “improve the enterprise’s profitability” (p. 9)  
> “Increase the turnover of the business” (p. 9)  
> **NGOs:**  
> “Partnering with a number of NGOs to support their sanitation programs, WASHKing acts as a service provider, designing and installing toilet systems” (p. 6)  
> “Global Youth in Environmental Sustenance (G-YES) is an NGO that was established to deliver WASHKing’s non-profit services. G-YES receives 10% of WASHKing’s revenue to run programs and initiatives that focus on solutions to environmental degradation, youth unemployment and poor health. As a WASHKing entity, GYES provides business and non-business-based solutions to address social and environmental issues” (p.6)  
> **Government:**  
> “WASHKing and GWMA recently began cooperating in order to increase the level of household toilet coverage.” (p. 7)  

| Unique Quality Product Enterprise (SEED, 2018d) | **Local Community:**  
> “The enterprise engaged with local landholders and wider communities” (p. 4)  
> **Local Individuals:**  
> “Increased female farmers income” (p. 8) |
| **Enterprise:** | “The main social target of UQE is to improve the livelihoods of women in rural communities in northern Ghana.” (p. 8)  
“The main economic objective of UQE is to ensure the economic empowerment of local women” (p. 8) |
| **NGO:** | “The partnership with Send Ghana has enabled UQE to train more women in raw fonio production processes and Send Ghana to reach more women farmers.” (p. 7) |
| **Local business:** | “The partnership between PWA and UQE was established to transfer the task of fonio processing to PWA’s members. UQE pays a fee to PWA members for this processing service. This enables UQE to significantly increase its income and diversify its income sources to support income security” (p. 6) |

| **YICE Uganda**  
(SEED, 2018e) | **Local Community:**  
“empower the local community to make better, more informed decisions” (p. 4) |
| **Local Individuals:** | “training of female farm agents” (p. 8)  
“The information and training provided allows farmers to increase their income” (p. 8)  
“Increased profits for smallholder farmers” (p. 8) |
| **Enterprise:** | “The enterprise specifically targets youth and women” (p. 4)  
“YICE and their partners inform and promote sustainable farming practices.” (p. 9)  
“YICE increases food productivity” (p. 8) |
| **Local business** | “Through its partnership with YICE, Agro Market Days provides smartphones and training to YICE farm agents on how to use the platform. “ (p. 6)  
“Gutsinda’s use of mobile technology serves as a valuable tool for YICE to more accurately understand participating farmers, collect data and manage its system” (p. 6) |
| **NGO** |  |
| Sahelia Solar (SEED, 2018f) | **Local Community:**  
> allows the community to draw higher profits from their activities” (p. 8)  
> “livelihood improvements for low income customers and communities” (p. 9)  

**Local Individuals:**  
“Secure income for 7 fulltime and 5 casual employees” (p. 8)  

**Enterprise:**  
“Sahelia Solar identifies and actively promotes opportunities for solar and off-grid micro energy systems to build more sustainable communities.” (p. 9)  
“Increase sales and strengthen the sales team” (p. 9)  

**SEED:**  
“The SEED support through SWITCH Africa Green has given them the management skills and exposure to be able to gain that next level of funding.” (p.7)  

**International business:**  
“SMA supplies Sahelia Solar with reliable technologies required to meet the needs of their customers.” |

| Safi Organics (SEED, 2018g) | **Local individuals:**  
> “improve the income and food security of local farmers, and provide opportunities for local youth. “ (p.4)  
> “training opportunities for local farmers and youth employed in the enterprise's production facility”(p.8)  

**National Government:**  
“The Kenyan Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation (KARLO) works on demand-driven solutions to local agricultural challenges” (p.6)  
“Linked closely with KARLO, the Agriculture Sector Development Support Program (ASDSP) similarly uses a public-private partnership to encourage technology generation to improve the lives of farmers, and tp promote sustainable farming practices. ASDSP has assisted Safi Organics in developing its value chain, marketing its technology and products to farmers, and advising on funding opportunities” (p.6)  

**Partners (overall, enabling):** |
| All Women Recycling (SEED, 2016a) | **Local Individuals:**  
“Empowering unemployed young black women through income creation, skill development and training in upcycling PET bottles into versatile and useful crafts.” (p.3)  
“In South Africa, most people with a mental illness are still excluded from the job market and by training those women in manufacturing greeting cards from recycled PET, AWR offers them a way to generate an income” (p.4)  
**Local Community:**  
“By expanding its portfolio, AWR empowers more marginalised segments of the community and increases its impact. “(p.4)  
**Enterprise:**  
“The enterprise recycles discarded plastic 2-litre PET bottles, which they source from dumpsites, community centres and schools, into greeting cards and into kliketyklikboxes™.” (p.3)  
“The fact that the enterprise is now fully selfsustaining and scales up each year is evidence of their financial viability. “ (p.5)  
**Civil Society Organisations:**  
“AWR is partnering with various CSOs.” (p.7)  
**International retailers:**  
“Contigo, a fair trade business from Germany, and Syiabonga, a Dutch retailer, are two of the 35 international retailers that AWR works with” (p.4) |
| Food & Trees for Africa (SEED, 2016b) | **Partners and Local Community:**  
“Our multiple partnerships are dynamic and to ensure continuity it is imperative to manage both the expectations of the sponsors and those of the community by setting realistic targets and through coaching.” (p.4) |
“The surplus of vegetables and fruits is then sold to the community, which generates a sustainable income” (p.5)
“At the same time, they work with hundreds of sponsors, e.g. corporates, foundations, and governments, that aim to alleviate South Africa’s poverty and environmental degradation” (p.3)

**National government**
“Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) has partnered with FTFA for the last 25 years to green South Africa and provide food security. “ (p.4)

“Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), a national development finance institution owned by the South African Government, is one of the multiple sponsors of FTFA”. (p.4)

| Khuin Kwa Khomani (SEED, 2016c) | **Local Community:**
|                               | “KK provides the community with employment opportunities, “(p.3)
|                               | “ the enterprise is led by the ‡Khomani San community “ (p.3)
|                               | “KK, households enjoy more income that can be spent on food and education” (p.5)
|                               | **Local Governance Actor:**
|                               | “ The Bushman Council is a Community Based Organisation (CBO) representing the San community in South Africa and with their trusted position they are the main link to the ‡Khomani San. “(p.4)
|                               | **National Government:**
|                               | “the San community regains a sense of self-worth and their identity and traditional knowledge is valued by government decision makers and the wider national and international community. “

| Waste to Food (SEED, 2016d) | **Local Individuals:** “is part of their strategy to increase employment and income in Cape Town and in turn, reduce poverty. “
|                             | **Local business:**
|                             | “source and deliver organic waste to W2F and offer marketing and packaging advice” (p.4)
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<td>“but by clustering the indigenous trees into greenbelts, ecosystems are reinstated which increases biodiversity“ (p.5)</td>
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<td>2016b)</td>
<td>“it is in the enterprise’s DNA“ (p.5)</td>
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<td><strong>Khui Kwa Khomani</strong> (SEED, 2016c)</td>
<td>“Water scarcity (...) is exacerbated by climate change, causing increasing pressure on the limited water resources servicing the park and communities” (p.3)</td>
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<td>“through its inclusive approach, KK (...) aligns the needs and values of the community with conservation” (p.3)</td>
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<td>“authentic eco-tours” (p.3)</td>
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<td>“During apartheid the San population was socially and politically invisible” (p.3)</td>
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<td><strong>Waste to Food</strong> (SEED, 2016d)</td>
<td>“waste management” - 4 times mentioned: (3x p.4, 1x p.5)</td>
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<td>“The staff food garden generates vegetable for the staff, and the greenhouse and micro-franchises increase access to high quality and affordable vegetables for the community” (p.5)</td>
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<td>“positive environmental impact” (p.5)</td>
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<td>‘Therefore addressing food waste, not only at the production, post-harvest and distribution stages, but also at the post-consumption stage, is directly linked to food security. “ (p.3)</td>
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